

Swiss news

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SWISS NEWS

THE NATIONAL DAY

Processions and patriotic manifestations were organised in every Swiss commune to mark the 1st August and the approaching 700th anniversary of the country. The President of the Confederation pronounced a particularly lofty speech to the nation. Three thousand adherents to the National Action against Overforeignisation met at Sempbach and heard their leader, Mr. Schwarzenbach, congratulate himself on the near results of the 7th June Referendum. Apart from some heckling by left-wingers, there were no incidents. Mr. Schwarzenbach compared the 7th June results as the feat of Winkelried at the battle of Sempach: the vote had "opened a breach among the ranks of the Swiss industrial phalanx". In Geneva, there were vehement protests from the International Movement for Reconciliation, the International Civil Service and the International Resistance to War. These worldwide organisations had been refused the right to take part in the 1st August procession to Plainpalais on the grounds of not being sufficiently patriotic.

POLITICAL

The Committee canvassing against the creation of an intercantonal police force had no difficulty in collecting the necessary signatures for a cantonal referendum on this issue in Geneva. It appeared that the majority of Genevans were against the eventuality of a shared police force to come to the rescue of overstretched local police forces in case of emergency. Their grounds were that such a force would be anti-federalistic in spirit and that it would not lay the necessary emphasis on negotiations in the settlement of differences.

The economic commission of the National Council has recommended the acceptance of a motion to give the Federal Council the right of changing the parity of the Swiss franc without prior consultations in Parliament or the National Bank. The issue will be debated this Autumn. By not giving the National (or Swiss Central Bank) a consultative role, the Commission has in fact ruled that the decision of a change of parity in the national currency is a political one, and one which does not therefore depend on an administrative body like the National Bank.

MODERN LIFE

Having attempted in vain to organise a pop concert in Neuchâtel, Engolm and Colombier, the organisers have abandoned the idea of staging a Swiss

pop festival for this year. There will, therefore, be no Isle of Wight and no Woodstock in Switzerland in the immediate future. The local authorities concerned were frightened by the prospects of vast losses and eventual violence. They were also afraid of the consequences of insufficient sanitary and medical facilities. The organisers have published a manifesto in which they consider themselves to be the victims of a selfish society.

The parish priest of Pleigne, in the Jura, has indicated in a Sunday sermon that he would refuse to give Communion to girls in mini-skirts. In his view, wearing a mini-skirt should be equated with a "mini-spirit" and a "mini-Christian". This indecent garb, he said, was an expression of the world's obsession with sex and a violation of the sense of decency sown by God in the soul of every being.

(ATS)

Another parish priest, the long-time vicar of Unteriberg in Canton Schwytz, has published an open letter violently criticising the attitude of the Catholic hierarchy towards the problem of priestly celibacy and resigned accordingly from his post, despite a special visit from the Bishop of Chur, Mgr. Johannes Vonderach. He will remain at Unteriberg and devote himself to social work.

A Swiss writer of Czech descent made the opening speech of a Moral Rearmament congress which took place at its headquarters in Caux. He said that the job of a writer was not merely to shock his readers, but to change the world. He attacked an attitude widespread among intellectuals, which consisted in disbelieving in the spiritual effect on the masses of an art which sought its inspiration from a higher level. He claimed that the world had been shaped by utopists, from Plato to Marx, and that it was meaningless realism to believe that nothing could be done by a writer to improve the present state of the world.

Over a thousand volunteers, and 200 servicemen, took part in a wide-scale cleansing operation of the shores of Lake Lugano. The Italian shores were also included in the operation, which involved a fleet of 15 lorries and 20 boats.

(ATS)

MR. SCHAFFNER'S DECISION

Mr. Hans Schaffner the prestigious former leader of the Economic Department who retired on grounds of ill health last year, has resigned from the presidency of the Board of Brown Boveri to which he had just been elected. This nomination had aroused considerable criticism — especially among Brown Boveri employees. It was felt that a public personality should not make such a use of his former standing and the procedure was

considered as undemocratic. But the Chairman of Brown Boveri, Mr. Max Schmidheiny, had laid great hopes in using the negotiating skills of Mr. Schaffner at a time when the Brown Boveri concern was expanding into a multinational affair. Although Mr. Schaffner was still recovering from a serious illness, the principal reason for his decision can be taken as a personal reaction to the criticism which was directed against him. Mr. Schaffner, who is reputed to be sensitive to criticism, has explained his stand in an open letter which was not without some bitterness. This is by no means the end of his activities in the private sector, however, and he sits on the board of four other companies.

THE SWISS HOSPITAL IN PARIS

A Swiss hospital with 96 beds has been completed at the cost of 10 million new French francs on a site jointly owned by *Société Suisse de Bienfaisance* and *La Maison de Retraite* at Issy les Moulineaux. It is mainly intended for elderly people. It has radiological and physiotherapeutic facilities as well as consulting rooms. The original appeal for the project was launched in 1947.

A LANDMARK CRIME

A fifteen-year-old flower delivery boy, who appeared to be three or more years older, was seized with the urge of clenching by the neck the pretty housekeeper of the building where his flowers had to be delivered. When she had fainted, he cut her throat with a kitchen knife, not fully realising what he was up to. He was caught the next day. The last similar murder in Geneva happened in 1940, when a 14-year-old killed a lady to plunder her. The present murderer came from a good home.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

MAKE CLAIMS

Representatives of all Federal Employees have indicated their plans to submit certain demands to the Federal Council. They want a 4 per cent pay rise due next year to be backdated to July 1st, 1970. They claim that the disparity with the private sector has made this move necessary. They also want a new package, which was originally to be implemented on 1st January, 1972, to be advanced by a year. This deal included better starting salaries, improved bonuses for overtime and irregular work, and prolonged holidays. The fourth week of annual holidays would be added as from the age of 40, and not 45. A fifth week would be enjoyed by employees over 55 years of age.

(ATS)

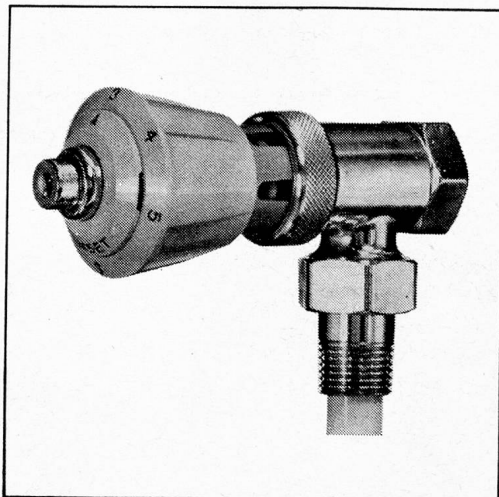
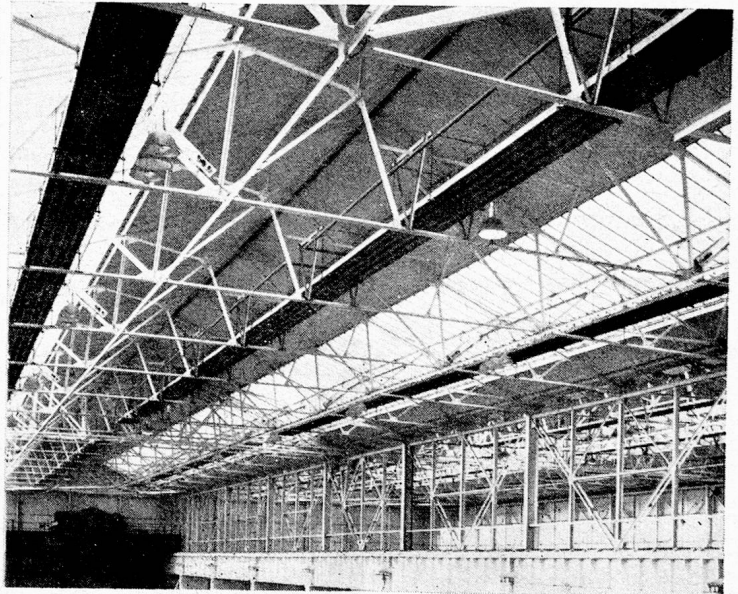
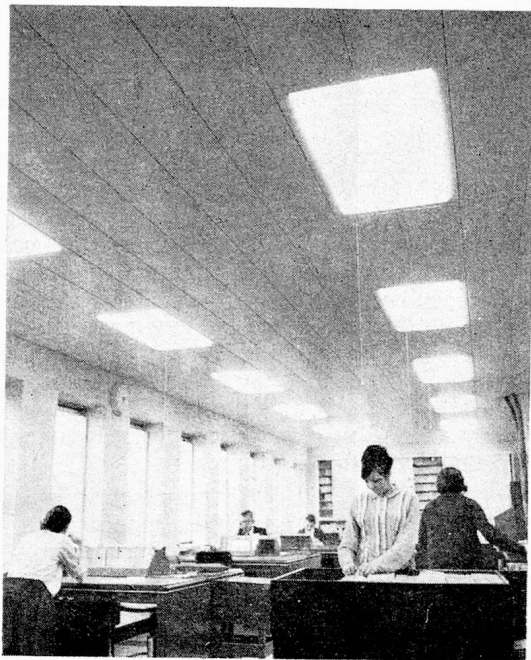
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TEMSET

"NEW LOOK" FOR SWISSAIR HOSTESSES

From 1st September, Swissair's 700 air hostesses will wear new outfits in toning shades of ocean blue, largely dispensing with the traditional "uniform" look. The new working dress is styled in a simple, elegant line, lightly flared, with a stand-out collar and a medium length hemline, which can be adjusted to suit individual appearance. It will be worn without hat, thereby also allowing scope, within limits, for a more personal coiffure.

With the dress goes a short, collarless jacket, fastened on one button, a raincoat and an overcoat with a high pleat.

A special tropical dress, made of particularly light fabric in the same colour and style, is intended for hot climates.

In summer, the hostesses wear white nylon gloves and dark blue court shoes, in winter dark blue, lined leather gloves and high white boots. As a lively accessory and in place of the hat worn up to now, the girls will have colourful silk scarves in an exclusive design. Serving meals on board the aircraft they will wear a nylon apron, matching the dress, and a name tag.

As company badges they will wear on the lapel a gilt button with the Swissair isignia. The dual finish of the button—matt background and highly polished isignia—gives it the appearance of a piece of jewellery.

In the new clothes, designed by the Zurich couturière Julia Diethelm, Swissair has stressed simplicity and durability of style, versatility for different climates, comfort and pleasing appearance.

(Swissair News Service)

When we first heard of "hostess", we felt a little twinge of regret—"stewardess" sounded special, and of course, our national pride stepped in, for the stewardess was a Swiss institution. In 1934, Swissair introduced the first stewardess on an European flight, that is when the Curtiss Condor was

put into service, and the "large" number of passengers—a whole fifteen or sixteen of them—needed looking after. I had the privilege of writing about the "Girl on the Magic Carpet" and her training in the S.O. of 14th August, 1964 when the 30th anniversary of the introduction of the stewardess was celebrated.

The other day, I came across a picture in some Swiss newspaper of the first Swiss stewardess, Miss Nelly Diener. The length of the navy blue culottes was somewhere between midi and maxi, and the jacket was double-breasted. She wore a rather masculine peaked cap well drawn over her right ear.

All kinds of hats and caps and berets have been part of the stewardess's uniform since then, and now after 36 years, no hat at all. And even so, the new outfits will cost Swissair around a million Swiss francs.

(MM)

MOUNTAIN FARMERS

The "Schweizer Berghilfe", Swiss aid to mountain communities, is a private organisation constituted like a society. It evolved from the Swiss National Conference for Social Work in 1942; a special commission for social work in mountainous districts was formed. The "Berghilfe" has as its aim the promotion of spiritual and material welfare of the mountain dwellers. It receives no state subsidies, and most of its revenue comes from a collection every January, from legacies and interests.

It may sound strange that at a time when landings on the moon are becoming almost commonplace, there should be such urgent need to assist poor communities in Switzerland, a land of affluence. Of all economic groups, the mountain farmers are by far the worst off and have to cope with very real difficulties. Nature alone already sees to it that they have no easy life—avalanches, stone falls, earth subsidence, spring floods, a very short summer and long, endless winter

months. The ground is often in small patches on steep hillsides, and the yield most modest.

The more industrialised lower parts of the country with their amenities and easier earning possibilities prove a great attraction for the young mountain farmer, even if his lot is already a little better than that of his father and grandfather. But the standard of living is still very much lower than it should be. It will never be possible to improve it to the same level as in the prosperous lowlands. But it is the aim of the "Berghilfe" as well as of other organisations, some of them cantonal and federal, to improve the life of the mountain communities. After all, two-thirds of the total area and one-third of the arable land lie in mountain regions. The mountain farmer forms an important part of Swiss life, not only because of his historic and folkloristic value.

What assistance is being given? It comprises the construction of roads and aerial cableways, water and electricity supplies, improvement of alpine pastures, communal dairies, protection ramps against avalanches, floods and stone falls, introduction of efficient modern machinery, improved stables and better housing, introduction of industries, promotion of tourism, vocational training for boys and girls and activating cultural life. Such a programme needs considerable funds. Where public money is not sufficient, the "Berghilfe" steps in. These contributions may be modest, but may make all the difference to an individual.

Perhaps next time when you are in Switzerland, you would like to remember your compatriots in the mountains and want to help them—even the smallest donation (*Schweizer Berghilfe, Zurich, Postal Cheque Account 80-32443*) will be much appreciated. If the mountain communities are not given help, their plight will be such that it will eventually lead to depopulation and to a serious loss of our alpine inheritance.

(MM)

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