

Swiss events

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could settle for the F.15 under advanced development in America but it will probably be considered far too expensive. They could buy the Mig 23 – assuming the Soviets were ready to sell it – but Swiss neutrality is not universal to that

point.

Despite the Government's agreement to look for a fighter jet, more controversy can still be expected on the combat plane issue.

P.M.B.

CHRISTMAS APPEAL

As in past years, the SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY and the SWISS CHURCHES IN LONDON are endeavouring to prepare the little extras, which most of us associate with Christmas, for those compatriots who, for reasons of age

or illness, are not able to provide them for themselves and their families.

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SWISS EVENTS

CANDIDATES TO THE FEDERAL COUNCIL NOMINATED

The successors to the three retiring federal councillors – Hans Peter Tschudi, Roger Bonvin and Nello Celio – have been designated by their respective parties. They are Mr. Arthur Schmid, a Socialist from Aarau, Mr. Enrico Franzoni, a Christian Democrat from Ticino and Mr. Henri Schmitt, a Radical Democrat from Geneva. The three men had to overcome strong opposition from other leading politicians. Thus Mr. Franzoni only scraped through in front of Mr. Leo Schurmann, the Swiss "Prices Watchdog" and three ballots were required before Mr. Schmitt could emerge ahead of Mr. Andre Chevallaz, former Mayor of Lausanne, who had been tipped as winner. Although the standing and record of the three candidates were a major consideration, it is possible that linguistic and regional factors were the determinant factor in the end. Thus it is likely that Mr. Franzoni was chosen among the Christian Democrats so as to keep a representative from Ticino at the Federal Council after the departure of Mr. Celio. Mr. Schmitt, from Geneva, probably won over Mr. Chevallaz because Geneva has not been represented at the Executive for 57 years and because Mr. Pierre Graber, though a Socialist and a Neuchatelois, had made his career in Vaud, and also been mayor of Lausanne.

The Federal Assembly, which brings together both the National Council and the Council of States was to ratify the nomination of the three men on 5th December. They will step into office on 1st January. Mr. Schmid, 45, is a former member of the State Council of Aarau, a former lawyer and a former judge. Mr. Franzoni, 53, a lawyer by profession, has had a long career in cantonal politics and has been active in several parliamentary commissions. He has been Speaker of the National Council for the past two years. Mr. Schmitt, 47, is also a lawyer by

profession but most of his career has been in local and federal politics. He has been involved in the reform of the Swiss criminal code.

DETERMINED MEASURES TO SAVE PETROL STOCKS

The Swiss authorities have reacted to the petrol crisis as drastically as any other country in Europe. Switzerland is the only country that has introduced speed limits, a ban on Sunday driving and statutory restrictions. These are only a step, depending on how the situation develops, to full rationing. The measures taken so far were gradual. On 8th November, the Federal Council called on the people to save fuel by reducing the temperature of their homes, using less hot water, controlling their heating appliances, etc. (Switzerland uses more petrol for heating than for motoring). On 14th November, it imposed a 100 kmh speed limit on all roads, and on 21st November it decreed a ban on driving during the three following Sundays and fuel supply restrictions. The ban was effective from Sunday at 3 a.m. to 3 a.m. the following night and corresponded with the German Sunday ban so as to avoid traffic hold-ups at the border.

At the time of writing, there were eight "prohibitions":

- no driving above 100 kmh
- no storing of petrol
- no Sunday motoring (certain exceptions for doctors, ministers, etc.)
- cut-down in the Army's fuel consumption
- quotas on fuel importers
- supplies to petrol stations reduced by 20 per cent
- supplies to domestic fuel dealers reduced by 25 per cent
- strong lowering of temperature in federal buildings

The Swiss people were asked to

limit the temperature of their houses to 20° by day and 17° by night.

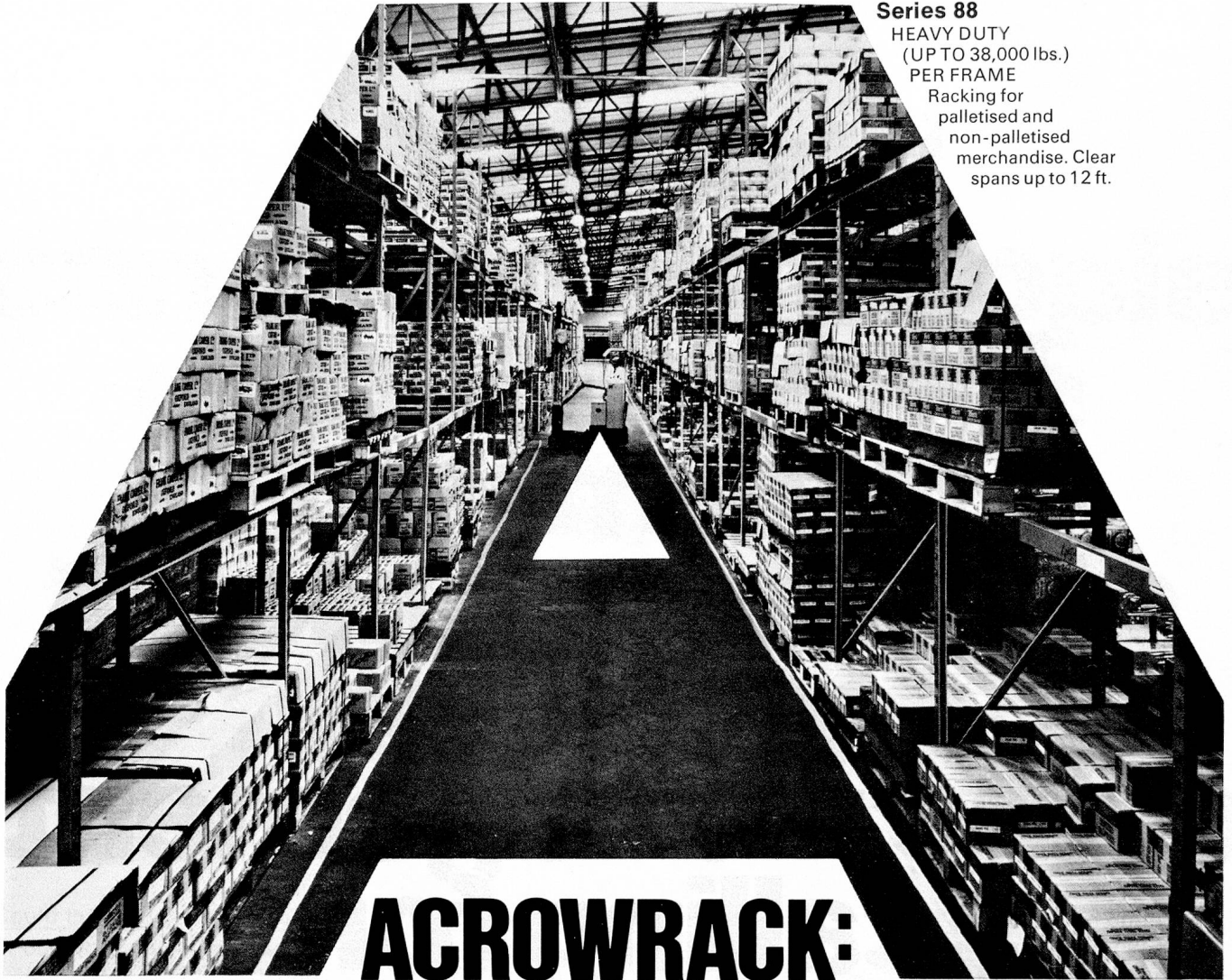
ANGRY FARMERS DEMONSTRATE FOR INCREASED AGRICULTURAL PRICES

About ten thousand farmers, two-thirds of whom appeared to come from the French-speaking parts of the country, staged a demonstration on Federal Palace Square to demand a 20 per cent increase of the price of their products. A beating rain didn't deter the demonstrators from hearing their leaders accuse the Government of not having protected their income. They carried a wide variety of banners and streamers complaining of "slavery", "exploitation from the middlemen" and "famine". One also complained of Army exercises on farmland. All these placards were piled against the closed entrance of the Federal Palace as the demonstrators dispersed without incident after an hour.

Swiss peasants feel they have been left behind in the prosperity stakes. Federal support has remained stagnant during the past three or four years. Although subsidies are expected to reach almost a billion francs this year, farmers find that rising costs and pre-emptive foreign competition have prevented them from obtaining a fair reward for their efforts.

SWISS WRITER WINS FRENCH LITERARY PRIZE

For the first time ever a Swiss has been awarded France's most coveted literary prize, the *Prix Goncourt*. The laureate was the Vaudois writer Jacques Chessex whose novel *L'orgre* earned him six out of ten votes at the fifth ballot by the Goncourt Academy. The only other Swiss ever considered as a candidate for the Goncourt was C. F. Ramuz (also a Vaudois), for his novel *Aline*. The fact that a Swiss should have been thus honoured by the French literary world shows that writers of French expression have won growing recognition across the Jura. So far, Switzerland has been known in Paris for its films, its artists, and especially its literary critics. Now, the French are becoming aware of the literary performance of a people who, although belonging to a different country, partake of a same culture. Chessex, whose picture was even in the *Evening Standard*, had already established his reputation at home by his poems and his "Confessions du Paster Burg" (1967). His work shows him vying with a sense of guilt inherited from a rigid Protestant background so as to break into the open spaces of sensual experience. In his last book, the "Ogre" is the dominating father of the Hero, Jean Chalmet, who fights throughout his life to regain his own identity and detach it from the overwhelming personality of a father whom he both adored and hated. The book is written in a tough but elegant style with the imagery and poetry which the author had already been noted for.



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(President A. Baltensweiler
in his report to the Board
on November 15, 1972.)

Baltensweiler

So what can Swissair people do but improve anything that remains to be improved?

Could the food be better cooked?

No; but more might be served, more attractively, and over a longer period. So the mealtimes on board are being extended. And in most cases the throwaway dishes are being thrown away and replaced with handsome china.

Could waiting times on check-in be further reduced?

Zurich and Geneva already have a sort of express counters. Eighty per cent of passengers in Europe are kept waiting less than three minutes for check-in. Swissair's object is to permit 90% to move through within 3 minutes; and the rest very soon thereafter.

Could luggage-handling after landing be speeded up?

Unluckily this depends more on the airports than on Swissair. Still, Swissair has reached the point where at 20 European airports you'll have your bags not more than 15 minutes after landing. And it looks very much as if the same would be true soon of other airports as well.

Could a DC-8 be made as comfortable as a jumbo jet?

Why not? Just not for so many people. Swissair DC-8s are now acquiring overhead racks for hand luggage to keep the foot-room clear. In addition, a new 33-page medical-physiological study lists ways of improving the seating.

Could changing planes be made easier?

From 20 different cities Swissair now offers check-through on flights via Zurich and Geneva to other Swissair destinations. So transfer passengers need neither go to the check-in counter nor worry about their luggage.

Could information and reservations be speeded up still further?

Swissair staff are now in the process of organizing reservation and information offices so that 90% of all phone calls will be answered within 20 seconds. If you should happen to fall among the remaining 10% that take a little longer, just one moment please.

Could even more be done for passengers after that?

Well, make sure they find a proper hotel. The Swissair PARS seat reservation system is now linked to the Citel System. So in the same operation Swissair can book rooms for its passengers at 1500 European hotels and 700 overseas.

Can anything be done to make sure all this actually gets done?

Swissair has a customer service center responsible for these improvements. Every week it conducts passenger surveys on 60 flights to all destinations. And inspectors are constantly in flight to all 79 Swissair destinations, checking on air and ground performance.



THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY ANALYSED BY THE NSH

The Nouvelle Société Helvétique has sponsored a voluminous report on the future development possibilities of Switzerland. This massive work is the result of two years of meetings by 15 study groups specialising in as many aspects of human life. 168 people, many of them in a professional capacity, have helped to compile this work. The report doesn't only touch on economic and environmental issues, but faces the problems of society, religion, information, education and daily life. This work was launched in reaction to the confusion and increasing questioning of values experienced everywhere since the troubled summer of 1968. It was an all-embracing effort at determining the options offered to the Swiss of today.

Pro Helvetia hamstrung by rising costs

In its last Annual Report, the Pro Helvetia Foundation complains that rising costs are preventing it from accomplishing all the cultural aims for which it was founded. The situation was particularly difficult at home and the Foundation feels that it has not been able to achieve all that it should have in promoting cultural and artistic exchanges. The budget of the organisation, which can be compared to the British Council in this country, is fixed by law at 5.5 million francs. 57 per cent of this sum was spent abroad last year, and the remainder in Switzerland. (The activities of Pro Helvetia abroad are of particular interest to the Swiss of Britain. We can remember at least three events at the South Bank — the Hodler-Boeklin Exhibition, the recent Swiss film festival and a performance of Heinrich Suttermeister's *Requiem* — which were made possible thanks to the help of Pro Helvetia.)

The 1972 Report shows that the Foundation has helped to finance tours by the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra and the Orchestre the Chambre de Lausanne. It has also given a hand to the Theatre de l'Atelier (Geneva), the Theater am Neumarkt (Zurich) and the Schiefe Theater (Basle). Thanks to a private legacy, Pro Helvetia can now put a house at Carona (Ticino) at the disposal of writers and composers. Seven have already availed themselves of this hospitality to find the peace and quiet they required for creation.

300,000 accidents

There are over 300,000 shop-floor accidents and cases of professional disease in Switzerland every year, it was disclosed at the constitutive assembly of a new research organisation for hygiene and industrial medicine. These figures indicate that roughly one worker in five is the victim of an accident. The great majority of these accidents are fortunately without serious consequences.

No new constituency in the Jura

The Great Council of Berne (Parliament) has rejected by an overriding majority proposals by the Third Force Party in the Jura to turn the Jura into a new constituency for elections to the State Council (Executive) of the Canton and to seat three, instead of two Jurassian delegates at this council. The Separatist delegates present at the session abstained from voting.

Post Office announces a record deficit

The Post Office is forecasting losses of 153 million francs in its 1974 Budget. This will be coupled with a reduction of deliveries announced two months ago and a cut in investments. With losses incurred during the past two financial years, the Post Office expects to be nearly 270 million francs in the red. Income for 1974 is planned to be 4,093 million francs and expenditure 4,280 million. The Post Office is plagued by labour shortages. Many of its employees are attracted to the higher wages of industry with the result that the GPO has the highest employee turnover in the country. It plans to alleviate this by introducing self-service post offices and by asking customers to displace their letter-boxes in order to minimise the postman's work.

New environmental initiative

A new initiative calling on the State to develop public footpaths in the countryside has been launched by a committee of some fifty distinguished nature lovers chaired by Dr. S. Widmer, Mayor of Zurich. If it is backed by the required 50,000 signatures and, later, by Parliament, the issue will be brought to the people and then inscribed in the Constitution. What the promoters wish is a new constitutional text entrusting the Confederation with taking the necessary legislative steps so that the country can be equipped with more and better maintained footpaths and hiking tracks. One of the main causes of concern to the Initiative Committee is the gradual transformation of existing footpaths into paved roads. The new Article would protect the dwindling preserve of the rambler.

Swiss share-holders badly informed

The Swiss association of financial analysts claim in a recent report that Swiss firms do not give adequate information to their shareholders. Two years ago, a working group set up by the association defined the minimal requirements expected of companies in respect of shareholder information. The Association regrets however that these standards have not been adopted by the great majority of Swiss companies. Having examined the results released by 24 Swiss undertakings, the Association gives the best rating to Swissair, which has satisfied 83 per cent of requirements in its latest figures, Globus (76 per cent)

and Jelmoli (74 per cent). Lowest marks go to Von Roll (20 per cent), Hoffman-la Roche (16 per cent) and Roco (11 per cent). The Analysts complain that firms still fail to publish exhaustive consolidated figures and that they do not keep up the eagerness to inform they expressed in their annual report by continuous information.

Socialist paper folds up

The French-speaking Socialist fortnightly *Le Point* has closed down after only two years of publication. Reasons put forward for this early disappearance was the lack of support from the interested political parties in promoting the paper's original goal. This was to replace the defunct *La Peuple-La Sentinelle* and preserve a distinctly French-Swiss Socialist forum. Due to this lack of support, *Le Point* never gathered enough subscribers to ensure its financial survival.

Swiss firm to keep time at next Olympics

The organisers of the 21st Olympics due to be held in 1976 at Montreal have entrusted the time-keeping at all athletic events to the Swiss grouping "Chronométrage SA", better known abroad as "Swiss-Timing". This decision will ensure that Swiss horological technology and experience will be put into operation at the world's most important sporting event. Swiss-Timing is a joint venture by the Swiss Watch Federation, Omega and Longines. A pooling of resources was considered necessary in view of the high cost of stop-watching the Olympic games — which both Omega and Longines did at the last Olympics.

Fribourg stands by religious education

The Government of Fribourg has reaffirmed its intention of making religious education compulsory for schoolchildren of 16 and under. Religious education in Catholic Fribourg has been put under fire by various demonstrations by secondary school children. Last spring, the students of the Collège Saint Michel had circulated a petition claiming that Scriptures at school were an infringement of the laws safeguarding the freedom of belief. Article 49-2 of the Federal Constitution explicitly says that religious teaching can be forced upon no one. But the State Council said that this could not be interpreted as a prohibition of Scriptures at school. The Federal and Cantonal constitutions do not consider school as neutral: its purpose is to prepare youth to become citizens, it maintained. In this respect, religion can be linked to Civic instruction and its teaching at school cannot be considered as a violation of individual freedom. The State Council also remarked that children under 16 were under the responsibility of their parents and that it was upon them to decide whether or not to dispense religious education to their offsprings.

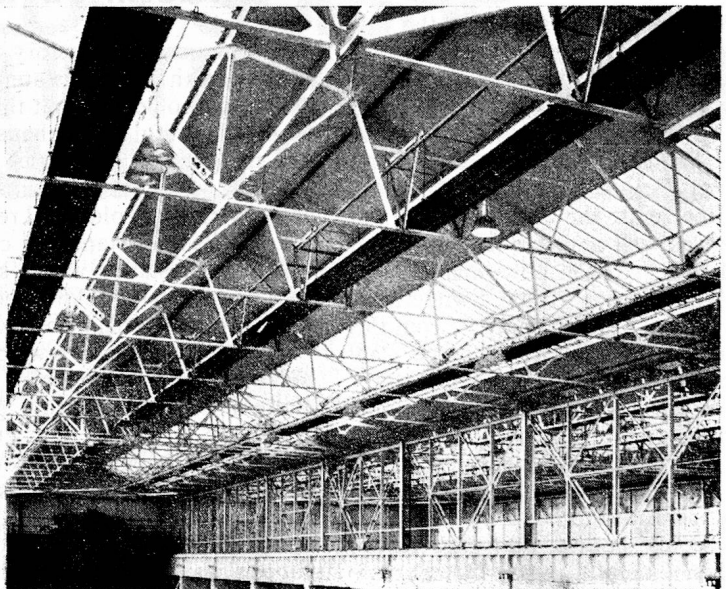
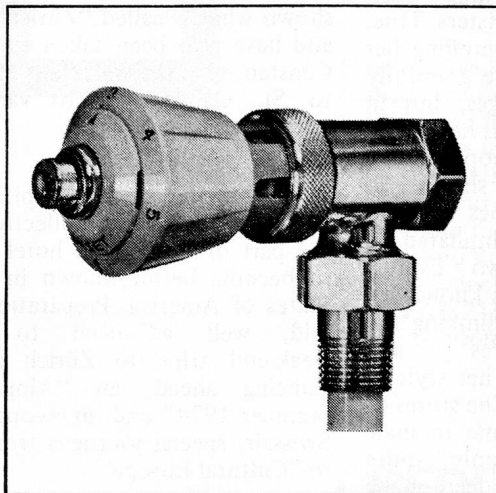
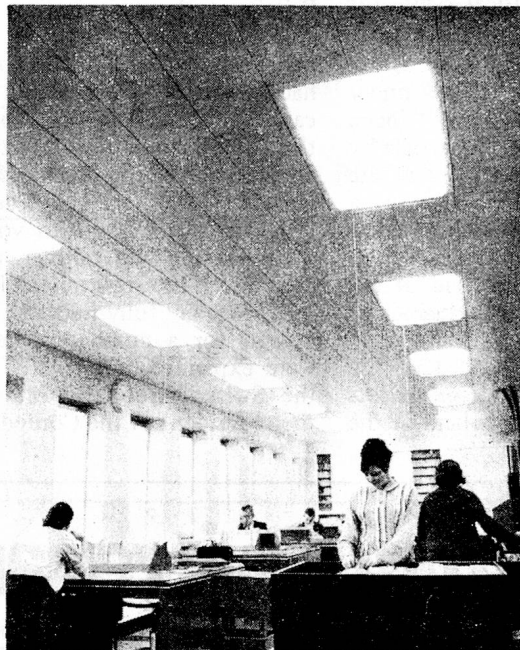
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Trade unions firmly against wage control

The Swiss TUC (Union Syndicate Suisse) has almost unanimously rejected Government proposals to maintain a certain degree of wage control within the framework of its fight against inflation. Holding a special congress to discuss four federal decrees due to be extended by the people on 3rd December, the Congress turned down by 199 votes to 22 all idea of wage control. Speakers acknowledged that wage control had so far been practised only in some limited cases with no bearing on the means of the working community. But they stressed that this could pave the way for more demanding legislation making the working class carry the brunt of the struggle against inflation.

The trade unionists gave their support to the three other decrees. These concern credit restrictions, a clamp-down on the building trade and a reduction of fiscal facilities for investments.

Current proposals on political rights for Swiss abroad attacked by a Geneva daily

Current plans for enabling the Swiss abroad to vote on federal issues under certain circumstances have been scathingly criticised in a recent article by the *Tribune de Genève*. These plans are contained in a report prepared by a special working group chaired by Minister A. Jaccard, Head of the Section concerned for the Swiss Abroad at the Political Department. The conclusions of this commission have been known to Swiss abroad for nearly a year. They are essentially to allow those compatriots who happen to be in Switzerland at the

time of a vote to go to the polls, if they so wish, and if they have registered beforehand. The report of the Jaccard group, which had been commissioned by the Government, will serve as a basis for a future debate on the subject in Parliament. According to the *Tribune de Genève*, none of these who championed more extensive political rights for Swiss abroad were admitted to the working group. In particular, a Swiss society in Paris who had asked to send an observer to some of the group's sessions met with a polite refusal. The Geneva daily claimed that the Jaccard Report was "ambiguous" and "confusing". It stressed that its "restrictive" proposals were "lacking in imagination" and amounted to the introduction of a "poll-tax" in favour of those who either had the money to journey to Switzerland or who lived near the border.

This point of view was shared by the official representatives of the Swiss of Britain at the organisation of the Swiss abroad. Those who spoke at Berne on behalf of the Swiss-British societies which had examined the problem called for a cancellation of the whole project. When the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique discussed the issue in 1971, it was generally accepted that introducing the right to vote in "Fifth Switzerland" was neither practical nor desirable. The Government is opposed to the idea of fully-fledged Swiss voters abroad for a number of reasons which were explained at the 1972 Assembly of the Swiss Abroad by Mr. Nello Celio, then President of the Confederation.

own first ascent of that "elusive peak", which she had been wanting to climb from schooldays onwards, the Matterhorn. While, naturally, the Swiss alps play a great part in this book, the story nevertheless takes one also to the French mountains, to the Dolomites, to Wales and the English Lake District — where quite some rock climbing can be done — to Turkey and the Pacific Coast of America, from New Zealand to Alaska — on and on, higher and higher, to peaks seemingly more and more inaccessible. It is a marvellous story of courage and sacrifice, of struggle and achievement, told by one who has many such achievements to her own credit, told with inside knowledge and much feeling. It is also a story which should put an end, once and for all time, to that silly saying that the female sex is the weaker one of the two. "Women on the Rope" is a book well worth buying, reading and enjoying.

"Hospitable Zürich 1973"

During the last two years a number of new hotels have been built in and around Zürich, some quite spectacular in size and with a kind of pop-art intérieur, offering 4,000 additional hotel beds. But according to official statistics the average occupation of hotel beds during the first 8 months of this year shows a retrogressive tendency, which varies between minus 4.4% and minus 17.4%. Several factors seem to have contributed to this for the hotel-keepers somewhat disquieting state of affairs: the devaluation of the American dollar, the increased competition in the international field, with countries like Spain and Yugoslavia drawing more and more tourists to their generally sunny shores.

In order to combat this tendency the Zürich Hotel Proprietors Association, the Zürich and the Swiss National Tourist Offices and Transworld Airlines have co-operated in inviting some 38 American Travel Office Agents and Tourist writers to a stay in "hospitable Zürich". They have been lodged in 10 different hotels, received by the Mayor of the town, they have been dined and wined, have been shown what is called "Zürich's nightlife" and have also been taken to the lake of Constance, to the waterfalls of the Rhine, to St. Gallen and to various other attractive places.

The operation "Hospitable Zürich 1973" was part of a collective effort on the part of the Zürich hotel proprietors to become better known in the United States of America. Preparations are, it is said, well advanced to popularise week-end trips to Zürich as well as, glancing ahead, an "Alpine Highlife Summer 1974" and, in co-operation with Swissair, special journeys from the USA to "Cultural Europe".

Several of the leading Zürich hotels

Letter from Switzerland

Women on the Rope

by Gottfried Keller

"Women on the Rope" is the title of a new book, dealing with the feminine share in mountain adventure, published by George Allen and Unwin Ltd., and written by that prolific writer Mrs. Cicely Williams. She is, as so many of her friends in the Swiss Colony know, the wife of the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Leicester, as well as a life-long friend of Switzerland. I forget how many times Cicely Williams has visited Switzerland, but it is typical of her to have written this new book in memory of the late Bernhard Biner who for more than thirty years was not only her mountain guide, but also her friend. The author, who has quite a number of eminently readable books to her credit, among them a specially charming one called "Zermatt Saga", is, of course, an experienced mountaineer herself, who, on the late Bernhard Biner's rope, has climbed most of those grandiose peaks around her beloved Zermatt.

Her most recent book has been described as one for mountaineers, for social historians and for fireside

connoisseurs of good story telling. While agreeing with all these statements, I think it should also be said that this work is the result of careful and exhausting research and study both in libraries and in hotel archives, where Mrs. Williams had to work her way through old hotel registers. True, she has had assistance in compiling her material, assistance which she gratefully and handsomely acknowledges, but in spite of this the main work was hers.

I expect that few people know today that women's share in mountaineering adventure goes back to 1808 and has — so far — culminated in female participation in two Everest expeditions. Cicely Williams's knowledge about mountains, mountain climbing and mountaineering adventures and happenings is as immense as her style in telling the tale is endearing. The stores of female climbing exploits, some in male company, and some "Ladies only", quite a few very dangerous ones indeed, make fascinating reading. The same can be said of Cicely Williams's description of her