

News from Switzerland

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Colourful Figure in South Taranaki Dies at Okaiawa. Mr. J. Freiman, well-known as drover.

A former drover, and a well-known figure in many parts of Taranaki, Mr. Josef Freiman, Okaiawa, collapsed suddenly and died while haymaking at Inaha recently.

Mr. Freiman, who was 66 years old, was assisting on the farm of an old friend, Mr. C. J. Bourke. Ahipaipa Road. The haymaking crew had just begun its operations after lunch and had swept about a quarter of an acre, but had not begun to stack when, at about 1.30 p.m., Mr. Freiman collapsed, apparently suffering from a heart attack. He was attended by Dr. A. G. Buist at the scene.

Mr. Freiman was known in practically all parts of Taranaki when he was active as a drover. A familiar figure with large, white, bushy moustache and golden earrings, "Old Joe," as he was affectionately known, drove stock from many a sale to practically everywhere in the province at one time or another.

Born at Zug, Switzerland, he arrived in New Zealand in 1913 and first went to the Pihama-Oeo district to work on farms. He returned to Switzerland in 1921 and married Miss Marie Fleuher. He returned to New Zealand with his wife and settled first at Kaponga and then at Okaiawa. Mr. Freiman lived at Okaiawa for 30 years, but when his wife died in 1950 he returned to Switzerland for a short time. Since arriving back in Taranaki he had been in semi-retirement at his home at Okaiawa, where he had a small holding he farmed.

Not a man who took an active part in local body or social life, but one who preferred to stay in the background, Mr. Freiman was always prepared to go out and give farming acquaintances a helping hand when needed.

He is survived by three daughters, Mrs. S. R. Cook (May), Okaiawa, Mrs. De Castro (Lena), Dawson Falls, and Miss Freda Freiman, Okaiawa, and two sons, Messrs. Joseph Carl and Frederick Freiman, Okaiawa.

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

The Helicopter Conquers the Alps

The snowy vastness of the Alps was until recently the exclusive domain of the airplane. And yet, only experienced pilots like the ace Geiger would dare to land on the glaciers or the mountain tops. But the helicopter, whose power and flying performance improve daily, is tending to oust it. The month of February, 1955, was marked by a series of extraordinary performances on the part of Swiss helicopter pilots. At the beginning of the month, a Hiller type machine, piloted by S. Bauer, carried 90 passen-

gers and nearly seven tons of baggage and mail between Brigue and Zermatt, making 34 landings in five days. On February 15th, the same machine took only twelve minutes to cover the distance from Brigue to the Simplon Pass, where the pilot landed with his passenger at an altitude of 6590 feet. A few days later, on February 27th, a Bell machine piloted by L. Kunz deposited two reporters from the "Progres" of Lyons at the very doors of the famous Hospice on the Grand St. Bernard Pass, at a height of 8110 feet. But all records were shattered on March 3rd and 4th by a small French machine, a Djinn, piloted by Jean Daboz, who made numerous landings with passengers on the Jungfrauoch (11,350 feet), and then went and landed on the top of the Monch (13,469 feet). After these exploits, which are only just a beginning, it is obvious that the helicopter will have a great part to play in Alpine transport.

Twenty-five Years of Occupational Therapy in Leysin

The health resort of Leysin, in the Canton of Vaud, has just paid homage to one of the personalities who contributed the most to its renown: Professor Auguste Rollier, who, 25 years ago, founded the first international clinical factory in the world. This clinical factory is a real plant, with its machine-tools placed not only in the various workshops, but also in the rooms and wards where they can be fixed to the patient's bed, a patient suffering from tuberculosis who may be forced to remain in bed for weeks and months at a time. Although the clinic has changed hands since then, the principles of the anti-tubercular therapy put into practice by the famous doctor have remained in force.

The Watch of the Future

From times immemorial, watchmaking has exercised a great attraction on inventive minds, and as a result very evident progress has been achieved during these last few years. For instance, it has proved possible to perfect springs to such a degree that they are practically unbreakable. Nevertheless, there are some seekers who aspire towards still more sensational discoveries, and their idea is to suppress the traditional mechanism in order to replace it by another method of propulsion. Two Swiss factories have already obtained remarkable results by producing small clocks which are without any manual winding-up mechanism, but revolutionary innovations are found to be much more difficult to achieve in small calibre watchmaking.

Ever since the end of the war, Swiss and foreign laboratories have been striving to insert an electrical mechanism into a watch, and

several inventors have announced successful results. In spite of such news, which might prove alarming, Swiss watchmaking circles remain optimistic. For one thing, the Swiss watchmaking industry does not stay behind, and its technicians are engaged in identical research, and, for another, experts consider that these new watches will remain for a long time to come in the position of prototypes, their mechanism being too delicate to proceed to any mass production, that is to say, to any production which might prove a dangerous competition to the manufacture of watches possessing the classical mechanism. The electronic watch of the future is not an Utopian idea, but its appearance on the market will not take place tomorrow.

Cruising-Trains Organised by the Swiss Federal Railways

In 1955, the Swiss Federal Railways are to organise four so-called cruising-trains, in collaboration with the Administration of European railways. The itineraries of these cruising-trains will enable the travellers to see Belgium, Holland, and the Rhineland in May, Paris and the South of France in June, Austria, Yugoslavia and the Dolomites in September, whilst the last of these cruising-trains will take its passengers to Italy, in the month of October.

Another Gothard Tunnel for Motorists?

One of the main problems in the construction of road tunnels has always been that of ventilation. Rail tunnels, on the other hand, particularly when the line is electrified, raise no problems of this kind. The best solution therefore is to use the railways for transporting motor cars through tunnels, once the mountain passes have been blocked by snow. This is what has been done for years now, through the Simplon (from November to May) and the Gothard (from November to June).

The railways, however, also have to keep their trains running, which are often numerous and cannot wait. Consequently there are often very annoying delays during periods of heavy road traffic, as at Easter for example. The authorities of the Canton of Uri, anxious to keep their district accessible to motor traffic all the year round, have studied various plans for road tunnels. None of them, however, was entirely satisfactory. This led therefore to the drawing up of a plan by the Swiss Railways for piercing a second gallery with a single track parallel to the existing tunnel. This second tunnel, nearly 10 miles long, would considerably increase the number of motor cars capable of being transported. It would cost much less to build than a road tunnel: there would be no ventilation problems, for the reasons given above, and the width would be less than that of

a road with two 11 ft. lanes. Shuttle services with special flat cars would be run at intervals of half an hour (and even every twenty or fifteen minutes during peak periods). The tunnel, costing approximately 45,000,000 Swiss francs to build, would be financed by the Confederation, the cantons concerned and the Swiss Federal Railways. This would enable a considerable reduction to be made in the charges for the transportation of motor cars.

1955 Geneva "Rose Weeks"

In order to remain true to tradition, Geneva has once more placed the month of June under the sign of the Rose. Among the events that will be taking place during the period from June 4th to 21st, there will be a "Concours d'Elegance Automobile," a concert by the Philadelphia Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by E. Ormandy, performances of Orpheus by Gluck, as well as other concerts and ballets in the lovely rose-gardens of Geneva which will be illuminated for the occasion.

Winegrowers' Festival, Vevey, August 1st to 14th, 1955

In addition to the actual performances at the Winegrowers' Festival, the organisers have arranged three processions which will parade through the streets of Vevey on August 1st, 7th and 14th. Stands holding some twenty thousand spectators will be put up along the whole of the route, which will be over three miles long. The picturesque and colourful processions will consist of the 4000 singers, dancers and performers taking part in the Winegrowers' Festival, accompanied by fifteen bands.

Swiss Watches and the U.S.A.

The American Department for Defence has authorised the publication of a secret report, dated April, 1954. This report belongs to the dossier which President Eisenhower used as a basis for increasing by 50 per cent., in July, 1954, Customs duties on watches and on watch movements. This report states that the industry engaged in the manufacture of jewel lever watches is not indispensable for national defence. It also points out that it is not necessary, either for the fabrication of time fuses or of other instruments, to have available detached parts which could only be made by the jewel lever watch manufacturing industry. The report concludes by saying that the American national defence does not require that the American watchmaking industry should enjoy any special preferential treatment. The publication of this report may very possibly have the effect of bringing up again the whole business of duties on watches. Plain

common sense told one not to believe seriously the protectionist arguments put forward, whereby the defence of the United States was supposed to be subordinated to the existence of three plants which were incapable of meeting foreign competition. Interested circles are awaiting with great curiosity the explanations of the Department of Finance, which made use of such a fragile argument. The Swiss watchmaking industry, however, did not allow itself to be discouraged and the figures for watch exports in February, 1955, show that the efforts made to find new markets have not proved to be in vain. Compared with the preceding month, watch exports in February, 1955, showed an increase in value of 11,000,000 francs and they almost attained the level for the corresponding month in 1954.

A Swiss Invention

Some Swiss inventors have just shown a new parachute in Berne, which is equipped with elastic cords. These cords attenuate to a remarkable degree the shock experienced when the parachute opens and when it lands.

NOTICES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our next Annual General Meeting of the S.B.S. will be held on Saturday, July 2nd, at 1 p.m., at the home of our Vice-President, Mr. W. Risi, in Ngaruawahia.

The farm of Mr. Risi is opposite the Hopuhopu Military Camp on the main highway between Huntly and Ngaruawahia.

Would anyone who is intending to come please write to the Secretary. We would like to see as many members as possible.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Would any member who has changed his/her address recently, or who does so in the future, be so kind as to notify the Secretary, so that the records may be kept up to date.

I have received two membership fees, neither with name nor address. One bears the postmark of MAREWA and the other of ELTHAM. To whom may I have the pleasure of sending the receipts?

E. GILGEN,
Hon. Secretary, S.B.S.

LETTER FROM SWITZERLAND

SWITZERLAND AND THE PROBLEM OF SOCIAL ALLOWANCES ON THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The Director-General of the International Labour Office (I.L.O.) raised an interesting problem in his recent report laid before the European Regional Conference: that of the inequality existing between the social conditions of wage-earners in different countries. Mendes-France had already referred to this problem during a meeting of the Council of Europe in September, 1954, and urged that a commission should be set up to study the possibility of arriving at an equalization of the social conditions of wage-earners in order to prevent what might be called "unfair competition."

A comparison of the social benefits, which are additional to the basic salary, reveals the existence of considerable differences in the various European countries. According to the statistics published by the I.L.O., and based on national indications, these benefits represent an additional expense for the producer amounting, in the case of Italy, to as much as 69 per cent. of the basic wages, and in the case of France 39 per cent., but for Sweden and Switzerland only 7 per cent. and 11 per cent. respectively. The repercussions on cost prices of allowances nearing or even exceeding 50 per cent. of the wages are only too clear and producers in these countries complain that they are unable to meet foreign competition and demand that protective measures should be taken.

(To be continued)

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