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NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

NEW METHOD OF GARBAGE DISPOSAL

Today it is generally agreed that the three operations involved in garbage disposal — collection, transport and destruction — should be integrated in planning. While suitable solutions have been found for collection and destruction, the same is not true of transport, especially over long distances. The answer to this problem is provided by a new system of garbage transport developed by two big Swiss firms possessing considerable experience in the rationalisation of transport. According to this method, after collection the garbage is poured into high capacity containers where it is compressed by a special hydraulic device. Transfer is effected automatically and requires no special staff, since recording and safety devices ensure that all operations are properly carried out.

For the transport of containers of up to 700 cu. ft. capacity, use is made of a tip-loader capable of lifting, unloading. The tip-loader can be mounted on the chassis of trucks or trailers. In garbage disposal, volume varies greatly from one collection to the next and, as transport has to be effected anyway, vehicles are not always used to full capacity. Thanks to its tremendous possibilities of use, the tip-loader produced by two Swiss firms offers very special advantages. A firm can in fact use this universal vehicle for transporting various building materials and machines, as well as liquids in special tanks, for removals, and for internal transport purposes, etc.

SWITZERLAND IN FIGURES 1971

The Union Bank of Switzerland's 1971 edition of its pocket statistics publication "Switzerland in Figures" contains many interesting particulars regarding the Swiss economy. According to a calculation of national income by cantons in 1970, Basle-Town comes first with Fr. 17,410 per head of population, followed by Geneva with Fr. 15,170, Zurich Fr. 13,800 and Zug with 13,380. Appenzell Inner-Rhodes is the canton with the lowest figure, i.e. Fr. 7635. In the various capitals of cantons, the taxes levied by the Confederation, the Canton and the Commune on an income of Fr. 20,000 for a married taxpayer with no children are lowest in Basle and Liestal, amounting to only 5.8% in each of these two towns. Fribourg charges the highest rate, i.e. 18.8%. Taxes on a capital of Fr. 1,000,000 are lowest in Zurich (3.4%) and highest in Glaris (12.4%). On a 10 HP car, Geneva charges on Fr. 185, while St. Gall levies Fr. 354.

LION OF LUCERNE" 150 YEARS OLD

The monument called "The Lion of Lucerne" enjoys legendary fame as one of the sights of Lucerne. It is known all over the world as a memorial of an historic event that took place in 1792. One has to envisage the Musegg Towers, the focal points of the medieval city ramparts, placed atop a chain of hills. At one spot the hillside forms a vertical rocky cliff. In front of this nature-made wall there is a pond, as clear as a mirror, with shrubs and trees around it. In this impressive setting the eye turns toward a large recess in the cliff. In it there is carved out of the rock a lion dying while defending the coat of arms of the Bourbon kings of France.

This symbolic sculpture with an inscription in Latin commemorates "Swiss fidelity and valour" with which the Swiss Guard Regiment sacrificed itself on August 10, 1792 in the defence of the Tuileries Palace in Paris against the revolutionaries' attack. Napoleon Bonaparte who as a 23-year-old Lieutenant of artillery had seen the soldiers killed on the spot later wrote in his memories that no battlefield had ever made a more terrible impression on him. On the cliff of the "Lion of Lucerne" the number is listed of those killed in the assault on the Tuileries and during the September murders in Paris following it, and the names of officers are carved in the rock. Also, one may read the number of those saved due to attentive care and the names of their officers.

The guardsmen came from various regions of the old Swiss confederacy. About six hundred of them were killed. Karl Pfyffer von Attishofen (1771-1840), a scion of an old Lucerne family, who in the unhappy years of 1792 served in the Swiss Guard as a Second Lieutenant, wrote an authentic report of the tragic event. Having reached high military rank as well as political importance in his home town, he was foremost among those instrumental in having the Lion Monument created in 1821. The model by the great Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen was reproduced in the rocky niche by Lukas Ahorn within fifteen months.

TIMEKEEPING SYSTEM OFFERED TO DUTCH SCHOOL

The new premises of the Christian Huygens Technical School, a very big educational complex for 1200 to 2000 students, was recently opened in Rotterdam. In addition to training specialists in fine engineering, metallurgy, electronics and optics, this institution also possesses a watchmaking section. At the opening ceremony, members of the Swiss watch industry presented the heads of the school with an Oscilloquartz timekeeping system (made by one of the firms affiliated to Ebauches Co. Ltd.); automatically controlled by a thermostatised quartz oscillator, this timekeeper guarantees a precision of as high as one thousandth of a second per day, and will indicate the time to over 200 secondary clocks in different parts of the buildings.

SWITZERLAND COMES UP FIRST WITH A CHAIRLIFT TURNING AROUND CURVES

The mountain resort of Schönried in the Saanen region has a world novelty in the field of chairlifts. It was developed by the firm of Bachmann in Steffisburg near Thun, and it is a chairlift able to go around curves on parallel pulling ropes. This new invention has already aroused the interest of experts. The first trials with single and double chairlifts of this type were made at Linden near Oberdiessbach in the presence of experts from the Swiss Federal Traffic Office.

The "Baco Ablenkrad" ("Baco" diverting wheel) is protected by patents in Switzerland and abroad. The biggest problem was to diminish the jerking to the side known to occur with golygon lifts. However, the polygon lifts of which only two or three have been built abroad are equipped with single chairs and run at a maximum speed of 1.6 metres (about 5 feet) per second, as one could not expose the passengers or the chairs to the considerable strain of an acceleration sideways and the jerk it causes. As the new track on the Rellerligrat is about two kilometres (about 1.25 miles) long, this meant that one should aim at reaching the maximum speed of 2 metres per second permitted by the authorities on a straight track. Maximum riding comfort was achieved due to suppression of torsion, as it is possible to pass the wheel at full speed.

At the same time, similar chairlifts to the one of Schönried, were built in Schwanden above Sigriswill, in Reutigen in the Bernese Oberland and in Saas Fee in the canton of Valais as well as in Bosco Gurin in the canton of Ticino, a settlement of German-speaking "Walsers" in an Italian-speaking canton. All these chairlifts go around curves. Thus one may make detours around forests and it is no longer necessary to blaze trails in the woods.

RECONSTRUCTION OF ZURICH'S AIRPORT

Switzerland's largest building site at present is located at the northern edge of Zurich where no less than 38 different building lots make up the third phase of the enlargement of the intercontinental airport. During a press conference, the director of the Office for Air Traffic and some of the experts on his staff led journalists, radio and TV reporters to several tremendous pits from which within the next few years will rise buildings and innovations of a total value of several hundred million Swiss francs. The high pressure construction programme includes a large underground railroad station which, in the future, will be able to handle fast international trains, also a terminal subway station, a parking garage for 2000 cars, a new airport with finger docks, two departure halls for jumbo-jet passengers and many other buildings, among them a special airport for private and sport plane traffic, situated entirely outside the main airport area.