

Risky bridge

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RISKY BRIDGE

On the road between Gruyère and Château-d'Oex in the canton of Fribourg lies the village of Montbovon. From there a side road leads to the village of Allières. Along this road you come across (if you dare) a bridge over the river Hongrin. The bridge is desperately in need of repair but the local authorities claim they lack the necessary funds to make the bridge safe again. So they erected no less than 6 different signs warning anyone wishing to cross the bridge that his would be entirely at the person's own risk as the bridge could collapse at any time. What a novel idea: Let the travellers decide from now on whether a bridge is safe to cross or not. What is a traveller to Allières supposed to do? Bring along his own civil engineer to inspect the bridge before crossing it? A bridge is either safe or it should be closed completely.

Needless to say that the inhabitants of Allières are most unhappy about the situation. Tourist business has almost dried up and local transport firms are refusing to deliver anything to Allières as they do not want to see their trucks finishing up at the bottom of the river. So despite the road that connects it to Montbovon, Allières is virtually cut off from the rest of the world.

ENDANGERED FISH

Did you know that 47 different species of fish live in the lakes and rivers of Switzerland? Well, 35 species out of these 47 are now on the endangered list and risk to disappear for ever. Pollution, excess phosphate draining into the rivers and lakes and hydro-electric dams are killing them or robbing them of their natural habitat. Very soon, it will be hardly worth it dangling a fishing line into any Swiss lakes or rivers, unless you are fishing for old boots....

The sign reads: "Restriction on the Hongrin bridge. Risk of bridge collapse". Talking about a traveller's dilemma and nightmare. Take a tip from your experienced Travel Agent: if you visit Switzerland this year, give Allières a miss, you might never get there or if you do, you might remain stuck there for the rest of your life....

SBB-CFF MISCALCULATION

During last July and August, the SBB-CFF offered as a special incentive a new "Sundaypass" which allowed unlimited free travel but on regional trains only. The management expected to sell around 800,000 passes, but eventually only 168,000 passes were purchased. The restrictive nature of the passes which did not allow travel on the Inter City trains was given as the main reason for this lack of interest on the part of the travellers. But another reason advanced by the consumers was that "Sundaypasses" could not be purchased through the automatic vending machines nor could they be bought at the ticket counters because most of these are now closed on Sundays in order to economise on staff salaries. Sunday passes that cannot be purchased on Sundays!!! No wonder this special offer flopped.

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As a publicity stunt, a tie designer, Michel Jordi, hung this huge 20m long tie over the facade of the Savoy Hotel at the Paradeplatz in Zurich. Hotel guests with rooms opening up onto the back of this monster tie must have had a dim view of this publicity gimmick.

