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GENERAL GUISAN

As part of the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, a film has been produced on the life of one of Switzerland's most respected citizens: General Henri Guisan. The film is entitled "Le Général Guisan, un homme, un destin" (General Guisan, a man, a destiny). Filming started already in 1993 and it is hoped that all work on the film will be finished in time for its première in June which will take place at the "Théâtre du Jorat" in Mézières, General Guisan's birthplace.

General Guisan during an inspection of his troupes.



SWISS TOURISM

The strong Swiss franc is not only keeping foreigners away from Switzerland, but luring an increasing number of Swiss on low-priced holidays abroad. From Malaysia and Morocco to China and the Channel Islands, there are few countries not recording a rise in Swiss visitors.

In Swiss franc terms, some air fares to the US are lower now than they were in the 1970's. On a per capita basis, Switzerland sends more tourists to the US than any other European country.

Switzerland's hotel industry claims that three establishments are closing down every week, and some car rental companies are fighting for survival. The trend is causing concern in a country where tourism is the third biggest earner

of foreign revenue (after the machinery and chemical sectors) and where nearly 10 percent of the workforce is dependent, directly or indirectly on tourism.

In a hard-hitting speech to tourism industry leaders, the President of the Swiss National Tourist Office blamed the current state of the sector on regional rivalry within Switzerland, inadequate co-ordination and squandered resources. He also criticised Switzerland's lack of service-orientated and innovative spirit.

Another problem facing the tourism industry is the imposition of a 6.5% value-added tax in Switzerland since January 1. Hotels are planning to increase their charges by 7%, but this would still not cover inflation, increased operating costs or the considerable sums spent on repairs and renovations. In some Swiss hotels visitors can expect to pay up to 10% more in 1995.

Travel costs within Switzerland are also increasing from this year, with most public transport services raising their fares. And the annual motorway fee for private motor vehicles - although still modest compared with some other countries - is costing 33% more. Motorists now have to pay SFR40.- even if they cross into the country only once for a Sunday spin.

SWISS RADIO INTERNATIONAL

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SINKING FEELING

Despite the recovery of the economy in Switzerland, there is a distinct sinking feeling in Le Locle (NE).

Since 1988, large holes have opened up all over the city, in streets, public parks and under houses. Millions of years ago, the area, where Le Locle stands now, was a lake and with the gradual disappearance of the underground water, the surface is starting to crumble. If this action continues, Le Locle will soon rival the leaning tower of Pisa.