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NEWS AT RANDOM

Uranium deposits believed to total 1,000 tons have been discovered in the pre-Alpine sandstone mountains of the Canton of Berne. The discovery was made by Professor Hermann Vogel, the Basel geologist, who has been surveying the Swiss Alps for a number of years. He described his uranium find as the most important such deposit in Switzerland. But mining the uranium will involve heavy boring and transport expenses.

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Mr. Leopold Boissier, president of the international committee of the Red Cross, has addressed a strong letter to UN general secretary, U Thant, requiring a full enquiry into the tragic death of our compatriot, Georges Olivet, and his companions, who were murdered near Elisabethville while travelling in a van bearing the distinctive colours of the Red Cross. It is generally believed that they were shot by "Blue helmets" of UN.

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Switzerland was again last year one of the few European countries — including West Germany, Sweden and Italy — which increased their industrial exports by a margin of 10-15 per cent; she previously achieved this distinction in 1960.

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The new South African Ambassador to Berne, Mr. C. H. Taljaard, was a participant for the first time at the general assembly of the Swiss-South Africa Association in Zurich last month. On this occasion Mr. Taljaard delivered an interesting speech about the social and economic situation in his country. He underlined the extraordinary development of South Africa since the war and explained the necessity and the benefits of apartheid.

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The Swiss Ice Hockey Federation have sacked the man they previously appointed as coach of the national team, because he is a card-carrying Communist. The sacking has caused an outcry in the Swiss sports world and again opened a rift between French and German Switzerland. It is unfortunately true that the French part of Switzerland is being easily influenced by Soviet propaganda. However, resentment which built up during the visit last year of the Russian violinist, David Oistrakh, who played in French-speaking Switzerland but was banned in Zurich, flared up again.

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The Swiss chocolate industries use over 10 million gallons of fresh milk annually. The Swiss consumption of chocolate amounts to over 85 million pounds for a population of 5.4 million, which gives an approximate figure of 16 pounds per head.

State Councillor Samuel Brawand has informed the Bernese section of the Socialist Party that he will not seek re-election when his mandate comes to an end in April.

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The Swiss Army has decided to equip with safety belts all new automobiles for use by army personnel and members of the army administration. After experimenting with the belts for several years, the army has decided that they should be worn by all passengers, including those occupying rear seats.

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A well-known Swiss clergyman, Mr. Pierre Vittoz, and his family, will be compelled to leave India; the Indian authorities have, without giving any reason, refused to renew their visa. Mr. Vittoz is the author of the popular book, "Another Himalaya". Some years ago, in company with the late French alpinist, Claude Kogan, he was the first to make a successful climb of the Nun-Kun mountain in the Everest range. Mr. Vittoz, who has also lived as a missionary in Tibet, was working in India on a revised version of the Tibetan Bible.

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Switzerland spends more on advertising per head of the population than any other European country. Switzerland's expenditure on advertising within the country, which exceeds S.Fr. 100.— per inhabitant, represents about 2.2 per cent of the gross national income. This proportion is much higher than in other European countries — including those with economic structures comparable to that of Switzerland. The very high figures are explained by the fact that several languages are spoken in the country, and consequently local papers and periodicals are quite numerous, with the result that it is not possible to concentrate a nation-wide advertising campaign into a small number of publications.

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In Fleurier (Neuchâtel), they are preparing to celebrate a double anniversary in October: the centenary of their secondary school and the bicentenary of the arrival of J. J. Rousseau in Motiers.

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National Councillor Munz, of Zurich, has asked the Federal Council to take the necessary measures to enforce respect of the 60 kms/h. speed limit in cities.

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Police at Winterthur are drawing up a list of charges against an American who has been travelling in German Switzerland forging a name stamp on 50- and 100-dollar bank cheques on a portable printing press. The man, Seattle-born Frederic Knapp, forged an "official" name stamp on cheques made out to himself, then endorsed them and received change for goods bought in cash, according to Winterthur police. After defrauding shopkeepers in Winterthur and Zurich of clothes, jewellery and cameras, Knapp moved on to St. Gall. It was there that a sharp-eyed bank clerk spotted a discrepancy in the stamped cheques — and called the police.

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Last year the lost property office in Geneva found on the roads, in trams and shops 19,224 items of lost property. And only 9,735 of them have been reclaimed by their owners.

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The population of the city of Zurich was 439,633 at the end of 1961 — 2,335 more than the previous year.

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Plain-clothes policemen in Berne are soon going to spy on the public to see that traffic rules are observed. The plain-clothes men will patrol the city streets in police cars linked by radio-telephone with a mobile, uniformed patrol, and will report lawbreaking motorists and pedestrians to the latter.

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Mr. Jean Martin, former editor-in-chief of the *Journal de Genève*, has died at the age of 82. He was famous for his fights in favour of the independence of small countries.

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In Saint-Aubin (Neuchâtel), Mr. and Mrs. Charles Burgat-Maccabez, aged 96 and 97 respectively, have just celebrated the 74th anniversary of their wedding.

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At the end of December the canton of Geneva had only forty people unemployed — one in every 3,000 wage-earners.

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Vevey, on the Geneva lake, has now 17,488 inhabitants — an increase of 1,360 on the previous year.

(Most of the above items were received from the A.T.S. News Service.)

MORT D'UN JOURNAL

Une récente dépêche de l'Agence télégraphique suisse nous apprend la disparition du "Journal suisse d'Egypte et du Proche-Orient", qui paraissait à Alexandrie depuis 1927.

Fondé par le professeur J. R. Fiechter sous le nom de "Bulletin Suisse", cet organe s'imposa rapidement pour devenir l'un des plus importants journaux suisses publiés à l'étranger. Mais le départ d'Egypte de M. Maurice Fiechter, ingénieur, son animateur actuel, a automatiquement entraîné la perte de cette publication très estimée.

L'information de l'A.T.S. déclare judicieusement: "Une telle disparition sera ressentie avec regret par les Suisses d'Egypte, car elle sonne le glas d'une période heureuse et prospère qui permit à notre pays de jouer, sur les rives du Nil, un rôle dont l'importance n'était pas proportionnée au nombre de ses représentants."

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Nous avons eu la curiosité de demander au Secrétariat des Suisses à l'Étranger, à Berne, une liste des périodiques suisses publiés à travers le monde. Et cette liste, ma foi, est éloquentte, elle montre que nos compatriotes fixés sur des terres lointaines ont encore quelques solides journaux bien à eux.

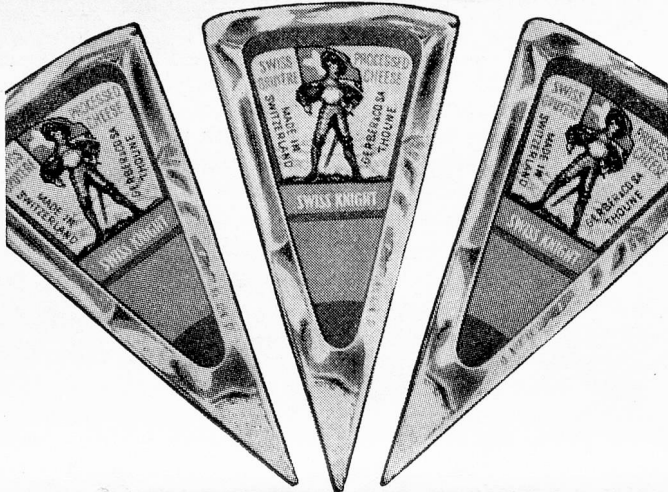
En Argentine, par exemple, paraissent l'"Helvetia", organe de la fédération des Associations suisses, et "La Cronaca Ticinese". Nos amis du Canada ont le "Swiss Quebec Journal", que dirige M. Barbey à Montréal. Aux Etats-Unis sont publiés trois journaux helvétiques, l'"Amerikanische Schweizer Zeitung", créé il y a quatre-vingt-quatorze ans, et qu'anime notre excellent et dévoué confrère Franz X. Amrein, le "Swiss Journal" de San Francisco, et le "Swiss-American" qui, bien que paraissant à New York, dessert surtout l'Ohio et le Middle West.

Quant aux Suisses de Colombie, ils ont le "Cuadernos Suizos de Colombia", et ceux de France un "Messenger suisse de France" dirigé de main de maître par Mme Silvagni-Schenk.

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Et nous, nous avons, eh! bien, le journal que vous êtes en train de lire maintenant. Le "Journal Suisse d'Egypte et du Proche-Orient" complétait heureusement cette liste. Sa disparition est regrettable. Mais les survivants montrent que même en cette époque d'intensification des voyages et des contacts internationaux, la nécessité, pour les Suisses de l'étranger, de disposer de leur propre presse demeure fondamentale.

P. H.



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