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SWITZERLAND'S SKIERS TRAIN FOR THE OLYMPIC GAMES

KARL ERB

This winter's ski-ing season must be viewed in the light of the Olympic Winter Games to be held in Innsbruck (Austria) in 1964. Performance in the various races will decide upon the candidate's nomination for the Olympic team. At the end of the season, the Swiss Ski Association will have to make its choice and decide who is good enough to represent our country at the Olympics. The skiers selected will then be given a special and final training which should enable them to stand their own among the international elite.

The governing body of the Swiss Ski Association has again undergone important changes. Chairman Roger Bonvin has resigned due to the fact of his being elected a member of the Federal Council. The technical committee, too, has been modified following the resignation of Dr. Jürg Frei. Since it was felt that the job demanded too much of a honorary chairman, he has not been replaced and Hans Brunner, Hans Fuchs and Heini Klotz now share in the responsibility of looking after our national teams. In principle, they have agreed to give the young an even better chance. Several juniors, boys and girls, have been given the opportunity to train and compete with skiers of international experience. Everyone of these talented youngsters holds a promise. The future will show whether and to what extent this new generation will find the ropes on the international scene. Furthermore, Georges Schneider has been newly appointed as trainer for the men. Schneider who was slalom world champion in 1950 and at the Swiss championships last year was second only to Adolf Mathis, has taken up his new job with great enthusiasm and vigour. His vast experience will surely benefit his pals and trainees, particularly where international races are concerned. He as well as the other functionaries have done their best to induce their protégés to lead the more simple life of a real sportsman. This should increase resistance of the individual and of the team as a whole.

[S.N.T.O.]

RETREAT BY SWISS GLACIERS SLOWED

Dating studies of vegetation

The general retreat by the glaciers of Switzerland is continuing, if at a slightly slower rate, with some local, and perhaps momentary, advances. This is the conclusion of the report by the Swiss federal commission on the study of glaciers, for the period 1960-61. Heavy snowfalls were recorded, a maximum of 20ft. 4in. being recorded at the Jungfraufirn beacon, at about 11,000ft. the deepest for the past 20 years.

Some interesting tests were made on the Aletsch glacier to find the age of tree trunks and remains of bushes revealed by the retreating ice. It was found that these growths had "died" about the year 1200, at a time when the glacier was even smaller than now. The last important advance of the Aletsch glacier dates from 1850 and it looks as if since 1200 no retreat has been greater than the present one.

Of 99 glaciers regularly checked 93 were surveyed during the year, and the average decrease in length was found to be 24ft. It was further established that while three glaciers were at a standstill, 72 were retreating, a proportion of 84 per cent. Ten were advancing and in eight cases whether the glaciers were retreating or not could not be determined.

Smaller Reduction

The main receding glaciers were:—

Rhone basin: Great Aletsch (-111ft.), Gorner (-78ft.), Zmutt (-129ft.), Findelen (-60ft.), Zinal (-96ft.);
Aar basin: Gauli (-66ft.), Unter Grindelwald (-33ft.);
Reuss basin: Hufi (-435ft. in three years).

Rhine basin: Porchabella (-129ft.); *Inn basin*: Morteratsch (-99ft.), Roseg (-114ft.); *Adda basin*: Palü (-111ft.).

Those which advanced were:—

Rhone basin: Mutt (15ft.), Allalin (123ft.), Tälliboden (15ft.), Fee (99ft.), Bella Tola (36ft.); *Aar basin*: Ober Grindelwald (48ft.), Rosenlauri (27ft.).

Reuss basin: Rotfirn (24ft.), St. Anna (62ft.); *Ticino Basin*: Bresciano (12ft.).

Measurements showed that the reduction in the mass of ice was smaller than during the previous year, indicating that the general retreating movement is slowing down.

(By courtesy, "The Times" 9th October 1962.)

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