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SWITZERLAND AND AIR TRAFFIC

Flying today is no longer the adventure it used to be in the days of the first operational aeroplanes. At the Swiss Museum of Transport in Lucerne, pictures and documentation from the early and historic period of Swiss aviation are exhibited. On 10th February 1910, an appeal was made for share capital — it said:

“Citizens! The great moment has come to secure for our city Lucerne the first aviation station of Switzerland”. In connection with the German Aviation (Zeppelin) Company, the “Aero Luzern” was the first commercial aviation enterprise in the world. From 1910 till 1913 it carried with its own airships and aeroplanes on numerous circuit flights some 827 passengers without any accident. However, the low financial income from these flights was the reason why this service had to be ended in 1914, before the outbreak of the First World War.

Another anniversary recently celebrated is the first flight in Switzerland. On 10th May 1910, at Avenches (Vaud), Ernest Failloubaz achieved the first flight in Switzerland in a plane constructed by René Grandjean. A bronze plaque, a present from the International Federation of Aviation Pioneers, was unveiled at Avenches last month, commemorating this flight.

On 4th June, the former chief pilot of the Swiss Air Force, Alfred Comte, celebrated his 70th birthday. He was, and still is, known as “Le Chevalier de l’Air”. He trained sixty-three pupils as military pilots during the first world war. At the end of his active service, he founded, together with Walter Mittelholzer, a civil aviation company which had a hangar and workshop near the Mattenhof at Schwamendingen. He was the best acrobatic airman at the time, the first night flyer, and he accomplished the first flight from Zurich to London.

Since those days, flying has become almost commonplace. According to the Register of Aircraft, at the end of 1964 there were 1,021 licenced aircraft in Switzerland as opposed to 957 at the end of 1963. This figure can be broken down as follows: 694 engine-driven planes (+46), 300 gliders (+12), 15 helicopters (+4) and 12 non-captive balloons (+2). 41 of the planes (+5) weighed over 10 tons, 32 of these belonging to Swissair, while twin-engine planes numbered 74 and single-engine planes 579.

At the end of 1964, a total of 45 Swiss undertakings were permitted to carry out flights for profit. Of these, 32 were allowed to fly abroad. The number of new pilot licences has increased considerably. In 1964, 449 were issued (398 in 1963). Gliders stood at 207 (174). In the Swiss School of Aviation, 9 aviation advisers and 16 candidates as professional pilots finished their basic training, and 26 (16 in 1963) were still in training at the end of the year. In spite of this, there is a shortage of pilots, also for helicopters.

During last year, the flight control centres of Zurich and Geneva airports registered a total of 405,600 flight movements. Of these, 368,800 were controlled by radio-telephone. In addition, 13.3 million telegram messages were sent and received.

In 1964, Swissair planes covered over 27 million miles compared with 25 million the previous year, on routes totalling 80,695 miles, calling at 59 towns in 41 countries. In 1964 Swissair transported 1,941,088 passengers as opposed to 1,801,599 in 1963. The number of passengers flown across the North Atlantic by Swissair last year amounted to 136,845.

Recently, Swissair have re-opened a daily service between Berne, Zurich and Geneva. It will be operated by

Balair on behalf of Swissair, using a Swissair-owned Fokker F.27 “Friendship” turbo-prop aircraft.

Another new service has been started by Swissair between Zurich and Budapest; with Caravelles like to the other Eastern European countries (Prague, Warsaw, Zagreb and Belgrade).

In 1964, total revenue of this non-subsidised private enterprise Company climbed to 566 million Swiss Francs — U.K.£46,355,446 (1963 509 million Swiss Francs — U.K.£41,687,141). Total operating costs came to 476 million Francs — U.K.£38,984,438 (1963 437 million Francs — U.K.£35,790,335). The net profit for the year is 14,862,000 Francs — U.K.£1,217,199 (1963 9,647,110 Francs — U.K.£790,099).

On 1st April Swissair substantially stepped up the capacity of its all-cargo flights London-Zurich-Basle by introducing DC-4 aircraft in place of Convair Metro-politans which had operated the service previously. Between that date and 30th June, the DC-4 freighter, chartered by Swissair from Balair for this purpose, carried a total of about 450,000 kilos of freight in both directions between the U.K. and Switzerland.

On 30th June the aircraft transported a particularly valuable consignment from Basle to London, consisting of thirty-eight parcels of pharmaceuticals, weighing nearly two tons and worth 7 million Swiss francs (£583,000).

The DC-4 freighter operates three times weekly in each direction, leaving London early on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, and Basle on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evening.

Including passenger services, Swissair carried 901,000 kilos of freight from London to Switzerland and beyond in the first six months of this year, a 45 per cent increase over the same period last year.

Other Swiss companies carried a total of 262,023 passengers in 1964 including 90,601 by Balair and 125,518 by Globe Air. Foreign undertakings flew 91,432 passengers, bringing the total up to over 350,000 passengers, an increase of 40% over 1963.

At the same time, traffic via Zurich-Kloten airport increased, and the number of passengers, which had amounted to 1,946,290 in 1963, topped the 2-million mark in 1964 for the first time with a total of 2,102,119. Consequently the increase in the number of passengers from one year to the next amounted to 8%, while goods traffic increased by 10.9% and postal traffic by 7.8%. The number of passengers transported daily averaged 5,759, the greatest number, 9,085, being recorded on 20th September.

The number of passengers using Geneva airport was 1,129,441 (+11%) and Basle 25,930 (+16%).

For the first time, the Basle airport worked without a deficit in 1964. Balair has increased its share capital by one million francs. The Basle Grand Council voted a subsidy to the Balair flying school, to be paid annually for the next few years.

On 20th June, a jet plane of the English Rolls Royce company landed for the first time in Basle, a huge aircraft carrying 147 passengers and a crew of nine.

The airfield of Grenchen was at the top of all Swiss sports and training fields in 1964.

In the parliamentary spring session, the Federal Council asked Parliament for another grant of 23,135 million francs for the third stage in the extension of Kloten Airport, after a total of 129,403 million francs had been passed last year and early in 1965.

The automated runway (length 3,200 metres) at Kloten has been overhauled after an exceptionally long and remarkable period of eighteen years. This means that

39,000 metres of grooves in the concrete surface have had to be filled. In order to get the job completed with the least possible delay, all three firms which execute this kind of work in Switzerland were engaged, and fifty men with fully motorised machinery were at work. The operation was complicated by the fact that the runway would have had to be used in an emergency.

A new safety measure has been put into service at Zurich-Kloten international airport to be used when the landing gear of planes coming in to land jams. It consists of a group of tractor-drawn vehicles spreading a carpet of foam $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. deep on the runway over an area 763 yards long by 33 yards wide in 28 minutes. The foam greatly reduces the danger of fire breaking out as a result of the heating and sparks caused by the friction of the plane's body on the concrete runway.

As part of its progressive rationalisation measures, Swissair has ordered large Real Time Data Processing equipment consisting of two IBM systems 360/40, several input and output units and communications equipment. The equipment will be installed in 1966 in Swissair's new Head Office at Zurich Airport. Post Office lines will connect it with decentralised Agent Sets. Standardised questions can be fed in at any time, producing immediate replies. The dual system is to ensure continuous operation.

The computing equipment will be introduced in two stages: First, from 1967 it will be used for passenger handling and load calculations at the airports of Zurich, Geneva and Basle, and to control telex traffic for Swissair's telex centre at Zurich.

In the second stage, from 1969, the equipment will be expanded into an electronic seat reservation system.

Air traffic noise is a perpetual topic of argument, also in Switzerland, and not only concerning supersonic bangs. That noise is not only a matter of unpleasantness is proved by reports that the population of Rümlang, the worst affected Commune in the Kloten airport region, is suffering from certain neurotic tendencies due to aircraft noise. Teachers have noticed a marked decrease in the power of concentration in their pupils. The two most obvious solutions are at the moment impracticable. An uninhabited belt around an airport is obviously a difficult thing to create in a country as densely populated as Switzerland, and sound absorbers on the aircraft have an adverse influence on the flying economics of a plane.

Swissair has perfected new methods of take-off, which reduce noise, and even stricter regulations to pilots came into force last September. Special studies have shown that noise in inhabited zones can be reduced by aircraft taking off at certain angles and in certain parts of the airfields. Four stations are being constructed at Kloten, Rümlang, Oberglatt and Glattbrugg, capable of measuring aircraft noise. This should lead to new methods of reducing it further.

In accordance with its importance, the Zurich Airport will be joined to the network of national roads by a special motorway starting at the "Aubrugg" junction point on the Zurich-Winterthur motorway. This motorway will be taken round the Butzenbüel hill as a great loopway with direct access to the flight service centre.

To handle local traffic, including bus traffic and internal operational traffic in the opposite direction to the motorway flow a two-way road is planned. This is to be curved away from the airport parallel to the motorway track round the Butzenbüel hill. It will be provided with junction points for Glattbrugg and Rümlang on the one hand and Kloten on the other. The two-way road and

the motorway are mutually connected by a number of direction reversal feeders.

A separate local road provides the connection to the flight service building and access to the apron for e.g. tanker traffic coming from the fuel depot at Taubenried, and this also serves the area between the workshops area and the flight operations building. The mail and freight building also has its own road. The actual junction of the main airport service building with the motorway takes place on two levels with a departures approach on the upper storey and an arrivals dispersal road at ground level. A return loop not affecting the motorway track is planned for internal traffic between upper and lower level.

The areas lying between the individual road routes of the system as a whole will to a large extent be turned into parking zones for cars. A total of about 3,400 parking lots will result. Special footpaths and cycle tracks will be provided for pedestrians and cyclists. The main building will be attainable intersection-free from all points. To this purpose there will be a centrally-located pedestrian subway running under the two-way road, the motorway track and the approach feeders, and the bus stops will also serve this.

Provision has also been made for the possibility that a high-speed rail connection might in future be installed as connector between the airport and the city centre. This rail connection would be brought axially into the main building as an underground line at lower storey level. The station hall would be sited directly under the roadways. That part of the terminal station lying beneath the approach and distribution roads of the airport building is to be built with first stage and turned provisionally into a garage.

(News received from A.T.S., Swissair, O.S.E.C., S.N.T.O. and "Zürich".)

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