

# Technical items

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Zofingen, the romantic town in the canton of Aargau which has given its name to an ancient honorable students' fraternity, will next August be host to the convention of Swiss Living Abroad.

\* \* \*

The Chamber Music Orchestra of Radio Saar with Antonio Janigro as its conductor and Karlheinz Zöllner as flute soloist will play in Zurich on March 2 and then continue a concert tour through Lucerne, Berne, Geneva and Basle on the days immediately following.

\* \* \*

In Berne the Zagreb String Quartet will play on March 2 and 3. In Western Switzerland the concerts of the Quartetto Italiano on February 12, in Lausanne, and on February 13 in Geneva, had great success. The Zagreb Quartet may also be heard in Geneva on March 1.

\* \* \*

The canton of Ticino is very music-minded. The Silzer Quartet from Berlin played in Locarno on February 13. On March 10 there follows a concert of the Mozarteum Quartet of Salzburg. Lugano offers on March 4 a concert of the Zagreb String Quartet.

#### Exhibitions and Fairs in Switzerland in 1970

Of the 40 or so events announced for 1970, let us call attention to the following fairs and exhibitions of international interest, to be held during the first half of the year:

- 11—21.4, Basle, Swiss Industries Fair;
- 18—21.1, Lausanne, SPISO, Exhibition of Souvenirs, Toys and Summer Goods;
- 31.1—8.2, Geneva, International Motor Show — Utility vehicles and mechanical handling equipment;
- 7—15.2, Lausanne, International Salon of Tourism and Sport;
- 21.2—1.3, Zurich, Boat Show;
- 3—7.3, Basle, SWISSPACK 70, International Packaging Salon;
- 12—22.3, Geneva, International Motor Show — Private cars and special bodywork;
- 25.4—5.5, Berne, BEA, Exhibition of Trade, Agriculture and Industry;
- 2—10.5, Lucerne, IBA, International Exhibition of Nautical Equipment;
- 21—28.5, Montreux, International Symposium and Technical Exhibition of Television;
- 28.5—1.6, Basle, DIDACTA 70, 10th World Fair for Educational Equipment;
- 28.5—7.6, Geneva, European Biennial of leisure.

#### 4th Congress of the International Women's Press

Swiss tourist organisations and the textile and embroidery industries, as well as various private organisations will be hosts to members of the International Association of Journalists for the Women's Press, at the 4th Congress

to be held in Lausanne and St. Gall, from February 20th to 24th, 1970. Two hundred journalists from 22 countries, specialising in the most varied fields—reporting, fashion, tourism, town-planning, architecture, the arts, culture, politics, health, economics, social questions, gastronomy, household arts, interior decoration, education—will be meeting in Switzerland to take part in various work sessions devoted to information in the women's press.

(by courtesy of the Swiss National Tourist Office.)

## TECHNICAL ITEMS

### For training all the year round, the mechanical ski-trainer

One may well be an expert on textiles and a keen skier at the same time. There is nothing contradictory in that. One may also—if one is a textile engineer to boot—produce new textile machinery. But from here to inventing a mechanical ski-trainer is a gigantic step . . . brilliantly taken by a Swiss inventor, textile engineer and manufacturer in the canton of Berne. This new machine makes it possible to simulate training at speeds of 0 to 75 m.p.h. Crouching down on two "skis", the skier feels the same effects and is submitted to the same stresses and strains as in a real downhill run. If he is a champion, he can even step the speed up to as much as 75 m.p.h. But the ski-trainer is not reserved only for ski champions. The holiday skier, the mountain climber, anyone who practices a sport in which the strength of his legs is of prime importance, those recovering from accidents who wish to strengthen the muscles of their lower limbs, all can take advantage of this invention—without any risk at all, the speed being easily adjustable to the ability of each. Members of the Swiss national ski team, who used it regularly for their autumn training, are enthusiastic about it. Another expert in the matter, the trainer of the Austrian national team, has even said "it is the first time there has been a ski-training device that is both so simple and so ingenious".

### Space techniques in the service of the Swiss ski CZ

For many years now, the firm of Contraves Co. Ltd. in Zurich, has been carrying out research and perfecting new methods and new materials capable of satisfying the exacting requirements of highly specialised techniques or top performances. Its research workers have thus, among other things, perfected a stratified micro-cellular material, based on certain principles used in the construction of spacecraft. Now it seems that the specific advantages of this new material are far superior to all those offered by the mater-

ials previously used in the manufacture of the cores of skis. This has led to the manufacture of a completely new ski, known as CZ, which will begin to be seen on the snow towards the end of 1970. The biggest Swiss ski manufacturer, Olin-Authier, has made a few prototypes which — after exhaustive tests in the laboratory—have been tried out on the snow at Crans-sur-Sierre (canton of the Valais). Carried out with the co-operation of the Swiss Olympic medal winner Willy Favre, these snow tests showed scientifically—the skier carried a transmitter transmitting the reactions of this new material directly by radio—the extraordinary qualities of the CZ ski: considerable improvement in stability, exceptional resistance of the core of the ski to moisture and, finally, considerable improvement in the coefficient of elasticity. The analysis of the results recorded during these tests confirmed the scientists' forecasts, and allows one to expect a wide application of this discovery which will in fact be of benefit to all skiers.

### A new hinged hospital bed

Specialising in the production of furniture for hospitals, a Swiss inventor has produced a new anatomic bed for patients. Hinged at four points, it ensures maximum comfort and allows the patient, by means of a special easily operated electrical control cable to find the most comfortable position for himself. The patient can thus easily put himself to bed or get up, which greatly simplifies the work of the nursing staff. Presented at the 18th International Inventors' Exhibition in Brussels, this invention won a gold medal, as well as a special medal, awarded by the Burgomaster of the town. Specialists, meeting at the 3rd National Congress of Public Hospitalisation in Paris, called attention to the interest of this novelty.

### TV films in EVR cassettes

A recent American invention, known by the initials EVR (Electronic Video Recording and Reproduction) is behind the creation, a short while ago, of a Swiss consortium grouping the Basle chemical firms of Ciba and Geigy as well as Rencontre, a Lausanne publishing firm. By a decoding system, this novelty makes it possible for everyone to use his own TV screen for projecting a film of his choice. This is TV in cassettes, whose importance in the educational and cultural fields is still difficult to evaluate. In view of the possibilities it offers, some experts are ready to compare it to Gutenberg's invention. At any rate the publishing firm of Rencontre quickly realised the importance of this discovery and created a film department, Television-Rencontre (TVR), which works in several fields: all subject education programme, reporting and contemporary history, entertainment, etc. It is Ciba, through its branch Ilford, that will produce the high sensitivity films needed for EVR. Ilford will also print the films and place them in cassettes for all countries except the USA and Canada. This new Swiss con-

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#### Swiss machinery industry: increase in exports

The figures for the 3rd quarter 1969 allow us to expect a very favourable evolution in the Swiss machinery and equipment industry. Not only has the degree of occupation continued to improve and the amount of work on the books to increase considerably, but a marked increase in deliveries on the home market and especially abroad has also been recorded. During the first nine months of 1969, the value of exports amounted to 4.8 billion francs (U.S. \$1.2 billion), which represents an increase of 18% over the corresponding period in 1968. The part played by machinery exports in the total Swiss exports increased from 33.2% to 34.1% during the first three quarters of 1969; these results were influenced decisively by the favourable evolution of demand in West Germany whose purchases, valued at 795 million francs (US \$184.8 million) exceeded those of the first nine months of the previous year by 34%. The 26% increase in exports to France purchases valued at 464 million francs (US \$107.9 million) is the second biggest client of the Swiss machinery and equipment industry, after West Germany. The USA follows in third position with purchases totalling 440 million francs (US \$102.3 million) (+1%). Great Britain with 340 million francs (US \$79.1 million) (+6%), and Italy, with 272 million (US \$63.25 million) (+14%), continue to occupy 4th and 5th place respectively.

#### Savings in Switzerland

Theoretically, every Swiss possesses in a savings bank, savings book or in the form of stocks or bonds, a sum of 9,000 francs (US \$2,090), the inhabitants of the town of Basle contributing, to a decisive extent, to making the Swiss rate of saving per head of the population the highest in the world. It has been calculated in fact that each citizen of Basle has savings valued at 12,798 francs (US \$2,976). The least favoured of the Swiss are the citizens of the canton of the Grisons, with individual savings of 3,230 francs (US \$751). This situation is a result of the extraordinary development of the Swiss banking infrastructure, which numbers some 4,300 banks representing a density of 7 for every 10,000 inhabitants. Since the end of the war, the average per capita savings in Switzerland have regularly been higher than the corresponding rate for most industrial countries. From 1964 to 1968 for example, they worked out on an average at 28% of the gross national product, a figure exceeded only by Japan.

#### Swiss time at UNO

In the conference chamber on the 38th floor of the UNO building in New York the time is Swiss. The Secretary General U Thant has only to raise his

eyes to know the exact time in any capital throughout the world. A present from Switzerland, the wall-clock placed above U Thant's desk is a work of art . . . of great precision. Made by a famous Neuchâtel firm, it represents a map of the world whose continents are in gold relief. Fine vertical stripes indicate, from hour to hour, the time zones. A rotating ribbon also indicates the change from day to night. To the right and left of the work, two "real" clocks indicate the right time in New York, the world headquarters and in Geneva, the European headquarters of UNO. Mr. Thant noted that it was vital for a secretary general of UNO to know the exact time all over the world. He recalled the difficulties he had had in telling the difference between the time in Pakistan and India, at the time of the Kashmir incidents and he pointed out that the clock could thus help contribute to the maintenance of peace in the world.

#### Increased Swiss Aid for the Developing Countries

Switzerland's technical cooperation with the developing countries will be able to develop without a hitch. In fact, at its winter session, the Swiss Parliament unanimously approved a loan of 180 million francs (US \$41.86 million) for financing the projects of technical co-operation during the next three years (1970-73). Switzerland's contribution will amount therefore to 60 million francs (US \$13.95 million) a year, representing an annual increase of 20 million Swiss francs (US \$4.65 million). During the discussions, the Head of the Political Department—to which the Technical Co-operation Department is attached—promised to examine the means of increasing the effectiveness of Switzerland's aid to the developing countries, in particular by the creation of an institute for technical co-operation. The discussions on the new loans were among the most closely followed—and the longest—of the parliamentary session. This is a good sign. A political commentator wrote that "Aid to the developing countries is becoming a popular cause. Men still differ on the means, but the main purpose is accepted by the majority". In addition, the budget of Swiss protestant missions will amount in 1970 to 10.5 million francs (US \$2.44 million) which represents an increase of 7.2% compared with 1969.

#### Concerning the Vocational Training School of the Geneva Bank

In the October Number of "Swiss Economic News" (paragraph 16) mention was made of the opening in Geneva of a vocational training school for the study of banking. By mistake, this scheme was attributed to the Swiss Bank Corporation (SBS). In actual fact, it is the work of the Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS). Its purpose is to offer new prospects to young people who, for one reason or another, cannot

follow the traditional path of apprenticeship or the Commercial School. Their training, terminating in the award of a diploma, will last three years. The courses will be divided into two periods: the first, at the School of Higher Commercial Studies in Geneva, will allow the apprentice to gain theoretical notions of the subject; the second period, in the bank itself, will be divided into three parts of different length—and will allow young people to learn all the ins and outs of banking.

#### A new merger

The Brugg, Cortailod and Cossonay cableworks have agreed to combine their export departments. For this purpose, they have decided to found a joint company, Cablex Co. Ltd., A Penthalaz, near Lausanne. As from January 1st, 1970, all exports of these firms are carried out direct through this new export organisation.

(by courtesy of the "Office Suisse d'Expansion Commerciale").

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