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News from Switzerland

THE SWISS TELEPHONE INEXPENSIVELY

In accordance with a recent comparison between European and overseas countries, Switzerland has one of the lowest telephone rate schedules. The Swiss rate for local calls is far below the average and its rates for out-of-town calls are the lowest among all the countries taken into consideration. A three-minute call at a distance of 135 miles will, for instance, cost five times as much in the United States as in Switzerland.

Furthermore, Switzerland is soon going to introduce a direct dialling system to foreign countries. Already this year the telephone company customers in the largest Swiss cities will be able to dial automatically European foreign countries.

SWITZERLAND AND SPACE RESEARCH

At the end of last October, a Zenith research rocket was successfully launched from the Salto di Quira base in Sardinia. This rocket, which reached an altitude of 87½ miles, was made by the Swiss firm Contraves Ltd., a member of the Swiss Association for Space Technics.

The payload of the Zenith was constituted by scientific experiments prepared by Professors J. Geiss of the University of Berne and M. Golay of Geneva Observatory. This is proof that Switzerland can make an effective contribution to space research, even though not possessing the technical and financial means available to larger countries.

AGROCHEMISTRY AND AVIATION: AN INTERESTING SWISS ACHIEVEMENT

Ciba Ltd., in Basle, and the Pilatus Aeronautical Construction Works Ltd., at Stans, have joined forces to found Ciba-Pilatus Aerial Spraying Co. Ltd. at Glarus. The purpose of this new firm is to spray agrochemical products by plane, for big plantations all over the world, as well as to purchase, equip and maintain the planes required. The majority of the registered capital is in the hands of Ciba.

Ciba insecticides and herbicides are used throughout the world today, especially on the big rice and cotton plantations. The most efficient way of spraying agrochemical products on these big plantations is from the air and the "Pilatus Turbo-Porter" plane, in its agricultural version, is particularly well suited to the aerial spraying of liquids, using the ultra low volume spraying process.

38th INTERNATIONAL MOTOR SHOW

The 38th International Motor Show was held in Geneva from 14th to 24th March. On display were all the latest private cars and special bodies, trucks, utility vans, accessories and works machinery presented by 1300 exhibitors from 25 countries on 378 stands. In 1967, the Geneva Motor Show was attended by 502,300 visitors.

NEWS IN BRIEF . . .

The Rhaetic Railway in the Canton Grisons is going to carry passenger cars this winter. A special car-carrying train will be run three times daily from Thusis and Tiefencastel through the Albula Tunnel to Samedan (Engadine Valley), and back from Samedan to Thusis.

Even after banking hours cash can now be drawn in Zurich. The Union Bank of Switzerland has put in front of its main office a money dispensing machine which will electronically pay Sw. Frs 200. to each customer producing a special cash card.

Geneva, due to its increased hotel capacity (12,000 beds), was able to accommodate the overflow of visitors to the Winter Olympics, held in Grenoble, France, from February 6 to 18. Special commuter trains ran between the two cities for those unable to find rooms in Grenoble and its environs.

At the Schaegalp (Canton St. Gall) an automatic meteorological service was installed. It provides a 24-hour information service on the weather, snow and road conditions at the Schwaegalp. The bulletin which is intended mainly for skiers is changed immediately if a sudden change of weather occurs.

A new "Eternal Calendar Watch" was recently shown to the press by a Geneva Inventions' Laboratory. Unlike the usual calendars which have to be set five times a year, this new personalised calendar needs to be set by hand only once every four years, at the end of February of a leap year. Marks in various colours may be put on dates to be particularly remembered.

The Klewenalp (Central Switzerland) now has its own ski run vehicle. It was especially constructed to prepare ski runs. Thus the skilifts and the run to Beckenried on Lake Lucerne are afforded faultless runs. The new vehicle not only smoothes the beautiful slopes for beginners but also the steeper and more difficult places.

An Argovian rose grower has offered to the trade a new salmon-coloured rose developed during a period of six years. He called it "City of Lucerne" out of gratitude to that tourist city. The Municipal Gardens of Lucerne have already ordered a large number of bushes to be planted in the public parks.