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DR. LINDT'S PRESS CONFERENCE

The International Red Cross Committee organised a Press Conference in Basle, at which the Commissioner-General, Dr. August Lindt, former Swiss Ambassador in Moscow, gave the following figures: there are 2,065 people on service with the Red Cross in Nigeria/Biafra at the moment, of whom 390 foreign and 1,675 local helpers. The IKRK feeds over two million refugees, injured, children, women and old people. The two air lifts transported about 10,753 metric tons of food and medical drugs, etc., by the end of March (1,105 flights). Some 42,000 tons of goods are on the way. The threatening measles epidemic was dealt with successfully by immunising half a million people immediately. 1.2 million children were immunised the same time against smallpox. The monthly budget of the International Red Cross Committee, not counting the value of the goods, amounts to about 15 million francs. A considerable vaccination campaign against TB has been undertaken in conjunction with UNICEF.

Early in May, the IKRK announced increased aid, and in addition, 650 tons of seed (maize, yam and beans) has been distributed in war ravaged zones.

The Swiss dairy producers decided to donate the milk production of a whole day to the children of Biafra. They had already given five tons of dried milk to refugee children in Gabon. Their aim is to send fifty tons to Biafra.

(A.T.S.)

AMBASSADOR LINDT ARRESTED

The Delegate of the International Red Cross Committee, Ambassador Lindt, and three other Swiss (an assistant and two pilots), were arrested at Lagos Airport on 27th May. The reason was that Dr. Lindt had apparently flown from Dahomey to Lagos without landing permit. After 16 hours, they were released, the Swiss Ambassador having intervened. The incident is believed to have been the result of a "misunderstanding" of instructions from Lagos, and the Federal Council protested to the Nigerian Government, but Nigeria has rejected the protest.

(A.T.S.)

NEW DOCUMENTATION SERVICE

The Agence Télégraphique Suisse introduces new Information Department

The Agence Télégraphique Suisse is preparing a new information service which should be of interest to newspapers and publishers, as well as to all kinds of organisations. Their daily information will be classified according to subject, economics, social insurance,

agriculture, aviation, technological and scientific discoveries, etc., 60 in all.

The Swiss Newspaper Publishers support the scheme. It is expected to result in new revenue to A.T.S., which, in turn, would again be for the benefit of the newspapers.

The Swiss Telegraphic Agency in Berne will be pleased to supply details of the new service on application.

BUILDING TRADE

Building plans announced for 1968 represented a total value of 13,551 million francs, which corresponds to an increase of 12.4% compared with the actual volume of construction recorded the previous year. However, the unfavourable relationship between supply and demand continued in 1968, so that the actual level of building during the last year seems once again to have been lower than the plans made (10%). In the housing sector, the plans represented a value 10% higher than that of the housing actually built in 1967. With regard to craft and industrial building on the other hand, the plans announced for 1968 corresponded to all intents and purposes to the building actually completed the previous year. The comparative falling off in the two above-mentioned private sectors is offset however by the extraordinary growth in public building work; its proportion of the total volume of building rose from 28.4% in 1960 to 38% in 1968. Today investments in the form of building still represent some 17% of the gross social product and are the biggest single item after private consumption. It may be predicted that in 1969 the building trade will contribute to the favourable evolution of the economic situation.

(O.S.E.C.)

SWIMMING POOLS AT CATERING SHOW

The International Catering and Hotel Exhibition due to take place in the halls of the Swiss Industries Fair in Basle, from 13th to 19th November, will have an additional sector dealing with the construction of indoor and open-air swimming pools.

The Swiss Society for the Preservation of Health, together with the Swiss Swimming Association and the International Swimming Association will make use of the opportunity during the trade exhibition to hold its Second Swiss Conference on the Construction of indoor Swimming Pools, which will be accompanied by a special day dealing with the subject of hotel swimming pools and will be organised in collaboration with the Swiss Hotel Proprietors' Association.

The conference and the new sector of the trade exhibition will certainly arouse great interest amongst the municipal and parish authorities whose duty it is to concern themselves with the construction of swimming pools.

CIGARETTE PRODUCTION

In 1968, the number of cigarettes manufactured in Switzerland amounted to 20,509 million, representing an increase of 10.5% over the figure for the previous year. Statistics show that the change in smokers' tastes continues in the same direction as in recent years. The American blend comes first in production (49.2%), followed closely by the Maryland type (39%). The Swiss consumer, however, tends more and more to favour the Maryland blend, because almost all exports, sales in frontier regions and to tourists consist of the American blend type of cigarette.

(O.S.E.C.)

SWITZERLAND AT OLYMPIA

INTERPLAS '69 will be opened at Olympia, London on Wednesday, 18th June, by Mr. Anthony Wedgwood-Benn, Minister of Technology, and will continue until 27th June.

As the official international plastics exhibition in Europe, Interplas will this year, more than ever, be the centre of attention for the plastics industries of the world. Plastics users, fabricators, manufacturers and buyers from all the major industrial countries will visit the exhibition to see a display of more than 6,500 different items covering the entire field of plastics commerce — materials, machinery and products — in a display unequalled in the history of British-organised exhibitions.

Interplas '69 will be a record-breaker. More than 660 firms will be participating, including some 300 overseas exhibitors including Switzerland. An attendance is expected in excess of 120,000 visitors, including 13 to 15,000 from overseas countries.

Interplas '69 is sponsored by British Plastics and organised by Iliffe Exhibitions Ltd., with the co-operation of the British Plastics Federation.

WELFARE OFFICE

for

SWISS GIRLS IN GREAT BRITAIN

(For Information, Advice or Help)

11 Belsize Grove, London N.W.3.

(Nearest Underground Station:
Belsize Park)

Telephone: 01-722 4260

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