

# HELVETIA PHILATELIC SOCIETY

## NEWS LETTER



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No. 1

JANUARY 1981

35TH YEAR

## UNUSUAL RATE COVERS

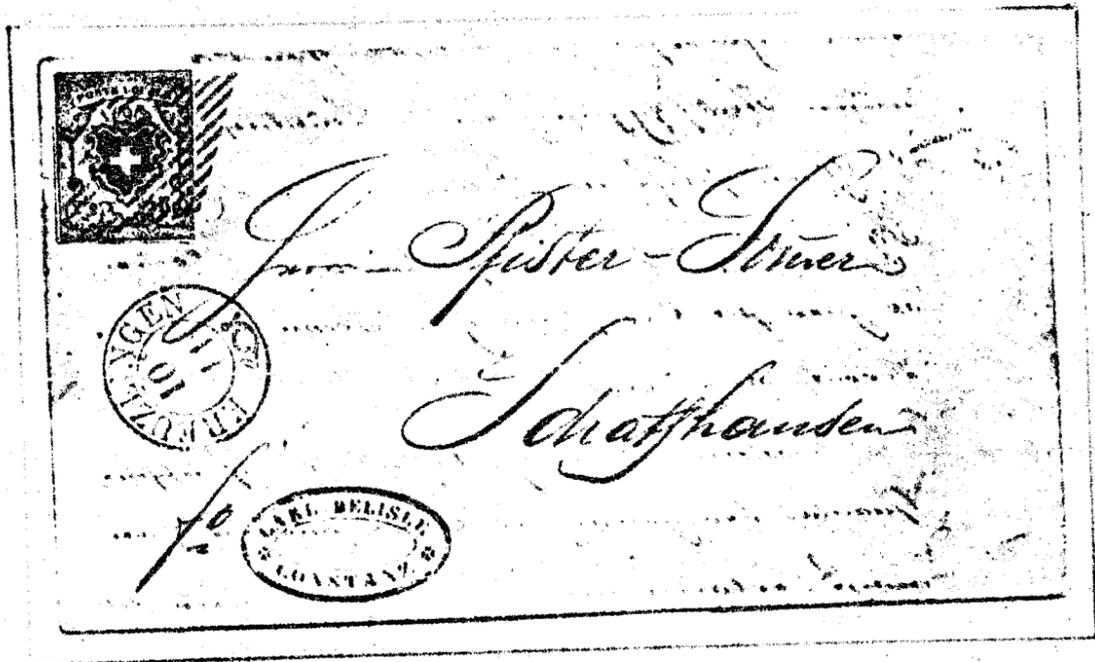
By HARLAN F. STONE

One of the intriguing aspects in the study of early covers is trying to work out the rates charged for postage and how they were arrived at. Shown below is the first of six unusual rate covers from my collection which may be of some interest.

### 1st RAYON PRINTED MATTER

The first Federal postage rates, effective October 1, 1849, included the following fees for printed matter bearing no writing except the address:

	<u>1 oz.</u>	<u>2 oz.</u>	<u>4 oz.</u>	<u>1 lb.</u>
1st Rayon	2½ Rp.	5 Rp.	7½ Rp.	10 Rp.
2nd Rayon	5 Rp.	10 Rp.	15 Rp.	20 Rp.
3rd Rayon	7½ Rp.	15 Rp.	22½ Rp.	30 Rp.
4th Rayon	10 Rp.	20 Rp.	30 Rp.	40 Rp.



"Poste Locale" stamp with framed cross, Type 25.

Kreuzlingen to Schaffhausen - dated Nov. 10, 1851.

2½ Rp. postage for 1st rayon printed matter going no more than 30 miles and weighing up to 1 oz.

Circular printed in Constance, Baden (with firm's oval cachet) and carried across the border for mailing in Switzerland to avoid postage for foreign letter.



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01-348 0296

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The Swiss Specialists

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Dear Client,

STAMPEX 1981 is called "SUPER STAMPEX" and a super STAMPEX it will be! Not only has the lay-out of the stamps in the Hall been changed - a second Hall across the road will accommodate more dealer stands and more Exhibits.

STAMPEX has become so popular over the years that the single Hall could no longer accommodate the volume of visitors at peak periods. The innovations for this year will enable visitors to look at Exhibits in greater comfort and with less jostling.

Stamp collecting is becoming more and more popular and STAMPEX had to grow. It is no surprise, therefore, that our stock which has always been superb, will be finer still for this occasion.

Please come to see us at the show, discuss Swiss Stamps with us - my Staff and I will gladly help you with any queries and show you what you wish to see. Incidentally, should you wish to make purchases the cost of your entrance ticket will be refunded as follows: First day of the Exhibition on minimum purchases of £20; all other days on minimum purchases of £10.

See you at "SUPER STAMPEX".

Yours sincerely,

H.L. KATCHER

P.S. The TEMPORARY DISCOUNT OF 10%  
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*Consultants for Exhibition and Competition Displays Publishers of the "Stamp Catalogue of Switzerland"*

## THE EXCHANGE PACKET

More helpful hints:

1. Please put sender's address on back of Packets forwarded by post. One Packet has been lost this season, which might have been prevented had this been done.
2. If in difficulty trying to deliver by hand, advise me. Do not just post - it may go to an empty house and be extremely hard to recover.

And I repeat - if in doubt please phone me: 024-535-4149.

G. RAUCH

## NEW 'K' CANCELS

From 19 January:

4208 NUNNINGEN - in Schwarzbubenland (K.805)  
8625 GERSAU (ZH) - (K.806)

## MEMBERS' REQUESTS

1. Has anyone a copy for sale of the book "Die Markenheftchen, Kehrdruck & Zwischenstegmarken der Schweiz 1904-54" (Tête-bêche etc.) by Ernst Müller?
2. An American member seeks to borrow or purchase copies of the 'Ortsverzeichnis' as follows: 1938-49; 1951-5; 1959; 1960; 1962; 1966; 1963/73.

Please advise the Secretary who will forward any offers.

## SWISS POSTAL DIRECTORY

The next edition of the 'Ortsverzeichnis' will be issued in June at SFr.1.50. It lists some 7000 names and code numbers, together with postal connections with rail, bpat etc. Orders accepted by PTT from 2 February. Invaluable for postmark collecting.

# THE SILK THREAD ISSUES 1854 - 1862

By G. KUISEL

**(Editor's Note)** Having received a number of requests for information on the 'Strubel' issues from newer members and having failed to find any recently published works on the subject, it seems most useful to give once more Frl Kuisel's treatise, originally published in the "Journal Philatelique Suisse", then translated and published in the "Philatelic Magazine" in 1944 and in our "News Letter" in 1962, and which remains a standard work. I hope for the indulgence of those who know it for the benefit of those who do not.

**INTRODUCTION:** The classification of the "Silk Thread" issues, with all the intricacies of papers and printing, continues to puzzle many collectors, and the following article is designed to clarify some of the problems.

The excellent study by Dr. J. Suter, regarded as the most thorough cataloguing of these issues, is embodied in Zumstein's great manual of 1924 - alas long out of print. Unfortunately the text relating thereto, by M. F. Furi of Bern, was inadequately understood by many collectors. Subsequently H. Erne, of Bottstein, revised the text and later editions of the catalogue were based on this re-arrangement. Nevertheless, the new classification did not please everyone and many collectors still experience difficulty in identifying their specimens. After many years of thought and search, a new approach is now made. By profound study of the Federal Acts, and consultation with eminent specialists in paper manufacture and printing, it has become possible to fix new fundamental principles, while meticulous tests with the aid of modern accessories such as the Quartz lamp, the microscope and precision scales, enables the establishment of proper rules to simplify classification.

## 1. FACTS ESTABLISHED BY THE FEDERAL RECORDS.

Study of the Federal records concerning the manufacture of the "Silk Thread" stamps and the difficulties encountered has given, in brief, the following results:

After the Postal Directorate age stamps printed in relief on ed that nobody in Switzerland could consequently entrusted to the paper had already supplied the paper for necessary experience.



at Berne had decided to issue post-silk thread paper, it was discovered that nobody in Switzerland could consequently entrusted to the paper had already supplied the paper for necessary experience. Manufacture was mill at Pasing, near Munich, which Bavarian stamps and possessed the

The Federal Mint at Bern was given the work of printing the stamps, but as preparation of the necessary equipment required time it was found necessary meanwhile to utilise the services of the J. G. Weiss State printery at Munich.

First deliveries from Munich arrived in Bern in July 1852. The authorities were more or less satisfied with them. They desired only a slightly darker shade for the 5c. After the second delivery in December 1852, Bern requested that the yellow-green colour of the 40c. should also be made darker.

Munich printed the stamps at first in sheets of 100. In October 1852 the size of the sheet was reduced to 50, which resulted in better relief. They also used a hand-press. In August 1853 the Munich State Printery completed its undertaking to print 5 million stamps, and at the same time they handed over the plates.

To render forgery most difficult a silk thread of a different colour for each value was chosen in 1854. At the same time an order for sufficient paper to print 10 million stamps was given to Pasing.

In the spring of 1854 the Berne Mint was able to begin printing. In April 1855, on the first delivery of the 5c. on paper with yellow silk thread, the Director of the Mint, Dr. Kuster, wrote to the Postal Directorate:

"The next delivery will be furnished in part on the new paper, and in part on paper with green silk thread. The paper with yellow silk thread is defective, also the thread is not sufficiently visible."

From December 1855 the paper with the insufficiently visible yellow silk thread was replaced, for the 5c. stamp, by the black silk thread paper of the 1 Fr., while the 1 Fr. stamp, from that time, was printed on the yellow thread paper. Till the end of 1856 all the paper used for the stamps was supplied exclusively by Munich.

Then commenced the first deliveries from the Sihl Paper Works at Zürich. Paper from Sihl cost much less, and thenceforward it was all obtained from that source. From the commencement the Sihl Works met with manufacturing difficulties; delays in delivery were encountered; the silk threads of different colours complicated the work, so much so that the Postal Directorate, to help matters, decided to revert to a uniform green thread for all values. At the same period the Mint installed new printing machinery which enabled them to print sheets of 50, instead of sheets of only 25, which they had been working up to then.

## 2. THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SILK THREAD PAPERS.

Examination of the paper employed has been very interesting for there are grounds to suppose that paper manufactured by two different paper mills would show different characteristics.

### (A) MUNICH PAPER

Under the Quartz lamp, yellowish, lighter or darker according to the delivery, but always yellowish.

Under the microscope, the paper reveals a composition of silk and linen rags. The fibres are long, and there is very little additional loading substance.

The weight of the stamps varies almost 100%. Tests show that the weight of the 40c. pale yellow-green varies between 25 and 45 milligrams.

Hand-made: these properties indicate that it is of the nature of a paper made by hand, without the aid of machinery. Paper trade experts confirm this theory.

### (B) ZÜRICH PAPER

Under the Quartz lamp, greyish, lighter or darker according to the delivery.

Under the microscope, the pulp is shown to be composed of short fibres, and is heavily loaded with additional materials.

The weights vary to the extent of 30%. For example, the 5c. dark-brown varies from 42 to 54 milligrams.

Machine-made: This without question is a machine-made paper, although it cannot be established by the records, which Sihl mills state no longer exist.

The silk threads in the Zürich paper react as follows under the Quartz lamp: the green thread appears clear, like the phosphorescent figures of a luminous watch. The red thread appears dark red, and the blue thread appears so pale as to be nearly invisible.

For Quartz lamp examination the following observations should be noted:

The stamps should not have been cleaned, nor subjected to damp or any chemical product. Soap leaves in the paper a residue which modified the fluorescence under the lamp. Paper affected by humidity appears yellow or blotched with yellow.

The fluorescence of stamps which have been in contact with chemical products varies according to the matter employed. In general the fluorescence of the silk thread is destroyed.

(C) The question of PELURE PAPER. It should be added that the 'pelure' paper mentioned in certain catalogues should be considered as Munich paper. In the classification which follows stamps of this kind are not considered as a special issue, but as a paper variety. In its structure, neither the Munich nor the Zürich paper is woolly or soft. On the contrary both are quite stiff. Copies which appear woolly to the touch have been cleaned with soap or other products. This operation has destroyed, in part, its foundation, the fibres are loosened from the pulp, and it has lost weight.

(To be continued)

## FEBRUARY MEETINGS - Winter weather permitting!

NORTHERN GROUP: Saturday, 7th Feb. DISPLAYS BY NEW MEMBERS  
LONDON GROUP Wednesday, 11th Feb. CDS & ENDS - Short Displays by Members

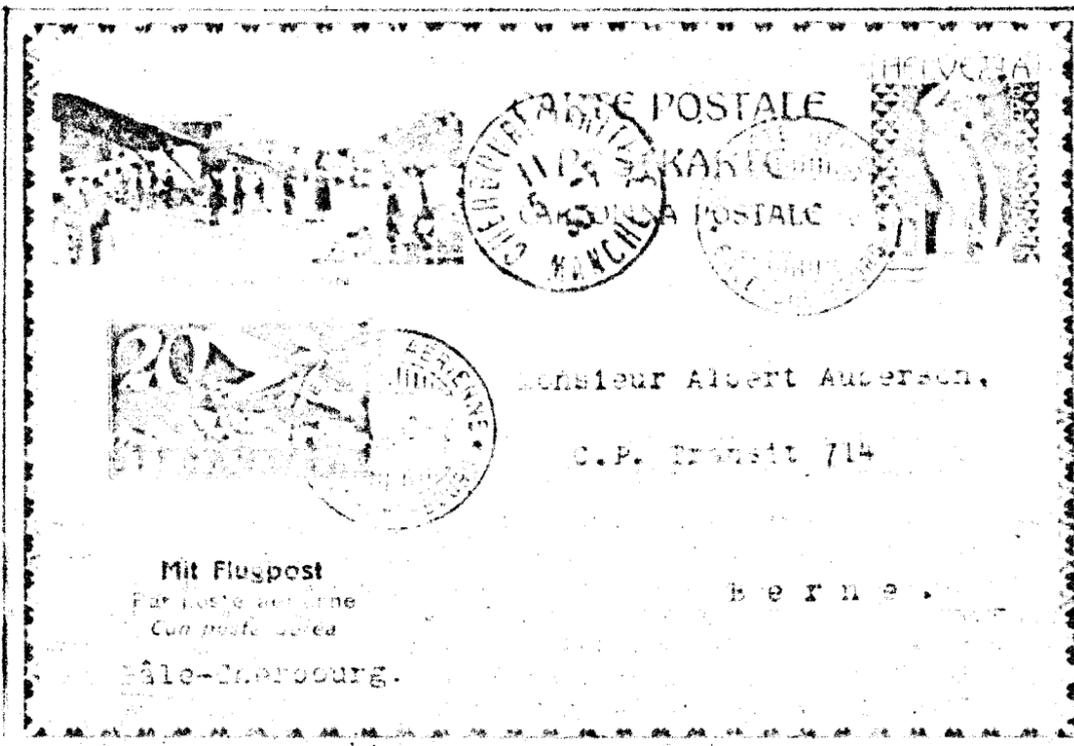
We would like as many as possible to bring along a few sheets of unusual items, or to take the opportunity to try to solve any puzzles.

THE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF SWISS AIR MAIL SERVICES

By D. Cairns

Part V

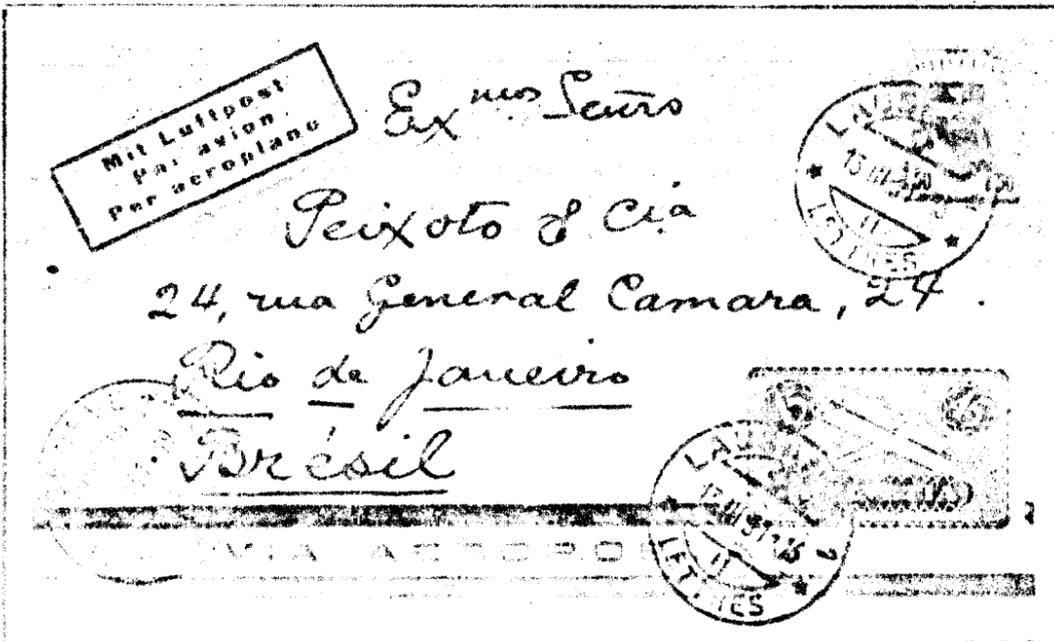
In July 1930 Balair introduced a purely mail carrying service between Basel - Cherbourg and Basel - Le Havre to connect with the departure or arrival of the transatlantic liners, thus effecting a saving of perhaps two days on the mail's transit time. The first flight, with special cancellation (Fig. 10), was on 5th July, 1930, to connect with the S.S. Berengaria which left Cherbourg on that same evening and arrived in New York on the 11th.



The South American Air Service of the late 1920's and 1930's, referred to by Mittelholzer, makes a philatelic study in itself. In 1928 the French had introduced a service in Brasil and Argentina via their West African colonies using a combination of aircraft (Aeropostale - the forerunner of Air France) and fast boat which together took 7½ days

Fig. 10

from Marseilles or Toulouse to Buenos Aires. From the early 1920's air services between Geneva - Lyons - Marseilles had been operated by various companies, including Balair, and it was by using this feeder route that Swiss airmail could be conveyed to South America.



The Germans, on the other hand, had used the 'Graf Zeppelin' on the South American service, first on an experimental basis from 1931, then from 1934 onwards on a scheduled service. Additionally in 1934, Lufthansa introduced an airmail service from Stuttgart to

Fig. 11 Backstamped Rio de Janeiro, 23.III.31

South America, via Bathurst (Gambia), with transfer of mail to a flying boat operating with the aid of two 'catapult' ships off the West African and South American coasts respectively. This method reduced the time taken for mail between

Germany and South America to three days. On this service Swiss mail carried a surcharge of Fr.2.00 plus the foreign letter rate of 30c. (as from 1.10.24). From 1934 onwards, the circular, red, "Deutsche Luftpost - Europa-Sudamerika" cachet is to be found on mail along this route (Fig. 12).

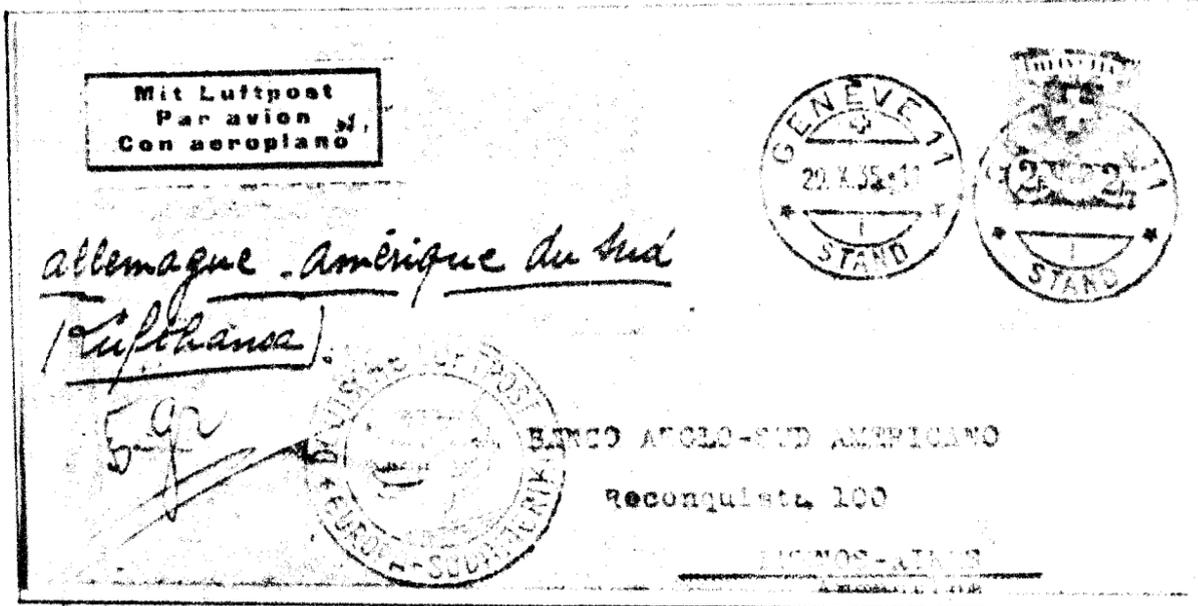


Fig. 12. This particular cover is backstamped "Buenos Aires, 3.11.935-20", just 5 days after cancellation in Geneva.

Similarly other long distance routes were being opened to other parts of the world. In 1929 and 1931 Imperial Airways introduced services to India and South Africa respectively, using Genoa or Brindisi as a starting point because of overflying restrictions imposed by the Italian Government. The route to South Africa via Alexandria and Nairobi had been surveyed by Sir Alan Cobham at the time when Walter Mittelholzer was making his second Africa Flight in 1929. The two met when Mittelholzer stopped at Benghazi in Libya. A flown cover in the writer's possession destined for Beira in what was then Portuguese East Africa was cancelled in Basel, 20.VII.32-18, with backstamps applied at Alexandria, 23.JUL.32.2-3P; Salisbury, S.Rhodesia, 29.JUL.1932 and Beira, 1-AGO-32; a total of eleven days.

The rivalry that had existed between Ad Astra Aero and Balair came to an end on 1st January, 1931, when the two companies merged to form Swissair. The first two directors were Balz Zimmerman and Walter Mittelholzer, who was also the chief pilot for the new firm.

Purchase of new aircraft, such as the Lockheed "Orion" which had a speed to outstrip all other aircraft in European service at that time, meant that Swissair were able to introduce a number of "express airmail (and passenger services", often at a lower surcharge. One such route was Zürich - Basel - Frankfurt, opened in May, 1933. One of two cachets, in German or French, was applied to indicate the service and the surcharge was, presumably only 10c. (30c. foreign letter rate plus 10c. - 40c.). Fig. 13 from a cover addressed to London illustrates this.

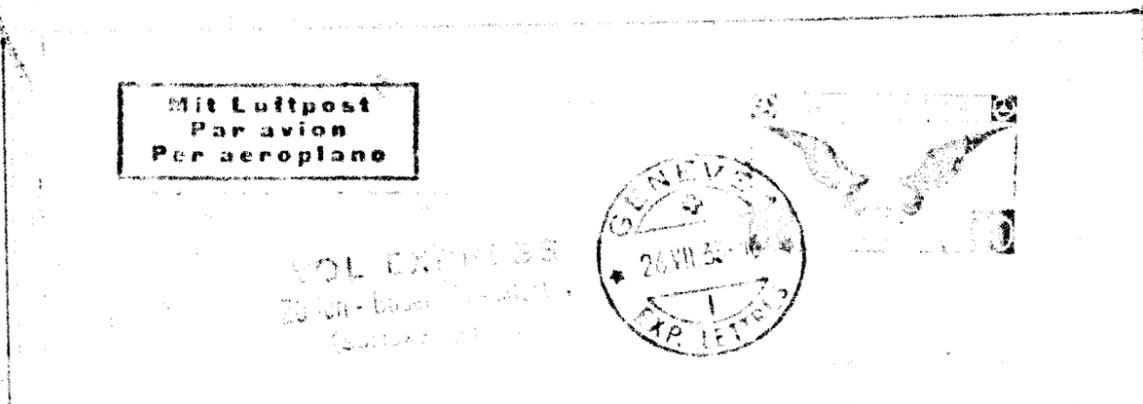


Fig. 13

(To be continued)

## DID YOU KNOW?

.... that with 24 new stamps announced by the PTT for 1981 the upper limit for commemoratives is being reached, as the 'normal' is 18, but of course this is still ridiculous when compared to some countries. Let us be thankful for small mercies.

.... that the PTT has recently stated that at least 10 years must elapse before a subject can be used again on a stamp, yet the PJ arms of Wolfenschiessen would clash with the 1967 70c definitive, and the coming 'Restoration of St. Pierre' in Geneva with the same subject on the 40c.

.... that the numbers of special postmarks has risen again this year: Local publicity, K, from 47 to 54; Specials incl. MPOs from 67 to 71, and machine slogans from 79 to 84. The trend is still upwards.

.... that I found the article by Dr. Ganz on 'Parcel Labels' fascinating, especially the old ones. Once in a lifetime I can answer one of his questions! The 'G' mentioned in the November part was given in the DYK column some 2-3 years ago when it was first introduced, to indicate a 'Gross' or 'Grand' customer to whom the PTT would give a rebate if the year's postage paid exceeded a certain big amount, for mail order firms mainly.



.... that the slogan shown was used, in the 3 separate languages, all over Switzerland during December for the last few years. The Italian one, clearly impressed, is rather rare. All Italian language slogans are hard to come by, as there are only 5 or 6 machines in use in the Tessin, compared with much higher numbers north of the Alps.

.... that Swiss letter boxes are now all being modified to accept roll film being mailed in, in that a special shaped widening of the slot is filed in on old boxes and provided in new ones from the factory. Pressure from Kodak etc. ?

.... that details of all collections is now also being shown on all letter boxes, plus, if appropriate, times of collection at the nearest railway station. This is usually about 7 pm, 7 days a week.

.... that the answer to Question No. 99 is the 1980 postcard, printed by offset, for the first time.

.... that Question No. 100 is a bit different. I have just received a letter from UK, weight 67 g., franked with 25p, with a

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DON'T FORGET THE NEW ENLARGED  
S T A M P E X  
WILL BE HELD 24 - 28 FEBRUARY

### DID YOU KNOW? - Cont.

circular 'To Pay' fraction, from Glasgow T 8/13 $\frac{1}{2}$ . How much should I have to pay here in Switzerland?

M. RUTHERFOORD

**N. GROUP:** Hon. Sec. MR. R. A. HOYLE,  
6, Lines Ave, Huddersfield Rd, Halifax

Airmails was the subject for the December meeting in Leeds when 3 members combined to provide an astonishing array of material.

Mrs. Davis from Hull, introducing the subject, described the early days of the airmail service, with much interesting information about the pioneers of aviation and formation of Swissair. She displayed a comprehensive range of airmail stamps, many early flight covers with their varied cachets, air letters and the Bundesfeier airmail cards.

Mr. Cairns displayed a wealth of material illustrating the commercial development of the airmail service and the routing of many of the flights. Among the many fine items were a cover dated April 1st 1934 from Bern to London, the date of the formation of Imperial Airways and a registered airmail express letter of 1934 from Lausanne to Liepaja in Latvia.

Mr. Whitworth completed the afternoon's entertainment by displaying many of the airmail stamps including mint and used copies of both values of the 1919-20 propeller overprints.

All displays of great interest.

R.A.H.

## SWITZERLAND

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1981

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