OPENING OF THE SWISS PARAPLEGIC CENTRE IN BASLE

By Dr. L. MICHAELIS

THE Swiss Paraplegic Centre at Basle was officially opened in the presence of the guest of honour, Sir Ludwig Guttman, and high federal and cantonal officials on 6th June 1967.

It had been Sir Ludwig who 10 years ago advised the authorities on the choice of the site in the grounds of the Department of Social Medicine of Basle University. He then also impressed on them that it would have to be a clinical department devoted to the treatment, rehabilitation and professional retraining of the para- and tegraplegic from the day of his accident or illness to his return into society with provision for the essential periodical check-ups.

Built to the customary Swiss standard of quality and workmanship the Centre provides on five floors spacious accommodation for 56 patients which, without further building, can be expanded to 80 beds with all the modern equipment needed to treat the most severe new lesions as well as all complications. A lavishly equipped urological and X-ray suite, fine rooms for occupational and physiotherapy, a large heated swimming pool, extensive grounds for all kinds of wheelchair-sport and space for a further operating suite are provided.

The top floor contains a dozen rooms for the nursing staff, all with a beautiful view of the Swiss hills around Basle.

Three former members of the nursing staff of Stoke Mandeville hospital form the nucleus of an expanding team.

There are first-rate heads of the physiotherapy- and occupational-therapy departments, advisors on professional retraining and rehousing and extensive workshops of the older rehabilitation centre already in existence.

The medical team consists of Professor H. Nigst as the head of rehabilitation and chief of the Centre, Dr Guertler, a physician, as first assistant, Docent Rutishauser as consulting Urologist and L. Michaelis from Stoke Mandeville who is in charge of treatment and teaching at all levels.

So far 14 patients, some with formidable complications, have been admitted. More are bound to follow soon.

The work-programme includes close collaboration with other Centres in and outside Switzerland on many projects of clinical and laboratory research.