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The Councils have fixed August 1955 for the next "Fête des Vignerons". On the last occasion, it was celebrated in 1927, with great success. Two thousand actors, choir-singers and musicians took part, and the vast open-air theatre welcomed an average of 16,000 spectators at each performance.

\* \* \*

The Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research communicates as follows: "In order to make use of the experience acquired during the reconnaissance of the Southern approaches to Mount Everest, last spring, an expedition will be sent there again next October and November — i.e. the period of stable weather conditions following the monsoon. A new attempt to reach the summit will be made. The authorisation of the Nepalese Government has been obtained for this expedition. Owing to the fact that several members of the spring expedition are prevented by their professional commitments from taking part in this new expedition, new elements, fresh and in top-form, have been engaged. Dr. Gabriel Chevalley, of Bex, has been chosen as head of the expedition, which will be composed of the following three guides: Raymond Lambert, of Geneva; Arthur Spoehel, of Berne, Gustave Gross of Salvan (Valais), and of two alpinists: Mr. Jean Buzio, of Geneva and Ernest Reiss, of Meiringen. Bhothia Tensing has again been chosen as sirdar (head) of the Sherpas, and is now considered as a member of the alpinists' group. The number of porters (Sherpas) will be doubled, in order to facilitate and speed-up the transport of material to the altitude camps".

## HOME AFFAIRS.

by DR. MAX NEF.


The communication from Washington, according to which the President of the United States of America has rejected the proposal put forward by the Tariff Commission for an increase in the rates of duty on watches and on watch-parts, has been received in Berne with great pleasure and satisfaction. A very grave burden of anxiety has been removed from the most important branch of the Swiss export industry. For the first six months of 1952 its exports attained the value of 500 million francs. That is almost a quarter of the total value of Swiss exports. Some 50 thousand workers earn their livelihood in the Swiss watch-making industry.

It will doubtless be recalled that in the Autumn of 1950, in compliance with American wishes, and in spite of considerable misgivings on the part of the Swiss, the so-called "evasion clause" was added to the Swiss-American Trade Agreement of 1936. In accordance with this clause, unilateral increases in Customs duties are permitted, in so far as certain stipulations of an economic nature have been fulfilled. The fact that, contrary to the fears which have been entertained during many a long month, the liberal principles for the structure of international trade have triumphed in the United States, was learnt with particular satisfaction in Switzerland. For our country, also, has always been a partisan of the re-establishment of foreign trade which is unhampered to the largest possible extent, in the conviction that therein lies the most effective and lasting means for the normalisation of world economy. Had America turned more and more towards a system rendering imports more difficult, whilst, at the same time, supplying the world market with increasing quantities of its own export goods, this would have meant, in the long run, an impoverishment of many a country in the rehabilitation of which Switzerland, being a land engaged in very active export trade, is particularly interested.

But, also in the reciprocal trade exchange between the United States and Switzerland, the balance would have been considerably disturbed. Swiss purchases of American goods exceed 900 million francs in value per annum, whilst Swiss exports to the U.S.A. amount to approximately 600 millions a year, so that at the present time, Swiss imports from America surpass her exports to that country by about one-third. Moreover, almost half of Switzerland's export value to America is in respect of deliveries of watches.

The introduction of prohibitive American customs duties would have struck a very serious blow at the Swiss watch-making industry, in view of the fact that about one-third of the exports from this particular branch of our industry goes to the United States. There would, undoubtedly, have been reactions on the Labour Market so that it will easily be understood that the whole of our economy and, of course, our authorities also, gave a big sigh of relief when the good news came from America.

However, in spite of the momentary escape from this danger, all anxiety is by no means eliminated. The reason for this is that there exists a tendency among some of the most important American watch-manufacturers, to carry out the production of watches



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from the watch-jewels to the finished article. Switzerland will therefore have to make the greatest efforts to prevent her market possibilities for watches, in the U.S.A. from shrinking too much. What is of paramount importance is to convince the American buyer of the qualitative merits of the Swiss watch, in order to prevent the cheap mass-produced article from supplanting, one day, the hereditary and traditional good work of watchmakers, on the American market.

And, even if, for once, the danger of an oppressive increase in Customs duties on Swiss watches in America has been averted, it must not be overlooked that the decision of the President of the United States has not improved the situation in respect of other branches of our export industry. There still exist prohibitively high rates of duty in respect of Swiss textiles chemicals, machinery and apparatus. However, hopes are nourished that in these branches of economy also, the efforts which are being made by the Swiss authorities will be crowned with success, and that the United States will be prevailed upon to show greater willingness to meet us half-way, in these matters. We have good grounds for such hopes, in that Switzerland is an excellent and solvent customer. Half of her imports from the United States consist in manufactured goods and a considerable portion in raw materials. The purchase of cereals to the value of approximately one million francs is not — to put it vulgarly — an item to be sneezed at. It is perhaps not generally known that the United States come second on the list of suppliers of coal to Switzerland, coming next after Germany. That such a change in countries of supply has taken place, in spite of the considerable distance involved is

one of the consequences of the decreased capacity for deliveries on the part of former coal producers in Europe.

### CURLING.

The Richmond Curling Club, Sports-Drome, Clevedon Road, East Twickenham, Middx. opens its second Winter Season at the Richmond Ice Rink on Tuesday the 16th September at 6.0 p.m. The Club, which is affiliated to the Royal Caledonian Club was very successful last year, and nearly 100 members enrolled, many of whom were members of Scottish and Swiss Clubs.

Play takes place every Tuesday evening of the winter, and keen competition is expected again for the "Straus" Cup, as well as in ordinary games on the six excellent Rinks, while for the novices a special section of ice is put aside.

The Richmond Rink is excellently appointed, and dinner is served after play in the fully licensed Restaurant.

The subscription and ice charges are reasonable, and the Committee of the Club extend a hearty invitation to all those who are interested in the "roaring" game.

The Hon. Secretary at the Rink will be pleased to give any further information so desired, and send an informative brochure and application for membership form combined.

## Looking Ahead...

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