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COMMERCIAL NEWS

The next Swiss Industries Fair.

The forthcoming Swiss Industries Fair, which will be the 41st, will be held in Basle, from the 27th April to the 7th May, 1957. It will group together some 2,300 exhibitors and will include textile machinery, the products of the electrical industry, those pertaining to mechanical construction in general, the products of the textile and clothing industries, and will also comprise the 27th Swiss Watchmaking Fair. This latter will group together nearly 160 watch manufacturers, among whom will be found most of the famous Swiss firms, whose names are known throughout the world. This section will be completed by the presence of some sixty exhibitors belonging to branches directly connected with the watchmaking industry.

Swiss Imports of Motor Vehicles.

If the Suez crisis has not impeded, to any considerable extent, Swiss imports of liquid fuel — which, as a matter of fact, show a considerable increase in comparison with the figures for 1955 — it would appear, on the other hand, to have caused a slight decline in imports of motor vehicles, as a whole. It is only in respect of motor cars that there was a slight increase, their number having exceeded 63,000 cars, of a total value of nearly 370 million francs, so that the 1956 figure for this category of vehicles constitutes a new annual record. Compared with 1955, the advance achieved amounts to approximately 10 per cent. It may be noted that the tendency has changed towards the purchase of more highly-powered cars, to the detriment of the small car.

Swiss Cheese Abroad.

According to a recent Report of the Swiss Cheese Union, Switzerland exported more than 1,600 wagons, of ten tons each, of cheese during the business year of 1955/56. This is the highest figure attained since the pre-war period. This favourable result is all the more remarkable as considerable progress has been achieved abroad in the domain of high-quality cheeses, and, moreover, the export prices for Swiss round (hard) cheese, are still higher by from 25 to 80 per cent than those of the competitive products. Thus, facts prove that the renown of Swiss cheese has not

been usurped, as it continues to find numerous connoisseurs throughout the world who are eager to purchase it, in spite of its high price.

Swiss factory to be built in South America.

The Swiss firms of Sandoz, Geigy and Ciba are going to establish jointly a big factory for chemical products, in Brazil, in the region of Resende. This plant will be the most important of its kind in South America. Building will be started in 1957, and production will begin in 1959. It is anticipated that the initial annual output will amount to 300 tons of aniline and to 150 tons of chemical products for the pharmaceutical industries and for tanneries.

A Swiss firm produces an interesting new device.

The progress realised, during the last few years, in regard to radio-telephony, has made it possible for the Swiss firm of Messrs. Hasler Ltd., of Bern, to launch a new system by means of which persons employed in big plants, administrations, hospitals, etc., can be easily found, wherever they may be. Thus, persons who are often obliged to be absent from the office or place where they usually work, will carry a small receiving-set, no larger than a cigarette-case, somewhere on their person; when needed, a transmitter, with a low frequency current, operated by the

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telephone girl at the central board, will produce a signal in the form of a whistle emitted by the receiving-set of the person who is being sought for, who will then immediately know that he is required. This electro-technical novelty will be exhibited and demonstrated together with a great many others, at the forthcoming Swiss Industries Fair.

Switzerland's foreign trade at the beginning of the year.

The general evolution of Swiss foreign trade, as observed in 1956, persists, and imports, during the first month of the current year, have again increased to a considerable extent and have attained the record figure of 740 million francs. This high figure is explained partly by the fact that there has been a certain rise in prices. Nevertheless, the fact remains that purchases of cereals, of liquid fuel for heating purposes and of motor cars have gone up, whilst imports of other commodities have maintained a satisfactory level. Exports, on the other hand, have not followed this movement and show a slight decline. This decline, however, is of a seasonal character.

The Swiss Labour Market.

As is nearly always the case, at this time of the year, the evolution of the Labour Market has been marked by a recrudescence of winter unemployment. The cold and the snow have caused a partial stoppage of work in the building trade. At the end of January there were some 9,000 unemployed, in the whole of Switzerland, whilst the number of jobs offered amounted to nearly 6,000.

New Swiss-American Agreement.

A Swiss Delegation has just signed, in Washington, an additional Protocol to the Agreement on Air Navigation Lines, concluded between Switzerland and the United States, in 1945. This new agreement will make it possible for Switzerland to make use of some supplementary stopping-places in her air traffic with North America, namely in Portugal and in Germany, the necessary agreements having already been concluded with these two countries.

An outstanding Swiss realisation.

A big factory in the watchmaking industry, namely the firm of Ebauches S.A., at Neuchâtel, has just produced a quartz standard generator. This high precision apparatus has been created in Switzerland with the collaboration of the Federal Polytechnical School and can be used equally well as a standard of frequency or as a chronometer. Its guaranteed precision is of one milli-second per day. However, the official results registered by the Neuchâtel Observatory show that the average precision is of one tenthousandth of a second per day. Standards of this kind have already been ordered by several observatories in Switzerland and abroad.




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