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COMMERCIAL NEWS

A Franco-Swiss Watchmaking Agreement.

The negotiations which have been taking place for several months already, in the Franco-Swiss Watchmaking Commission, have now resulted in a new Agreement being signed on the 16th April. This Agreement provides for a closer collaboration between the two industries, as well as for a considerable extension in the trade in watchmaking products, between Switzerland and France.

Switzerland and Cyprus Constitution.

We learn that it is a Swiss, Mr. Marcel Bridel, a professor at the University of Lausanne, who has been designated by Athens and Ankara as juridical Counsellor, in the Commission charged with the task of elaborating the constitution of the new independent State of Cyprus.

Swiss railway rolling stock.

With a view to the modernisation of their rolling stock, the Swiss Federal Railways put into service, last year, no fewer than 1,476 new vehicles, namely 201 standardised carriages for the transport of passengers, one Pullman car, seven dining-cars and 1,267 freight cars of various types, for carrying goods.

Renewal of "Labour peace" in machinery industry.

The 1937 Convention on the regulation of working conditions and wages in the Swiss metallurgical industry was one of the first "Agreements" to establish social peace and to open the way to collective labour agreements, which are essential nowadays. Concluded originally for a period of ten years, this Convention has been renewed four times. In view of the fact that the last five-year period is due to expire very shortly, negotiations have already started between the employers' and the workers' associations which are interested in its renewal.

The Convention has proved very beneficial from the social point of view; it is to be hoped that the contracting parties will be animated, when renewing it, with that evident desire for mutual understanding which has not ceased to predominate during these last twenty-two years.

Swiss foreign trade during first quarter of 1959.

Switzerland's unfavourable trade balance for the first quarter of 1959 amounted to 177.6 million Swiss francs as against 238.2 million for the corresponding period of 1958. The decline, amounting to more than 60 million Swiss francs, is due to a decrease in value

in respect of imports and a corresponding increase in that of exports.

Franco-Swiss trade relations.

As the Franco-Swiss Trade Agreement is due to terminate shortly, it has been prorogated until 31st December 1959, by means of an Agreement which has just been signed by the two countries. This new Agreement also provides for a considerable increase in industrial quotas for the whole of 1959.

Swiss-American relations.

It was on 30th April 1830 that the first Consulate-General of the United States of America was established in Switzerland, in Basle; it was one of the first to be set up by the young American Republic. The present United States Ambassador to Switzerland has decided that, in future, 30th April shall be celebrated under the name of "Representation Day".

Swiss watchmaking at the Basle Industries Fair.

It was in 1922, in Switzerland, that the very first wrist-watches which wind up automatically were invented. This new kind of watch enjoyed great commercial success some twelve years later, when it had been perfected. To-day, the automatic and water-tight wrist-watch represents a very important percentage of the production of the Swiss watchmaking trade. Nearly ten million of these watches are made per year, for men, as well as for ladies. For a long time to come the automatic and water-resisting wrist-watch will remain the article that is best adapted to the conditions of modern life. Proof of this can be found in the fact that out of 46 novelties exhibited at the Basle Industries Fair, 15 technical novelties were in respect of the automatic wrist-watch. Among these may be mentioned the automatic watch "Polerouter-Jet", which is the flattest automatic watch in the world, the first to be as flat as an ordinary wrist-watch. Mention should also be made of the flattest automatic watch-calendar, which has just made its appearance, in the shape of a lady's model — this is a novelty.

Switzerland leads in electronic watchmaking.

A big watchmaking firm from Geneva exhibited the smallest quartz clock in the world, at the Basle Industries Fair. This clock is enclosed in a case measuring 50.6 cubic inches, and being 5.12 inches in length; it is propelled by means of a battery of accumulators which ensures a running time of 70

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hours, without any recharging; its consumption of energy amounts to 15 milliwatt. This little clock, which has an oscillator of quartz crystals and an electric micromotor of 0.78 inches in diameter and 1.38 inches in height, is a real high precision electronic clock. Nevertheless, it is in no way a laboratory instrument of a unique character, but simply a clock which can be easily moved and which gives one the right time, for everyday purposes.

New locomotive for the Swiss Federal Railways.

The Swiss Federal Railways are at present testing a new electric Diesel locomotive, for shunting purposes. This 600 h.p. machine, possessing an 8-cylinder Diesel engine — which, together with the mechanical parts, was made at Winterthur, whilst the electric parts were made in Geneva — is the first of its kind in Switzerland. Possessing a relatively high speed of 65 km. per hour, it can be used not only for shunting, but also, in case of need, for hauling trains along the ordinary lines. The locomotive is also equipped with a particularly interesting innovation, namely, an electric brake. Although usual on the electric locomotives of lesser power which run on the mountain lines, this type of brake is being used here for the first time on an electric Diesel engine of this power.

SWISS FASHIONS FOR GREAT BRITAIN.

One of the biggest overseas fashion drives since the war starts presently.

The Export Association of the Swiss Clothing Industry, comprising over 100 manufacturers of men's, women's and children's clothing, are staging a spectacular Fashion Show at the Dorchester Hotel Ballroom on Tuesday, 6th October. This Show will be the highlight of a Swiss Fortnight which starts on Monday, 5th October, with a ceremonial opening by H.E. the Swiss Ambassador to Great Britain.

Twelve Swiss mannequins, two male models and two children will come from Zurich specially to show the clothes, and buyers from all over the country will be invited to watch the presentation and then meet the manufacturers to see additional garments, again in the Ballroom of the Dorchester Hotel.

Many of the buyers will be travelling to Zurich for their Export Week in the middle of May, and this visit will be closely followed by a large party of journalists from magazines, periodicals, national and provincial newspapers who, during a flying three-day

visit, will see the clothes that have been ordered by the British buyers.

Monsieur Hans de Watteville, Secretary of the Swiss Clothing Industry, says: "Many of our Members already export to Great Britain, but, in view of the fact that the British public enjoys being able to buy from a wide range of foreign clothes, our Members are making an all-out effort to increase their exports to this country, thus offering an even greater variety to the British public. Our Association is a young one, having been founded only a few years ago. All of our Members, however, are most enthusiastic and are looking forward enormously to the October Show."

DAWN AND SUNSET IN THE MOUNTAINS.

"Noch ruh'n im weichen Morgenglanz".

In slumber wrapped, all nature rests,
Kissed softly by the rosy dawn,
And o'er the heights and snowy crests
A silvry mist its veil has drawn.
Awake, awake, awake. . .

The glorious sun with purple glow
Now deepens morning's tender blush.
The birds are singing sweet and low
And Sabbath smiles in peaceful hush.
Awake, awake, awake. . .

But when the fiery torch of war
Is kindled and on God-sent wing
Our freedom's eagles proudly soar,
Throughout the land the call shall ring:
Awake, awake, awake. . .

Translated by J.J.F.S.

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