

Official opening of the new premises of the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade

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And here is another scheme which so far is very much in the air but about which the *Leader*, October 26th, has secured the following particulars :

"The most modern underground railway in the world is planned for Zurich, Switzerland. It will be only three miles long at first but its single carriage train will do 125 miles an hour. The running time from end to end of the first short section will be 2½ minutes. Biggest technical innovation is that the carriages, designed by Professor Wiesinger of the Swiss Institute of Technology, can't possibly derail. Both wheels and rails are placed at an angle. They slope outwards towards the base and the flanges of the wheels grip under the inner surface of the inclined rails, so it's physically impossible for the carriage to lift off the track.

The locomotive carriages will be about 80 feet long, weighing 15 tons each, and will be driven by a 300 horse power Diesel engine. Each will accommodate 200 passengers.

The initial section of the new tube, which will link the centre of the city with Oerliken, one of the most densely populated suburbs, will take two and a half years to build at a cost of £600,000. Later the system will gradually be extended along the lake shore and out into the countryside."

* * *

A huge increase in motor-driven vehicles has taken place since September 1945 when petrol rationing ceased. The number was then 46,212 and reached on July 1st this year 108,397, about a third being private cars. The figure for motor cycles for the same period showed a sixfold increase.

* * *

Grenchen is likely to be our emporium for the marketing of civil aircraft and the centre for instructing and training civil pilots. At the aviation school under the direction of Dr. Farner anyone who has not been involved in police court proceedings can acquire the necessary qualification and obtain a flying licence at a cost of Frs. 450 to Frs. 600. It also operates a hire service under which light planes can be secured at an inclusive fee of Frs. 36 to Frs. 90 per flying hour, according to size; for longer distances and airtaxis the charges are based on the rates fixed by the large international companies. In conjunction, though separately, Dr. Farner also superintends an aircraft factory and repair shop which has, it is stated, sold over 200 light aircraft since the beginning of this year.

Economics

A slight increase in inland postal rates has been decided upon by the Federal Council; it comes into force on January 1st next and will result in an annual revenue increase of about seven million francs.

* * *

After protracted negotiations the guild of Swiss bank clerks and the Schweiz. Kauf. Verein — stated NOT to have acted in unison — have concluded an agreement with our banks. Apart from a general salary-rise of 12% in addition to the existing cost of living bonus, uniform working conditions and a distinct classification have been decided upon.

* * *

Instructive information is gleaned from statistics now appearing in the home press. The wholesale price

of coal before the war varied little from Frs. 3.50 per cwt but gradually rose to four times this figure in 1945, viz. Frs. 13.46. In the same period Benzine (petrol) rose from Frs. 12.90 to Frs. 78 and at one time in 1944 touched Frs. 87.60. The industrialisation of our country during the last few decades shows marked intensification in a general way; exceptions are the cotton industry which in 1895 employed 35,000 hands which gradually diffused to 20,000 in 1944 and the embroidery branch which before the first world war gave work to 29,000 people and according to the recent census employs scarcely 2,000.

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE NEW PREMISES OF THE SWISS OFFICE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE.

The above-mentioned office which hitherto occupied temporary quarters at the Swiss Legation, 18, Montagu Place, W.1, has now moved to new premises at 1, Great Cumberland Place, W.1.

To celebrate this event a small party was given by Mr. A. J. Stahelin, the Delegate for the United Kingdom, who, together with his charming wife, received the guests.

Mr. Stahelin, in welcoming the guests, expressed his appreciation to the Swiss Legation for having, for over a year extended their hospitality to his administration; he mentioned that, although a separation has now taken place, that this would not mean a divorce, and expressed the wish that the always cordial relationship would be continued in the future. He especially expressed his appreciation to Monsieur de Grafenried, Commercial Counsellor at the Legation, for his help and advice.

Monsieur A. Escher, the Swiss Chargé d'Affaires, in the absence of the Swiss Minister, Monsieur Paul Ruegger, in a happy little speech in "Schwyzerdütsch," thanked Mr. Stahelin, on behalf of the guests, for the "house-warming" party, saying that the relations between the Legation and the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade have always remained very happy, and expressed the wish that the relationship should remain so. He then declared the new premises officially as opened.

Monsieur de Grafenried, Counsellor of Legation, referred to the successful collaboration between the two administrations, expressing the wish and hope that, although separated, their mutual good relations would continue.

The new offices, which are spacious and comfortable, were then inspected and we, on our part, wish the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade every success in their new headquarters.

The following gentlemen attended the opening :

Dr. A. Escher, Swiss Chargé d'Affaires; Messieurs de Grafenried, P. H. Aubaret, Ch. Weibel, H. Bähler, H. Suter; Messrs. E. Steiner, A. Renou, Dr. P. de Wolf, J. J. Boos, W. Deutsch, V. P. Ceresole, A. P. Moehr, C. Voegeli, John Steiner and A. C. Boller. The Swiss Press was represented by Dr. Egli, Gottfried Keller and A. Stauffer.

The following were unavoidably prevented from attending: Messrs. C. Wüthrich, A. Oboussier, A. Bon and P. F. Boehringer.