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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Anglo-Swiss Trade Negotiations.

Under the leadership of Mr. Cohen, Under-Secretary at the Board of Trade, M. Schaffner, the Delegate of the Federal Council for trade agreements, the Anglo-Swiss Trade Negotiations started in London on Monday, May 5th. Details will be given in the next issue of the *Swiss Observer*.

The new economic Agreement between Switzerland and Germany.

The economic negotiations between Switzerland and the German Federal Republic ended on the 25th April with the conclusion of a new agreement regulating goods and payments traffic. The new agreement will be in force until 31st March, 1953.

On the whole, the new agreement is similar to the former one, though it does reflect the improved position of Germany's foreign trade. Despite the fact that Swiss exports to the German Federal Republic were slowed down as a result of a reduction of liberalisation, German imports have again been released up to 60% on 31st January, 1952, and since the 1st April this figure has been stepped up still more, namely to 75%. The renewed liberalisation effects numerous Swiss exports, particularly textiles, shoes, machines and chemical products. A contingent totalling 167m. marks has been set for those Swiss products the export of which to Germany has not been liberalised.

The Swiss Industries Fair in Basle has closed its gates.

The Swiss Industries Fair in Basle closed its gates on 29th April, after eleven days of extremely successful show period. The number of visitors was 420,000, or nearly as many as in the previous year. A total of 16,000 visitors came from abroad, of which 15,000 were from European countries and the other 1,000 from overseas.

An Invention of the Swiss Watchmaking Industry: the Pendulum with Automatic Winding by Light.

In the experimental workshops of Messrs. Patek Philippe of Geneva, light has been used, for the past year, as the source of energy for automatic winding of a pendulum clock. This prototype was publically shown, for the first time, at the Swiss Industries Fair at Basle.

Increase of the national Income.

The net national income in Switzerland in 1951 amounted to 19.5 milliard fcs. This figure is made up as follows: Income from work 11.7 milliard fcs. (last year this figure stood at 10.8 md. fcs.), income from business 4 md. fcs. (last year it was 3.8 md.), income from capital 3.8 md. fcs. (last year 3.5 md.). Thus it will be seen that income from work registers the greatest increase. This is due, apart from the generally favourable employment position, above all also to wage increases which have taken place in the past year.

In Switzerland everybody will soon have his own Telephone.

Telephone traffic made a noticeable increase last year; a total of 704 million calls were registered compared with 657 million in 1950. 58% of the calls were local, 41% trunk calls and the remaining 1% international calls. There are now 952,000 telephone connections in Switzerland, that is to say 56,000 more than in the previous year. Quite obviously it will not be long now until everybody in this country has his own telephone.

The Wholesale prices have slightly decreased.

At the end of March, 1952, the index for wholesale prices stood at 222.4, if we take August, 1939, as 100

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points. Thus there was a drop of 0.9% when compared with the previous month. This development is again due mainly to a drop in textile and non-iron metal prices.

The Activity of the Rhine Ports in March.

In March, 1952, both the Rhine ports at Basle registered a goods turnover of 321,800 tons, or a little less than in March, 1951. The number of river boats which landed amounted to 610.

The Control of Swiss Material.

Swiss industry can only maintain its high level of quality by careful and constant checking of material. With this aim in view an institute was formed, already in 1880, which worked in close co-operation with the Technical Highschool at Zurich. After various changes and enlargements this institute developed into the federal material control department, known as EMPA. Later a number of individual businesses and industrial groups formed their own research and experimental laboratories. The material-testing laboratory attached to the Polytechnicum of the University of Lausanne also deserves special mention.

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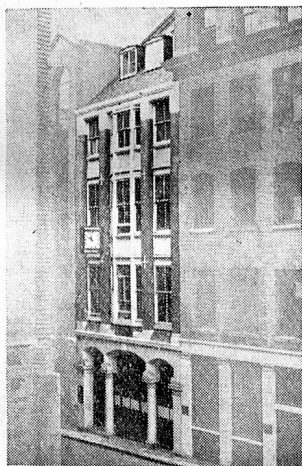
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