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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Gift of a Swiss watch to a queen.

During their stay in Switzerland, Their Majesties King Mahendra and Queen Lakshmi, who are the rulers of Nepal, visited a big Genevese watchmaking factory. On this occasion, a watch, bearing the arms of the Royal family on its dial, was presented to the Queen of Nepal, for whom it had been specially made.

Lack of female staff in the Swiss Administration of Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones.

It is the Swiss Administration of Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones which employs the largest female staff in Switzerland. Indeed, no fewer than 7,300 women (21 per cent of the total staff) are working at present for the official institution, which pays the greatest attention to the recruitment and to the training of its employees. In pursuance of this the Swiss P.T.T. have just produced a propaganda film entitled "The Unknown Helpers", which is devoted entirely to the manifold activities of the women telephone and telegraph operators.

European economic integration and the watchmaking industry.

The representatives of the German, British, French and Swiss watchmaking industries, who are now meeting in Geneva, have proceeded with their exchange of multilateral views regarding the problems first arising out of the economic integration of Europe. They have given their full adherence to a formula of co-operation, which is as extensive and complete as it is possible to make it; after which, going on to deal with questions relating to their trade, they discussed a certain number of aims they have in common, based on the principle of a progressive and reciprocal liberalization of trade in the various products of the watchmaking industry, in a broad spirit of economic and industrial co-operation.

Insurance, a Swiss export item.

Switzerland is to-day one of the principal exporters of insurance. Among the 60 Swiss licensed insurance companies, 31 have foreign trade; some work with almost every country in the world. One third of the total premiums deposited in private Swiss insurance companies come from foreign countries. According to the last available statistics, this sum reaches some 23,000 milliard Swiss francs. It is the Swiss companies of reinsurance which are the most concerned with 90% of foreign business. In accident and other damage insurance, 67% of the premiums come from abroad, while for life insurance this proportion is only 11%.

Swiss industry at the exhibition "Atoms for peace" in Geneva.

At the second international exhibition "Atoms for Peace", which was held in Geneva at the beginning of September, one could see, in the section of Swiss material, a whole range of appliance and installations

for nuclear physics, constructed by Landis & Gyr Co. of Zoug. There are apparatuses for protection against radioactive rays, in particular an automatic inspection apparatus for the detection of radioactivity in the air, which has been tested for some time already, especially during the International Geophysical Year. These installations serve as a permanent control against radioactivity in the air; a large number of them are already used in weather stations all over the world. The installation for the inspection of radioactivity in water has also proved to be very interesting. It is useful either as a control of the water used in atomic centers or for industries using radioactive material.

Temporary halt in Switzerland's oil prospection.

Prospecting undertaken a few months ago in the French speaking part of Switzerland, near Lausanne, to find petroleum deposits, has recently been given up — temporarily at least — and the technical installations partially dismantled. This work has nevertheless provided some interesting data; the drills went down to a depth of 4,925 feet.

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Switzerland builds a dam of earth.

Near Goeschenen, in Switzerland, on the famous Gotthard Railway line, an immense dam for the storing of water for hydroelectric power is presently in construction. The interesting fact is that the dam will not be made out of concrete as is usually the case, but out of earth. It is the largest in Switzerland constructed according to this interesting technique. The central core of the dam, which is impervious to water, is made of material found at the site. Clay is also used but this must be brought from another part of the country. The remainder — alluvial deposits and rocks — is dug out of the mountain itself. This immense undertaking was noteworthy for its extreme mechanisation. The method used has the advantage of being less expensive than that of concrete and, in particular, does not need great transports of cement and uses less manual labour; besides, dams built in this way become an integral part of the mountain and are not visible like those made of concrete. This is of course not a small construction for the basin created will have a capacity of 75 million cubic meters and its total production of energy will amount to 320 million kwh.

Swiss machines at the exhibition "Atoms for Peace".

At an International "Atoms for Peace" exhibition, which has recently opened in Geneva, one can see a small 1.33 model of a project nuclear power plant, combined with a district heating station for a total heat output of 30,000 kw. This plant, which is intended for the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, in Zurich, will have to be installed in a chamber, some 131 feet underground. It has been worked out in detail by a Swiss study group, with the collaboration of three important Swiss firms, which are the Oerlikon Engineering Company, Escher Wyss, Ltd., of Zurich and Sulzer Brothers, of Winterthur, the last-mentioned firm having, moreover, been entrusted with the overall planning. The reactor, which will be housed in a chamber of 65 feet in diameter and of 131 feet in height, uses predominantly natural uranium as fuel, whilst the total quantity of heavy water required amounts to 18 tons.

Swiss food specialities in Germany.

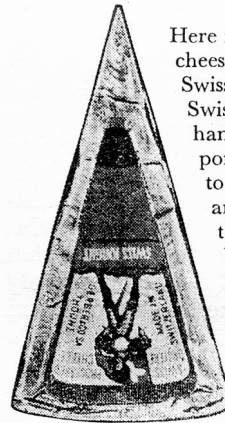
At the "LEFA", which is the name given to the International Exhibition of Food Products and Specialities, being held presently in Hambourg, a great many Swiss manufacturers of cheese, chocolate, biscuits, confectionery and beverages, are exhibiting their wares in the competition with nineteen other countries. Swiss collective participation, with the collaboration of the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade, the Swiss National Tourist Office, the "Swissair" and the Union for Trade in Cheese, is to be found in the form of a charming Swiss village, in which the visitors can enjoy the samples of cheese which are offered them. Furthermore, another International Exhibition of Colonial products and Food specialities will open, in Munich, at the end of September, under the name of "IKOFA", Switzerland will also take part in it, together with forty-three other countries.

Credits for the Lausanne-Geneva high-speed motor-road.

The Legislative Council of the Canton of Vaud has approved the construction of a high-speed motor-

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road between Geneva and Lausanne, the cost of which, on Vaudois territory, is estimated to 210 million Swiss francs. It has granted the Cantonal Government a credit of 30 million in order that the preliminary work may be started and it has allowed the authorities to proceed with the necessary expropriations. In its turn, the Federal Government has approved a project, which establishes Federal participation to the expenses at 80 per cent for the Canton of Vaud and at 70 per cent for the Canton of Geneva.

Paper consumption in Switzerland.

Switzerland uses 850,000 cubic meters of wood, annually, for the manufacture of paper. Of this amount, half a million cubic meters are supplied by the domestic forestry industry, the remainder having to be imported. In 1900, the quantity of paper consumed in Switzerland represented 33 pounds per inhabitant and per year. In 1957, the figure attained was 172 pounds, whereas in the United-States and in Canada it amounted to 420 pounds. The total production obtained from the Swiss forests amounts to 3.8 million cubic meters per year.

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Soirée Familiale.**

A report about the "Soirée Familiale", which took place on Wednesday, September 17th, will appear in our next issue.

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