

Commercial News

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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Switzerland's hovercraft establishes an unofficial record.

The boat provided with an air cushion, which was built in Zurich by the engineer Karl Weiland, has just established, under the control of the police, an unofficial world record, on the Lake of Zurich, where it attained a speed of 43.5 miles per hour.

A Swiss school for the training of business executives.

A School for the Training of the Essential Staff of a business undertaking or plant has just been established in Lausanne. This new institution, which is called "ECADE", is being given support by several industrial concerns and by various personalities. It is intended for the purpose of providing a possibility for university graduates, as well as for foremen who have been engaged in practical work, to finish their training in regard to the management and running of an establishment.

A new Swiss welding works.

A new firm was recently started in Zurich, under the name of Fontargen, for the manufacture and the sale of special electrodes, rods for welding and fluxes for low heat input joining. The advantages of this technique are self-evident; the most important are: minimum stresses, no deformation and no harmful structural alterations, together with a maximum economy of filler material, time and labour. This new company has been founded by a firm of machine-tool manufacturers of world renown, which has been also specialising for a great number of years in the making of electrodes.

Switzerland at Squaw Valley.

Switzerland is not represented only by sports teams at the Winter Olympic Games which are now taking place at Squaw Valley. There is also to be found there, a team of Swiss specialists who are entrusted with the task of the chronometric timing of the competitions, for the account of the Longines Watchmaking Company. In an era of increasingly keen competition, the choice made by those in charge of the big international sporting event, shows very plainly that, in the domain of precision, the prestige of Swiss watchmaking remains intact.

A huge Swiss machine for the Near-East.

It has been learnt that the Electricity Station in Damascus has given an order to an important works in Baden (Switzerland) for a steam turbine of 15,000 kilowatts, costing nearly 2.8 million Swiss francs.

An original machine for nibbling sheet metal.

A machine-manufacturing firm in Zurich has just put on the market a new machine for nibbling sheet-iron, which makes it possible to perform a large number of operations, such as shearing, peening, flanging, bevel edge nibbling, beading and folding, by means of various special adjustable attachments. These machines are very advantageous, both for single purpose work and for small and medium standardised production, because they enable one to perform work which formerly necessitated the creation and the adaptation of special tools, which were very expensive, to much bigger machines.

New Swiss apparatus for testing grinding.

In precision technique there are operations which are of such delicacy that their supervision is impossible, even for the most practised eye. For this reason, a Swiss firm has just produced an apparatus which renders it possible to control acoustically and by means of an optical signal the degree of rectification required. This new device consists of a microphone, which is fixed on to the piece of work that has got to be rectified, and which through the intermediary of an amplifier, transmits the vibrations of the object in question to a receiver in the shape of a stethoscope and a magic eye. In this way, the supervisor is able to perceive, without even approaching the machine, simply by acoustical and optical means, the degree to which grindstone is working. The sensibility of this apparatus can be extended to such a point that it even becomes possible to perceive the exhalation produced by the grindstone when it does not touch the piece of work itself, but only comes very close to it.

SWISS CREDIT BANK (CREDIT SUISSE), ZURICH

The Annual General Meeting of shareholders was held on 27th February, 1960. The accounts for the year 1959 were adopted and on the recommendation of the board the dividend was increased to 10% (against 9% in the previous year). The yearly turnover of the bank rose by about 30%. The Net Profit for the year, after providing for taxation of SFrs.12,638,541 (previous year 9,153,365) and depreciation and special reserves SFrs.8,922,081 (previous year 8,907,682), available for distribution, including SFrs.3,119,819 brought forward, was SFrs. 33,092,886 (against 30,299,820 in 1958). After allocation of SFrs.10 million to General Reserves, which will therefore be SFrs.110 million (with issued capital SFrs.165 million) and a further SFrs.2 million contribution to the Staff Pension Fund, the balance on Profit and Loss account to be carried forward is SFrs.4,180,386.—

The General Meeting re-elected members of the board due for statutory retirement; in addition Mr. W. Schweizer of Zurich, General Manager of "Zurich" Insurance Company, was elected a new member of the board.

DIE UHRENAUSFUHREN IM JAHRE 1959

Im Jahre 1959 haben die Gesamtausfuhren der Schweiz 7,274 million Franken erreicht und sind um 625 millionen Franken oder 9.4 Prozent höher als 1958. Auf dem Uhrensektor, bemerkt "La Suisse Horlogère", ist die Lage nicht so befriedigend, die Totalausfuhren von Uhrenprodukten belaufen sich wohl auf 1,125 millionen Franken, haben aber gegenüber 1958 nur um sechs millionen Franken oder 0.6 Prozent zugenommen. Dabei verzeichnet dieses letztere Jahr einen Rückgang von 185 millionen Franken oder 14.2 Prozent auf das Rekordjahr 1957 erreichte Resultat von 1,303 millionen Franken.

Der Anteil der Uhrenindustrie an den Total-
exporten der Schweiz beträgt für 1959, 15.5 prozent
gegenüber 16.8 prozent im Jahre 1958 und 19.4 prozent
im Jahre 1957.

Verschiedene äussere Faktoren können diese
Gesamthft gesehen ungünstige Entwicklung erklären :
"Sättigung auf gewissen Märkten, Importrestrik-
tionen auf andern, Zölle oder prohibitive Prämien
anderswo, sie spiegelt aber teilweise auch die
unheilvollen Auswirkungen gewisser innerer Probleme
unserer Industrie wider."

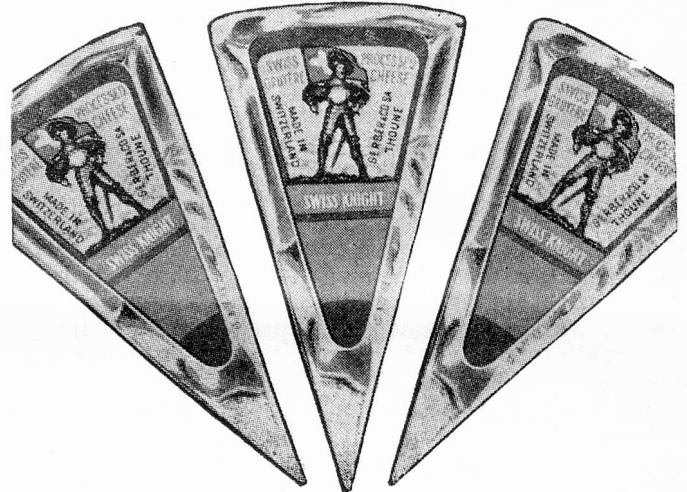
Trotzdem ist aber festzustellen, dass 1959 total-
wertmässig gegenüber 1958 eine Verbesserung der
Lage eingetreten ist. Der Aufschwung machte sich
ab Juli bemerkbar und war während der zweiten
Zeitspanne des Jahres genügend, um die sehr
enttäuschende Ereignisse des ersten Halbjahres zu
kompensieren.

Im Detail jedoch sind die Gründe zur Beunruhi-
gung zahlreich. 1959 haben die Ausfuhren von Uhren
und Uhrwerken um 3.95 millionen Stück (plus 11.9
prozent) jedoch nur um 4.2 millionen Franken (plus
0.4 prozent) zugenommen. Innerhalb eines Jahres ist
der Durchschnittspreis dieser Artikel von 30.82
Franken auf 27.67 Franken gesunken.

Auffallend ist die Verminderung, wenn nicht der
Qualität, so doch des Wertes im Sektor der Uhren, wo
die exportierte Stückzahl um 1.49 Millionen (plus 6.1
prozent) angestiegen ist, wogegen der Wert um 26.5
millionen Franken (minus 3.2 prozent) abgenommen
hat. Damit ist der Durchschnittswert von 33.69 auf
33.74 Franken zurückgegangen.

Auf dem Gebiet der Uhrenwerke ist eine Zunahme
von 2.46 millionen Stück (plus 27.9 prozent) und 30.7
millionen Franken (plus 15.3 prozent) festzustellen.
Auch hier ist also eine Verminderung des Durch-
schnittswertes, der sich auf 20.57 Franken gegen 22.82
Franken beläuft, festzustellen. Eine beunruhigende
Feststellung ist im weitern die Tatsache, dass der
Anteil der Uhrenwerke zu den Ausfuhren von Uhren
und Uhrwerken zugenommen hat. In absoluten
Zahlen und nicht mehr in Differenzen ist die Lage wie
folgt : Die Schweiz hat letztes Jahr 26,014,000 Uhren
im Werte von 799,721,000 Franken im Vergleich zu
24,523,000 Uhren im Werte von 826,215,000 Franken
im Jahre 1958 exportiert. Im Jahre 1959 hat sie
11,248,000 Uhrwerke ausgeführt im Vergleich zu
8,791,000 im Jahre 1958. Der Wert dieser Uhrwerke
betrug 231,210,000.— Franken (200,603,000 Franken
im Jahre 1958).

Die Ausfuhren von Fournitüren ihrerseits sind
relativ stabil geblieben. Eine fühlbare Zunahme ist
für die Ausfuhren von Uhrengeläusen festzustellen,
diese haben 1.2, millionen Stück im Werte von 6.9
millionen erreicht. Für die Grossuhren ist bei einem
totalvon 15.9 millionen Franken eine leichte Verbessi-
rung um 2.2 prozent eingetreten. Verglichen mit den
Jahren 1955 bis 1957 jedoch besteht noch ein
beträchtlicher Rückstand. Abschliessend stellt das
offizielle Organ der Schweizerischen Uhrenkammer
fest, dass die im 1958 eingetretene Rückschritts-
bewegung zum Stillstand gekommen ist. Es bleibt
jedoch noch viel zu tun, um den Weg der Expansion
und der allgemeinen Prosperität wieder aufzunehmen.



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30th SWISS WATCH FAIR IN BASLE

In connection with the 44th Swiss Industries Fair, there will also be the 30th Swiss Watch Fair to be held from 23rd April to 3rd May 1960 in Basle.

Having regard to the undoubtedly predominating position occupied by the production of Swiss watches — Switzerland manufactures something like one-half of all the watches produced in the world and supplies 85 out of every 100 watches bought by countries with no production of their own — the Watch Fair in Basle, with its 160 exhibitors manufacturing every type of watch, is the most comprehensive and important exhibition of goods covered by this branch of production. It provides visitors with a unique display of the wide range of the goods produced by the Swiss watchmaking industry in which, greatly to the advantage of buyers from all over the world, the never-tiring spirit of invention combines with the experience of centuries.

In addition to the Watch Fair in the narrow sense of the term, there will also be in Basle a noteworthy display by some 30 exhibitors of public clocks and electric clocks together with tools and accessories for the watchmaking industry.

Another striking exhibit will be the Jewellery Pavilion with a choice display of the dazzling products of the leading Swiss manufacturers which will not fail to draw the attention of experts in the trade and the general public.

* * *

Increasing Demand for High-Class Products of the Swiss Textile and Clothing Industry.

The new live trend on the textile markets has had a very early repercussion on the various sectors of the Swiss textile and clothing industry. Increased demand from foreign countries is just as much responsible as home consumption for this improvement in the general position in an industry which has always been closely influenced by export trade. It is becoming more and more evident that interest is being aroused by the top-line range of high-class goods to which Swiss production has always devoted attention for the simple reason that competition made it imperative to do so.

Probably the best opportunity of obtaining a really comprehensive idea of Swiss production of fashion goods will be afforded by the Swiss Industries Fair, due to take place in 1960 from 23rd April to 3rd May. The special textile group comprises some 150 individual stands and the trade shows "Création", "Madame-Monsieur" and the "Knitwear Centre". The increased demand for high-class textile goods is expected to arouse renewed interest on a wide scale from the textile trade at the display presented by the textile and clothing industry in Basle.

CITIZEN AND SOLDIER

By DR. E. BIERI

For the past 150 years no foreign soldiers set foot on Swiss territory except as refugees. Switzerland has known no aggression despite the fact that it is located in the middle of a continent that meantime suffered three great wars involving some or all bordering states. How can we explain this small country's fortunate escape?

Certainly not by an out-of-the-way strategic position. Quite to the contrary, situated in the heart of Europe, Switzerland holds a key position, controlling the shortest Alpine passes connecting North and South. Furthermore, as the German and French armies clashed on the Rhine it would have offered great advantages for turning the enemy's flank. And surely Switzerland does not owe its preservation from war solely to the formal declaration by the European powers after the Congress of Vienna that they would respect the inviolability of the Swiss Confederation always. The main reason was Switzerland's own effort: a policy of strictest neutrality and military preparedness, in short "armed neutrality."

During World War II Switzerland was in a position to mobilize 800,000 soldiers and auxiliary troops, that is almost one-fifth of the entire population. In no other country did the armed forces reach such a high percentage. To-day 10% of the population have had military training and are assigned to the different units. Every year 300,000 Swiss do their military service, 10% are recruits receiving the initial training of 4 months, the rest attend the repetition courses of 3 weeks. In the course of the forty years during which an able-bodied citizen is liable to military service the time served totals at least one year; training for non-commissioned officers and officers takes considerably longer.

Typical for the Swiss system is the fact that military service is divided into a relatively short basic training and a series of even shorter repetition courses. Characteristic also is the total lack of a standing army. Switzerland has not adopted the mixed system of other countries consisting of a small career army of volunteers and the big mass of "conscripts"; there exists but one army to which all belong. We thus have the unique situation of an army actually training itself: the senior officers are teachers and pupils at the same time because there are no career men to assume the task of training. A corps of 550 permanently employed army instructors only assists the militia staff in training an army of 500,000 men. The results obtained are good, not merely in a relative sense, considering the short training periods but with regard to combat efficiency which of course

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