

Facts & Figures

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FACTS & FIGURES.By **THÉO CHOPARD.**

The Conference of high government officials from Denmark, Great Britain, Austria, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland, which had been held in Stockholm, came to an end recently. It had been convened for the purpose of discussing the preliminary conditions and the possibilities for the project, set up by those countries, for a small free trade area. The chief aim consists in obtaining a contact with the customs and politico-economic development of the European Common Market. In the final communiqué issued by the Conference it was stressed that the representatives of these countries had carefully examined ways and means which might prove suitable for opening up new negotiations with the European Common Market, with a view to achieving a multilateral association of all the countries belonging to the O.E.E.C. A plan has been elaborated for the consideration of the relevant Governments, which provides for the abolition, within the space of ten years, of the customs duties and the quotas levied on and affecting industrial products. To start with, as from 1st July 1960, industrial duties in the countries concerned will be reduced by 20 per cent. A special agreement is to be worked out in regard to the agricultural branch. It is expected that these countries will hold a Conference on a ministerial level, in July and in Stockholm, in order to comment on the Experts' Report and to make the necessary decisions.

During May of this year, imports of goods into Switzerland rose by about 45 million francs, as compared with the corresponding month last year, thus attaining the value of 660 million francs, whilst exports increased in value by approximately 30 million and totalled 560 million francs. The most important increases in imports, as compared with May 1958 were in respect of deliveries from the U.S.A. and from Great Britain, whilst the improvement in exports is due mainly to bigger purchases on the part of West Germany and the United States of America. Deliveries to China and to Great Britain also showed an upward trend. On the other hand, sales to Argentina, France and Australia registered a decline.

In an attempt to combat the unemployment which exists in that region, the Municipal Administration of Bornem, in Belgium, has just concluded a contract with a Swiss firm, providing for the building of a factory for the production of electro-mechanical apparatus. The municipality has donated twenty hectares of ground for the setting up of this factory. The first building, measuring 200 metres, is to be ready this year. This factory will provide employment for 300 workers belonging to Bornem and the adjacent region.

After a DC-7C aircraft belonging to Swissair had recently accomplished the flight between Geneva and New York in 12 hours and 21 minutes, a second DC-7C owned by Swissair has now flown from Zurich to New York in the best-time of 12 hours and 33 minutes. This machine carried 42 passengers, a crew of eight, and a freight load of 4,500 kilos.

A "Swiss Week" was held in Chicago, from 21st to 28th June. Attention was called to Swiss products and services by means of posters and of an extensive "windowshow" campaign in the business quarter of Chicago. More than 300 educational establishments

in Chicago received illustrated educational material dealing with Switzerland, and in many schools special lessons, having Switzerland for their subject, were arranged for the "Swiss Week". TV stations, as well as museums, undertook to show Swiss films in their programs. Furthermore, the touring exhibition "Glimpses of Switzerland" went to Chicago for the "Swiss Week", and connected up with the Book and Map Exhibition.

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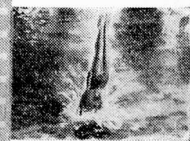
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