

Business news

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MORE COMPUTERS IN SWITZERLAND

According to a survey carried out by the Institute for Automation and Operational Research at the University of Fribourg the number of computers in Switzerland rose from 2,313 in 1976 to 2,448 in 1977, i.e. an increase of 6 per cent. The memory capacity also rose and now totals 366,095 K Bytes. Last year, sales of computers in the lower price categories increased from 48 to 56 per cent of the total. The percentage of more

expensive computers therefore dropped correspondingly. By branches, banks came third among computer users (14.6 per cent of the market), after the machinery industry (16.2 per cent) and trade (16.7 per cent). But with regard to the memory volume as opposed to the actual number of computers used, the banks had a very clear lead with 26.7 per cent of the total volume.

MAIL ORDER UP 11 PER CENT

The total sales of mail order firms in Switzerland increased by 11.1 per cent in 1977 (+3.2 per cent in 1976), while retail trade as a whole progressed by 3.3 per cent during the same period (-0.3 per cent in 1976). This trend can be attributed to the slight tendency towards recovery in consumption as a whole, to the stability of postal charges, the drop in the average selling price of mail order articles and, in the majority of cases, to an improvement in the quality of the products, service to the clientele and advertisements.

Mail order firms' share of the market can be estimated at 753 million, which represents 1.6 per cent of the total retail trade, i.e. 120 francs' turnover per inhabitant. The profit margins remained

unchanged or showed a very slight increase. The number of personnel in mail order firms remained the same as in the previous year. The prospects for 1978 are considered to be quite favourable.

EXPORTS OF ELECTRONIC WATCHES: LARGE GROWTH CONTINUES

Exports of electronic watches and movements continued to increase strongly in 1977. Swiss exports of electronic watch products increased in value by 47 per cent compared with 1976 to total 390 million francs' worth. The number of watches and movements increased by as much as two-thirds to reach a figure of about 4.25 million units.

BUSINESS NEWS

This trend gives cause for a certain optimism but mention should however be made of the fact that exports of electronic products continue to occupy a comparatively modest place in Swiss watch exports as a whole. In value, they correspond to roughly 14 per cent of this total, as opposed to 72 per cent for lever watches and movements, 11 per cent for Roskopf watches and movements and 3 per cent for other articles.

THE SWISS FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY IN 1977

In 1977 the Swiss footwear industry produced 9.11 million pairs of shoes, i.e. 5.3 per cent more than in the previous year. Turnover increased by 7.5 per cent to total 360.5 million francs. The increase in production and sales is mainly a result of the growth in exports. Sales on the home market, whose share of the total sales dropped from 21.9 per cent to 21.6 per cent have also increased but to a lesser extent: 3.1 per cent in value. As a general rule, the branch worked to full capacity. Receipts of orders, which fell off slightly in the spring and summer, started to recover at the end of the year.

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BREAKTHROUGH IN SWISS FARES

Following discussions first initiated almost a year ago, Dan-Air has finally broken through the IATA strangle-hold on International Air Fares and has received permission to introduce a lower tariff on one of its International Scheduled Services.

Both the British and Swiss Authorities have formally approved a tariff filing by Dan-Air for its London (Gatwick) - Berne route which links these two important capital Cities. The application gives the carrier authority to offer an excursion fare at 120 per cent of the Normal Tourist one-way fare which is £65 single (£130 return). The newly approved excursion fare of £78 is now the lowest scheduled fare available for travel on any Scheduled Service between the U.K. and Switzerland.

The only qualification for the Excursion is that travel arrangements must include an overnight stay in Switzerland (or the U.K. if Swiss originating) on Saturday night.

Dan-Air had claimed that the previously prescribed fares were higher than necessary to produce an adequate profit on the route and were a barrier to developing the traffic potential. The Airline argued that the lower fares would generate additional traffic and thus additional revenue.

The decision of the British and Swiss Authorities gives the Airline the opportunity to prove its contention which has already been successfully

demonstrated by another British independent Airline on the main North Atlantic route.

CIBA-GEIGY U.K. GROUP SALES - 1977

Unaudited figures for the Ciba-Geigy Group of Companies in the United Kingdom show that 1977 consolidated sales amounted to £304.3 million, an increase of 20 per cent over the comparable figure for 1976.

Export sales rose by 25 per cent from £93.0 million in 1976 to £116.3 million in 1977, and represented 33 per cent of the U.K. Group's business. Capital expenditure during 1977 amounted to £17 million.

NON POLLUTING BUSES AND LORRIES

The Saurer Co. Ltd., of Arbon-St. Gall, the biggest Swiss manufacturer of commercial vehicles - lorries, buses, engines - this year celebrates the 125th anniversary of its foundation. Among the vast range of new models exhibited by this firm at the Geneva International Commercial Vehicles Show, there was a prototype of an ultra-silent gas engine, intended for both lorries and buses and designed mainly with a view to reducing fuel consumption and causing the least pollution. This will be particularly suitable for the propulsion of vehicles used mainly in urban areas, where less polluting engines are of great importance.

SWITZERLAND IN BRITAIN'S CULTURAL LIFE

26th June to 8th July - Nureyev Festival at the London Coliseum - *Manola Asensio* dances leading roles in *Romeo & Juliet*, *Giselle*, and *Sleeping Beauty*.

1st July to 29th July - Stills Gallery, Edinburgh - *Photography in Switzerland from 1840 until today*.

WEDNESDAY, 5th July - Nottingham - Thursday, 6th July & Tuesday, 11th July - Royal Festival Hall, 8 p.m. - *Charles Dutoit* conducts the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

SUNDAY, 16th July - Royal Albert Hall, 7.30 p.m. - Peter Aronsky plays Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Mendi Rodan.

SATURDAY, 26th August, & MONDAY, 28th August - Royal Albert Hall, 7.30 p.m. - *Karl Anton Rickenbacher* conducts the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

From 26th August - Third Eye Centre, Glasgow - Art Brut: *Aloïse, Müller and Wölfl* exhibition.

29th & 31st August (L'Orfeo), 1st & 4th September (Il Ritorno di Ulisse in Patria), 3 & 5 (L'Incoronazione di Poppea) - King's Theatre, Edinburgh, 7.30 p.m. - *Zürich Opera* present their widely praised cycle of Monteverdi operas.

FRIDAY, 28th July - Wigmore Hall, 7.30 p.m. - Recital by the *Tamas Vasary* Piano Quartet.



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