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AUCKLAND.

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

Swiss Industries Fair, 1952

Switzerland is at present experiencing a boom period and it was natural to consider how this would affect participation at the 36th Swiss Industries Fair to be held in Basle from 19th to 29th April. As it has turned out, the economic fluctuations have not had any effect on the number of exhibitors which remains at about 2200, the maximum number possible having regard to the exhibition area available at the fair premises in Basle. Amongst the 18 groups of exhibitors it is the exporting industries that hold first place.

The watchmaking fair which, with full justification, is considered the most important exhibition in that branch of industry, will be presented in a partially renovated pavilion which will be increased by one section, that of jewellery, accessories and tools for watchmakers, and also large sized watches and clocks.

The textile and footwear industries occupy a complete sector by themselves and, in this section the delightful pavilion with the "creation" exhibit, reserved specially for fashion goods and which this year will undergo a complete change in the manner of its presentation, will doubtless be one of the major attractions of the 1952 Industries Fair.

Those sections dealing with industry occupy as previously the largest amount of space; first of all there are the machine tool and woodworking machinery exhibits notable for the abundance and diversity of production as also for the number of exhibitors. The textile machinery section is striking in its homogeneity and the spirit of collaboration which animates the manufacturers in this line. The electro-technical group is one of the most characteristic at the fair.

Mechanical and electrical measuring instruments, physical, optical and medical apparatus, industrial tools and equipment and a section for aluminium and light metals complete this survey of mechanical production in Switzerland. Industrial production of gas and heating apparatus,

that of machinery for the foodstuffs trade, together with the group covering means of transport are of considerable interest for the public at large. The building fair provides evidence of the increasing success connected with the employment of machinery tools and new kinds of material.

Amongst the other groups those of applied arts and ceramics, of toys, illumination and of chemistry, including beauty products, deserve special mention.

The group covering office and shop appliances, to which this year suppliers of accessories for the graphic arts are again attached, is also worthy of attention.

The furniture fair consists of two sections, the first being devoted to manufacturers who supply direct to customers, and the other dealing wholesale with mass produced furniture. It would not be quite correct to forget the foodstuffs section, as well as that of domestic science, because, as regards the latter section in particular, the construction of new buildings will allow it to indulge in all the expansion it requires.

Some new sections will characterise the 1952 Swiss Industries Fair, e.g., the preservation of certain exhibits originally sent by Switzerland to the Universal Exhibition in London of 1851; the O.E.E.C. will give a brief survey of its activity by the presentation of illustrations and publications which it has issued; but visitors will be particularly interested in the television pavilion which will give a survey of the scientific and commercial problems involved one year prior to Switzerland's starting upon the practical realisation of this form of entertainment.

Having succeeded in applying the brake fairly efficiently to the rapid rise in prices, production continues on a very high level in Switzerland. However, the Swiss Industries Fair in Basle will supply proof that the conception of high-class workmanship which exists amongst the population of the country has not suffered in the slightest as a result of this boom period of high production.

Accidents in the Alps

Public opinion seems to be strongly impressed by the great number of climbing accidents which have occurred in the Alps during the past summer. There is in some quarters a tendency to consider mountaineering as a very dangerous pastime, but that is not so, as can be demonstrated with the help of the statistics carefully compiled by the Swiss Alpine Club, which does not merely record the yearly number of alpine accidents and deaths, but also examines their causes.

The 1951 alpine climbing season began later than usual because of the delayed melting of the huge masses of snow which had accumulated during the past winter; the situation remained unfavourable in the Alps until the second half of July, but sudden storms and cold spells prevailed until the end of August, so that the best period for mountain ascents was short and naturally the great bulk of the season's accidents were concentrated in a few weeks.

There are yet no accurate figures concerning the present year, but a rough estimate puts the number of accidents and deaths at respectively 21 and 28 in Switzerland, 12 and 16 in France, 55 and 61 in Italy, and 30 and 32 in Germany-Austria, altogether 118 accidents involving the death of 137 persons. The increase has been particularly striking in Italy and in Germany-Austria, while the death roll did not exceed the average in France and Switzerland. Swiss statistics are so far the most accurate, and extend over a longer period; they show that, since 1935, the number of alpine accidents has ranged from 60 to 75 a year, involving the death of 69 to 80 persons. The lowest figure—48 accidents and 54 killed—was recorded in 1950 (the periods concerned extending from May 1 of the previous year, 1949, to the end of April, 1950), while the highest—91 accidents and 118 killed—was registered in 1943. Between 1935 and 1950, inclusive, there were 958 alpine accidents which caused the death of more than 1100 persons in the Swiss Alps.

CAUSES OF DEATHS

The examination of the causes of these deaths is instructive. Physiological conditions (heart failure, apoplexy, etc.) accounted for 46 deaths, falling stones for 48, bad weather and exposure for 61, while 62 persons were killed through missing the right way, 71 through falls into crevasses, and 88 through falls when picking wild flowers; 147 deaths were due to avalanches of snow, 311 to falls on snow and ice, and 357 to falls when rock climbing. It has been ascertained that 410 deaths were due to imprudence, lack of training and of physical fitness, faulty equipment, and ignorance of alpine technique, geography, and topography. Moreover, it should be pointed out that 515 of these victims were making excursions

without guides and that 77 of them were climbing alone.

At first sight these figures seem to be exceedingly high, and might lead to the conclusion that climbing is particularly dangerous. But the number of victims of the Alps should be compared with the number of persons who every year climb or make excursions in the mountains. The registers of the huts of the Swiss Alpine Club show that about 80,000 tourists are visiting them every year, while the other huts receive some 5000 persons; the alpine resorts of Switzerland are receiving more than 450,000 guests every year, and it is safe to consider that 10 per cent. that is 45,000 of them, are making tours in the mountains; to these should be added a further 25,000 who are going from the towns to the hills without stopping at a hut or resort, giving a grand total of 155,000 persons who are every year, winter and summer, making tours and ascents in the Swiss alpine districts. The figure of 155,000 compared with a death roll of 118—to take the highest figure recorded—represents less than one killed in a thousand, a low proportion indeed.

That is, nevertheless, too high, as it is clear that nearly 30 per cent. of these deaths might have been avoided. The alpine associations are every year organising training and instruction courses for young climbers, with lectures on map reading, meteorology, and first aid, and by rope, ice axe, and ski-ing practice in the mountains.

Cost of Running a Car in Switzerland

If it is true that the price of new motor cars is lower in Switzerland, and that moreover new cars can be bought, running them is definitely more expensive than in the United Kingdom. Customs duties and purchase tax vary between 15 and 20 per cent. of the value, a burden that is light by comparison with the United Kingdom. What is expensive is the yearly running since taxes are levied on each car according to horse power, and petrol is subject to high excise. Besides, the premium on an all risk insurance policy costs at least twice as much as in the United Kingdom. The following tables will substantiate the case and show at the same time the great variety in taxes resulting from our Federal system:—

Car Licences, 1951 (Fr.)				
Canton.	Volkswagen.	Citroen II.	Plymouth.	Buick.
Zurich	170.—	250.—	330.—	490.—
Berne	204.—	276.—	348.—	492.—
Basle (Stadt)	96.—	192.—	270.—	372.—
Tessin	180.—	260.—	340.—	500.—
Vaud	150.—	250.—	350.—	550.—
Geneve	110.—	162.—	224.—	388.—

Impact of the Customs Duty on Petrol.			
Make of Car.	Petrol consumption.	Duty, 10,000 km.	
	100 km.	litres.	francs.
Volkswagen	8	149	
Citroen II	11	205	
Plymouth	15	279	
Buick	16	298	

Swiss Centre in New York

The opening in Manhattan of a Swiss Centre grouping the offices of Swissair, the National Tourist Office and the Mid-Town Branch of the Swiss Bank Corporation will serve a very useful purpose. Located in fashionable Rockefeller Centre, the new premises will enable any person interested in Switzerland to find out about Swiss airlines, tourism and banking facilities all at the one and same place. During the coming months Swissair will be the only airway company to have the modern DC-6B planes plying the North Atlantic route, and every wish will be made for the success of advertising Swiss reliability and Swiss comfort.

A Great Increase of the Output of the Swiss Watchmaking Industry.

Thirty-five per cent. more Swiss watches were exported in 1951 than in 1950. Thirty-three and a half million watches and clocks, whose value amounted to 1000 million francs, were exported last year. The increase in exports was due primarily to the improvement in technical methods which helped to speed up production. Progress has also been made in increasing the output of individual workers. While the number of workers and employees rose only 15 per cent. from 1950 to 1951, production went up 38 per cent. This means that each worker produced an average of 620 time-pieces a year or more than two a day. The results are especially significant for the Swiss watch industry, as its products are also of the highest quality.

A Swiss Invention: A New Security Apparatus for Those Who Work with Electric Lines.

A Swiss inventor has constructed a new universal voltage indicator. It will benefit mostly those who work with electrical lines. As it is known, this work always demands the greatest precautions, complex instructions, and awkward equipment. The new invention is a small, light, sturdy instrument which can be used outdoors and indoors. It is easily operated with one hand by any qualified worker. The voltage indicator will register voltage from 80 to 50,000 volts, warning the workman of live wires. It can be used for testing fuses and other electrical installations,

or as a phase meter for rotatory current up to 16,000 volts. The price of the instrument is so low that it will be possible for power plants to use it on most of their equipment.

The Swiss Trade with the West and the East of Europe.

The United Nations Economic Committee for Europe is now examining the economic condition of Europe in 1951. The head of the Swiss delegation, Dr. H. Hauswirth, commented among other things upon the Swiss liberal policies of economic trade. He said that Switzerland does not restrict the import of industrial products, but concluded that Switzerland could only continue this policy if her products were not discriminated against on the world market. Dr. Hauswirth is the vice-Director of the Department of the Swiss Federal Department of Economics.

In 1950 Switzerland's exports to Eastern Europe were valued at 260.5 million francs, and they rose to 261.3 million francs in 1951.

Treatment of Tuberculosis

The laboratories of F. Hoffmann La Roche & Cie., S.A., in Basle, are perfecting a new remedy for the treatment of tuberculosis. Switzerland contributes thus to a great extent to fight this plague.

Cantonal School of Aarau

The famous physicist, Albert Einstein, declared that the Cantonal School of Aarau is for him the best example of an educational institution of this kind.

Marine Diesel Motors

Twelve per cent. of the diesel motors propelling the ships of the whole world come from the factory Sulzer S.A., Winterthur, or have been constructed under the licences of Sulzer.

Swiss Geologist.

The Swiss polar pioneer, Dr. Hans Staub, who for many years has done geological research work for the Danish Government, has just discovered a lode of lead in Greenland, representing a value of some 25 milliards of Swiss francs. In Switzerland, Dr. Staub is known under the name of "the doctor of the mountains" since he prevented the village of Schuders from being buried under a landslide.

THE FEDERAL FESTIVAL OF THE YODELLERS IN ST. GALL

St. Gall is known all over the world as being the town of fine embroidery and beautiful textiles. But this venerable town of Eastern Switzerland, situated between the Saentis and the pleas-