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GROUP NEW ZEALAND OF THE NEW HELVETIC SOCIETY

17th YEAR.

SEPTEMBER, 1952.

AUCKLAND.

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

Steady Growth of Air Travel

In the first half of 1952, the Swiss airline "Swissair," has carried almost 137,000 passengers, approximately 15,000 more than during the first six months of 1951. This remarkable increase has been obtained in spite of the fact that scarcity of fuel forced the company to cut down the number of flights scheduled during May and June.

The Swiss Watch Exports During the First Half-year of 1952

Total Swiss watch exports during the first six months of 1952 amounted to almost 500 million francs, 34 million more than in the same period of 1951. This increase is due primarily to the fact that Swiss watches were more in demand towards the end of last year, resulting in high figures for the first four months of 1952. The business transactions were difficult because of import restrictions in many countries and the fact that Switzerland restricted her exports to sterling countries.

A New Arm Against Bacteria

A Basle laboratory has produced an apparatus which will destroy all bacteria in gaseous, solid, or liquid form. Scientific and official tests have shown that air can be made 99.9 per cent. bacteria free. Other tests made in barn stalls have produced remarkable results, and stalls have been purified up to 95 per cent. free of bacteria. The principle of this new invention lies in its application of invisible rays of various strengths.

Swiss Defence Tax

It is little known abroad that the authority to levy taxes is principally vested in the Cantons and Communes and subsidiarily only in the Federal State. The mainstay of the federal

taxes is the "defence tax," named after a war-time budgetary source. The period of assessment extends over two years, so that the yield of the years 1949 and 1950 (Federal Defence Tax V Period) is only known by now. Of a total of 301.5 million Swiss francs in 1949 physical persons accounted for 75 per cent. and corporate bodies for 25 per cent. For 1950 the relationship was 72.5 to 27.5 per cent. for a total of 273.6 million Swiss francs. The lower yield being due to special allowances made to offset higher costs of living.

Foreign Trade During the First Half of 1952

Switzerland's imports during the first six months of 1952 amounted to 2731 million francs, 408 million francs less than in the first half of 1951. At the same time, the value of Swiss exports has increased by almost 6 million francs to a total of 2251 million, although the volume of goods exports has decreased by about 9 per cent.

The direction of trade shows some characteristic changes. Swiss trade with Germany has considerably increased, while the level of trade with France has been declining. Germany is once again the most important supplier of goods to Switzerland, followed by the United States, France and Italy. On the other hand, the United States have remained the most important market for Swiss goods, with Germany, Italy and France following in that order.

Swiss Exports of Machinery.

Due to high quality and precision of workmanship, the products of the Swiss machine industry are in heavy demand all over the world. In the first six months of 1952, a total of 472.6 million francs worth of machines was exported, considerably more than in the first six months of 1951, but somewhat less than in the second half of that year.