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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

Swiss foreign trade during the first half of the current year remained at a relatively high level. Imports amounted to about 2,224 million francs, or 591 million more than for the corresponding period last year, and exports to 1,593 million francs, as against 1,151 million. The debit balance of foreign trade therefore stood at about 630 million francs, whereas in 1946 it was only 482 million. The recent trend of the trade balance has caused the Federal Government to raise certain restrictions on exports imposed last year. The decision was received with relief by Swiss manufacturers and especially by the watchmaking industry, which had been rather severely hit by these measures, particularly as regards the dollar-area countries. Customs revenue rose sharply during the period under review and totalled 189 million francs or 63 million more than during the first six months of 1946. On the other hand, Swiss Federal Railway returns were less favourable than in 1946, even though both passenger and goods traffic increased. The decline in profits is due to higher overheads and expenditure, especially as regards the pay-roll. Although industrial activity continued good, output was hampered in several branches, firstly by the labour shortage, which has now become acute despite the constant increase of imported labour, and, secondly, in certain sections, by the lack of raw materials. Wages rose another 2.5 per cent. and stood at 70.3 per cent. above pre-war. At the end of May the cost-of-living index stood at 157.6 (August, 1939=100), whereas wholesale prices reached 206.

* * *

Details concerning the Polish-Swiss trade agreement signed this spring have now been published by the Swiss authorities. Poland is to deliver one million tons of coal in the course of this year and a further 600,000 tons in both 1948 and 1949. In Exchange Switzerland is to supply machinery and chemicals to the value of 60 million francs (the estimated clearing value of coal deliveries in 1948-9). Orders to the value

of 30 million Swiss francs can be placed immediately, and the remainder in the course of next year.

* * *

After having recently made public its intention to raise a Frs.100,000,000 (£5,800,000) Three per Cent. loan, which was partly to serve for repaying old Railway loans, the Swiss Federal Council now announces there is no need for such a loan as sufficient funds are available.

* * *

A Swiss financial group is going to place all the necessary funds at the disposal of the Montecattini concern for the erection of the Resia and Mezzo electric power stations, which are to supply a great part of Northern Italy with electricity.

In exchange, the Italian partner undertakes to supply, during a number of winter seasons, electric current to Switzerland.

* * *

Pending a definite trade agreement with Egypt, Switzerland has declared her willingness to grant Egypt a credit of Swiss Frs.15,000,000, the Revue Commerciale et Financière Suisse reports. The credit will primarily be used for the purchase, in Switzerland, of pharmaceutical specialities and machinery.

* * *

A Hungarian military delegation, headed by Colonel Jmre Sonogyi, arrived in Berne in order to hand over to the Federal Council an address of thanks from the Prime Minister Lajos Dinnyes for the hospitality and care extended to soldiers of the Hungarian army, who, during the war fled from Germany. Federal Councillor v. Steiger, in the absence of Dr. Kobelt, Chief of the Federal Military Dept., received the delegates who were entertained to Luncheon by members of the Swiss General Staff. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The following Foreign Diplomats have presented their credentials to the President of the Swiss Con-

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federation: Alfredo Carbonell-Debali, Minister Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Uruguay, Monsieur Khaled Bey al Azan, Syria, Monsieur Safwat Bey, Minister Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Egypt and Monsieur Jmre Oltvanyi, Minister Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Hungary. [A.T.S.]

The autumn session of the Federal Parliament (National and States Councils) was opened on the 22nd of September in Berne [A.T.S.]

M. Jules Arber, since 1934 Swiss Consul at Algiers has been promoted to the rank of General Consul. [A.T.S.]

The Hungarian Minister of Trade has arrived at Berne to negotiate a new trade agreement with Switzerland. [A.T.S.]

Cantonal

The Berne-Lucerne express collided at the level-crossing Fluhmühle, near Emmenbrücke with a motor-lorry carrying ten people. The passengers were able to jump clear, though the lorry became a total wreck. The express was derailed and the line was blocked for some time. [A.T.S.]

The couple Johann Schorno-Huser of Reussbühl, near Lucerne, have celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary. [A.T.S.]

Three tourists from Lucerne, Franz Meyer, Eugen Stocker and Tony Müller, have climbed the Tomlishorn (Pilatus) via the "Nordwand," this difficult ascent was effected in seven hours. [A.T.S.]

The death has occurred in Vitznau (Lucerne) of the dowager Princess Else of Liechtenstein, at the age of 69. The deceased was the wife of Prince Franz von Liechtenstein, who died in 1939. After his death, the Princess lived in Gunten (Lake of Thoune), she was known for her charitable bequests. [A.T.S.]

A monument to the well-known historian, scholar and educator, Dekan Franz, Josef Stalder, was inaugurated at Eschholzmatt (Lucerne). Dekan Stalder lived from 1757-1833 in Beromünster where he died. He was best-known as the author of the "Schweiz. Idiotikon" and of a great number of historical essays. [A.T.S.]

The Swiss Chamber of Commerce (Schweiz. Handelskammer) held its annual meeting at Zurich on the 17th of last month. The meeting was presided over by Dr. Hans Sulzer. Army-Corps commander Louis de Montmollin, Chief of the General Staff, gave an *exposé* dealing with the military budget. The meeting was attended by Federal-Councillors

Stampfli and Nobs. Dr. Eugen Grossmann, Vevey, spoke on "Produktivität der Wirtschaft and Bundesfinanzreform."

The following were elected on the council: National-Councillor Ernst Speiser, Ennetbaden and Dr. W. Hofmann-Hess, Basle. [A.T.S.]

The 50,000,000.—frs. loan at $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., issued by the canton of Zurich, has been considerably over-subscribed. Allocations were reduced accordingly. [A.T.S.]

The death is reported from Zurich, of W. Kaufman-Jan, President of the Zurich Section of the "Kaufmännischen Vereins," at the age of 69. [A.T.S.]

A party from Zurich, consisting of two brothers and a young lady from Lucerne, on the descent from the Bächistock, (Glarus), fell into a glacier crevasse. All three received serious injuries and had to be taken to the hospital at Glarus. [A.T.S.]

The death has occurred in Glarus of J. Ott-Haffter, a former Judge and "Ratschreiber," at the age of 81. [A.T.S.]

While descending from the Sandalp in the Clariden Group, a Mr. Scherrer, from Dübendorf, who was accompanied by his daughter, aged 22, fell 100 ft. and was killed. The daughter, who had broken a leg after a fall during the ascent, was unable to move and remained on a narrow rock ledge for four days and three nights until discovered by a search party led by a dog. In spite of her injury and the fact that she was exposed to frost and to a snowstorm lasting 24 hours, she was still alive. [A.T.S.]

Kaspar Freuler, the well-known dramatist, has celebrated his 60th birthday anniversary in Glarus. [A.T.S.]

Seventy-five years ago the railway track Porrentruy-Delle was opened, connecting the "Jura Bernois" with the French railway net. The cost of this line, amounted, at the time, to 1,850,000.—frs. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Guido Müller, Mayor of the town of Bienna has tendered his resignation from the post which he had held, with great success, for the last 27 years. [A.T.S.]

A fire, which broke out at the "Gasthaus zur Krone" in Rubigen (Ct. Berne), caused considerable damage. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Werner Naef, Professor of History at the University of Berne, has been elected rector of the University for the 1947/48 term. [A.T.S.]

A motor-car collided near Bellach (Solothurn) with a stationary furniture van, the driver and the passenger of the motor-car were killed outright. The names of the killed are: Hans Kohler from Bettlach and Fritz Kilchenmann from Luterbach. [A.T.S.]

Walter Müller, from Kulm, has been appointed Director of the "Musikschule & Konservatorium" in Basle.



Born in 1899 in the canton of Aargau, he spent the greater part of his youth in Basle. He studied music in Aarau, Zurich and Basle. Since 1930 Müller has been a teacher at the "Konservatorium" in Basle. He is well-known as a composer and many of his compositions have been performed at Swiss musical festivals. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Board of the "Sandoz, A.G." in Basle, has decided to increase their capital from 15 million francs to 30 million francs by issuing 30,000 new shares of 500.—frs. at par. The new shares are entitled to a dividend from the 1st of January, 1947. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Alfred Ramseyer, of Basle, has been elected captain of the Police in Basle. Captain Ramseyer is known as a successful athlete and the author of sports publications. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Reckless driving, unfortunately so prevalent in Switzerland, has caused the death of a woman (Frau Schäublin-Schneider) when the driver of a motor-car collided at an excessive speed with a tram-car in Basle. The driver, and another passenger, a little girl, were seriously injured. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. Albert Bauer, the well-known novelist and historian, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary in Basle. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The town-council of Schaffhausen has made a demand to the Federal Council for a further payment to persons who were the victims of the attack of the American Air Force during the last war. Although the American Government had, at the time, accepted full responsibility for the attack, a final settlement has not yet been effected. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The late Hans Walter Baumann, of Rehtobel (Appenzell a. Rh.), has left an amount of 13,000.—frs. to the town for charitable purposes. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The couple Müller—Ehrbar, of Thal (St. Gall), have celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary, the

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husband is 89 and his wife 85 years old, both enjoy good health. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The oldest inhabitant of the town of St. Gall, Marie Rheiner, a former school-teacher, has died at the age of 95. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Rudolf Frey, aged fifty, from Zurich, was found dead, in the Val Giuf (Oberalp district), he was well-known as a collector of crystals, and it is assumed that he lost his life during one of his collecting excursions. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The death is reported from Chur, of Professor Dr. Gion Cahannes, at the age of 75. The deceased enjoyed a great reputation for his works on romansch literature. In 1931 he was awarded the "Schiller Preis." [A.T.S.]

* * *

National-Councillor Augustino, representative of the Ticino radicals in Parliament, has withdrawn his candidature for the coming Parliamentary elections.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

A serious accident occurred on the Gotthard Pass when a motor-car descending into the Tremola Valley skidded and ran into a wall. One of the passengers, a Mrs. Frieda Menton, from Basle, was killed, whilst

another woman passenger and a boy received serious injuries, they had to be taken to the hospital at Faido.

[A.T.S.]

* * * * *

Ernst Schmidt, formerly Secretary of the "Fiera Svizzera di Lugano," has been appointed Manager of this institution in succession to the late Sig. Conza.

[A.T.S.]

* * * * *

The Chestnut harvest in the canton of Ticino promises to be exceedingly good. [A.T.S.]

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The death is reported from Lausanne, of E. Elskès, late engineer of the General Management of the Swiss Federal Railways. The deceased was from 1908-1928 Manager of the Cement Works of St. Sulpice in the Val-de-Travers. [A.T.S.]

* * * * *

The Comptoir Suisse was opened on the 18th of September in Lausanne. M. Mayr, President of the exhibition received the official guests, amongst them Federal Councillor Celio, representatives of the diplomatic corps, and the government of the canton of Vaud, the Presidents of the Federal Chambers, General Guisan, colonels of division Corbat and Montfort, Paschoud, General Manager of the Swiss Federal Railways, etc.

The "Comptoir" was closed on Saturday, September 25th. The Fair was visited by altogether 610,000 people. Next year's Fair will be held from the 12th-27th September. [A.T.S.]

* * * * *

The death occurred at Vaumarcus (Neuchâtel) of late National Councillor Paul Borel, at the age of 77. Borel was a well-known personality in Swiss agricultural circles. [A.T.S.]

* * * * *

Léon Nicole (Geneva) a well-known communist and agitator, was, on the occasion of a recent visit to Sofia, decorated by the President of the Bulgarian Republic, for his efforts in the cause of democracy. Nicole has now declined to accept the said decoration, which, as he said, might cause him "political embarrassment," [A.T.S.]

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The accounts of the canton of Geneva for the year 1946, just published, close with a deficit of 308,464.—frs. [A.T.S.]

Army

During military operations in the District of Tannen-Lindenthal, Corporal G. Egli, a 20 year old law student, and son of States-Councillor G. Egli, Lucerne, fell down a mountain rock and was killed. [A.T.S.]

Traffic

Flight-Captain and Chief Pilot of the Swissair, Ernst Nyffenegger, has become a double flight millionaire, having flown 2 million kilometers. Nyffenegger entered into the service of Swissair in 1926. [A.T.S.]

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The Airport of Cointrin (Geneva) has published the following figures in respect of air traffic during the month of August, 1947:—

Ordinary passenger flights: 817; special passenger flights: 415; flights carried out by private machines: 350; flights by military machines: 108; trial flights:

50; pleasure flights: 279, school and training flights: 1,579; or a total of 3,598 flights.

23,204 passengers and 311,392 kg. luggage, post and freight were carried. [A.T.S.]

* * * * *

Constantly actuated by the desire to further extend their network of air services on the European Continent, appreciably to reduce flying times on the most important routes, and to offer passengers an ever-increasing standard of comfort, Swissair have placed with the Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation, San Diego, California, an order for the supply of *four Convairs-240 planes*. Delivery of these aircraft is to be effected in the spring of 1948.

The Convair-240 is one of the most modern twin-engined air-liners at present being built, and there is little doubt that it will be one of the types which in the course of time will replace the Douglas DC-3, which has rendered such yeoman service, and has been most widely used in the past, but is no longer manufactured.

The following are a few technical data relating to the Convair-240:

Wing-spread, 28 metres. Length overall, 22.75 metres. Height overall, 8.23 metres. Powered by 2 Pratt & Whitney R-2800—CA—18 engines with a take-off power of 2400H.P. each. The mean cruising speed is 470 (400 block to block) kilometres per hour (DC-3 = 270 kilometres per hour), maximum range without refuelling being 2500 kilometres. The weight without load is quoted as 11,790 kilogrammes, and the maximum take-off weight 17,930 kilogrammes. The 'plane has a pressurized cabin which will appreciably add to the comfort of passengers, as neither rapid climbing and falling nor flying at altitudes over 4000 metres gives rise to any untoward sensation. The 'plane seats 40 passengers and is equipped with the most modern type of buffet installation. The crew consists of 2 pilots, 1 wireless operator and 2 stewards or stewardesses.

Humanitarian

The British war invalids, who were stationed in Préverenges near Morges, have, on the occasion of their departure, addressed a letter of thanks to the Swiss people and the Swiss Red Cross for the care and the sympathy which they had received during their stay in our country. [A.T.S.]

* * * * *

A batch of 280 children between the age of 4—10 have arrived in Switzerland from Munich. They will

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remain in our country for 3 months and will be distributed amongst families in the cantons of St. Gall and Berne. [A.T.S.] * * *

A special train, carrying 542 German children, has arrived in Basle, 250 of whom will be placed in families in the cantons of Appenzell, the remainder will be sent to families in other parts of the country. [A.T.S.] * * *

The last of the crippled children sent to Switzerland from France, six months ago, have now returned to their country.

They were treated in special clinics in Zurich and Lausanne. [A.T.S.]

oo

The Tribunal of the 4th Division, sitting in Basle, passed the following sentences for espionage during the last war: Corporal Heinzmann: 20 years penal servitude, degradation and expulsion from the army; Schleiniger, Manfred: 13 years penal servitude; Baumgartner, Louis: 12 years penal servitude and expulsion from the army; sentences varying from five months to three years were passed on seven others of the accused. [A.T.S.] * * *

Following an invitation by the Swiss Press Association, a number of Czechoslovakian Journalists have arrived in Switzerland for a fortnight's stay. They are visiting the towns of Berne, Basle, Geneva, Lucerne and Zurich. On their arrival at Dübendorf they were greeted by Dr. Meier, President of the Zurich Press Association. [A.T.S.] * * *

The French Premier, Monsieur Paul Ramadier, landed at the Airport Basle-Mulhouse, and was greeted by the Director of the aerodrome, Ch. Koepke, to whom he expressed his satisfaction that the international airport has come into being. He also thanked the Swiss authorities and the Swiss people for the spontaneous reception which they had accorded to General de Lattre de Tassigny, Chief of the French General Staff, during his recent visit to Switzerland. [A.T.S.] * * *

The next Federal Singing Competition (Eidg. Sängerfest) will take place in Berne from the 18th—29th of June, 1948. The concert Hall to be specially built, will have seating accommodation for 8,400 spectators, the stage can hold 3,000 performers; the building will be erected on the Allmend.

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Amongst the latest candidates for the post of Governor of Trieste the name of Dr. Walter Stucki, formerly Swiss Minister in Paris and Vichy, has been mentioned. We understand that Minister Stucki, has, in fact, been sounded as to whether he would be willing to accept nomination, but he has declined to stand as a candidate.

* * *

A number of British railway experts, at present in Switzerland, attended one of the sittings of the National Council in Berne. The President of the Chamber welcomed the visitors in English. [A.T.S.] * * *

Albert Lebrun, a former President of the French Republic, was seen in the Diplomatic enclosure of the National Council, watching their deliberations. He later conversed with several members of the Swiss Parliament. [A.T.S.] * * *

Dr. Karl Henschen, formerly head of the surgical clinic of the University of Basle, has been nominated Honorary Member of the Greek surgical society "Hellenike Cherurgice Hetaireia." [A.T.S.] * * *

Peter Staehelin, for 28 years one of the Editor's of the "National Zeitung" in Basle, has retired from his post. He is 65 years old. [A.T.S.] * * *

The 34th General Meeting of the Swiss Bankers took place, on Saturday, September 27th, at Lucerne under the Presidency of Bernhard Sarasin (Basle). Amongst the invited guests were: Federal Councillor Dr. Stampfli, Professor Laur, Dr. Homberger, Professor Kohli, Minister Sulzer, Professor Dr. P. Keller, and Professor W. Rappard. [A.T.S.]

NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

We hear that the *Consistoire* of the Swiss Church has appointed Pasteur Claude Reverdin from Geneva, as successor to Pasteur M. Pradervand.

Pasteur Reverdin, who is taking up his ministry at the end of this year, is the son of a medical practitioner and married to the daughter of colonel de Haller, of Geneva, they have two children, a boy and a girl.

* * *

Dr. Arnold Kunzli, has taken up the position, as London Correspondent of the "National Zeitung," of Basle, in succession to the late Dr. E. Spuhler.

Dr. Kunzli has previously occupied the post of foreign correspondent of the "National Zeitung" in Rome, and at one time was connected with the "Flüchtlingslager" organisation.

SWISS HOLIDAY EXPERIENCES.

The Holiday Season having now come to an unexpected end, the Editor would be glad, if some of the readers, who were privileged in spending their vacation in our country, would write short accounts of their experiences, pleasant or unpleasant, for the benefit of those, who, for some reason or other, were unable to undertake the journey to the "old country."