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COMMERCIAL NEWS

U.S. Import Restrictions on Cheese.

These columns have often echoed the steps undertaken in the United States with regard to the restricted imports of Dairy Produce. Switzerland's cheese exporters have been badly hit by the provisions of the Defence Production Act, which afforded unwarranted protection to American producers at a time when higher imports of foreign goods could be the answer to the Dollar gap. The very active representatives of the Swiss exporters have organised in New York a "Schwizer Z'vieri Party" in the course of which the last loaves of Swiss cheese were tasted by the Press under the eyes of Movies and Television Cameras. The American housewife shall know through the instrumentality of the Newspaper, Cinema and T.V. how badly she is to fare with respect to foreign cheese as long as the community's interest will have to give precedence to groups' interest. A keen lobbying of the Senators is also taking place in Washington and it is hoped that reason will at long last prevail.

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 wartime 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% and corporate bodies for 25%. For 1950 the relationship was 72.5 to 27.5% for a total of 273.6 million Swiss francs. The lower yield being due to special allowances made to offset higher costs of living.

Final Report on the Swiss Industries Fair Basle 1952.

At the 36th Swiss Industries Fair, in Basle, from 19th to 29th April, 1952, there were 2,200 exhibitors, and there was very keen interest displayed by visitors from abroad. At the Foreign Visitors Office 14,347 visitors from 74 countries were received including several important commercial delegations from Europe and abroad.

From the general point of view the commercial

success of the fair can be described as very satisfactory. The interest shown by visitors from abroad was particularly aroused by the display of watches, textile machinery, machine tools, precision and optical instruments, and the products of the electrical industry. Good business was reported particularly by the machine tool industry and the watchmaking industry.

The next Swiss Industries Fair will be held from 11th to 21st April, 1953.

The "Comptoir Suisse" 1952.

The Comptoir Suisse, the Swiss Autumn Fair which is mainly dedicated to the foodstuff and agricultural industries, as a rule offers its visitors various special attractions as well as foreign exhibits. This year's fair, which is scheduled to open at Lausanne on September 13th will include a Belgian Congo Pavilion which will give a picture of the native culture and development of that country. The Tunisian and Standardisation Tourist Office will also be represented at the exhibition. Apart from this there will again be attractions of a scientific nature.

Small Business Policy in Switzerland.

The Swiss Association of Craftsmen and Independent Businessmen recently held its general meeting, at which the president of the association also spoke about

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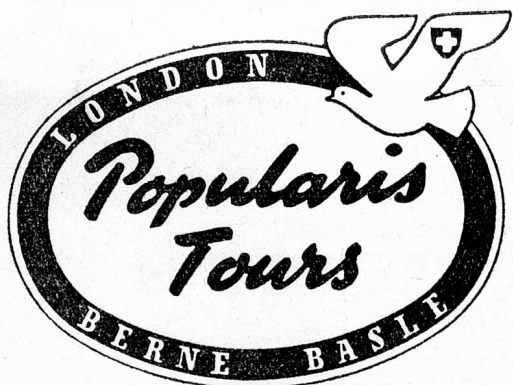
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the position and aims of small business policy to-day. The association's principal task, he said, was the maintenance advancement and strengthening of independent craftsmanship, retail trade and services as well as medium and small manufacturing. Craftsmanship still has an economic task, both at present and in the future, which nobody else can fulfil. This programme can be realised above all by measures calculated to raise the professional standard of the individual craftsman. The speaker stressed that the Swiss Association of Craftsmen and Independent Businessmen is in full agreement with the principles of free enterprise which are one of the corner stones of Swiss economic life.

Annual Congress of the International Union of Railways.

The International Union of Railways, which was founded in 1922 for the purpose of improving and unifying conditions in international railway traffic, has already achieved quite considerable results. Most European countries and many Swiss states in the near and far east are members of the organization.

This year's congress, which by the way coincides with the 50th anniversary of the Swiss Federal Railways, was held at Lausanne between May 26th and June 7th. More than 300 delegates attended. In view of the great number of member states, it is comparatively seldom that the Union is able to hold its annual meeting in Switzerland.

Anniversary of Steelmaking Concern.

This year, the Steelworks Georg Fischer Ltd., of Schaffhausen, are celebrating the 150th anniversary of

their foundation. On this occasion, the firm has made a contribution of one million francs towards the pension fund for its employees. A similar sum was made available to the firm's relief fund. Total contributions in favour of social welfare thus have reached nearly 9 million francs this year. Apart from this, the firm in 1952 will pay its 7,000 employees an amount of 2 million francs in bonuses, half a million francs will go to various public institutions, and 200,000 francs will be spent on professional training of children of employees.

Imports under General Global Quotas.

When the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in the House of Commons on the occasion of the budget speech that it would be necessary to withdraw Open General Licences for a further list of imports from certain foreign countries, implementation had to be made by the Board of Trade. In "Notice to Importers No. 497" the Board of Trade has now announced what quotas have been established for imports in the second half of 1952. Textiles and Cheese are the items on the list in which Swiss exporters are most interested.

SWISS SPORTS AND GARDEN PARTY.

We are informed that the participation in the various sporting events is very good, and thus this Sports Festival promises to be a very interesting affair.

It is hoped that many of our compatriots will turn up on Saturday, June 21st, at the Polytechnic Stadium, Chiswick.

Looking Ahead...

to his Summer Holidays in Switzerland: He knows that even with the £25 Travel Allowance there are still a thousand possibilities for an enjoyable holiday. Inclusive rates covering rooms, full board, tips and taxes range from 20/- to 30/- per day at a large number of Swiss Hotels. Your English friends will be glad to know the good news.



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