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COMMERCIAL NEWS

International Conferences.

A Conference of the Transport Ministers of 18 European countries is held at Brussels. Mr. Escher, Federal Councillor, head of the Federal Post and Railway Department, is participating. The meeting is concerned with standardization of Inter-European Transport Ways.

Dr. Walter Berchtold, President of the Managing Board of Swissair has been last years President of IATA. At the 9th General-Meeting of this Organization, held at Montreal, he has been elected a member of the Executive Committee. Switzerland is therefore to continue to take an active part in the leadership of this international body.

At the 4th International Silk Congress which recently opened in Milan, the Swiss silk industry was represented by a delegation of its own. It is interesting to note in this connection that Switzerland has imported about 600,000 lbs. of raw silk during the last year. This makes her the 2nd largest European importer of raw silk after France. With respect to the per capita consumption of raw silk and the capacity of her silk and rayon industry, Switzerland is second only to Japan. Though Switzerland is not a producer of raw silk, her silk industry goes back as far as the 13th century. The important place which the Swiss silk industry still occupies internationally is principally due to a high degree of specialisation, a preference for nouveautés fabrics, the purchasing power of Switzerland's population, and the widespread network of the industry's commercial organisation.

Switzerland's foreign trade relations.

The trade arrangements between Switzerland and France have expired on September 30th, 1953. As France is setting up new import regulations in collaboration with the OEEC authorities it has not yet been possible to come to new terms with this country. In the interest of the continuity of important exports and with a view to avoid any prejudices for the mutual trade relations, the French side has, however, agreed to charge in advance the future French contingents of certain categories of goods (embroideries, fabrics, watches etc.).

Interested circles examine the position of Swiss

trade with Ceylon. Swiss exports to that country have in fact increased during the last years from S.Frs. 3.7 millions in 1950 to S.Frs. 8.8 million in 1952 and S.Frs. 4.7 million during the first half of the current year whilst imports from Ceylon to Switzerland have considerably decreased. Swiss imports from Ceylon principally consists in Tea, edible oil, caoutchouc and goods made thereof. Switzerland mainly exports watches and machines to Ceylon.

Switzerland at the 3rd European Machine Tool Exhibition.

The 3rd European Machine Tool Exhibition, which has been recently held in Brussels, had a total number of 747 exhibitors from 13 European and overseas countries. The Swiss delegation was formed by not less than 54 firms, a figure which was surpassed only by the Western German and the French delegations. Switzerland's achievements in the field of precision engineering are well known, and specialists from numerous countries could once more convince themselves of the high quality of the models exhibited in Brussels.


Switzerland and EPU.

When in June 1952 the Swiss credit towards EPU had reached 70% of the proposed basic quota, our



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parliament decided to move the credit line from S.Frs 1090 millions to S.Frs 1640 millions. The Swiss creditor position did, however, not increase as rapidly as expected and it was only in June 1953 that EPU took advantage of the additional Swiss credit line. At present out of the 1640 millions mentioned about 1300 millions or 80% are engaged. According to the rules EPU had to give back to Switzerland part of this sum in gold, namely 540 millions whilst the rest, namely 760 millions are effectively credited to EPU by the Swiss Confederation.

Foreign Labour in Switzerland.

As far as the admission of foreign labour to Switzerland is concerned, the Swiss authorities follow a policy adapted to the changing circumstances on the labour market. In principle, the entry of foreign workers is authorised only as far as equivalent labour is not available in the domestic market. Thus the total number of entry permits issued fell from 150,000 in 1947 to 75,000 in 1950, and rose again to a level of 149,000 in 1952. The largest group of foreign workers in Switzerland is Italian. Others come from Germany, Austria, France, etc.

Three Swiss Engineers Honoured.

During its recent annual assembly, the Swiss Association of Engineers and Architects has conferred its highest distinction — honorary memberships — on two Swiss engineers of world-wide fame: Dr. O. Ammann, the well-known builder of one of New York's most important bridges, and Professor A. Stucky, director of the Lausanne Institute of Technology.

Dr. Stucky, who was called to the direction of this important school in 1940, has given the institution a new and successful impulse. At present, the Institute of Technology has almost 550 students, as compared with 140 in 1940. A number of new laboratories and institutes furnished with the most modern equipment have been created, especially for hydraulic machines, technical physics, photogrammetry, statics and applied mathematics.

Another Swiss engineer, Dr. Adolf Meyer, has recently been awarded the Henderson Gold Medal of

the Franklin Institute in Pennsylvania. This distinction acknowledges his pioneer work in the field of the construction of gas turbines where he has been the leading expert both by his own research work and by that of his pupils. Dr. Meyer has already received an honorary degree from the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich and, in 1935, from the Stevenson Institute in New York. Since 1950 he is an honorary member of the American Academy of Science and Arts. He is also the author of numerous technical publications.

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