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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Swiss Imports into the United Kingdom.

Better prospects for imports of certain Swiss goods into the United Kingdom result from the new facilities announced by the British Government on March 23rd. A large range of items has been taken off the Global Quota List and put under the Open General Licence System with immediate effect. According to "Notice to Importers No. 546", unrationed cheese, footwear, various textile products and many other goods interesting the Swiss export industry have been liberalised. On the other hand, as stated in "Notice to Importers No. 547" some of the Global quotas have been considerably increased for the 2nd half of 1953. Swiss exporters of stockings and socks, typewriters, musical instruments, imitation jewellery, fruit pulp and other goods will profit from the new facilities given in this sector. The British measures have been welcomed by all countries concerned as a keen contribution to the liberalisation of trade.

Increase of travel allowance.

On the same occasion, the British Government decided to increase the travel allocation as from March 24th from £25 to £40 for adults and from £15 to £30 for children under 12 years of age. The special allocation for cars was raised from £15 to £20 and for motorcycles from £5 to £10. This was most welcome news for the Swiss Tourist Industry.

New Trade Agreements.

(a) France:

An agreement concerning the exchange of goods during the period 1st April to 30th September, 1953 has been concluded between Switzerland and France on the 11th April at Berne. The terms of this arrangement are broadly speaking the same as those previously in force up to the 1st April. Quotas for Swiss exports to North Africa and to the French overseas territories could also be maintained.

(b) Spain:

A Trade and Payment Agreement between Switzerland and Spain has also been signed on the 20th March, 1953 with effect from the 1st January, 1953.

(c) Hungary:

On the same day new arrangements for the exchange of goods between Switzerland and Hungary have been agreed to.

(d) Germany:

Also on the 28th March, a Swiss and a German Delegation at Bonn came to a commercial arrangement. The old trade agreement has been prolonged for a further 6 months, from the 1st April to the end of September, 1953, in adaptation to the new German liberalisation measures. As far as invisibles are concerned, the negotiations could not take place yet, because Germany had not yet ratified the Debt Agreement negotiated in London. This question will be settled in the autumn together with a proposed long term trade agreement to come into effect on the 1st October, 1953.

A very essential point consists of the increase of the German travel allocation from DM 500 to DM 800 per head a year.

The International Wheat Agreement.

The International Wheat Council decided on Thursday, the 9th April, in spite of the opposition made by the British Delegation, to prolong the International Wheat Agreement for a further three years and to increase the fixed prices, which will vary between \$1.55 and \$2.05 per bushel (the old prices were \$1.20 and \$1.80). The British Delegation



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declared not to be prepared to agree to a maximum price higher than \$2.00. The United Kingdom, one of the biggest importers, seems not to be willing to give up this point of view and it is therefore doubtful, whether the new agreement can be carried out.

As announced in the Swiss Observer some time ago, our friend M. Umbricht from the Swiss Legation represented Switzerland at this very difficult negotiations. The readers will be pleased to hear that in the meantime he has returned to London.

The Swiss Wool Industry.

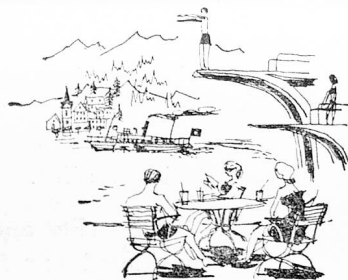
In 1952, Switzerland imported 21,560,000 lbs. of raw wool and wool tops, worth 101 million francs. On the other hand, Switzerland is increasingly exporting her wool manufactures; in fact, these exports have doubled within the last year. It is interesting to note that some of these exports go to countries that have important wool industries of their own. This indicates Switzerland's ability to compete in this field. In 1952, total Swiss exports of woollen products were 56 million francs.

Automobiles in Switzerland.

Of the 190,000 private cars registered in Switzerland 47,000 were imported from the United States and about the same number from Germany. France, Great Britain and Italy, in that order, were the next important providers. Almost two thirds of these cars have less than 10 HP. There are 22,000 trucks in Switzerland, 8,500 of which were made in this country.

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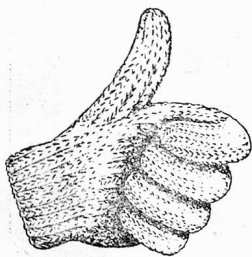


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* Night Tourist to Geneva begins 9th May and to Basle 22nd May.

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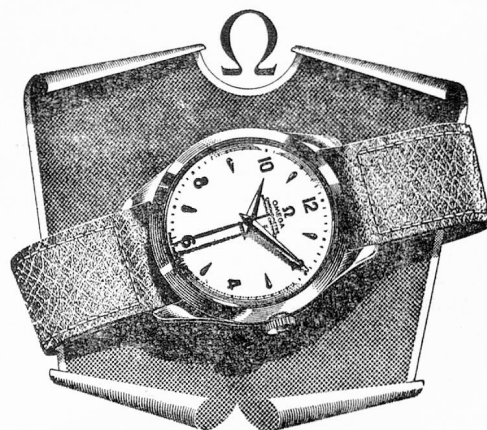


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