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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Increased activity in the machine industry.

In the Swiss machine-making industry, the number of orders inscribed are once more satisfactory, after having suffered a marked decline at the beginning of the year. According to statements made at the recent meeting of shareholders of important concerns belonging to this branch of trade, work is assured for the machine-making industry for several months in advance. It was during the last Quarter, more especially, that orders came in to an important extent. In certain undertakings these orders exceed those received during the same period last year, by as much as 30%. Thus, prospects for the near future are good, but the Swiss firms have to maintain an intense struggle in the domain of prices, against other countries where wage rates are considerably lower.

Fruit growing in Switzerland.

Switzerland continues to improve the quality of the fruit she grows, although exports of fruit, which used to be important, have become very unstable during the last few years. With the help of the State, fruit-growing companies are making tremendous efforts in order to obtain fruit of the highest possible quality, and during the course of recent years, they have succeeded in obtaining remarkable results, through rendering their orchards more healthy. Proof of this was very convincing to the visitors who attended the Exhibition of Swiss-grown fruit, which is now taking place in Lausanne.

Motor-cars in Switzerland.

The motorisation of Switzerland is proceeding at an accelerated rhythm; during the first nine months of 1954, the number of motor-cars imported surpassed the figure for last year by 9%. Small cars are occupying an increasing important place in Swiss imports of motor vehicles, and it is Germany who heads the list of suppliers, by a long way. She has, in fact, supplied more than half the number of vehicles imported; the remainder can be repartitioned more or less equally between France, the United Kingdom, Italy and the United States.

During the First Quarter, a marked decline was to be observed in respect of Swiss imports of motor-

cycles and of motor-scooters, which had attained a very high level during recent years. However, imports of these commodities became brisk again during the Third Quarter, and they even exceeded the imports for the corresponding period of last year. For the whole of the first nine months, however, they show a decline of about 15%, as compared with those for 1953.

Switzerland herself, also exports motor-cycles, and a very satisfactory increase is to be observed, at the present time, which has been taking place steadily, throughout the year. A particularly satisfactory level was attained in September.

A new calculating machine.

Swiss industry has just put the finishing touches to a new book-keeping machine, which is entirely automatic. Its principal characteristic is a device which automatically places the account-sheet at the level where the entry is to be made. In order to arrive at this result, the device in question utilizes simultaneously the possibilities of mechanism and of electricity.

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