

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1954)

Heft: 1220

Rubrik: Commercial news

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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Anglo-Swiss Trade.

The Anglo-Swiss Trade Agreement expired at the end of 1953. As talks to discuss terms of trade for the current year could only be started on January 19th, provisional arrangements have been made to prolong the old agreement for a short period (import licences up to one-third of the old half-yearly contractual quotas will be issued on both sides), thus ensuring continuity of the commercial relations between the two countries.

The new Agreement now under discussion will be described here as soon as possible. For the time being, it can be said that the field for bilateral negotiations has considerably shrunk thanks to the liberalisation measures announced by the United Kingdom authorities during the past year. The bilateral list for Swiss exports to the United Kingdom still contains, however, some important items, such as watches for instance.

Readers of the Swiss Observer might be interested to know something about the extent of Anglo-Swiss Trade during the past year. According to United Kingdom statistics the following development has taken place :

	£	£	£
	1951	1952	1953
Imports from Switzerland	20,452,948	21,408,019	22,833,199
Exports to Switzerland	34,185,810	30,250,167	26,491,016
Re-Exports to Switzerland	2,609,221	1,821,592	2,339,035

Whilst Swiss imports into the United Kingdom could be slightly increased United Kingdom exports to Switzerland decreased considerably.

The Swiss Industry Fair, 1954, is getting ready.

The large building designed to shelter sections 10 to 21 has been completed, and the event was duly celebrated. One can already get an idea of the outside appearance of the future Fair, but the alterations will also affect the location of the different manufacturing branches. The re-distribution work, which started immediately upon the closure of the 1953 exhibition, is nearing completion. The number of products offered by the 17 industrial groups that will participate in the 38th Swiss Industries Fair will surpass by far all previous years' achievements, and it is certain that both, layout and display, will be greatly improved.

Swiss Production and exportation of cheese.

In 1952 about 2/5 of the milk yield was transformed into dairy products. Among these, cheese comes foremost. Its production is estimated to reach 560,000 metric quintals, whereas that of butter is 223,000 mq, and that of other dairy products, such as condensed milk, powdered milk, casein and ice cream is 124,000 mq. Loaf-cheese constitutes four-fifths of the cheese production.

Cheese exports have fallen slightly below the level of preceding years. With 1931 wagon-loads they are still about 300 wagon-loads behind those for 1938-39. That is due on a large extent to the restrictions enforced by France, which now hardly buys in Switzerland half the pre-war quantities. Moreover,

the German market has not regained its former importance. Whereas Switzerland delivered to the latter 329 wagon-loads in 1938-39, only 21 wagon-loads were supplied in 1952-53, that is hardly more than 6%. Switzerland's chief customer is the United States, where she benefited last year by the abolition of the special restrictions introduced in 1951. Italy follows very closely, with only 7 wagon-loads less. Between them, these two countries absorb about 55% of the Swiss production.

The Swiss circles concerned think that Swiss cheese can maintain its positions in the world, if not improve it, only through a constant striving for irreproachable quality.

Imports and Exports of Shoes.

During the first eleven months of 1953 imports of shoes into Switzerland reached a value of 13.3m. francs, or 1.8m. more than during the corresponding period in 1952. The increase is particularly marked for material shoes, of which Switzerland imported 1,081,000 pairs, as compared with 613,000 over the same months in 1952. Imports of rubber shoes greatly increased, too, passing from 137,000 pairs to 268,000. On the other hand, imports of leather shoes went down slightly.

As to exports, they attained a value of 28.1m. francs, which constitutes an increase of 2.2m. by comparison with 1952. Exports of leather shoes, in particular, went up from 690,000 to 759,000 pairs, whereas exports of material and rubber shoes showed a considerable reduction.

Traffic movement in the Basle Ports.

During the month of December, traffic movement in the Basle ports attained 169,000 tons, that is to say 113,000 tons less than in the same period of last year. Traffic, for the whole of the year amounted to 3,923,000 tons, as against 4,239,000 tons for 1952. This represents a decline of a little more than 7%.

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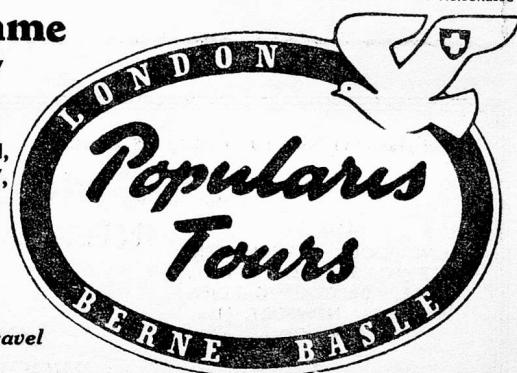
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