

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: - (1955)
Heft: 1252

Rubrik: Commercial news

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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Exports in Swiss Economy.

One often hears that one Swiss family out of three works for the export trade, whilst the other two benefit from it and this assertion is certainly not an exaggeration, as the importance of exports in certain branches of Swiss industry, attains much greater proportions. The watchmaking trade, to cite one of the branches of Swiss export industry which is best known abroad, sells 95% of its products abroad, whilst the metallurgical and machine-making industry sends approximately 2/3 of its products beyond the Swiss frontiers. In regard to the manufacture of machinery and of electrical apparatuses, this proportion amounts to as much as 90%. From 1945 to 1953, export figures have increased in value by more than 1,000 million francs, and this in spite of foreign competition which is greatly on the increase, and also, of the numerous Customs difficulties.

Wages in Switzerland.

From the provisional results of an enquiry carried out at the end of 1954, it would appear that the average level of the wages of the totality of Swiss workers has increased by 126% since 1939, whilst the salaries of employees have gone up by 102%. Both wages and salaries have increased by about 12% since 1949.

Foreign Workers in Switzerland.

The economic situation being particularly favourable in Switzerland during the whole of 1954, the average number of unemployed amounted to only about 8,000. As a matter of fact, there was a lack of man-power and Switzerland was obliged to engage more than 160,000 foreign workers, of whom more than half were women. 50% of these people were employed in the hotels and in domestic service, that is to say in seasonal jobs, whilst the remainder worked in industry, more especially in the metallurgical and in the building branches. As compared with

the previous year, the number of foreign workers in Switzerland showed an increase of approximately 10%.

Visit of a Group of Swedish Journalists.

A group of journalists, representing the big daily Press in Sweden, was recently invited by the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade in Lausanne — this in agreement with the Pro Helvetia Foundation, in Zurich — to come to Switzerland in a "study trip", lasting a fortnight, for the purpose of getting better acquainted with the four Swiss linguistic communities. In addition to visits of cultural interest, such as visits to universities, to the Federal Polytechnical School and to a Landsgemeinde (i.e. an open-air general-participation Parliament held in certain Swiss Cantons), the journalists were also taken to see various plants, more particularly in the branches specialising in precision instruments and apparatuses, in watch-making, in the construction of machinery and the production of foodstuffs. M. Max Petitpierre, the President of the Confederation, himself received the Swedish guests and the Federal Political Department gave a lunch, in their honour. There can be no doubt that these contacts will serve to bind still closer the traditional bonds that unite these two countries possessing such similar conceptions of life.

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Award of Swedish Medal to Swiss Professor.

This is the second time that a Swiss citizen has been awarded the medal, created some years ago by the Association of Swedish Watchmakers, for the purpose of honouring such persons as have contributed to the development of the watch-making industry. Professor A. Bornand, of the Watchmaking School in Geneva, had the honour of receiving this distinction as a reward for his technical, artistic and pedagogical work in the domain of watchmaking.

Economic Collaboration between Norway and Switzerland.

The Norwegian firm Elektrokemisk Ltd. and the Swiss Aluminium Company Ltd. plan to establish an important aluminium factory, with a capacity of production amounting to some 20,000 tons per year, in the Northern region of Norway. The Swiss company will — so it is stated — participate largely in the share-capital of this new Norwegian company, whose plant will start its activities in 1958.

New Sky Advertising Gadget.

A Swiss engineer has just completed a new apparatus which will make it possible to project publicity clichés over a long distance. This projector, which is mobile and can be transported from town to town, has proved its efficacy as, during the course of various manifestations, perfectly clear clichés could be reproduced either at relatively short distance, against the flank of a mountain, for example, or on

clouds at an altitude of more than 5,000 metres. The pictures thus obtained had a diameter of nearly one kilometre.

Greatly interested in this new stunt in the field of publicity, a Swiss watchmaking factory has already arranged to have a whole series of clichés, some of which comprise the showing of the exact time, reproduced in this fashion. For the moment, these projections can only be made at night, when it is dark, and they can only be white, but projection in colours is now being studied.

Customs Receipts in April.

In April, 1955, the receipts of the Swiss Customs Administration attained the sum of seventy million francs, thus providing the Confederation with eight million francs more than for the corresponding month last year. These very satisfactory results reflect the prevailing intense economic activity. For the first four months of 1955, Customs receipts show an increase of nearly 28 million francs, as compared with the same period in 1954, which was already enjoying a considerable boom.

ERRATA.

In our last issue, under "Legacies", the amount of the legacy of the late Dr. E. Bindschedler (Philadelphia) to the University of Zurich, should read: 196,670.—frs., and not, as mentioned 196,670,000.—frs. (Ed.)



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