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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Swiss Equipment for South America.

A group of textile manufacturers in the South American Republic of Chile is to construct a new artificial silk factory, to be completely equipped by Swiss firms. A Swiss firm located in Bern, which has its own patents for the manufacture of artificial silk, will supply the machines, while all complementary equipment such as electrical appliances, drying stations, and the like, will be furnished by another Swiss firm of Baden. The equipment supplied by the Swiss companies for the Chilean artificial silk factory will reach a total value of close to nine million Swiss francs. The factory itself will be designed according to the latest methods and will employ 200 workers. It will have a yearly capacity of from 1,000 to 1,500 tons of artificial silk.

Swiss Sewing Machines in the World.

The manufacture of sewing machines has marked a steady increase in Switzerland during the past few years. The export of sewing machines, one of the articles which has made Switzerland's reputation for high-quality products, reached a total value of 43 million francs in 1954, as compared with only 200 thousand francs during the last year before the Second World War. A large part of the machines accounting for this tremendous increase in export trade are manufactured by a firm located in Geneva, which sells its wares on markets in about a hundred countries. This firm has also decided to place its machines on the British market, where no foreign sewing machines are on sale at present.

Swiss Shoe-making Industry.

Another Swiss industry which has grown considerably in the past few years is the manufacture of shoes. At present the Swiss shoe-making industry employs more than ten thousand workers. The industry's activities for last year are reported as favourable.

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able, production having slightly gone up to an annual production of 11 million pairs of shoes. Swiss shoe exports were up too, and increased from under 30 million to more than 34 million francs: pre-war figures, however, have still not been attained. Production for the home market regressed slightly. The reason for the set-back is thought to be imports from other countries, which rose slightly last year to over one and a half million pairs.

Switzerland's Best Clients.

Last year, Switzerland exported approximately 5,300 million francs worth of goods to other countries. This figure represents about a fourth of the national income. In spite of a considerable development in transportation and market research efforts to find new overseas outlets for Swiss exports, Europe still remains Switzerland's best customer. To put it in figures, the Continent absorbs sixty per cent of Switzerland's exports, while America buys just a little under a quarter of the Swiss goods exported.

In 1954 Germany was Switzerland's best customer in Europe with total purchases amounting to a value of 640 million francs, or 12 per cent of the total. The United States bought Swiss goods for the same amount, while Italy made 462 and France 390 million francs worth of purchases from Switzerland.

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Fiftieth Jubilee of an Important Swiss Industry.

The Ticino is mostly known to foreign tourists for the beauty of its landscape but is not greatly developed from the industrial point of view. It is the seat, however, of an industry, unique in Switzerland and relatively rare in Europe, namely that of linoleum. This Swiss linoleum factory, which is established in Giubiasco and which gives employment to three hundred workers, has just celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. More than one-third of present day houses in Switzerland have their floors covered with linoleum, as a result of which production has developed considerably, attaining, as it did, more than a million and a half squares metres in 1954.

Switzerland's Presence in the World.

Although Switzerland is a very small country, viewed from the standpoint of demography and geography, its radiation throughout the world exceeds, by a good deal, its condition of being a little country, and this alone by the presence in all the countries of the globe of more than 200,000 Swiss, most of whom are industrialists, merchants, technicians and agriculturalists, as well as by the figures for its foreign trade which, last year, surpassed eleven thousand million francs, that is to say, more than half of its national income.

It is therefore not at all surprising that the number of Switzerland's official and semi-official representations in the world should be relatively large, the Confederation maintaining no fewer than

153 diplomatic and consular representations in fifty-six countries. The Swiss Tourist Office also has sixteen representations abroad, four of them being Overseas, whilst the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade possesses five agencies in the world. To this must be added Chamber of Commerce in nine European countries and Overseas, which have been established by the numerous and very active Swiss Colonies abroad. The upkeep of these posts and of their numerous staffs is a heavy financial burden for the Swiss collectivities, but it is, nevertheless, indispensable for it contributes largely to the maintenance of Switzerland's cultural and economic presence in the world.

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