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COMMERCIAL NEWS

State Accounts for 1954.

The State Accounts of the Swiss Confederation for 1954 show a surplus in receipts, amounting to 361 million francs. This very favourable result is due, on the one hand, to the fact that not all the credits granted for various constructions have been used, owing to the bad weather which prevailed in 1954, and, on the other hand, to the exceptionally satisfactory receipts which are the consequence of the high level of economic prosperity enjoyed by the country. Taking into account various amortisations which have to be made, the uncovered balance of the Confederation has now been reduced from 8 thousand million francs to 7.8 thousand million francs.

Slight Decline in the Cost of Living.

In February, the cost of living index once more showed a decline of 7/10 in points, and although this decline is due principally to seasonable factors, it may be hoped that the upward trend in the cost of living has now been definitely stopped, and that it was due to seasonal factors and not following a general tendency.

The Watch of the Future.

From times immemorial, watchmaking has exercised a great attraction on inventive minds, and as a result very evident progress has been achieved during these last few years. For instance, it has proved possible to perfect springs to such a degree that they are practically unbreakable. Nevertheless, there are some seekers who aspire towards still more sensational discoveries, and their idea is to suppress the traditional mechanism in order to replace it by another method of propulsion. Two Swiss factories have already obtained remarkable results by producing small clocks which are without any manual winding-up mechanism, but revolutionary innovations are found to be much more difficult to achieve in small calibre watch-making.

Ever since the end of the war, Swiss and foreign laboratories have been striving to insert an electrical mechanism into a watch, and several inventors have announced successful results. In spite of such news, which might prove alarming, Swiss watchmaking circles remain optimistic. For one thing, the Swiss

watchmaking industry does not stay behind, and its technicians are engaged in identical research, and, for another, experts consider that these new watches will remain for a long time to come in the position of prototypes, their mechanism being too delicate to proceed to any mass production, that is to say to any production which might prove a dangerous competition to the manufacture of watches possessing the classical mechanism. The electronic watch of the future is not an Utopian idea, but its appearance on the market will not take place tomorrow.

Television.

The Commission for Swiss Television announces that the first French-Swiss television transmitter, which is established at the Dôle, a summit of the Jura, will be put into service on the 24th of April next.

Measures to Improve the Quality of Milk.

Whereas, up to the present, the price of milk paid to the producers was fixed in accordance with a uniform rate, the Swiss Federal Assembly has now decided that, as from the 1st of May, payments for milk will take place according to quality. It is hoped that by means of this measure, which has been taken in the interests of the consumer, it will prove possible to improve the average quality of Swiss milk. As this method of payment will necessitate considerable extra



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costs for the collecting centres, the Swiss Government has decided to take upon itself part of these costs.

Cruising-Trains Organised by the Swiss Federal Railways.

In 1955, the Swiss Federal Railways are to organise four so-called cruising-trains, in collaboration with the Administration of European railways. The itineraries of these cruising-trains will enable the travellers to see Belgium, Holland and the Rhineland in May, Paris and the South of France in June, Austria, Yugoslavia and the Dolomites in September, whilst the last of these cruising-trains will take its passengers to Italy, in the month of October.

Swiss Foreign Trade in February.

Contrarily to what occurred during the preceding years, Swiss foreign trade developed considerably at the beginning of 1955. In comparison with the previous month, imports in February increased by 33 million francs and attained 482 millions, whilst exports showed an improvement amounting to 45 million francs and totalled 430 millions.

This rise, in comparison with the preceding month, corresponds essentially to a seasonal tendency. It is interesting, however, to note that there was such a remarkable progress when compared with the corresponding month of last year, amounting as it does to nearly 40 million francs in respect of exports. These show a marked increase in the metallurgical and, especially, watchmaking branches of industry.

Twenty-five Years of Occupational Therapy in Leysin.

The health resort of Leysin, in the Canton of Vaud, has just paid homage to one of the personalities who contributed the most to its renown: Professor Auguste Rollier, who, 25 years ago, founded the first international clinical factory in the world. This clinical factory is a real plant, with its machine-tools placed not only in the various work-shops, but also in the rooms and wards where they can be fixed to the patient's bed, a patient suffering from tuberculosis who may be forced to remain in bed for weeks and months at a time. Although the clinic has changed hands since then, the principles of the anti-tubercular therapy put into practice by the famous doctor, have remained in force.

The Swiss Colony in Paris has now its Organ.

The first number of the "Messager suisse de Paris", the organ of the Swiss Colony in Paris,

has just been published. In an introduction Mr. Pierre de Salis, the Swiss Minister in France, states that the Swiss Colony in Paris is one of the largest in the world, and that it has already been able to create various institutions, such as a Welfare Association, a Home for Old People, a Chamber of Commerce and Swiss Clubs which represent that unity in diversity which characterises Switzerland. Very soon a Swiss Hospital will be founded in Paris. Mr. de Salis expressed the hope that this new journal, which is to appear once a month, will become the mouth-piece of the aspirations of the Swiss in Paris. A void has now been filled and the Swiss Colony established in the French capital will possess, henceforth, a journal of their own serving as a link and a source of information.



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