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COMMERCIAL NEWS

The Swiss Ready-to-Wear Clothing Industry.

The Swiss industry specialising in the manufacture of ready-to-wear garments provides occupation for 55,000 workers and employees in 1,400 concerns, so that one-tenth of the manpower employed in Swiss industry, works in this branch. Since 1948, exports of Swiss ready-made garments have more than doubled, rising from 39 to 83 million francs in value. These figures give an idea of the importance of the industry in question.

Swiss Cost of Living in March.

The Swiss cost of living index, showing the fluctuations in the retail prices for the principal articles of consumption, stood at 171.6 points at the end of March, 1955. The slight decline registered in comparison with the previous month, may be attributed to the general decline which is customary at this season.

Escher-Wyss Established 150 Years Ago.

It is just a hundred and fifty years since the Swiss firm of Escher-Wyss was established. From the small spinning-mill that it used to be, at its beginnings, this concern soon became one the most important machine manufacturing plants in Switzerland, especially famed for its hydro-electric turbines.

Holland Buys Trams from Switzerland.

An order for twenty-nine fully equipped tram-cars has been received by the Swiss firm of Schindler Wagons S.A. from the Tram Company of Rotterdam. The contract, which amounts to the sum of more than seven million Florins, has been approved by the Communal Council of the great Dutch port, in spite of objections raised by Dutch industry, the conditions of payment and the terms of delivery offered by the Swiss firm being the most favourable. The agreement also provides for the future manufacture, under Swiss licence, of some 150 to 170 tram-cars, by Dutch firms.

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Will Switzerland have her Model City.

A group of young Swiss has launched the very original idea that the next National Exhibition, which is planned to be held in 1964, should be replaced by the erection of a Model City. This City, inspired by similar ideas already realized in India by the famous Swiss architect known as Le Corbusier, as well as in Great Britain and in the United States, would be created right in the Swiss countryside. The City would extend over an area measuring from four to five square kilometres, and could house from 10 to 15,000 inhabitants; it would be furnished with all the most modern improvements, chief among them a thermic central station which would provide heating for the whole town. Each trade and profession would be represented by model installations, so that the city would constitute a kind of permanent National exhibition. For the present, all this is merely a project, but it has aroused great interest in all quarters.

Swissair Plans.

The Swiss national aviation company, "Swissair", not content with its more than satisfactory results for the last few years, has now decided to improve its services for 1955 and 1956. No new line is to be opened up in its already very extensive network of air-lines, but those existing will be made the object of an intensified service. The Company's 25 aircraft

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will fly an average of 60,000 kilometres per day, that is to say, one and a half times the circumference of the globe. It is interesting to note that even the air traffic between Geneva and Zurich, which covers a very short distance and is subject to very strong road and rail competition, will have three daily services, in each direction. As a result, the centres of these two important Swiss towns, will find themselves at less than two hours' distance from each other.

Swiss Foreign Trade in March.

Compared with the preceding month, Swiss imports in March increased by 80 million francs, in value, whilst exports showed an *increase* of 44 millions. If one compares these figures with those of March, 1954, one finds that there is an increase of approximately 68 millions in respect of imports whereas that relating to exports only shows an increase of about 12 million francs. Taken as a whole, exports reflect the usual seasonal tendency, whilst imports considerably exceed the limits of this seasonal development.

Postal Traffic in Switzerland.

In consequence of the exceptionally favourable economic conditions which prevailed throughout last year, Swiss postal traffic attained a considerable development. The number of letters and parcels, etc. carried by the post surpassed the figure of a thousand millions, in the internal postal service, whilst the figure for correspondence sent abroad attained 112 millions. Moreover, Switzerland is a land of newspapers, proof of this being the number of 660 million newspapers delivered by the post during the period under review.

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