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COMMERCIAL NEWS

American-Swiss Agreement about atomic energy.

On the 21st of June, an Agreement on the exchange of information relating to the peaceful utilisation of atomic energy was signed in Washington. This Agreement provides that the United States shall sell to the Swiss Government, up to 500 kilos of enriched uranium, which will entail an expenditure of about fifty million Swiss francs. This Agreement on co-operation stipulates expressly that the deliveries made by the United States shall only serve civilian purposes. This Agreement will come into force after ratification by the respective Parliaments of the two countries.

The next Swiss National Fair at Lausanne.

All the sections of the Swiss National Autumn Fair, which is to be held in Lausanne, from the 8th to the 23rd of September next, have already been retained by the exhibitors. This important event is distinguished this year by several innovations. For one thing, the furniture branch is to be extended, and for another a Salon is to be created for the luxury industries, which will group together watches, jewellery, Morocco leather goods and book-binding. Canada will be the official foreign guest at the 37th Comptoir Suisse. In addition, the Comptoir Suisse has organised, as a special scientific attraction, a Pavilion of Submarine Exploration, with the co-operation of the "Club alpin sousmarin" of Cannes. A whole series of documents will make it possible for the visitors to familiarize themselves with the development which has taken place in sub-marine exploration throughout the ages.

We would like to draw attention, in passing, to the fact that the diving apparatus used by the underwater divers of Cannes is manufactured by a Swiss firm, and that the Swiss watch-making industry has perfected a submarine chronometer which is intended specially for the use of divers.

Payment Agreement between Poland and Switzerland.

After lengthy negotiations, Switzerland and Poland have now concluded an Agreement which provides that the proceeds from the sale of Swiss property assigned to Poland can now be transferred immediately to the owners in Switzerland. This

Agreement also settles the question of the arrears in the regulated service of Swiss-Polish payments.

Switzerland and the industrialisation of economically undeveloped countries.

It is a real pioneer's work that has been accomplished by a firm in Argovie, when it succeeded in preparing and then perfecting the industrial utilisation of ramie fibres. The fibre of this plant, which is an Asian perennial of the nettle family, which grows in the far East, is known for its exceptional resistance. Thus, mixed with other fibres, it can be used for the manufacture of furnishing fabrics, damask linen, etc. The Swiss firm has been commissioned to deliver a complete modern plant for the processing of ramie fibre to the Philippines. This plant, which is unique of its kind, is capable of producing six tons of ramie fibre per day.

Swiss Labour Market in May.

In May, 1956, the evolution of the Swiss Labour Market was characterised by a fresh reduction in the number of workers available, as well as by a very great offer of employment. At the end of May, the total of unemployed for the whole of Switzerland was less than 700, whilst the number of vacant jobs was ten times as great.

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