

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: - (1956)
Heft: 1270

Rubrik: Commercial news

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COMMERCIAL NEWS

40th Swiss Industries Fair in Basle.

The fortieth Swiss industries Fair will take place in Basle, from the 14th to 24th of April, 1956. Whereas, at the beginning, the chief mission of this exhibition was to satisfy the requirements of the country, it has, more particularly since the Second World War, taken on a considerable extension, which it owes to the participation of the big export industries. The number of exhibitors amounts to-day to 2,300, which is twice the number of those who took part, before the war. In order to satisfy the wishes of the exhibitors, the surface covered by the exhibition has almost quadrupled, during the same space of time. Exhibits in the field of technics, alone, now require more than half of the superficial area of the exhibition. Moreover, all the branches of trade and of industry are represented at the Basle Fair.

Europe's Longest Aerial Cableway.

After five years of preparatory work, the tourist resort of Zweisimmen, in the Bernese Oberland, has been authorized by the Federal Authorities to build an aerial cableway which will probably be the longest in the world. What is being planned is to overcome a difference in level of about 3,000 feet by means of two cableways, the total length of which will be three miles. It is intended to operate them in summer as well as in winter. The authors of the project stress the fact that their aim is in no way to transform the character of the resort to which the tourists are accustomed, but, on the contrary, to preserve its own particularly quality.

The Swiss Footwear Industry in 1955.

The production of the Swiss Footwear Industry for the domestic market, in 1955, attained nearly ten million pairs of boots and shoes, a further almost two million pairs being imported; thus, the theoretical average consumption of footwear approximates 2.4 pairs per inhabitant. Imports have increased, especi-

ally in respect of leather footwear and, thus, foreign competition is making itself felt more acutely on the internal market. On the other hand, a steady increase has been registered, since the beginning of 1953, in regard to exports. Thus, last year, exports of leather shoes, which constitute the principal export article of the Swiss boot and shoe manufacturers, exceeded one million pairs, for the first time since the war. The number of workers employed in this industry amounts to about 12,000 persons.

Novelty on Swiss airport.

The Zurich-Kloten airport has just been endowed with two fire-extinguishing machines, equipped with apparatus such as it would be vain to seek on any of the other airports in Europe. These two engines, mounted on chassis of seven and nine tons, and possessing a speed which can attain 90 kms. per hour, are provided with wireless installations which make it possible for them to communicate with each other and with the airport. One of them, moreover, has a loud-speaker for the transmission of orders and an observation tower made of plexi-glass.

The new Swiss Customs Tariff.

Minister Hans Schaffner, the Head of the Division for Commerce of the Federal Department of Public Economy, recently spoke of the need to adapt the

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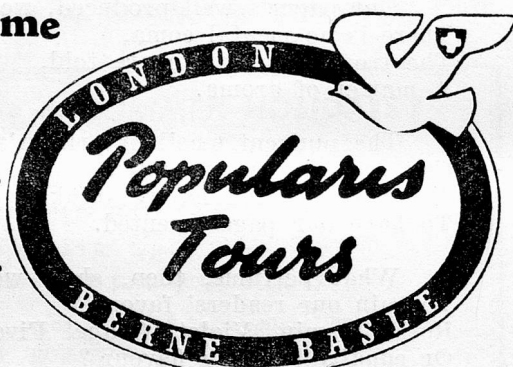
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Swiss customs tariff to new circumstances. Unfortunately, protectionism is being born anew, in the world. This evolution finds Switzerland somewhat unprepared, as the customs nomenclature of this country goes back to some fifty years ago, whilst the Tariff dates from 1921. The other countries engaging in a policy of customs tariffs, Switzerland has been out-distanced by the situation and she must hasten to bring her Customs Tariff up to date, revising it in accordance with new ideas, which will allow her to conduct commercial negotiations better. Contrarily to a mistaken idea which has spread in certain circles, there is no question of profiting from the situation in order to induce an increase in prices, but of forging a modern instrument of economic policy, an efficacious arm, which will make it possible for Switzerland to carry out successfully her negotiations in the commercial field.

The latest creations of Swiss watchmaking.

At the Horological Salon of the Basle Industries Fair, which is to open its doors on the 14th of April, it will be possible to see a great many technical novelties of interest to the consumer. Among men's watches, will be found three, the construction of which makes it possible to get the exact time, as a result of the blocking of the big seconds finger at the centre, a mechanism which is less complicated than that of the chronograph. The compass-watch would appear to have reached the point of perfection; two models

are to be launched at Basle, where one will also be able to see three new types, extremely flat, and possessing calendars. The "Alarm" watch-bracelet has also been perfected, and there will be several new types with very interesting characteristics. Automatic water-tight watches are now being made for ladies, in reduced calibres, so as to preserve all their elegance.

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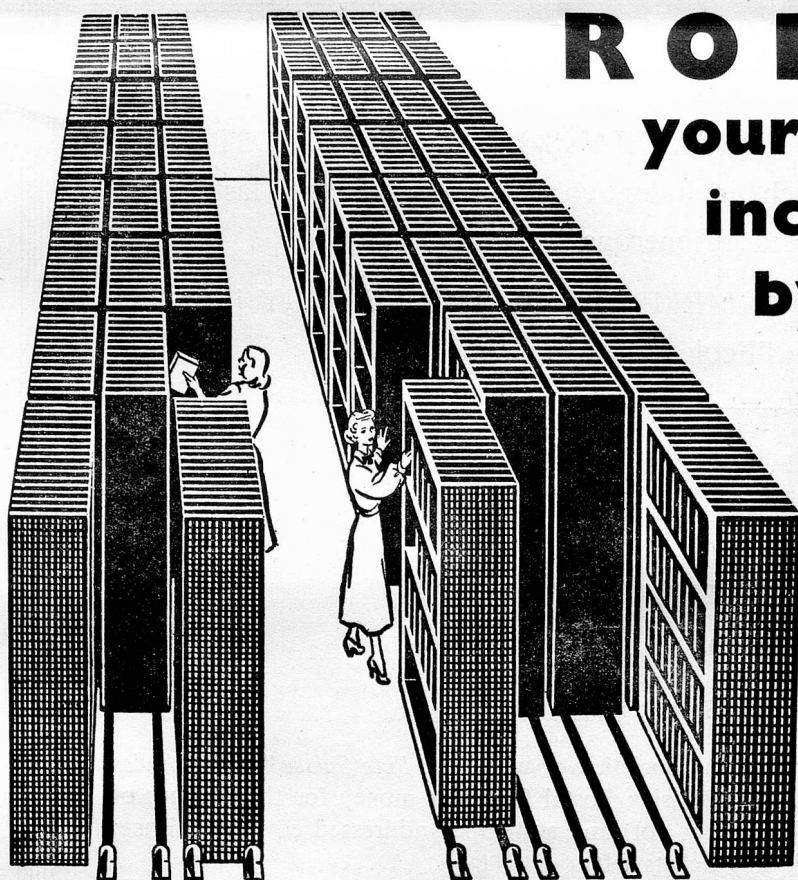
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