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AIR FREIGHT INCREASES DESPITE SLIGHT RECESSION.

Although Switzerland's foreign trade showed a slight contraction in the first half of 1958 compared with the same period a year ago (the volume of imports was down by 17 per cent and of exports by six per cent), Swissair's freight traffic continued to go ahead strongly, recording an increase of 36 per cent. Freight tonne-kilometres performed totalled 9,216,664 against 6,784,181 in the first half of 1957. Freight traffic thus rose more than the increase in Swissair's offered capacity, which was 35 per cent higher at 97,400,755 tonne-kilometres. In fact, freight traffic in the first six months of 1958 exceeded that for the whole of 1955.

The greatest rate of increase was recorded on the route between Europe and South America, where almost four times as much freight was carried as in the first half of 1957. In Europe, Swissair's freight traffic rose by 18 per cent and on the North Atlantic by eight per cent. The latter figure is still noteworthy, however, in view of the recession in the U.S.

On the Middle Eastern routes freight traffic revived in recent months so that the results for the half year are about the same as for the first six months of 1957. Satisfactory loads were also flown on the route to the Far East.

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EDITOR'S POSTBAG.

Bath, 3rd August 1958.

The Editor,
The Swiss Observer,
London.

Dear Sir,

About five weeks ago there appeared in the Personal column of advertisements of the local evening paper an announcement asking any Swiss residing in Bath who would like to meet other Swiss on the occasion of August 1st to telephone Bath 5603.

This was a personal initiative of Mrs. Maddox, a native of Baden (Aargau). The result was that eight Swiss, who would not otherwise have met, were assembled in her hospitable home.

We had a delightful evening of chatter and gossip in Schwyzerdütsch and in French, and we sang again some of the songs of our young days. This meeting did not attract the young Swiss who are here for a brief time to improve their English, but it did bring together those who remain Swiss at heart, however long their absence from the Homeland.

This enterprise could be copied in many other centres that are too small to have a Swiss Club; not only would the participants derive much pleasure, but it would provide a nucleus of compatriots ready and able to give advice on local conditions.

Two years ago a Swiss couple who were touring had a car accident near Bath: they spoke very little English and were in a serious dilemma until a local Swiss read of the accident in the local paper.

He was able to visit them in Hospital, arrange for repair of the car, and relieve much of their anxiety.

If the group that Mrs. Maddox has now brought together had been organised at that time it would have been so simple to give help without delay; the Hospital or other authority would be able to contact not merely an interpreter, but a compatriot eager to give any help within his power.

Let us hope that the example of Mrs. Maddox will be widely copied.

Yours faithfully,

C.H.

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