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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Prospecting for oil in Switzerland.

The Swiss Petroleum Company at St. Gall (S.A. du Pétrole Suisse) has announced that a boring line possessing rich prospects extends from the north of Augsburg, in Germany, in the direction of Lake Constance and continues into Switzerland. A certain region, lying to the south-west of Winterthur, in the Canton of Zurich, would appear to possess particularly rich prospects. Drilling there is to be started upon soon. Further prospecting is going on, especially to the south of Zurich.

Success of the Swiss pavilion at Brussels.

It is estimated from data gathered in July that between 10 and 12 per cent of all visitors to the Brussels World's Fair visit the Swiss pavilion. The press of visitors varies from day to day, with an approximate daily average of between 15,000 and 18,000. The tourist department, which is seen by most of these visitors, answers an average of 1,800 enquiries per day.

Glacier aviation at the Comptoir Suisse, in Lausanne.

Switzerland's national autumn fair, known as the Comptoir Suisse, will very shortly open its doors for the 39th year. Among the special events at this year's fair, we may mention the day devoted to glacier aviation, Wednesday, 24th September. On that day the public will have the opportunity of becoming better acquainted with that branch of aviation, which was developed in Switzerland and serves chiefly for rescue purposes.

Swiss participation in the running of an experimental reactor in Norway.

The Swiss Cabinet has proposed that parliament appropriate a credit of 1.5 million Swiss francs to enable Switzerland to participate in the research programme of the experimental reactor at Halden, Norway. The research project is sponsored by the Organization for European Economic Co-operation, and has the aim of promoting international collaboration in the field of the peaceful uses of atomic energy in Europe.

Swiss index of prices.

The Swiss index of wholesale prices, which encompasses the most important unprocessed foodstuffs and the chief raw materials and other basic commodities, at the end of June 1958 stood at 215.2 (August 1939 = 100). The level is 0.6 per cent below the preceding month. The index of consumers' prices at the end of July was 182.4 (also based on August 1939 = 100), thus showing no change over June, although there was a rise of 2.2 per cent compared to the figure for the same month of last year.

Health insurance in Switzerland.

The number of persons in Switzerland registered with an authorized health insurance company at the end of June 1956 was over 3.8 million, or as much as 77 per cent of the total population. The comparable figure for last year was 74.8 per cent.

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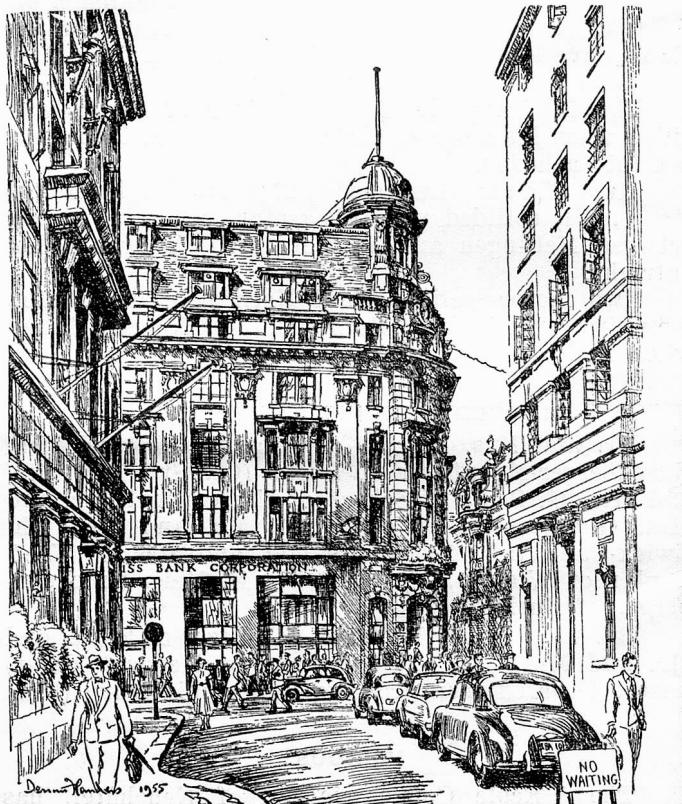
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TRAVELLERS' CHEQUES AND ALL
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Domenico Gnoli 1955

Swiss loan societies in Switzerland during 1957.

According to the report of the union of Swiss loan societies, the Raiffeisen system, that branch of the Swiss banking system has developed favourably in 1957. At the end of last year the number of Raiffeisen agencies was 1,040, with a total of 117,000 members. The total balance of all the affiliated societies came to over 1½ billion Swiss francs, 83 millions more than in 1956.

Swiss postal printed forms.

Switzerland's post, telegraph and telephone administration uses some 3,500 different printed forms for its public services and internal business. In all, 430,000 million copies of these forms are printed annually, and the resultant contracts with printers amount to 7 million Swiss francs per year, while paper manufacturers have contracts to the value of 4 millions.

Horse-breeding in Switzerland.

The traditional horse fair of Saignlégier, in the Jura mountains, which has been a horse-breeding centre for centuries, was recently held once again. As many as 43,000 spectators were drawn to the event, evidence of the popularity which the work-horse still enjoys in Switzerland, despite the increasing agricultural mechanization. The 380 animals exhibited made an excellent impression.

The receipts of the Swiss Post, Telegraph and Telephone in the first half of 1958.

During the first half of this year, the Swiss Post, Telegraph and Telephone Services noted a marked slowing down in the increase of their traffic in comparison with the corresponding period of the preceding year. The profit of 45 million francs recorded during the first half of this year is 6 million less than in 1957. The deficit of the postal service reached 4.5 million and the profits from the telephone and telegraph services fell by 1.5 million Swiss francs.

Meat consumption in Switzerland.

According to a report issued by the Swiss butchers union, meat consumption in Switzerland during 1957, home slaughtering included, amounted to approximately 101 lb. per inhabitant, representing an increase of some 4½ lb., or 4.4 per cent over the preceding year. The consumption of poultry doubled, that of veal remained unchanged, and that of beef decreased slightly. If home-produced meat, fish and the private breeding of poultry and rabbits are included, the consumption per inhabitant in 1957 was just over 1 British cwt. (112 lb.)

Dairy and agricultural exhibition at St. Gall.

From 9th to 19th October this year a dairy and agricultural exhibition, under the name of OLMA, will be held at St. Gall, in Eastern Switzerland. This year's exhibition will include a special display of large and small livestock from the canton of Appenzell. It should be mentioned that Eastern Switzerland, which is well known in foreign countries for its textile products, also possesses a flourishing agriculture specialising mainly in dairy farming and fruit growing.

New success of Swiss moving pictures production.

Even if Switzerland produces only very few feature films, it makes up for this by shooting a great number of documentary and scientific pictures, of which several have received awards this year. Thus, "Rendez-vous avec Svea", a film in colour devoted to the Loetschberg Line (which connects Berne with the big Simplon artery) obtained the First Prize awarded by the Congress of Publicity Films, which took place in Brussels.

Exceptional transport operation carried out by the Swiss Federal Railways.

Among the number of unusual jobs carried out by the Swiss Federal Railways during the first six months of this year was the carriage of a turbine, measuring over 13 feet in diameter and weighing 190 tons, from Münchenstein near Basel in Switzerland, to Kalundborg in Denmark, for installation in a heating plant there. This enormous turbine was transported on a special 36-wheeled flatcar of the Swiss Federal Railways.

A new housing settlement in Switzerland.

A group of villas constructed with the reserve funds of the employees of the Geneva Company for Physical Instruments, provided and managed by the Company itself, has just been opened at Onex, near Geneva. This housing settlement, in the construction of which employees of the company collaborated, consists of 24 houses capable of accommodating about 90 people. The 5-room villas are semi-detached and have the same outward appearance as the old mansions of the Genevese countryside; in addition, they are spacious, possess all the modern comforts and each have a garden of some 6,600 square feet. Although enjoying all these advantages, the tenants are all in the middle income bracket — which is the main point, since these villas were constructed to counter the acute housing shortage faced by the employees of the Company.

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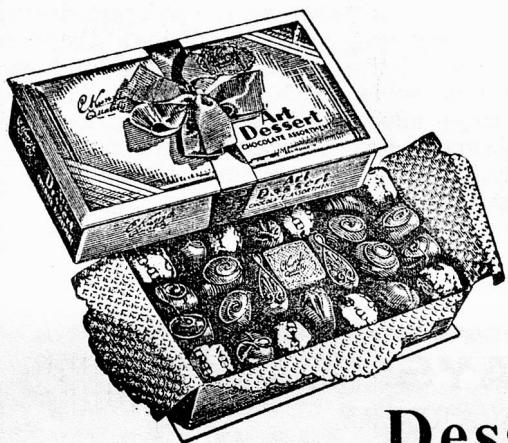
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A Swiss insurance company celebrates its centenary.

At the end of September the insurance company, "La Suisse", whose head office is in Lausanne, will be celebrating the hundredth anniversary of its foundation. This company was the second of its kind to be founded in Switzerland and the first founded in the French-speaking part of the country. A century ago life insurance in Switzerland was handled by foreign companies and was not very extensive. The creation of companies within the country brought a rapid increase in life insurance, and "La Suisse" played an important part in the economic development of the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

Development of Swiss television.

The latest figures released on the number of television receivers in Switzerland are for the end of July. The total number of sets at that time was 43,000, of which 38,000 were in homes and 4,800 in public places.

Kloten-Zurich airport in 1957.

The receipts of Zurich-Kloten airport continued to rise and for the first time exceeded 4 million Swiss francs. Expenses did not rise as much as receipts, and there was a net profit of 1.5 million Swiss francs. Because of this favourable result and in spite of increased costs of amortization and depreciation the net deficit of this airport has again diminished, and this result can be considered as a good omen for the future of Kloten.

The Swiss topographical Service in honour.

The United States have asked the Swiss Topographical Service to plot a map of Mount McKinley, the highest point in North America. In an official communication, the Department of Commerce, in Washington, states that this work, in which the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research will also collaborate, has been entrusted to the Swiss institution, because of the great experience it possesses in regard to the topography of mountainous massifs. An exhibition which has just been opened in the capital of the United States shows the various degrees of technique developed and used in Switzerland. Prepared by experts from the Swiss Federal Military Department, one finds there the oldest national geographical map. Switzerland, which enjoys the reputation of being the country possessing the best topography in the world and of being the best mapped, has a cartographic history, which goes back to the 15th century.

Swiss participation to a Norwegian aluminium plant.

An aluminium plant, possessing a capacity of production of 22,000 tons of metal per year (intended almost exclusively for export) was inaugurated recently at Moesjøen, in the extreme North of Norway, in the presence of the Norwegian Minister of Industry and of the Swiss Ambassador at Oslo. One third of the capital of this new plant has been subscribed by a big Swiss firm belonging to the aluminium branch, which has its head-quarters in Zurich.

The most modern Swiss Stock Exchange.

The Stock Exchange in Geneva, where so much business has been done during the last forty years, has now taken on a new aspect. The architects have entirely transformed the hall, arranging it in such a way that it has been possible to place the twenty-eight telephone call-boxes and the Exchange offices at an equal distances from the stockbrokers' ring in the reserved enclosure. When one adds that there are as

many as eighty-four telephones on 'Change, this will give an idea of the installation of the place. The acoustics, the lighting and the ventilation of the hall are all ensured by means of the most modern devices. In short, the Geneva 'Change is now the best equipped in Switzerland.

Decreases of Swiss watches exports.

During the first five months of this year, exports of watches from Switzerland amounted in value to 424 million Swiss francs, this figure representing a decline of about 60 million francs as compared with the corresponding period in 1957; the decrease, in respect of the number of pieces exported, amounts to approximately 2.5 millions of watches and movements. The United States, Canada and the territory of Hong Kong absorb nearly fifty per cent of the output of the Swiss watchmaking industry. During the first five months of 1958, Swiss watchmaking exports suffered a decline, as compared with the previous year, of 29.3 per cent on the American market and of 38.5 per cent on that of Hong Kong.

A new Swiss postage stamp.

As from the 25th of August (and until the stock is exhausted) a special Swiss postage stamp of 40 centimes, i.e. the postage required to send an ordinary letter abroad, will be on sale at all the post-offices, instead of the usual stamp of the same value. This stamp, which is dedicated to the 2nd International Conference for the peaceful utilisation of atomic energy, which started on 1st September will represent, in three colours (blue, red and light yellow) the symbol of nuclear fusion. Printed in rotogravure, this special stamp comes from the presses of a specialised Swiss printing establishment at La Chaux-de-Fonds.

BREVES NOUVELLES QUI FONT PLAISIR.

Une importante association américaine indépendante, la "Consumers Union", dont le but est de donner des conseils en matière d'achats, a retenu parmi 25 autres modèles, la machine à écrire portative d'une entreprise connue d'Yverdon. A son avis, cette machine à écrire présente des qualités qui la placent en tête dans la branche.

Après de longues années de recherches, une fabrique zurichoise a mis au point une machine à calculer pour les quatre opérations : les résultats finaux et intermédiaires sont reportés ensemble et de manière très lisible. Cette machine portative, rapide et de forme agréable, présente encore nombre d'autres avantages.

Une nouvelle préparation destinée à faciliter les recherches dans le domaine de la psychiatrie vient d'être créée dans les laboratoires d'une maison réputée de Bâle. Elle permet de mettre le sujet dans un état d'ivresse momentané sans cependant qu'il perde conscience ni la mémoire. Ce procédé n'a aucune conséquence néfaste pour le patient.

A l'exposition " Regards sur les spécialités européennes " organisée par une maison londonienne de renom, les vêtements en tricot d'une fabrique réputée de Liestal ont été spécialement remarqués pour leur

très haute qualité, ce qui a fait dire que cette entreprise était en mesure d'adapter à chaque personne une mode particulière et inimitable.

* * *

Distinctions: L'Ecole technique supérieure de Vienne a décerné à M. C. Kollbrunner, ingénieur diplômé, à Döttingen, le titre de sénateur d'honneur. — Le professeur J. Kläsi de Berne a reçu le grade de docteur honoris causa de la faculté de médecine de Kiel. — A l'Académie de médecine de New-York, Mme M. Kämpfer, de La Neuveville, a terminé ses études en obtenant le deuxième rang parmi 115 candidates. — Le prix Andersen 1958 a été décerné à la jeune écrivain Gertrude Häusermann. — La ville d'Ueberlingen a octroyé le prix de littérature du Lac de Constance à l'écrivain M. Lavater-Sloman.

Semaine suisse.

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