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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Old Swiss banknotes recalled.

New banknotes, to the value of 1,000, 500 and 50 francs, were put into circulation in Switzerland in 1957. More than four-fifths of the old notes having been replaced by the new ones, the old banknotes in circulation were recalled on 1st October 1958; from that date they ceased to be legal tender. Nevertheless, in conformity with the official regulations they will be accepted, at their nominal value, up to 31st March 1959 by the cashiers at all government bureaux, and the National Bank is bound to exchange them at their nominal value for another twenty years, *i.e.*, until 30th September 1978.

Swiss Television awarded a prize.

Swiss television continues to make progress, and the number of licensed sets amounted to nearly 45,000 at the end of September. At the International Radio and Television Competition for the Italia prize, the prize of the City of Venice, consisting of the sum of 500,000 lire, was awarded to the documentary film "The Glacier Pilot", which had been realised by two members of the staff of the Geneva Studio of Swiss television, with the co-operation of the famous pilot Hermann Geiger. This prize was won in competition with twenty-four documentary films, submitted by fourteen countries.

A Swiss air-transport school.

The Swiss legislative assemblies have granted an appropriation for the establishment of a Swiss school for transport aviation, which will be placed under the supervision of the Federal Department of Posts and Railways. It is intended to train thirty pilots, ten navigator/radio-operators, fifteen despatchers, and twenty aircraft mechanics. Total annual expenditure is estimated at 3,200,000 Swiss francs, from which amount it is necessary to deduct 500,000 francs which is at present being paid to Swiss-air for the training of its aviation personnel, and also 170,000 francs which constitutes an indemnity granted to the "Aéro-Club de Suisse" for basic aeronautical training.

To the rescue of the fishermen of Neuchâtel.

Switzerland is a very small consumer of fish. Indeed the annual consumption of fish per head of the population, which, for example, in France attains 28.7 pounds and in Germany 33.2 pounds, only amounts to 4.42 pounds in Switzerland, of which three-quarters consists of imported fish. The fishermen on the lake of Neuchâtel, where fish is more abundant than in any other lake in the country, are finding themselves faced by a tragic situation as a result of the lack of marketing possibilities, this more especially as fishing has attained record figures during the last two years. Thus, whereas the yearly average for their catches during the last ten years amounted to some 600,000 pounds, it increased in 1957 to 1.07 million pounds, half of the fish caught being "bondelles", a small fish belonging to the "coregonus" genus. In order to prevent a catastrophe, a Neuchâtel inspector of hunting and fishing had the brilliant idea of establishing a smoke-house for curing the "bondelles", thus making it possible for them to be kept longer and, also, to promote their sale. In 1957 the production of smoked bondelles had already attained 32,000 pounds and the economic success of this new project is very encouraging.

Swiss uranium.

The "Working Group for the study of Swiss minerals and rocks, for the purpose of assessing their contents in nuclear fuel and rare elements" has just published the results of the analysis to which were subjected samples of radioactive rocks found in the Canton of Valais at the beginning of the year. At Isérables uranium is to be found in the form of natural uranite of oxide or radium, in chlorital mica schists. At Sarreyer the mineralisation is not apparent. The radioactive rock, there, is a carbonaceous quartzite, containing uranium. The two layers are to be found in the rocks covering the Saint Bernard massif. The prospecting which is now taking place will show whether these layers offer any prospects of profitable working.



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Swiss spinning frames for Ceylon.

The Government of Ceylon has decided to go in for the development, on a large scale, of the textile industry on the island and, with this aim in view, to establish a big spinning mill at Avsyangoda. In spite of strong competition, it is the Swiss firm of Messrs. J. J. Rieter & Company, Ltd., of Winterthur, which has been given the order for the delivery of spinning machinery to the value of about 4 million Swiss francs. This order is all the more important as it is a trial order, and the equipment of the new mill will have to be doubled in two years' time.

Fiftieth anniversary of the first electric steel furnace at Aarau.


It is just fifty years since the firm Oehler & Company, Ltd., of Aarau, installed in that city its first electric furnace for melting steel. At that time the setting up of an apparatus for melting by means of electricity was looked upon as being a very daring undertaking. The first electric furnace in Aarau used to consume one-quarter of the capacity of the electric plant which furnished the current for the local network. In order to commemorate this venturesome initiative Messrs. Oehler recently donated a statue to the city of Aarau, which has now been set up in a public park.

Swiss watches to be presented to the captains of the Polar submarines.

A group of citizens of the town of Geneva have decided to offer a watch to each of the two commanders of the American atomic submarines which recently made the successful submerged crossing of the North Pole. These two magnificent watches have been specially designed and made for the geophysical year, and each bears an inscription commemorating the performance of the two American "A-subs".

A welding centre in Lausanne.

The Soldering Company Castolin, Ltd, founded in Lausanne more than fifty years ago, has contributed very largely to the development of the technique of "soldering at a low temperature". During the course of a half-century of activities it has spread its relations to eighty countries, *i.e.* practically to the whole of the world, and has set up four factories in Europe as well as a large subsidiary company in the United States. It has just inaugurated, not far from Lausanne, a centre for soldering — where in addition to laboratories for research and development there are to be found lecture-rooms — which will make it possible for future specialists to become initiated in the technique of "soldering at a low temperature" under the direction of experienced technicians.



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