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COMMERCIAL NEWS

A new project for enlarging Zurich — Kloten airport.

In the summer of 1957, the people of Zurich rejected a project for the extension of the Kloten airport, because they considered it to be too costly and ambitious. The Government of the Canton of Zurich has elaborated some new proposals, taking into account the criticisms expressed in regard to the former plan. The carrying out of the new project will only cost 73 million Swiss francs, whereas the rejected project had been estimated at 180 millions. Moreover, measures have been provided for lessening the noise caused by air traffic. Furthermore, it is intended to proceed, concurrently, with a revision of the tariff for airport fees.

Swiss instruments for checking the amount of radio-activity in the air.

It is an established fact that the numerous nuclear tests which are carried out result in an increase of radio-activity in the atmosphere in places which are sometimes a long way off from the test fields. In order to be able to control this phenomenon better, to discover the laws which govern it, and to be able to assure the security of the population, in plenty of time, a great many countries have proceeded to install adequate measuring devices. Thus during the international geo-physical year, some thirty stations for controlling radio-activity in the air, spread over the entire surface of the globe, will be placed at the service of science. These apparatuses have been conceived and furnished by an important Swiss firm which manufactures electrical appliances. It will be possible to see one of these devices in action, at the forthcoming Swiss Industries Fair, which is to be held in Basle from the 12th to the 22nd of April, 1958.

Switzerland honours an American Colonel.

Colonel John Stapp, of the American Air Force, who is at the head of a medico-aeronautical service, has been awarded the Girard-Perregaux Prize for geophysics, in recognition of his research work on the behaviour of man in rocket flights.

This is a prize which is awarded every year by the aforementioned Swiss firm of watch manufacturers, in recognition of eminent services rendered towards scientific knowledge regarding the destiny of man.

Friendly exchanges between Austria and Switzerland.

A group of Swiss banks, together with a Swiss company for the production of electricity, have just opened a credit of 18 million Swiss francs to the Association of Austrian Electricity Stations. In return, this association will supply power to the Swiss company in question, which is unable, at the present time, to furnish to the regions dependent on it, the very large quantities of power required, which amount to three thousand million kilowatt hours, per annum, that is to say, one-fifth of the total consumption in Switzerland.

Swiss exports of cheese during 1957.

According to the provisional figures in the possession of the Swiss Union for the Cheese Trade, it may be said that exports of cheese in 1957, even if they did

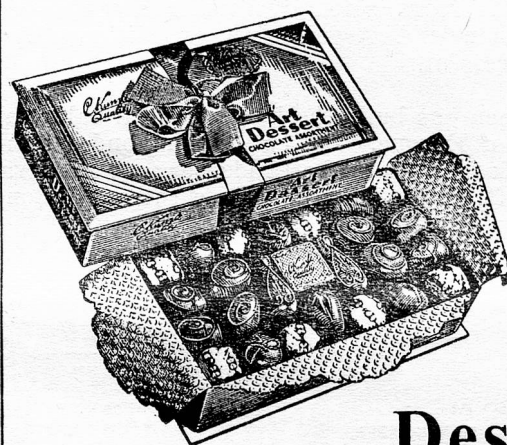
not attain the figure for 1956, were nevertheless, satisfactory. The quantities absorbed by the principal customers were considerably higher and the decline in the annual tonnage is due solely to the fact that France held up the granting of permits for a period of six weeks. On the other hand, sales to Italy, to the Belgo-Luxembourg Union, to Germany and to the U.S.A. were definitely superior to those in the previous year, and this almost filled in the deficit of more than 1,100 tons on the French market. Total exports of round cheeses in 1957 amounted to 11,370 tons, as compared with 11,750 tons in 1956.

Swiss Industry of non-ferrous metals in 1957.

The Swiss metallurgical plants belonging to the non-ferrous branch were obliged to produce their maximum output during 1957, in order to satisfy the demand for semi-manufactured products. A particularly large number of orders was received during the first half of the year, but the weakness of the market prices for metals and the decline in prices, caused a certain slowing down in business towards the end of the year.

Deliveries of semi-manufactured products in coppery metals to the consuming industries in Switzerland, showed, in general, a slight increase, as compared with the previous year. Requirements proved greater in the watch-making industry, the industry making bolts, pipes, etc., the electrical appliances industry and the building trade, whilst a decrease was

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to be observed in the machine and the brass-founding industries.

Exports of the products of the Swiss metallurgical plants were maintained at approximately the same level as the year before; they represented about 20 per cent of the total production. The development of the export trade directed towards the traditional pre-war markets, namely, France, Italy, Belgium, Holland and Great Britain, is hampered still by the high customs barriers of these countries.

As a result of the chronic lack of domestic labour, the metallurgical plants have had recourse to foreign manpower, in order to be able to maintain their activities. It is still very difficult, however, to find a sufficient number of skilled craftsmen and technicians.

Prospects for the near future would appear to be favourable, all the more so as the order-books of the plants and of their customers are still well-filled. The business market will also depend, partly, on the evolution of copper prices, during the next few months.

A Swiss locomotive at Brussels Exhibition.

Swiss Industry, together with the Swiss Federal Railways are going to exhibit a locomotive, of the very latest type to be built, at the stand of the European Railways, at the International and Universal Exhibition, which is being held in Brussels, this year. This locomotive will thus not be among the exhibits in the Swiss Pavilion itself. The machine in question will bear, in the Belgian capital, the name and the arms of the Republic and Canton of Geneva. At the Brussels Exhibition, the locomotive "Genève" will not only bear witness to the quality of the work done by Swiss industry, and to the spirit of invention possessed by her technicians, but also to the desire for peace and understanding among the Nations which — in the eyes of so many people — is represented by the name of Geneva.

The Swiss Fleet.

A cargo vessel of 14,000 tons, the "Regina", belonging to a Swiss shipping company, was launched, at the beginning of this year, from a Belgian ship-building yard. In this connection, we would like to recall the fact that, a year ago, the Swiss Merchant Navy comprised twenty-three ships, of which five were coasting-vessels, possessing a total tonnage of some 150,000 tons. Since 1940, the tonnage of the Swiss mercantile marine has almost tripled. The oldest ship is the "Saentis", which was built in 1915, and which possesses a capacity of 4,349 gross tons. About 50 per cent of the crews are of Swiss nationality.

As for the Swiss river fleet on the Rhine, this comprises about 360 ships, of a total tonnage of more than 260,000 tons; there are 242 motor-propelled barges, including some tankers.

OUR NEXT ISSUE.

Our next issue will be published on Friday, February 28th, 1958. We take this opportunity of thanking the following subscribers for their kind and helpful donations over and above their subscription: E. Montag, A. Baenziger, J. Clement, R. J. Helfenstein, E. von Bergen, John E. von Felten, E. Oggier, J. C. Margot, H. E. Messmer, E. Winzeler, A. Wegmuller, E. Hofstetter, R. Ryf, A. Knapp.

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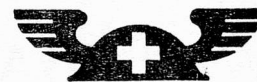
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