

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: - (1959)

Heft: 1345

Rubrik: Commercial news

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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Swiss Navy crews.

There are 682 men serving at the present time in the Swiss Merchant Navy, 380 of them, that is to say 57 per cent, being of Swiss nationality. No fewer than fifteen Swiss citizens hold Masters' papers, and three of the ships of the Swiss fleet sailing on the high seas are commanded by Swiss captains.

The transport of milk by pipeline.

The Swiss Association for International Civil Service is at present engaged in having a plastic conduit measuring 3½ kilometres, intended for the conveyance of milk, laid in a valley in the Valaisan Alps, in Switzerland, in order to connect an isolated grazing-ground for cattle with the cheese-making farm in the village.

Uranium for Switzerland.

A Swissair freight plane recently transported 10 tons of uranium, valued at some two million Swiss francs, from Canada to Switzerland. This atomic fuel is to be used in the Swiss experimental reactor at Würenlingen.

Swiss chocolate as popular as ever.

The increase in exports of Swiss chocolate is the result of the relaxation of import restrictions and the growing popularity of Swiss brands in the main buying countries, in spite of keen competition from their own highly developed chocolate industries. This branch of Swiss industry continues to bring out a large number of delicious novelties each year.

The training of Swiss atomic science experts.

The Swiss government grants the Swiss National Fund for Scientific Research a subsidy of 40 million Swiss francs for the purpose of encouraging the training of experts in the field of atomic science. This aid is intended for the years 1959 to 1962.

A new industry in Switzerland.

There exist several glass-works, of ancient origin, in Switzerland, which supply the domestic market with articles required for current use, but, until this year, Switzerland did not possess any crystal-making factory. Certain difficulties experienced in regard to imports have led to the setting up, at Sarnen, in primitive Switzerland, of a factory which can deliver articles of blown or cut crystal which have been made entirely locally. The quality of these products and the state of the market will, no doubt, make it possible for this firm, which employs some sixty workers, to develop in a favourable manner and even to engage in the export trade. Moreover, this constitutes an economic enrichment, very welcome in a mountainous region which hitherto has not been greatly favoured.

A Swiss scientist honoured abroad.

Mr. Jacob Ackeret, Professor at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, and well-known Swiss expert in the field of aerodynamics, has just been elected an honorary member of the British Royal Aeronautical Society.

The " minute era ".

Our epoch has become a " minute era ", not only because of the rationalisation of production, but also as a result of the introduction of a time limit for the parking of motor-cars. This explains the success of the Swiss " alarm " watches for motorists. One of the most up-to-date of these creations was shown recently

at the Swiss Industries Fair, at Basle, under the name of " Parking ". This watch is equipped with a calendar, on which the days of the month are shown in red for the even dates and in black for the odd dates. This facilitates alternate parking, on one or the other side of the road, according to the date, as is prescribed in certain localities. Another advantage possessed by this watch is that the alarm can be set not only for any time desired, but also for any lapse of time, without it being necessary to have recourse to calculations, thanks to a very simple system of marking. Finally, the setting of the alarm (which is wound up at the same time as the watch movement) is not accomplished by manoeuvring with the winder — always a delicate matter! — but simply by means of turning the rim of the watch-case. In spite of this, the watch is absolutely water-tight, which constitutes a remarkable technical performance and adds a further advantage to this ingenious contrivance.

Sixty years in the service of medical science.

It was in 1898 that there was founded, in Berne, the Swiss Sero-therapeutic and Vaccinal Institute, which took over the activities of an older establishment devoted to the preparation of anti-tetanic and anti-diphtheritic serums. Beginning modestly, this institution developed steadily. It extended its field of activities and adapted it to the rapid scientific development of bacteriology, serology and, later on, virology.

It is in this way that the Institute has always been able to elaborate the most recent serums and vaccines, for either prophylactic or therapeutic use. The activities of the Institute extend, however, to other kindred fields, for which special departments have been added to those which already existed. Particularly worthy of mention are the following: the department of veterinary bacteriology, the chemical laboratories, the pharmacological and pharmaceutical departments, the department for the preparation of various diagnostic products, and the department for dental products.

To-day, this important undertaking has attained a degree of development which necessitated the setting up of new modern installations and a technical re-organisation. The new buildings, situated in the vicinity of the city of Berne and which conform to all requirements of modern technique and science, were inaugurated recently.



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