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COMMERCIAL NEWS

The Swiss are big meat-eaters

Meat consumption per head of population has again increased in 1959, official statistics disclose. It now comes to 284,034 metric tons and corresponds to 118.6 lbs. per head of the Swiss population.

A dyestuffs congress in Basle

The Swiss Chemists' Association is to organize an international dyestuffs congress in the main hall of the Industrial Fair Exhibition in Basle from 24th to 29th June this year. Promoted by the Basle Dyestuffs Industries and with the co-operation of the Swiss Institute for dyeing chemistry at the university of Basle, this congress is to deal with problems and new know-hows in dyeing technology, to be presented by thirty specialists in the field, from Switzerland and abroad. Some four hundred participants are scheduled to arrive.

Constitution of a Swiss Co-operative

Some seventy watchmakers and members of the Swiss Federation of watchmakers have founded in Neuchâtel the most important watchmaking co-operative so far. By taking appropriate measures the new co-operative aims at promoting the interests of its members by streamlining the means of production and the channels of distribution for their products. At a time when concentration drives are becoming more and more necessary in order to safeguard an industry's

competitiveness, a particularly smooth and favourable formula has been found with which to organize such a professional grouping. It permits of safeguarding as far as possible of the individual character of each member, at the same time increasing its competitiveness.

The Valais and industrial decentralisation

The Canton of the Valais is setting an example of industrial decentralisation which may be the solution to the problem of heavy concentration. With a population going in mainly for agriculture, but needing other resources, this part of Switzerland is attracting new industries, or developing those that are already in existence, so as to provide employment for a labour force anxious to avoid leaving the Canton. Thus, a local factory making secateurs for home arboriculture recently expanded so as to be able to go in on a large scale for the manufacture of an improved model of secateurs, which will not only satisfy the local demand, but will also be exported.

Then again, a Swiss-German ready-to-wear concern decided to set up a branch factory in the Valais for the manufacture of ski trousers. Some forty local women, eager to branch out into the new line, have gone off to the main factory to serve an apprenticeship of several months, after which the new factory, which has been opened meanwhile, will be able to start production.

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Finally, a pure silk twisting mill providing employment for some twenty people has just been opened in the same canton.

An outstanding architectural achievement

The new administrative centre of the Nestlé-Alimentana Company Ltd. has just been inaugurated at Vevey, on the banks of Lake Leman. This Swiss Company, which is at the head of some 150 factories and employs 65,000 persons in the five continents, needed a modern administrative seat, adequate to its importance, and this it now has. The vast building is not only a model of its kind from the point of view of equipment, but it is also a veritable masterpiece of architecture, which has gained an important American award for its architect. Planned in the form of a regular three-branched star, it raises its six floors of concrete, glass and aluminium towards the sky, in a magnificent landscape in which it dares to attest the greatness of human endeavour.

The first jet of the Swiss air fleet

The Swiss national airline company "Swissair" has just taken delivery, in California, of a Douglas DC-8 aircraft, which will be the first jet plane to be put into service in the Swiss commercial air fleet. The new jet aircraft arrived at Kloten-Zurich after having accomplished the flight between New York and Zurich in 7 hours 26 minutes.

Merger of Swiss office-machinery firms

An alliance has just been concluded between the firms of Paillard S.A., which manufactures the "Hermes" typewriting-machines, at Yverdon, and Precisa S.A., which makes calculating machines, in Zurich. This merger has been decided upon in view of the steadily increasing requirements which have to be faced by manufacturers of office machines, in the domain of research, manufacture and distribution. Moreover, the fact that the programmes of the "Hermes" and "Precisa" machines are complementary to a very satisfactory degree will not fail to strengthen the position of these two makes on the international market.

100,000th Swiss television licence holder

The one hundred thousandth television licence holder has just been registered in Switzerland! This is an advance of twenty-one months on the estimates made three years ago in respect of the development of television. The first licence for TV was issued in

September 1952; in December 1958 there were 50,000 licence holders, a figure which has now doubled in less than eighteen months.

A philately exhibition in Switzerland

A philatelic exhibition is now being held in the Museum of the Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones, at Berne. It has been organised within the framework of the World Refugee Year and is entitled "The Refugee's Stamp". This exhibition shows the complete collection of the special stamps issued by seventy countries on the occasion of the World Refugee Year.

Ice in midsummer

Ice in the very middle of summer is nothing very wonderful when it is just a matter of the ice which one uses to freshen up drinks! But the ice to which we are alluding is something quite different, being as it is the ice of a skating-rink which is to be built in the Valaisan health and sports resort of Crans-Montana, above Sierre. This is to be the biggest artificial skating-rink to be found in the Swiss altitudes, and is to measure 197 by 144 feet. It will be in use even during the summer, to the extent of one- or two-thirds of its surface, which will be open to curling enthusiasts. The refrigeration will be ensured by a Sulzer compressor, which is regulated automatically and requires no greasing.

A new hand-saw for metals

A Swiss firm in Vallorbe has just announced the launching on the market of a new hand-saw for metals, made of high-speed steel of exceptional flexibility. This new saw combines the advantages of ordinary steel, from the point of view of solidity, and that of high-speed steel from the point of view of cutting, the tooth being tempered to the maximum extent. The old method of making rapid saws consisted in tempering the entire saw, which made the blade very brittle, or else in reheating the saw after it had been tempered, which while lessening the fragility, also lessened the hardness of the teeth and thus reduced the output. The new rapid saw is flexible and unbreakable and it gives remarkable results when in use.

A 50th anniversary in the aluminium industry

Aluminium is a relatively young metal, and that is why it is of interest to mention the fifty-years jubilee of the foundation of a Swiss firm belonging to this branch of industry, namely the Aluminium Welding Works Ltd., at Schlieren. This firm, founded in 1910,

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was the first to undertake the industrial working of Schoop's invention for soldering aluminium. It subsequently acquired world renown through the creation of novelties which marked an era, such as containers for the transport of milk, beer barrels, tanks for breweries, etc.

Success of a Swiss architect

The first prize of the architectural competition for the new building for the World Health Organisation, has been won by Professor Jean Tschumi, of the Polytechnical School attached to the Lausanne University. The new building will be nine stories high and will cover a superficial area of 127,000 square feet. The cost of building has been estimated at 9.3 million dollars, of which a large part has been advanced by the Swiss Confederation. As has already been reported, Professor Tschumi recently received a high American award for his realisation of the Nestlé Administrative Centre, which was inaugurated a short time ago.

New Swiss postage-stamps

The Swiss Postal Administration has issued, at the beginning of May, a new series of 18 postage stamps, which are replacing the vignettes of the series "Technique and Landscapes" which were put into circulation in 1949. The four values ranging from 5 to 20 centimes represent ancient methods of transmitting news, from the messenger of the 15th century to the postillion of a hundred years ago; the fourteen values ranging from 25 centimes to 2 francs are illustrated with historical monuments, each one being representative of a different town.

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Swissair has now taken delivery of its first Caravelle jetliner, pictured above. The aircraft will be put into twice-daily service between London and Zurich from 21st May.

Three more Caravelles will be delivered to Swissair in the course of this summer. Other European destinations to be served by Swissair Caravelles are Athens, Basle, Copenhagen, Dusseldorf, Istanbul, Lisbon, Madrid, Stockholm and Vienna. In the Middle East Caravelles will serve Ankara, Cairo and Tel Aviv.