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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Quick and high

The chief attraction at the horticultural exhibition, "Floriade", in Rotterdam, is a cylindrical tower, 330 feet high, called "Euromast". Visitors are carried to the top of this tower by means of two Schindler lifts, each of them having room for 12 persons and travelling at a speed of 4 metres per second. Thus, each of these cages covers a distance of 295 feet in a mere 23 seconds. These modern lifts, which are of Swiss manufacture, are equipped with a "Transitronic" electronic control, which offers, among other advantages, rapid transit, an imperceptible transition from high to low speed and vice versa, and a very gentle final stop, executed with a precision amounting to, more or less, 0.2 inches, irrespective of the size of the load.

Foreigner's big order for Swiss printing machinery

A printing-house in Denmark has given an order to a Swiss manufacturer for a high-speed rotary letter-press, which comprises six printing and perfecting units, two auxiliary colour-printing units, two special colour decks, with their own printing cylinder, and one double high-speed folder, which can take paper that is up to 1.7 yards in width. The running speed of this machine is 30,000 cylinder revolutions per hour, which represents a production of 120,000 copies of 24 pages per hour. "This "Wifag" machine is capable of producing copies up to 80 pages in size.

Soft-ice for all

Everybody is acquainted — or should be acquainted — with "soft-ice"! This delicious, refreshing speciality has won for itself a large number of customers, all over the world, among them being many persons who formerly never ate ices. A Swiss manufacturer of machines for making soft-ices is now putting on to the market, in addition to his standard type, two very interesting new models. These are an Estrella Standard-Twin machine, which makes it possible to produce two different flavours simultaneously, and a highly perfected Baby table-model freezer which, by virtue of its reduced dimensions, does not take up more than 15.5 inches of space, at the very most. There is not doubt that this new "Baby Swiss Freezer" will open up fresh prospects in the sale of soft-ices.

Swiss industry's contribution to modern aviation

It is interesting to note that the Swiss machine industry, and more particularly that branch which specialises in machine-tools, has participated, through its deliveries, in the development of modern jet avia-

tion. Genevese firms, specialising in this branch, have got more than 200 machines in service, solely in American, British and French plants which are building "Douglases", "Caravelles" and "Convairs" which are, or will be, put into service on the airlines of the Swissair Company. The industrial machines are: sharpening machines, automatic lathes, rectifiers, universal and precision sharpening machines, universal rectifiers of screw thread-making, measuring machines, profile projectors, etc., in regard to all of which the greatest precision and high quality are indispensable for the machine-finishing of delicate parts.

Swiss firm to supply equipment for the Hoover Dam

The Hoover Dam, on the Colorado, is one of the most important and imposing dams in the world. 674 feet in height, it is the biggest dam in the United States, and its reservoir is 115 miles in length. It is in order to equip the plant which is established at the foot of this dam that the Bureau of Reclamation, of the Department of the Interior of the United States Government, has just signed a contract with the Ateliers de Sécheron, Ltd., of Geneva, for the supply of a tri-phase transformer of 105,000 kVA.

Swiss-British construction of lifts

A joint business has just been established in England by the firm of Schindler & Co. Ltd., of Lucerne, and a British firm manufacturing machines, Stone Platt Industries, Ltd., for the purpose of producing Schindler lifts and all kinds of Schindler products in the United Kingdom, under the name of Platt-Schindler Lifts Ltd., with headquarters in London.

Swiss contribution to the Olympic Games

Each competitor in the equestrian events at the forthcoming Olympic Games in Rome will receive a new saddle, and a saddle-cloth made of felt. This indispensable accessory to the art of riding has been supplied by a Swiss firm which manufactures felt goods.

Fuel oil consumption in Switzerland

Swiss imports of liquid fuel for heating purposes have increased more than tenfold during the last twenty years, rising from 1938 to 1958 to more than 1,900,000 metric tons. The part played by raw oil in covering the total requirement in energy amounts to 44 per cent in Switzerland, so that this country occupies the third world position in this domain, coming immediately after the United States and Canada.



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The specialised exhibitions in Basle

At Basle, the premises of the Swiss Industries Fair will give hospitality, from 1st to 9th October next, to the Second International Woodworking Fair, for which more than 150 exhibitors have already sent in their names. Owing to the great success of the first ILMAC, i.e. the International Congress and Exhibition of Laboratory, Measurement and Automation Techniques in Chemistry, which took place in Basle in November 1959, the organising committee have decided unanimously to repeat this event. The second ILMAC will be held from 15th to 20th October 1962, again in the buildings of the Swiss Industries Fair in Basle. This exhibition will be rendered still more attractive by the organisation of some scientific meetings.

The financing of Swisspetrol Holding Ltd.

As a result of having been able to place shares and bonds giving the holders the right to participate in the net profits to the amount of thirty million Swiss francs, Swisspetrol Holding Ltd. has now at its disposal the necessary capital with which to guarantee, within the limits provided, the financing of Swiss oil prospecting. In addition to a number of important firms, private persons have also subscribed for the above-mentioned participation bonds, although Swisspetrol has not dissimulated the risks incumbent on this operation.

Growth of air transport, Switzerland—U.S.A.

The best results obtained, up to the present, in one day, by the Swiss air navigation company, "Swissair", occurred on 1st July, on the North Atlantic line, in the east-west direction. On that day Swissair carried 252 passengers on this line, aboard three machines. The jet plane Douglas DC-8 had a full complement of 120 persons on board, whilst the two DC-7C carried 75 and 57 passengers respectively, the destination being New York.

ANGLO-SWISS ECONOMIC RELATIONS

Their recent Evolution and the E.F.T.A.

By H.E. THE SWISS AMBASSADOR

(The following article appeared in the July issue of "Swiss Industry and Trade")

In 1536, a group of British students came to Switzerland to buy some special wood for making bows; the Englishman's fondness for the noble sport of archery would seem to have marked the beginning of economic relations between Great Britain and Switzerland. The evolution of these relations during the hundred and fifty years that followed this transaction were somewhat uneventful, but at the beginning of the 18th century, Albion and the Republic of Berne carried out a whole series of important financial transactions. Then the roles were reversed; the industrialisation of Great Britain exerted a considerable influence on the Swiss economy. British goods began to flood the Swiss market, which compelled Switzerland to make a thorough overhaul of her working methods and to adapt herself to the new conditions.

In the middle of the last century, the two governments felt the need to consolidate their economic rela-

tions on a contractual basis. A commercial treaty was signed in Berne on September 6th, 1855, after numerous divergences had been smoothed over thanks to the good will of both parties. The application to Switzerland of certain clauses of Cobden's Franco-British treaty (1860) greatly favoured the importation of Swiss goods into Great Britain. In 1880 and 1907, the two countries signed conventions for the protection of trade marks and commercial samples. Finally, just before the first world war, this treaty was completed by an additional convention extending to the whole of the dominions.

From the beginning of the 20th century, Anglo-Swiss economic relations were at times extremely active. Thus in 1925 — when money was worth much more than it is to-day — Swiss imports from Great Britain amounted to 278 million francs and exports from Switzerland to Britain 420 million. On the eve of the second world war, they amounted to 109 and 165 million francs respectively. However, the two world wars and the slump of the 30's had an unfavourable effect on them. Immediately after the second world war, the conclusion of the payments agreement in 1946 fortunately gave them a new lease of life, although the shortage of foreign currency compelled Great Britain to curtail her purchases abroad for a certain length of time. Switzerland's liberal policy with regard to imports allowed British firms to step up their sales considerably on Swiss markets, which proved their large capacity of absorption; British firms as a whole consider that Switzerland is an excellent testing ground for the sale of high quality products. Great Britain, for her part, considerably relaxed her restrictions on imports and payments as a result of the gradual freeing of trade brought about within the framework of the Organisation of European Economic Co-operation (OEEC). Both the volume and the value of British purchases in Switzerland therefore increased appreciably in their turn.

The coming into force, on July 1st, 1960, of the convention instituting the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) — which Switzerland decided to join — will doubtless further tighten her economic ties with Great Britain. It is too early to hazard any prophecy concerning the future of European Economic Co-operation; apart from closer contacts on the official level, greater collaboration may however be expected between the different economic sectors of the seven countries adhering to EFTA. Meanwhile, it will be interesting to cast a glance at the structure of the economic relations between the two countries during the last few years.

On the whole, imports have increased steadily since 1954, rising from 316 million francs to 617 million over the last five years; the difference of 204 million between 1958 and 1959 is due mainly to big purchases of planes, etc., which, naturally, occur only periodically. Exports too have advanced continually since 1950, when they totalled 137 million francs to reach the figure of 414 million in 1959. On the other hand, if we examine the results for the main branches, we notice a very irregular evolution, due not only to changing consumer needs but also to fluctuations in the prices charged on the different international markets, as well as government restrictions and trends towards greater liberalisation; attention should also be called to the important part that may be played by the creation of branches abroad of firms exporting a large part of their output.