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# 1966 THE YEAR OF "FIFTH SWITZERLAND"

## THE STATE OF THE SWISS COLONY AND THE SWISS "PRESENCE" IN THE UNITED KINGDOM IN 1965

Survey by Monsieur BÉAT DE FISCHER, Swiss Ambassador

*The Survey of 1964 gave a comprehensive picture of the state of the Swiss Colony and the Swiss "presence" in the United Kingdom in that year. There have been only a few important changes since then; the present review can thus be confined to showing where the figures have altered or new developments have occurred.*

### Part 2

The outstanding events were, of course, the very opportune creation of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom and the endeavours to form a Cultural and Social Centre in the Swiss Centre in Leicester Square, which had the full support of the Swiss authorities.

#### B.

(1) The legal basis of trade between Switzerland and the United Kingdom continued to be the agreement of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). The duty charged on goods originating within the area covered by that Association is now only 20% of the normal rate; it will be abolished completely at the end of this year.

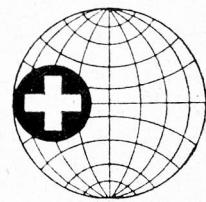
In addition, there is the British import duty surcharge of 10%; the original 15% introduced in 1964 was reduced last April. This surcharge is still applied to most Swiss exports to the United Kingdom and one might argue that without this special duty Swiss exports would have increased even more than they did. It is hoped that Britain will be in a position in the foreseeable future to repeal the import duty surcharge altogether. Switzerland and other countries are doing everything in their power to persuade her to do so.

(2) The 1965 figures for Anglo-Swiss trade are not yet available, but the statistics for the first eleven months of 1965 show that Swiss imports from and exports to the United Kingdom both increased. Swiss imports from the United Kingdom during this period stood at 1,046 million francs compared with 1,113 million francs for the whole of 1964. By the end of November Swiss exports to this country had reached the highly satisfactory figure of over 816 million francs compared with 781 million francs during the whole year 1964.

(3) Close on one hundred Swiss firms are known to have affiliations in the United Kingdom. Quite a number of important Swiss factories, banks and insurance companies have branches here. Many compatriots run their own businesses. Swiss investments in the United Kingdom continued in 1965.

(4) The Swiss Economic Council, grouping Swiss businessmen, maintained its fruitful activity and kept in close touch with the Embassy. It endeavoured to set up an institute of trade promotion at the new Swiss Centre in Leicester Square. The realization of this plan may, it is hoped, fill the gap left by the missing Swiss chamber of commerce.

(5) The Swiss Mercantile School, which received a subsidy from the Swiss Government in 1965, continued to render great service to many young Swiss by giving them a sound commercial education. It has prospered beyond all expectations. The attendance was very high throughout the whole of 1965, which was a record year, and there is now a waiting list of applicants.



(6) The impressive building of the "Swiss Centre" in Leicester Square, promoted by a company in which the Swiss Bank Corporation, the Swiss National Tourist Office and Swissair are principal shareholders, has been taking shape. Swiss Fair Ltd. are endeavouring to set up several catering services and organize a permanent exhibition of Swiss products at this Centre. Efforts are being made to obtain the support of the Swiss industrial and business worlds.

(7) Tourism between Switzerland and Great Britain was still extremely active, thanks to the most efficient efforts of Swiss tourist organizations, above all the Swiss National Tourist Office in London. In the first ten months of 1965 close on 700,000 residents of the British Isles spent 2,662,000 nights in Swiss hotels and pensions, which represents a slight increase over the corresponding period of the previous year. Britain again sent the third largest number of visitors to Switzerland, coming after Germany and France but before the U.S.A. and Belgium/Luxembourg. At a rough estimate, their expenditure is believed to have been something like 200 million francs.

52,600 Swiss visited Britain in the first ten months of 1965, a higher figure than for the whole of 1964. They are estimated to have spent over £4 million in this country.

The highlight of 1965, which was the "Year of the Alps", was the commemoration of Whymper's first ascent of the Matterhorn in 1865. On the initiative of the Swiss National Tourist Office, famous mountaineers and foreign journalists were invited to Zermatt to celebrate this centenary on July 14th. Sir John Hunt represented the British Government. Several films were made of the historic memorial climb and shown throughout Great Britain. This happy initiative did much to strengthen British interest not only in our Alps but also in Switzerland as a country of leisurely holidays.

(8) That very active company Swissair again proved to be the main aerial link between Switzerland and Britain, and its fast services carried over 90,000 passengers from Britain to Switzerland and well over 100,000 the other way during the first eleven months of 1965. Traffic after Christmas was also very heavy. Swissair are likely to have broken the record of the previous year by a considerable margin.

*(To be concluded.)*

### NEW SWISSAIR STATION MANAGER

Mr. W. J. Kuemin has been appointed Swissair's Station Manager at London (Heathrow) Airport in succession to Mr. R. Spruengli who has retired to Basle.

Mr. Kuemin has been with Swissair since 1953. From 1954 to 1957 he was traffic officer at London Airport and subsequently station manager for the airline at Innsbruck, Beirut, Shannon and Accra. In Ghana he was also deputy regional manager. For the past 18 months Mr. Kuemin had been seconded to Cathay Pacific Airways in Hong Kong as station manager and on staff training duties.

In his new position he will be in charge of Swissair's operations through both London Heathrow and Gatwick airports.