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TECHNICAL ITEMS

Three Foreign Guests of Honour at the 53rd Swiss National Fair

The chief aim of the Lausanne Fair is, and has always been, to present Swiss production, encourage trade, and give Swiss industry, agriculture and craftwork an opportunity of displaying their traditional quality. The Fair will be open from 9th to 24th September, 1972 and will present the whole range of Swiss products in the 38 halls of the Palais de Beaulieu in Lausanne (Vaud-Switzerland). But the Swiss Comptoir, as it is known locally, also prides itself on being a market open to the whole world: for the first time it will be welcoming three foreign countries as guests of honour with official displays of their resources. *India*, which took part in the Fair once before, in 1954, will show the progress achieved by its industry during the last eighteen years, the wealth of its more than thousand year old culture, and the vitality of its craftwork which has succeeded in adapting to modern times. *Poland* will be taking part for the first time with a display emphasising its agricultural and craft production; the important Polish industry of building-site machinery and tractors will be featured in an open-air exhibition. The Fair will also welcome *Senegal*, whose first official appearance this will be in an economic event in Switzerland.

A new packaging for milk

A Swiss factory at Küsnacht (Zurich) has launched on the market a new plastic milk bottle which can be opened and hermetically sealed again at will. The principle is quite simple: in order to open the full bottle, one tears off a strip of the plastic top, which will then be used as a permanent seal. The plastic used for making the bottle leaves no taste or smell. The bottle is conveniently shaped and does not tend to slip; a large spout, preventing dripping, enables the liquid to be poured without any difficulty. Tests have shown that the milk keeps longer in this packaging. When the bottle is empty, it can be crushed like a paper bag and thrown away.

World novelty in the automobile sector

Although so necessary in certain climates, chains for use in snow have never been a very popular accessory with motorists. Often enough, in order to cover quite short distances, to comply with a traffic sign or simply to get out of a pile of snow fallen round his

car during the night, the motorist has to carry out a series of operations that are simple enough in themselves but annoying and dirty work. After many years of research, two Swiss inventors have produced an anti-skid device eliminating the drawbacks of conventional snow chains. It consists of a crown, made of cast aluminium alloy, fixed on the wheel of the vehicle by means of the wheel bolts. This ingenious system, known as "Barry", replaces the hub cap and is left in position all winter. Seven L-shaped claws, like crampons, are fitted round the crown and can be opened and closed—without tools—by means of springs that are very easy to operate although sufficiently strong. In this way, it is a matter of seconds only to turn down the claws, which remain fixed to the wheel rims all winter. When not in use, the device in no way interferes with driving on dry roads.

Swiss plant for a Tunisian port

A plant for the transfer of grain from ships, which will be the most modern of its kind in North Africa, is at present being built in the port of La Goulette, near Tunis, together with a silo designed for a storage capacity of 30,000 tons of grains. After an international call for tenders, the execution of this scheme was awarded to Bühler Bros Engineering Works Co. Ltd. at Uzwil (St. Gall-Switzerland), which will provide and assemble all the necessary mechanical and electrical plant. The principal—the National Harbour Office, Tunis—will supervise the execution of the scheme until the plant is put into operation, with the help of a company of engineering consultants in Paris, the building work being carried out by a Franco-Tunisian consortium. Buhler's supplies consist mainly of a mobile pneumatic unloader for ships, a ship loading plant, connecting belts between the quay and the silo, including the gangways, as well as all vertical and horizontal transport units inside the silo.

Publicitas in Great Britain and the Benelux

Publicitas, one of the biggest advertising firms in Europe, with its registered office in Lausanne (Vaud-Switzerland) and associated companies operating in Germany, France, Italy and Spain, is shortly going to open up in Great Britain. The British Parliament's vote in favour of joining the Common Market was the deciding factor. Publicitas has just signed an agreement with Albert Milhado which,

in addition to the London firm, will incorporate financially and commercially in its group the Amsterdam and Antwerp offices as well as the one due to open shortly in Brussels. Extending to three new markets and benefiting moreover from the knowhow of the Milhado team in the sector of foreign mass media, Publicitas with its experience dating back more than a century in the field of advertising thus confirms its position as a top multi-national advertising organisation in Europe and, at the same time, as the biggest firm in the world specialising in the field of newspaper agencies.

Chocolate:

Japanese-Swiss licensing agreement

Interfood Co. Ltd., of Lausanne (Switzerland) and the Japanese firm of Meiji Seika Kaisha Ltd. in Tokyo, have signed a licensing contract for the manufacture and distribution of Suchard and Tobler products in Japan. Interfood, which groups the Suchard and Tobler companies and is one of the leading chocolate firms in the world, has a turnover of more than 900 million Swiss francs. Suchard and Tobler products are manufactured in 16 different countries and sold on a hundred markets. Meiji Seika, for its part, is the biggest chocolate manufacturer in Japan. Its products cover a wide range of confectionery, canned goods, prepared foods and pharmaceuticals.

Foreign Trade:

3rd place for Switzerland

During the last ten years, Switzerland's foreign trade has increased some 160% to amount to nearly 53.3 billion francs. The volume of trade rose from 3,700 francs per head of the population in 1961 to Fr. 8,600 in 1971. Of all the industrial nations in the western

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world, only the Belgians (Fr. 10,500) and the Netherlands (Fr. 9,000) come ahead of Switzerland. On the other hand, countries like Sweden (Fr. 7,300), Norway (Fr. 6,900), and Denmark (Fr. 6,800), whose economies are also heavily dependent on other countries, come after Switzerland. The rapid growth of Switzerland's foreign trade is due in the first place to the restoration, at the end of 1958, of the full convertibility of the main currencies, the liberalisation of international trade in goods and of movements of capital, and the continual expansion of the European economy. Switzerland's purchases abroad increased by over 150% from 1961 to 1971, rising to 29.6 billion francs, whereas in the same period exports advanced 170% to reach the total of 23.6 billion francs.

Big increase in exports of Swiss textiles

Last year the Swiss textile and clothing industries exported 2.1 billion francs' worth of goods, i.e. 8% of Switzerland's total exports, which amounted during this period to an overall figure of 23.6 billion francs. Compared with the previous year, the total for Swiss exports increased by 6.7% while the figure for textiles and clothing — excluding footwear — increased by 7.3%. While the rate of growth of Switzerland's exports as a whole dropped from 10.7% in 1970 to 6.7% in 1971, that of textile and clothing exports remained practically stationary, with a slight drop from 7.4% to 7.3%. It would seem as though the textile and clothing industry has thus succeeded to a certain extent in consolidating its position within the framework of Switzerland's exports as a whole.

(Swiss Office for Development of Trade)

French-Swiss solution to the "Jeumont-Schneider Affair"

A European future has been decided for the French Jeumont-Schneider electromechanical group, which the American Westinghouse Company has been trying to take over for the past two years. The French authorities had put their weight against such an eventuality. The Belgian Baron Empain, who owns 61 per cent of the company, has accepted to sell his concern to the Swiss Brown Boveri group of companies, through its French subsidiary *La Compagnie Electromecanique*, in which the Baden firm has a 38 per cent stake. In accordance with French wishes, "Jeumont-Cem" will at a later stage surrender part of its productive capacity to the CEM-Alhstrom group.

By opting for a Swiss alliance, French industry has once again shown its concern not to be "invaded" by American capital.

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