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NEW SWISS CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

The Swiss consumer price index, like that of most comparable countries, is based on a typical "shopping basket" of goods and a list of services included in the consumption of private households.

The index in force up to last September was based on a diagram set up in 1966; as from October, a new base of reference is to be used for calculating the index.

It is not the method of calculation that changes but the composition of the "typical basket", as well as the system of weighting the groups of expenses.

In the new index, the food group accounts for 20 per cent of the composition of the "basket" (31 per cent in 1966), drinks and tobacco 5 per cent (5 per cent), clothing 8 per cent (13 per cent), rent 19 per cent (17 per cent),

heating and lighting 4 per cent (6 per cent), the fitting up and upkeep of housing 7 per cent (7 per cent), transport and communications 15 per cent (9 per cent), health and hygiene 7 per cent (7 per cent), education and entertainment 15 per cent (5 per cent).

The spread of goods and services has been increased by over 70 items including private cars, apartments with one and five rooms, hospital fees, concerts and theatres, sports and holiday equipment.

As previously, the new index takes into consideration only the category of wage-earning households in its establishment of the bases of consumption, leaving aside the self-employed, pensioners and the agricultural population.

INDEX OF PRICES IN SWITZERLAND AT THE END OF OCTOBER 1977

	Wholesale price 1963 = 100	Difference in relation to	Retail price Sept. 1977 = 100 (Sept. 1966 = 100)	Difference in relation to
End of October 1977	146.5		100.2 (169.0)	
End of September 1977	147.6	-0.7%	100.0 (168.6)	+0.2%
End of October 1976	147.6	-0.7%	(166.4)	(+1.6%)
Evolution of the prices of	... raw materials, semi-manufactured products and consumer goods.			
	... main consumer goods and services included in the family budgets of wage-earners.			

TV ADVERTISING IN SWITZERLAND

Of the 2,245,000 households in Switzerland, 1,827,231 or 81.3 per cent have a TV set, 42.2 per cent of them are colour models. The number of advertising films broadcast by the three Swiss TV chains rose between 1975 and 1976 from 1,365 to 1,585.

Nearly three-quarters of the time allotted to TV advertising was accounted

for by foodstuffs (23.6 per cent), cosmetics (20.3 per cent), cleaning and washing products (16.3 per cent) and household articles (10.3 per cent).

It is estimated that 41.5 per cent of the Swiss population between the ages of 15 and 74 see at least one set of advertisements per day on TV.

NEW INSTRUMENT FOR MEASURING WINDOWS

A firm at Altstätten (St. Gall) has produced a universal instrument that represents a revolutionary innovation with regard to window measurement. The Vetroscope, as it is called, is a measuring instrument made of plastic (somewhat similar to a slide-rule) for architects, joiners, window-makers, supervisors, caretakers and managers of big premises.

It enables them to determine the dimensional characteristics of a window and, in particular, to measure the thickness of the glass, the depth of the fillister and even the play of the grooves by means of a tongued gauge.

(Ego-Kiefer AG, CH-9450 Altstätten, telex 71 581 egoki ch)

SWISS IMPORTS FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Until 1972, Swiss imports from the developing countries increased less strongly than Swiss imports as a whole. However, in 1973 and in 1974, imports from the third world advanced much more rapidly; in 1975, they fell off to a lesser extent than total imports, whereas in 1976, the respective growth rates stayed practically parallel.

SWISS FOREIGN TRADE IN OCTOBER 1977

Period	Imports	Exports	Switzerland's Balance of Trade		Value of exports as a % of the value of imports
			(In million Sw. francs)	Balance	
1976 October	3,320.5	3,570.9		+ 250.4	107.5
1977 September	3,700.0	3,666.7		- 33.3	99.1
1977 October	3,699.0	3,706.5		+ 7.5	100.2
1976 Jan.-Oct.	29,991.4	30,059.1		+ 67.7	100.2
1977 Jan.-Oct.	35,654.2	34,197.4		- 1,456.8	95.9

BUSINESS NEWS

BIG AUSTRIAN ORDER FOR TWO SWISS FIRMS

Securiton AG and Contrafeu AG — both branches of Securitas AG, the Swiss property guarding company — have received an order for the installation of an automatic fire detection and alarm system for the future Arlberg (Austria) motorway tunnel, just under 9 miles long.

The system to be used is the Transafe, developed by Securiton AG, which has already proved its worth in several tunnels in Switzerland and Austria.

(Securiton SA, Alpenstrasse 20, CH-3052 Zollikofen, telex 33 721 secur ch)

(Contrafeu SA, Sägegasse 2, CH-3110 Münsingen, telex 32 666 cag ch)

BIG ORDER FOR SWISS INDUSTRY IN TURKEY

A consortium headed by the Union Bank of Switzerland and also comprising the Swiss Credit Bank, the Swiss Bank Corporation and the Swiss People's Bank has signed a contract with the Turkish government for an export credit amounting to Sw.Fr. 373 million and a financing contract for Sw.Fr. 320 million.

These contracts have enabled Swiss industry to obtain a big order from Turkey. It concerns the equipment required for the Karakay power station on the upper reaches of the Euphrates river. A consortium has also been set up for this purpose by Escher Wyss and Brown Boveri and Co.

Escher Wyss will supply six turbines of 306 megawatts each, while Brown Boveri will provide six alternators of 315 megavolts.

For Swiss industry, these orders represent an invaluable addition to the reserve of work in hand. Their effect however will not be felt by the works for another two years, since deliveries are not to begin until 1980.