

Economic notes

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factories where, by a force-and-suction system, it clears the atmosphere of steam, dust, or of local fogginess due to a damp and misty geographical situation.

But the possibilities of future developments in the machine for use, if only a limited use, in the open air are obvious. At some not distant date it may be possible by the use of such a machine to eliminate fog, under favourable wind conditions, from streets or from outside theatres or railway stations where fog is hampering street traffic.

This year's Basle Fair is the most comprehensive of the series that has yet been held. Since 1923 the number of entrance cards issued has risen from 32,000 to 70,000. The Fair is of particular interest to British exporters in view of the vast import necessities of Switzerland for her rapidly increasing manufactures.

And still another one, not quite Swiss, seeing it comes from our one and only "Protectorate" is mentioned in the *Revue* of 4th May:

The little mountainous Principality of Liechtenstein, which, with its romantic hill-top castles and unique political independence, has been the basis of many a "Ruritanian" novel since the "Prisoner of Zenda" was first published, is exhibiting a remarkable building device at the Swiss Industries Fair, which is now being held at Basle and closes on Tuesday next.

By means of walls made of pressed wood shavings complete isolation from changes of temperature is obtained for a house. Rooms remain warm in winter and cool in summer. By a process, now patented over most of the world, the shavings are pressed to such a hardness as to take a stucco or rough cast interior covering where desired.

Swiss Buses.

The interesting development of Diesel Engines in Motor Cars is illustrated by the following from the *Commercial Motor*, 29th April and incidentally shows how up-to-date our friends at Berne are:

We learn from Berne, Switzerland, that the municipal authorities of that city have decided to add 10 vehicles to their fleet of motor-buses. Two of the vehicles are to be supplied by F. B. Broznovic and Co., of Wetzikon—one being a six-wheeler—whilst eight are to be supplied by the Saurer Co., of Arbon, a feature of the Saurer vehicles being that they will have Diesel engines.

Writing of Motoring, I take it that some of our friends of the Colony here may venture to visit the Alps with their cars and the following from "Stock Exchange Gazette" 2nd May, may interest them:

In a circular letter to the Cantonal Governments the Federal Council publish the new road traffic regulations to be observed in Switzerland.

As well over a hundred thousand foreign motor-cars pass the Swiss frontiers during every travelling season, special care was taken to make the road signs as simple and as intelligible to foreign tourists as possible.

All red signs mean that roads are totally or partially blocked, whilst the best roads are indicated with blue signs. No more boards with inscriptions are to be used, as many foreigners would not understand them, and a commonly accepted international terminology does not yet exist.

Entrances and exits of villages and hamlets where reduced speed is required will be marked with boards bearing the names of the localities. Sign posts will be known by their white tops, and bear only the name of the nearest larger place with the distance given in kilometres. In the cities blue boards mean "parking allowed," and blue boards with a red edge "no parking."

Dangerous curves and crossings will still be marked as such, but other sorts of danger will not be specialised, but simply indicated by an exclamation mark, meaning "Look out!" In order to prevent misunderstandings no advertisements will be allowed to make use of the forms and colours of road signs.

THE SWISS PAVILION AT THE LIEGE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION 1930.

The visitor who enters the exhibition grounds at Liège at the present time can already see the complete timber framework of the Swiss Pavilion standing in front of the Palais de l'Electricité on the main artery of the "Mustache."

The builder of the pavilion is the architect Hofmann who had previously achieved great success in his arrangement of the Swiss sections at the International Exhibition of the Press at Cologne and also very particularly at the International Exhibition in Barcelona.

A large part of the outside wall of the pavilion being of glass, the visitor is enabled to gain some idea of the interesting contents of the building from outside.

A photo frieze, 120 m. long, visible from outside, gives an insight into Switzerland's productive capacities. The frieze, is composed of views of waterworks, railways, bridges, tunnels, factories, electric works and power stations, workshops, engine rooms, etc., and forms a valuable supplement to the exhibits in the Pavilion.

The visitor to the Pavilion first enters a large hall. His attention is at once arrested by the large diorama exhibited by the various Swiss companies, railways, etc. interested in the promotion of tourist traffic. This Diorama is 50 m. long, and 5 m. high, and gives a grand conception of the scenic beauties of Switzerland. On entering the interior of the Pavilion, we see the "Bureau de renseignements" immediately to the right, where experts in the different branches, who have been carefully selected for the purpose, give visitors detailed information concerning the various Swiss exhibitors. Special conference rooms are at the disposal of visitors wishing to discuss the question of commercial connexion with Switzerland. Further on we find the Exhibition of the Federal Polytechnic at Zurich. Special sections for engineering, overground and underground building, architecture, chemistry, agriculture and forestry show the aims of the studies in the different divisions of the school by means of clear schedules and illustrations. Models of electric power stations, of the geological formation of the Swiss Alps, etc. complete the show. Opposite the Polytechnic Exhibition is the section for time-pieces and textile goods. There is a dim light in the room, and 6 bright horizontal glass show-cases attract the visitor's gaze. They contain the richest treasures of the Swiss watch-making trade. To the right and the left of this case there are horizontal show-cases, 15 m. long each, containing products of Swiss textile industries. About 10 firms take part in the textile exhibition, and 30 in the exhibition of time-pieces.

The remainder of the Pavilion is occupied by the engine-room which measures over 500 sq. metres. Machine-engines of the most varied kinds are systematically placed, such as machinery for mills, electric apparatus, a Diesel motor and a compressor, and, in the section for metal industries, fittings, files, precision instruments, etc. Here too, the room is not divided into separate stands and therefore represents Swiss machine-building as a whole. S.I.T.

ECONOMIC NOTES.

FOREIGN TRADE.

The figures for foreign trade for the month of February show a slight rise, not only compared with the month before but also in comparison with the corresponding month of 1929. In fact, for February 1930 the total for imports and exports reached 362 millions as against 355 millions in January, and 351 millions in February 1929. For this last-mentioned month, however, it is necessary to bear in mind the unusually cold winter of 1929 which proved a great obstacle to imports.

Imports show a total of 205 millions (208 spread over the following different groups of products. (The figure in brackets refers to the month of January 1930):

Foodstuffs, beverages and tobaccos: 38 millions (39). Agricultural raw material: 10.5 millions (11). Fuel: 14 millions (17). Raw material for industries: 49 millions (51.5). Manufactured articles: 48.5 millions (47). Other Goods: 45 millions (43.5).

Exports, the total for which in February was 157 millions (146.6) may be split up into following chief categories of products:

Foodstuffs: 11.1 millions (12.3). Textiles: 57.4 millions (51.3). Machinery and metallurgical products: 39.1 millions (11.6). Chemical products and colouring matter: 13.7 (13).

The increase makes itself felt particularly in clock-making and textiles. The figures for these two groups, however, show a certain backward movement as compared with the month of February 1929.

Allotted to different countries, the export-figures are as follows:

Germany: 27.4 millions (24.8). France: 15.9 millions (16). Italy: 10.2 millions (9.7). England: 20.4 millions (20.3). United States: 13.6 millions (10.4).

The increase may be said to be general for the most important countries, except in the case of exports to France, which have fallen off, though only to an insignificant extent.

THE HOME MARKET.

The condition of the home market has hardly undergone any change from one month to the other. The labour market shows, so to speak, only weak signs of change. In most districts its condition may be regarded as being satisfactory, and in nearly all skilled trades, except that of textile products and certain branches of the machine-building trade. Demands for employment have decreased in number, from 14,800 to 13,400 whereas offers of employment have risen from 3,600 to 3,900.

The *Hotel Industry*, during February, has continued to have a relatively favorable season, 46.9 per cent. of the beds in the census having been occupied up till the middle of February, in the roughly, 1,200 establishments submitted to regular enquiry; the proportion falling to 38.7 at the end of the same month, a rate which we may consider satisfactory. Indeed the latter includes not only the resorts most sought after during the winter months, and whose coefficient of occupation by visitors has even been known to exceed 90 per cent., but besides these, also the places which at this time of the year slow down in their work. Generally speaking, the month of February has been particularly favorable to localities situated at an altitude exceeding 1,000 metres and which in mid-February showed an average percentage of 61.9, and at the end of February, one of 43.6.

SOCIAL LEGISLATION.

The work of social insurance schemes is gradually making headway in Switzerland, after its constitutional principle having been accepted by popular vote on December 6th, 1925. A scheme of legislation is at this moment under examination by the Federal Department of Public Economy, limiting this insurance to old age. The system will probably cost up to 190 millions per annum, half of which will be defrayed by the State.

The part payable by the State will be found by means of taxation, notably of alcohol and tobacco. S.I.T.

ANCIENT CEMETERY IN SWITZERLAND.

An important archaeological find has been made in Canton Zurich, near Oerlikon, not far from the industrial town of Winterthur. A cemetery dating from the seventh or eighth century A.D. has been discovered, and 53 tombs have been investigated, 38 of which contained funerary equipment.

The tombs have been plundered—a most uncommon circumstance in this part of the world—which accounts for the absence of valuable articles and jewels, and for the fact that the bones are either missing or tossed about. The violation apparently took place during the ninth or tenth century, as one of the plundered tombs lies at a depth of 10-in. below another tomb, of a more recent date, which has not been violated. The cemetery is that of some early Germanic tribe and appears to have been plundered by another tribe of the same race.

Several finds were made in one tomb which escaped the plunderers. In it were found a skeleton whose head and feet are surrounded by flat stones; a necklace of 125 small glass beads, some green, others brown, white, or red; and an iron belt buckle and a bone comb, as well as a curious bronze disk surrounded by a tubular bronze ring. The disk—which was undoubtedly an ornament—had been broken, and was repaired by means of four iron rivets. It is adorned with concentric engraved circles and with the engraving of an animal repeated four times on the centre part. The feet of the skeleton still wore a well-preserved pair of leather sandal fastenings. Many Roman tiles and pieces of charcoal have been recovered from most of these tombs.

In a vineyard at Monthey, Canton Valais, a lead coffin was recently dug up containing a well-preserved skeleton of a man lying on oak leaves. The leaves are in excellent condition but their colour has completely faded. The coffin is similar to those discovered some years ago in the same region, and it is supposed to be the sepulture of a Burgundian chief of the sixth century.

The Times.

RETURN JOURNEY TO THE MOON.

In the 'Vaterland' for April 19th we read the following story of heroic deeds which, however, have conveniently been postponed until the next century.

"Hundert Jahre nach Fritz Lang wird es auch den übrigen Sterblichen vergönnt sein, eine Spazierfahrt nach dem Mond zu machen. Der Professor für Astronomie an der Universität Princetown, John Y. Steward, hat es dieser Tage im Institut für Künste und Wissenschaften in Brooklyn verkündet. Der Reisende wird in einer Rakete Platz nehmen, die mit Telephon, Radio und den allerneuesten Erfindungen des 21. Jahrhunderts ausgerüstet sein wird. 40 Meter

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