

# Swiss events

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# PEOPLE LIKE SWITZERLAND!

The French newspaper "Le Figaro" published a report recently on all the tycoons and film stars who have elected to reside, at least temporarily, in Switzerland to enjoy the amenities of the country and in particular its fiscal facilities. The newspaper notes in a special report that one of the last land deals was made by the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia. He bought a 32,000 square metre estate at Pregny Chambésy, near Geneva, for 4 million francs. Naturally, he required a special permission from the authorities to make such a purchase because of the laws which have been set up precisely as a result of the "invasion" of prosperous foreigners only too eager to invest in property and to evade taxes in their own country.

Despite these laws, the "Figaro" claims that there have been at least three major land deals involving foreigners in Canton Geneva during the past eighteen months.

The newspaper draws a list of the celebrities presently residing in Switzerland for at least a part of the year. It claims that the list is far from complete. There it is:

Audrey Hepburn at Tolochenaz, Prince Fahd at Pregny-Chambésy, Nana Mouskouri in Geneva, Peter Sellers in Geneva, Jean-Claude Killy at Cologny, Richard Burton at Celigny, Elizabeth Taylor at Gstaad, Charlie Chaplin at Corsier, David Niven in Lausanne, Peter Ustinov in Lausanne and at Diablerets, Noel Coward formerly in Lausanne and Montreux, Yul Brynner at Buchillon, James Mason at Corseaux, William Holden in Geneva, Charles Aznavour at Craus, Gilbert Bécaud at Craus, Petula Clark at Cologny, Stavros Niarchos in Lausanne, Marcel Dassault in Geneva, the Emir of Qatar in Geneva, ex-King Faycal of Arabia formerly in Geneva, Karim Aga Khan in Geneva (Pregny), Sadruddin Aga Khan in Geneva (Collonge-Bellerive), President Houphouët Boigny in Geneva, President Mobutu in Lausanne (Savigny), ex-Queen Marie-Josée of Italy in Geneva (Merlinge), Michael of Romania in Geneva (Versoix), Prince Napoleon at Prangins, the Shah of Iran at St. Moritz, Princess Ashraf of Iran in Geneva, Georges Simenon at Epalingues, Frederic Dard in Geneva, Albert Cohen in Geneva, Solzhenitsyn in Zurich, Arthur Rubinstein in Geneva, Oskar Kokoschka at Villeneuve, Emerson Fittipaldi at

Lonay, Jackie Stewart at Beghins, Gunther Sachs at Pully and Paul Morand at Vevey.

Probably three-quarters of the above celebrities have residences around Lake Geneva. This area seems to have a particular attraction for the international set. The Ticino and the area around Lake Lugano also contain heavy concentrations of foreign residents, but these foreigners are not quite of the status of those who have elected the Léman. Maybe the Casinos at Evians and Divonne (the

# SWISS EVENTS

largest one in France and ahead of Monte Carlo for its turnover) have something to do with it.

Following the new laws against the purchase of real estate by foreigners, a great many people with money have bought land on the French side of Lake Geneva. The cost of property has shot up and the situation is already creating a malaise in the area.

## BASLE INAUGURATES CONTROVERSIAL NEW TOWN THEATRE

A project which was launched twelve years ago and has seen a lot of controversy since has just come to fruition in Basle: The city's new Stadttheater built at the cost of 50 million francs has been inaugurated with a mammoth theatrical display that produced thirty-six hours of entertainment in three days.

The new edifice has a rather tormented history. It began in an awry way because the architects who won the contest for the design back in 1963 came from Zurich and not from Basle. When the building got under way after plenty of delay, the people of Basle found that it took a preposterous shape. It was considered far too large and extravagant and seemed to please no one. Then it was found that the new installations would cost considerably more to run than the old ones. For budgetary reasons, the building, completed last year, was left unused for a year until these issues were resolved.

The physical transformation of Basle's Town Theatre was coupled with trouble at management level. Basle theatrical life has always unfolded in fits and starts, but this time the Director, Werner Duggelin, said that he refused to move into the new premises unless he was given the funds he required. He demanded an annual subsidy of 18 million francs. The Cantonal Parliament agreed but the people said "no" in a subsequent referendum. Disappointed by this attitude, Duggelin resigned and a new man, Arno Wuestenhofer, a German who had run Wuppertal Theatre for ten years, was appointed.

From the start he caused an uproar by planning to mark the opening of the new theatre with a production of "Puntilla", by Paul Dessau, an opera created in East-Berlin in 1966. None of the Stadttheater's regular cast would have participated. A petition was launched. The matter was discussed at the Great Council. Wuestenhofer also took issue with the City's decision to reduce annual subsidies to 15.5 million francs. After further disagreement with the Theatre's Management Committee he backed down and the Theatre was once again compelled to look for a new man. Its choice fell on Duggelin's former Assistant, Hans Hollmann, who had just staged a remarkable première of a play by Karl Kraus: "The Last Days of Humanity".

## DEMONSTRATIONS OVER SPANISH EXECUTIONS

A wave of demonstrations in Switzerland greeted the news, on the last weekend of September, that five urban guerrillas had been executed in Spain. There were incidents in Berne, Lugano, Fribourg, La Chaux-de-Fonds, Zurich, Basle, Biel, Lausanne and Geneva.

The worst trouble was in Geneva, where a pitched battle was waged between several hundred demonstrators and police in front of the Spanish Consulate. Several arrests were made and many people received injuries.

Following all the other governments of Western Europe, the Federal Council recalled Switzerland's ambassador in Spain, Mr. Samuel Campiche, in protest. But he returned to Madrid eight days later.

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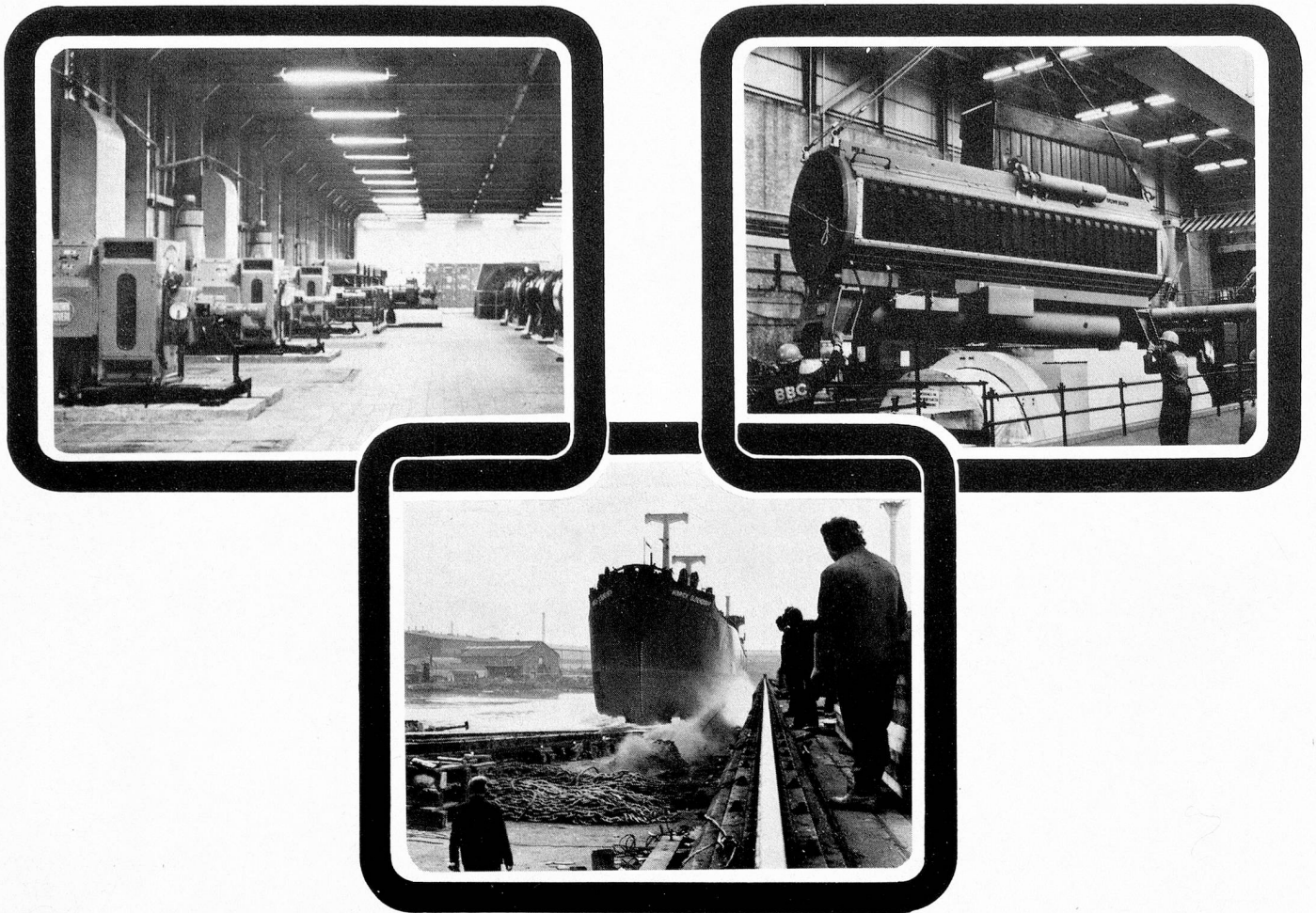
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of State and Head of the Political Department, refused to comment on the decision. Most papers seemed to endorse the decision but the *Neue Zuercher Zeitung* made the remark that Switzerland had never recalled her ambassador in Berlin during the whole duration of the war. Accepting that the decision was justified, it wondered why the Government had not made similar gestures in protest for executions carried in other countries, such as the Soviet Union.

#### MORE SIGNATURES TO BE NECESSARY FOR LAUNCHING A REFERENDUM

The Council of States (upper house of Parliament) has approved the principle that the number of signatures required to launch an Initiative or a Referendum (50,000) should be increased. This decision aims at arresting the growing number of initiatives that are being launched these days at the risk of upsetting the proper operation of Swiss political institutions.

#### GENEVA AND BASLE ACCUSED BY THE FRENCH

The French Government has recently complained that Geneva and Basle have allowed their economies to expand in an incoherent way to the detriment of the many French border workers who come to work in the two cities every day. The Ministry in charge of regional development said in a communiqué that it deplored the fact that French border workers could not enjoy the facilities of Geneva University. It claimed that the "numerus clausus" introduced there because of a shortage of intake space was hurting French students and complained that Geneva's University was not accepting the equivalent of French education certificates. (These allegations were denied by the University.)

The French also feel that border workers will be increasingly affected by Swiss "xenophobia" as the recession continues. The authorities have put forward a number of solutions to improve the lot of the border population. These solutions include new customs regulations for border workers and new regulations on Swiss investments in the border area. The French Government feels that these investments are concentrated too near the border. It is also proposed to alter the laws governing the purchase of property in these areas.

## SWISS FEDERAL ELECTIONS

The Social Democrats won at least nine new seats at the Federal Elections held at the end of October.

The poll was held under what some correspondents describe as the worst

# 53rd ASSEMBLY OF THE SWISS ABROAD

Before the 53rd Assembly was officially opened, much work had already been done by the various Executive Boards, Councils and Commissions, the most important of which was the ASK (Commission of the Swiss Abroad), often called the "little Parliament". The meeting took place at the *Rathaus*, home of Government and Parliament of the Canton of Basle. The President of the ASO (organisation of the Swiss Abroad), Councillor of States Dr. Louis Guisan, was in the chair. Amongst the nearly 70 members present, there were rather more than usual from overseas. Great Britain was represented by Dr. H. R. Bolliger (North), Mrs. Mariann Meier and Father P. Bossard, deputy (South). The first major discussion was on *political rights for the Swiss Abroad*. The subject would be dealt with by the two Chambers this autumn and winter, though there were some complications, and safe passage through Parliament was by no means completely assured. (*In the meantime we have heard that the National Council has accepted it after a long debate*).

*Citizenship* was next on the agenda, and again members were informed that the matter was extremely complicated and that much more time would be needed to find satisfactory solutions before the constitutional changes could be made.

*Sickness insurance*, both for repatriated Swiss from abroad and for those temporarily in Switzerland, was then discussed. The latter did not appear to be of great importance as adequate cover could be had in most countries. But there were difficulties in joining insurance schemes when returning to Switzerland, as there is as yet no state insurance.

There was a report on *Swiss schools abroad*, in which problems and difficulties as well as success of the 19 schools were dealt with. The rest of the agenda consisted of various reports, elections and miscellaneous matters. The next meeting would be on 6th March in Berne, and the next Assembly would be held in Morat at the end of August 1976.

The *Solidarity Fund* had two meetings, one was the *Council meeting* and the other the *A.G.M.* It was reported that in 1974, Fr.670,000.— had been paid

out in compensation, the second-highest amount since the Fund was created in 1958. At the end of 1974, membership stood at 12,734. It was hoped that the new structure of the Fund, in which the savings element was stressed, would encourage a good many more compatriots to join.

*Information* played a big part. Two meetings took place, one of the *Commission* which has been working out the scheme of informing all Swiss abroad registered with Embassies and Consulates four times a year. Representatives of the Federal Political Department (responsible for the free distribution of news and information), the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, journalists, other publicity experts, including a few from abroad (Mrs. M. Meier from G.B.), deal with all aspects of information, including the *Echo* whose circulation has not increased as much as would be desirable, or indeed its excellent quality would warrant.

There was also a meeting on *co-ordinating information*, chaired by Minister M. Jaccard, and attended by editors and other personalities concerned with the distribution of information. It concerned mainly technical matters.

The *official opening* took place at the beautiful 18th-century mansion, the Wildt'sche Haus in Petersplatz. Not all of the approximately 500 participants to the Assembly attended, but the evening was fine enough for the ceremony to take place in the garden. It was performed by the ASO President, and the welcome was given by a member of the Basle Government, Regierungsrat Dr. Edmund Wyss. Later there was an opportunity of seeing some parts of Basle's old quarters, so harmonious in their simplicity. Incidentally, visits to some of Basle's 23 museums and the famous Zoo had been organised earlier in the day.

#### IS THERE A SWISS CULTURE?

The plenary sessions took place on Saturday, 30th August, at the superb Sandoz Auditorium, a hall most suitable to accommodate large audiences. Amongst the guests were representatives of the two Chambers, the Federal Government and Administration, the Army, members of the Basle Parliament and of several organisations connected with the ASO. One of the greatest friends of the Swiss abroad, the former Federal Councillor Dr. F. T. Wahlen, never misses an opportunity of attending the Assembly. From Great Britain, the Swiss contingent of 15 included one of the oldest compatriots, Mr. Vogel, aged 94. One of the great pleasures of the Assembly is always to meet old friends, some who used to live in one's country of residence, possibly in the diplomatic and consular service, and this year was no exception.

economic recession since World War II.

Although the Social Democrats now have 55 seats in the 200 strong assembly, the coalition which has ruled for 16 years remains unchanged.

There is evidence to suggest that the results reflect a measure of public support for more state intervention to help Switzerland out of her economic problems.

WGS

The session was opened by the President, Dr. Guisan, followed by the President of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique in Switzerland, Dr. E. Basler. He talked about cultural values playing an important part in foreign policy. He also referred to the danger of cultural clashes involving individuality and spiritual attitude. It needed, he said, sound self-assurance in traditions and the right attitude to look after them and to appreciate them. Federalism was the best possible way, the Swiss hallmark of unity in diversity, with the authorities only as a helping and promoting clearing-house. He assured the audience that in all the discussions about reform, these principles were never in question. There were no quick and easy solutions available, but the NSH would go on trying to find them. It was the reason for which the Society had been founded two generations ago.

The Director of the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad, Mr. M. Ney, then addressed the audience on "Is there a Swiss Culture?" In an excellent talk, he showed that there was a true helvetic culture. (*It is hoped to give a fuller account of Mr. Ney's speech in a later issue. Ed.*)

The President of the Pro Helvetia Foundation, former Federal Councillor Dr. W. Spuehler, then gave a review of the work his organisation did abroad.

After a coffee interval, the President of the Paris Section of the Swiss Painters, Architects and Sculptors, Mr. Edmond Leuba, talked about the work of his group and showed slides illustrating the amazing variety of artistic output,

often perhaps rather difficult to understand for laymen.

The round-table discussion was introduced by the Deputy Director of the Secretariat, Mr. L. Paillard. It was opened by the former Cultural Attaché in London, Dr. P. Stauffer, who talked about the duties and problems of his colleagues in various parts of the world, Mrs. Ilse Frei, Antwerp, informed the audience of the cultural work done by her and her compatriots and referred to the two-way traffic between the town of Basle and the Netherlands in the past. Mr. Charles Adam of La Châtre in France, Mr. Markus Giss, Lecturer in German and French at the University of Tampere, Finland, and Dr. Alfred Binder, Professor of Literature and Cultural History at the University of Osaka, Japan, spoke of their work in countries so different from Switzerland. Dr. Maximilian Braendle, Director of the Institute of Modern Languages and Professor of German Literature at the University of Brisbane, Australia, gave an interesting account of the former Anglo-Saxon attitude of Australians to the exclusion of all else, and the change that had recently taken place reversing that tendency.

#### SWITZERLAND WILL SOLVE HER PROBLEMS

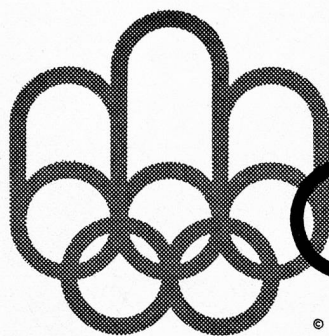
The by now traditional ecumenical luncheon took place in the well-equipped canteen of the Sandoz concern. In short talks, the organisers, Protestants and Catholics, referred to ecumenical co-operation in Switzerland and the activities of the Basle Mission which had

already helped to build brick works overseas long before development aid had been thought of.

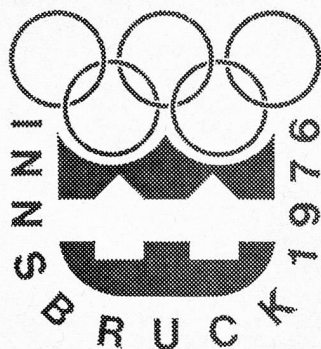
The afternoon session began with songs by the famous *Auslandschweizer* singer Fernando Corena, well-known in many great opera houses, but not in his homeland where he was happy to give his first public performance!

Minister Maurice Jaccard, in charge of matters concerning the Swiss abroad at the Federal Political Department, then gave a survey of what the Swiss authorities were doing for the Swiss living outside their home country. He mentioned the information scheme (*see above*) the Solidarity Fund, various agreements on social insurance and what had already been done under the special Constitutional Article for the Swiss Abroad. He stressed that all these matters were not just worked out and superimposed by the authorities, but had been evolved in a typically federal manner by co-operating with private organisations and the Swiss abroad themselves. Much was still to be done, and it was important that the dialogue must be kept up everywhere.

It has been a tradition at the Assembly that a member of the Swiss Government addresses the gathering. This year it was Federal Councillor Georges-André Chevallaz, Minister of Finance and Customs, who told the Assembly of the Government's preoccupation with financial problems. Last year, matters had grown worse, not least because of the recession which made itself felt also in Switzerland. But he was confident that the Swiss people would



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solve the problems out of their own inherent strength, and that the Swiss abroad would help wherever they were in a position to do so.

### FRIENDSHIP AND COMPANIONSHIP

Riehen is one of the two villages which, together with Basle, form the Canton of Baselstadt. Though today it has over 21,000 inhabitants, it has kept a rural aspect, especially in the village centre. It was at the picturesque Wettstein Houses (inhabited by the illustrious Basle statesman Rudolf Wettstein from 1640-1666) that the Commune of Riehen gave a reception in the evening. This was followed by a

dinner-dance at the "Landgasthof". The great attraction of the evening was a performance by one of Basle's famous carnival *Cliques*, "Schnoogekerzli". Their superb drumming and fifing was as much applauded as their weird masks and costumes and the expert antics of the *Tambourmajor*.

Sunday began with an ecumenical service at the Church of St. Leonard, whose origins go back to 1118, though the new Gothic building was erected after the earthquake of 1356. The service was in French and German, the short sermons given by Pasteur Marc Kohler and Vikar Karl Freuler, a Priest who had been in the Far East for some 15 years as architect.

Then followed a coach trip to the

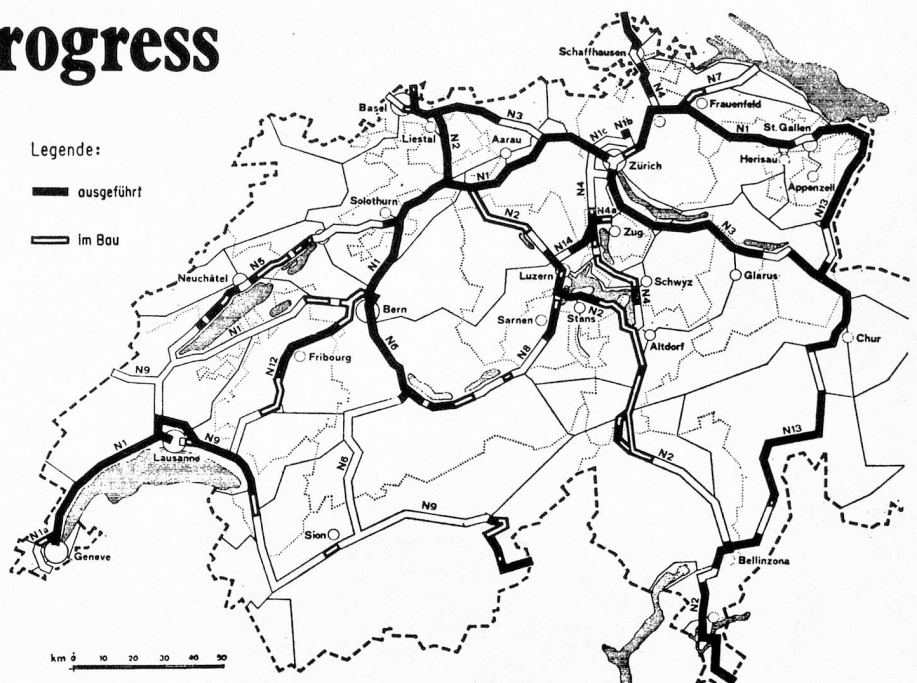
castle ruins of Dorneck. The weather was overcast, so lunch was served in a spacious hall nearby. The Commune President of Dornach reminded the party of the famous battle of Dornach in 1499, when the victory by the Confederates resulted in the separation of Switzerland from the German Reich. The afternoon was spent in happy companionship and dancing to a folklore band from Berne and some fine tossing of the flag, alphorn blowing, and yodelling by the caretaker of the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad in Berne and his wife.

Thus ended the 53rd Assembly, and the organisers may be sure of the gratitude of all those who took part.

MM

## Motorways in progress in Switzerland

Federal expenditure on national highways for the current year was planned to reach 1,018 million francs, 43 million francs more than last year but 60 million francs less than what the Cantons would have wished. Total expenditure on motorways is higher than the above sum, additional revenue being raised with the help of a surcharge on petrol, and cantonal contributions. The network is definitely taking shape and over half of the planned motorways are completed. The map printed here which was published by the NZZ some time ago, indicates where the network stood at the end of last year.



## THE SWISS MACHINERY INDUSTRY - 1974

The Swiss machinery and metallurgical industry, which has a labour force over 360,000 strong, succeeded in raising the value of its exports to 14.8 billion francs in 1974, as compared with 12.8 billion the year before, thus emphasising once again its position as the leading export branch in the national economy.

Of the country's total exports in 1974, 2.3 billion francs worth, ie 6.5 per cent, was accounted for by the metallurgical industry, 12.5 billion by the machinery and appliances industry, ie 35.4 per cent of Switzerland's total exports, which were valued at 35.3 billion francs in 1974.

Electrical machinery and appliances accounted for 22.1 per cent of the total

exports in this branch, textile machinery 16.6 per cent and machine tools 9.2 per cent. With the exception of the sectors related to construction, orders received, up to the second half of 1974, were slightly larger than deliveries in almost all fields of the machinery industry; order books are consequently comparatively full, for a period of 10 months on the average.

In the second half of the year, however, the recession in the world economic situation began to have an effect on the situation in the Swiss machinery industry; as a result of the downward trend and uncertain situation in many purchasing countries, demand dropped sharply towards the end of the year.

At the same time, the rise in the exchange rate of the Swiss franc continued. In periods of heavy demand, the Swiss machinery industry had always succeeded to an astonishing extent in absorbing the continual over-valuation of the Swiss franc. But the combination, within a few months, of the rise in the cost of products by as much as 20 per cent, and even more owing to uncontrollable fluctuations in exchange rates, and a sudden falling off in demand was able to unsettle an industry as sound as the machinery branch in Switzerland. In this difficult situation, many firms have to take great care to keep up output - failing which it would be impossible to maintain the production set-up - and go on financing research and development so as to ensure long-term job prospects.