

# News of the colony

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show of automatons, among them items of unique importance coming from museums and private collections in Germany, Austria, Spain, the United States, France, Great Britain, Italy and Switzerland—above all from the Neuchatel Museum.

The exhibition also includes the newest creations of the Swiss watch and jewellery industry which will not be placed upon the market until next spring. Forty-seven companies are displaying their newest models. Among the 300 automatons exhibited are not only a number of old pieces constructed by Jacques Vaucanson, Jaquet-Droz, Friedrich von Knaus, and the Mailardots, but also several modern creations such as the electro-magnetic chess player invented by Torres y Quevedo.

### The Prospects in Swiss Industry

Figures from the Federal Office of Industry and Trade show that business prospects for 55 per cent. of Swiss industries are considered good, 34 per cent. uncertain, and 10 per cent. bad. It is especially satisfying to notice that in several branches of the textile industry prospects are considered to be more favourable than before.

### The Metal and Machine Industries are Very Active

A majority of the metal and machine industries are now extremely active, and working hours in many of them have been lengthened. In a well-known machine factory in German Switzerland, almost 2000 employees work two hours overtime each day with 25 per cent. overtime pay, in order to satisfy the orders which are coming in. In other companies, three shifts are at work seven days a week.

### A Fine Anniversary.

Swiss watches have a tradition of elegance and precision. This is an especially praiseworthy tradition when it is kept by the same manufacturer for one hundred years. A Villeret watch company, Lavina, Inc., founded in 1852, is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. At the same time, the Chronometrik observatory in Neuenburg has awarded a prize to the Lavina Company for its new wrist chronometer. It is the first time that wrist chronometer in mass production has received a prize; a fine example of the vitality of the Swiss watchmaking industry.

### The Activity of the Basle Rhine Harbours

Three hundred and sixty thousand tons of goods were reshipped from the Basle Rhine harbours in August, 1952. In August, 1951, 440,000 tons of goods were transhipped at the ports, 80,000 tons more than in August this year. Total traf-

fic for the year rose to over 3,000,000 tons in the middle of August last year, while the corresponding figure this year at the end of August was 2,900,000 tons.

## NEWS OF THE COLONY

Swiss voters have rejected by 550,712 votes to 128,237 a proposal of the Communist Party for the abolition of purchase tax. This is one of the Government's main sources of revenue. Here are detailed results of the voting:—

	Yes.	No.
Zurich .....	30,538	112,928
Bern .....	12,274	72,685
Luzern .....	4,661	26,142
Uri .....	503	4,477
Schwyz .....	1,179	7,909
Obwalden .....	356	2,549
Nidwalden .....	353	2,936
Glarus .....	1,128	5,877
Zug .....	768	4,075
Fribourg .....	2,200	13,930
Solothurn .....	3,716	21,286
Baselstadt .....	7,130	16,527
Baselland .....	3,728	11,222
Schaffhausen .....	3,206	11,045
Appenzell A.Rhr. ....	1,797	7,595
Appenzell I.Rh. ....	248	1,623
St. Gallen .....	9,100	47,504
Graubunden .....	1,800	19,115
Aargau .....	9,623	59,282
Thurgau .....	4,423	26,820
Ticino .....	3,374	9,450
Vaud .....	11,686	29,564
Valais .....	3,455	11,411
Neuchatel .....	4,213	12,191
Geneve .....	6,778	12,569
Total .....	128,237	550,712

The tax is 4 per cent. on all goods sold to consumers. The referendum clearly demonstrates what powers the citizen can exercise with his voting paper.

### Compatriot in Fiji

Swiss who contemplate going to the Fiji Islands in order to enjoy the sun under coconut trees and to have a swim in the warm coral sea, will be pleased to learn that they have a charming compatriot in Suva. Mr. Hans Furrer, whose fair skin and blond hair makes a contrast with the Fijians, is an architect with the Department of Works at Suva, and is at present busy with the construction of the new Medical Centre. He is very popular on Viti Levu Island, and takes an active part in the social and cultural life of the island. This "Luzerner" is a good musician and writes musical arrangements for the Suva Orchestra, which he conducts with skill. Painting is also another one of his hobbies. We wish to congratulate Mr. Furrer on his success.