

News from the Consulate

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in Switzerland is in the Rhine Salt Works. The biggest one in the world, which evaporates ten tons of water an hour, is in a foreign aluminium works. Both were built by Escher-Wyss, of Zurich. Escher-Wyss also developed the variable pitch propeller to break the speed of airplanes when landing.

Another important group which has shown marked and rapid progress during the last twenty years is the machine tool industry.

The Swiss automobile industry is well-known for its heavy and semi-heavy lorries. Other important industrial products are machinery for flour mills and for food industries, paper-making machines, printing presses, packing machinery, optical and surveying instruments, meters, counters and type-writers.

Naturally the watch industry, which today extends from Geneva to Schaffhausen, will always be one of the principal industries of Switzerland and one with which the name of the country will remain most closely bound. In the course of generations, a numerous population has acquired great technical aptitude and a justly renowned skill. A tradition has thus been created by which the trade is so strongly rooted in the life of the population that even when times are bad, confidence is never shaken.

The jeweller's art is centred principally in Geneva, where a large number of specialists—engravers, enamellers, gold and silversmiths—have brought their work to a high level of perfection.

One other important Swiss industry is the chemical industry centring around Basel. Dye firms are situated in Basel while there are large concerns specialising in the manufacture of pharmaceutical products in Basel, Zofingen, Berne and St. Gall.

Names of Swiss chemical or pharmaceutical firms, such as Hoffmann-La-Roche, Ciba and Geigy, are famous throughout the world. D.D.T., a powder which kills all insects and yet is non-toxic to man, was invented by Geigy.

Certain products, such as sulphuric acid, have been made in Switzerland for over 100 years, while sodium chloride has for a long time been obtained from the Rhine salt beds and at Bex.

The electro-chemical industry embraces enterprises whose products differ widely, but whose manufacture has the common feature that a chemical conversion process by the direct action of electric energy is used. Among electro-chemically manufactured products, aluminium takes a leading place. It is made at Neuhausen, Chippis and Martigny and worked up in various factories. Apart from aluminium, metallic sodium (at Monthey) and iron alloys (Visp, Bex, Bodio) are manufactured electro-chemically.

The sipper is a Swiss invention, and the Swiss were the first to use tar to pave roads and to solve the problem of liquifying coal. The food and tobacco industries, chocolate

manufacture, the production of cheese and condensed milk, the products of the Nestle concern, the preserving industry and the ceramic and paper industry, as well as the graphic arts, all flourish in Switzerland and contribute to making the standard of living in this country what it is.

—A.B.

NEWS FROM THE CONSULATE

SWISS CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATION

DUTY FREE IMPORTATION OF GIFT PACKAGES

Decree of the Federal Council and Decision of the Federal Departments of Finance and Customs of February 23, 1960.

Gifts which private persons abroad send to private persons in Switzerland by post, or railway, or as air freight, are exempt from import duties, provided the total value of such gifts **does not exceed 50 Swiss francs** (i.e. the retail value on the foreign market). On the other hand, gift packages which are dispatched by firms are always subject to duty, even if the firm sends the gift on the order of a private individual, and despite the fact that the nature of the article is obviously that of a gift. Gift packages must be clearly marked as such in the customs declarations and shipping documents.

In connection with the articles herein after listed and which are included in gift packages, the exemption from import duties is limited to the quantities indicated, even if the total value of the articles sent is less than 50 Swiss francs.

Kind of goods:	Max. duty free quantity:
Manufactured tobaccos	100 cigarettes or 100 grams pipe tobacco or 20 cigars
Cigarette paper	100 leaves or pre-rolled papers
Alcoholic beverages:	
— up to 50 proof	1 liter
— over 50 proof	½ liter
Butter	500 grams

Gift packages must not contain more than 10 kilograms of meat or meat products, including canned meat and fish. If such packages exceed 2 kilograms, they must be examined by the veterinaries at border at the established fees for such examinations.

Articles which in consideration of their kind or quantity do not have the character of gifts, for instance goods which are merchandise reserves or which are not usually meant for private use, and articles which are not generally given as presents, are excluded from duty free importation.