

Commercial news

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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Cattle-breeding in Switzerland.

Cattle-breeding plays a capital role in Swiss agriculture. 70% of the gross yield from agriculture comes from cattle and poultry farming. In 1954, there were more than 200,000 owners of cattle and 100,000 households that went in for poultry-farming or bee-keeping.

The proportion of cattle owners is very high in certain parts of the country, especially in the Valais, where one family out of two possesses domestic animals. This wide-spread repartition of domestic animals is due principally to the efforts made in that direction, in accordance with the war economy plan. Although, since then, the number of cattle owners has declined the number of domestic animals in this country has increased.

The Swiss Mercantile Marine Grows.

A new trading motorship, the first of a series of three ships of more than 10,000 tons each, has just been launched at Fiume. This vessel, christened "Silvretta", is the first to have been built in Yugoslavia for a foreign country. This ship, which is to swell the number of vessels belonging to the fleet of the Swiss Maritime Society "OCEANIA" is equipped with "Sulzer" engines, produced in Switzerland and possessing a capacity of 4,900 h.p.

Swiss Foreign Trade in May.

In comparison with the corresponding month of last year, Swiss imports in May showed an increase of 34 million francs, amounting as they did to 509 million francs, whereas exports rose by 25 millions and attained 444 million francs. When compared with the month of April, 1955, the figures for Swiss foreign trade in May show a slight decline. This, however, is a customary seasonal tendency.

The development occurring in Swiss foreign trade in May, 1955, increased the receipts of the Swiss Customs Administration, which attained more than 66 million francs, so that the Confederation has at its disposal four millions more than for the corresponding month in 1954. During the first five months of the current year, Customs receipts have risen to 233 millions, thus showing an increase of 31 millions in comparison with the same period in 1954.

General Assembly of the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade.

The Swiss Office for the Development of Trade held its General Assembly, on the 16th of June, at Lausanne. From its report, it may be seen that the number of its members, recruited from all the various branches of Swiss Industry, has now increased to 1,689. During 1954, the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade has shown, in so far as possible, an increasing activity in the domain of propaganda and of the prospecting of markets, and this in the most distant regions of the globe. Let us cite, among other publications, the issuing of a propaganda pamphlet in Arabic, whilst, on the occasion of the exhibition of Sao Paulo, a special review appeared in the Portuguese language.

The Swiss Office for the Development of Trade also organized Switzerland's official participation in eight international Fairs abroad, during 1954.

Insurance Business in Switzerland.

Switzerland constitutes one of the greatest insurance centres in the world and the excellent reputation of her insurance and re-insurance companies is well established. Even if, in consequence of the smallness of the national market, an important share of their activities is directed to foreign countries, this in no mean way means that the Swiss population is

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not well insured. In 1953, the premiums and subscriptions paid to private and public insurance companies in Switzerland amounted to nearly two thousand eight hundred million francs, a considerable sum for a country of less than five million inhabitants. The major part of these premiums were paid in for non-obligatory insurances, life, accident and sickness insurance being at the head. Although this satisfactory development in insurance stimulates both individual and collective saving, it nevertheless, raises the problem of the investment of such an enormous mass of capital. Here again, the Swiss market often reveals itself as being too small and it is necessary to proceed with the regular exportation of capital.

Swiss Exports of Capital.

It is difficult to estimate the value of Swiss capital invested abroad. Nevertheless, an examination of the balance of payments shows an income from capital amounting to about 500 million francs. If one reckons on a yield of approximately 4%, the amount of capital invested abroad should amount to about thirteen million Swiss francs. If, on the one hand, these investments contribute to the economic development of other countries, on the other hand, they are also profitable, in their turn — and quite rightly so — to the Swiss export industries.

Swiss Textile Machinery Industry.

The construction of textile machinery constitutes one of the oldest branches of the mechanical industry in Switzerland; it comprises more than thirty plants and provides employment for some 12,000 workers, i.e. 8% of all the workers employed in the Swiss machine industry.

Exporting, as it does, nine-tenths of its production, this industry plays an important role in Swiss exports, in general, as more than one-fifth of Swiss exports of machinery consist of textile machines. As a matter of fact, Switzerland is one of the leading exporters of textile machines, in the world, its contribution being as important as that of the United States or of Germany.

Factories in Switzerland.

The progressive industrialisation of this country is demonstrated by the steady growth in the number of factories in Switzerland. At the end of March, 1955, there were 11,635 factories, that is to say 133 more than in the preceding year.

Fifty-two factories shut down, but, during the same period more than 600 plans for building were submitted to the Federal Inspectorate.

Capital and Labour in Switzerland.

Since 1938, the share of income from capital in the total national income of the Swiss people, has increased by 75%, that of the income of persons engaged in independent activities by 135%, whilst that of wage earners has increased by 208%. The share of the wage earners, which prior to the war represented just half, now represents three-fifths. This modification in the ratio is due partly to an increase in the number of workers and employees, and partly to a substantial increase in wages which, amounts to about 30%.

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