

Commercial news

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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Swiss watch exports in the United States are still on the platform.

It would appear to have become almost a tradition that the holiday period should be marked by striking events in the history of the watchmaking relations between the United States and Switzerland. It was in July, 1954 that President Eisenhower decreed the famous increase in duties levied on watchmaking imports. This year, the summer has been marked by the publication of several reports and interventions, on the part of the parties concerned. The most important event is certainly the publication of a parliamentary report declaring the protection of the American watchmaking industry by means of import restrictions, decreed in the name of national defence, as being unjustifiable. This thesis, which has long been refuted by the Swiss watchmaking trade, has thus been revealed as unfounded. The failure of the protectionist manoeuvres levelled at the exports of the Swiss watchmaking industry now gives rise to the hope that a reasonable solution may be achieved in the near future.

Swiss Labour Market in July.

The Swiss Labour Market remains characterised by an unprecedented state of saturation. Even the larger number of foreign workers to be found here has not served to remedy entirely this general shortage of labour, as will be seen from the fact that at the end of July there were only 500 totally unemployed persons in the whole of Switzerland, whilst the number of jobs offered was ten times as great.

Geneva-Cointrin airport to be enlarged.

The rapid technical progress in commercial aviation requires a corresponding adaptation of airports. Thus, the airport of Geneva-Cointrin is to be enlarged very shortly in order to make possible the landing of long-distance jet aircraft, which are to be put into service in 1959. The airport of Geneva-Cointrin which, until 1948, was the only Swiss airport on which four-engined aircraft could land, is equipped with a runway for blind landing which is almost two kilometres in length. This runway, however, will have to be made almost twice as long. As it is situated only a few yards away from the French frontier, there were two possible solutions open to the Swiss authorities: the prolongation of the runway on French territory, or else, an exchange of territory which should make it possible for the runway to be established entirely on Swiss soil. It was this latter solution which was given preference by the Federal authorities, and negotiations for the exchange of about a hundred acres of terrain could be concluded successfully, as a result of the comprehension shown by France. Thus, the new inter-continental airport of Geneva-Cointrin will remain an entirely Swiss concern, whilst at the same time rendering useful services to France.

Swissair during the first half of this year.

"Swissair", the Swiss national aviation company has been very active on all the lines of its air network during the first half of the current year. The number of passengers carried amounted to nearly

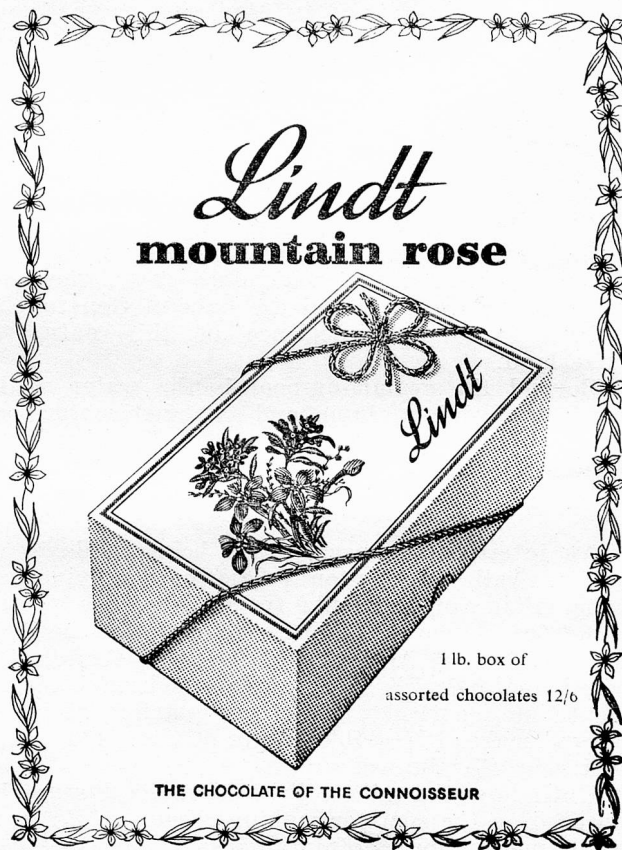
350,000, which figure represents an increase of 25 per cent in comparison with last year. The freight carried by air shows a still more rapid increase, namely that of 33 per cent as compared with the first half of 1955. Air freight now embraces more and more extensive economic circles and all the traditional export branches of Swiss industry now make use of it. The mean co-efficient of lading was also very satisfactory and exceeded 65 per cent.

The importance of telephone in Switzerland.

Switzerland has never been considered as a chatter-box, and yet telephonic communications have increased in number, recently, to a considerable degree. At the end of 1955, there were one million two hundred thousand telephone stations in operation, that is to say, almost one telephone per every four inhabitants, Switzerland's population having now attained the five million mark. The increase in telephone calls is still more marked as it attains nearly a thousand million conversations per year. In 1955, the yearly average amounted to 178 calls per inhabitant. It is interesting to note, by way of comparison, that the average number of calls is three times lower in France and in Germany, whilst it is higher in the United States, in Canada and in Sweden.

Switzerland's foreign trade during the first six months of this year.

Swiss foreign trade, during the first six months of 1956, has increased by more than 10 per cent as compared with the corresponding period in 1955.



attaining, as it has, in absolute figures, the value of five and a half thousand million Swiss francs. All the traditional branches of the Swiss export industry participate in this upward trend, and it is noted with satisfaction that both the Swiss textile and watch-making industries are once more to be found in a good position. Trade with Switzerland's European customers has gone up to a more marked extent than that with the Overseas countries. Thus, Switzerland buys nearly three-quarters of her foreign goods in Europe, whilst about two-thirds of her exports also go to these countries. During the course of the last few years, Switzerland has succeeded in assuring for herself new market possibilities in a number of Overseas countries, and she is devoting particular attention to her relations with economically under-developed countries.

A new Swiss marine engine.

Switzerland, which is an essentially Continental country, is an important producer of marine engines and one of the biggest metallurgical plants in Switzerland, the firm of Sulzer Brothers, in Winterthur, has equipped nearly one-fifth of the motor-boats which are at present sailing on the Seven Seas. The Swiss firm has just completed a new type of two-stroke Diesel engine, super-fed by exhaust-gas turbo-blowers. The originality of this type of engine resides in the fact that it is equipped with three gas turbines, as a result of which there is an appreciable increase in the engine's output. Compared with a similar engine of the ordinary type, this new marine engine offers the advantage of an output which is about 30 per cent greater, whilst consuming 8 per cent less of fuel. The first model of this new type of engine is, at present,

being subjected to a very severe control and to trials which will last for several weeks. Afterwards, it will be taken to pieces and conveyed to Rotterdam, where it will be installed in a ship belonging to a Dutch company.

Switzerland's foreign trade in July.

Swiss imports have increased by more than 100 million francs as compared with last year and attained 645 million francs during the month of July. The increase in the value of exports is smaller, amounting as it does to 32 million francs, in respect of a total of about 521 million francs. The general tendency noted during the previous months has now been confirmed, and it is, above all, the Swiss metallurgical and machine industry which, together with the watch-making industry, have consolidated their positions. The sales made by the textile industry have attained a very satisfactory level, whilst the other traditional export industries continue to maintain their position. In regard to imports, motor vehicles are well in the forefront, as a result of which a considerable increase is to be noted in respect of imports of liquid fuel.



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