

Facts and figures

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FACTS AND FIGURES.

In 1957 the financial revenue of the Swiss Confederation was very high again; it reached approximately 2,043 million Swiss francs, that is 114 millions more than the budget estimate. The total sum, however, is smaller than that for 1956; this is due to a peculiarity in the levying of the National Defence Tax, which only recurs biennially. If one also excepts the anticipated tax on the revenue from personal property and the supplementary duties on imports of agricultural produce, then higher receipts are to be found under all the other headings. The most striking increase is noted in the Customs returns and the turnover tax, which amounted, respectively, to thirty and to fifty million Swiss francs.

The constant increase in the consumption of energy in Switzerland is expressed by the steps that have been taken to promote production. One is always hearing of the inauguration of a new electric station, or of work begun on a new power plant, or of the elaboration of new projects. Thus, the cantonal government of Berne has just proposed to the Legislative Council the adoption of a project which will make possible an annual production of 84 million kilowatt-hours. Furthermore, construction work has already been started on a plant, in the Canton of Glaris, Northern Switzerland, which will utilise the water of a new Alpine artificial lake, with a capacity of 3,177 million cubic feet. As the area was practically impassable, a helicopter was used for the transportation of the construction material to the site on which the job is to be done, prior to the setting up of the traditional cable lifts. The dam will be erected in 1961 and 1962, and the first machines will start running in the autumn of 1962. This new plant will serve to increase by ten per cent the annual production of the company which is building it, and which is one of the most important in Switzerland.

Swiss air traffic showed a considerable increase in 1957. The National Airlines Company, "Swissair", whose air lines now cover 71,500 miles, developed its activities considerably. The number of passengers carried went up by more than 200,000 and amounted to nearly a million. The figures for flight-miles and weight carried per mile relating to passengers, freight and mail, also showed a marked increase. Swiss international airports also noticed a growth in traffic, and more than a million passengers were registered at the Zürich-Kloten airport. The Geneva-Cointrin air-

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port also reached a new record figure for the number of passengers, which amounted to 700,000, that is an increase of more than twenty per cent as compared with 1956.

The Swiss locomotive bearing the name "Geneva", which is to be on show at the Brussels International Fair, 1958, belongs to a type which was created specially for traffic on the St. Gotthard line. The number of trains running on this line has increased to such an extent that it has been necessary to avoid any waste of time, in particular that caused by coupling double engines. It was therefore necessary to have locomotives that were capable — individually — of hauling the heaviest trains over the Gotthard ramps. It was this necessity which gave birth, a few years ago, to the remarkable engine in question: it weighs 120 tons, has a capacity of 6,000 h.p., and can reach a maximum speed of 78 miles per hour. Fifty such engines are required for the St. Gotthard line; they are now in course of construction and the last one is due to be delivered in 1960.

CONCERT NEWS.

We wish to direct the attention of our readers to a concert to be given by the London Orpheus Choir, on Tuesday, 25th March, at 7 p.m., at St. James's Church, Piccadilly, W.1.

The programme consists of "The Passion according to St. John" by Bach.

Amongst the soloists will be Mme. Lily Bucherer-Habegger, a compatriot of ours; this will be her first major London engagement.

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