

New Swiss industrial documentary

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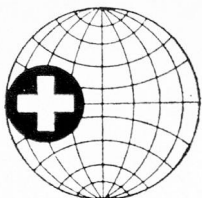
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THE SWISS "PRESENCE" AND THE STATE OF THE SWISS COLONY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM IN 1968

Survey by the Swiss Ambassador,
Monsieur René Keller

The Swiss Ambassador and Madame Keller gave a Reception to Members of the Swiss Colony on 26th February, at their Residence in Upper Brook Street. The following survey was made available on that occasion.

(Continued)

PART II

1. Trade between the United Kingdom and Switzerland developed favourably.

According to Swiss statistics for 1968, goods to the value of 1,291 m. francs were exported to the U.K., and goods imported from this country to the value of 1,422 m. francs. The traditional trade deficit has gradually decreased over the last few years to 131 m. francs. In comparison with 1967 Swiss exports increased by 14.2% and imports by 3.5%.

The United Kingdom is the 5th largest customer of Switzerland and also the 5th largest supplier. Trade with this country represents 7.4% of Switzerland's total foreign trade, i.e. exports and imports together.

By contrast, Britain's exports to Switzerland represent barely 2% of her total sales abroad, and her imports from Switzerland amount to just slightly over 2% of her total purchases from overseas. Switzerland ranks 15th in Britain's foreign trade. What does she buy from the United Kingdom? — Vehicles of many kinds, non-electrical and electrical machinery, jewelry, organic and inorganic chemicals as well as pharmaceuticals and dyestuffs, synthetic and woollen textiles, plastic ware, ready-made clothes and jersey goods, iron and steel products, copper, etc.

Switzerland sells to the United Kingdom the following products in order of importance: non-electrical machinery, above all machine tools and textile machinery, organic chemicals and dyestuffs, watches, electrical machinery, synthetic and cotton textiles, jewelry, precision instruments, plastic ware, foodstuffs, etc.

2. The basis of trade relations between Switzerland and the U.K. is the Stockholm Convention of 1959, setting up the European Free Trade Association. Since the beginning of 1967, all

tariffs on industrial goods have been reduced to nil. Quotas and other quantitative restrictions have been abolished. In May 1968, the EFTA Ministerial Meeting was held in London. The Swiss Delegation was chaired by Mr. Spühler, then President of the Confederation, and Federal Councillor Schaffner.

3. Some 100 Swiss firms are known by the Embassy to have branches or subsidiaries in Great Britain. Besides banks and insurance companies, the most important Swiss firms with branches in this country are in the chemical, food processing and engineering fields. Many Swiss citizens have their own business in this country, such as factories, hotels, restaurants, shops, etc.

4. Unfortunately, there are no statistics on Swiss direct investments in Great Britain. They must be considerable and seem to be expanding. British workers employed by Swiss capital in Great Britain run into several thousands.

5. The Swiss Economic Council, representing prominent Swiss businessmen in Great Britain, has succeeded after many years of hard work in setting up an Institute for Swiss Trade Promotion. This institute, with offices at the Swiss Centre in Leicester Square, is generally concerned with the promotion of Swiss exports to this country. Its immediate task is to recruit enough members to make its operations self-supporting. The Institute is in close contact with the Commercial Section of the Embassy and the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade (OSEC).

6. The Economic and Commercial Section of the Embassy is concerned with Swiss economic policy and the safeguarding of Swiss economic, commercial and financial interests in Great Britain. It is in constant touch with the Swiss and British authorities. Many questions, of an economic or commercial nature, however, are no longer dealt with bilaterally but are raised within the EFTA Council.

The Swiss Embassy continues to provide the Honorary Secretary to the Association of Economic Representatives in London, an informal group consisting of most economic, financial and commercial diplomats in London. The Honorary Secretary organises luncheons and cocktail parties to which many public figures are invited. These functions are usually a very interesting source of information.

7. Tourism between Switzerland and the United Kingdom was active. The number of Swiss visitors to the U.K. shows a rising trend, whereas fewer British tourists have been going to Switzerland, mainly as a consequence of the £50 travel allowance.

In 1967 111,000 visitors from Switzerland were recorded, of whom 70,000 were Swiss citizens, i.e. 50% more than only a few years ago. They

rank 8th among foreign tourists in the United Kingdom, after the Americans, French, West Germans, Dutch, Scandinavians, Belgians and Italians.

8. Swissair continued to develop its services between the United Kingdom and Switzerland, both as regards passengers and freight. Its planes connect Zurich, Geneva and Basle with London and Manchester.

In 1968 approximately 130,000 passengers flew from Britain to Switzerland by Swissair and about 140,000 in the opposite direction, while the corresponding freight figures are about 5,000 t. transported to Switzerland and almost 4,500 t. to Britain, in part jointly with BEA.

Swissair occupies 12th place in Britain's international air traffic, out of a total of 55 airlines.

9. The Swiss merchant marine numbered (on December 31st, 1968), 31 ships with a total tonnage of 209,988. The ships belong to 10 different shipping companies employing 940 seamen, of whom 546 are Swiss nationals, or 58%. The Swiss fleet is therefore no longer just a joke.

(To be continued.)

NEW SWISS INDUSTRIAL

DOCUMENTARY

In a new film entitled "Seconds and Micro-Seconds", Ebauches Co. Ltd., Neuchâtel, the biggest producer of watch parts in the world, has sought to illustrate two essential aspects of its work. The first part of the film shows the large number of machines needed for the manufacture of the many parts used in a watch movement. The second part is devoted to watchmaking of tomorrow, which is moving more and more towards electronics. This new 16-mm. film, lasting 25 minutes, gives a synthesis of the progress achieved in the field of classical watch manufacture and electronic watchmaking, in a form easily understood by the layman and yet interesting for specialists.

(O.S.E.C.)

TWO NEW INSTITUTES IN

NEUCHÂTEL

An Institute of Chemistry and another of Structural Metallurgy, which will help increase the number of chemists trained in Switzerland and thus answer the great need felt in Swiss industry for such technicians, were founded in Neuchâtel, at the beginning of 1969. The equipment of these two institutes, housed in a modern building, has met with the unanimous admiration of specialists. The Institute of Structural Metallurgy, in particular, is equipped with an electronic microscope which is a marvel of its kind.

(O.S.E.C.)