

# Technical items

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A major trend in the operations of GATT is the growing importance of third world countries. Mr. Long underlined that GATT, unlike rich-country organisations like the OECD and the Central Bankers Club in Basle, is open to poorer countries and prosperous nations alike. In fact, developing countries are not influenced in their decisions by big powers and take the initiative at the GATT Council.

GATT is an important source of international legislation. One topic about which Mr. Long has been particularly concerned is international handling of pollution. Some industrial nations will soon have to invest heavily on the means of reducing effluents and wastage. They will therefore be at a disadvantage with regard to other countries having fewer investments to make in this field owing to the different nature of their economy. GATT's research department has therefore investigated the implications for international trade of the protection of the environment and drafted the proposals intended to limit its effect on the growth of commerce. The problem has admittedly not yet become actual, but it is necessary to make provisions long in advance. The GATT document on concerted environmental control was published in September and was outlined in every important newspaper of Europe.

The ball must be set rolling by Mr. Long himself. He must again "create a consensus" and make politicians hitherto unaware of this particular problem convinced of its relevance. This implies visits to the ministers of the most important capitals of GATT member-countries. Governments have to be convinced first because, as Contracting Parties of GATT, they are to decide at the Annual Assembly whether a new agreement is to be included in its body of rules. The machinery is bound to be slow but the GATT will probably embody an agreement on pollution within one or two years—long

before this problem begins to hurt international trade.

The importance of international trade is perhaps not grasped by everybody. However, it is vital for the buoyancy of any national prosperity. Most periods of depression have coincided with slumps in international trade. Nations are nowadays so interdependent that prosperity can only be achieved together, hence the importance of GATT. Mr. Long had a fitting way of describing his responsibilities: "I am like the

general manager of a company. The shareholders are the member states, and the increase in business is the growth of world trade. Last year I was able to report a 14 per cent increase in world trade to my shareholders".

Mr. Long may not have quite as much power over the progress of international trade as a manager over the success of his company, but he nonetheless stands for one of the most important instruments of world prosperity.

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## TECHNICAL ITEMS

### (OSEC)

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#### Remarkable growth in health insurance in Switzerland

One of the branches of insurance with the highest rate of growth in Switzerland is private health insurance, practised by a certain number of companies without any support from the government. In 1960, the value of premiums totalled 26 million Swiss francs; 10 years later the figure was 7 times as high. In fact in 1970 this branch collected S.Fr. 188 million in premiums, i.e. 18 per cent more than the previous year. Admittedly, a considerable part of the growth in premiums corresponds to an increase in rates made necessary by the adaption of benefits to increased wages and living costs. These S.Fr. 188 million are offset by 113.3 million francs' worth of benefits paid out in the form of payments to insured persons, hospitals, doctors and medical aids, as well as a sum of S.Fr. 45 million for building up reserves to cover pending claims.

#### Co-operation between German, French and Swiss manufacturers

Within the framework of an exclusive licensing contract signed recently the Automatic Lathe Manufacturers, Conver Maschinenbau GmbH, of Reutlingen and Lomersheim (Germany) and Manutar Co. Ltd., of Geneva (Switzerland), have worked out the conditions governing the manufacture and sale of the coil turning automatic "Convermatic RF 16" produced by Conver. Conver's engineers, who played a decisive part in the production of this lathe, will continue to work on its development in co-operation with specialists from Manutar. Production and world sales, on the other hand, are from now on to be handled by Manutar. It should be pointed out that this co-operation agreement was signed 18 months after the merger agreement made between Manurhin-Tarex Co. Ltd.

(Mulhouse-France) and Tarex-Manurhin Co. Ltd. (Geneva-Switzerland). Thanks to this expansion of its programme, Manutar (Geneva) is able to offer a wider range of products; in this way the firm answers the growing requirements of the clientele as to quality and range of use.

#### Switzerland's contribution to the development of Madagascar

The Federal Council has released a sum of 1,080,000 Swiss francs, from the funds of the Technical Co-operation Programme, in favour of a scheme for developing the dairy industry in Madagascar, under the supervision of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). For the next 5 year period, UNICEF has set itself the goal of providing a supply of milk, either free or at reduced cost, to destitute women and children in Madagascar. In addition, this international organisation will try to offer the population of Tananarive and its surroundings a constant supply of good quality milk and dairy products at moderate prices. A few months ago, Switzerland released a sum of 750,000 Swiss francs for a scheme developing the vineyards on the island; under the terms of the agreement signed between the two countries, Switzerland agrees to make available two experts as well as the necessary demonstration equipment and ensure the technical supervision of the scheme, the Madagascan government covering the expenses incurred on the spot.

#### The cost of research in the Swiss pharmaceutical industry

In order to remain competitive, the pharmaceutical industry has to devote enormous sums to research; this represents a burden that only the biggest firms are able to support. The general tendency towards mergers now ap-

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parent in the most varied branch of the economy answer a growing need therefore. In Basle chemical firms, pharmaceutical research generally accounts for 12 per cent of the turnover in this sector, the sums devoted by these firms to research being estimated today at about one billion Swiss francs. However it is largely due to this remarkable emphasis on research that Switzerland comes first, for example, among the non-American countries which have registered pharmaceutical specialities on the United States market during the past 30 years; with a proportion of 18 per cent of the foreign products, Switzerland comes ahead of Germany (13 per cent) and Great Britain (12 per cent). Of the 16 new substances introduced on the American market last year, five came from laboratories belonging to the Basle pharmaceutical industry; this is equivalent to a proportion of 31 per cent, which is all the more remarkable in fact as no other European firm was included on this list. In 1970, Switzerland exported 907 million francs' worth of pharmaceutical products; the total value of the medicines sold abroad represents 95 per cent of the sales of the big multi-national firms domiciled in Basle, two of which, Hoffmann-La Roche and Ciba-Geigy, are the biggest pharmaceutical firms in the world.

#### Output of Swiss oil refineries

In 1970, 12.45 million tons of

petroleum products were sold in Switzerland; as in the previous year, the country's two refineries covered 41 per cent of Switzerland's requirements in this field. Domestic production was able to be increased by 0.2 million tons compared with the previous year, but the total sales of petroleum products have increased to a larger extent. The various proportions of petroleum products from domestic refineries compared with Swiss consumption as a whole are as follows: liquefied gas, 71 per cent; light gasoline used for the production of urban gas and petrochemicals, 63 per cent; high octane fuel, 36 per cent; normal fuel, 35 per cent; kerosene, 49 per cent; diesel oil, 37 per cent; extra-light heating oil for household use, 33 per cent; medium and heavy heating oil for industrial purposes 38 per cent and 68 per cent respectively, and tars, 36 per cent.

#### New hand-dryer

As everyone has discovered for himself at one time or another, after washing his hands in a public toilet, the drying systems are very seldom completely satisfactory. The semi-automatic towel roll dispensers are hardly any more hygienic—when they work—than ordinary towels; for technical reasons, automatic hot-air hand-dryers are not completely effective either: the air takes too long to warm up and finally becomes too hot. As for paper towels, they are comparatively

expensive, owing to their lavish use. A Swiss inventor at Zug has thought of a new device eliminating all these drawbacks—the hygroscopic or “sucking” flake hand-dryer. At the last Inventors Salon in Brussels, this appliance won a silver medal. It is the size of a small, narrow piece of furniture and comprises a sucking fan, an electric air heater and a device for the production of sucking flakes. The ambient air, drawn through a filter by means of the fan, is warmed by the electric heater. Via an air duct, the hot air passes over a device producing flakes from a bar of hydroscopic cellulose fibres or plastic foam, on its way to the hand-drying shell in which the hands are placed for drying. In this way the latter are dusted with flakes which are then completely removed by a sucking fan into a waste flake sack. With this appliance it is possible to dry one's hands in a matter of seconds.

#### Stock Market Information Centre in Zurich

An ultra-modern stock market information system has recently been put into operation at the main Swiss Credit Bank in Zurich. With this system, which is unique of its kind in Europe, it is possible to obtain the most recent information concerning the evolution of market rates. Provided with a video-master and TV sets, it supplies 160 different quotations. This information centre, set up in co-opera-

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tion with the Swiss firm of Autophon Co. Ltd. (Solothurn), is open every day from 6 a.m. to 12 p.m.

### The Swiss Bank Corporation in Tokyo

In place of its old agency, the Swiss Bank Corporation recently opened a branch in the business centre of Tokyo. It is thus the first Swiss bank in Japan to be able to carry out all the operations of a commercial bank. The new branch represents not only an invaluable link in the already wide network of the Swiss Bank Corporation abroad, but also a sound base for the development of Switzerland's relations with an economy as dynamic and important as Japan's. It is worth mentioning here that Swiss private investments in Japan are very high. Many big Swiss firms, in the foodstuffs, chemical and metallurgical industries, have set up branches there, and Switzerland comes second, after the United States, among private foreign investors in Japan.

### Success of the Swiss Nuclear Industry

Swiss industrial firms working in the field of nuclear technology have succeeded, in spite of very keen international competition, in achieving several big successes with their exports. As the following examples show, it is not only the big firms that are meeting with success but also the small and medium-size concerns. Brown, Boveri & Co. has received a new order in the United States for a group of turbines for the nuclear power station at Forked River, as well as orders from abroad for fifteen main circuit-breakers for alternators in atomic power stations. The orders received from Argentina, Belgium, Germany, Finland, the Netherlands, Italy and Sweden by Sulzer of Winterthur, cover a wide range of products, from valves and tubes to pumps, heat exchangers, etc. Georg Fischer, of Schaffhausen, has supplied cast steel parts for American, British, French, Italian and Swedish atomic plants, and the Charmilles Engineering Works in Geneva, fuel-handling devices for the Belgian nuclear power station at Doel. As for K. Rüttschi Co. Ltd. of Brugg, its special pumps for atomic plants are meeting with great success in Argentina, the Netherlands, India and Canada. Metrohm, of Herisau, has received orders from Germany and the Netherlands for instruments measuring the concentration of boron in high pressure water reactors. Chemap, at Männedorf, has sold filtering plants to various European nuclear power stations. Landis & Gyr Co. Ltd., at Zug, has supplied a plant for super-

vising radiations at a German nuclear research centre. Emil Haefely, of Basle, has received orders for accelerators. In addition to their work of planning nuclear power stations at home, Swiss engineering consultants' firms are finding more and more scope on the international level for their ability and knowhow in the nuclear field. Electro-Watt Engineering Consultants of Zurich, for example, have been awarded consultancy contracts for the nuclear power stations at Biblis (Germany) and Loviisa (Finland), in the latter of which the Zurich firm of Brandenberger & Ruosch is also taking part. Motor-Columbus Engineering Consultants of Baden are working on plans for nuclear power stations in Turkey and Pakistan; they have also been commissioned by the biggest German electricity company to compute the heat load on the Rhine between the mouth of the Aar and the Dutch frontier.

### Vocational training: Concrete aid to development

The duty of industrialised countries to provide technical assistance for the developing countries has been recognised by private enterprise for a long time now. A large Swiss reinsurance company selected a particularly effective way of doing this in the services sector, by founding a training centre, in 1960, for insurance personnel from companies all over the world, in particular the developing countries. The "Swiss Insurance Training Centre" was opened in 1961. So far it has organised 13 courses on life assurance or property insurance, lasting from four to six months each. These courses have been attended by 250 participants from nearly 50 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and, to a lesser extent, Europe; practically all of these trainees are now working in insurance in their own countries.

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# ANGLO-SWISS SPORTS

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### MEETING WITH A SHARPSHOOTER

A reception given by the Cultural Attaché at the Embassy gave members of the Swiss Rifle Association the opportunity to meet Mr. H. R. Spillmann, champion sharpshooter and Olympic medallist, and his wife.

Mr. Carlo Jagmetti introduced his guest to the unusually small attendance. Mr. Spillmann, who won a silver medal at the Rome Olympic Games in 1960, was presently the National Coach of the Swiss marksmanship team and had in the last year led it to international contests at Phoenix (Arizona), Budapest and Innsbruck. He was furthermore President of the Commission of the Swiss Shooting Union and highly involved in the life of our national sport. That one can speak of a "national sport" is attested by the current membership of 500,000 of the Swiss Shooting Federation, which is officially considered as a "patriotic" organisation, as contrasted to a "sports" organisation.

Mr. Spillmann is the holder of a national record by scoring 37 "tens" and 3 "nines", or 397 points out of 400, at the ten-point "A" Target. His personal best at the standard "Combination", which includes shooting in the standing position, is 1,130 out of 1,200.

What does it take to achieve this kind of result? Mr. Spillmann was unequivocal as to the degree of commitment required in practice and physical training if one wished to reach the top. When he was still active in competi-

tion, he spent an average *thirty hours* a week in training, he said. There was no room left in life besides work and training, he added. Marriage and a family life were out of the question.

Mr. Spillmann, who is now married and has a family, still spends 80 days a year in preparing for the various competitions in which the Swiss National Team is involved. Shooting is as time-consuming as any other sport. The Swiss ski-team, he points out, spend up to 200 days a year in training at considerably higher expense. If shooting is going to be more than a militiamens' tradition and a popular sport, if it is going to be a serious and competitive discipline in which the Swiss can be the international leaders, then it must be given the adequate means.

Mr. Spillmann made this point clear in a short address to the gathering. First, there was a requirement for funds. At present, the National Team's expenses amounted to about 300,000 francs a year, a figure which would have to rise to about half a million francs in the near future. So far, there was no shortage of funds. Members of the Shooting Federation contributed a cent per round to the Team's budget and further support was forthcoming from the Swiss football pool, or "Sport Toto".

Among the requirement of Swiss marksmanship, a National Trainer came as a priority. Mr. Spillmann recalled that every widely-practised sport was supervised by highly qualified personnel. There were professional trainers in tennis, ski-ing, athletics and football. Why shouldn't this be the case of