

Economic and technical items

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ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL ITEMS

participation in civic life. The second resolution, which went yet further, asked that foreigners, who already enjoy the right of voting on communal issues, be given the right to vote on cantonal matters. Neuchatel is the only canton which allows its alien residents to vote on communal issues.

There was some excitement at Fribourg University, as Professor Pfuertner, the Dominican Priest who had been banned from teaching for a year because of his sexual views, planned to re-occupy his theological chair and open a course on sexual morals at the beginning of the new university year.

Roland Pièce, the engineer who created Radio Lausanne, the fourth oldest radio transmitter in Europe, died in Sottens, aged 75, where he had retired following the removal to that village of Lausanne-Geneva's joint radio transmitter.

The Initiative Committee which had organised the arms-ban initiative rejected by the Swiss people last September, was to hold a plenary assembly on 21st October to decide whether to continue the fight and launch a new initiative to counter the federal proposals which eventually won the assent of the voters.

The Swiss Engineering and Equipment Industry in 1971

For 1971 the value of the annual production of the Swiss engineering and equipment industry may be estimated at between 11,000 and 12,000 million francs (US \$2.9-3.15 billion). Exports of machinery and equipment—which account for about 75% of production—came to 8,500 million francs (US \$2.237 billion) while exports by the metallurgical industry reached 1,300 million francs (US \$340 million) thus, between them these two branches achieved exports totalling nearly 10,000 million francs (US \$2,632 billion).

In 1971 the share of machinery and equipment in total Swiss exports rose from 35.2 to 35.9%, the growth rate for exports of machinery reaching 8.9%. This latter figure, however, is of only limited significance since it includes the price rises which resulted from the general increase in price levels. When allowance is made for this increase, the growth rate drops to 2%. The results achieved are the fruit of the efforts of a very large

number of people, since nearly 400,000 persons earn their livelihood in the engineering and metallurgical industries, i.e. 45% of the economically active population of Switzerland engaged in industry. At the end of 1971 this branch had a reserve of 8.1 months' work, as compared with 9.6 months at the end of the preceding year. While a certain reduction in the volume of orders in reserve was anticipated, such a sharp fall due to changes in the overall economic situation was not, however, expected.

During the year the principal foreign market for the Swiss engineering and equipment industry was the Federal Republic of Germany, followed by France, the United States, Great Britain and Italy. At 80% and 20%, respectively, the shares of the development and the developing countries in the exports by this branch remained unchanged. The electrical engineering sector heads the exports list, with a total of 1,787 million francs (US \$470 million); textile machines account for 1,455 million francs (US \$383 million), followed by the machine tool sector with 965 million francs (US \$253 million).

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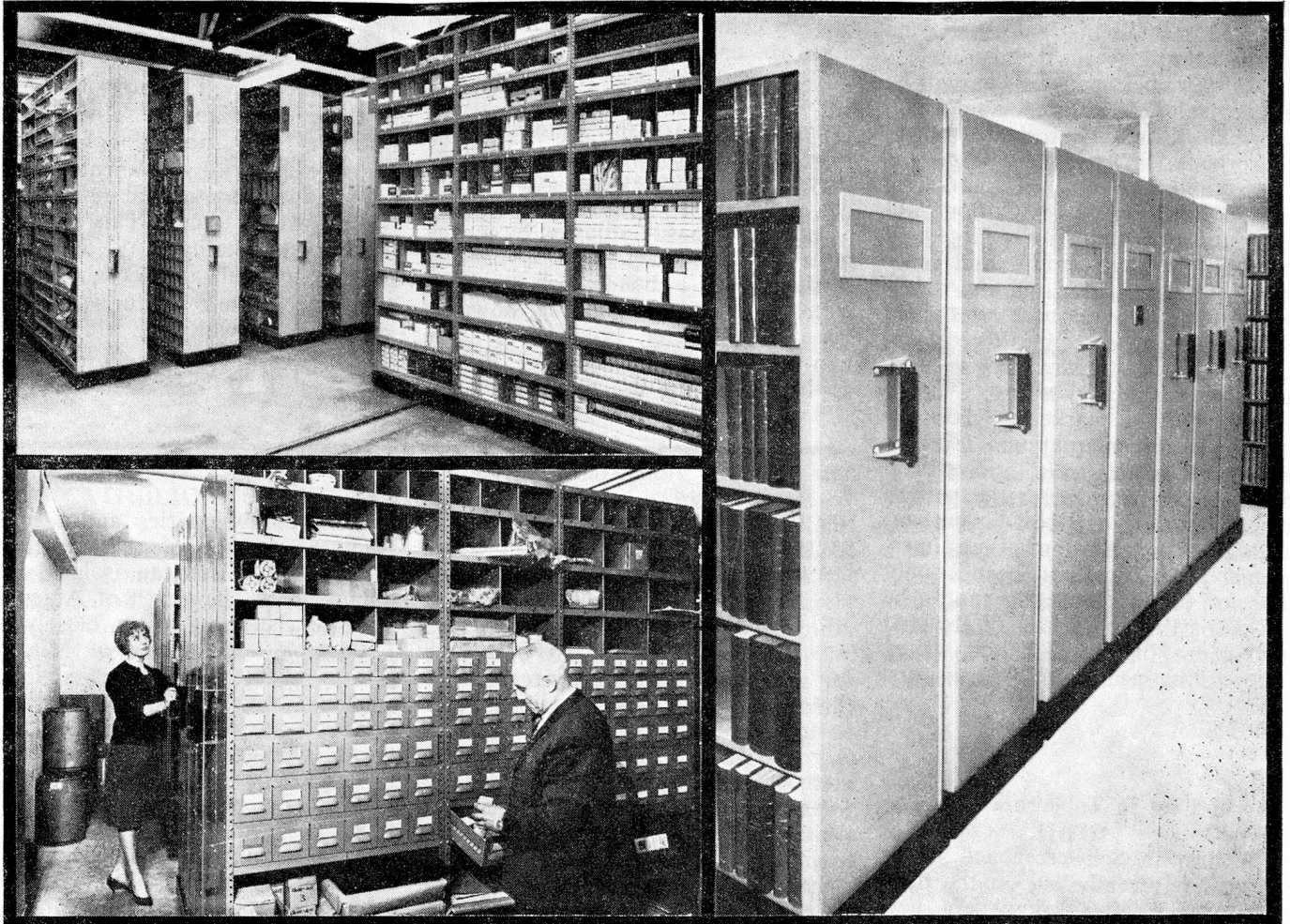
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The Swiss Love Chocolate

Since Swiss chocolate has long since won a world-wide reputation, it is not surprising that the Swiss themselves are so fond of chocolate that they are among the greatest consumers. In Switzerland last year consumption per head of population was 9.3 kgs, as compared with 7 kgs in Belgium and 6.2 kgs in Sweden, the countries immediately following the Confederation in an international comparison.

In 1971 the total sales of the Swiss chocolate industry rose quantitatively by 4.7% and came to over 63,000 tons, representing a value well in excess of 600 million francs (US \$157 million). Retail prices increased considerably and endeavours to offset this were made by seeking to rationalise production, with great efforts being made to overcome the manpower shortage. The industry continues to give proof of great adaptability and, despite severe competition, the manufacturing firms are maintaining a remarkably sound position.

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First International Exhibition of New Inventions and Technology

Geneva—a financial and commercial hub, a city open to the whole world will be host from 18th to 26th November next to the First International Exhibition of New Inventions and Technology. Geneva was chosen following a poll among about a thousand European inventors and industrialists which confirmed that the majority of companies and inventors interested in exploiting patents wanted the exhibition to be held there.

This exhibition in Geneva will be open to all companies, commercial undertakings, industries, design offices and private inventors holding new patents and desirous of marketing them. Likewise, the exhibition will afford an opportunity for college and University research groups and other groups engaged in research and development and for laboratories and patent dealers to enter into direct contact with financiers, large export companies or manufacturers who might be interested in marketing their inventions at the international level. A number of *grands prix* and special prizes will be awarded to the participants submitting the best inventions, on the recommendation of an international jury. There can be no doubt that no better location could be chosen for this exhibition of its kind than Geneva, the city of Calvin, visited each year by nearly 900,000 visitors.

A World First in Tableware

A firm in Schwerzenbach (Switzerland) has recently put on the market tableware of a completely new type, developed in collaboration with Ciba-Geigy. This ware, produced from a material akin to both porcelain and ornamin, has the appearance and weight of ceramic ware but is unbreakable and keeps its shape, while being at the same time heat-resistant and extremely easy to wash even in dishwashing machines.

This new product, named "Colombo", will be just as welcome in private households as in hotels, restaurants, tea rooms and communal centres. As long as 20 years ago unbreakable tableware made of melamin was introduced on the international market but failed to gain acceptance in the catering field because of the then insurmountable traditions and qualities of ceramic tableware. In contrast, this new "Colombo" tableware has already won approval on the German market, where it is used by over a million persons in factory and university canteens. The Swiss manufacturer proposes to make this process available to all interested firms by offering them licensing facilities.

New Folding Household Slicer

Light metal is particularly suited to the manufacture of household equipment and appliances, thanks to such remarkable qualities as its anti-corrosion properties, good mechanical resistance, light weight, ease of cleaning, etc.

A Swiss firm in Berne specialises in the manufacture of a slicing machine of modern design and which takes up extremely little space. In producing this machine two shaped extruded parts are used: the first provides the cutting platform and is hollow and grooved on the surface, thus giving better adhesion of the material being cut; the second piece serves both to support the blade and as cover when the appliance is folded. The thickness of cut can be easily adjusted by means of a worm screw, while a moving carriage with a handle, of synthetic material, ensures safe cutting down to the last millimeter. Four rubber suction pads guarantee stability of the appliance on any flat surface.

SECRETARIAT FOR THE SWISS ABROAD

The Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad has published its 1971 Report.

1971 was a particularly busy year for the small team who care for our interests at the Alpenstrasse, as well as for the Commission for the Swiss Abroad who met in March, August and November to debate on several important issues, the most actual being the ways and means of giving reality to Article 45bis on political rights in 5th Switzerland.

The study group set up to examine proposals by the Justice and Police Department on extending social assistance to the Swiss Abroad has completed its work and its report is currently under review by the Cantons and professional organisations. Another important novelty was to offer all young Swiss coming to the Motherland to perform national service a free return ticket.

The Secretariat remains in touch with Swiss abroad both collectively and individually. In the former case, this contact is established and maintained through Swiss societies, of which 554 are in the Secretariat's files. Mr. Marcel Ney, its Director, went on a journey to South Africa to meet some of the 7,000 Swiss who have settled over there, and who still emigrate every year (494 in 1970). He found a very active colony life. Well-off compatriots had thriving sports societies and enjoyed varied activities.

Mr. Ney then went to Rhodesia, where 520 Swiss are established, and finally to Madagascar, whose 350-strong Swiss colony is mainly repre-

International Success for a Fribourg Firm

A firm in Schmitten (Switzerland) has won several awards for the five inventions it presented at the 21st International Exhibition of Inventions and New Products held at Brussels in March. At this world presentation of inventions, 30 countries displayed over 1,000 new inventions and Switzerland was represented with some 130 products.

The inventions displayed at Brussels by the Fribourg firm are a machine for tamping down ski-lift tracks, a turbo snow plough, a trailer for spreading salt, a warning device for ice and snow and a trailer grader for use with a tractor. This list is evidence of the vitality of the Swiss company concerned and of the interest attaching to their products it has invented and to which we will return on a later occasion.

sent by missionaries and teachers. Another member of the Secretariat, Miss Vifian, visited an isolated community in the far north of Argentina. She was the guest of the closely knit 1,500-strong community of Misiones, a town inhabited by Swiss tea planters who had come to eke out a living in this lost area during the depression years. They remain closely attached to the Motherland and gladly receive their AHV benefits in hard Swiss francs.

The Secretariat also organised a series of conferences. We, in London, were to enjoy an exposé by Mr. Jean-Claude Nicole, Central President of the N.S.H. Other conferences were held under the auspices of the Secretariat and the N.S.H. at Naples, Monte Carlo, Mulhouse, Burlington (near Chicago), and Osterode (near Hanover).

As in former years, the Secretariat has sent out on request, a number of films on Swiss subjects. Only two films have actually been circulated through several countries owing to costs involved by this formula. The Secretariat will continue its efforts to obtain films from the Swiss television for distribution. These efforts have so far been thwarted by copyright considerations. The possibility of borrowing films from the National Swiss Film Centre has been abandoned because of the high leasing costs. The Secretariat has developed its readership and information services. Increased costs and postal rates have forced an increase of yearly subscription rates of "Echo". But the Secretariat has made every effort to present a rich and interesting magazine. It has

also reached about half the Swiss population abroad by the four-yearly handout of official information. This will also reach the Swiss of English-speaking countries.

Personal assistance and information continues to remain one of the most important concerns of the Secretariat, which has dealt with a great many individual cases. The year has seen important changes as regards Old Age Pension. It is now possible to subscribe to AHV after 41. Invalidity benefits have been equalised with those implemented at home.

The 49th Assembly of the Swiss Abroad took place in Brunnen and dealt with the particular situation of the Swiss abroad, submitted to the influence of the Motherland and their country of residence.

The Youth Service of the Secretariat, apart from its counselling and information through the "Weltwoche", organised four holiday camps in which 186 teenagers participated. The hundred young Swiss abroad who had come voluntarily from 24 countries to carry out their national service were not forgotten. They received a traditional parcel of goodies and some of them accepted an invitation to an outing to Mitholz. Eight recruits took part in the Assembly for the Swiss Abroad at Brunnen.

The Solidarity Fund for the Swiss Abroad had 516 new members subscribing a yearly 57,650 francs and laying down a sum of 413,550 francs. Nine Swiss nationals in Egypt, Bolivia, Algeria, Chile and Sudan had reason to be thankful for their mem-

bership to the Fund. They were entitled to draw assistance valued at 145,000 francs. Both columns of the income and expenditure account of the Secretariat stand at 739,988 francs. The main items of expenditure are "Echo", which costs 224,790 francs to run (but has an income of 201,735 francs), the Youth Service (128,000 francs), communications with colonies abroad and personal counselling (83,000 francs). Nearly 44,000 francs were spent on the Brunnen Assembly.

Revenue (besides that of "Echo") mainly comes from the Foundation for the Swiss Abroad (305,000 francs), and a Federal subsidy of 105,000 francs. Excess of expenditure was slightly short of 14,000 francs.

(PMB)

NEWS FROM THE COLONY

30 YEARS OF SWISS CATHOLIC MISSION

In a recent survey of Swiss Events in London 30 years ago, we omitted to mention the creation of the Swiss Catholic Mission, which was founded on the National Day of Prayer and Thanksgiving 1942. It was on this day that the foundation AGM was held. In the following, Father Bossard recalls an event which was not recorded in the "Swiss Observer" at the time:

When, in 1936, Rev. Attilio Lanfranchi was appointed Chaplain for foreigners at the Westminster Cathedral, it became more and more desirable and necessary for the Swiss Catholics to have a chaplain of their own to look after the many Swiss aged and infirm. A decisive move came from the Swiss Benevolent Society. Under Colonel Bon, who was then president, and Mr. J. J. Boos, a small committee was formed in April 1942 and supported by the Swiss Minister, Mr. W. Thurnheer, an appeal was made to Cardinal A. Hinsley of Westminster to release Rev. A. Lanfranchi from Cathedral duties in order to devote his time to the service of the Swiss Colony who had approximately 2,000 Catholics. The request was granted under the condition that the Swiss provide for his maintenance and that suitable accommodation could be found. It was stressed that the Committee together with their Chaplain would work in close collaboration with the Swiss Benevolent Society, the Eglise Suisse un die Deutsch-Schweizerkirche in the true Swiss Spirit of tolerance and co-operation for the spiritual and moral welfare of the Colony.

With great effort, untiring and often frustrating work, Rev. Lanfranchi, supported by the members of the committee, began to organise the Swiss Catholic Mission, undertook the spiritual and social work among the Swiss with great zeal, baptising the children, hearing confessions, celebrating weddings, attending to numerous sick calls and many funerals, especially during the war.

He made social contact with many young Swiss and established a Swiss Youth Club in Westminster, then known as "Alpenrosen-Club", and was even able to form and conduct a church choir. Besides that a suitable and permanent accommodation had to be found, which proved a very difficult task for the Committee. Different churches, presbyteries and private accommodation had to be tried out until, in October 1952, with the co-operation of the Swiss Minister, M. de Torrenté, St. Ann's Church in Abbey Orchard Street was made available. It became a centre of contact and pastoration for the Swiss in London until 1972.

After having prepared the foundations solid and strong Rev. A. Lanfranchi returned to Switzerland and was replaced in 1958 by Rev. J. Scherer who continued and consolidated the work, especially the care for the many young people who come to London in ever increasing numbers.

Unfortunately St. Ann's Church in Abbey Orchard Street was not in a position to celebrate the 20th anniversary as residence of the Swiss Catholic Mission. It was sold and closed down on 18th February, 1972 for demolition. It still stands untouched, but empty and sealed, perhaps for a few more years to come.

But the work of the Swiss Catholic Mission is carried on in 48 Great Peter Street and it is hoped that the new premises, as old as they are, will soon become a home and a centre of contact for the Swiss Youth in London in close collaboration with the Swiss Protestant Community and the local Community of the neighbourhood.

Paul Bossard

ALFRED SCHMID

In the issue of 25th August we reported the death on 10th August of Mr. Alfred Schmid, of "Westfield", School Lane, Hatfield, Herts. With him a well known personality has gone from the Swiss community in London, although bad health had for some time kept him from attending special events of the kind he used to delight in coming to.

Alfred Schmid was born on 2nd September, 1887 at the "Schwert", Oberstammheim, Zurich. By tradition he was destined to a career in catering, and he certainly made a success of it. He served his apprenticeship as cook at the Hotel St. Gotthard in Zurich, followed by a period as cook in Paris ("Chez Laurens") and at the Deauville Casino.

In 1914, he did his military service in the Swiss Cavalry, but he got leave of absence very soon and came to London at the end of that year. During the First World War, all public restaurants had to be closed by 8 p.m. and all dinners were held in private suites on the floors. Thus the duties of Floor Head Waiter were of great importance, and it was as such