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BERNE, September 19th, 1947.
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RECEIVED
 LEGATION OF SWITZERLAND
 OTTAWA

The Right Honourable James G. GARDINER,
 Minister of Agriculture,
 OTTAWA, Ontario,
 Canada.

SEP 25 1947

Concerns: Swiss cereal supplies.

Sir:

We beg to refer to the negotiations a Swiss delegation headed by Prof. Dr. F.T. Wahlen has had with the Canadian authorities during spring and summer of this year and would particularly draw your attention to an aide-mémoire dated April 12th, 1947, submitted by the Legation of Switzerland in Ottawa, and to a statement dated July 12th, 1947, in which the position of the Swiss government with regard to cereal imports from Canada was outlined. In the meantime, informal discussions took place between the Canadian and the Swiss delegations to the F.A.O.-Conference in Geneva. Dr. H. Barton, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, suggested on that occasion that a request for the shipment of 10'000 tons of Manitoba wheat fit for seeding purposes, which is, at the moment, the most pressing concern of the Swiss government, be jointly submitted to the Ministers of Agriculture and of Trade and Commerce. For this reason, this letter is also being addressed to the Honourable J.A. MacKinnon, Minister of Trade and Commerce, and copies are being sent to Mr. George McIvor, Chairman of the Canadian Wheat Board and of the Cereals Committee, Winnipeg, as well as to Dr. Barton.

Without entering more fully upon the subject matter, we may recall that in the statement of July 12th the following import quantities were requested:

- a) A minimum of 200'000 tons of wheat, 30'000 tons of which at least should be Amber Durum,
- b) a minimum of 50'000 tons of oats, 20'000 tons of which at least should be fit for human consumption,
- c) 30'000 tons of barley, 20'000 tons of which should be fit for human consumption,
- d) in addition to these quantities, the Swiss Federal Cereals Administration would like to receive up to 10'000 tons each of Manitoba wheat fit for seeding, and of seed oats (commercial grade) mainly of the Alaska and Cartier varieties.

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While the Swiss government still hopes that, in spite of the reduced Canadian crop, a high percentage of these quantities can be expected, it is particularly anxious to secure, as early as possible, the 10'000 tons of Manitoba wheat fit for seeding, and as much of seed oats.- Of the latter commodity, considerable quantities have been bought regularly during the last years, and negotiations again take place which, we trust, will bring about a good result. As regards the shipment of Manitoba wheat, conditions are somewhat different. In normal years, our agriculture has always been in a position practically to cover all our needs. In years of low yields and when the harvest weather was bad, the Swiss Federal Cereals Administration has always covered the deficit by selecting good samples of Manitoba milling wheat of high germination. While not giving the same high yield as Huron wheat, (the standard variety sown in Switzerland), Manitoba wheat has regularly given satisfaction.

As you are no doubt aware, the 1947 harvest has been very seriously impeded by a wet spring and persistent drought. Not only has the yield been very materially reduced, but where almost all the hay is fed before the beginning of winter, the collection of farm surpluses will of necessity be hampered. The situation has become so desperate, that the Swiss authorities are seriously contemplating the import of Canadian hay. In fact, a first shipment of 5'000 tons is bought already.

Under these circumstances, it will be extremely difficult to secure enough seed wheat for spring sowing, and the purchase of 10'000 tons of Manitoba wheat fit for seeding is almost urgent. As spring sowing begins at the end of February in the lower regions and should practically be terminated by the end of March, an early fall shipment is necessary. We should therefore be obliged if you will be good enough to attend to this matter as soon as ever possible.

The Swiss Federal Cereals Administration in Berne being entrusted with the handling of such business, we should be much obliged if you would address your reply as well as any further correspondence related to it to the Legation of Switzerland in Ottawa.

We shall be very grateful to you for anything you may be able to do in connection with our cereal supply and remain,
Sir,

Very truly yours,
Département fédéral
de l'économie publique
sig. Stampff

For their information copies are being sent to:

- 1) the Honourable J. A. MacKinnon, Minister of Trade and Commerce, Ottawa,
- 2) Mr. George McIvor, Chairman of the Canadian Wheat Board and of the Cereals Committee, Winnipeg,
- 3) Dr. H. Barton, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Ottawa,
- || 4) the Legation of Switzerland, Ottawa.

Further copies are being sent to:
(intern remark)

Mr. Prof. Dr. F. T. Wahlen, ETH, Zurich,

Handelsabteilung des Eidg. Volkswirtschafts-
Departementes, Berne,

Swiss Federal Cereals Administration, Berne.
