

'Publicity campaign for the economy of the Saarland' from the Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung (15 November 1957)

Caption: On 15 November 1957, the Saarland Economic Promotion Corporation publishes a promotional insert in the Bulletin of the Press and Information Office of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) presenting the Saar as an ideal location for industrial development.

Source: Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung. Hrsg. Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung. 15.11.1957, Nr. 213. Bonn: Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung. "Werbung für die Saarwirtschaft", p. 1962.

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Publicity campaign for the economy of the Saarland

From research carried out by the Saarland Economic Promotion Corporation

The information that follows has been provided by the Saarland Economic Promotion Corporation. Outsiders see the Saarland as a region of coal mines and iron works. It is true that coal and steel are the determining factors in its economic life, but the past few decades have seen the arrival of a variety of enterprises in the processing industry that have settled alongside the pitheads and the steelworks on the Saar. The development of this sector of industry, in particular, has been impaired by the continual changes in the political fate of the Saarland, and, today again, it is facing an uncertain future and a difficult period of readjustment to the market. In the last ten years, the separation of the Saarland from the German market and its economic ties with France were the determining factors for the structural development of processing industries in the Saarland, which now sells almost nine tenths of its production on the France-Saar market.

In two years' time at the latest, the Saarland will return to Germany, as will its economy. The prevailing costs and prices will be adjusted to take account of the situation in the remainder of the Federal Republic, and the customs barriers will be shifted from the eastern border of the Saarland to its western border. The Saarland processing industry will then lose part of its market for its products in France and will simultaneously have to share the home market with strong German competition. Some compensation for the losses that definitely have to be expected is possible only if companies succeed in restoring the connections and traditional business links with the German market. Given the strong pressure of competition on the German market, this will be no easy task and will be associated with very costly adjustments in production and considerable financial endeavours towards the formation of new sales and distribution organisations.

At present, the processing industry sells approximately 5 % of its products in the Federal Republic. If it is to survive its incorporation into the German economic area unscathed, once the customs borders have been defined, it must be able, just as it was before the war, to sell at least one third of its products in Germany (not including the Saarland market). It is quite certain that a transition of this kind cannot be managed without very sympathetic adjustment aid or without a joint effort on the part of all those involved.

It was in order to promote and to support the endeavours of the individual firms by means of a concerted campaign, a kind of goodwill advertisement for industry in the Saarland, that the Saarland Economic Promotion Corporation was founded, in cooperation with the leading industrial organisations and the Saarland Ministry of Economic Affairs. The Corporation will generally prepare the ground so that the efforts of the individual firms to establish new business links in the Federal Republic may flourish. Its task is, therefore, to inform and to advertise simultaneously, to inform German industry about what is manufactured and offered for sale on the Saar and, at the same time to advertise these products, i.e. to report on the performance and the quality of Saarland capital and consumer goods, which people have learned to appreciate quite extraordinarily in the last ten years in France and which are now more or less unknown on the German market.

It is often quite amazing how little information there is in the Federal Republic about the situation on the Saar and about the range of products manufactured by Saarland industries. The Saarland Economic Promotion Corporation therefore has a very important task in the fields of publicity and information. In order to fulfil this task, it is making use of all the usual ways and means of modern public relations, such as information services, advertisements, exhibitions, company events, etc. In addition to provision of information and publicity, the Saarland Economic Promotion Corporation also undertakes various technical tasks for maintaining contacts, i.e. it commissions specialised market analysis for individual branches of industry and groups, it supports the Saarland economy at exhibitions and trade fairs in the Federal Republic, and it is also concerned to use its contacts with the external officer of the chambers of commerce and industry of the Saarland and with organisations and associations within German industry, especially with buyers' organisations, so as to extend a helping hand to firms in opening up business links — although only to the extent to which this is possible and permissible within the terms of its remit.

In a quite separate action from the goodwill publicity for the Saarland economy on the German market, the

Saarland Economic Promotion Corporation has also been assigned a task that may well, initially, seem somewhat curious to the outsider: in the near future, the Corporation will launch an extended advertising campaign on the Saar for the sale of domestic products. This publicity campaign, however, does have a particular justification. The demand for German products today in the Saarland is quite artificially inflated. One contributory factor here was that German goods are in extraordinarily short supply. Similarly, because of the continuing overvaluation of the franc exchange rate, German products appear unusually cheap to consumers in the Saarland, who often travel into the Federal Republic. These two factors have already caused such an increase in the already very high regard for German products in the Saarland that the firms there fear the worst for their sales levels, once the customs barriers between the Saarland and the Federal Republic come down.

When the German border was opened up for the Saarland in 1935, one convoy of German goods after another rolled onto the banks of the Saar. It is hardly likely to be different this time. The task of persuading the people of the Saarland that nothing other than German goods are being manufactured in the Saarland — and, eventually, also at low German prices — is also one of the many aims that the Saarland Economic Promotion Corporation has set itself.