## Switzerland today [continued]

Autor(en): Merz, E.<br>Objekttyp: Article<br>Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand<br>Band (Jahr): 14 (1949)<br>Heft 9

PDF erstellt am: 24.05.2024
Persistenter Link: https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-942900

## Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Inhalten der Zeitschriften. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern.
Die auf der Plattform e-periodica veröffentlichten Dokumente stehen für nicht-kommerzielle Zwecke in Lehre und Forschung sowie für die private Nutzung frei zur Verfügung. Einzelne Dateien oder Ausdrucke aus diesem Angebot können zusammen mit diesen Nutzungsbedingungen und den korrekten Herkunftsbezeichnungen weitergegeben werden.
Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. Die systematische Speicherung von Teilen des elektronischen Angebots auf anderen Servern bedarf ebenfalls des schriftlichen Einverständnisses der Rechteinhaber.

## Haftungsausschluss

Alle Angaben erfolgen ohne Gewähr für Vollständigkeit oder Richtigkeit. Es wird keine Haftung übernommen für Schäden durch die Verwendung von Informationen aus diesem Online-Angebot oder durch das Fehlen von Informationen. Dies gilt auch für Inhalte Dritter, die über dieses Angebot zugänglich sind.

MONTHLY
PUBLICATION
OF THE

SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY IN
NEW ZEALAND（INC．）

GROUP NEW ZEALAND OF TEE NEW HELVETIC SOCIETX．

WBILINGTON，N．Z．
SAPTIMBER，1949．

Volume 9
14th year．


Our return from Zermatt took us via Simplon－Italy to Locarno．Before entering the Simplon，the world＇s loneest rail－tunnel，passport inspec－ tion was made by the Italian authorities at Brig．The unpleasant feature was that none of the customs officials knew Swiss，English or French to explain the procedure．We all were simply asked＂preca passport＂and had to hand over the precious document without receiving any explanation or re－ ceipt．The only consolation was to see hundreds of passports under the arms of tho officials，indicating that everybody was treated alike．As it happened the passes were returned at the first stop in Italy to those stay－ ing or visiting the country，whereas travellers proceeding to Locarno re－ ceived them back at the Swiss border．

What a contrast when we reached Domodossola！Jverything looked noglected， dirty and scores of men standing around doing nothing．We had to wait two hours for the customs to let us board the little decrepit train．However， the lone and slow journey through the Centovalli，with the doep gorges and the southern vegetation，was quite interesting．

At about 5 olclock we reached Locarno，very pleased to be in lovely Switzer－ land again．Sunny Locarno lies on the southern clope of the alps，nestled along the famous Lake Maggiore．This garden town is well protected from cold winds and completely free from mists snow or ice in winter are very rare，Spring，similar to nearby Lugano（where we spent a week already 4 months previously）bursts forth into a veritable riot of colour and bloom． Above the town，reached by cable－rail，is the famous Madonna del Sasso，where We saw the wonderful，oricinal，painting of＂Christ＇s Intombment＂by Ciseri． The panorama from the church－terrace is one of peace and still beauty．

A relative of mine had invited us to his summer residence in RONCO，midway between Locarno \＆Brisago，high up the hills，overlooking half the length of lake Maggiore．This was a charming spot and the garden presented a confusion of colour；it is really amazing the variety of flora grown on these sheltered slopes：magnolia，camilias，azaleas，passion fruit，camphor， cypresses，etc．，all compete to present a colourful picture．We spent some pleasant and happy days，doing a few hours gardening，walking over hills or through the fascinating little village of Ronco．

We come now to the last stage of our holiday．Long aco we had decided to explore the most southern part of Switzerland and açain we were lucky to secure a suitable abode．Our stay for the next 6 weeks was CARONA， situated above Iuģano，high up on the declining saddle behind the famous mountain San Salvatore．This little villase is in typical Italian style， very old and beautifully placed high above an arm of the lake of Iugano， Just where the Gotthard rail crosses the lake by the great causenwey of Melide．
of rough stone, always clustering round, or adjoining a beautiful church and of peaceful and contented appearance. An easy access by bus connects Carona with Iugano.

The sunny South of Switzerland in autumn is certainly the nearest realisation of a dreamland one can expect. The mild climate, the profusion of colours, the people so well contented and without claims to participate in modern pleasures, all inspire fresh spirit and a natural happiness. Iugano, in my estimation, is easily the most charmingly situated town in the whole wide world. Stretched on a long gulf at the foot of lovely heights, the city is enframed by the shape $\perp$ y Monte Bre and San Salvatore on each flank, and opposite rise the Caprinos and Monte Generoso. All this glorious surrounding is reflected in the deep-blue placid waters of the lake. Iugano's suburbs Castagnola and Paradiso, built on steep slopes north and south of the City, interspersed by many imposing hotels and private residences, enhance the impressive panorama. At night, if viewed from one of the peaks, you see the nearest picture to a fairy-dream: Luegno a great mass of countless lights, all around the coast and high up hills thousands more and sprinkled here and there over the dark lake you see the lights of slowly moving boats. It is just as spectacular as the great city and harbour of Hong Kong which we had the privilece of visiting during 1938.

Along the fine quay of Iugano, shaded by trimmed chestnut trees, one can stroll for hours, or else visit one of the many open-door cafe or restaurants, or the fine Casino and listen to a top-class orchestra. The weeks were fully occupied. with scores of interesting excursions to choose from, all in close proximity. First of course, a round-trip on the lake; then the many mountain tours; and finally the colourful villages with their quaint, homely inns and wine-grottos,

We went up the Monte Generoso, commanding a wonderful view of the long alpine chain from Mt. Blanc/Mte Rosa in the West, right through to the Bernina group in the far East. The lakes of Lugano, Como and Mageiore, are easily discernable and make a perfect picture. The journey, after crossing the lake hy boat, is by cog-wheel railway, pushed (not pulled) by a tiny, but very powerful, steam engine. A rather unique experience, as it is, excepting the Rothornbahn above Brienz, the only non-electric locomoiion still existing in Switzerland.

The Monte Bre and the $S_{a n}$ Salvatore afford quick access by finiculal. The rocky, solitary, salvatore is really the finest peak of this southern fairyland. The panorama is incomparable: the encircling arms of the blue lake in every direction; Iugano spread along the horsomshoe guif and the great alpine chain as an imposing backgrouna. I must have been a dozen times up this peak from our home in Carona; it took li $\frac{1}{2}$ hours and was my favourite walk before breakfast. I had many happy jaunts and rambles in forest and field, past some isolated lovely churches, such as for instance the Madonna d'Ongera with several beautifully preserved paintings, frescoes and statuaries inside the old dignified building. Then often I walked down to Iuegano to do some shopping, past the wild and rocky San Salvatore, through the old and poor hamlets of Carabbia, Pazzallo and Calprino. This road descend.s behind the mountain towards Iugano, with a fine view of the alps northwards, but upon passing Calprino, around a sharp bend, the road unexpectedly opens up the whole magnificent panorama of the city, the lake and the eastern mountains, at a point just above $\mathrm{P}_{\mathrm{a}}$ radiso. I can never forget this breath-taking view, and every time had to stop for 10 or 20 minutes, to fully absorb the beauty of it all. As much as Gandria (on the south-eastern flank of Iugano) is picturised, so just as much is this spot a really classic scene, embracing the whole of Iugano proper in close preximity and the long eastern arm of the lake down to Porlezza, deep into Italy.

Other beautiful walks and excursions we made to morcote, directly on the water's edge, and to its fine church, 355 steps up above the village. Or we went to PontemTresa, past the picturesque lake of Muzzano; or to the port of Ceresio, a.lready in Italian territory. One night some friends invited us to visit the famous gambling hall "Campione". This is across the lake from Iugano, in Italy proper. The establishment is run by Italians, but all transactions are in Swiss Francs; you hardly ever see a Lira change hands. It is a popular attraction for tourists and wealthy Swiss, and the half dozen Roulette-tables are always thick with eager gamblers from 9 p.in. until the early morning hours. There is ample space to dine and wine with a "floor-show"; with "tailed" waiters and all the usual glamour fortaining to such amusement dens. We watched the fickle roulette for several hours; some players placing 50-100 Frs, each bet. It takes less than a minute between the croupiers' call "fait vos jeu, rien ne va plus" and one can hardy calculate the vast turnover during r night at the six tables.

It is said that Italy profits by millions of Sw. Francs every season, through the income of the luxurious gambling hall in Campione.

All around Carona are countless clusters and small forests of Chestnut Trees, and during weekends we often went gathering these edible nuts. After the middle of October the large clumps of the thorny prickly shells comnence to burst open through the force of the growing fruit inside. After the split of the shell, it take only a few days for the chestnut to fall off the tree and we gathered them by the thousands and sent many parcels to relations. For me it was just as much joy, as it was to our little daughter, in collecting the bright reddish-brow, often dark-brown chestnuts, and needless to say, we baked them on the open fire, or boiled them for an hour and indulged in eating large quantities. And speaking of eating, we certainler enjoyed many times the famed Italian Spachetti with grated cheese and tomato-sauce, together with the inovitahle Chianti; or the "risotto" with delicious dark-red Valpolicella wine. These wines we never drank without suitable food and only modestly; neat they taste far too heavy and of course, are fairly intoxicating, if not accustomed to it.

During Octoher the people everywhere began harvesting the crop of dark, velvety grapes. We sampled the fresh sweet "Sauser" (unfemented grape juice) but generally found the lucal wine called "Nostrano" too sauer. The grape-leaves, the gardens, the forests, everything visible, now commenced to change to vivid shades of gold, orange, dark brow, a picture of colour I had forgotten for many years. With the rising, or the setting sun, the sight became a vision of flamboyant hue, belonging quite to a world apart. The softness of the green meadows, the radiant purity of the mountain-air, the profound peacefulness of the towering hills and the valleys below, all contributed to the intense delight and pleasure of our holiday.

> (To be concIuded.)


An examination of the figures for Swiss foreign trade during the first half of 1949, shows that the economic overexpansion which has been prevailing during the last few years, is giving way at the moment to a situation that is fast becoming more normal. However, trade relations with other countries are becoming more difficult, as the most recent economic negotiations have shown. Swiss foreign trade has been distinguished on the whole by a considerable drop in the import surplus reculting from a falling off in imports and an almost stable value for exports. The prosperity enjoyed by Swiss economy has diminished, particularly where production is concerned. It must be stressed however, that it is a question, in almost all fields, of a return to normal conditions of economic activity; there is no reason therefore to speak of a crisis.

It should be noted that imports, totalling 1,964 million francs for the six months under consideration, are almost a third less than those for the first half of 1948; on the other hand, they only show a very slight recession ( $3 \%$ ) compared with the corresponding volume in 1938. It is of interest to note that the prices of imported goods have undergone a slight drop - about 10\% - compared with those of the previous year. Foodstuffs have shewn the greatest drop. This phenomenon is partly explained by the fact that North America has to a great extent replaced Argentina in the supply of wheat; the prices of this cereal have consequently dropped almost by half since the first six months of 1948.

The figures for exports show that only the sales of manufactured products exceed. the 1938 half-yearly average, both in quantity and value. In almost all sectors, a slight falling off is noticeable compared with the figures for the second half of 1948. The most marked declines are in foodstuffs and raw materials and are due to a reduction in the consignments of heavy consumption coods. The total exports reached a ficure of 1,638 millions, a result which lies somewhere between the relatively low figure for the first half of 1948 and the somewhat higher figure for the second half of the same year.

All this has its repercussions on the trade balance which, it must he remembered, traditionally shows a deficit. The adverse balance amounts, at the moment, to

