

News from Switzerland

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand**

Band (Jahr): **20 (1957)**

Heft [3]

PDF erstellt am: **25.05.2024**

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.

ENQUIRY FROM INTENDING MIGRANT

A Swiss national, married, with two children, cabinet-maker, at present living in Tanganyika, British East Africa, would like to come to New Zealand. Anybody able to offer accommodation or employment, or better still, both, please communicate with the Consulate of Switzerland, G.P.O. Box 386, Wellington.

SWISS DEFENCE IN THE ATOMIC AGE

An N.S.H. Lecture

(From "The Swiss Observer.")

Recently Lieut.-Colonel W. Koch, Military Attache at the Swiss Legation, gave a fascinating discourse on the Swiss Army in the present age at a meeting of the Nouvelle Societe Helvetique at Park Lane House. The new weapons of incalculable power and effect in the hands of potential aggressors present the defenders of our country with infinitely more difficult tasks than heretofore. Not being in possession of such weapons, so far as can be foreseen, our Army must make do with the best of conventional weapons it can obtain, combined with a skilful exploitation of the natural aids for defence afforded by the mountainous configuration of Switzerland intersected by numerous lakes and rivers.

It does not seem unreasonable to assume for the purpose of planning our defence that the aggressor, whoever he may be, is unlikely to use the big destructive atom weapons meant for much bigger concentrations of industries and inhabitants than are met with in our country. Even so, it is difficult to visualise beforehand where and how the attack is likely to come and develop. Our defence will therefore have to adapt itself to the aggression when it comes. It requires above all a wide distribution of forces and arms to be brought up promptly at the point of attack. The light units, formerly covering the outer regions of Switzerland beyond the lines regarded as tenable, are today largely replaced by armoured units and light tanks. Even merely tactical atomic weapons could breach defensive lines over areas of 6-8 square kilometres. Only large and highly mobile reserves could seal and later fill the gap thus created. In order to minimize the danger of surprise attacks also the watch on the frontier must be reinforced and amply furnished with RADAR apparatus. This might at least assure sufficient time to mobilise the frontier forces, the armoured units and the civil defence.

Regarding the disposition of troops and arms a compromise solution might be decided on, covering the country with a web of small observation and action units, establishing barriers and blocking forces wherever possible routes of attack

converge, and holding highly mobile tactical reserves ready in basic areas for deployment in any direction required to counter the enemy moves. The Swiss Army is relatively well supplied with armour and 100 Centurion tanks. But at all times the people's will and courageous determination to resist attack by all means remains the most essential condition for an effective defence by our people's army. The world situation is perhaps more serious than ever. To stint on defence expenditure seems to be the most foolish economy imaginable. It should not have needed the agony of the Hungarian people to kill the Chevallier initiative, misguidedly seeking to deny our Army the indispensable tools to make our democracy's will to survive in freedom and peacefulness effective.

Lt.-Col. Koch's thoughtful lecture, of which these few lines can only give some inadequate indications, was received with warm applause of the large gathering of compatriots and evoked a lively discussion.

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

Switzerland and the OEEC

Switzerland has given proof of the interest she felt in the recent Session of Ministers of the O.E.E.C. by delegating to it two members of her Government, the Federal Councillors, Mr. Petitpierre and Mr. Holenstein. Mr. Petitpierre announced that the Swiss Government is taking a positive attitude in regard to the creation of a free trade area. The Swiss Government hopes that this free trade area may come into force at the same time as the Common Market adopted by the "Six," so as to avoid the existence of any intermediary period which might be prejudicial to the trade relations between all the member-countries of the O.E.E.C. Switzerland is ready to make the sacrifices implied by the creation of a European free trade area, but she also hopes that the Agreement comprises clearly defined principles and norms that are sufficiently rigorous to ensure a smooth development of the system. Mr. Holenstein, for his part, explained what were the particular problems arising out of this project, for Switzerland. This is why Switzerland favours, in principle, a special statute in respect of agriculture, within the framework of the future European free trade area.

Coming Swiss Exhibition Devoted to Women's Work

In 1928, various Swiss women's organisations arranged a big exhibition, devoted entirely to women's work. Under the same title of "SAFFA," the organisers are now preparing a fresh edi-

tion of this Swiss exhibition, dealing solely with the life and activities of women, which is to open its doors to the public on the 31st of July, 1958, and which will be situated on the left bank of the Lake of Zurich. During more than six weeks, it will give both Swiss and foreign visitors an opportunity of realising more fully the life and personality of the Swiss woman, her activities and the part played by her in the home, in her job or profession, and in public life. This big manifestation will not be merely a fair or exhibition, like others, but will bear a very personal imprint, because it is being planned by women and will be carried out entirely by them.

Swissair Opens a New Line Between Switzerland and Japan

On the 1st of April, 1957, an aircraft belonging to the Swissair left Switzerland for the first time on its way to Tokio. This flight preceded the inauguration of a new line, on the 23rd of April, to be operated between Switzerland and Japan, by the Swiss national air navigation company.

Interesting Swiss Creation of World Interest

A firm specialising in the manufacture of electric apparatus for precision measuring has just launched a new instrument on the market, which will no doubt arouse great interest in the chemical industry and among the atomic physicists throughout the world. This is a spectograph for nuclear induction, which will unquestionably render great services in regard to the microscopic analysis of elements, in atomic research work, and also in regard to the control of certain substances.

Development of Telephone in Switzerland

Calculations have made it possible to establish the fact that, on an average, every Swiss telephones seventeen times per year to a foreign country, which certainly constitutes a world record; the Belgian, for instance, telephones outside the borders of his country ten times a year; the Dutchman nine times, and the Frenchman seven times. At the present time, only six of the nine hundred or so central stations on the Swiss telephone network do not, as yet, function automatically. Today, automatic functioning extends also to international communications. In certain Swiss border regions it is already possible to dial a number directly beyond the frontier. Telephone subscribers in Switzerland are now able to call Paris, London, Amsterdam, Stockholm and other important European cities, by means of semi-automatic system.

Important Order to Swiss Industry

The Austrian broadcasting station has decided to rebuild the No. 1 transmitting set in Vienna,

which was destroyed in 1945. The most important European firms specialising in this particular branch, have sent in offers in order to obtain the command for the construction of the technical plant. This important order has been entrusted to a big Swiss firm, which is to build four different transmitting sets, which will broadcast two programmes on medium waves, with a capacity of 240 kw.

Switzerland Builds Largest Alternators

A hydro-electrical station is now being built in Switzerland, which will partially supply power to the network of the Swiss Federal Railways. This station is to be equipped with alternators which will be the most powerful ones in the world of such type. Built in Switzerland, each one of them will weigh more than 400 tons and the rotor will have an external diameter of approximately three metres.

The International Motor Show of Geneva

The 27th "Salon de l'Automobile" (Geneva Motor Show) opened its door, in Geneva, from the 14th to the 24th of March. There were 815 exhibitors, who came from sixteen different countries. The superficial area occupied by the stands amounted to 25,000 square metres. The 1957 salon had two new buildings at its disposal, of which one was to be reserved for heavy-weight vehicles, whilst the other housed a most up-to-date restaurant.

Europe's Biggest Goods Van Built by Swiss Federal Railways

Berne, Switzerland: The rapidly progressing development of Switzerland's electrical equipment industry and the increasing demand for transportation facilities for Swiss Army tanks have resulted in a shortage of special goods vans of high tonnage. The Swiss Federal Railways therefore are envisaging the purchase of a great number of vans of a completely new design. A van of this type, for instance, is to carry huge Swiss-made turbostators weighing 270 tons. In co-operation with several private firms the SFR, early in 1956, proceeded with the construction of an 18-axle wagon, and within less than 12 months Europe's most modern and best-equipped heavy-goods van was completed. Immediately after rolling off the assembly line in February it was sent on a six-day journey to Germany's Ruhr, carrying a heavy Swiss-made stator for a new electric plant there. This van consists of six three-axle wheelbases; it is a two-unit wagon with several coupling bridges, featuring nine axles per unit. It weighs 98 tons and has a carrying capacity of 270 tons. It is more than 100 ft. long.

A City for Children—Traffic School and Playground

Zurich, Switzerland: A interesting project designed to teach school children "safety first" in true-life surroundings is to be built here. It is a city for children, complete with such replicas of every-day gadgets as traffic-jammed streets and squares, office buildings, a railway station with "dangerous" street intersections, sidewalks, pedestrians' crossings, petrol stations, trolley lines, and all sorts of signs and traffic lights. One of the most fascinating places in this town is a miniature motor-car factory to be operated on the "do-it-yourself" basis. The children will drive their own brand of cars also out of town in order to get acquainted with cross-country traffic rules. After each lesson, however, rules and regulations will be done away with, and the entire city will be turned over to its citizens for play.

Swiss Invented a Sensational Luminous Wrist Watch

Basel, Switzerland: A leading Swiss watch factory has invented a new-fangled luminous wrist watch. It is independent of the old-fashioned pattern of radium-illuminated figures, and, instead, is equipped with a miniature battery and a tiny electric bulb. The new invention not only enables its wearer to tell the time in pitch darkness but can also be used as a flash-light, its beam being powerful enough to light up door-plates, telephone directories and note-books for jotting down notes. Moreover, it has a built-in Morse transmitter for short-distance communications. Its battery lasts several years and can be recharged in a trice. On top of these revolutionary new features the watch is also waterproof, shock-proof and anti-magnetic and is said to "cost not more than any other good Swiss wrist watch."

Lake St. Moritz—one of Several New Swissair Stops

Zurich, Switzerland: Swissair, the Airline of Switzerland, during the past winter months has tentatively inaugurated several new air links between international airports and well-known Swiss resorts. From Zurich Inter-continental Airport a Swissair "Twin Pioneer" flew a new branch-route to Davos and St. Moritz where the planes landed on the natural ice field of Lake St. Moritz. This service, which was flown from January to March, became very popular with winter visitors. The same plane was kept busy in spring for the duration of the Geneva International Automobile Salon, flying daily services to Geneva from, and back to, Basel, Sion-Zermatt and La Chaux-de-Fonds. A major purpose of these flights was to try the "Twin Pioneer" out for its technical fitness for landings on small

airfields. The results are said to have been highly satisfactory, and Swissair is planning to set up a permanent net of local air stops for the convenience of tourists.

Zurich by Night—Yodelling, Dancing under the Stars, and Lake Cruising

Zurich, Switzerland: Despite the fact that only about one out of a thousand Swiss can yodel, participants in the nightly conducted tours of Switzerland metropolis, labelled "Zurich by Night," are likely to believe that 999 actually can and one lone Swiss can't. This impression is due to one of the night spots on the touring programme where the entire cast of the show bursts into yodelling and alphorn-blowing as soon as the conducted tourists appear (and switches to Dixieland jazz when they're out of sight). Other highlights of the tour include auditions of Swiss folk music, a motor-boat cruise on Lake Zurich, a visit to a hill-top restaurant famous for its panoramic view of the light-flooded city and a midnight call at an elegant night club of the non-yodelling variety. Everywhere free drinks and snacks are provided, and participants are taken back to their hotels after the tour.

News in a Few Lines

A caterpillar snow-jeep is at present being tested at Jungfrauoch, Switzerland's loftiest eternal snow wilderness reached by rail. The caterpillar device has been developed by a Bernese firm and can be mounted on an ordinary jeep in less than 30 minutes. The vehicle is particularly fit for operations in deep snow as well as in marshlands and for tackling steep gradients and ditches. Civil and military circles are keenly interested in the outcome of the tests.

Several weeks ago Switzerland established its first Embassy in Paris; a few more Swiss legations have since been raised to the Embassy status, namely in New Delhi, Rome, Ottawa, London, Washington, Teheran, Lima, Madrid, Stockholm and Moscow. While several foreign Governments had promoted their representatives in Berne to the rank of Ambassadors, some time ago already, Switzerland has only now begun to do the same in foreign capitals. Some more Swiss legations are likely to become embassies in the near future.

Inauguration of a Unique Museum in Switzerland

Wohlenschwil, Switzerland: An exceptional museum was opened on April 6th at the Wohlenschwil village church dating back to the Peasants' Wars (1653). It is called the "Swiss Peasants' Museum," and is intended to be the abode of an exhibition of models, plans and pictures of all types of farmhouses existing in Switzer-

land and of particular interest to historians, architects and students of rural life. Furthermore, there are collections of items of peasant culture, such as old ceramics, costumes, arms and banners of the Peasants' Wars, as well as products of the local strawbraiding industry and other handicrafts. Wooden statues and religious paintings are on exhibit in the choir of the church.

Working Hours to be Reduced in Swiss Industry

The organisations belonging to the Swiss Metallurgical and Machine Industry have just concluded a convention, providing for a reduction, by stages, of the weekly working hours, starting next May. Both employers and workers were of the opinion that working hours should be reduced in the Swiss industry, but that this could not be achieved advantageously, were it done all at once. The sudden introduction of a working time that had been considerably reduced might very easily lead to economic perturbations and to a perceptible rise in the cost of living. By the terms of this convention, working hours will amount, as from the 1st of May, 1957, to 47 instead of 48 hours per week, whilst, as from May, 1958, they will be reduced to 46 hours per week. At the same time, provisions have been made in respect of wage compensation, in proportion to the reduction in working time. In view, however, of the large number of orders on hand, the workers will work overtime whenever this is essential, for which they will receive appropriate extra pay. In point of fact, the length of working time will not be shorter, for the present, and, in practice, the workers have obtained an increase in their wage rate.

The Highest Dam in the World Raises

The Grande-Dixence Ltd., which is now engaged in building a dam that will be the highest in the world, has just launched a new loan of 40,000,000 francs, at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., for a term of sixteen years. On this occasion, the company furnished details regarding the present state of construction work on the most important hydro-electric plant in Switzerland. The concrete work is progressing at a far more rapid rate than had been estimated, and, in October, 1956, already more than two million cubic metres had been put into place, i.e., 34 per cent. of the total volume of the work. Thus the partial letting in of water, and the operation of the electric plant, can be started during the course of this year. It may be of interest to recall the fact that the total output of this gigantic dam will amount to one thousand six hundred million kilowatts, that is to say, that this plant will produce, by itself, one-tenth of the electricity consumed at present in the whole of Switzerland.

Swiss Emigration Abroad

The economic prosperity which prevails in Switzerland has still further reduced the attraction exercised by foreign countries, more especially overseas countries. Thus, in 1956, only two thousand persons of Swiss nationality left their homeland in order to establish themselves definitely on another continent.

Switzerland's Fiscal Receipts in 1956

In 1956 the fiscal receipts of the Swiss Confederation attained two thousand two hundred million francs. This result, which is more favourable by one hundred millions than the figure provided in the budget estimate, has been achieved in spite of the reduction in taxation. It bears witness to a very satisfactory economic situation, as the State Account for 1956 shows a favourable balance amounting to more than 400,000,000 francs.

The Swiss Does Not Eat Much Bread

The consumption of bread in Switzerland has varied considerably during the course of the last twenty years. Today, it is lower than it was during the last world conflict. According to an international comparative enquiry, it would appear that Switzerland is one of the countries in which the smallest quantity of bread is consumed. At the present time, the annual consumption of bread amounts to 61 kilos per inhabitant, whereas in the United States, where not much bread is eaten, the figure for its consumption nevertheless attains 75 kilos. In Yugoslavia five times more bread is eaten than in Switzerland.

The St. Gotthard Jubilee

This year, during the course of the month of June, Switzerland will celebrate the 75th anniversary of the opening up of the St. Gotthard Tunnel, which connects the North of the country with the Tessin and with Italy. Thus, it was three-quarters of a century ago that the St. Gotthard was put into service. This railway tunnel is still the longest in the world, after the Simplon Tunnel.

Swiss Industry Receives Flattering Order

One of the most important of the British steel works has just placed an order with the Swiss industry for a group of blowers for a new blast furnace. This group is composed of an axial compressor which is run directly by means of a condensating turbine, possessing a capacity of 12,000 kw. The two machines, which will figure among the most powerful ones in the world, will be delivered by two Swiss firms who specialise in such apparatus. They will form the equipment of a blast furnace of which the

internal diameter will surpass nine metres, and will possess a capacity of production attaining more than 10,000 tons of iron per week. This flattering order was given to the Swiss industry on the strength of the satisfactory results obtained from a similar equipment delivered in 1955.

The Demographic Evolution of Switzerland

During the course of one century, the Swiss population has doubled, rising from 2.4 millions to more than 5 millions, towards the middle of 1956. During the space of twenty years only, i.e., from 1930 to 1950, it has gone up by one million inhabitants. There has been an increase in the population of all the Cantons, but this is not the case in regard to the Communes, two-fifths of them registering a decline in the number of inhabitants. In one Commune, in the Tessin, this decline amounts to as much as 75 per cent. Thus, in Switzerland, as in other countries possessing an industrial character, the flight from the land is growing more and more accentuated. Whereas a hundred years ago only 6 per cent. of the population resided in eight towns, today we find that more than 40 per cent. of the population is established in the forty-two towns of Switzerland, which have more than ten thousand inhabitants. The penury of labour, which makes itself felt so acutely in industry, exists, therefore, in the countryside also, so that every year several tens of thousands of foreign workers have to be engaged in order to give a helping hand to the Swiss farmers.

capital goods industries continued at the same high level and the only reason they showed no appreciable advance is that they were already working to maximum capacity at the beginning of the year. In the consumer goods industries, especially textiles, various branches were able to make up their slight leeway and it was the shortage of manpower alone that prevented them from working to maximum capacity too.

This favourable economic situation is particularly apparent from the figures for Switzerland's foreign trade, which broke all records in 1956. The rise in incomes, the considerable volume of investments and the constitution of stocks noted towards the end of the year were all factors contributing largely to the increase in purchases of goods abroad. In fact, imports totalled 7,597,000,000 francs, representing an increase of 18.7 per cent. over the figure for 1955. Although the increase in exports was less marked, the total of 6,203,000,000 francs also constituted a record. The increase in the value of imports being greater than that in exports, the deficit in the balance of trade became even greater. In fact, the adverse balance increased by 80 per cent., amounting to 1,394,000,000 francs, a figure that has only been exceeded twice before, in 1947 and 1948, when big purchases were made for the purpose of replenishing stocks. The percentage of imports covered by exports fell from 87.8 per cent. in 1955 to 81.7 per cent. However, this figure is not below normal; it corresponds approximately to the post-war average and exceeds by 13 per cent. the average figure for the five-year period immediately preceding the war.

(To be continued.)

SWITZERLAND'S ECONOMIC SITUATION AT THE BEGINNING OF 1957

The economic prosperity that Switzerland has been enjoying for several years now became even more marked in 1956. Last year will go down in the economic annals of the country as one of the best Switzerland has ever known. The index of industrial activity is particularly eloquent in this respect, since it stood at 137 at the end of the third quarter of 1956, as opposed to 100 in 1949. Production, revenue and consumption broke all previous records. The labour market had to make increased demands on foreign labour, and throughout the year the number of situations vacant exceeded the applications. Contrary to what has been happening in other countries, there have been practically no signs of any slackening in the upward trend in Switzerland, except in the building trade.

In 1956 the majority of Swiss firms reached the limit of their possibilities of output. The

CORRESPONDENCE: Please address to the Acting Secretary,

Miss D. Peyer,

48 Moa Road, Pt. Chevalier, Auckland.

METZLER'S CONTINENTAL SAUSAGE CO. LTD.

Box 8124, Auckland

Phone 44-835

Telegrams: "Newme"

OUR SAUSAGES ARE BETTER THAN AT HOME

Schublings, Salamis, Cervelats, Streich-Leberwurst, Landjaeger, Jagdwurst.

50 verschiedene Sorten, eine besser als die andere.

— Ask Us For Your Nearest Retailer —

Printed by McKenzie, Thornton, Cooper, Ltd., 126 Cuba St., Wellington, for the Swiss Society in New Zealand (Inc.), 24 Edmund Street, St. Heliers, Auckland.