

Our late Consul, Mr. A. C. Blau [...]

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1491 Tug-boats, 112 passenger steamers and dredges, 1624 motor-freighters, and some 500 odd motor-boats, etc. The Swiss' portion of this fleet is approximately 200 lighters, boats, tugs, etc. This will give you an idea of the fast increasing traffic on the Rhine.

Notwithstanding the serious position regarding the unemployed in Switzerland, we still compare favourably with other countries. The number of unemployed people at home amounts to 79,000 or approximately 1.9% of the population. Other countries have about the following proportion: Austria 4.7%; England 2.7%; U.S.A. 8.8%; Czecho Slovakia 3.7%; and France 1.9%.

Emigrations from Switzerland to foreign countries show the following figures:- During the first 6 months of 1936, a total of 886 went overseas, against 549 the previous period. This figure is the highest since 1930, when 1838 emigrated. It will be a long time before levels of earlier years are reached, such as 1913 with 6191, or 1927 with 5272.

Electrified Railways: Switzerland has now 98% of all railroads electrified, a fine achievement indeed. Electric traction has many advantages, one of the most apparent being the absence of smoke, soot and dust. The normal power supply enables trains to take the various gradients in our mountainous country at much higher speed, and stops and departures are effected in an easy and smooth manner. The electrification naturally involved a tremendous outlay for the construction of power plants and equipment. Huge power-stations have been erected in Ritom, Amsteg, Barberine and Vernayaz. The turbine machinery at Ritom produces 60,000 H.P., the Amsteg station 75,000. The Barberine development above Martigny in the Vallais produces 65,000 H.P., and the Vernayaz station nearby, has an output of 77,000 H.P.

The electric locomotives have been constructed in about ten different types, of which the 3 more important are the heavy express passenger locomotive, the lighter type for the lower regions, and the heavy freight locomotive for the St. Gotthard line. The latter is a real mammoth type and is the strongest locomotive in the world. They cost 1 Mill. Frs., develop 8,500 H.P., and are able to carry trains of 1,500 tons. Each of these locomotives is 111.5 feet long, and is built in two symmetrical sections, with a "joint" in the middle. There it can be separated and each section is able to run by itself.

Our late Consul, Mr. A. C. Blau, extends to all his friends and fellow-countrymen in New Zealand, greetings and best wishes for the coming New Year. He assures us that the time he spent in New Zealand was very happy indeed and still very much regrets that he was called away. Mr. Blau has been transferred from the Consular Service to the Political Department. His future movements are as yet uncertain.

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Address correspondence to :-

W. Ungemuth, Secretary,
Clarence St., Northcote,
AUCKLAND.