

# News from Switzerland : Switzerland is not an expensive country

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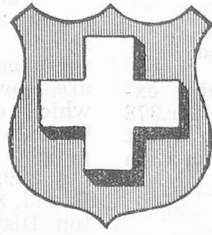
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AUCKLAND.

## NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

### SWITZERLAND IS NOT AN EXPENSIVE COUNTRY

This autumn, Switzerland is going through a period of intense economic activity. Its industries are working to full capacity, its exports up to the present moment have already exceeded in both value and volume the totals recorded during the whole of last year. The retail trade too is obtaining satisfactory results, and finally the tourist trade, in spite of a rather wet summer, has recorded a great number of visitors. In spite of certain difficulties, supplies of raw materials seem to have been secured in most sections of industry. On the other hand, the engagement of a strong contingent of more than 100,000 foreign workers has made it possible to avert a man-power shortage that an almost non-existent unemployment was beginning to make seem alarming.

However, it must not be thought that this favourable situation is due merely to a happy conjunction of circumstances, for the whole of Switzerland has worked hard to achieve this result. The country had been under the threat of inflation. At the first warning signs, however, it succeeded in warding off the danger. The Government and the big industrialists took the road that seemed the less easy of the two—that of individual controls based on a self-imposed discipline. It seemed to those responsible for Swiss economy that to submit to a system of Government-imposed price controls would be dangerous and that it was far better to allow the laws of supply and demand free play.

Today, it is possible to see the fortunate effects of this policy. Admittedly, the cost of living has increased in Switzerland since the summer of 1950 when war broke out in Korea. It is true, too, that certain salary readjustments have had to be made in many professions and trades. The cost of living index rose from 157.5 in April, 1950, to 160 in September, 1950, then to 168.3 in August last, and it can already be predicted that by the end of the year it will have passed the index of 170.

However, this trend, due to external factors over which Switzerland has no control, is less marked than in other countries. Inflation, having shown its premonitory signs as strongly and clearly here as elsewhere, has been kept in check more effectively. Indeed, although the cost of living in Switzerland rose by 6 per cent. from July, 1950, to July, 1951, this country nevertheless remains the one where this increase has been the smallest, since in certain other countries it has amounted to as much as 20 per cent.

Another factor equally interesting to note is the trend in wholesale prices. According to the 21st report of the International Settlements Bank, wholesale prices

increased in Switzerland by 15.7 per cent. during the period from March, 1946, to March, 1951. In other countries, however, whose possibilities of obtaining supplies are much greater than those of Switzerland, the rise varies between as much as 40 and 75 per cent.

Switzerland is not, therefore, an "expensive country." The obvious conclusion to be drawn from this observation dictated by the facts, is that foreign tourists have a definite advantage in coming to stay in Switzerland, in making their purchases here, and in sending their children here to continue their education. Particularly when it is considered that the Swiss are fully conscious of the importance of the present situation and of the necessity of doing everything in their power to justify it.

Another conclusion that can be drawn is that the prices of Swiss industrial products of all kinds are becoming more and more reasonable, if not more advantageous, as compared with the prices that have to be paid in other countries. At times, potential clients of Swiss industry and craftsmanship, attracted by the famed quality of the products submitted to them and tempted by the latest improvements offered to them, felt themselves put off by the price. This barrier is being swept away, and everything leads us to believe that it has disappeared for a long time to come. For equal quality, Swiss products can no longer be considered as "expensive products."

### The Situation of the Swiss Labour Market in September.

The development of the Swiss labour market shows again that there is full employment. Although many more foreign workers came to Switzerland during the last year, there is a definite shortage of labour in most professions. Very little labour is offered and there are 1413 less people unemployed this year than in September, 1950. This increased employment has affected commercial employees, workers in the metal and watch industries and the building trade, as well as unskilled labourers and hotel employees.

### German-Swiss Friendship in Memory of Gottfried Keller.

In honour of the great Swiss writer, Gottfried Keller, one of the most modern schools in Hanover has been named "Gottfried-Keller-Schule." On October 17th, the Swiss Consul, Mr. Kaufmann, in the presence of the Mayor, Mr. Wiechert and the Head Mistress, as well as the teaching faculty and many children, handed over a portrait of Gottfried Keller, together with a complete edition of his works. These gifts have been presented by the Pro Helvetia Foundation. The German authorities accepted them with hearty thanks as a sign of the revival

of the Swiss German cultural relations and the celebration ended with the well-known song "Vo Luzern uf Waggis zue," sung by the children.

#### The Consumption of Tobacco in Switzerland.

According to the paper "Le Tabac" the total expenses of the Swiss people for tobacco amount to Sfr.378 millions per year. Of this sum 263 millions are spent on cigarettes, 88 millions on cigars and 27 millions on pipe tobacco.

Since October 28th, Switzerland has had a new National Council of 196 members, composed as follows:—

- 27 Lawyers
- 26 Farmers
- 22 Representatives of workers' organisations
- 7 Representatives of industrial associations
- 14 Journalists
- 25 Members of Cantonal Governments
- 15 Members of communal authorities
- 12 Bankers
- 8 Engineers and architects
- 6 Business men
- 5 Manufacturers
- 5 Doctors
- 10 Professors and Judges
- 14 Miscellaneous

The political parties are represented as follows:—

51 Radicals, 49 Socialists, 48 Catholic Conservatives, 23 Agrarians, 10 Independents, 5 Liberals, 5 Labour, 4 Democratic, 1 miscellaneous.

#### The King of Siam Leaves Switzerland.

His Majesty King Pumipol, who has been living in the Canton of Vaud, near Lausanne, for 10 years, has left Switzerland with Queen Sikirit and his daughter Ubol, who was born in Lausanne. The President of the Canton of Vaud presented him with a golden chronometer.

The Royal couple, after having received the Siamese Colony, and the Student Society "Trailandia," stepped into their private carriages on the Simplon-Orient Express, accompanied by their entourage of thirty persons.

During their sojourn on the shores of Lake Geneva the King and his family have on several occasions donated various sums to charity and have also presented books of a high value to the University of Lausanne.

The Swiss Merchant Navy has acquired a new ship, built in 1948, of 7850 tons, which has been christened "Calanda." Her maiden voyage will be to Brazil.

In the Canton of Neuchatel, the Civil Registrar will have microfilms made of all the registers so that in case of necessity they can be put in a safe place.

The American Public Health Association has conferred the Diploma "Lasker" on the Swiss Professor Karl Frie-Ses of Basle, for his important research work in the bacteriological field.

The Administrative Commission of the Marcel Benoist Foundation which sat under the Presidency of Federal Councillor Etter, has awarded the 1950 prize to Emile Guyenot, Professor at Geneva, for his remarkable works on psychology, genetics and regeneration, and especially for his valuable book "La variation." The monetary value of this prize amounted to S. fr. 20,000.

## NEWS OF THE COLONY

Numbers of our readers are asking themselves how many Swiss people there are in New Zealand. We should imagine that in the Taranaki District there must be well above 1,000 people of Swiss descent who are now New Zealanders. According to the statistics which closed on November 20th, 1951, at the Swiss Consulate, the total number of Swiss registered is 557 persons of whom 245 are men, 128 women and 184 children; 392 are living in the central part of the North Island, 85 in the Auckland district and 51 in the Wellington District. There are only 29 residing in the South Island. In the course of 1951, 53 men arrived, most of them in their youth, 20 women and 8 children. In 1951, 2 passed away, 17 left the country, and 6 men, 6 women and 21 children were naturalized.

As most of our compatriots are scattered throughout the country it is impossible to have a Club like the Swiss living, for instance, in Istanbul or in Cairo, where they meet, dine, play cards or billiards, etc. The only link between the Confederates in New Zealand is the "Helvetia," therefore everyone should subscribe to it.

## SWITZERLAND AS SEEN BY THE FOREIGN PRESS

The American newspaper "Providence Journal" published an article under the title "Switzerland Knows What Democracy is and Has Learned How to Make it Work."

The article, which speaks about Switzerland's military preparations, begins as follows:—

"In the midst of loud and sharp debates concerning the question of what is the best way to make democracy work, whether this is really possible and what it exactly means, it seems appropriate to observe a little country where nobody has any doubts about what democracy is, where it functions and where every man, woman and child gets educated in a way to be able to protect democracy, should it be in danger at any time.

This country is, as you probably guessed, Switzerland. Just now Switzerland arouses additional interest, because she forms a perfect model in regard to politics and economics as well as being a military power in the midst of the confused European Continent."

Referring to the battle of Morgarten, the author says that one could imagine what people who fought so well with scythes and pitchforks could achieve with modern arms. In the last war they resisted all German attacks and would not have hesitated to blow up their expensive tunnels in a critical moment.

"So are these people. You cannot make fun of them. If you want to be their friend, they will meet you half-way, but if you want to be something else, take care of them."

"The Swiss have their defence plans worked out to the last detail," continues the writer. "They know that an enemy could break into their country, but they are just as convinced that once in he could no more get out."

"Because one must know that these Swiss, when they do anything, do not do it by half, whether it be the manufacture of watches, the management of hotels or the military preparation. As the Greek of the time of Perikles, they find perfection the only worthy ideal. Hard work is the basis of their prosperity. There are no shirkers in Switzerland, few idle rich people and so to say no parasites. The Swiss live well and enjoy great economic security. Nobody gains something he does not earn, is a typically Swiss slogan. One could also recommend it to others."