

Swiss spotlight : Switzerland facing recession

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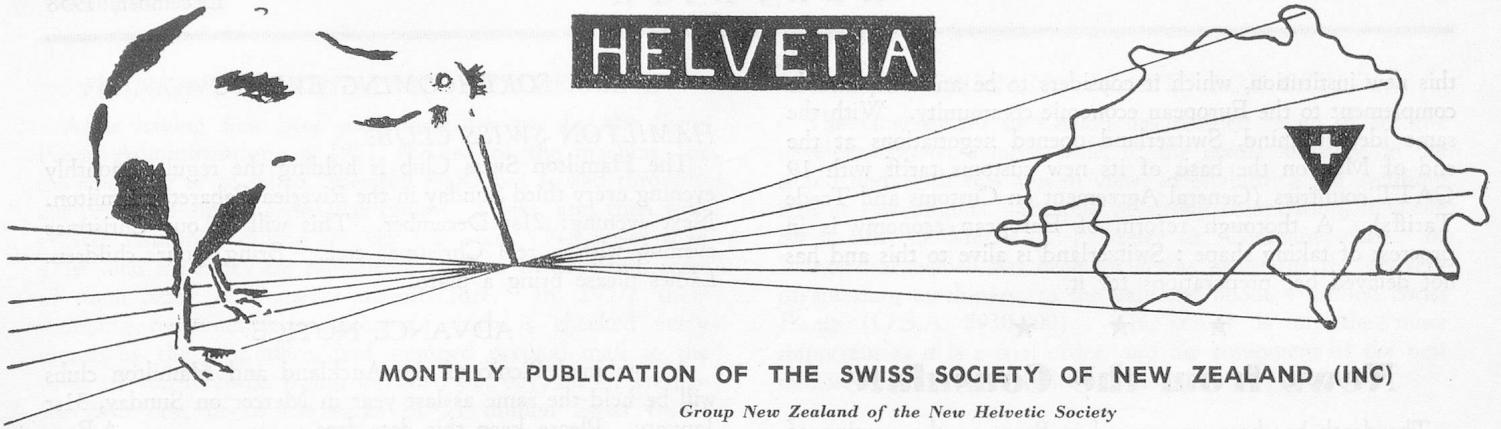
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SWISS SPOTLIGHT

SWITZERLAND FACING RECESSION

(Swiss Observer)

Like many other countries, Switzerland too is experiencing a certain slackening in the tempo of its economic life, which after a period of high tension, has stabilised itself at a level which can still be regarded as very satisfactory. In fact, Switzerland appears to be less affected than some of her business partners. On the domestic scene there has been no decline worth mentioning, except perhaps in building; on the contrary, consumption can be said to have risen slightly and probably investments as well, the revenue from Federal taxes having increased by 10.1 million Francs, or 3.4 per cent over the first half of 1957. On the labour market, the effects of the economic fluctuations have in general remained at a minimum—with some differences, however, depending on the region and branch of economy.

On the other hand, Swiss foreign trade has experienced some repercussions from the recession which has been felt and is still being felt elsewhere. Thus imports at 3,689.9 million Swiss Francs, during the first six months of 1958, are 662 million Francs or 15 per cent lower than for the corresponding period of 1957. Exports have likewise followed a downward curve, though less steeply; in fact, they totalled 3,170.1 million Francs, showing a decline of 90.4 million or 2.8 per cent compared with last year's figures. This has brought about a considerable improvement in the Swiss trade balance deficit, which has been reduced by half, from 1,091.2 million in the middle of 1957 to 519.7 million in the middle of 1958.

The decline in exports has especially affected the textile industries (—26.1 million), the watchmaking industry (—72.4) and the chemical industry (—41.6). In the latter field, however, the pharmaceutical industry has stepped up its sales abroad (+5.7). The same applies to machinery, apparatus and instruments (+54.1), and to foodstuffs (+5.6).

From a territorial point of view, it is trade with Europe which has remained the most important for Switzerland. From the beginning of January to the end of last June it reached a total of 2,707.3 million Francs for imports, and 2,015.2 million Francs for exports. The OEEC countries alone have supplied Switzerland with goods amounting to 2,548 million Francs in value, equivalent to 69.1 per cent of

her total imports, while Swiss exports to these countries have increased to 1,774.1 million Francs or 56 per cent of the total exports. Taken countrywise, Western Germany has retained its position as Switzerland's No. 1 supplier (954.8 million) and customer (492.6). It preceded in the following order, Italy (463.9/246.1), U.S.A. (411.4/290.2), France (391.8/247.0), Great Britain (198.0/181.6), the Belgo-Luxembourg Union (156.4/136.3), and the Netherlands (166.9/115.9).

Although the situation is by no means alarming, Switzerland is too dependent on foreign countries to disregard it. In each of her major activities, energetic steps have been taken to deal with present and future exigencies. Thus, to quote just one example—that of the watch industry: "The effort made," states an editorial issued by the Federation horlogere in the last number of "Journal Suisse d'horlogerie et de bijouterie," "applies both on the technical and on the commercial plane. Besides the initiative taken by the individual factories, the professional organisations are closely studying every aspect of the present economic position. Purposefully

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A Merry Christmas

and a Prosperous New Year

and dynamically they have instructed commissions and work groups to promote, by their own concentrated efforts, definite progress in productivity, standardisation, rationalisation, automation, professional training and sales policy. Several important decisions have already been made. By pooling their interests, mediumsized and small concerns are imbued with a vigour of which they were incapable alone. The system by which watch factories exchange movements, blocks and parts reduces the stocks of the one and permit the other to speed up execution of orders."

These problems, however, are not the only ones at present confronting Swiss commerce. The effective establishment of the Common Market actually puts the future of the national export trade very much in doubt. Switzerland is also showing herself very favourably disposed towards the creation of a free trade zone and is actively participating in the formation of

this new institution, which it considers to be an indispensable complement to the European economic community. With the same idea in mind, Switzerland opened negotiations at the end of May on the basis of its new customs tariff with 19 GATT countries (General Agreement on Customs and Trade Tariffs). A thorough reform of European economy is in process of taking shape: Switzerland is alive to this and has not delayed her preparations for it.



News from the Consulate

The death has been announced in Bern, on the evening of November 3rd, 1958, of Dr Markus Feldmann, Member of the Swiss Federal Council, who was Head of the Federal Department of Justice and Police.

Dr Feldmann, who was born in 1897, hailed from Bern and Glarus. The late Dr Feldmann, who held a Degree of Doctor of Laws, practised in his early years as a lawyer, and was a prominent journalist, before becoming a Member of the local Government of the Canton of Bern, and a Member of the National Council for a number of years. He was elected to the Federal Government in 1951, and was President of the Swiss Confederation in 1956.



News of the Colony

OBITUARY

Last month we mourned the passing of a very well known and respected member of our Swiss community, Mrs Margaretha Kaegi, the beloved wife of Ferdi and mother of Rosemary, Andreas and Peter.

The Kaegi family came to New Zealand eight years ago, where they immediately settled in Palmerston North and afterwards started dairy-farming on a farm in Bombay, which must have reminded them very much of the homeland. Although in New Zealand only a comparatively short time, Mrs Kaegi won the hearts of everybody with her charming and warmhearted nature and it is hard to believe that we had to part with her always ready smile, and that the many visitors to Rockdale will find her no more. Our deepest sympathy goes to the bereaved family and the pleasant memory of her will live with us for many years to come. —W.R.

In Taranaki the Swiss people paid their last respects to Mrs Rosa Engelberger, whose death occurred suddenly at her daughter's residence in Kapuni. Her passing closed a chapter of fine pioneering history of this country, a life of hard work and enterprise. In her busy life, however, she always found time for social activities and in this field the Swiss people owe her a great debt of gratitude. Whenever there was a church function in need of funds, she was the prime organiser to stage a Swiss dance or social to give those needed funds a boost. She richly deserved the credit that as an organiser for well-attended and well-behaved functions she was second to none. She invariably knew how to keep the Swiss activities in the limelight without personal gain. As a wife and mother she reared a family of four daughters and one son, all of whom are married. To Arnold and the family we extend our heartfelt sympathy. —W.R.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

HAMILTON SWISS CLUB:

The Hamilton Swiss Club is holding the regular monthly evening every third Sunday in the Riverlea Cabaret, Hamilton. Next evening: 21st December. This will be our Christmas evening with a real Christmas tree. Bring your children. Ladies please bring a plate.

ADVANCE NOTICE

A combined Picnic of the Auckland and Hamilton clubs will be held the same as last year in Mercer on Sunday, 31st January. Please keep this date free. —A.B.

CABBAGE, SPINACH OR SILVERBEET "WAEHE"

Line a cake tin with pastry or short crust. Steam finely-chopped vegetable until all liquid has evaporated (for a 10in. tin we need about two cups of steamed vegetable). When cooled add three beaten eggs, together with $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 cup of cream. Add some spice (such as majoram and nutmeg). Spread over pastry. Over the top place small pieces of bacon and onion rings. Bake for about 45 minutes.

STEWED APPLES VERY GLAMORIZED

Peel and core apples, slice finely. Soak a handful of raisins in some rum. Gently braise apples together with raisins in some butter until soft, add sugar to taste before cooking, also some grated lemon rind. When soft pour over some warmed rum and light it.

These two recipes have been picked at random from the "Nelly Kalender." This is a magazine published in Switzerland especially for women. It appears monthly. Amongst its pages are items of interest, such as fashion, homemaking, menu suggestions for the whole month and many excellent recipes. What is particularly nice is that in contrast to English women's magazines, the "Nelly Kalender" has our accustomed Swiss way of presenting things. Really excellent are the articles on health problems, such as may occur in any family, and the diets which will help overcome such problems. Thus over the past three months there have been articles with attached food suggestions on liver and gallstone complaints, on the very common complaint of flatulence (Blaehungen) and how to keep the blood stream pure. Space does not allow to enumerate further articles, but all are of interest. One year's subscription costs 18 Franken. Send order to: Nelly's Kalender, Kuesnacht Z H, Switzerland.



News from Switzerland

SWISS EXHIBITION OF AGRICULTURE MACHINERY AT BRUGG

After an interruption lasting for two years, the Swiss Association of Owners of Agricultural Machines, in collaboration with other groups which are directly interested in this matter, are once more organising, from the 3rd to the 7th April, 1959, a Swiss Exhibition of Agricultural Machinery. This show will group together about a hundred Swiss and foreign manufacturers, and will thus be the most important exhibition of this kind to have been organised in Switzerland.