

Statistics galore

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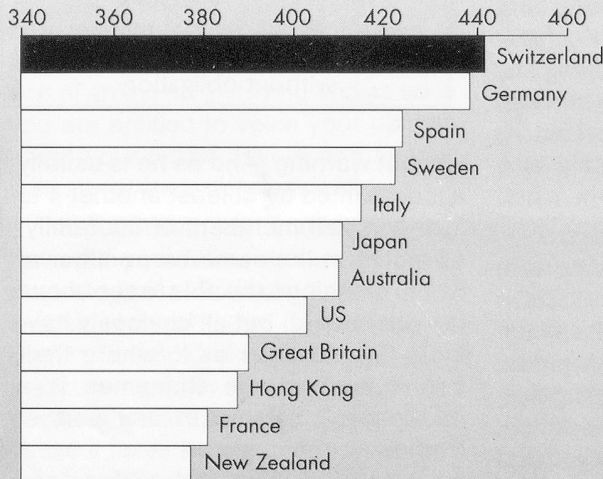
STATISTICS GALORE

Here are a few interesting tables produced by the Swiss Federal Office for Industry and Labour. As all statistics, they can be interpreted in many ways and many of you may not agree at all with these tables. But here they are for whatever they may be worth.

THE BEST COUNTRIES TO LIVE IN

«Where to live, Utopia in the Alps»

(Overall evaluation scale)



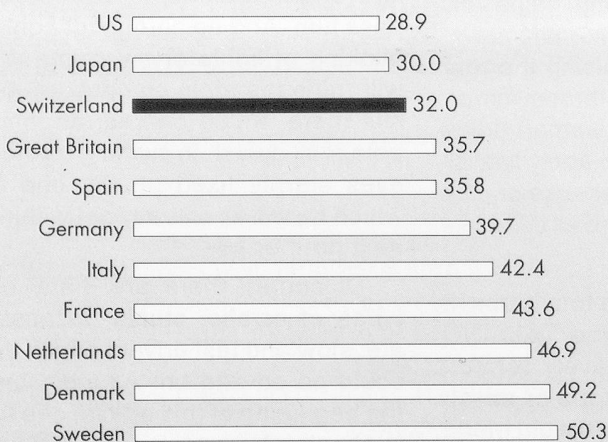
The criteria for the best quality of life are based on economic, social, cultural and political indicators, whatever that means.

According to this table, all of us who migrated to New Zealand got it all wrong. We blundered by coming to New Zealand, we should have stayed put in Switzerland since it is still supposed to be the best country in the world to live in. Makes you wonder, doesn't it?

TAXES

Total tax revenues

(in % of gross industrial product, 1992)

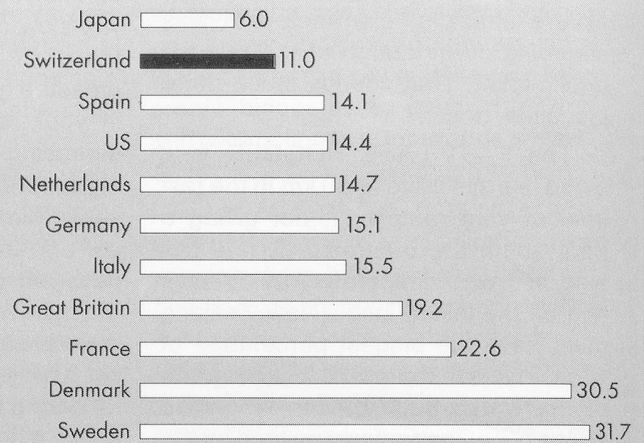


Another area where we may have chosen the wrong country to live in because when we add all the taxes (direct and indirect taxes such as GST, import duties and the hundreds of "users pay" taxes, etc) our guess is that New Zealand may well be below Sweden.

CIVIL SERVICE

Civil service

(in % of total employment, 1990)

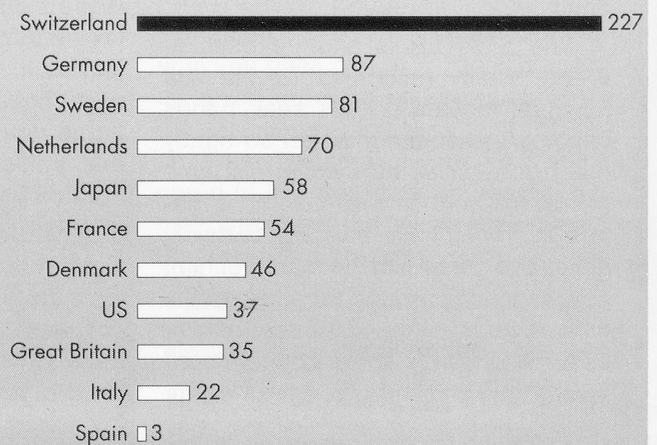


This table is a surprise. We all thought that Switzerland was overrun by bureaucracy. So if you think there are too many bureaucrats in Switzerland, spare a thought for the poor Swedes where every 2 workers have to toil to keep one bureaucrat in his cosy office.

NUMBER OF PATENTS

Number of patents per country of origin

(per 100,000 population, 1992)



According to this table, the Swiss are apparently not such a dull lot. The inventive spirit still seems to be alive in Switzerland, in fact more than twice as alive than in the next country (Germany) which is really amazing. The statistics of course do not say how many of these patents have any significance in real life, in other words, how many are really useful to us and how many are a dead loss. Compared with the Swiss, the Spanish seem to be more interested in their siesta than in inventing new gadgets.

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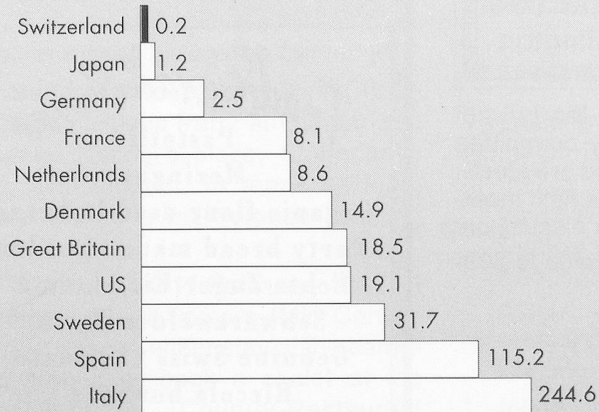
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EDUCATION

Number of days lost to strikes per year

(per 1,000 population, 1992)

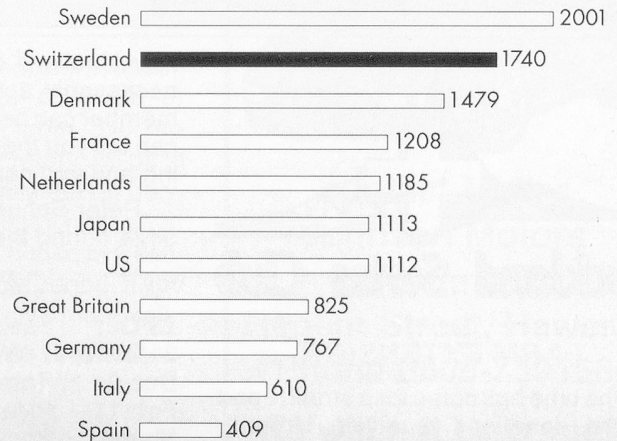


At least, thanks to all the bureaucrats, Sweden has been able to beat Switzerland in this field. Once again, siesta in Spain seems to be more to the taste there than education. We wonder where New Zealand would fit in here? Somewhere between Italy and Spain perhaps? The position of Germany comes a bit as a surprise. Does this mean that the Germans educate themselves without government assistance???

STRIKES

Government expenses for education

(in US dollars per capita, 1991)



The picture is crystal clear: the Swiss work, the Italians strike and the rest of Europe is somewhere in between. What about New Zealand? A few years ago, we would have been right at the bottom of the table, well below Italy, with the number of days lost so large that it would not have fitted into the above table. Where does New Zealand fit into this table today? Frankly, we have no idea....

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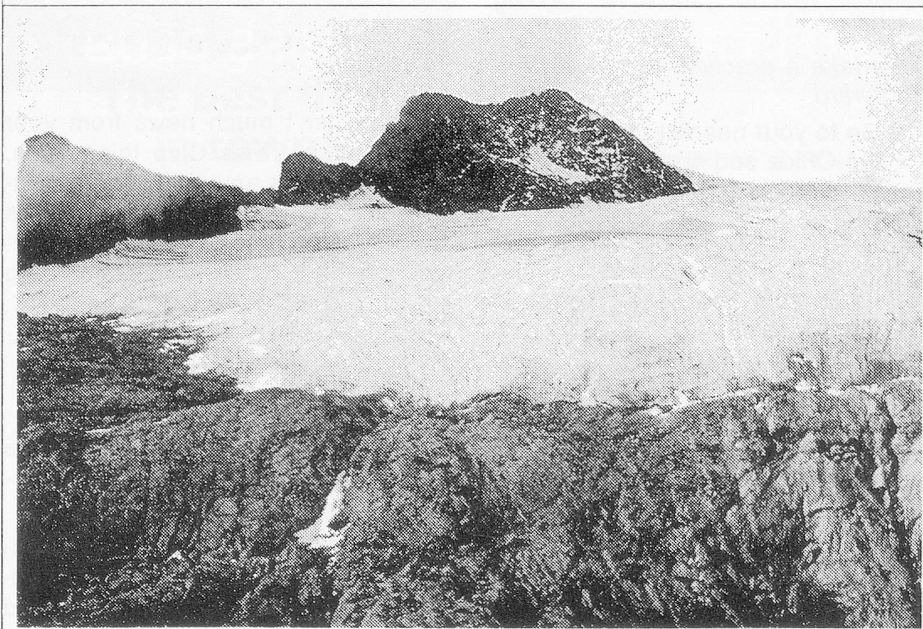
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SWISS GLACIERS STILL RECEDING

The year 1994 was no exception, in fact it will go down as one of the years which registered one of the largest glacier retreat. During the 115 years since glaciers have been studied and their movements registered, only 33 years have been counted in total during which the glaciers have either stayed put or have slightly advanced. In fact, over these 115 years, the average yearly length lost by all glaciers was 7 metres.

NOTE TO SECRETARIES

Next issue of the Helvetia magazine: NOVEMBER 1995. All contributions must be in by 15 October. Many thanks for your kind cooperation.