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Nidwalden

Nidwalden is in the centre of Switzerland. The population is 40,287 (in 2007), of which 10% are foreigners. To the north it is bounded by the Lake Lucerne (Vierwaldstättersee), to all other directions by mountain chains. The area of the canton is 276km²,

Many of these soldiers died, and some stayed on in foreign countries. This helped to lessen the pressure of a growing population.

Under the Helvetic Republic, imposed in 1798 by French Revolutionary troops, Switzerland be-



Bannalpsee in the canton of Nidwalden

of which about 40% is inhabited or used for farming. Forests occupy about one third of the canton with about one quarter being considered unproductive (mountains or glaciers). The capital is Stans.

Initially the land was owned by a number of noble families and abbeys. But by the late 13th century the major powers in Nidwalden had shrunk to three: the Habsburgs, Murbach Abbey and Engelberg Abbey. Nidwalden, like Obwalden a bit earlier, joined Uri and Schwyz to form an alliance which is considered the foundation of modern Switzerland.

Around 1500, many young NW men worked as mercenaries.

came a united country. The ideas of the French Revolution were not popular in many parts of Switzerland, as the cantons were accustomed to self-government. When rebel forces threatened the Republic, Nidwalden was attacked by French troops on 9 September 1798. The canton's infrastructure was badly damaged and at least 400 people were killed.

Up to the 20th century Nidwalden was dominated by agriculture. Cattle and cheese were exported mainly to northern Italy. From the middle of the 19th century onwards, trade, industry and tourism gained momentum. A great number of small and

middle-sized businesses have developed over the last decades. The largest employer is Pilatus.

Traditional areas such as forestry and agriculture are still of importance. Agriculture is specialized in cattle and dairy farming. The farms are still run by individual families.

In recent years, Nidwalden has become an increasingly popular place to live and work. This is caused by its low taxes, its central location between Zürich and Milan, and its beautiful countryside.

Because of its mountainous geography, tourism is important in Nidwalden. The lake and the mountains attract many tourists, both during the winter and in summer. Major resorts include Klewenalp, Stanserhorn and the region around Bannalp, and Bürgenstock.

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