

Notes & gleanings

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REPORT ON THE COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY OF SWITZERLAND IN 1920.

(Communicated by the Commercial Adviser to the Swiss Legation.)

The Report on the Commerce and Industry of Switzerland, published each year by the Committee of the Union Suisse du Commerce et de l'Industrie, which is the association of the various Swiss Chambers of Commerce, is now ready for the year 1920. This volume presents, with its 470 pages—in the same way as previous volumes, have done—a general review of economic life in Switzerland during the past year. The abundance of information of every description which it contains makes it possible for all interested—and especially the foreign reader—to become easily acquainted with documentary facts as to the commercial and industrial activities of Switzerland.

As in former years, the report for 1920 consists of two parts: the one—under the title of Introduction—gives a general statistical review of the economic conditions of the country, and the other—in greater detail—deals successively with the various branches of industry and commerce.

The purely statistical part, which has been very much improved in the volume under review, gives in a condensed form general ideas on the economic life of Switzerland: for example, on the population, professions, labour market and salaries, factories, banks, securities, joint-stock companies, foreign commerce, Customs and public finance.

The second part, which contains about forty chapters, first exposes the position for 1920 of the various commercial and industrial branches as such. Each chapter begins with the figures of the official statistics of importation and exportation for that particular branch. The volume then gives reports on traffic, hotels, banks, securities, commercial and professional instruction, etc. The text of the chapters is accompanied by detailed numerical information on the production, salaries and prices compared with those of preceding years and pre-war years. The Annual thus not only gives detailed information on the commercial relations of Switzerland with other countries, but also on the economic situation in Switzerland itself.

The Report on the Commerce and Industry of Switzerland in 1920, which is published either in French or German, can be obtained at the price of 9 francs (Swiss) plus postage from the Secretary of the Union Suisse du Commerce et de l'Industrie at Zurich (Switzerland).

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

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BOARD-RESIDENCE.—Comfortable Home offered to three gentlemen; one double bedroom (separate beds) and one single bedroom; breakfast and late dinner; full board week-ends; good cooking; convenient City and Westend.—Apply, Mrs. Miller, 83, Park Lane, Clissold Park, N.16.

NOTES & GLEANINGS.

The important step taken by Switzerland towards the abolition of passports has been heralded in the British press with general approval. The Federal Council has proposed to Great Britain and most of the other countries, with the exception of the Central Powers, the conclusion of an agreement for the reciprocal suppression of visas as from December 1st; this would apply to tourists only and not to those wishing to find work in Switzerland. The proposal, according to an answer given in the House of Commons on November 9th to Sir Martin Conway by the Home Secretary, is being carefully considered by the British Government. It seems doubtful, however, whether immediate effect will be given to this request on account of technical difficulties due to the Aliens' Restriction Act. In the meantime a most welcome propaganda for the winter season is displayed by several tourists' agencies, the inclusive rates for travel and hotel charges comparing favourably with those quoted for French resorts. The increasing interest in our winter sports is further demonstrated by two recent publications, one entitled "Switzerland in Winter," by Will and Carine Cadby (Mills & Boon, 4s. net), and the other "Alpine Ski-ing," by Arnold Lunn (Methuen, 5s. net).

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An interesting illustrated article in *The Gentlewoman* (Nov. 12th) describes the attractions at the principal centres which suit "all tastes and all purses." "Prices," the writer says, "differ as much as the guests, but at certain pensions one can live comfortably for £4 4s. a week."

In *The Daily Mail* (Nov. 14th) a correspondent from Vevey gives intending visitors the benefit of his experience, stating that ignorance of the very essential points of *where* to go and *when* to go has ruined the holiday of many a neophyte, and that the question of outfit is a very important item. He concludes by saying that with the adjunct of a fancy costume one is never at a loss for amusements. The big hotels are often offering very substantial prizes which have enabled lucky competitors to defray the entire cost of their holiday.

The same paper (Nov. 16th) gives a reply to an erroneous statement on London hotel charges published in a Geneva daily:—

The Swiss newspaper "Tribune de Genève" having stated that the cost of a bedroom with one bed at the best hotels in London ranges from £2 15s. to £6 6s. a night, the Department of Overseas Trade has circularised all the London hotel proprietors asking for any observations they may have to make on the statement.

The Department alludes to the possible harm such a statement might cause to leading hotels if the prices quoted are inaccurate.

The Incorporated Association of Hotel and Restaurant Proprietors has taken up the matter. Meantime the Overseas Trade Department has received replies showing that the charge is from 10s. 6d. per day for a bedroom with a single bed in hotels like the Cecil up to a maximum of 25s. in hotels like the Ritz and the Carlton.

One manager in London told a "Daily Mail" reporter yesterday that the Swiss hotel proprietors during the League of Nations conference in Geneva charged big prices because hotel accommodation was at a premium, and that it was with a view to justifying those charges that they are apparently now trying to draw comparisons. "The statements as to London charges are inaccurate in every way."

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The improved NAVIGATION OF THE RHINE was the object of an influential deputation of British exporters received by Mr. Stanley Baldwin, the President of the Board of Trade, on November 2nd. It was pointed out that if the navigation between Strasbourg and Basle were

improved, goods could be loaded into large barges at Rotterdam or Antwerp and sent direct to Basle, thus not only furthering Anglo-Swiss trade, but also developing the means of transit for goods intended for Central Europe and Northern Italy. The final decision of the matter rests with the Supreme Council and the International Rhine Commission.

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An article in *The Manchester Guardian* (Commercial, Nov. 3rd), summarizing the difficulties and hindrances imposed by the "Dyestuff Import Regulation Act," contains the following reference to Swiss Dyes:—

"It is common knowledge that the foreign dyes for which licences are mainly required come from two sources—German and Swiss. Let us consider the case of the Swiss dye-makers. They are the most efficient unit of dye-makers outside the German Trust, and, so far as the Allies are concerned, they have a clean record of service throughout the war. They helped England chiefly, even as England helped them with raw materials since 1914.

The Import Bill was regarded by the Swiss as a domestic matter of Great Britain's own private business. The Basle works are willing to bind themselves to take exclusively British raw materials. This manifestly does not permit the Swiss to dump dyestuffs; nor is their exchange position any assistance.

On June 10th they met the Import Committee and offered to confine their source of raw material supply to Britain, even at a higher price, in return for free access to the British market for the dyes made from them. This offer cannot have been properly considered and has not been replied to, except to imply refusal. The Swiss offer was a sound one economically, it was fair financially, and it provides a "temporary bridge" upon which dye consumers might safely trust themselves. For seven years the best Swiss dyes have been used in the dye-consuming industries, they have been relied upon, and, as consumers know, have successfully withstood the strain. It is quite possible, the change from German dyes to Swiss during the war will have given trouble to consumers, so deeply do dyes go down into the technology of textile manufacture; but now that the Swiss dyes are in the recipe-books, in patterns circulating round the various trades, it surely is ridiculous as well as dangerous in these times to commence cutting them out except by fair competition."

* * *

A day in a "Swiss Sanatorium" is described in the *Blackburn Weekly Telegraph* (Nov. 5th) by one who has taken the cure at the Schatzalp near Davos. He wonders why so many lives are sacrificed when, if only the disease were attacked in its early stages, so much could be done.

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The Geneva correspondent of *The Westminster Gazette* (Nov. 8th) gives an—it is to be hoped exaggerated—account of the "frontier raiding" carried on along our borders due to the temptation of depreciated currencies. He says:

"The Swiss living within easy reach of the frontiers, especially those of Austria and Germany, have been for some time past carrying on week-end frontier raids, until these have become not merely a nuisance, but a scandal. The people of Basle, which has a population of about 130,000, have often eaten out of hearth and home the inhabitants of the small frontier town of Lörrach and of all the frontier villages in the Grand Duchy of Baden, so much so that the unfortunate people, especially the housewives, appealed for mercy to the Basle people, imploring them not to raid the countryside and shops to such an extent that on Monday mornings there was literally nothing to be had.

It is estimated that something like 35,000 excursionists visited Lörrach in a single Sunday recently—that is, more than twice the population, about 15,000, of the town. Naturally, when a Swiss can buy 100 marks for about 3 francs, he can order whatever he wants in a restaurant and buy everything he may fancy in a shop. And not only do these unwelcome visitors lunch and dine copiously across the frontier during their raids, but fill their rucksacks and other receptacles with cheese, butter, poultry, and anything else eatable on which they can lay hands.

The Germans do not object to the Swiss coming over and buying goods, but it is the food raiding to which they object.

The Swiss tradespeople living on the German and Austrian frontiers have naturally suffered heavily as a result of this wholesale purchasing over the border. A working man crosses the frontier with a handcart, and for a few francs buys perhaps bedding or furniture. A chair, for which he would pay 8 francs in his own country, costs him about 20 marks in Germany (about 7½d.). The opportunity is too tempting.

The Swiss and the German frontier authorities have been holding a special conference on the subject of these frontier raids, and it has been decided that only a limited number of permits shall be issued in Basle for week-end excursionists over the frontier.

On the Austrian frontier conditions are no better. It is not the Swiss alone, nor even chiefly the Swiss, who are frontier raiding in Austria, for the Italians, Swedes, French, and even Dutch are doing likewise. These frontier raiders belong to every section of the population and resort to every kind of vehicle, from motor-cars to barrows. They sometimes lay in stores enough to last for months, and buy finery for all seasons of the year. Nor do they forget to eat and drink, and do small credit to Switzerland's reputation. Many of these people who have been buying German goods for next to nothing and selling them in Switzerland at an immense profit have never engaged in trade before. The so-called unemployed have also been using their relief doles to do a little frontier trading. A dole of 10 francs a day exchanges for 300 marks and leaves something over, so that the receiver can either go across the frontier and do a little raiding, or live there—live like a prince."

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THE END OF THE SEASON.

SWISS HOTEL PROPRIETOR. "WE LOSE ALL OUR ROYAL CLIENTS: MONSIEUR FERDI, 'E CREEP AWAY; MONSIEUR TINO, 'E MARCH AWAY; AND NOW MONSIEUR KARL, 'E FLY AWAY. WELL, WELL, PER'APS LATER ON WE GET SOME EX-PRESIDENTS."