

Glaciers still receding

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GLACIERS STILL RECEDING.

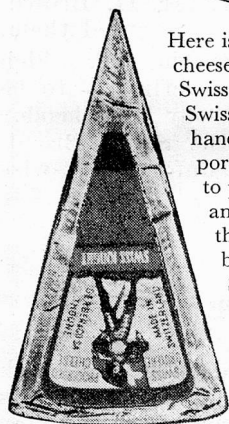
In its last year's report, covering the period 1955-56, the Swiss Commission for the Study of Glaciers hinted that, according to some observations, the coming years might see a new general progression of alpine glaciers. The report for the period 1956-57, recently published, shows that the new glacial period has not yet started, that glaciers are still retreating, but that the receding movement has somewhat slowed down.

During the 1956-57 period 88 glaciers were observed and measured, as against 70 during the previous year, and it was ascertained that 75 glaciers, or 85 per cent of those observed (as against 56 glaciers, or 80 per cent, in 1955-56), were receding, that 3, or 3 per cent, were at a standstill (3, or 4 per cent, in 1955-56), while 10, or 12 per cent, were advancing (10, or 14 per cent, in 1955-56), and that the average variation in length was 34ft., against 37ft. during the previous year.

The general improvement in the feeding of the higher snowfields, which had been recorded during past years, was confirmed in 1956-57; it has not yet influenced to a great extent the length of alpine glaciers, except that it has slowed their retreating movement. The report further remarks that during the winter of 1956-57 snowfalls on the Alps were well below average up to February, when heavy snowfalls — which continued in March and April — made up the deficit. The greatest depth of snow was recorded in June.

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