

# Switzerland as a maritime state

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## FIFTY YEARS IN THE SERVICE OF YOUTH

The Swiss "Pro Juventute" Foundation, which has undertaken and sponsored numerous works in favour of youth, was founded in Switzerland as long ago as 1912. The Golden Jubilee was celebrated in Zurich in November in the presence of some 1,200 collaborators and representatives from authorities and fraternal delegates from various organisations. An exhibition took place at the same time.

Among the many speakers was the Central Secretary of the Foundation, who gave a review of the activities which were started in 1912 as a scheme to help the many youngsters suffering from T.B. Today, ten special fields of the Foundation's work could be outlined, those of training the mother, holidays for families and holidays for mothers, care of mountain youth, children suffering from asthma, foster-children, scholarship schemes, games and leisure of the teenager, initiative of young people and education of parents. Over 140 million Swiss Francs have been devoted by "Pro Juventute" to charitable work in favour of Swiss youth since 1912.

The great birthday wish on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee is to find generous private and public bodies which would enable the dissolution of foster-homes and provide integration of more foster-children into families.

Many of the one hundred districts into which the Foundation is divided have already announced jubilee gifts in the form of new schemes of various kinds.

At the celebrations in Zurich the speeches were interspersed with musical performances by the Zurich Youth Orchestra and groups of children from several parts of the country including Greek dancers from the Pestalozzi Village at Trogen. A play by Ludy Kessler was acted by Zurich teenagers, and the film-strip "Pro Juventute" was shown.

In his address, Federal Councillor Spuehler called "Pro Juventute" a creation by the Swiss people, a transformer of good-will. He said to remain young, to go in step with youth, to help it to find its way in human relations and in later life, to open heart and head of the adult for what youth needs — all that was the aim of the founders fifty years ago, it remained the object of all those who have since helped in the movement and it should remain our guiding star in the future.

\* \* \*

Every year, at the beginning of December, "Pro Juventute", in collaboration with the Swiss Post Office, issues a new set of highly artistic postage stamps, with a slight surcharge, the proceeds of which go towards financing certain charities for the youth of the country. This year's set of "Pro Juventute" stamps consists once again of five values; while on the 5-cent and 50-cent stamps sprays of blossom commemorate the Foundation's jubilee, the three other stamps illustrate its charitable activities in favour of the youth of Switzerland. These stamps will be valid for all letters and postal packets, both at home and abroad, from 1st December 1962 to 30th June 1963. The proceeds from the surcharge will be used not only for covering the ordinary financial needs of the foundation, but also for creating a jubilee gift for special needs of the moment. In addition, "Pro Juventute" is once more issuing a special envelope with an ornamental border as well as a book of thirty-two 5- and 10-cent stamps (postal value) in a gilt cover, sold for the price of S.Fr.5.—. All these stamps are printed on a rotary photogravure press by Courvoisier Ltd. of La Chaux-de-Fonds.

[A.T.S. & O.S.E.C.]

## SWITZERLAND AS A MARITIME STATE

### GROWTH OF NATIONAL MERCHANT FLEET

The idea of a Swiss Navy is frequently looked on as a joke. But in fact, besides its patrol boats on Lake Constance, Switzerland has an established merchant fleet. There was a recent reminder of its existence when the Swiss ship *Celerina* picked up survivors from the American Super Constellation airliner which came down in the Atlantic 500 miles west of Ireland.

Two cold-storage ships launched this year brought the merchant fleet up to 31 vessels, with a total tonnage of about 250,000 tons. Ownership is divided among 16 companies. As revised and completed in 1957, the maritime law provides for general Government control of the fleet, whose place of registration is Basle. Ship owners must be Swiss and live in Switzerland. All the shareholders and partners in the shipping companies must also be Swiss citizens. The aim of these regulations is to safeguard the neutrality of vessels flying the Swiss flag in time of war.

The ships do not keep exclusively to the Swiss trade. Some are employed as tramps and others are chartered to foreign owners. For Swiss trade, the ships generally unload at Rotterdam, where the cargo is transferred to Swiss barges and taken to Basle. Some ships unload at Genoa, Marseilles, or Bordeaux, and the cargo is then transported by train. Switzerland, the land of mountains and glaciers, and 250 miles from the nearest sea, has become a maritime country.

### ESTABLISHED IN 1941

The merchant marine dates back to 1941, when it was realized that this was the only way to get essential supplies. Before that, Swiss ships sailed under neutral flags.

There were 16 Swiss ships on the high seas in 1941. Ten ships used exclusively by the Geneva International Red Cross Committee also flew the Swiss flag and had the Red Cross badge on their sides. These only carried mail, relief stores for prisoners of war, civilian internees, and other people hit by the war.

The merchant fleet was so useful that during the Korean war the Government granted loans to shipowners to try to double the tonnage. This raised the fleet to 35 ships with a total tonnage of about 200,000 tons. After the war the fleet was reduced, but it has since been increased again because of the unsettled international situation.

Manning of the ships has been a problem. But an increasing number of young Swiss are enlisting. About 600 of the 1,500 men employed are Swiss citizens trained at the Basle sea school. Fifteen of the captains are now Swiss, and 30 other officers.

(By courtesy of "The Times".)