

Switzerland's economic situation at the end of June 1944

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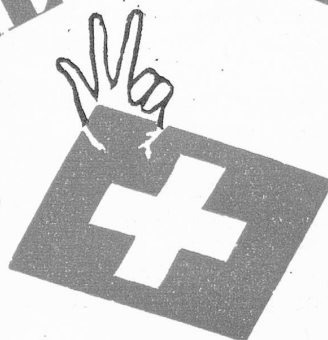
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SWITZERLAND'S ECONOMIC SITUATION AT THE END OF JUNE, 1944.

Switzerland's trade exchanges with countries abroad was strongly influenced during the last six months by the military events. The intensification of hostilities on the European continent with military operations getting closer again to our frontiers has had a very unfavorable effect on our export and import trade.

During the first semester of 1944, especially, imports have dropped considerably. They have diminished 12% in quantity and 25% in value as compared to the corresponding period in 1943; as compared to 1938, the volume has decreased by more than 40%.

As the value of imports has diminished more heavily than exports the result has been a reduction of the deficit of our commercial balance to 4.6 million francs as against 193 million in the preceding year.

It is no secret that before the war Switzerland was obliged to import the major part of the raw materials and foodstuffs she needed. The ever increasing retrogression of imports therefore has imposed grave problems on the authorities charged with the reprovisioning of our country.

Last year the Swiss farmers delivered 18,500 freight cars of foodstuffs to the Federal War Office for Food Supply. This figure is very large if one considers that this quantity is enough to feed the major part of the Swiss population during six months and that during the preceding years these deliveries only amounted to from 8,000 to 12,000 freight cars.

This year's crop of cereals promises to be good and will probably reach the same quantity as in the past year. The shortage of forage, however, makes itself more and more felt, especially as this year's hay harvest was generally not very favorable because of the very dry weather. For this reason it has been decided to further as much as possible the growing of forage in the next, i.e. the seventh phase of the increased cultivation plan. It is projected to maintain the 325,000 ha of land under cultivation (in the prewar years there were only 185,000 ha) and to add a new area of some 20,000 ha in 1944-45. It is very probable that thanks to these new efforts it will be possible to maintain Switzerland's live stock at the present level.

The international traffic difficulties to the great seaports, so far at the disposal of Switzerland, have greatly hampered the delivery of goods from Switzerland to countries abroad. The repercussions are particularly heavily felt in those branches of industry which are depending on the export trade. The business activity has, however, been stimulated by the joint efforts of the three great Swiss Trade Fairs at Basle, Lausanne and Lugano. These fairs allow our industry to display its capacities of production and adaptation.

On the other hand, melioration works in agriculture, the increased cultivation plan and also the national defense works are occupying a large number of workers.

Finally, the Swiss Army which is vigilantly guarding our independence also keeps a considerable number of men under arms.

The prices during the past three months have remained almost stable and the general cost of living has increased by only 0.9%. Since the beginning of war, Swiss tourist traffic has greatly changed its face. In this connection, it is interesting to learn that still in April, May and June 1937, the number of foreign tourists totaled 245,000 persons and that in 1944 this number has only reached 18,000.

The Swiss railways have continually seen the number of passengers increase during the first six months of this year. They have transported 95.9 million people, i.e. 9 million more than during the first semester of 1943. Freight traffic on the other hand has diminished by some 587,000 tons during the same period.

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SWISS SYSTEM FOR MILITARY TRAINING.

When President Roosevelt recently put to the public the problem of postwar military training for the nation's youth, polls had already shown the public favoring such a proposal by a majority of nearly 2 to 1.

Below follow excerpts from the leading editorial in the New York Journal-American of August 25, entitled: "The Swiss System".

"What the American people truly and wisely want and need is a constructive and wholesome and democratic system of military training for all youth, which can be depended upon to maintain high physical, mental and moral standards and which can be relied upon to maintain an adequate and constant and competent reservoir of citizens prepared and trained for the defense of their country.

Fortunately, there is such a system, long established and efficiently functioning in one of the real democracies of the world, as the Hearst newspapers have often noted in the past.

It is the successful and democratic Swiss System.

With this system, the democracy of Switzerland has kept out of the two greatest wars in history which have raged all around her.

The safety of Switzerland has unquestionably been in the preparedness of the people. The peace of Switzerland has been the reward of her preparedness. And yet Switzerland has never been a military nation. The Swiss people have never been a military people.

Since the American people have become almost universally agreed upon the need for compulsory military training, let us be sure that we adopt a system that will protect and preserve our American democracy and not destroy it.

We have no better example before us, for the attainment of this essential and vital objective, than the beneficial example of provident Switzerland."

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INTERNEED FLYERS SKI AND STUDY IN SWISS CAMP.

Life in Camp Maloney, where several hundred American aviators are interned in Switzerland, is described in a report recently received in New York from the neutral representative of the War Prisoners' Aid of the World's Committee of the Y.M.C.A. The camp was named for the first American aviator to lose his life on Swiss soil.

Dorothy Dunbar Bromley writes in the "Herald Tribune":