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HELVETIA

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in New Zealand.



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2nd Year --- Vol. 1.

FARMING CONDITIONS IN SWITZERLAND.

Agriculture and Dairying in our homeland should be an interesting subject to our Members who gain their livelihood from the land. It may be news to many, that of the total area of Switzerland, 22.6% is barren land, 55.6% productive area, and 21.8% forest land. The Alps represent 60% of the total territory; the Jura ranges 10%, and the Plateau the remaining 30%.

Extensive parcelling and division of real estates constitute the chief characteristic of Swiss agriculture. The average farm-area is about 22½ acres. Of a total of 233,079 estates in 1929, 102,000 measured less than 7½ acres, and only 890 exceeded 175 acres. A survey of the financial situation shows a fairly sound state of affairs. In 1926, agricultural undertakings represented a capital of approximately 8.2 thousand million francs- (Farmland; land-improvement funds; buildings; cultivated land and forests.) On the other hand, personal property (stock, machines, turnover, etc.) was estimated at 2.9 thousand million francs. The general balance showed assets amounting to 11,059 million francs, against 4.1 thousand million mortgages and debts.

Pasturage constitutes one of the principal features of Swiss husbandry, forming the basis of cattle-breeding and milk-production, the development of which ranks among one of the important factors of Swiss economy. Besides the production of milk and meat, pedigree cattle-breeding for exportation constitutes one of the principal items. The brown stock is chiefly bred in the Eastern cantons, whilst the central cantons - especially Schwyz - produce a breed very similar to the brown cattle, but with a slight tinge of grey, the so-called "Schwyz coloured breed". Simmenthal and Fribourg have their spotted stock. Before the world-war, the national stock consisted of 1,445,000 head, or 384 per 1000 inhabitants; Switzerland thus ranked fifth among the more important dairying countries, coming after Denmark, U.S.A., Norway & Sweden. According to the census taken 10 years ago, a total of 1,587,110 head of cattle were registered.

In 1929 the total milk-production reached approximately 3000 litres per cow, amounting altogether to 27 million litres. Domestic consumption absorbed about 40%, and the remainder was used for the manufacture of cheese, butter, condensed milk and milk chocolate. Switzerland's main exportation is cheese.