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SWITZERLAND AS AN INDUSTRIAL AND
EXPORTING COUNTRY.

The Swiss National Exhibition of 1939, which has been open in Zurich since the 6th of May and closes on the 29th of October, has already proved a success beyond all expectations in spite of the general political uncertainty which has surrounded it.

The Exhibition is in effect a profession of faith in the future, a splendid expression of purpose and energy on the part of a small country of four million inhabitants, divided into 22 autonomous Cantons (States), recognising two principal religious faiths, three different races, four national languages and more than two dozen dialects. Far from being an obstacle, this diversity is the *raison d'être* of the Swiss nation which now, more than ever before, represents a solid entity bound together by secular ties of liberty and patriotism.

Herein lies the fundamental idea which inspired the organisers of the Exhibition in their endeavour to present a true portrayal of the country. The last Swiss national exhibition was held in Berne in 1914 and had for its theme the brilliant economic results of a long period of political peace. To-day the National Exhibition, with its ideal situation near the extremity of the two converging shores of the Lake of Zurich, presents, as it were, a living picture of the perseverance and efforts of a whole nation during a period crammed with historical events, tension and crises of every kind.

Breaking away from the traditional manner of former exhibitions, which consisted in presenting the public with the products of individual exhibitors, the organisers have successfully attempted to give their visitors, thanks to exhibits being collective and anonymous, a living picture of the country's characteristic life and manifold activities. They have been able to eliminate the often tiresome element of individual advertisement and to retain nothing but a single comprehensive and instructive whole. Thus the Swiss National Exhibition of 1939 can claim a character of unity and collaboration which reflects great credit on the spirit of mutual co-operation which has inspired those who have been responsible for it.

One of the features about the Exhibition which first impresses the visitor is the importance of industrial production in Switzerland. This is a feature which makes itself felt in many different directions and is surprising when considered in conjunction with the small compass of the country, her poverty in raw materials and the narrow confines of the home market. We propose to examine here this aspect of Swiss economic activity, to follow briefly the stages of evolution out of which it has grown, and to demonstrate the supreme importance of export for the prosperity of the country,

but we cannot give in these few pages more than a vague sketch of the various lines on which Swiss economic activity has developed. The Exhibition has presented them in a most successful and enlightening way, and we shall confine ourselves to an attempt to present a general picture, basing ourselves as far as possible on official data.

Situated in the centre of Europe, having neither Colonies nor direct access to the sea, Switzerland numbers 4,077,099 inhabitants (1930 census) and has a superficial area of 41,295 square kilometres. The density of population is thus 98 persons to the square kilometre, which is increased to 127 if only the productive area of the country is taken into account. The country is thus essentially a commercial and industrial State. The last official census (1930) showed that about half the population, viz. 1,942,626 persons, were employed in some form of economic activity divided as follows: 45% in industry and trade, 22% in agriculture, 10% in commerce, banking and assurance, 7% in domestic service, 5% in administrative services and the liberal professions, 5% in the hotels, 4% in communication and transport services and 2% in various institutions.

Switzerland was early conscious of the necessity of devoting her attention to the export trade. To-day the principal industries find a market abroad for the greater part of their products. Through adopting a policy of specialisation it was found possible to achieve this result; through reducing costs, Swiss manufacturers have been able to compete successfully in the world's markets against the more favoured industries of larger countries, with raw materials and a sufficient domestic market at their disposal. They turned first to the manufacturing processes required for those raw materials (e.g. cotton, wool, cacao) which owing to incidence of overseas freights cost no more in Switzerland than in other competing Continental countries. Likewise Swiss manufacturers devoted their efforts to the working up or finishing of costly materials and such raw and semi-manufactured products as could easily bear the cost of transport, into high quality goods which required great scientific or technical experience and specialised, highly paid labour. The more costly goods are for the most part specialties with which it is difficult to compete, and are in general less affected than others by protective measures adopted abroad. Thus there came into being the Swiss chocolate and condensed milk industries, and the watchmaking, chemical, machinery, textile industries, including embroidery, silk ribbons and in a word all the Swiss export industries.

AGRICULTURE. When the Swiss Confederation was formed in 1291 the people of the original Cantons were essentially agriculturists. The subsequent successive entry of urban Cantons brought in with it the commercial element and towards the middle of the 19th century the growth of industry caused a rapid exodus from the country to the towns. Even then the agricultural population was already in a minority; in 1900 it did not represent more than one-third of the total population and to-day it only constitutes one-fifth. Though improved appliances have made it possible greatly to reduce the proportion of uncultivated lands, 22.6% of the total area of Switzerland is unproductive. Of the productive area of 77.4%, about one-third is arable land, one-third forest and one-third alpine pastures and regions where nothing grows but a few exiguous plants. One of the characteristics of Swiss agriculture is the way in which the land is divided into small properties. As to the types of crop, cereals take the first place (120,000 hectares). To-day about half the cereals necessary to Switzerland for her bread supply is home grown. The root crops, notably potatoes, are sufficient to supply a large part of the requirements of the Swiss markets. Mangelwurzel is grown in amounts sufficient for cattle feeding purposes but sugar beet is not available in sufficient quantities to cover the domestic demand for sugar. The same applies to tobacco. The grass crop is of great importance in Switzerland, as it forms the basis of cattle rearing and the milk production.

Many well-known export industries are dependent on it (vide the following paragraph), and the export of breeding stock plays an important though irregular part in Swiss agriculture. Vine growing is an important factor in Swiss economic life; the products of Swiss vineyards are generally appreciated, but the export is not considerable.

(This article will be continued in next issue).

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LIECHTENSTEIN is Visiting the National Exhibition in Zurich :

In our present and modern times it is a very rare occurrence that the Head of a Country goes visiting his neighbouring Country accompanied by 2,000 of his subjects.

Such was the case when Prince Franz Joseph II of Liechtenstein accepted an invitation to visit our wonderful Exhibition. He and his large retinue were welcomed upon their arrival at the Enge Railway Station by representatives of the Cantonal Government, the City Council and the National Exhibition. Dr. Briner, President of the Cantonal Parliament of Zurich, in extending a hearty welcome to their guests, stressed the most friendly relations between the two countries.

Speaking for Prince Franz Joseph, Dr. Hoop expressed his appreciation for the invitation as well as for the friendly thought of the authorities to reserve a special day for the people of Liechtenstein. He presented the Director of the Exhibition with a most artistically executed address of thanks and appreciation from "their little neighbour in the East."

The number of prominent people of other countries, who paid official visits to our National Exhibition, included also Sir Frank Bowater, Lord Mayor of London, who was accorded a wonderful reception and a very impressive State procession through the streets of Zurich. Sir Frank Bowater and Lady Bowater also paid a visit to Mr. Etter, our Federal President who was spending a short vacation at Unteraegeri.

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MILITARY CONTROL AND TAX MATTERS

The following letter was received by the Swiss Consulate recently from a countryman in New Zealand, and commends itself to the attention of our Swiss friends who are subject to military control and the payment of military taxes :

"I am in New Zealand since January 22, 1929, and worked here first as farm labourer and I am working now on my own farm. In view of the fact that our country at the present time is confronted with tremendous financial burdens for her defence, I wish to pay up my military taxes and request your advice."

There are a number of Swiss citizens in New Zealand, whose military matters should be straightened out regarding military tax payments and military furlough. It is to be hoped that they will act in the same spirit as the above countryman. The Consulate of Switzerland at Wellington will be at their service.

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MEMBERSHIP: We take great pleasure in presenting an up-to-date list of members which has considerably increased during the last financial year. This fact shows that we are progressing very satisfactorily. When our Society was formed five years ago, our efforts elicited many prophecies that after the first year it would fall again. Now we can look back to five years' steady progress. We admit that it was a very hard proposition at first, but with patience and perseverance we have at last reached the stage where our compatriots are beginning to recognise our aims. During last year we have enrolled 39 new members. With the beginning of the new financial year our prospects of an ever increasing membership are looking very promising. Although our funds are not yet strong enough to enable us to give more than nominal assistance, nevertheless our help in more ways than one is always in request. We wish to assure you that our assistance is manifold but always gladly given.