

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 14 (1949)
Heft: 7

Rubrik: Sundry news

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SWITZERLAND AND THE WAR VICTIMS.

According to statistical data just published by the Federal Political Department the contribution of the Swiss Confederation amounted to Sfr.350 million (roughly £20 million) between 1940/48. Apart from this, the Confederation has advanced Sfr.213 million in favour of the military internees and Sfr.10.7 million for diverse purposes.

Private generosity in favour of the war victims has been practically inexhaustible. The sum of Sfr.620 million 180 thousand has been subscribed by private individuals. Of this Frs.135 million was for the "Save the Children Fund"; Sfr.51 million went to the "Swiss Gift" and Sfr.78 million to various charitable institutions. Sfr. 30 million was placed at the disposal of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and charity parcels absorbed the sum of Sfr.250 million. Thus the total amount spent by Switzerland in favour of the war victims amounts to Frs.1,193,190, 000 (approximately £stg.70,000,000).

SWISS MERCHANT FLEET.

The latest edition to the Swiss merchant fleet is the "Annunciada" recently launched at Sunderland, England. It is registered under No. 23 in the Swiss maritime register. Her maiden trip took her to Montreal, where she is loading wheat for Switzerland.

NEW TYPE OF WIND.

A Swiss factory has brought an interesting innovation into the watch industry; it is a self-winding device for watches, and it works on roller bearings. The small balls are unbreakable and they are working practically without any friction; they have a diameter of sixtyfive-hundredths of a millimetre. It takes 100 of these small balls to make up the weight of 1 gramme (one-twentyeighth of an ounce).

THE SWISSAIR IN 1948.

The distance covered by the planes of the Swissair represent 6,224,920 km. in 1948, an increase of 52% over the figure of the previous year. During that period the tonnage of goods transported showed an increase of 37%.

THE SITUATION OF THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN SWITZERLAND.

Under the effect of a considerable reduction in the exports, the situation of the Swiss textile industry has become less favourable. The majority of the factories have had to reduce their activity. This situation is due mainly to the discrimination on the part of various countries who had been important buyers of Swiss textiles, and who have introduced severe import restrictions during and since the war.

SWITZERLAND AND HER PRESENT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

Voices have been raised on all sides in Switzerland to protest against the situation created for this country on certain foreign markets.

The first to be heard was that of a Swiss delegate at the European Economic Conference in Geneva, who declared that Switzerland would not be able to pursue her liberal trade policy if certain Governments persisted in qualifying Swiss products as non-essentials. He added that, although Switzerland is looking forward to a return of "multilateralism," she must also think of her own interests. This statement must be considered as a warning that Switzerland will take a stiffer attitude at future economic discussions. The Swiss Government has, in recent years, adopted a liberal policy, but the traditional structure of the national export trade, the country's only guarantee of prosperity, must be maintained. There is a tendency in several countries to consider Swiss products as luxury goods; for instance, in 1947, 70% of Switzerland's total exports (50% in 1948) were regarded as such. Under the circumstances, therefore, Switzerland cannot do otherwise than to seriously consider re-adopting the defence measures which were applied before the war, that is to say, the limitation of imports and restrictions in relation to the origin of the merchandise. A development of this kind would

certainly be highly regrettable.

The Swiss Minister of Trade, Mr. Rudolph Rubattel, Head of the Federal Department of Public Economy, stated in a recent speech, that in Switzerland, the return to normal economic conditions was being retarded by the lack of freedom in the domain of currency exchanges. The Minister pointed out particularly, that the lack of medium of exchange, the determination of not purchasing more consumption goods than strictly necessary, the desire shown by Governments to place new industries on a sound footing or to revive old industries hard hit by recent war conditions, were all factors which are canalizing the export trade into narrower channels, and that a form of autarky, as dangerous to Swiss economy as was the earlier one, is becoming manifest.

To conclude, the Swiss Chamber of Commerce, in which are associated all regional organizations of the same kind and the majority of Swiss trade groups, has recently examined the problem of Switzerland's foreign trade relations. These are becoming more and more difficult to maintain and currency regulations are the means usually selected to restrict the import of Swiss merchandise by such countries as deem it non-essential. It has, besides been established that, in these markets, there would be no lack of buyers for Swiss products, and that there is a demand for Swiss-made wares. The Chamber of Commerce voiced an opinion similar to that stated in our opening lines, and further stressed the fact that Swiss tariffs, which are today the same as those established in 1921, are not a sufficiently powerful weapon against the customs barriers recently instituted by many Governments; elsewhere, tariffs are constantly being raised, despite the recommendations made at several international conferences. The Swiss Chamber of Commerce expressed the hope that new tariffs would be instituted in Switzerland, in defence of the country's commercial policy.

It is clear that Switzerland has no intention of supinely accepting the obstacles raised against her traditional export trade and that this country is ready to take all necessary steps to protect itself against trends which are jeopardizing the nation's most vital economic interests.

(O.S.E.C. Lausanne, June 1959 - P.2/49).

FEDERAL YODELLING FESTIVAL.

The Federal Yodelling Festival took place last month in Bern. Thousands of yodellers of both sexes took part. Federal Councillor von Steiger held the elocution and a great play was presented on that occasion. All in all it can be said that it was a noted success.

THE EMPLOYMENT SITUATION IN MAY, 1949.

There has been little change in the situation of employment in Switzerland during the month of May so far as supply and demand is concerned; 4,706 totally unemployed persons were officially registered as compared with 4,391 in the previous month, and only 887 in May, 1948. The demand for workers and employees in various groups such as housework, the hotel industry, farming, building, clothing, and cleaning trades, is still very considerable.

SWISS CITIZENS IN RUMANIA ARRESTED.

The Federal Political Department has been informed by the Swiss Legation in Rumania that the Rumanian authorities have started an action against Swiss citizens established there, and that many of them have been arrested. They are Swiss citizens who had applied, through the Swiss Legation, for exit permits, and they had been for a long time without an answer. The Federal Council took note with indignation of this action and protested energetically to the Rumanian Minister in Bern.

THE MOUNTAIN VILLAGE SELVA BURNT DOWN.

The mountain village of Selva in the Canton of Grisons was burnt down completely on the 11th of June. The fire started at 20.30 o'clock; within less than half-an-hour, the whole village was in flames. All but two of the fifteen houses were completely destroyed; even the church was a victim of the fire. Furthermore,

twenty stables (with sixty goats and twenty pigs) were burnt down. Fortunately, there were no human casualties, but over one hundred people are without a home, and assistance is urgently required. The cause of the fire has not been determined yet. Selva lies 6,000 feet above sea level, near the Oberalp Pass.

CHANGE IN THE COMMUNAL COUNCIL OF LE LOCLE.

For the first time since 1924 the majority in the Communal Council of Le Locle has changed camp. The National Progressive Party has now three of the five seats in the Council, and the Socialist Party has now only two, having thus lost one seat.

PESTALOZZI CHILDREN'S VILLAGE.

On the 10th of June, sixteen Hungarian children left Trogen after a stay of over two years. They are returning to Hungary in compliance with the wish expressed by the Hungarian Government. The Hungarian Ministry for Welfare expressed its thanks for the care that was given to the Hungarian war orphans in the Children's village "Pestalozzi" and it promised to grant a beautiful life to the returning children. On the 15th of June, another nine war orphans from Greece arrived by the Swissair.

SWISS BROADCASTS.

The following special Programmes from Switzerland will be broadcast for New Zealand listeners:

Wave Lengths . . . 25,61 m; 25,28 m; 19,60 m.

Tuesday ... 26.7.49 8.05 - 9.00 GMT Prélude au 1er Août

Thursday ... 28.7.49 : : Si avvicine il 1^o
Agosto.

Saturday ... 30.7.49 : : Am Vorabena zum
3. August

Monday ... 1.8.49 7.30 - 8.30 GMT 1. August - four languages

Repetition 8.45 - 9.45 GMT idem.

COMMITTEE NOTIFICATION.

We regret very much to inform the members of our Society, that MR. A. PEYER of Auckland, has decided to retire as President of the S.B.S., at the end of the present term.

In accordance with our By-Laws we request members to submit in writing to the Secretary, NOMINATIONS for a successor to the retiring President.