

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 14 (1949)
Heft: 9

Rubrik: Letter from Switzerland : Switzerland's economic situation, summer 1949

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 26.07.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

326 millions only, whereas on the 30th June last year it was 1,218 millions. It must be pointed out however, that the import surplus resulting from Switzerland's trade with other countries had already shown a marked decline during the last half of 1948. It is heartening, after all, to note that Swiss exports represent at the moment, more than four-fifths of the value of imports, while this proportion hardly exceeded a half at the same time last year.

A brief survey of Switzerland's principal supplier and buyer markets shows that, during the last six months, the consequences of the decline in Swiss imports have made themselves felt in the trade with almost all countries. This recession is particularly noticeable in the trade with the United States of America, Brazil, and China. Trade with India has fallen off, more particularly during the first quarter. The same is generally true as far as European countries are concerned. Deliveries from the Belgium Luxembourg Union, Great Britain, Sweden and Czechoslovakia show a marked decline, especially compared with the first half of 1948. Swiss exports to countries overseas show a slight falling off, while those to European countries have shown an improvement, particularly in the course of the second quarter. Swiss sales to France and Czechoslovakia have decreased however, whereas deliveries to India, Italy and Sweden have improved appreciably.

As far as the situation at home is concerned, it should be noted that the index for the wholesale trades has been dropping regularly since 1948; the effects of this movement have not made themselves felt very strongly however, on the cost of living, which is only very little less than it was six months ago. Sales in the retail trades have for some time been showing a reversal of tendency and a decline, slight as yet, is noticeable in the figures for the last half, as compared with the corresponding period last year. The situation on the labour market is still quite favourable. It is true that the number of those looking for work and of unemployed is higher than last year, but in spite of everything unemployment is much less widespread than before the war, and is still very slight when compared with the figures of those employed. The downward trend of the degree of occupation index has been largely checked by various precautionary measures. The stability of this situation depends naturally enough not only on the state of the home market but also particularly on the development of affairs on the international level, that is to say, as far as Switzerland is concerned, on the possibilities of export.

In conclusion, it is becoming more and more evident that the extremely favourable conditions of the first few years after the war belong to the past. The demand for consumer goods is gradually being replaced by the demand for production goods; this is a consequence of the industrial re-equipment taking place in most countries and especially of the import restrictions introduced because of lack of currency.

On the other hand, Switzerland, which does not benefit in any way from American aid under the Marshall Plan, has to try in its commercial policy to maintain the balance of its exchanges with its different clients and suppliers and avoid a unilateral evolution. Unlike many countries, it has always followed an extremely liberal economic and commercial policy and has remained faithful to the open-door principle. It is unfortunate that Swiss products, on the contrary, should come up against discrimination and obstacles on international markets.

XX
X 1st OF AUGUST CELEBRATIONS X
X IN SWITZERLAND. X
XX

Switzerland, as is traditional, has enthusiastically celebrated its National Day everywhere. Cities, villages and little communities ensured the spirit by decorations with bunting and even the tables in the railway dining cars were bedecked with miniature flags. The Swiss abroad also paid tribute to the Confederation. In Geneva, Mr. Cahen, from Salvador, in the name of all delegations, paid tribute to Switzerland. A cordial message was received from Pandit Nehru. Special programmes were transmitted by the Canadian short-wave service; the programmes comprising, Italian, French and dialect items were assembled by Canadian Swiss. The Mount of Blanc was magnificently illuminated with flood lights from the French Army. In Bern, Basel and Chur it is customary for young citizens upon reaching the age of 20 years to receive a "Burgerbrief" (Diploma of Citizenship) and they also receive the "Bundesbrief" (Replica of a document from 1291) or the Constitution. The broadcasting stations of Bermünster, Sottens and Monte Ceneri, conveyed the message of Federal President Nobs, in all three languages, to his