

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 15 (1950)
Heft: 1

Rubrik: A panoramic display of Switzerland hard at work

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: 18.08.2025

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

A PANORAMIC DISPLAY OF SWITZERLAND HARD AT WORK.

Within the family of the nations, Switzerland occupies a unique position based - as proclaimed by the Council of the League of Nations in 1920 - on a tradition of several centuries.

This country which, since the defeat it experienced at Marignano in the 16th century, renounced of its own free will any expansionist intentions, found itself obliged to develop its industry and, consequently, its trade, if it was to enable its steadily growing population to secure an existence. Switzerland, for which the idea of neutrality is a state maxim, has always consistently manifested a major interest in the liberty of the exchange of goods between the various nations.

On the occasion of a recent investigation made by the UNESCO Switzerland was able to show that, of all the countries consulted, it was perhaps the most liberal, seeing that hardly 7% of its imports are still subjected to quantitative restrictions. Its Customs Tariff, of which the average ad valorem rate of duty is 8% is one of the lowest in Europe. This policy is dictated by the requirements of Switzerland's population which are necessary to its existence. Recent calculations have shown that Switzerland's population would be 131% too numerous to be able, under a self-sufficing system, to meet all its own requirements. In the same line of thought, it is easy to understand that Swiss products have been able to obtain a secure footing on foreign markets by the excellent quality of the work, which makes up for the unfavourable production conditions, seeing that this country is almost totally devoid of raw materials. It is from the sale of almost 1/3 of its industrial production that Switzerland derives the purchasing power necessary to obtain in return all those goods in the distribution of which nature has been so niggardly towards this country.

The foregoing remarks reveal what an attractive market Switzerland is for world trade in spite of the smallness of its territory, and why it has become in the first instance an industrial country. It has been estimated that, before the war, out of a population of 4 million inhabitants, round about 45% of those who exercise a trade are engaged in industry or as craftsmen, a proportion which is only exceeded in Belgium and Great Britain.

Switzerland provides proof of this astonishing productive activity at the Annual Swiss Industries Fair in Basle where, on an exhibition area of roughly 1 million square feet, there are almost 2,300 exhibitors. This means that the Basle Fair provides the foreign buyer with a panoramic display of the resources of this little country which maintains extremely active commercial relations with the whole world. We can quote as a demonstration of this fact that Switzerland is bound at present by 56 commercial treaties with foreign countries.

The next Swiss Industries Fair in Basle, which will take place from the 15th to the 25th April, 1950 is already assured of the participation of a satisfactorily large number of exhibitors.

WINTER SESSION OF FEDERAL PARLIAMENT

On December 5th the two Chambers of the Swiss Parliament started their ordinary Winter Session. In the National Council the Socialist Schmid from Solothurn was elected President, and Pini, Liberal Tessin, vice President.

In the State Council the Representative of the Canton of Solothurn, Dr. P. Haefflin, Liberal, was elected President and Egli from Lucerne, Vice President. For the first time Federal Councillor Petitpierre the Swiss Foreign Minister was elected President to the Swiss Confederation.

As Vice-President, Federal Councillor von Steiger once again takes over office.