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EIRE FIRST, N.Z. SECOND AMONG WORLD'S EATERS

New Zealanders are the world's second heaviest eaters, and Australians the third heaviest, according to a United Nations report published recently.

The United Nations statistical year-book for 1952 said that first place belonged to the Southern Irish. Each Irishman averaged 3500 calories a day in 1951.

Next came New Zealand with 3450, Australia 3280, Switzerland 3250, Canada 3240, Sweden 3240, Iceland 3210, Finland 3210, the United States 3210, Argentina 3190, Norway 3180, Denmark 3130, Britain 3100, the Netherlands 3090.

India was at the bottom of the list with 1570 calories.

THE PRESENT SITUATION OF SWISS ECONOMY

Interested observers of Switzerland's economic life are of the opinion that the unusually high business activity here, with all its inherent advantages and dangers, will return to a more or less normal state. There will be fewer fluctuations in employment, and orders for manufacturers will be less numerous. As was the case in the time of shortages, consumers will again have more to say.

During the last few months, competition among Swiss manufacturers has sharply increased, a good indication of the fact that Switzerland has retained its vitality in the game of free market changes. This turn from a sellers' market has until now had no effect on the employment situation, and, in general, a demand for labour still exists, and there is practically no unemployment in Switzerland.

Swiss exports have been high and the construction business has had a good winter. Future prospects for this country are also bright.

The Swiss consumer has at his command more than enough goods to satisfy his needs. Although the average factory worker's salary is slightly lower than it was in 1950, the actual buying power of salaries and family incomes has, without doubt, increased. The retail industry has also completed a successful year, and an increase in activity is expected in the future.

In general, the outlook for Switzerland's business world is favourable. Some of the difficulties which Swiss exporters had in 1952 will probably be overcome this next year. Past experience has repeatedly shown that whenever markets

are lost because of foreign exchange difficulties, new sources of outlet are uncovered, and any losses are taken care of immediately. This policy of utilising every possible foreign market will be continued in 1953, but at the same time, Switzerland must be sure to avoid too much protectionism against foreign imports into this country. For her own interest, an "Open Door Policy" must be maintained here.

SWISS EXPORTS IN 1952: 4,700 MILLION FRANCS

When examining the figures for Switzerland's foreign trade, it must not be forgotten that this is a small country of 4.7 million inhabitants, possessing no raw materials of its own, an unproductive soil and without direct access to the sea. The high export figures recorded last year in most branches of Swiss industry thus assume their real importance.

Swiss exports as a whole amounted to some 4,749 million francs, and thus exceeded in value those of the previous year. This change was due in part to already existing orders and in part to the very high figures for watchmaking exports. These, in fact, totalled 1,082 million francs, i.e. 72 million more than in 1951. They represented 22.8 per cent. of the country's total exports. However, from the point of view of volume, there was a slight falling off in this branch. It should be pointed out in this connection that although Swiss exports as a whole did not vary much during 1952, important changes occurred in certain categories of goods. Exports of most of the textile industries decreased; this was mainly the case with regard to cotton fabrics and pure and artificial silk materials.

The retrograde movement was even more marked with respect to the exports of certain chemical products. Thus, for example, the value of dyestuffs exported fell from 276.4 to 179.5 million francs, and that of chemical products for industrial use from 136.7 to 94.8 million francs. It is only fair, however, to point out that these figures are still three times as large as those of the last year before the war.

Exports of machinery advanced from 962.7 million francs in 1951, to 989 million last year, while sales of instruments and apparatus increased from 305.5 to 311.6 million francs. In the field of foodstuffs, exports of cheese almost reached pre-war levels with regard to volume; exports of condensed milk, however, remained somewhat lower. In comparison with the same period, exports of chocolate showed a remarkable increase, and were valued at some 21 million Swiss francs.

As compared with 1951, Swiss imports dropped 12 per cent., and totalled almost 5,206 million