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News from Switzerland

THE NEW FACE OF SWISS AGRICULTURE

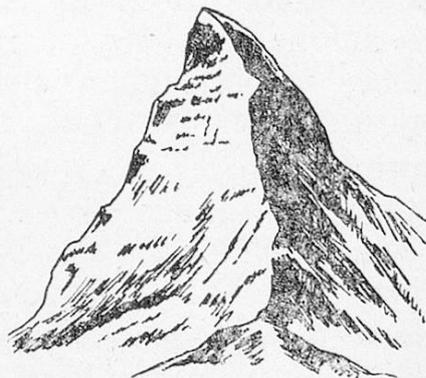
The kind of mergers and transformations which have changed the face of industry so rapidly in the past have affected the Swiss peasantry. A recent survey by the **Schweizerischen Bauernsekretariats** shows that the number of farm holdings had diminished by 13 per cent in the four years from 1965 to 1969. There are now no more than 149,300 farm estates in Switzerland. They employ 161,152 people on a regular basis, a reduction of 21,950 or 12 per cent compared with the 1966 figures. The effectives of the seasonally employed farm labourers has on the other hand increased by 5.1 per cent. As the surface of cultivated land hasn't markedly changed, the reduction in the number of estates is due to takeovers by larger neighbouring farms. The result is that the number of fairly large units (10 to 15 hectares) has increased by 3 per cent and that of farms larger than 15 hectares, by 15 per cent. Mechanisation has also increased by 16 per cent during the same period. There are now 71,253 tractors (including the two-wheel all-purpose mountain tractor). Sales have increased too. Turnover for meat and wheat has bounded by 5.2 per cent in the first semester of this year.

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