Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer: the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in

the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1951)

Heft: 1158

Rubrik: Commercial news

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: 23.11.2025

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

COMMERCIAL NEWS

The Farmer and the Swiss Economy.

Switzerland rightly prides herself on her liberal economy. An "open door" policy has been pursued since the war, the importation of nearly all goods being free. When O.E.E.C. decided to liberalise first 60%, and later 75%, of all imports, Switzerland was able to point out that of her own free will she had already Bearing these facts in mind, one liberalised 85%. might be surprised that farming in Switzerland is strictly protected: import restrictions, surtax on customs rates, centralised imports and exports, a State monopoly for spirits, are the measures devised for the protection of Swiss agricultural products. The resulting high prices conflict with the general interest of an exporting country in keeping production costs as low as possible, the more so as wages are the chief cost factor in manufacturing quality goods. No wonder in these circumstances that no easy solution can be found in order to maintain on the one hand a sound farming community and on the other to expand still further our foreign trade relations. At present a bill designed to codify the measures of protection and to increase efficiency has just been tabled. In order to understand the often heated discussions that have ensued, it might be of use to know more about the problem.

Swiss farmers represent an important economic, political and military element. Economic because of the great quality of many specialities, political because of the stability of all farming communities, military because the yield of our soil may have to be our chief source of food supplies. Although only one quarter of the land is arable, 72% of the calories used by the Swiss people were by the end of the war provided by the national production thanks to a superhuman effort. Switzerland is self-sufficient so far as dairy products and potatoes are concerned. The home production of wheat and edible fats account, however, for 40 and 35% respectively of her need.

As in the rest of the world, the farming population is in steady regression. In 1900, out of a total of 3.3m. inhabitants, 1.07m. were engaged in agriculture. The respective figures were 3.88m. and 1.01m. in 1920, and 4.26m. and 0.94m. in 1941. For all the reasons mentioned above this trend must be checked, and some State planning however, inconsistent with the views of the majority, proves unavoidable: between 600,000 and 750,000 acres should be cultivated to produce wheat, fodder, potatoes, beet, vegetables, oil seeds, etc; grassland must be kept within reasonable limits if over-production is to be avoided.

It is to the credit of the non-farming population that they realise on the whole the peculiarities of the Swiss agricultural production, and are ready to bear the burden imposed by its maintenance. Nevertheless, wide disagreement exists where the means to reach this goal are concerned: For instance, the farmers ask for quantitative import restrictions not only on the goods directly involved but also on similar goods which may not even be produced in Switzerland. Planned consumption is for many liberal-minded Swiss a far reaching step on the way to a general planned economy,

so that the debate is being lifted to the higher level of fundamental principles.

Swiss Banks.

The 1950 statement of accounts of the five big Swiss banks showed higher balance sheet totals. During the first half of 1950, when prices were falling, and imports were on a reduced scale, the flow of money to the banks was great. In the second half of the year, however, the situation changed completely. Stock replenishment and expanded business activities led to greatly increased demand for credit, and the great commercial banks thus saw their earning possibilities augment.

Taken together, the balance sheet totals of the five big banks increased in 1950 by 633m. francs to 7,977m. Among the liabilities, bank creditors increased by 238m. francs to 1,004m., chiefly because of the stimulation of commercial credits. Cheque accounts and sight creditors increased to a lesser degree than in the previous year, and so did savings and deposits. Among the assets, the most noteworthy item was the augmentation of bank debtors by 255m. francs to 1,004m., and current account debtors by 318m. to 1,995m. The cash in hand and the securities portfolio decreased. From the net profits, which showed for the five big



Four tablespoons makes a gallon of first rate soup!

Good beef stock makes a grand basis for soup; but when you haven't got it—and, in these days, that's all too often—you'll find Maggi^s Beef Bouillon a great help. It is a scientifically prepared Meat Extract, packed in tins of 5 lbs. net (enough to make approx. 40 gallons of soup at four level tablespoons per gallon) and can be used with great satisfaction to yourself and your patrons as a base to your own soup recipes both thick and clear.

MAGGIS

FREE TESTING SAMPLE Recipes and a generous sample of Maggis Beef Bouillon will be sent on request

Beef Bouillon

THE NESTLÉ COMPANY, LTD., HAYES, MIDDLESEX

Telephone: Hayes 3811

banks an increase of $1\frac{1}{2}\%$ over those of 1949, the same dividends were declared as in the year before.

Factories and Industrial Workers.

Despite the favourable business trend that became noticeable during the second quarter of 1950, the number of plants in Switzerland subject to the Factory Law decreased from 11,332 at the end of 1949 to 11,155 at the end of 1950. By comparison with 1948, when the peak was reached at 11,459, the decrease over the two-year period was 304 plants.

The number of factory workers also declined, namely from the peak at 531,303 in September, 1948, to 496,573 in September, 1949, and 492,563 in September, 1950. The decline chiefly affected foreign factory workers who had found employment in Switzerland in large numbers during the period of over-employment. Although no statistical evidence is yet available, it is clear from industrial reports that since September, 1950, there has again been an increase in the number of factory workers in employment. Applications for the allocation of foreign workers are being received on an increasing scale.

West-East Trade.

The Anglo-American controversy on the alleged trade with China through Hong Kong shows how strategic views, even between allies, can be at variance. It is hardly surprising therefore that Switzerland's policy of neutrality can conflict with the views of the Great Powers. In that connection it may be interesting to know what our trade with Eastern States is like:

Our exports to the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Eastern Germany, Hungary, Roumania, Bulgaria and China amounted in 1950 to 338m. francs only, that is 8.6% of global exports totalling 3,981m. in 1938, the share of these same countries had been 10.4%. Swiss imports from the East in 1950 were worth 263m. francs (5.8%). A break-down of the most important items shows that if we sell some goods classified as essentials, we also import commodities such as coal, finished and semi-finished iron and steel products, dynamo sheet metals, crude electrodes.

Neutrality as a concept of international law gets its full significance in wars only. Belligerents, however, will only trust the sincerity of our will to stay neutral by the policy followed in time of peace; that is why Switzerland can but hope that the duties and responsibilities derived from her neutrality will be understood by all. Commercial profits are not to be drawn from the present world situation, trade with foreign countries shall not exceed normal proportions, but Switzerland claims the sovereign right to shape her trade policy.

State Receipts in the First Quarter of 1951.

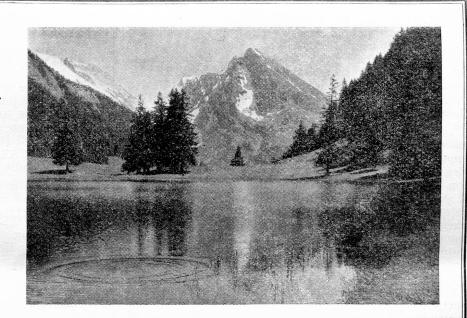
The comparative figures for 1950 and 1951 show a slight decline of 11m. francs, which must be attributed to a smaller return of the defence tax; its levy covers a two-year period, and more payments are made during the first year. On the other hand, customs duties yielded 37,000,000 more francs, owing to the very large imports still being made since war began in Korea.

Have you made your holiday plans yet?

Don't forget – and let your English friends know too –

SWITZERLAND

is an ideal choice.



THE SWISS NATIONAL TOURIST OFFICE AND OFFICIAL AGENCY FOR THE SWISS FEDERAL RAILWAYS

458/9 STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2