

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: - (1970)

Heft: 1590

Rubrik: Swiss 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: 12.12.2025

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

The Swiss Observer

Published Twice Monthly at
63/67 TABERNACLE STREET
LONDON E.C.2
Tel.: 01-253 2321

Telegrams: Paperwyse Stock London

HON. PRESIDENT: Robert J. Keller

EDITOR: Pierre-Michel Beguin

Advisory Council:

Gottfried Keller (Chairman)

O. F. Boehringer, J.P., (Hon. Sec.)

F. Burri, J. Eusebio, Dr. C. Jagmetti

(Press Attache Swiss Emb.)

A. Kunz, C. Nater, R. M. Süss

PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES
(POST FREE)

UNITED KINGDOM

24 issues £2. 8.0

12 issues £1. 5.0

6 issues £ 13.0

SWITZERLAND & Elsewhere

24 issues Frs. 25 — or £2.10.0

12 issues Frs. 13 — or £1. 6.0

Swiss subscriptions may be paid into

Postcheck-Konto Basle 40—5718

Editor's telephone: 01-602 1378

COMMENT

WHY THE BONJOUR REPORT?

The publication of the Bonjour Report can be considered as a highlight in the history of publishing. Indeed, governments commission reports every day. In England, one has only to visit Her Majesty's Stationery Office to find such a wealth of official literature that one wonders why the Bonjour Report should ever have been considered as such a remarkable publication. However, the Bonjour Report cannot be compared to a white or a blue paper designed to explain the mechanism of government or the meaning of a new law to the ordinary citizen. A government publication has a specifically pragmatic aim and serves the government, the Bonjour Report, on the other hand, has no practical use whatever and has been published for the sake of historical curiosity. It is an officially sanctioned quest into the past for the general interest of all those who are alive to Switzerland's destiny. One can only praise the Federal Council for having taken the decision to commission the report back in 1962.

The Federal Council then asked a Basle history professor, Professor Edgar Bonjour, to make an extensive study of Swiss foreign policy during the second world war, to bring to light the influence of the decisions in defence and home policies on Switzerland's foreign policy and to reveal in detail the role and conceptions of the people who led the country during those troubled times. This report was intended to provide an explanation to events that had never been clearly understood before.

To help him in his task, the Federal Council authorised Professor Bonjour to search into the Federal Ar-

chives in Berne, thus exempting him from the law which rules that personal records may only be published 50 years after the recorded events so as to protect the personalities involved. This was one good reason why such an inquest into the past couldn't have done without an official blessing from the outset.

For seven years, the professor waded through a profusion of files and documents in the Federal Archives in Berne, in the Political Archives in Bonn and elsewhere. He began by making an extensive study of the first world war and the pre-war years, the results of which have been published. He then started on his journey through the six years of the war and presented his manuscript to the Federal Council for approbation. This was duly granted and the unaltered text was sent to the publishing firm of Helbing and Lichtenhahn in Basle. The completed, ponderous work uses up three tomes, one of which has already been published and is currently a best-seller. Two or three papers have reproduced large extracts of the report, which well deserves to be described more in detail in these pages at some later stage.

Professor Bonjour was extremely meticulous in his task. He compared information from all the available sources and asked all his oral witnesses to sign their declaration. The work which he has now brought to light is probably the most unbiased, the most complete and scientific study of war-time history ever attempted. The reason for such a study, as we have seen, resided in plain, honourable interest. Switzerland is remarkably short of war-time memories and competent retrospects. Also, due to the special circumstances of war, the decisions of Government were by no means as open as they are today and many of the political facts of these days were confined to the archives. A number of reports on limited problems (such as the handling of refugees in the war or the situation of the Press) have indeed been published, but the Bonjour Report brings many new facts to light and offers a comprehensive political picture. One of the main set of records which were hitherto available were the reports by the Reich's Ambassador in Berne. Since they were strongly biased against Switzerland, they could not be considered as a true presentation of Swiss war-time history and this was one more reason for correcting the picture.

The Bonjour Report scathes some leading figures pretty badly. One of them is the Swiss war-time Minister in Berlin, whose incredibly blunted political judgment prevented him from seeing the reality of Nazism and induced him to send over-optimistic reports to the Political Department in Berne, which in turn inspired unwarranted optimism to his boss, Federal Councillor Giuseppe Motta, who saw the danger come almost too late. (He died two months after the beginning of the war). A Swiss official who comes off with

banners flying is Walter Stucki, the Swiss Minister in Paris, who saw the war coming well in advance and whose foresight led to the smooth repatriation of the Swiss Colony. The harassed life of the succeeding head of the Political Department and President of the Confederation in 1940, Marcel Pilet-Golaz, is described in detail. His secret interview with the Swiss fascist leaders and the subsequent national uproar is analysed carefully.

All this makes thrilling reading. It dispels some of the doubts that were still left on these crucial years, breaks down legends and shows our leaders as they really were. All in all, this monumental work should be hailed as an exercise in national clarification and honesty.

(PMB)

SWISS NEWS

PROFESSOR BONJOUR WILL SUPERVISE THE TRANSLATION OF HIS REPORT INTO FRENCH

Professor Bonjour, who is bilingual, has said in a recent interview that he would like to supervise the translation of his work into French. He added that he had accepted the job of writing the report on two conditions. These were that he should have complete access to all federal and cantonal records, and that no one should attempt to influence him. The report was at first only intended for the Federal Council, the question of its publication was considered much later. Professor Bonjour also confessed that he had sometimes been discouraged by the mountains of documents that lay before him.

ANOTHER AIR DISASTER

The Wuerlingen disaster was still present in everybody's mind when a Handley Page "Jet Stream" belonging to a private German carrier, the "Bavaria" airline, crashed less than a mile away from the Graubunden airfield of Samedan. The plane was piloted by the owner of the company, who also acted as its head pilot, and had, apparently, some trouble with one engine. As is usually the case, the enquirers were faced with much conflicting evidence but now believe that, following the failure of one engine, the pilot had attempted to make an improvised landing. His crippled craft had lost altitude faster than he had expected, hitting trees and then a high-voltage line before ploughing in a tract of land called "Alp Champesch", killing all eleven occupants. The pilot had come to Samedan from Munich with his family for the winter holidays. His four young daughters and the two children of another passenger perished in the crash.

(ATS)

FEDERAL

A better alternative to the 5% Export Deposit

Contrarily to our report in the last issue Parliament has not accepted the 5% export deposit. The measure is back to the Federal Council for redrafting. The export deposit was intended to drain superfluous liquidities from the economy in order to stem inflation. The Trade Unions, or "Union Syndicale Suisse" has suggested another means to achieve the same ends. They want every Swiss employer to put aside 3% of their salary bill in a special kitty which would serve to finance the country's private pension funds. They believe that a hoarding of 3% of industrial and commercial wages would amount to the same drainage (approximately a billion francs) as the 5% export deposit. All the money thus saved would help the condition of retired workers, who at present benefit from unequal private pensions and an insufficient State Pension. This proposal comes concurrently with three popular "initiatives" for a modification of the old age pension system in Switzerland. The Unions have commissioned an economist, Prof. Waldemar Jucker, to study the feasibility of their project.

Swiss population in 2000 AD

According to a study group, commissioned by the Federal Council to evaluate the trends in Switzerland's population growth, there will be 7.5 million inhabitants at the turn of the century. Considering that there were 6 million inhabitants at the end of 1965, this means a yearly increase of 0.68 per cent, or 46,000 persons annually. The population growth will be considerably smaller than the exceptional expansion of the fifteen years up to 1965. Available labour will increase even slower and the Commission predicts even tighter labour bottlenecks than at present.

(ATS)

Relations with East Germany

Mr. Georges-André Chevallaz, President of the National Council's Commission for foreign affairs, has said in an interview that nothing should prevent Switzerland from establishing

diplomatic relations with East Germany.

As was pointed out by the "Journal de Genève", there was indeed nothing in Swiss political doctrine which was opposed in principle to diplomatic exchanges with East Germany. The Government was leading a basically empirical policy and the fact that ties had only been established with the German Federal Republic was not due to any pro-western attitude, but to the fact that the East-Germans had from the beginning denied Swiss diplomacy any right to defend Swiss interests in East Germany. For many years there had been no question, either on the part of Berne or Pankow, to resume those ties. The situation has been gradually improving lately and with the rapprochement between East and West Germany, the time may well come when the question will be brought forward once more.

The position is similar with Korea and Vietnam, two other divided countries. That Switzerland is only represented in Saigon and Seoul is due to North Vietnam's and North Korea's lack of interest in diplomatic relations and not to a political non-recognition by Switzerland. Although she has no representations in these two countries, there is an Embassy in Peking.

ANGLO-SWISS

The Swiss off the East Coast

After having sent its first broadcast off the Dutch Coast, the 650-ton converted freighter "Mebo II" dropped anchor in the Barrow Deep, six miles off Essex and continued to beam pop music for twenty hours a day on medium waves (183m), short waves and VHF. According to the Marine Broadcasting Act of last year, no one in Great Britain is permitted to supply such a "pirate" radio-station, and none of its staff is allowed to set foot on British soil. The medium-wave broadcasts were soon shifted to 199m, near Radio One, because the band formally used interfered with local coast-guard.

The "Mebo II" belongs to a Swiss radio engineer and salesman, Mr. Edwin Bollier, who lives and keeps his offices at the Albisriederstrasse in Zurich. He started his company, "Mebo Ltd.", ten years ago and has

branches in Portugal and Sierra Leone. Working for the Caritas organisation in Biafra, where he rigged up a transmitting station, he raised part of the considerable funds necessary to get "Mebo II" going. His motivations are a passion for wireless and a schoolboy dream of setting up a radio station. The fact that Switzerland did not sign the international agreement against offshore broadcasting had helped him to carry out his plans.

"Mebo II" has already got a sizeable audience. At the time of writing, Mr. Bollier had already received 10,000 letters from British listeners alone. The ship is very comfortably geared and, apart from force-9 gales, life is quite pleasant aboard. The managing director of the station is a Swiss, Mr. Urs Emmenberger. There are four disc-jockeys, two engineers, a cook, a steward and four sailors. The ship's refrigerated hold keeps enough food to keep up the humour in the broadcasts of "Radio North Sea International".

CANTONAL

The thousandth number of the "Jura Libre"

The "Jura Libre", the Separatist weekly founded in 1948 and directed by Roland Béguelin, chief Editor and Roger Schaffter, deputy Editor, has recently appeared for the thousandth time. Speaking of his publication, Roland Béguelin said the following in his leader: "It has been a great enterprise, undertaken with the constant care of writing well and thinking correctly, so that our French-speaking people may recover in human society the place to which their historical past and deep identity have given them a right".

(ATS)

"Mutter Kurz", 80

Mrs. Gertrude Kurz, who earned the nickname of "mother of refugees" during the war, celebrated her 80th birthday last month. She still plays a vital role in refugee help as well as in the "Christian Movement for Peace" which she has inspired for so long.

All those who lived through the war remember the energy which she displayed to help refugees that had fled into Switzerland and to persuade our Federal authorities to relax the policy,

Telegrams and Cables : TRANCOSMOS LONDON

TELEX 24777

Telephone : 01-407 4433 (8 Lines)

COSMOS FREIGHTWAYS AGENCY LIMITED.

INTERNATIONAL FREIGHT FORWARDERS

By Road, Rail, Sea and Air

1, CATHEDRAL STREET,
LONDON BRIDGE, LONDON, S.E.1.

REGULAR GROUPAGE SERVICES WITH

SWITZERLAND

ANGLO-SWISS CUSTOMS EXPERTS.

OFFICIAL FREIGHT AND
PASSENGER AGENTS FOR
SWISSAIR AND ALL AIR LINES
TO SWITZERLAND AND ALL
PARTS OF THE WORLD

ALSO AT
LIVERPOOL, MANCHESTER,
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE
HULL, BRISTOL, CARDIFF,
SWANSEA, NEWPORT, Mon.,
GLASGOW.

CONNECTED
THROUGHOUT
THE WORLD

Agents: WELTIFURRER INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT CO. Ltd., Zurich, Basle, Schaffhausen, Geneva, St. Gall.

introduced for security reasons after 1942, of halting the inflow of refugees. She clamoured her cause in the higher Federal spheres and used to plead with the head of the Department of Justice and Police, Mr. Von Steiger (even when he was on holiday) to allow more refugees in and thus save thousands of lives. The results were not in measure with her efforts, but they were tangible enough. As a proof "Mutter Kurz" has received thousands of telegrams from all over the world for her birthday.

The reconstruction of the Pont des Bergues

The Pont des Bergues, a narrow bridge which succeeds the Pont du Mond Blanc and the Pont de l'île Rousseau as one goes downstream, was built in 1846 by General Guillaume-Henri Dufour, victor of the Sonderbund war and cantonal engineer in Geneva. The bridge was certainly well designed and constructed, since it was only in 1966 that an expertise discovered a few signs of wear. The pillars and abutment of the bridge were not replaced but the superstructure was reconstructed in record time. The bridge remains a secondary thoroughfare for traffic, which stays one-way. The pavements are enlarged and pedestrians can enjoy the numerous benches that have been placed along it. The opening ceremony gathered a good part of the town and all its main representatives.

A new and rich art gallery in Winterthur

Oskar Reinhart, the well-known businessman and art collector who died in 1965, had his wish fulfilled last month when his fabulous collection, comprising 700 masterpieces, was opened to the public in the renovated Reinhart mansion "Am Roemerholz". Oskar Reinhart had bequeathed his collection to the Confederation. The act of donation was passed in 1958 already and approved by the Federal Council. It was then agreed that the Reinhart artistic legacy should remain at "Am Roemerholz" for the enjoyment of the public, that no work of art should be sold or lent, and that the collection should not be enlarged in any way.

Oskar Reinhart was born in 1885 and worked in the paternal business of Volkart Brothers. This firm is well-known to the Swiss Colony in Great Britain since many of its members worked in the City branch of Volkart Brothers. Oskar Reinhart retired from business in 1924 already, in order to devote himself entirely to his activities as a collector. His vast knowledge earned him a say in many artistic bodies, such as the Federal Fine Arts Commission, the Gleyre and Gottfried Keller Foundations.

Basle airport comes of age

The Basle-Mulhouse airport, which has been undergoing important modernisation and enlargement, now has little to envy to its two peers, Cointrin and

Kloten airports. A new and gleaming terminal building has been opened. The approaches to the airport are as streamlined and practical as those to other modern airports. The customs hall has modern luggage shoots and revolving tables. The airport is also equipped with highly developed freight-handling facilities.

Switzerland at Osaka

The Swiss pavilion at the World Exhibition in Osaka has been considered by many reporters in the British Press as the best European pavilion. There is a standard exhibition pavilion housing a restaurant and a few well-chosen Swiss industrial products and an astonishing construction having the shape of a tree. This tree is 65 feet high and entirely constructed of aluminium. The leaves of nature are replaced by 32,000 electric bulbs and their rustling is imitated by electronic music. An air conditioning system is moreover built in the branches so that visitors can rest in a pleasant atmosphere.

Such an aluminium tree, with the harmony and the precision which its construction involved, was considered to have a far greater symbolic value than a classical pavilion.

The Swiss Day at Osaka will be 24th April. Mr. Gnägi, head of the Military Department, will make the trip to Japan for that occasion. Six concerts will be conducted by Charles Dutoit. In August, Durrenmatt's play, "The Meteor" will be presented in Japanese and in September, the "Ballet Moderne Suisse" will give eight performances.

FEDERAL

A new way to deal with the inflow of foreign labour

The Federal Council has decided to alter the mode of control of foreign labour. Hitherto, each firm has been allotted a definite quota of foreign labour. Now, the quota is not to be defined according to factories, but according to each canton. The country may henceforth not import more than 40,000 workers a year. 3,000 are intended to work for the Confederation and the rest are shared by the cantons. Zurich, for example, may have no more than 5,772 new foreign labour a year, Geneva only 2,590. The new apportionment tends to benefit the lesser developed cantons. There are provisions for supplementary authorisations in special cases, such as foreign scientists or men with federally-required competences. Particular restrictions have been laid down to prevent a disorganised movement within Switzerland by foreign workers. As an example, they may not change firms before having been active in their present place for a year. The actual population-control will be made more efficient and centralised. The ceiling of seasonal workers remains unchanged at 152,000, shared

by the building industry (115,000), by hotellery (21,000) and by all the other industries making use of seasonal manpower (16,000).

(ATS)

Purchase of land by foreigners

With a remarkable majority of 117 to 0, the National Council agreed to prolong the present federal order which prevents a foreigner from buying land unless he is a resident in Switzerland. The order has efficiently served its purpose and the National Council found it still necessary to prolong its implementation.

(ATS)

PROGRESS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL ROADS LAST YEAR

71 km of new national roads were opened last year, bringing the total of constructed highways to 560.3 km, 30.5% of the projected total of 1,840 km. 325.3 km, or 17.7% of that total are presently under construction. The three largest stretches open to circulation last year were the 30 km-long Wängi St. Gall, the 10 km Kaltwasser-Alter Spiegel and the 9 km Grono-Bellinzona extensions.

Last year, the Confederation carried the greatest part of the financial burden, spending some 730 million francs. The cantons contributed 130 million francs. The federal money was obtained from taxation on sales and imports of petroleum. As these sources of revenue were insufficient, the Confederation spent 80 million francs at a loss, the maximum permitted by the law on national roads.

(ATS)

RECENT DEATHS

Professor Auguste Lemaître, 82, in Geneva. He had been pastor in France, pastor of the Jonction parish in Geneva, moderator of the Company of Pastors in Geneva, president of the Consistoire of the National Protestant Church, lecturer in systematic theology at Geneva University, dean of this faculty for seven years, and President of the International Federation of Blue Cross Societies.

Pfarrer Paul Hassler, 51, of a sudden collapse in Basle. He was the well-known and beloved parson of the St. Alban parish in Basle.

Henry Breitenstein, 72, in Geneva. He had been General Secretary of the Geneva section of the Swiss Touring Club for the past 31 years. He had also held a similar post for ten years at the "Automobile Club de Suisse".

Hubert Gremaud, 72, at the Sainte Anne clinic in Fribourg. A teacher by profession, Hubert Gremaud had made himself a name as a writer and playwright. His better known novels are "Haut Pré" and "Ceux des rochettes". His plays include "Etreinte du Passé" and "Le Rapaca".

Pasteur Pierre Juillard, general

director of the "Eben Hezer" foundation for the handicapped, at 74 in Lausanne. Pasteur Juillard had been editor of "Jeunesse", the organ of the Swiss Y.M.C.A. and had published two books for young people, "Le Chant du Foyer" and "Pour la route . . . aux jeunes".

Etienne Lardy, 83, former Swiss Minister in Belgium. He came from a family of diplomats. His father, Carl Lardy had been Minister in Paris for over 30 years. His brother, Charles Lardy, was Swiss Minister in Tokyo and in Stockholm. Attached to the Legation at St. Petersburg, Etienne Lardy witnessed the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. His career led him to London, Berne, Washington, Shanghai, Turkey, and finally Brussels.

(ATS)

CRIMES AND ACCIDENTS

The Graenichen murder

Abi Heer, a 14-year-old schoolboy, was the natural child of a coloured Englishman and a Swiss woman. Adopted by the Heer family, who own the "Jaegerstubi" restaurant at Graenichen, he had been a constant worry to his adoptive parents, who had done all they could for him and sent him on several occasions to specialised institutions. However, one evening that the restaurant was closed and that the 30-year-old maid and mother of two was cleaning the floor, the young Abi, who had been watching her work, gathered his courage when she was bent over the sink and squeezing her floor-cloth and hit her on the nape with a hammer. The first knock brought her to her knees: it was followed by two more blows and concluded by knife-stabs. The young boy then realised what he had just done and went to report it to his step-mother. She was upstairs and had heard nothing. According to his testimony, Abi Heer had felt that he "had" to commit this crime. The psychologists who ex-

amined him discovered that sexual motives had underlied his act. He had stabbed his victim because, as he explained, he preferred to know her to be dead rather than maimed or paralysed for life.

A libel action defeated

Brigadier-General F. A. Von der Heydte had lodged a complaint against Rolf Bigler, a journalist who is presently chief editor of the "Sonntags Journal" but who at that time worked for the "Weltwoche", for a libellous article on his career. According to the article, the General had been a Nazi in 1933 already, he had instructed Egyptian troops in 1956 and had made numerous pronouncements against West Germany democracy. Mr. Rolf Bigler had referred to information which had appeared in the German Press, in particular "Der Spiegel", a publication which the General had also brought to the courts. Mr. Rolf Bigler was fined 1,000 fr. by the tribunal of the circuit of Zurich. He has appealed against this judgement and the Supreme Court of Zurich has acquitted him and condemned General Von der Heydte to repay 6,000 francs costs.

EVOLUTION OF THE SWISS ECONOMY IN 1969—FORECASTS FOR 1970

In 1969, for the second time in the last ten years, the Swiss economy showed a record growth. The actual increase amounted to 6% in 1969 (4% in 1968), which is very high for Switzerland and is probably to be attributed to the slight rise in consumer prices, whose index rose by 2.6% compared with 2.4% in 1968. Obviously the Swiss economy has benefited greatly from the intense economic activity reigning among the majority of its main trade partners, the slowing up in the growth experienced in the United States having been offset by the speeding up that has occurred in Europe. While the growth

in exports remained strong, domestic demand, of which private consumption and investments form the main part, showed a strong upward trend too.

Production and employment

The last known index of industrial output — October, 1969 — reached the new record figure of 193 points (1958=100). This corresponds to a mean rate of increase of 11% compared with 1968, made possible only by the use of the last reserves of the production forces. Output increased in all groups, except electricity works and gas works, where there was a falling off of 4%. Only the extent of the development differs, varying in fact from 3 to 24%. This record rate of growth is once again to be attributed to the chemical industry. In the machinery and apparatus group, the increase in output (+15%) also exceeds the average, while in watchmaking it is considerably smaller (+6%).

As in 1968, there were no signs of any easing up of the situation on the labour market, which remains one of Switzerland's major problems from both the economic and the political points of view. The number of unemployed dropped, at times, to below 100, for 5,000 jobs vacant. The number of foreign workers varied very little; at the end of September, when it normally reaches its maximum, the figure was in the neighbourhood of 659,000 (compared with 648,000 in 1968).

Foreign trade

Switzerland's exports represent about 2% of the total world exports; they are of vital importance therefore for the country. In fact, there are a whole series of industries which would not be able to survive if they could not market their products abroad. The extreme case is that of watchmaking, which exports almost the whole of its output (97%). In the embroidery, textile machinery and pharmaceutical industries, the percentage of the output sold abroad is also extremely high

FOR *Your*
WORLD
TRANSPORT
(ANYTHING - ANYWHERE)



Ask /
first!
WORLD TRANSPORT

WORLD TRANSPORT

Tel: 01-928 6996 . Telex: 28401 London

20/22 EMERSON STREET
LONDON S.E.1.

AGENCY LIMITED

AIRPORT OFFICES:

Specialized Regular Groupage Services

LONDON BIRMINGHAM SOUTHEND
MANCHESTER YEADON GATWICK

GREAT BRITAIN - SWITZERLAND and ITALY
and VICE VERSA

BRANCHES; BASLE · MANCHESTER · BRADFORD · BIRMINGHAM · HULL · SHEFFIELD · LIVERPOOL
LEICESTER · STOKE

(90%). The machine tool industry markets 76 to 80% of its production outside Switzerland, which is also the case of the chemical industry as a whole. The electrical machinery industry exports 60 to 70% of its products, whereas for the textile industry the figure is in the neighbourhood of 40%.

The value of the exports of goods is equivalent to a quarter of Switzerland's gross national product, i.e. of the value of the whole of the country's economic activities. If to this is added the proceeds from the exports of services, a third of Switzerland's gross national product comes from her economic relations with other countries.

Prospects for 1970

Although industrial activity is expected to remain brisk in 1970, the general economic growth will tend to slow up. This forecast is based on a survey of the Union Bank of Switzerland covering 22 branches of the economy. Whereas the increases in the turnover of the branches under consideration worked out at 11.3% in 1969, the growth is estimated to be in the neighbourhood of 6.8% for 1970. Forecasts differ however from one branch to the next. A falling off in the rate of growth is expected in the following sectors: textiles and clothing 8.3% (1969: 12.9%), building 4.1% (13.3%), machinery industry 9% (16.5%). On the other hand, no slowing up is expected in the other main branches of Swiss economic activity.

Domestic demand will increase, particularly as a result of the rapid growth in the purchasing power of consumers and the high level of the reserve orders for work in the building trade. Thus, unlike in previous years, in 1970 it is home demand that is expected to constitute the main driving force behind the overall demand, in spite of the slight improvement in export possibilities owing to the revaluation of the DM. However a certain slackening in the growth of exports is expected for 1970. The report issued by the Commission for Economic Research confirms this, just as the opinion of the Institute for Economic Research of the Federal Institute of Technology: "The day of extremely high rates of growth in exports seems to be nearing its end, for capacities are no longer sufficient to enable them to be maintained".

Employment will increase slightly and the shortage of labour become more marked. The last reserves available will probably be exhausted during the first half of the year. Let us mention, in this connection, that the Swiss people will be called on to give their opinion on a scheme, submitted by certain circles that have become concerned at the growth in the number of foreign workers, aimed at cutting down the number to 10% of the Swiss population in any given canton. If, in June of this year, this scheme were to be accepted, the number of foreign workers would have to be reduced by some 200,000 over a

period of four years. Such a reduction would inevitably involve the closing of a number of firms. Let us point out however that the Federal Council (Swiss government), the Federal Chamber (deputies) and all the parties voted unanimously to reject this scheme. In fact, for Switzerland it is not only an economic but also a political and humanitarian choice.

Fearing a recurrence in 1970 of the excessive boom conditions which had been checked only with difficulty in 1964, the government at the beginning of 1970 instituted a number of anti-inflationist measures such as restrictions on the programmes of public building work, the cutting down of personnel in the federal offices, the sterilisation of profits from the minting of currency, the lowering of the rate of guarantee for export risks and the speeding up of the tariff reductions negotiated within the framework of the Kennedy Round. Other more important steps might eventually be taken during the course of the year, affecting in particular Swiss exports. But this is not only a political but also an economic problem which needs to be solved not by the government—but by parliament.

A FREE ADDRESS BOOK OF IMPORTANT SWISS EXPORTERS

The Swiss embassies and consulates, the Swiss chambers of trade and the Swiss tourist offices will distribute free of charge to all those who request it an address book of all the important Swiss export industries: namely the catalogue of the Swiss Industries Fair in Basle, which has just come out. This comprehensive volume, with more than 1,000 pages, is a useful reference book which can be used the whole year round, as well as an absolutely indispensable guide for visitors to the Swiss Industries Fair which will take place from 11th to 21st April, 1970.

THE CONSUMPTION HABITS OF THE SWISS

Wine consumption is dwindling to the benefit of beer consumption; such are the conclusions of a recent report by the Swiss centre for agricultural information. Between 1880 and 1884, every Swiss drank an average of 70 litres of wine a year and 11.81 litres of spirits. Over the wider span of 1893-1902, the average per capita consumption of wine was 88.8 litres. Now it is only 39 litres a year, and the consumption of strong drinks has fallen to 4.45 litres a year, an undeniable improvement. However, the information centre warns us not to be misled by these figures, since they show a distinct upward trend in consumption. In the early fifties, the Swiss consumed only 33.9 litres of wine and 2.88 litres of spirits a year. A hundred persons now die of alcoholism a year, 30,000 labour and road accidents are deplored every year and an alleged 4 to 5 per cent of national income is spent on alcoholic drinks.

Consumption of beer has sharply increased in recent years and now stands at 75 litres per person. Cider is losing ground strongly.

The Swiss ate more meat than they ever have in their history last year. Statistics show that the per capita consumption of meat was 70.365 kilograms. Consumption had reached a minimum in 1945 and was then of 30.767 kilos. According to the Federal Veterinary Office, 450,337 tons of every kind of meat, including fish, were consumed in Switzerland last year. Pork (198,000 tons) came in first position, then came beef (119,000 tons), then veal (42,000 tons), then lamb (5,500 tons), then imported and processed meat (5,300 tons), horse-meat (4,000 tons) and, finally, goat-meat (649 tons). Over two-thirds of the meat consumed in Switzerland was of national origin.

(ATS)

SNTO AND OSEC NEWS

"Gaily blows the horn . . ."

Gotthard (SNTO): - Who does not know it, the song about "the yellow coach" with its horses trotting so fireily while one sits high up with the coachmen who blows his horn? The tune of the last uostilion of the Gotthard comes back to our memory, too. — The romantic stage coaches have long since been replaced by modern, yellow postal buses. Their powerful engines make the heart of technically minded men beat faster, the melodious triple sound horn has become world famous and somehow recalls the good old times of the stage coaches of days gone by. At the same time one marvels at the comfortable way of travelling and at the high skill of the postal bus drivers, especially when they so masterfully guide their big, yellow cars across the Alpine passes. The general management of the PTT (Post, Telegraph, Telephone) has just published a nice booklet devoted to travel by post. It is very attractive from a graphic point of view and contains a lot of interesting information on the development, organisation and achievements of this postal service so rich in ancient traditions.

Avalanche shooting in the Gotthard region already in the 15th century

Davos (SNTO): - The Federal Institute of Snow and Avalanche Research on the Weissfluh Ridge near Davos is world famous. Almost immeasurable is its work aiming at the protection of mankind at times of potential danger of avalanches and first of all in the service of steadily increasing winter sports and tourism. However, it is probably less known that for instance already in the 15th century the inhabitants along the Gotthard Road used to fire mortar shots so noisy that their din would cause huge masses of