

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: - (1983)

Heft: 1803

Rubrik: Business world

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Swiss put in world's second longest working week

THE Swiss are working hours which are still long by international standards. With an average working time of 2,042 hours per year, Switzerland is surpassed only by Japan with 2,133 hours.

The long hours should not conceal the fact, however, that a considerable shortening of the working week has also taken place in Switzerland. In 1982, the average week in industry amounted to slightly below 44 hours and the actual working time (after deduction of public holidays and absences due to illness and accidents) to only just under 38 hours.

Four weeks' vacation is standard nowadays; older employees are usually granted between five and six weeks'

vacation. In addition, public holidays account for between 10 and 12 days of the year, eight of which generally fall on a working day.

Consider the past: Over 100 years ago (1877) the factory law was passed which saw the introduction of the 65-hour workweek and the prohibition of child labour. By 1920, the

workweek had been shortened to 49 hours and it was only in the last 20 years that the working week was reduced through collective agreements to 43.7 hours (fourth quarter of 1982).

The reduction in working time can be illustrated more clearly by an example spanning three generations: The grandparents (born in 1895), having reached retirement, can look back on roughly 115,000 hours worked. Prior to 1920, only every tenth employee was able to take a week's vacation per year. In 1910, about 3,000 working hours per annum was the general rule.

During the Second World War, the children (born 1925)

started gainful activity. At that time, two weeks' vacation was usual in Switzerland. On the basis of the virtually unchanged average workweek of 47 hours till 1960, they accumulated an average annual working time of nearly 2,300 hours.

By the time they retire in 1990 (men), they will probably have worked about 100,000 hours. The grandchildren, which were born around 1950, will have accumulated 85,000 working hours before they reach retirement age in the year 2015 at the latest.

This is equal only to 70 per cent of the working time recorded by their grandparents. In other words, on the basis of an 8½-hour day and a 5-day workweek, the grandchildren will have been able during their working lives to enjoy 700 weeks, or 13½ years, more leisure time than their grandparents in their generation.

Source: UBS Business Facts and Figures May 1983.

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Swissair adapts its fleet

SWISSAIR is taking further action to adapt its transport capacity to market needs. The adjustments are aimed at returning flight operations to profitability by 1985 and to continue a strategy initiated two years ago in connection with the purchase of 10 Airbus A310 aircraft.

Counting all new acquisitions and planned withdrawals, Swissair currently expects that in 1984-85 its fleet will consist of 47 aircraft and not 50 as originally planned.

Apart from meeting the most stringent environmental criteria, the aircraft entering service are larger and more efficient than

those they replace, so that scheduled capacity will still grow by about three per cent annually in ton-kilometre terms during this two-year period. This brings the airline's production more closely into line with expected demand.

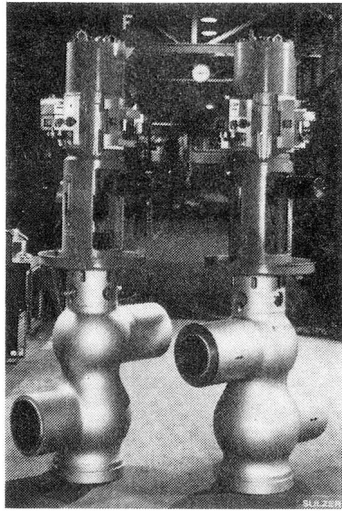
No cuts are planned in the airline's route network. All current destinations will continue to be served, although a few frequencies will be reduced.

Current plans envisage an increase in fleet size to 49 aircraft from 1986.

Sulzer gear for Hong Kong

THE Castle Peak "B" power station for the China Light and Power company, Hong Kong, will contain 660 MW steam turbine generator units incorporating Sulzer HP and LP steam by-pass valves and control equipment to enable the boilers to maintain output and rapidly restore the turbines to load following load rejection.

The main contractors, GEC Turbine Generators, have awarded the contract for the supply of the LP by-pass equip-



Sulzer HP bypass control valves

ment to Sulzer Bros (UK) for progressive delivery from September 1984 to September 1988.

Manchester to mount first Swiss mission

MANCHESTER Chamber of Commerce is organising its first ever trade mission to Switzerland, the UK's seventh largest export market.

The sales drive will take place in October and is aimed at introducing North West companies to valuable contacts in the country.

Last year the UK won a 5½ per cent share of Swiss imports with

exports worth £1,196 million but with a greater concentration of effort, the chamber believes this figure could be substantially improved.

The mission, which will be based in Zurich with access to other centres, has the full backing of the Trade Promotion Branch of the British Consulate General in Zurich.

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AFTER making allowances for seasonal variations, employment in Switzerland in 1982 ceased to drop from one quarter to the next, says the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade.

In the fourth quarter, the number of persons gainfully employed was 1.4 per cent fewer than the figure for the last three months in 1981, which corresponds to the reduction of about 33,000 jobs.

The number of workers in industry dropped by 4.4 per cent, while in the building and services sectors it increased slightly.

Owing, in particular, to seasonal variations, unemployment increased in the fourth quarter and at the beginning of 1983. The unemployment rate, which

amounted to 0.9 per cent in January, nevertheless remained very small compared with the figures in other countries.

In 1982 the part of the reduction in employment exceeding the increase in unemployment was offset largely by a drop in the Swiss working population.

The foreign working population, on the other hand, continued to increase; in December it amounted to 648,000 people, representing an increase of 1.7 per cent compared with the same month in 1981.

There are two reasons for this trend in the size of the foreign working population, which is the reverse of what occurred during the 1974-76 recession: the worsening of the economic situa-

tion has had a far less marked effect than in the mid-'70s on certain branches such as the hotel trade and part of the building sector.

In addition, holders of

residence permits, who enjoy the same rights as Swiss citizens on the labour market, rose from 31 per cent to 53 per cent of the foreign working population between 1973 and 1982.

Employment and labour market

	1980	1981	1982	1983
Unemployment rate	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.9
Number of unemployed	6,255	5,889	13,220	27,864
Number of partially unemployed	2,128	5,704	36,611	68,545
Situations vacant	12,312	11,876	6,352	5,209

Source: la Vie économique



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