

Switzerland and her postwar problems

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SWITZERLAND AND HER POSTWAR PROBLEMS.

Switzerland is fully conscious of the fact that her future partly depends on the new world order which will be born of the present war. Nevertheless, in spite of everything, this country cannot continue entering the postwar period without preparing for it. Switzerland must maintain her national economy and prevent states of tensions from arising. It is with these facts in view that a few days ago, M. Stampfli, President of the Swiss Confederation made a statement on postwar social and economic problems. This is the first time that a member of the Swiss Government has given a public address on a subject of this importance. M. Stampfli spoke of the uneasiness the coerced measures of war economy is causing in Switzerland's industrial and business circles. This uneasiness is forming a current of opposition against any tangible change in the principles of the line of the present economic policy, a change which would imply a system of controlled economy. On the other hand, the creative value of private enterprise in Switzerland is such that any exaggerated attempt to introduce state control would have to take this factor into consideration. However, once hostilities have ceased, Switzerland will not be able to overcome certain obstacles without the intervention of government authority. For a fairly long period after the war it will be necessary to follow a policy of trade control, at least as regards foreign trade. The object will be to subordinate Switzerland's imports to her exports as was the case before the war. This is one of Switzerland's primary and traditional activities, and it is to be hoped that the system of bilateral economic treaties and trade agreements and of international trade relations will be maintained. Switzerland's financial power will have to be placed at the service of the export trade and thus subordination will take the form of the export of capital. Credits should always be granted against corresponding economic advantages. After the war, the world will probably be further removed from free trade which can be considered as the ideal system of international trade exchanges. Switzerland must take timely and methodical preparations in view of postwar economic methods. Speaking of agriculture, M. Stampfli, who is the head of the department of Public Economy, called attention to the transformation of Swiss agriculture necessitated by the measures which had to be introduced to insure national wartime food supply. These measures have allowed Switzerland to extend her total area of cultivated land from 450,000 to 900,000 acres. This increase has brought about profound modification in methods of production and has moreover involved a marked increase in agricultural labor. Public authorities have invested enormous amounts of capital in this undertaking. The Swiss Federal Government alone has granted credits to the value of 180 million francs for land improvement, besides which cantonal and municipal authorities have granted subsidies totalling about half this amount. Thus enormous expenditures of both capital and labor would not be justified if the land thus recuperated was to be changed back into grassland after the war. The Swiss Federal Government has therefore decided to maintain a surplus of 700,000 acres of land under cultivation when the war is over. The government considers that Swiss agriculture must above all serve to furnish national supply. To achieve this aim, the government will have to adopt an active agricultural policy even in peace-time. M. Stampfli then

mentioned that Swiss industrial circles are viewing somewhat apprehensively the efforts made by farming and handicraft circles to obtain definite guaranties in regard to living conditions after the war is over. It is evident that these living conditions must be conciliated with the vital necessities of other branches of national economic life and especially with those of the export trade. In brief, the Swiss export trade can survive only if the difficulties it has to face as regards the national price structure are not too great as compared with other industrial countries. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that war conditions have resulted in an effective wage decrease for both Swiss workmen and employees. Owing to the fact that wage and salary adaption have not run parallel to that of the increase in the cost of living, postwar price movements cannot be allowed to increase this difference without endangering social peace. The only object of all these measures, Mr. Stampfli continued, is to safeguard Switzerland's economic life. The providing of work for the unemployed by orthodox methods is one of the most important tasks which lies before the government. Disturbances are bound to occur in the postwar period and that is when the problem of the best way of fighting unemployment will arise. Supplementary possibilities of employment according to a program prepared before long will be ready to unemployed labors. Certain plans of this kind, involving an expenditure of 404 million francs for cantonal and municipal authorities and of 656 million for the Federal Government, are already to be put into operation when the time comes. The President of the Swiss Confederation closed his speech by declaring that Switzerland is well ahead in the matter of social welfare and further progress will be realized in this domain as soon as the war is over by the introduction of old age and widows' and orphans' pensions.

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SWISS INDUSTRIES FAIR OF 1944.
(22nd April - 22nd May) at Basle.

The Swiss Industries Fair of 1944 will be mainly a technical show. The Swiss machine industry, which has earned a good name all over the world with their quality products, will be very strongly represented by machine tool machinery, woodworking machinery and textile machinery. Furthermore, special machines for the building, baking and butchery trades, together with agricultural and domestic machines, will be shown in large numbers. The electrical industry will be represented by a still larger range of machinery and appliances than last year; while the exhibits for gas, water, boiler plants and transport will be at least as comprehensive and the Swiss watch industry will fill the special watch pavilion to the last inch.

In spite of the extension of the showrooms it has not been possible to accept all the numerous applications to exhibit from the technical industries.

The rest of the Swiss industries will, naturally, not lag behind at the coming Fair. The textile industry and clothing trade, including shoes and leather goods, will be represented by wider ranges than in former years. The exhibits featuring office furniture, business appliances, paper, graphic and commercial art, will be complete, as well as those for home science, applied art, ceramic art, furniture, etc. The book show will present the cultural life of Switzerland.

Swiss Industries and Trade are greatly interested to show to the world their capacity and their wide range of production. The problem of providing work for everybody will be illustrated by a special exhibit, organised by the competent authorities, under the slogan "Work for ALL".

The Swiss Industries Fair of 1944 will therefore be an expression of Swiss determination that her industries and trade shall play their part in the coming New Order of world trade.

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SWITZERLAND SPONSORS MUSIC AND DRAMA IN SPITE OF WAR.

Surrounded by the most cruel warfare mankind has ever seen, landlocked and striving desperately for an ever greater degree of self-sufficiency, Switzerland believes in holding up her chin. Vacations, sports and trips in the scenic paradise that is Switzerland are recommended by the government for both physical and mental relaxation. In addition to this enjoyment of nature's priceless gifts the large number of music-lovers and theatre-goers are still well catered for.