

Hydro-electric power in Switzerland

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Only after the fair closed, however, was the explanation of this extraordinary attendance understood. Expecting continuously increasing competition from the United States and Britain, above all in products such as machine tools and electrical apparatus, all leading Swiss firms were on hand to revive the close pre-war personal contacts with foreign buyers, the object being to secure orders large enough to guarantee full employment despite Switzerland's high price level and the impossibility of reducing costs by mass production.

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HYDRO-ELECTRIC POWER IN SWITZERLAND.

Lausanne. - The total output of electric energy in Switzerland was 9655 million kW/h over the 1944/45 period as compared with 8583 million kW/h in 1943.

The remarkable increase in the electric power output in Switzerland in the last few years must be attributed to several causes. This country is, it must be remembered, the land of "white coal"; hydraulic power is, in fact, its only natural resource. Owing to the difficulty in obtaining coal supplies, this resource has been exploited to the full; great new power stations have been built, harnessing mountain torrents, rivers and streams.

Last summer the rise in output was checked by the interruption of the export of energy to Germany and the percentage of exported energy as compared with the total output fell to 9.2%, as against 13% in the previous year, 22% in 1938/39 and 24% in 1935/1936.

Switzerland's consumption of electric power has risen from 7,432 to 8,771 million kW/h, representing the energy of 230,000 tons of imported coal. Over the 1944/45 period only 160,000 tons of coal reached Switzerland, and it will therefore be easily understood how important this modern source of energy is to this little country. The Swiss Federal Railways are entirely electrified and last year consumed 15 million kW/h more than in 1943. A slight fall in consumption for industrial purposes was noted.

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SOCIAL WELFARE AND INDUSTRY IN SWITZERLAND.

Lausanne. - Thanks to the emergency powers conferred upon it since the outbreak of the war, the Swiss Government has the power to enforce the enactment of trade conventions passed between labor syndicates and employers. In the course of the last five years, arrangements of this kind have been widely adopted. The Swiss Federal Council has issued 51 decrees giving force of law to certain agreements of this kind having a national or regional scope. The compulsory application of 64 orders passed by cantonal authorities has also been decreed and 58 of these enactments were still in force at the end of September 1945.

The object of most of these conventions are higher living allocations, family subsidies, paid holidays for workers, the length of working hours, and so on. Switzerland is making a great effort to ensure good working conditions in trade and industry and so to raise the standard of national well-being.

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INCREASED SWISS SHOE PRODUCTION.

Swiss shoe production increased to 7,500,000 pairs during 1945 from 6,850,000 pairs during 1944. The output fell short of the 1940 production, however, of 11,000,000 pairs.

Present leather imports are considered insufficient to meet the demands of the domestic footwear industry, according to the Swiss press.

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