

Appreciation

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A P P R E C I A T I O N

By E. Merz, Auckland.

Last year I published in this paper a series of articles, describing some of my experiences and travels in lovely Switzerland whilst on holiday there in 1948. The reaction from my compatriots has been spontaneous, as many dozens of appreciations were expressed verbally as well as in writing. For several months I have intended to thank these friends through the medium of our little paper, as I could hardly find the time to reply to each of you individually. Your appreciation and gratitude has awakened fresh emotions of my intense admiration and love towards our Fatherland. And naturally too, I am happy and appreciative to know that many of you found a few moments of relaxation and pleasure to read a compatriot's travel impressions.

Although I hesitate to "broadcast" further views and again be in the "limelight", I feel that many of our readers will find interest in a few more articles which I may be able to compile in the near future. I am rather uncertain at the moment what I am going to tell you; it might be about Switzerland's vast foreign trade; the hotel industry; the transport; the watchmaking; science and economy; and, of course, of the people themselves. During my 8 months stay in Switzerland, I had ample time and opportunity to observe and study the people and their manifold activities and my store of memories is not yet exhausted. I shall now commence relating some further memories and will intitle the articles :

" R E M I N I S C E N C E S "

In New Zealand there is much talking and writing recently, relative to the electric power shortage, and it might be a suitable topic to give a few facts and impressions of Switzerland's water power and hydro-electric development.

Let me tell you at the outset that, although the generative power production is immeasurably larger than most other countries, Switzerland had to ration electricity twice in recent years. Both in 1947 and 1949 the supply was severely restricted due to prolonged drought. To counteract such deficiencies, further strenuous efforts are being made to harness the energy hoarded in water, as it is such a basic problem both for industry and the economic welfare of the country. I shall now try to describe the development of our water power installations, etc.

Switzerland has no coal-deposits, and in view of its mountainous aspect is able to support hardly 2 Million people from its own soil. Before the war we had to import 48% of all our food supplies. Already prior to the outbreak of the World War the electric power development had been immense, but promptly with the commencement of hostilities, fresh plans were made and put into effect as soon as circumstances permitted. Thus, the output of kwh was steadily increased and Switzerland was able to sell electric power to neighbouring countries, and in exchange obtain precious food so badly lacking. And today further vast projects are under consideration, and in actual construction, thus lessening the country's dependence on foreign supplies. Within perhaps 50 years, Switzerland has developed into a land of electricity and can be regarded as the most electrified country in the world.

From the snow capped peaks and the great glaciers the water runs down the valleys to form the many lovely lakes as vast reservoirs for collecting and storing the "white coal". The outlet of the swiftly flowing rivers can often be put under control relatively easily and thus countless horsepower can be harnessed and converted into potential power. Today,