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EIRE FIRST, N.Z. SECOND AMONG WORLD'S EATERS

New Zealanders are the world's second heaviest eaters, and Australians the third heaviest, according to a United Nations report published recently.

The United Nations statistical year-book for 1952 said that first place belonged to the Southern Irish. Each Irishman averaged 3500 calories a day in 1951.

Next came New Zealand with 3450, Australia 3280, Switzerland 3250, Canada 3240, Sweden 3240, Iceland 3210, Finland 3210, the United States 3210, Argentina 3190, Norway 3180, Denmark 3130, Britain 3100, the Netherlands 3090.

India was at the bottom of the list with 1570 calories.

THE PRESENT SITUATION OF SWISS ECONOMY

Interested observers of Switzerland's economic life are of the opinion that the unusually high business activity here, with all its inherent advantages and dangers, will return to a more or less normal state. There will be fewer fluctuations in employment, and orders for manufacturers will be less numerous. As was the case in the time of shortages, consumers will again have more to say.

During the last few months, competition among Swiss manufacturers has sharply increased, a good indication of the fact that Switzerland has retained its vitality in the game of free market changes. This turn from a sellers' market has until now had no effect on the employment situation, and, in general, a demand for labour still exists, and there is practically no unemployment in Switzerland.

Swiss exports have been high and the construction business has had a good winter. Future prospects for this country are also bright.

The Swiss consumer has at his command more than enough goods to satisfy his needs. Although the average factory worker's salary is slightly lower than it was in 1950, the actual buying power of salaries and family incomes has, without doubt, increased. The retail industry has also completed a successful year, and an increase in activity is expected in the future.

In general, the outlook for Switzerland's business world is favourable. Some of the difficulties which Swiss exporters had in 1952 will probably be overcome this next year. Past experience has repeatedly shown that whenever markets

are lost because of foreign exchange difficulties, new sources of outlet are uncovered, and any losses are taken care of immediately. This policy of utilising every possible foreign market will be continued in 1953, but at the same time, Switzerland must be sure to avoid too much protectionism against foreign imports into this country. For her own interest, an "Open Door Policy" must be maintained here.

SWISS EXPORTS IN 1952: 4,700 MILLION FRANCS

When examining the figures for Switzerland's foreign trade, it must not be forgotten that this is a small country of 4.7 million inhabitants, possessing no raw materials of its own, an unproductive soil and without direct access to the sea. The high export figures recorded last year in most branches of Swiss industry thus assume their real importance.

Swiss exports as a whole amounted to some 4,749 million francs, and thus exceeded in value those of the previous year. This change was due in part to already existing orders and in part to the very high figures for watchmaking exports. These, in fact, totalled 1,082 million francs, i.e. 72 million more than in 1951. They represented 22.8 per cent. of the country's total exports. However, from the point of view of volume, there was a slight falling off in this branch. It should be pointed out in this connection that although Swiss exports as a whole did not vary much during 1952, important changes occurred in certain categories of goods. Exports of most of the textile industries decreased; this was mainly the case with regard to cotton fabrics and pure and artificial silk materials.

The retrograde movement was even more marked with respect to the exports of certain chemical products. Thus, for example, the value of dyestuffs exported fell from 276.4 to 179.5 million francs, and that of chemical products for industrial use from 136.7 to 94.8 million francs. It is only fair, however, to point out that these figures are still three times as large as those of the last year before the war.

Exports of machinery advanced from 962.7 million francs in 1951, to 989 million last year, while sales of instruments and apparatus increased from 305.5 to 311.6 million francs. In the field of foodstuffs, exports of cheese almost reached pre-war levels with regard to volume; exports of condensed milk, however, remained somewhat lower. In comparison with the same period, exports of chocolate showed a remarkable increase, and were valued at some 21 million Swiss francs.

As compared with 1951, Swiss imports dropped 12 per cent., and totalled almost 5,206 million

francs. Quantitatively, it was purchases of manufactured products that decreased the most; with regard to foodstuffs and raw materials this decrease was smaller. It may nevertheless be concluded that since the middle of 1951, that is to say the time when the period of building up and replenishing stocks came to an end, Swiss imports have dropped continually.

The adverse balance of trade at the end of 1952 amounted to 456.8 million francs, i.e. almost 800 million francs less than in 1951. This large decrease can be explained by the falling off in purchases abroad. However, the slight drop in the level of the prices of imported goods also had its effect. Let us further point out, in connection with the balance of trade, that in the last four months of 1952 Switzerland even recorded an excess of exports over imports amounting to 117.2 million francs, or a monthly average of 29.3 million francs.

Switzerland's principal supplier countries last year were Germany, followed by the United States, France, Italy, Great Britain, the Belgium-Luxemburg Union, the Netherlands and Canada. The principal buyer countries were the United States, Germany, Italy, France, the Belgium-Luxemburg Union, Great Britain, Sweden, the Netherlands, Brazil and Austria.

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AT THE SWISS INDUSTRIES FAIR

BASEL, April 11th to 21st, 1953.

For many years past, the products of the electrical engineering industry have occupied a place of honour at the Basel Fair, Switzerland's pre-eminent technical exhibition. It is common knowledge that the scarcity of raw materials in Switzerland compelled industrialists at a very early date to utilise to the best advantage the hydraulic power which nature has so bountifully endowed the country. As a result, electrical engineering has developed in Switzerland on a gratifying scale, both in respect of power production and distribution and in the infinitely wider field of the practical applications of electricity. The Swiss Industries Fair thus affords each year an excellent general survey of the progress that has been achieved.

Swiss manufacturers ceaselessly improve their structural designs in all that relates to the **production, transformation and distribution of electrical energy**, and carry out fruitful research in admirably equipped laboratories. As an example, a 57 KW, 2400 KV shock generating set with a column more than 26 feet high, for high-tension testing laboratories, will be exhibited at Basel

this year. The design of high-power alternators is also making progress, especially as regards the insulation of the windings and the methods of fixing the pole pieces. The transformation of electrical energy is a subject of unremitting research. The insulation, protection, and cooling of transformers are improved with each passing year; more powerful types of mercury-arc and pumpless, rare-gas-atmosphere rectifiers capable of supporting heavy overloads appear on the scene. A new product which is now commercially available after having been tried out in the metallurgical industry is the contact rectifier, the characteristics of which are such as to warrant the statement that an interesting future lies before it. Every year sees the advent of new or improved equipment for the distribution of electric power. Remote operation and control of sub-stations and even of power stations has become common, and the special equipment used for this purpose has reached an extremely high degree of perfection. Remote control by audio-frequency pulses in the distribution network enables the loads to be conveniently spread, and this method is undergoing constant development. Several companies will be displaying their systems, which have found numerous practical applications abroad. There are new developments—not spectacular, but interesting—in equipment for power generating and distributing stations; new measuring transformers coated with a plastic product; square-dial indicating apparatus which can be read from a considerable distance; relays of all kinds for the most varied uses; low-oil or air-blast circuit breakers; disconnectors in which not only the insulations, but the operating levers as well, are made of synthetic plastics; lightning conductors of a new kind; recording and totalising apparatus with mean-value indication, etc. This year it will be possible to inspect at Basel a meter calibrating station, a programme-controlled regulator enabling the voltage of a supply system to be varied according to a pre-established schedule, and a new universal measuring instrument which will attract much attention; it gives direct readings of voltage, current, active and reactive power, power factor, and frequency. Mention should also be made of cables and wires, the manufacture of which is undergoing far-reaching changes owing to the new insulating materials which are now being utilised.

The **applications of electricity** are already extremely diverse, and they are becoming more extensive almost every day. Switzerland occupies a prominent position in this field; her products enjoy a high reputation all over the world. There has been an important advance in electric traction: the production of motors driven by 50-cycle single-phase current, which has made it possible to build locomotives supplied with current directly