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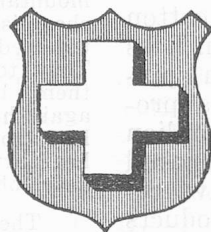
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AUCKLAND.

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

The Production of Electrical Energy

The new power station of Gondo, in Valais, recently went into operation. In a speech held on this occasion, Mr. Escher, Swiss Minister of Transportation and Communication, pointed out that this power plant with an annual production of 200 million kwh., is able to supply the same amount of energy as that produced by all of Switzerland's power stations fifty years ago. Progressive industrialization—Mr. Escher continued—has caused a considerable increase in the demand for electric power. Careful attention must therefore be paid to this branch of the national economy; one year of drought only may disrupt the equilibrium of supply and demand, and lead to renewed restrictions in the use of electricity. The demand for electrical power is rising at an annual rate of 7 per cent. Under these circumstances, Mr. Escher concluded, it is indispensable to continue the programme of the construction of new power stations.

A Memorable Event in Swiss Typewriter Manufacturing

Paillard Ltd., the famous Swiss manufacturer of typewriters, has been specializing in precision mechanics since 1814. In 1914 Paillard started to make typewriters and six years later, the first "Hermes" model appeared on the market. The company actually employs about 2200 persons. Its greatest success was the "Hermes Baby," a small sized, lightweight model which immediately gained the public's favour. It was due to the "Hermes Baby" that Switzerland moved from sixth to third place as an exporter of typewriters, being preceded only by the United States and Germany. Recently the one millionth Hermes machine has been produced, an event which deserves to be specially recorded.

Success of a Swiss-made Motor-cycle

At a recent durability test held in Monaco, in which 118 contestants from 11 different countries took part, the Swiss-made Condor motor-cycle

has won three first prizes. The Swiss team in fact heads the list of countries, clubs and makes which participated in the contest.

Motor Vehicles in Switzerland

There are three times as many motor vehicles in Switzerland today as there were before the war. Every thirteenth Swiss citizen owns a motor vehicle, and 234,000 automobiles and 142,000 motor-cycles were registered on September 30, 1952. This total of 376,000 vehicles does not include farm tractors and Army equipment. Two-thirds of the automobiles are under 10 h.p. There are 30,500 bicycles with small motors, approximately 39,000 scooters, and 72,500 motor-cycles of different models.

The Output of Swiss Breweries

From October, 1951, until September, 1952, the output of Switzerland's breweries was 50.6 million gallons compared with 44 million gallons in the previous year. Before the war, average output was about 55 million gallons a year. The Brewers' Association reports that the consumption of beer has been stimulated by the hot summer; on the other hand, business has been unfavourably influenced by a 40 to 50 per cent. increase in the price of hops as well as by high excise taxes on beer which amount of 50 centimes per gallon.

New Packaging Methods in the Swiss Chocolate Industry

Rich in food value and of the highest quality, Swiss chocolate is known all over the world. Recently the Suchard Co. in Serrieres, Neuchatel, has developed a new chocolate packaging process by which the aluminium wrapping sheet is hermetically sealed, the new method is due to Suchard's head chemist, who co-operated with a number of Swiss scientific institutes. It will protect chocolate against humidity, insects, and odours as well as against heat. This will be particularly welcome in hot climates where the problem of conserving chocolate has presented serious difficulties until now.

The Situation in the Swiss Cotton Industry

In the third quarter of 1952 the Swiss cotton industry continued to resume its production. Less activity was noted, especially in the cotton spinning mills, while in the weaving branches production was more or less steady and 96 million feet of cotton were turned out. But compared with last year, even the weaving mills have resumed their output. Imports of cotton products decreased by 50 per cent. last year and amounted to only 2.2 million pounds. The single increase was seen in imports of raw cotton. Egypt delivered the most cotton to Switzerland, Peru was in second place, and the United States in third. Switzerland exported 4.8 million pounds of cotton in the second quarter of this year, while only 3.5 million pounds were sold in the third quarter.

New Defence Production Act Proposed

Mr. Otto Zipfel, delegate of the Swiss Federal Government for defence production, has submitted the draft of a new law replacing the Defence Production Act of April 1, 1938. The new law contains provisions for the stockpiling of strategic materials by private business.

New Process for Sterilizing Water

The Katadyn-Filter Co. in Zurich has developed a new process for sterilizing water. According to official tests, bacteria are absorbed in this new process at an unusually rapid rate. No chemical substances are used, for the bacteria are killed through the action of silver ions. The new invention will be especially valuable on long trips in places with a shortage of sterilized water. Infected water can now be pumped out of the ground and sterilized immediately.

THE FIRST ALPINE HORN

A STORY FROM SWITZERLAND RE-TOLD BY
S. L. RICARDO (from the "Swiss Observer").

Have you ever seen a Swiss alpine horn? It is so long that a tall man can stand upright with one end of the horn in his mouth and the other end resting on the ground. The loud trumpet notes carry far over the mountains to call the cows or send a greeting from one lonely chalet to another.

Once there was a brave young hunter called Karl who loved to chase chamois. One day he leapt a ten-foot ravine, another he climbed a rock face steep as a wall. No wonder the mountain fairies began to notice him. They held his ankles when he walked along a three-inch ledge. They pulled him back by the hair when he slipped into a deep blue crevice in the ice. They strengthened his climbing rope with their magic threads and blew his arrows onward with their breath. At night as he slept they whispered in his ear, telling him where he could find a chamois next day.

But the gnomes who lived in the roots of the mountains and came out only at night, loved the chamois and all the other wild creatures and were troubled when Karl killed so many of their friends. They took to spying on him. Karl never really saw them, but they were all about his path. Now and again he could see a red cap whisk behind a boulder as he strode down the mountain at twilight; or would hear little voices crying through the morning mist, "Oh dear, oh dear, here he comes hunting again."

Then one day he chased a pure white chamois which led him on and on until, just at twilight, he lost it. It was too late to begin the long climb down the mountain so Karl looked about for somewhere to sleep. He found a herdsman's hut. It was old and empty and the floor was so wet and cold that Karl climbed into the loft and fell asleep on some straw.

At midnight something woke him, he peered through the ladder hole into the room below and saw a bright fire burning and three crystal bowls on the table. Round the fire stood three little red-capped gnomes cutting away with their axes at something which lay on the floor. As Karl watched they dropped their axes and stood back and he saw that they had made a great horn, as long as the hut. They dragged it to the door and blew on it and its deep, sweet notes re-echoed round the mountains and was answered by the cows on every pasture. Then the gnomes called up to Karl, "Come down, Karl, come and drink from which ever bowl you will." Karl climbed down the ladder and looked at the bowls. In the first bowl was a red drink, in the second a yellow one and the third bowl was full of milk. He chose this bowl and drained it. "You have chosen well," said the biggest gnome. "Now the magic horn shall be yours." Only once in 500 years do we make such a horn. So you must learn to copy it. Then all Swiss herdsman will be able to call their beasts to the mountain pastures. They will grow rich and have no need to kill our friends the chamois." "Sometimes when you blow your horn," said the smallest gnome, "wild creatures will come, but if you would live in happiness you must do them no harm." Then the gnomes vanished. But long after they had gone Karl heard their voices echoing under the ground, "Remember, remember."

Soon after this Karl fell in love with a shepherd girl, Fenette. She begged him to give up his wild life as a hunter and become a shepherd. At last he agreed. He made Fenette a horn like his own and every evening they used to call to each other across the mountains. One evening, just before the day fixed for their wedding, Karl began to blow his goodnight tune; as he blew a young chamois came bounding to him. He forgot the gnomes' warning, snatched up his bow, fitted an arrow and sent it right to the heart of the chamois. Then raising his horn he called to Fenette again and again. But there was no answer. Fenette had indeed risen to her feet to answer. But she was standing near a deep crevice. As she raised her horn an arrow sang, she took a step back and fell and the very same arrow with which Karl had pierced the chamois tinkled after her down the ice.

Day after day Karl searched for Fenette, but never found her. He became a gentle old man, caring for her sheep as well as his own. In winter he ventured out from his hut on the high alpine pasture to look for lost travellers and guided them to safety by the notes of his horn. One evening when the sunset glow glorified the peaks Karl blew one long clear note and left his hut for the last time. He was never seen again; but people said that the gnomes had forgiven him at last and allowed him to join Fenette in the land at the roots of the mountains.