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***Tourists Scarce at Swiss Resorts***

Les Avants, Switzerland.—Because the Swiss franc is still worth approximately twenty cents, the country is rapidly becoming impoverished. Tourists were always the principal Swiss source of income, and now tourists look at the exchange rates, see that they can get only five francs for a dollar, and stay away from Switzerland. As a result, parts of the country that were jammed with a tourist population before the war now look like the deserted boomtowns of Nevada.

Hundreds of hotels are closed in Switzerland, and the tourists are coming into the country in mere trickles of the streams that poured in before the war. The hotelmen are desperate. Wealthy Swiss people, when they want a holiday, go into the Austrian Tyrol where their francs will buy a bushel basket full of kronen. French people are not coming to Switzerland at all.

“I wish the Swiss franc would drop to the same value as the French,” the manager of a big hotel said to me today. “Then we might get our share of the flood of tourists coming to Europe now. Prices here are practically as low as similar resorts in the French Alps, but all the tourists want to get as many francs as they can for their dollars, so they stay away.”

As a matter of fact, the tourist would do as well in Switzerland as he would in France, for the big hotels in France and Italy counteract the rate of exchange by raising their prices in proportion. Room and board in a good Swiss hotel cost the tourist fifteen to twenty-five francs or three to five dollars. In a French hotel of the same class the rate would be thirty-five to fifty-five francs in French money, or three to five dollars.

The thing for tourists to remember is that all European hotelkeepers that have any clientele among tourists from America or England watch the exchange rates like hawks and make their room rates correspond to the pre-war value in dollars. So Switzerland is as cheap as anywhere else. But the tourists do not know it and Switzerland is paying the price of neutrality in a quite unforeseen way.