

Liechtenstein a 62-Square-Mile Compromise Between Austria and Switzerland

By LOYAL GOULD
Of the Associated Press

VADUZ, Liechtenstein — There's no railroad station in this capital of the principality of Liechtenstein. International trains pass through the country but don't stop. Liechtenstein has no daily newspapers, no airports, no customs officials, no army.

With 17,125 residents, Liechtenstein is a cozy country that has survived the wars and turmoil that have swept Europe for centuries.

"Things are going topsy-turvy most everywhere else," says farmer Ferderick Ospelt, "but we hope to go on living pretty much as we have in the

past without too much worry about the outside world."

No Tourist Attractions

The Liechtensteins have not developed tourist attractions.

"You're welcome to come here," said farmer Gunther Vogel, "but we don't go out of our way to get you here."

Liechtenstein lies in the center of Europe. Covering 62 square miles, it stretches 17 miles north to south and about 7 miles east to west at its widest point.

The Austrian princes of Liechtenstein bought the territory from two other bankrupt noblemen and founded the state in 1713.

Switzerland and Austria are immediate neighbors.

The Swiss supply border guards, diplomatic representation abroad, and use of their currency. From the Austrians come the lion's share of the legal system plus rich pastries and meat dishes swimming in cream sauces.

Most of their German-speaking Swiss neighbors are Protestants, but the Liechtensteins, like the Austrians, are largely Roman Catholics.

Austrian Comfort

"Our heads are with the Swiss but our hearts with the Austrians," says Mrs. Joseph Rheinberger, 80, a farmer's wife.

Every village is a picture of compromise—Swiss cleanliness on the outside but an atmosphere of relaxed Austrian comfort inside.

The ruling monarch is Franz Joseph II. A shy, retiring man of 56, the prince lives in a castle atop a hill on the outskirts of Vaduz. He owns the castle and the surrounding acre or so of land, plus vineyards.

His rights are limited. Liechtenstein's 15-member Parliament, which his grandfather set up in 1921, sees to that. Aside from opening and closing Parliament, signing measures approved by Parliament and okaying the law makers' choice of prime minister, he grants

amnesties and bestows titles on deserving subjects.

The prince controls a large share of the wine industry, which produces red and white vintages. Little of it is left to send abroad after Liechtenstein consumers buy theirs—at \$2.50 a bottle.

The income the prince derives from industrial and farm holdings in Western Europe is substantial but not enough to let him live extravagantly.

Prince Helps Out

The prince receives not a penny of government funds and pays no taxes, but his subjects look to him in times of need. When a widow's barn burned down and her cows were lost,

the prince's family supplied money for a new barn and a new herd of cows. After the last war when the treasury was short, the prince's family helped pay for new roads.

The Swiss let Liechtenstein turn out stamps despite its incorporation with the Swiss postal system. The sale of limited editions to collectors provides a tidy income—exactly how much is a secret.

Liechtenstein's specialty is the registration of foreign companies whose directors need not reside in this country of reasonable taxes. No list of these is ever published, discretion being part of the service offered. Government officials say 5,000-6,000

such firms are signed up here for an annual fee of \$100-150 each.

"These fees help build our roads and schools and keep work going in government house," said Oswald Keller, a storekeeper.

Three-Story Capital

Government house is the three-story capital. The 12-man police force and the Interior Ministry occupy the ground floor. The infrequently used jail is in the basement.

The Finance Ministry and the Treasury are in Room 26. On either side are the agricultural ministry and the office of Prime Minister Gerald Ballner. The Supreme Court takes up Room

35 with Parliament in Room 39. Ballner, one of three full-time government ministers, is a member of the country's largest party, the Citizens party. The other party, the Union, is likewise Roman Catholic and conservative.

Before the last war, 80 per cent of the Liechtensteins lived from farming. Only 12 per cent do today. The others have gone to work in new metal plants and in factories making false teeth and artificial sausage skins.

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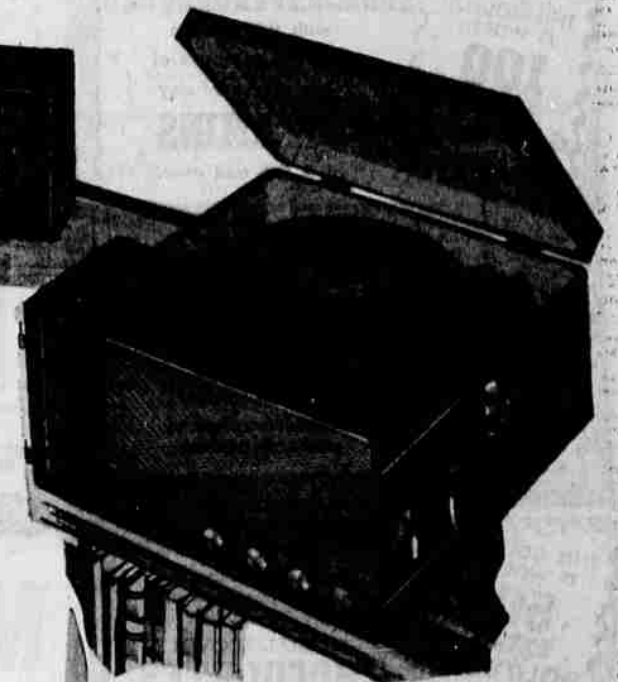
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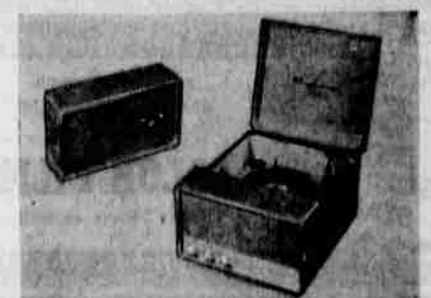
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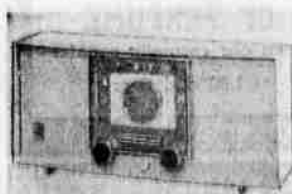
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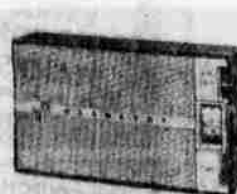
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