

World Conflicts Leave Austria Small Nation

By ALLEGRA BRANSON
United Press International
Vienna—The Austro-Hungarian monarchy was once the largest European empire next to Russia. Then came the First World War and its dismemberment and what is left is Austria—about one-eighth the size of the land ruled by the Hapsburgs before 1918.

Austria has an area slightly smaller than the state of Maine—32,375 square miles. It has a population of 7 million, about one-quarter of whom live in the capital city of Vienna.

German is the official language but the nationalities of the old empire—Czechs, Hungarians and Yugoslavs—make up sizeable minorities. Has Not Done Well

Austria has not done well out of world conflicts. The

first one cut her down to a minor power. Then came Anschluss (or linkup) inflicted by Hitler's Germany and for seven years the name of Austria even disappeared from the maps of Europe. The last allied occupation

troops did not leave the country until 1955 although the restoration of Austria as a free and independent land was recognized by the Allied Control Council in 1945, in return for a pledge of political neutrality.

From a distance and even to the tourists at first hand Austria is the pleasant land of Mozart (who wrote its national anthem) or the waltz king Johann Strauss. But in the harsh economic realities of today, the heart of most Austrians does not beat in three-quarter time.

Cost of Living High

The cost of living has been rising, bringing with it the threat of inflation and disaster for thousands of low paid government employees or retired persons. And this despite the fact that the average family of three people pays only \$5 a month rent for three rooms in the government-subsidized housing developments.

Medical, dental and hospital care are also part of a

national health scheme. Austria is a land of contrasts. The family may have television but no running water; an automobile but only enough income to run it week ends; a modern kitchen but no bathroom. There are 2 million radios and 400,000 television sets but there are 250,000 families whose water taps are outside their apartments and only 14 per cent of homes have their own bathrooms.

Some 300,000 apartments inhabited today were built before 1900.

Three Opera Houses

The average Austrian goes to the movies once every 17 days, attends the theatre twice a year, the opera once a year and a classical music concert once every four

years. Yet Vienna is the only town in the world with three full-time opera houses— which run at a state subsidized loss of \$6 million a year.

The status symbol is the private car. There are 500,000 registered in Austria at present, many of them bought at the price of eating dark bread and lard for supper in order to meet the installments.

The Austrian is hungry for durable consumer goods but he can hardly afford them at today's prices. Only 41 per cent of homes have refrigerators, 35 per cent washing machines and the steam iron is rare. Much of the apartment is furnished from money earned after hours or in week end jobs.

The Austrian family is generally small. The cost of raising children and the shortage of apartments are the main reasons. Many couples have their first child years after marriage. "We couldn't afford apartment, furnishings, a car and a child all at once," runs the usual explanation.

Schooling is Free

Schooling in Austria is virtually free. A child attends the Volksschule for four years, then either a Hauptschule for another four years or a "Gymnasium" (a combination high school and junior college) for eight.

Austrian universities turn out graduates with the title of "doctor" at such a rate that waiters in the tradition-bound coffee houses can safely address as "herr doktor"

any male customer they know is not "herr baron."

Austria is composed of nine provinces. The country borders West Germany, Liechtenstein, Italy and Yugoslavia and along the Iron Curtain its neighbors are Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

The boom industry of the moment is tourism. Last year foreign tourists accounted for 19 per cent of Austria's total income and covered 97 per cent of its chronic trade deficit.

Produces Own Food

Austria produces 90 per cent of its own food but the greatest problem is to keep the farmers down on the farm. There is a steady drift of small farmers to the cities although the government subsidizes milk, bread grains and

other products to help farm income. There are a million persons engaged in agriculture, 3 million in industry and 100,000 involved in the tourist and transportation industries.

Austria has been governed by a coalition since 1945. The government is almost equally made up of the Conservative "Peoples Party" and the Socialists.

Although Austria is located between "East" and "West" there has not been a Communist in Parliament since 1959.

Catholicism is the state religion with 90 per cent of the population claiming this faith. Most of the remaining 10 per cent are Lutheran. Despite the overwhelming Catholicism, the divorce rate is high—16.6 per cent.

No Hazards Found In 887 Residences

Medford firemen found no hazards in 887 residences checked during their annual inspection program.

The 1963 inspections of dwellings on north and south running streets in Medford were completed yesterday. They had been conducted since May 21.

Firemen made 769 recommendations for correction of

fire hazards. They checked 1,477 homes.

Stops were made at 3,465 homes. No one was home at 1,702 and occupants of 286 dwellings declined the offer of inspection.

A total of 130 inspections were made yesterday with no hazards noted in 75 houses and 74 recommendations made. Forty-one occupants declined the inspection offer.

Traffic on Area Highways Shows Drop During April

While traffic volume on major Oregon highways increased during April, 1963, compared to April, 1962, highways in Jackson county did not reflect this trend, according to the monthly report compiled by the Oregon state highway department.

Traffic on Highway 66, seven miles east of Ashland, dropped 3.6 per cent from the previous year, but the first four months this year shows traffic in that area 15.5 per cent above the same period last year.

Highway 99, two miles south of Talent, had only a .9 per cent traffic increase last month, and the first four months in 1963 is above last year by 6.5 per cent.

Weather Slows Traffic

The state's report noted that below normal temperatures and heavy rains were credited with lowering traffic counts on the highways, especially over the week ends along routes leading to recreational areas.

This could account for the 8.5 per cent drop in travel on Highway 62, four miles south of Shady Cove during April. A drop of 6.6 per cent was noted on Highway 238, one mile west of Ruch.

Travel on Main st., east of Geneva st. in Medford, dropped during April by 8.4 per cent, for a four month decline of 3.6 per cent over the previous year.

In Josephine county traffic on the county road in the Jump Off Joe area, nine miles north of Grants Pass, decreased 6.3 per cent and increased 4.4 per cent on Highway 1-5 in Grave Creek, seven miles north of Grants Pass.

New Health Center Estimates Approved

The state board of health Friday approved revised construction estimates of the Jackson County Public Health center and work will start at the county fairgrounds after June 17, according to Robert J. Keeney, Medford architect.

According to law, construction cannot start sooner than June 17, the date of the public hearing on the county budget. "Several items which do not affect the design, utility or wearability of the building were eliminated and changes made," Keeney explained.

The Portland office of the state board of health and the county court approved the design changes reducing the estimated construction cost. Wednesday afternoon, following the bid opening, it was determined construction costs plus some equipment and incidentals would run the overall health center cost up to an estimated \$3,800 over the county's \$190,000 budget allocation.

A representative of Murphy Construction company, Roseburg, which submitted the low base bid of \$187,816, met with the architect Thursday morning to discuss design changes to reduce the building cost.

Keeney said Saturday he is preparing the contracts and will send them to the state board of health in Portland and then will be referred to the U. S. Health department's regional office in San Francisco.

The Roseburg firm was the lowest of five bidders.

INK SALES SLIP
Fort Madison, Ia. — If sales of red ink are a barometer of the nation's economic health, last year was a prosperous one. Sheaffer Pen company reports 1962 shipments of red ink were 11 per cent below the previous year's total.

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