## **SWITZERLAND** – LAND OF MOUNTAINS and RIVERS

- Switzerland is a **landlocked** country, meaning it has no coastline or territorial waters (surrounded by land). Countries that surround Switzerland are **France, Germany, Italy and Austria**. Located in Europe.
- Switzerland's capital city – **Berne**. Languages are: **French, German and Italian**.
- **Population** – 7.9 million people. **Currency** – Swiss franc. Area – 41, 293 square kilometers.
- **Climate** – temperate, but varies with altitude. Cold, cloudy, rainy winters. Cool to warm cloudy summers.
- Switzerland has a policy of **neutrality** – this means it does not take sides with countries in cases of wars.
- The country is divided into 3 parts: **a) the Jura mountains**-north, **b)** the **Alps**-south, **c)** the **Central Plain** -center.
- **The Alps** form mountain barrier across Europe. **Highest** mountain point-**Mont Blanc** almost 5,000 meters high.
- **Aspect**-the direction towards which a slope faces. As the slopes face the sun and allows the snow to melt faster, and this allows more crops to grow.
- **The föhn**-it's a warm wind that blows from the south. It helps to melt winter snow, but cause avalanches.
- **Avalanches** are massive falls of snow and ice down the mountain slopes.
- **Tourism** accounts for about 6% of Switzerland's total income. (this is similar to The Bahamas, where tourism is our #1 industry).
- World center for **banking & finance**, and it's the headquarters of international agencies, e.g. the Red Cross.
- **Omega and Rolex watches** are made in Switzerland. There are close to 3,000 watch factories there.
- Special watches are made for sportsmen and women, for blind people, for test pilots and spacemen.
- Farming is done in the Alps on a low scale. Milk from cows is used to make Swiss cheese and chocolate.
- In the Central Plain, other crops are grown like: wheat, oat, fodder, orchards & vineyards (for making wine).
- **Transhumance**- it means the movement of animals from the valley to the Alps and back.
- **Chalets** – picturesque houses found in the snowy peaks of Switzerland.
- **Winter sports** – skiing, skating and tobogganing (sledding).
- **Summer sport** - mountain climbing.