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SWISS INDEPENDENCE DAY IN TARANAKI.

A very successful Ball to celebrate Switzerland's Independence Day was held on August 1st in the Lowgarth Hall, Lowgarth. The attendance reached a record; in all about 450 to 500 people were present at the function.

Friends from all parts of Taranaki were present, some came as far as from Urenui and Opunake. The program arranged consisted in Dancing, Yodling, Card-playing, Monte Carlos, etc. The euchre winners were Messrs. George Schneller and J. Slattery; Ladies: Mrs. Wisneski and Mrs. Laurent; Consolation: Mr. Wilson and Mrs. H. J. Shrimpton.

Some lively music was rendered during the evening by Messrs. F. Jomhof, A. Meier, A. Engelberger, P. Zimmermann and Mrs. G. Schneller. The Yodling quartette, consisting of Messrs. W. Risi, P. Zimmermann, F. Gwerder and W. Fluhler, were thoroughly appreciated and encores were demanded by everybody. No less successful were the charming songs by Miss Doreen Engelberger. The following won various Monte Carlo Sweepstakes: Miss Sattler and Mr. C. Chamberlain; Mrs. Morrissuy, Miss Tholma Walker and partner. A picture competition was won by Mr. H. McCarvel and a cake by Miss Annie Chamberlain. The principal speaker of the evening was Mr. A. A. Piper of Lowgarth, who addressed the Company as follows:

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have been requested tonight to make a small resume on the 653rd anniversary of the Swiss Independence Day. I am very much honoured that the task has been allotted to me. Today, August 1st, is the date on which the Swiss Independence was signed. Hence this gathering here tonight.

There will be numerous people present here tonight, who have never given a thought as to why Switzerland has never gone to war. I will now try in as short time as possible to outline the history.

In the year 1291 the settlers of the region round Lake Lucerne concluded an alliance which actually was the corner stone of the Swiss Confederation. In the light of history the Swiss people can claim to be the oldest Independent Democracy in existence. Their Democracy is several hundred years older than even the English Puritanism of the 17th century.

It is interesting to know something of the historical background which caused the alliance in the year 1291. The years 1250 to 1273 were a time of decaying Germanic Empire with no Emperor on the throne and so law and order had reached its lowest ebb. It was then that the Swiss people had to take the upkeep of Public Order into their own hands. Through this they became used to looking after their own affairs and built up their small States.

In 1291 their Emperor Rudolf died and the country faced chaos. The people got together and on August 1st, 1291 (that is, 653 years today, a long time ago), they formed their Federation. This alliance gradually grew and 13 small self-governing States were linked together. (They say 13 is an unlucky number but if I were a Swiss I would always look on 13 as a lucky omen.)

While this was being achieved in 14th, 15th and 16th centuries the sacrifice of blood was very heavy. But the following centuries except during the Napoleon's Wars, brought Peace with the outer world.

The Swiss people adopted a policy of neutrality and have been able to hold it even through the Great War of 1914-18 and up till the present day in this, the World War. Switzerland has practiced a policy which is consistent with her interests and on the other hand fully respects those of other nations.

Switzerland can honourably pursue a policy of strict neutrality, backed by well trained army, which jealously guards the Alpine Passes it has sworn to defend to the bitter end against any aggressor whatever.

Geneva is the International Red Cross Centre of the World. It is ably administered by Mr. Max Huber. Mr. Huber is 69 years of age and has held this position since 1928.

In conclusion, Ladies and Gentlemen, I will close hoping my small effort to describe Independence Day has interested you, and on behalf of the Committee, I wish to thank you one and all for your fine attendance."

A splendid home made Supper was served, a great undertaking to satisfy nearly 500 people. Very special thanks are due to the Organisers of the entertainment Mrs. Gionetti and Miss Bernold. The magnificent effort in organising the function is clearly shown in the profit returned which amounted to £60. This money is to be divided between the Lowgarth W.D.E.U., the Lowgarth Farwell Committee and the Soldiers' Parcels Funds.

On behalf of the Committee,

Miss I. Bernold.

AUCKLAND SOCIAL SCUTTLE!!!!

Although War Clouds hover around Switzerland, Auckland celebrated another year of her Independence. If, by some misfortune, you weren't able to attend, let me tell you what you missed.....

You missed a large, cosy, room decorated with flags and posters, with a roaring fire, filled with homey people, a sprinkle of youthful laughter, from the descendants of the Swiss populating New Zealand, a wonderful supper, wine and song, but - these were just a few of the things that helped to make our social go with a swing. We had some yodels sung by the younger generation, we must give them credit, you would think they had been born in Switzerland, and at least you could see their heart was in the songs they sung. We had yodels by the older generation, you could imagine yourself sitting on the sunny slopes of the mountains, deep in thought, amongst the Edelweiss and the sweet smelling mountain flowers, thinking of the times when you have called the cattle home yourself. I do declare that someone threw off about the hats women wear today - maybe he was just a little jealous - or lucky - that a little bit of straw and a little bit of felt didn't sit perky like, on his left ear and obstruct his vision. Other humorous items were provided by one of our ladies; an interlude of song was rendered by a charming singer, accompanied by a gifted pianist. Talent ran high amongst the tiny tots, one danced her way into your heart and another favoured us with a song which was exceptionally well sung. All of a sudden the lights went out - and out of the eerie blackness two pink lights started dancing. This was a club swinging number provided by one of the boys. Those who had been indulging in the cider saw more than two - I guarantee. Supper was very daintily arranged and everyone was feeling at home and partook freely. The girl waitresses in national costume, were called upon for returns of tea and coffee. I want to say a big "TANKS" for our one man orchestra. Does he realize how important he was and how he was appreciated, not only by the dancing enthusiasts, but by the whole jolly gathering. To the tune of his accordion, happy voices sung and laughed, while youthful feet danced the light fantastic.

I turned in tired but happy, slept long and peaceful and dreamt sweet dreams of Swiss chalets - did you -- or did you miss it?

B.R. HALTMEYER. HON. SEC.

GIFT - PARCELS TO SOLDIERS.

Some 6 or 8 months ago your Committee despatched 10 Gift-Parcels to sons of Swiss Compatriots serving with the N.Z. Forces overseas. It was considered that such a gesture would meet with the general approval of all our members. We know that, not only the recipients, but the next-of-kin as well are greatly appreciative for these small gifts, which after all are only a small and insignificant token of goodwill towards our fine Boys, who gave up home, position and comfort.

A number of acknowledgments reached us recently from some of our young friends, and it is with some pride we give you the following extracts: