

News from Switzerland

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Mr. N. Nolly, so that we may have them for the next occasion. As far as membership is concerned, we welcome everyone of Swiss blood to join. Judging by the popularity of our monthly card evenings, there can be no doubt about the future and prosperity of the "Swiss Social Club."

Swiss National Day Celebrated in Manaia Hall.

The following article appeared in the "Taranaki Daily News":—

For a few hours last night, Taranaki's Swiss population gathered in the Manaia Town Hall and men and women imagined themselves back in a silimar building in their native land. They created for a short time a little corner of Switzerland as they celebrated with traditional enthusiasm the 661st anniversary of Switzerland's emergence as an independent nation.

Each year on August 1 Swiss people the world over gather to observe Switzerland's national day and to remember with pride the breaking away of their country in 1291 from the savage monarchy of the Hapsburgs.

Last night over 300 Swiss spoke, ate, drank, danced and dressed at a social gathering organised by the Swiss Social Club of Taranaki as though they were back in Switzerland. Gay red and white colours predominated in the national costumes worn by many of the men and women.

The main part of the celebrations was a dance with music provided by a true Swiss orchestra and interspersed with items traditionally associated with Switzerland. For those who did not wish to dance there was jass, a Swiss game of cards played with an appropriate Swiss pack, a game similar to 500.

In one corner of the hall the pungent kirsch, a drink peculiar to Switzerland, made from fermented cherries, was popular with those who did not wish to dance or play cards.

There were many languages spoken, but Swiss-German, English, French and Italian predominated. Accompanying this mixture of tongues was an equally strong mixture of heavy smoke from the brissago, the Swiss cigar. Rarely seen outside Switzerland, the cigar is about eight inches long, slender and tapering to a point at either end.

Advice given to the unwary by the experts last night was that the brissago should only be smoked by those who were familiar with a pipe. Unpleasant consequences were predicted to those who were not smokers and accepted the offer of the pencil-like cigar.

Included in the sumptuous supper were genuine Swiss sausages specially made for the occasion.

Last night's celebration attracted visitors from many parts of Taranaki, including an 80-year-old Swiss resident of Palmerston North.

OBITUARY

It is with great regret we have to inform the Swiss Colony that our compatriot Joseph Werder passed away last month at his home in Springdale.

Mr. Werder arrived in New Zealand about 50 years ago and started farming in Kaponga, later in Te Aroha and finally acquired a property in Springvale, where he conducted a dairy farm with commendable success.

The deceased was well known in the Waikato district and everyone respected him for his tolerance and friendliness. Mr. Werder always took a keen interest in our Society, of which he was a foundation member. He is survived by his wife, four sons and two daughters, to whom we all extend our deepest sympathy in their bereavement.

We are sorry to have to inform our readers that Mr. Paul Schofield (Schaufelberger) passed away at Nelson on June 21st, 1952. The deceased was born in Alsace in 1898. He lived in England for some time and then went to India, where for many years he was a schoolmaster and teacher of languages in Bombay. In 1946 he came to New Zealand with his family. Mr. Schofield is survived by his wife and three children, to whom we extend our very sincere sympathy in their great loss. Mrs. Schofield intends to keep on their guest house at 135 Collingwood Street, Nelson.

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

Switzerland and E.P.U.

In June of 1952 the balance of the European Payments Union showed a surplus of 22,000,000 francs in Switzerland's favour. This figure compares favourably with the deficit shown in May of 6.8 million francs. In contrast to payments between Switzerland and other member countries, especially Great Britain, Switzerland paid out more in June to France, Western Germany, Italy, and Holland than she received from those countries.

A New Success of the Swissair.

The Swissair has made an agreement with American authorities in Germany whereby aircraft repair stations will be opened in Geneva-Cointrin for the maintenance of Douglas transport planes of the Dakota type. A year ago, the Swissair, among the first of European companies, received an "Aircraft Repair Station Certificate" from American air authorities. This certificate entitles them to repair and maintain American planes. The recent contract is a proof of the trust which is felt in the personnel and the technical equipment of the Swissair.

A New Automatic Loom.

One of the most famous branches of the Swiss machine industry is involved with the construction of textile machinery. Among the oldest of the textile machinery firms is the Adolph Saurer Corp. in Arbon, which has just introduced on the market a new automatic loom especially adapted to multi-coloured silks and artificial silks. The machine uses four shuttles and its main advantages are its versatility and the ease with which it can be adjusted to different tasks.

A Swiss Documentary Film Shown in the U.S.A.

The Swiss Film "Reliance" will be shown by the U.S. Public Health Service in the United States. This film is produced by the Condor Film Co. and gives a realistic account of the fight against tuberculosis.

Switzerland's Share in Ceylonese Industrial Development.

Ceylon's plans for industrial development include the construction of steel plant. The Government has now asked Professor Durrer, President of the Louis De Roll Steel Works in Gerlafingen, Switzerland, to assist in the planning and the executing of this work. The Government also asked for tenders concerning the construction of a caustic soda, chlorine, and hydrogen plant. Notwithstanding heavy international competition, the order went to the Louis De Roll Co. in Zurich, which had previously built a plant for the production of fatty alcohols in Ceylon.

A SWISS KINDERGARTEN

Zurich's most modern kindergarten was opened last December. It cost 260,000 francs (£21,000) to build and equip, and today it is one of the educational showpieces of the city.

Careful consideration went into every detail. The building is on two floors, each for a group of 35 children. Each floor has one large room, the whole of one side being window and the whole of the other cupboard space. One of the end walls has a large blackboard fixed at a level convenient for the children to use themselves, and a door at the other end leads into a large store cupboard—the dream of every nursery school teacher. At one side is a sink with two cold-water taps, again at a convenient level for the children. A spacious cloak-room outside, with pegs for coats and stands for shoes, contains a wash basin, with two small lavatories adjoining. The kindergarten is light and airy with a cheerful appearance, but the garden was obviously not considered of great importance by the planners. It is hardly as large as the play-room, and, apart from a couple of small sand-pits and a bench or two, is provided with no equipment for the children's outdoor play.

In comparing Swiss kindergartens with English nursery schools, there are two important differences to keep in mind. In Switzerland the kindergartens are officially for four- and five-year-olds (the children do not go to school until they are six), and in practice nearly all the places are reserved for five-year-olds. Small children seem to be treated as younger than they are. There is a considerable body of educational opinion in England which would prefer to keep the two-year-olds in their own homes, but few educationists here would doubt the value of nursery school life for the average three-year-old. Because the children in Swiss kindergartens are older than those in British nursery schools, a higher standard of achievement is required of them in concentration and execution, and more emphasis is laid on acquiring skills than on general social training.

The second important difference between Swiss kindergartens and British nursery schools is that there is no meal or rest period as part of the kindergarten routine in Switzerland. Great surprise is expressed by the Swiss on hearing that the British nursery schools provide food and rest for their charges not only because it may be more convenient for the parents, but also because it may be beneficial for the children to eat and sleep in a group rather than in the home where the mother's strong emotional feelings may encourage the development of difficult behaviour on the part of the child at these times. Swiss children arrive at the kindergarten at 8, leave again at 11.30, return to the kindergarten at 2 and go home at 4.

The morning and afternoon periods are both spent partly in group and partly in individual activity, and when the weather is fine the children play for short periods in the garden, or go for walks in the neighbourhood. Organised group activity may last from three-quarters of an hour to an hour, according to the attention and interest of the children, and the teacher's other plans. When the method now adopted in many modern nursery schools in England, whereby all group activities are optional, was described to the young teacher in the kindergarten, she explained that in Switzerland it was thought that the children must learn to concentrate, and that they should not be allowed to leave the group because they were not interested.

But there was little to complain of in the group activity at this kindergarten. The teachers' personal relationship with the children was excellent. She treated them as social equals, though when the individual work started the children were not allowed to go freely to whichever activity attracted them, but the teacher asked for volunteers for painting, chalking, cutting-out, jig-saw puzzles, and so forth, and then picked out a few children for each from those who put up their hands. They were not allowed to change