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HELVETIA



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SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY in New Zealand

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PLEASE READ CAREFULLY.

CELEBRATION OF THE 650TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION 1291 - August 1 - 1941.

Preliminary Information and Suggestions.

In his recent address to the Swiss people, on the forthcoming 1941 celebrations in Switzerland, Swiss Federal Councillor Philip Etter, said:

"First of all, the oath of federation must be sworn again by each one of us, inwardly, deep in our hearts. But it would not be right, not proper, if we did not give reverent expression to it, outwardly and visibly."

The Swiss people in New Zealand will, I am sure, wholeheartedly agree with this statement. In normal times, I would have suggested to you to hold a representative and gay "Landsgmeind" somewhere in the Centre of New Zealand. Under prevailing conditions of world affairs, however, this would not be in keeping with the tenor of times for any celebrations in New Zealand. Local celebrations by the different local Swiss communities, in my opinion, must be our solution.

In setting up their programs for appropriate local celebrations - in which direction action should at once be undertaken now - the local Swiss communities will be supported greatly by the official broadcasts, planned for the occasion for and in New Zealand, namely Special Swiss Broadcasts in the evenings of Friday and Sunday, August the first and third, and a special New Zealand broadcast, offered by courtesy of the National Broadcasting Service (tentatively and conditionally) for the evening of August the second, over 2YA Wellington. Preliminary information as regards time and items of these special broadcast programs are given below, at least as far as they are available as yet.

It is hoped that the hundred usual "Independence Day Badges" (Bundesfeierabzeichen) will reach us before August the first. Orders for them should be placed now without delay with the Secretary of the Swiss Benevolent Society, Mr. Werner Ungemuth, Clarence Road, Northcote, Auckland N 4. The price for the badge is as

usual sh. 2/-. This year's badge represents the First Seal of the Federal Charter of 1291, and therefore will keep its value as a special souvenir of the year 1941, the 650th of Swiss Independence.

In commemoration of this year's momentous occasion in the history of Switzerland, upon request, all Swiss children abroad (5-15 years of age), all Swiss families and single adult Swiss, living abroad, are offered a special gift, the former a Commemoration Booklet, (in either of the three national languages), and the latter a MEMORIAL TABLEAU, of good taste, containing a message of the President of Switzerland and the Commander-in-Chief of the Swiss Army. This Memorial Tableau promises to adorn the homes of thousands of Swiss abroad in future. Gratis orders for Commemoration Booklets for children, and Memorial Tableaux for adults must be placed without delay, with the Consulate of Switzerland, P.O. Box 386, Wellington. They will be ordered by cable, but, of course, will not reach us in time for the celebrations. Before being passed on by the Consulate, they will be placed before the New Zealand authorities for censoring.

The Swiss Mint will issue a special Commemoration Coin in the shape and form of a "Fuefliber" and it is advisable to cable at once for the number requested by our countrymen in New Zealand. Orders must reach the Consulate therefore on or before July 1. They are available at the approximate exchange rate prevailing at the time of delivery, plus shipping cost, neither of which can be stated at this time. In case of orders, I would suggest a preliminary remittance of sh. 8/6. In view of the uncertainty of the shipping conditions, delivery cannot be guaranteed, but in case of non-delivery the full amount paid in will be refunded. Acceptance of any orders is conditional to consent by the Comptroller of Customs and the Reserve Bank, which will be approached therefor immediately when the extent of the orders is known.

It is my personal suggestion, that after the celebrations are over, the Swiss Benevolent Society in New Zealand should publish for their members and friends in New Zealand as well as in Switzerland, a Commemoration Booklet of the celebrations held in New Zealand. Such a booklet should contain a few introductory remarks on the Swiss communities in New Zealand, the New Zealand commemoration broadcast and press comments, and above all the accounts and some good photographs of the local celebrations by our fellow-countrymen. For the time being, until any definite decision has been made by the Committee of the Swiss Benevolent Society, please keep in mind the sending in of reports and good photographs of whatever local celebrations may take place. The question whether or not it will be possible later on to issue such a Commemoration Booklet depends a great deal on the material, which we may receive from our fellow-countrymen.

In conclusion I would ask everyone of my fellow-countrymen and women to get in touch without delay with their compatriots of their locality, urging to set up a local committee, who should make all the necessary arrangements for the event. Swiss communities all over the world will make the Independence Day Celebration 1941 a climax in the history of their patriotic activities, and I am confident, that my compatriots in New Zealand will do likewise, within the limits of what is possible, to honour our homeland on its 650th year of independence. The flourishing Swiss communities of Taranaki and Waikato, no doubt on account of their numerical strength, are in an enviable position to organise local celebrations. In Auckland, Wellington, Bay of Plenty, Hawkes Bay too, there should be enough compatriots to get together and set up a program. It will be more difficult though for those fellow-countrymen, who are scattered over the country. There I would suggest, that all of us, who live in localities, where Swiss communities exist, make a big-hearted and concerted gesture of hospitality, inviting isolated countrymen to join our local celebrations and welcome them to our homes over the week-end of August 1-3, so

that they too may be able to be among us, when we are celebrating. The setting up of local committees, entrusted with the task of drawing up lists of such isolated compatriots, probably would be well advised. And lastly, as regards those isolated Swiss in New Zealand, who cannot be reached by extending our hospitality, in the last resort, can set up a "Committee of one or two" to celebrate the forthcoming great event of our country. Everyone very likely has access to a good radio, connecting them with the official celebrations in Switzerland and New Zealand, so that after all no-one should feel completely isolated from the celebrations.

SPECIAL SHORTWAVE BROADCASTS FROM SWITZERLAND.

Friday, the First of August. N.Z. Time

Preliminary broadcast (popular music)	7.45 p.m.
Chronic of the month	8.00 p.m.
Ringing of the bells	8.20 p.m.
Celebration broadcast	8.25 p.m.

Sunday, the Third of August.

Preliminary broadcast (popular music)	7.45 p.m.
Celebration on the Ruetli	8.00 p.m.
Ringing of the bells	8.15 p.m.
Celebrations at Schwyz, including the speeches of three Federal Councillors	8.20 p.m.
Taking of the Oath on the Ruetli	8.50 p.m.
Swiss Psalm	9.20 p.m.

It is pointed out that it should be possible to hear both of these broadcasts in the Far East transmission at 1.45 a.m. of August the first and the third. Advice regarding the meter bands will follow.

SPECIAL NEW ZEALAND CELEBRATION BROADCAST

OVER 2YA WELLINGTON.

The Director of Publicity and the Director of Broadcasting at Wellington have been very kind in offering (tentatively and conditionally) a Special Celebration Broadcast lasting probably 30 minutes some time in the evening of August the second. The Swiss communities of New Zealand are deeply grateful for this token of sympathy and appreciation for our homeland. Time and items of the program will be made known in the July issue of "Helvetia".

Dr. Walter Schmid, Swiss Consul.

Wellington, June 16, 1941.

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650 YEARS OF SWISS CONFEDERATION.

On the evening of the 21st of February the Swiss Federal Councillor Philipp Etter spoke over the Swiss National Link-up about the program for the 1941 Celebrations of the 650th anniversary of the Swiss Confederation. He first referred to the fanfare for the Celebrations which had just been sounded over the radio for the first time and then announced the details of the program of the Celebrations. He spoke in order to tell all the Swiss people in what spirit the Government wished them to approach these Celebrations, which mark the completion of 650 years of federal unity. He said: