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To give you an idea of the paralysing effect avalanches can have on railway traffic, I would mention that on January 20, 1951, 56 per cent. of the Rhaetian Railway system in the Grisons was out of commission. Similar disasters occurred in other parts of Switzerland, notably at Andermatt and Zermatt.

The winter 1950-51 was, however, exceptional. Unusually heavy falls of snow and adverse weather conditions generally were responsible for these disasters. In normal years the danger is less acute, although always present. But the normal precautions against the adverse effect of heavy snowfalls are sufficient to keep communications open. Avalanches do occur every winter, but their courses are known and each of them has a tendency to come down at a certain time, so much so that they have their names like, for instance, crack trains. This facilitates measures to harness or to deviate them. It is therefore the avalanches in unexpected places and at unpredicted times which are so dangerous.

It is evident that the Railway Companies, the Swiss Federal Post who run their own coach lines, and Motoring Organisations do their utmost to protect their installations and the lives of their passengers against the special dangers to traffic at high altitudes. I would, therefore, now like to give you an idea of what has been done to achieve this aim. Measures vary according to the type of transport and locality. Let me begin at home by telling you how state-owned Swiss Federal Railways guard against these contingencies.

(To be continued)

## THE NEW LAW ON SWISS CITIZENSHIP

Some important points resulting from this law, which came into force on January 1st, 1953, are the following:—

### (a) Loss of Swiss Citizenship (Section 9).

A Swiss woman loses the Swiss citizenship through marriage with an alien if she acquires through the marriage the nationality of her husband, or if she already possesses it, and unless she makes a written declaration stating that she wishes to retain the Swiss citizenship. In the event that a fiancée residing in New Zealand wants to sign such a Declaration, she has to send in the Declaration to the Swiss Consulate in Wellington, **prior** to the celebration of the marriage. The Consulate will furnish the official form on request.

According to New Zealand law, an alien woman does not become a national of this country

through marriage to a New Zealand citizen. Consequently, a Swiss woman who marries a national of New Zealand does not acquire New Zealand citizenship through marriage, and for this reason she remains a Swiss citizen by virtue of Swiss law. Therefore in such a case she does not need to sign the Declaration in question. If, however, she still wants to make the Declaration, she is at liberty to do so.

### (b) Loss of Swiss Citizenship Through Birth in a Foreign Country (Section 10).

A child born in a foreign country of a Swiss father also born abroad loses the Swiss citizenship at the age of 22 years if he has a second nationality, unless he has been announced by his parents or a relative or friend to a Swiss authority for the registration of his birth in Switzerland or made the announcement himself, or unless he has made a written Declaration stating that he wishes to retain the Swiss citizenship.

### (c) Acquiring of Swiss Citizenship Through Restoration (Sections 18-25).

A Swiss woman who has lost the Swiss citizenship by marrying an alien before January 1st, 1953, can regain her Swiss nationality under certain circumstances, in particular if her husband has passed away, or if the spouses have been divorced or have lived apart for three years, or if the woman has become stateless. Special provisions apply to children of such marriages. A woman who was Swiss by birth (not by marriage or naturalization) and lost the Swiss citizenship through marriage prior to January 1st, 1953, can regain it while still married, provided she makes application to the Swiss authorities before the end of 1953 (Sec. 58). Applications for reintegration, i.e., regaining the Swiss citizenship, are to be made to the Swiss authorities before December 31st, 1953. The applicant must procure certain official certificates, in particular Certificates of Good Conduct from all the places where she resided within the last five years. Consequently it is advisable that such persons contact the Consulate at their earliest convenience. The application form will be mailed to them upon request.

These provisions of the law are of the utmost importance for Swiss people living abroad, and every reader of the "Helvetia" should make them known to their Swiss friends who are not subscribers.

Persons affected by this new law and interested in retaining or regaining the Swiss citizenship should contact the Consulate.

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