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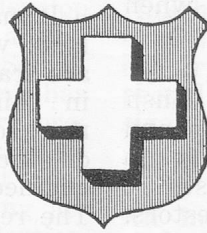
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HELVETIA

MONTHLY
PUBLICATION
OF THE



SWISS BENEVOLENT
SOCIETY IN
NEW ZEALAND (INC.)

GROUP NEW ZEALAND OF THE NEW HELVETIC SOCIETY

19th YEAR.

MARCH, 1956.

AUCKLAND.

OBITUARY

It is with very much regret that we have to inform our compatriots that Mr. Henri Blanchard, the former Consul for Switzerland in New Zealand, passed away in Switzerland on March 24th, 1956. It will be remembered that owing to ill health, Mr. Blanchard returned home in June of last year, and we are sad to say that his condition slowly deteriorated.

We extend our deepest sympathy to his widow and two little daughters.

NEWS OF THE COLONY

Swiss Club's Annual Picnic

Once again members of the Swiss community gathered at Te Ngute Park for the Swiss Social Club's annual picnic and sports meeting. Held in fine weather and ideal surroundings, it attracted a large attendance, including a number outside the province. There was also a sprinkling of new arrivals. A feature of the day was the display of "Kantons Fahnen" recently purchased for the club. The many competitions for young and not-so-young created a lively atmosphere. The principal event, of course, was the steinstossen, which was again won by Mr. A. Muller, of Eltham, who thus becomes the first to have his name engraved on the handsome silver cup twice. Mr. F. Gwerder, of Mangatoki, was second, and Mr. W. Unternahrer, of Wellington, was third.

Just to mention some of the competitions, there was: Nail-driving for ladies and gents, stepping the chain (all keenly contested), lively Swiss music created an air of homeliness and was generously provided by a host of willing players.

A. SCHICKER.

Centenarian Ready for Heavy Day

Probably the only person in Taranaki, if not New Zealand, who took part in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, Mr. Solomon Zinsli, Waitara East, recently celebrated his 100th birthday. He was a private in the Prussian 47th Infantry Division.

Born in Switzerland on February 28, 1856, Mr. Zinsli, better known at Waitara as "Ted," apparently acquired his taste for travel during his early service as a soldier.

After the war he spent two years in Germany as a cobbler—a trade he still follows in a casual sort of way—and then migrated to England. There he found some difficulty in overcoming the language, so he packed his bags and visited Austria, Sicily and Italy.

While working as a tourist guide at Naples, he heard of the opportunities offering in New Zealand, and in due course he arrived at Wellington on September 17, 1878.

When the Boer War broke out, Mr. Zinsli enlisted with the 1st Regiment of the New Zealand Contingent. He served in South Africa from 1900 to 1902.

When the First World War started, Mr. Zinsli tried to enlist. He lowered his age, for the benefit of the recruiting office, but unfortunately for him his wife got to hear about it and promptly put her foot down.

Mr. Zinsli had come to Taranaki in 1887, and before moving to Waitara in 1921 he lived at Waverley, Moumahaki and Eltham. He planted his roots in New Zealand, he said, because he was able to find the freedom and scope his heart desired.

Mr. Zinsli is as active as many people only half his age. It is his proud boast that he has never been inside a hospital or in a dentist's chair, and he can still read his newspaper without the aid of glasses, although he does need them when he reads at night.

As a proof of his interest in life, Mr. Zinsli joined the Clifton Lodge of the Royal and Ancient Order of Buffaloes at the age of 94 and accepted

office. Recently he was the guest of honour at a special function arranged by the lodge, when fellow members paid their respects to New Zealand's oldest serving member.

Giving his views of life today, Mr. Zinsli said that people should live more simply and work harder. He attributed his longevity to his daily beers, but added that he was still a youngster compared with some of his ancestors. One lived to be 125 and the other was 115 when he was killed in an accident.

Mr. Zinsli has made only one resolution for his 100th birthday. "Since my friends will probably want to stand me a beer, I have resolved not to drink anything more than ponies," he said.

A Home for the Swiss Abroad in Duerrenasch, Aargau

For a year or two now a very pleasant "Home" for the Swiss abroad has been open at Durrenasch (Aargau) near the Hallwiler-See. It offers a tranquil retreat for those who would like to spend a quiet holiday at a very small cost or even at no cost at all. The normal full-board charge is Fr.3.50—Fr.5.00 per day on condition that in return a helping hand is lent by the boarder in the kitchen, garden, workshop, in the fields or in the forest attached to the property. Those not able to pay anything at all need only work a little more to make themselves as welcome as anyone else, with plenty of free time to spare. Children below 15 are unfortunately in general not admitted, but for all other ages it seems to be an ideal place for longer or shorter holidays, to recuperate, to breathe some clean Swiss air, even for those wishing to look for employment in the home country and to choose at their leisure—without the fear of running up heavy hotel bills.

The home is open winter and summer. It is situated on the ridge between the Wynental and the Seetal, 565 m. above sea-level, less than an hour's journey from Zurich, Basle, Berne, Lucerne, etc. It is run as a non-profit-making establishment put at the disposal of the Swiss abroad by Mr. J. Bertschy. Enquiries should be addressed to the Sekretariat des Heims für Auslandschweizer Durrenasch, Aargau.

All that is needed for admission is a recommendation from a Swiss Consulate, Legation, Church or patriotic society.

We take this opportunity of reminding our readers of the Hotel ALBEINA at Klosters-Dorf, run on a non-profit basis by the N.S.H. and Sekretariat des suisses à l'étranger for the Swiss abroad. Full board costs Fr.14.50 and seven days Fr. 115.50 all inclusive in winter, with an appropriate reduction in summer.

Switzerland Lacks Technicians and Engineers

It may seem somewhat surprising that Switzerland, where so many technicians and engineers are trained, is, at present, experiencing a penury in this category of specialists. And yet, a marked decline is to be observed in the number of students who wish to become technicians and engineers, a decline which has set in since 1950. The requirements of Swiss industry have grown more rapidly than has the demographical evolution of the country. Moreover, the world demand for technicians and for engineers has not been without its repercussions on the penury from which Switzerland is now suffering. A reconsideration of the evaluation of intellectual work—and this not solely from the material point of view—is indispensable in order to provide against the lack of interest in technical and scientific careers which would seem to be appearing. The fact is that there are a great many young Swiss who, as soon as they have finished their secondary school, have been able to find a good job, at once, owing to the economic boom enjoyed by this country at present. It would also appear as if the sacrifice of both time and money necessitated by university studies is too heavy.

The Swiss Press Comments on the Results of the Federal Elections

All the newspapers, from Right to Left, agree that this ballot reveals an extraordinary stability. The National Council—so writes the "Tribune de Geneve"—comprises 196 seats; only four of these have changed their political colour. There are neither victors nor vanquished. Nevertheless, in spite of this stability, the electoral body shows a tendency which is growing more and more marked to vote towards the Left. Among the Catholic-Conservatives, the Christian-Social Wing progresses. The Left Wing Radicals maintain their position more easily than those of the Right. There is nothing in the way of a landslide, but, nevertheless, a considerable change may be observed in favour of the Socialists, who—as the "Basler Nachrichten" notes—have gained four seats. The "Gazette de Lausanne" adds that our electoral regime, which is that of proportional representation, reveals itself as being a conservative system. Although this paper, as well as the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung," observes that a certain movement towards the Left has occurred, both newspapers conclude that there would appear to be no reason for modifying our general policy. The Catholic "Courrier de Geneve," however, which also remarks on this movement towards the Left, draws different conclusions. This evolution, which, for the moment is almost imperceptible, must not be

looked upon as being insignificant. It should serve as a warning to the authorities to develop their social policy in a better manner, in anticipation of more difficult times to come. The Socialist "Volksrecht" declares that the moment has now arrived for the Government to be more progressive in regard to their social policies. The "Suisse" writes that in view of the fact that this evolution towards the Left is becoming accelerated within the so-called Bourgeois Parties, as well as within the Opposition, it may be anticipated that the Socialists will multiply their efforts in order to obtain two seats on the Federal Council (on which they are no longer represented). Nevertheless, when all has been said, the fact remains—even in the opinion of the Socialist "Tagwacht"—that the results of the elections bear witness to an extraordinary equilibrium between the forces facing each other. The "Journal de Geneve" considers that this equilibrium may be explained by the favourable economic situation; without being enchanted with their Government, the citizens are not displeased with it. An interesting remark on this subject is made by the "Tagesanzeiger," of Zurich, which observes that this stability has been maintained from as far back as 1919, that is to say, during thirty-six years, in spite of the disturbances of every kind which have marked this period. The reason why this stability has not been impaired is because of the rights to initiatives and to referendums, and because most of the laws are submitted to the people, all of which gives the Swiss people the power to proceed in a continuous manner with the application of the necessary corrections.

Swissair's New Training Centre

Zurich, Switzerland.—The rapid development of the airline of Switzerland has increased the demand for training and continuation-course facilities. In 1946 a total of some 800 instructional lessons were held, whereas 2300 were recorded in 1950 and no less than 7800 last year. The project of a central training school, therefore, became a matter of urgent consideration and has recently seen its realisation. Swissair's new training centre, which took twelve months to be built, consists of twelve different instructional rooms. A flight simulator, or true-life model of the front part of a DC-6B fuselage complete with instrumental switchboard and equipment, enables the instructors to perform their theories and demonstrations as realistically as possible. In view of the planned purchase of jet stratoliners a second flight simulator will have to be installed in quarters already assigned to it. Several instructional rooms of the new building are equipped with special high-precision

apparatus. One such device can be seen at the "finishing school" for hostesses, where students are trained in a full-size cross-section dummy of an airplane. Another one, the astrodom, is expected to expedite the hitherto long and expensive training of navigators.

An International Convention Meets Off the Beaten Track

Payerne, Switzerland.—Delegates from some 20 countries will meet here in May, 1956, for an International Convention on Aerology. Headed by Prof. Jean Lugeon, the Director of the Swiss Meteorological Centre in Zurich, experts of the International Meteorological Society have arrived at Payerne to start preparations. Why have they picked Payerne? Certainly not for its picturesque medieval skyline, nor for its status as a district capital in the Swiss Canton of Vaud, nor for its impressive history dating back to the second Christian century when, according to legends, it was founded by the rulers of nearby Aventicum, then the capital city of the Roman province of Helvetia. Payerne, briefly, is the site of Switzerland's only Aerological Station and already played host to an assembly of scientists from many lands in 1950. This time the list of participating countries includes several newcomers such as the Soviet Union, India and Japan. International aerology—which is the science of aerial currents in the free atmosphere, measurable by so-called radiosondes—is expected to progress further towards eventual unification, thanks to the exchange of experiences and the comparison of measured records as envisaged for the Convention.

A Letter from a Typical Swiss Wintersports Resort

Crans-sur-Sierre, Switzerland.—High above the Rhone Valey, facing the south, Switzerland's "Noble Contree," as this part of the Canton of Valais is pertinently named, literally culminates in the hamlet of Crans-sur-Sierre, one of the sunniest of the country's 150 wintersports resorts. There are no more than 120 permanent residents here, but the population is expected to increase rapidly within the next few weeks and eventually exceed 900. For there is accommodation for 795 holidaymakers in the 16 spic-and-span hotels and pensions. On the 15th of December, the official opening day of Switzerland's wintersports season, the mirror floors of the several local ice-rinks will be swept clean for the figure-skaters of all grades, the clumsier guild of ice-curlers and the tougher clan of ice-hockeyists, and the six funiculars, aerial tramways, chair and ski lifts will hoist the advance

guard of ski adepts to the lofty starting points of famous downhill runs, with the 5280-ft. high Bella Lui likely to attract the greatest number of visitors. The first of some thirty sports competitions is scheduled for December 31st. It is the traditional Robinson Cup Ski Race. The "Aces" will muster their forces on January 6th for a Giant Slalom. Extremely popular affairs with contestants and spectators as well are Crans-sur-Sierre's traditional children's ski competitions. Young champions under 15 will compete in various fields on February 15th and 18th and again on March 11th. There will be expertly conducted ski tours into the high Alpine wonderland of the Wildstrubel, from March 12th to 18th. Ice-hockey games at night are among the after-dark highlights, and all through the winter season, Crans-sur-Sierre with its Kursaal-Casino, its two cinemas and its many social functions such as masquerade and gala balls, will be a "place in the sun" also for fun-seekers.

New Swiss Gold Coins

By virtue of a decision passed by the Swiss Government, the former Swiss gold coins of the value of ten and of twenty francs will be replaced progressively by the issue of two new coins, of the value of twenty five and of fifty francs. The first coins have just come out from the presses of the Federal Mint. Made of an alloy of 900 thousandths of pure gold and of copper, these coins are the same on the obverse side, except for the difference in the numeral. On the reverse side of the 25 francs coin there is to be found a figure of William Tell, inspired by the picture of the Swiss artist Ferdinand Hodler. The reverse side of the 50 francs coin represents the taking of the oath by the three Swiss at Grutli. Working at full production, the workshops at the Federal Mint are capable of an output of 1.8 million of these coins per day.

Swiss Expedition to the Himalayas

Zurich, Switzerland.—A new expedition of alpinists and research men headed by the Berne lawyer Albert Eggler, and patronised by the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research, will venture into the Himalayas this coming spring. The Government of Nepal has granted the Swiss Expedition the permission to explore the Khumbu- and Imjya-Khola glaciers and the surrounding summits and ridges. The Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research already organised two expeditions to the Himalayas in 1952. The third one aims at collecting further scientific data, especially in the fields of petrography, glacier morphology and physiology. The members of this expedition will also attempt to climb the highest mountain in the world, Mount Everest, as well as the summits of the Lhotse (26,353 ft.), the Nupse (24,264 ft.), and the Pumori (21,724 ft.).

Swiss Emigration and Immigration

One hundred and seventy-nine persons emigrated from Switzerland during the month of October, as compared with two hundred and twenty-seven during the corresponding month last year. For the first ten months of this year, the excess of emigration over immigration was less than five hundred persons. These figures confirm the progressive diminution which is taking place in regard to Swiss emigration, during the course of these last years.

Swiss Tourism in 1954

It has been estimated that 875 million francs have been spent in Switzerland by the visitors from abroad, during the twelve months of 1954. The Swiss who have sojourned abroad during the same period of time have spent 365 million francs. Thus, the net proceeds derived by Switzerland from her tourist traffic amount to more than five hundred million francs. Tourism constitutes an important element in Switzerland's balance of payments, as it contributes towards compensating the deficit in her trade balance which is traditionally unfavourable.

NOTICE

There are still a number of subscriptions for the past financial year outstanding. The Committee ask the members concerned to make good this oversight so that the books for presentation at the General Assembly in June show the full co-operation of all members in this respect. The subscription outstanding of 22/6d. covers the period of 18 months ending March 31st, 1956.

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