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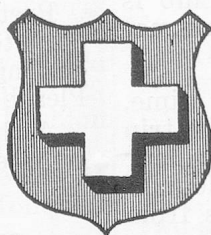
# HELVETIA

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MONTHLY  
PUBLICATION  
OF THE



SWISS SOCIETY  
OF  
NEW ZEALAND (INC.).

GROUP NEW ZEALAND OF THE NEW HELVETIC SOCIETY

21st YEAR

NOVEMBER, 1957

HAMILTON

## OUR DEMOCRACY

It has always been difficult for other people to understand why such a small country as ours has been able to unite under one flag people speaking four different languages and practically three different races.

All this started hundreds of years ago with the beginning of our history, when small groups of people lived in secluded mountain valleys and who came together for mutual help and common defence against foreign tyranny, and so through the centuries built up the present districts and cantons, still based today on these almost self-governing units. And the individual grew from father to son into a citizen with a great sense of responsibility and sense of duty to the community and what automatically came with this—a great love for his country. Then whatever you feel responsible for, you can't help loving, and this may be the one great secret of our true and enduring democracy. However humble he may be, his civic consciousness places him on the same level with all others.

Our country is a federated State and rests on the fundamental principle of the sovereignty of the people. The state is governed by the federal assembly (Bundesversammlung), which consists of two houses, the national council (Nationalrat—one deputy for every 24,000 electors), and the council of States (Staenderat—consisting of two deputies from each canton). The federal council has seven members (Bundesraete), and is the central executive body. These members are elected by a joint meeting of both houses. Each year, one of them is chosen as president. This position is largely nominal and entails mostly representative duties. Few Swiss know the names of all seven federal councillors. When recently home in Switzerland, I wanted to know those names and when nobody could tell me—there were always one or two names missing—I rang the information bureau, and they did not know either and had to look it up in a book! This illustrates the fact that no one man (even in the highest position) has more power than any other.

Our 25 cantons and half-cantons (three cantons, i.e., Unterwalden, Appenzell and Basle, have been divided by Federal law into two half-cantons each; these half-cantons are as independent as any canton) are the basis of our State, and they are divided into a great number of communes (Gemeinden), who in their turn guarantee the cantonal democracy. Even communes of, say, 50 inhabitants elect their own officers, i.e., president and councillors (Gemeinderaete), levy their own taxes, etc., and are practically self-governing. The canton co-ordinates the communes and carries out functions they cannot do separately, and the Federal State co-ordinates the cantons and carries out the functions they cannot do themselves. Only a few items such as post and telegraph, army, railways, supreme court are controlled by the federal state, and they in turn are responsible to the people as a whole.

The actual political right of the individual is extensive and is safeguarded through the "initiative" and the "referendum". Voting papers are posted to each Swiss individually.

Perhaps, in many years to come, our country might be taken as a base or as an example of how some day our whole world could live in peace.

—A.B.

## WELLINGTON SWISS CLUB FOUNDED

On the occasion of a Swiss Film Evening, which was held on October 5th at the Community Hall, Brooklyn, the new Wellington Swiss Club was founded.

As all previous Swiss gatherings had found such good response, proof was here that a club would be desired by a large group of Swiss residents of Wellington. Mr. K. Bischof, who had been the driving force behind our previous meetings, undertook to organise a committee of willing helpers. This committee will be acting until our first general meeting. When announced during the evening, everybody welcomed this move and confirmed satisfaction by signing a list of membership.

Mr. K. Bischof will act as president and all correspondence to the Wellington Swiss Club is to be addressed to the Secretary, R. Messmer (Mrs.), 94 Willis Street, Wellington.

Everybody enjoyed a most interesting time, when the screening took us for a two-hour trip through Switzerland. Especially the two colour films, "Under the Blue Skies" and "Colourful Switzerland," showing beautiful landscapes from north to south, bringing back many happy memories.

The evening was concluded with a gathering around the tables for supper, where delicious home-made cakes were offered. This was a most enjoyable evening and we would like to express our thanks to Mr. Bischof and everybody who helped to make this a successful event.

R.M.

### FORMATION OF A SWISS CLUB IN WELLINGTON

The committee of the Swiss Society wishes to congratulate the Swiss people of Wellington for the formation of a club. Our special thanks must go to Mr. Bischof for his efforts and to everyone else who helped this worthy cause come to a fruitful conclusion. We wish them every success in the future.

WALTER RISI,

President of the Swiss Society of New Zealand (Inc.).

### SWISS RECIPES

#### Dessert Bananes Flambees

Choose large bananas. Heat a small quantity of butter in frying pan and fry bananas, which have been cut in half lengthwise; when lightly fried, sprinkle generously with sugar. Let pan become very hot, then pour some liqueur of high alcohol content over bananas and light with a match. Keep on basting bananas with burning liquid. Serve immediately. Be careful as liqueur flames quite fiercely.

#### Brunzli, an old Basler Recipe (Christmas confection)

Take two egg whites, 2 tablespoons Kirsch (Vodka will do, as Kirsch is mostly unobtainable in New Zealand), 7 ounces sugar, 8 ounces ground chocolate, 1 pound unpeeled ground almonds. Whip egg white till stiff, then add sugar and spirit, then gradually add chocolate and almonds. It must make a dough of stiff consistency. Knead well on a board. From dough, half centimetre thick, cut out shapes, place on greased tray and bake in a low oven.

Mrs. H.B.

### PEN FRIENDS

Pretty, slim Swiss girl, aged 23, telephone operator, wishes to correspond in German, French or English with single Swiss or New Zealander. Please add photo.

Address: E.S., c/o Mary Burkhardt, Seefeldstrasse 313, Zurich, Switzerland.

### QUESTION AND ANSWER COLUMN

Desperate.—I have not been in New Zealand very long and getting on in age I find it very hard to learn the language, speaking as well as writing. What can you suggest?

Answer.—Make inquiries from the Adult Education Department in your district. In most bigger towns night classes in English are held for beginners and adults, and cost very little. I would also advise you to read as much as you can (newspapers and pictorial news), and go to the cinema as often as you can afford. If you are young and good looking enough, acquire a girl-friend. She will teach you. A.B.

### NOTICE FROM THE CONSULATE

A Swiss lady with three children, two daughters one 17 years and the other 14 years, and a son 13 years, would like very much to come and settle in New Zealand. Unfortunately, she does not know anyone in this country and before any serious consideration can be given to an Entry Permit for this family, it is, of course, essential that suitable accommodation is available. This is a very special case, as the lady concerned has a substantial income; more than sufficient to support her family. Would anybody who could help please communicate with the Consulate of Switzerland, G.P.O. Box 386, Wellington?

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Hamilton Swiss Club is holding the next evening on Saturday, November 16th, at the Catholic Hall across the traffic bridge, near the Catholic Church, Hamilton East. All welcome.

Reminder for Swiss people in Hamilton, that the Hamilton Orpheus Choir will present Brahms' Requiem on the 20th November in St. George's Church, Frankton. We recommend it to all lovers of church music.

Just a reminder to all our Swiss friends in Auckland.

Don't forget that the Auckland Swiss Club holds its monthly Social at the Epiphany Church Hall, Gundry Street, Newton, on the first Tuesday in the month. Come along and spend an enjoyable evening among friends. Everybody is made most welcome.