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CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

★ FROM THE AMBASSADOR:

I have now been here ten months, and even in this comparatively short time have been fortunate in having had opportunities to meet many of our compatriots in both Islands. My wife and I would like to take this occasion to thank you all for the kind and friendly way in which you have accepted us since our arrival in New Zealand. Our first contacts have of necessity been brief, but we sincerely hope that the future holds many more opportunities for us to be amongst you to strengthen our friendship as well as our mutual ties to our homeland.

Together with my wife, I wish you all, and the members of your families too, a Very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

—MAX CORTI.

★ FROM THE SOCIETY PRESIDENT:

Back home it used to be mid-winter with its early, dark nights. The snow was laying deep and crispy like a white blanket; the branches of the pinetrees bent under the snow and sparkled fairy-like in the light of the moon. A complete silence took hold of the countryside while its inhabitants felt secure around the log fire and were happy to be in the warm room. The busy preparations were done and the whole family gathered around the Christmas tree to celebrate the birth of Christ. The wax candles were shining and the fragrance of the pine was quite unique. The lady of the house has made sure that the variety of Christmas sweets were plentiful. A festive occasion in the family circle that had all the ingredients of happiness and joy . . .

This is how many of us still remember Christmas and for some of us it seems to be the past. Now we have summer, warm to hot days with all the bustle of preparations for the vacation thrown in as a bargain. Has it become a convenient reason for an extended holiday or a glorified picnic?

In an age where mankind makes great steps forward in every field of science and technology it still remains for us as individuals to find the true spirit of Christmas. If we make this effort we will certainly find the meaning of Christmas with its happiness that has been given to all of us in Bethlehem. It is not the value of the presents that will give us the happiness, it is the fullness of our hearts.

To all of you I send my best wishes for the season. May His birth bring you much happiness and joy that will carry you with fresh vigour into the New Year.

—K. BISCHOF.