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News of the Colony

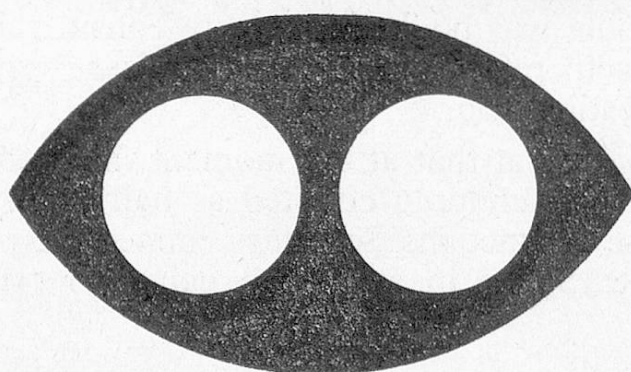
Auckland Swiss Club

SHOOTING SECTION

On 28th November the Annual Ball of the Auckland Swiss Shooting Club was held. It was pleasing to see so many shooting enthusiasts and friends attending, some two hundred or more. Among these were quite a number of compatriots from other centres of the North Island and from as far away as Switzerland and South Africa.

The Edendale Hall was tastefully decorated with Swiss Cantonal flags and bunting, while one never lost the shooting atmosphere due to the way in which the remainder of the building was hung with shooting targets on the walls and beautiful greenery was subtly arranged here and there. Mr Hans Enzler the Rifle-master opened the evening with a short address of welcome to all those present, and especially to the guests of honour, the Swiss Ambassador, Mr Corti, and Mrs Corti, from Wellington who had flown up for the occasion.

Following this the different medals and trophies were presented



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to the various winners of the events. Mention must be made here of a special medal struck to mark the occasion of the Jubilee Small Bore Shooting. This in itself was a real prize to be won. With the conclusion of the prize-giving Swiss Alphorn blowing and yodelling items continued, followed by the singing of "Vo Luzern uf Weggis zue" by all the ladies in national costume. In this the audience also participated. Later everyone was invited to partake of the wonderful dinner prepared as always by our Chef Paul Wuthrich and family and to whom the Club is ever grateful.

Throughout the remainder of the evening, music for dancing was provided alternatively by a New Zealand dance band, and by our Swiss folk trio. This merriment continued into the small hours, and I for one would not have missed this wonderful evening for anything. To each and everyone who organised and helped to make this evening a success a special "Danke viel mal". —D.B.

Wellington Swiss Club

CHRISTMAS PARTIES

"O come let us adore him
O come let us adore him, Christ, the Lord"

This was our six-year-old daughter's favourite song, which she had practised together with other Swiss children, to sing at the Christmas Party. She also liked to sing:

"lustig lustig trala lala la
bald ist Niklausabend da"

Everyone enjoyed the children's singing very much. Obviously also Father Christmas, who this year had come to the Days Bay Pavilion in Eastbourne. Although outside the summer activities were in full swing, there was a real Christmas atmosphere inside, when Father Christmas knocked at the door while the children were singing. One of the older boys played a sonatina on the piano with great skill. After some more items Father Christmas presented each child with a fine gift, with a bag of fruit and nuts and with a nice "Gritibänz". With a soft drink or a cup of tea or coffee this happy event was concluded. Each mother could help herself with candles offered by Mr Hangartner.

The drive home along the shore of the Bay was very pleasant too. At home the children had something to eat while their parents got themselves ready to go out again for their own party. Door opening was at 8.15. The room looked very festive, and we were happy to have our Ambassador and Mrs Corti with us, as well as Mr and Mrs Erb. Candles lit the room when after 8.30 a group of members started to sing Christmas carols. Through the windows we saw the moonlight reflected on the water. Then our president had something to say about tonight's occasion. He reminded us that this was not just a party. It had to be a celebra-

tion as well of an event that took place at the beginning of our calendar. Everybody should think about what Christmas really means to him. Every so-called Christmas Party should reflect something of Christmas spirit. While we heard some more songs Mr and Mrs Kleiner started to bring in the lovely plates of their excellent buffet dinner. After the meal the dancing came in full swing with the three-man band until 1 o'clock in the morning.

This finished a unique Christmas Party, highly praised by all who attended. There were less than expected — could it be that Wellington members decided it was too far to drive around the Bay, although the committee for once had exchanged the Brooklyn Hall for something more refined? —M.K.

FAMILY TRIP TO MT. HOLDSWORTH

When I met Mrs Corti this week somewhere in Lower Hutt she asked me jokingly: "So, händ si echli Muskelkater?" (Have you got sore legs?). I admitted it, as I told her what a beautiful day we had in the Tararuas. Indeed, we were lucky this year having a President who is a keen mountaineer. He showed us a beautiful part of the Tararua Forest Reserve.

Early in the morning each car drove over the Rimutaka, when there was nobody on the road yet, to meet the others at Holdsworth Lodge. The weather looked very promising. Just before Masterton one turns towards the mountains and into a very romantic scenery: A river runs at your side; there are green pastures with sheep, high grown forests and the blue-looking mountains in the background. And quietness and sunshine too.

There were 12 adults and 11 children. Some others were expected later for the Picnic. We formed three groups — one for those who wished to go as high as Powell Hut (4000ft) and another, consisting of many children, whose objective was to reach Mountain House (2300ft). The third group consisted of mothers with toddlers who elected to stay in the camping grounds.

As we climbed up, the track went mostly through lovely bush, and more or less at the half-way mark we had a beautiful outlook into the Wairarapa. At midday our group reached Mountain House and the kids appreciated lunch — and playtime — before we had to go all the way down again over roots and other obstacles. Some of the children were glad to be guided by a grown-up hand. As we heard the river rushing again we knew it wasn't far to go down any more. Gladly we rested with the others for quite a while and had a chat until the air became fresh towards the evening. We then started our engines again and headed towards Wellington and the Hutt, thankful for such a good day of activities and sunshine. —M.K.

WE WOULD LIKE TO REMIND our readers that "Letters to the Editor" for publication are always most welcome.

Christchurch Swiss Club

ST. NICKLAUS DAY PICNIC

Christmas seems to arrive earlier every year to me and this year is no exception. The wind which had been blowing from the north changed suddenly to the south just as everyone arrived at Moser's bach to celebrate St. Nicklaus Day. It was very pleasant, although a shower of rain would have done the ground a lot of good. In all we were about 25 adults and 17 children, which was quite a surprise turnout. It was lovely to see Mr and Mrs Wagner again. St. Nicklaus arrived in his red outfit and white beard and gumboots (!!!) — I didn't envy him a bit! Some of the children crowded around him, but most had to be coaxed up to him. He presented each child with a stocking full of nuts, biscuits, chocolates, raisins and fruit. No doubt, there were less people at the tea table after the children had nibbled on their goodies!

This was our last social event until February, so now the Committee can relax for a while.

The Committee of the Christchurch Swiss Club extends to members of the Northern Swiss Clubs its best wishes for the Christmas Season and a very happy New Year. —J.F.

HEDY'S CORNER:

A Short History of the Christmas Tree

A chronicle of 1606 says: "A fir tree was placed in the room, decorated with paper roses, also apples, wafers, sugar. A square frame was made around the tree and . . ." (here the document ends abruptly).

In 1646 a pastor at Strassburg Cathedral writes the following: "Rather than celebrating God's Christmas Word, it has become customary to also have a fir tree, called Christmas tree, which is mounted in the home. It is decorated with dolls and sugar, whereupon one shakes the tree till everything has fallen off. Where this childish play comes from I do not know".

The earliest mention of a candle-lit tree dates from 100 years later. A German university lecturer has this to say: "The housewife decorates fir trees (as many as there are persons in the home). These she then places in the largest room, starting with the largest tree down to the most modest and smallest one. By each tree she places gifts and burning candles beside them, as well as on the trees. The people of the family and household then file in and regard the order of the trees from largest to smallest; thus they can tell which is their's and appropriate their tree with their gifts".

In 1795 we read the following: "All branches and twigs were laden with delectable sweetmeats such as angels, dolls, animals and similar things, all made from sugar; even everything harmon-