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Obituary

Hans Rudolf Gilgen

We are gathered here today to say goodbye to a dear husband, father and friend — to our Swiss compatriot Hans Gilgen. I knew Hans — I think it must be about 20 years ago — when he and his brother Ernst arrived from Switzerland. He took a great interest in our social set up, the Swiss Benevolent Society, and he looked at it with an enquiring mind and he threw many different ideas into the ring for us to talk and to think about. We then thought that he was a bit of a rebel, but we don't make progress without these rebel minds — things would go into a rut otherwise and stagnate.

Invariably when somebody departs from our midst things come to our mind about the good deeds a person has done during his lifetime. In regard to Hans Gilgen several outstanding things come to our mind: No. 1 is that he was a good, devoted family man. He loved his wife and children dearly and was so proud of them that he took them last year to Switzerland to meet his family and friends there and in turn he wanted his family to see the beautiful country he had come from. When he was over there he went to see the convention of the Swiss abroad and other functions of National interest.

No. 2 that comes to our mind was his love for the job or profession he chose to work in. Hans Gilgen was an outstanding landscape gardener. The Temple grounds and gardens are a living proof of his work and love of Nature. Many of his friends admire some of his flower plants he freely gave away at times.

No. 3 was his friendship to others; Maori, Pakeha and Swiss alike all pay a fitting tribute to the saying that a man's age is counted not by years but by the number of friends he has made. He loved a friendly game of Swiss-cards and frequently attended our card evenings.

Last but not least Hans was a sincere churchman. It is not always easy for a man — especially a man with a rough and ready disposition — to be just that. It does not matter to what denomination we belong so long as we are sincere in our thinking towards God and our fellow men.

With these thoughts in mind I wish to convey to Rangi and the children and brother Ernst the heartfelt sympathy of all the members of the Hamilton and Auckland Swiss Clubs. I would like Rangi to know that all our thoughts are with her in her hour of compassion.—Address given by W. Risi at a graveside Service on 7th February 1973.