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"First of August Message"

(From our Charge d'Affaires, Mr F. Adams)

Dear Compatriots and Friends,

During the first year of my activity in New Zealand, my wife and I have attended several functions of the Swiss communities in different parts of the country. We wanted to meet as many compatriots as possible and by making their personal acquaintance to feel the pulse, so to say, of the Swiss community in New Zealand. I have the impression that there is a good number of devoted citizens eager to maintain our old traditions and to strengthen the existing bonds of friendship and the attachment to our home country. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of you who sacrifice time and energy to maintain our institutions and traditions, and I wish you every success in your endeavours.

We shall soon commemorate the 685th anniversary of the Swiss Confederation, and recall the origins of our country. On a foundation of what we would today call an internal autonomy — political and judicial — combined with mutual assistance, a unique structure has been built in the course of the centuries. It has proved to be solid and has during its long history, withstood the shockwaves which have in the past and are right now, spreading round the world and affecting all economic and social systems. Year after year, the First of August messages are much alike, which is in the nature of things, but the world in which we live is constantly changing. Every year in the days at the beginning of August, we remember, at least for a short while, the past, and a few questions on the present and the future may cross our minds.

The world in which we live may not be any more the same as it was six or seven hundred years ago, but the simple values on which the people in 1291, have founded their union are still the same today, even if the complexity and agitation of modern life makes us sometimes forget them.

The fatherland, a mental concept, is and always will be, what we make of it; what we contribute by our lives and our personal conduct. We create the image it presents to the outside world. Its internal life is strengthened by our devotion, by our willingness to understand each other, our sense of justice and by our daily effort and work. It is weakened by our indifference; by our lack of strength. This is as true at home as abroad, where you, my compatriots, represent our country so successfully.

We turn our thoughts to our small country, so dependent on the outside world, which has in this period of worldwide recession to prove again its capability to overcome its economic, financial and social problems. There is no doubt it will succeed, if the spirit of the First of August, praised on so many occasions during this special period, prevails and remains an inspiration the whole year long.