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I stated that, with the Club's endorsement, I would be prepared to take on the job if no one else wanted to do it.

- So now you have me. But, at least I have an ideal scapegoat if I don't do a good job, just blame Doris, afterall, it was all her doing....

- Today though, I must admit, I do feel quite proud to be the first woman President of the Swiss Society. Obviously, Appenzeller must be in the minority here today!

- Besides this, I can actually also claim two more 'firsts'. One is that I am the first New Zealand born President, which I sincerely hope will be seen as a sign that the next generation of Swiss is still keen and interested to be actively involved in the Swiss Community and with Swiss culture. I certainly hope that this is the case, as Switzerland still plays an important and integral part of our heritage, and our lives, even if it is in a different sort of way than that of the original immigrants.

- The other first to which I must unfortunately also lay claim to is that of being disabled. This, in itself, is actually of no importance to me, but I feel compelled to raise the subject for only one particular reason. It has been brought to my attention recently that there are apparently one or two people who seem to feel that, due to my disability, I should not take on the job of President. Personally, I don't see the relevance, but, to be honest, it was quite upsetting to hear, and certainly didn't do much for my self-esteem.

- But please, let me assure you all today, and especially those who have this particular concern, that my brain, quite uninjured from the accident, is still firmly in place in my head, and not down in the big toe of my injured leg!!!

- In any case, should my disability in some way prevent me from performing any particular task or function, I know that I have the support of a very good and capable committee behind me, and I am only one part of the whole team. So, with this said, I hope I have been able to put everyone's concerns to rest.

- Hamilton has an excellent team in place to run the Society's affairs over the next five years, and I know that we will all do our very best to keep things running smoothly. I have every confidence in our new Editor, Rinaldo Rust, and the editing team,

and am sure that future Helvetia magazines will be of a continued high standard. With Bert Flühler as Deputy President and Ruth Waldvogel as Secretary, we have very competent people who will efficiently carry out all tasks.

- But you've heard enough from me now, so apart from wishing everybody an enjoyable stay here in Hamilton, and a safe journey home tomorrow, there is just one more thing.

- Once more, I congratulate the Auckland Committee for their hard work, and have pleasure in moving the motion that the outgoing President, Hans Fitzi, and the outgoing Editor, Henry Sigerist, be made honorary members of the Swiss Society, and I invite Herbert Staheli, President of the Hamilton Swiss Club, to second this motion.

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Art-fair in Basel (Kunstaussstellung)

What's regarded as the world's leading contemporary art-fair has opened in Basel. More than 600 galleries had hoped to exhibit at this year's event. Unfortunately there is only space for half of them. The major artists and art-movements of the twentieth century are represented at this fair. Selecting the galleries which can exhibit is done by a committee whose chairman is the director of the fair. The main criteria is quality. There are 263 exhibitors from Europe, America, Asia and

Australia. The Basel art-fair is regarded as the most important fair for twentieth century art, according to the spokesman for the Marlborough gallery in London. A mood of optimism in the contemporary art market follows recent auctions in New York where the high bidding was seen as the long awaited sign of revival. At the end of the eighties and especially at the beginning of the nineties there was a big crisis in the art market as there was also a crisis in the worldwide economy. And now the beginning of the economic recovery is the best sign for the art market. One of the sectors getting stronger is photography. It's clear from a visit to the Basel fair that

many exhibitors consider photographic works as much part of their collections as sculptures, objects or paintings. Among the photographs being exhibited by the London gallery "Hamilton's" are four black-and-white portraits of the Beetles. This is the first time they are ever exhibited. They are rare in themselves as they are from an edition of twelve. The 4 portraits of the Beetles are priced at \$ 84,000. Many of the paintings are on sale for 6-figure-sums, far beyond the means of nearly all the 40,000 visitors expected at the fair. But as an opportunity to see the equivalent of dozens of art galleries in one building a visit to the fair is well worth the price of admission.

Swiss Company in Amazonian Rainforest

A Swiss company, "The precious wood's management group", has bought more than 80,000 hectares of land in the Amazonian rainforest where it is implementing a new concept of sustainable forest management. Instead of harvesting the full area, the company has divided it into sections leaving 30,000 hectares for permanent preserva-

tion. The company says the area is carefully analyzed for botanical information and once it is decided which trees to take, only few are taken by low impact logging. This consists in a concept of directional felling and it can be avoided to enter the forest with heavy machinery. A forest management plan had to be approved by the Brazilian authorities. While it would appear to be

impossible to have an ecologically sound forest management plan combined with profit making, the company maintains to be able to combine profitmaking with conservation of the eco-system and contributions to benefit the local community. The company thinks the long term forecast is in favor of this approach to use these precious wood products in a sustainable manner.

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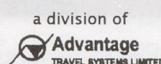
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