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from School-class 3 onward. It is estimated that 80 % of all pupils will partake of this offer. In contrast to these examples, the School authorities of the municipality of Greifensee and especially their local teachers are reticent to introduce English lessons either on a voluntary or on a obligatory level, since they feel incompetent to undertake this task. As the newspaper article mentions, there are no such worries for the private School 'Fun languages AG' since it operates some 30 English language clubs for Primary pupils of 'class 3-level' in Canton of Zürich at a cost to Parents of Fr. 18.- per hour.

Some time in future years it may be expected that English as part of the curriculum may become accepted throughout Switzerland and the more fundamental question will remain; what will the introduction of English, (the universal language as it is called) do to the relationship between the four language-regions of our 'home-country'? Will it help or hinder the understanding on a political and cultural basis? Let us hope that it will not lead to 'loss of culture' in the various regions. Maybe we should not fear, since there have been traditionally over 100 dialects spoken for quite some generations now and this is likely to continue even with English as a secondary language well into the new millennium.

#### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I'd like to begin by heartily congratulating the Swiss-Kiwi Yodel Group from Auckland on their most successful competition results at this year's Yodel Festival in Switzerland. They scored exceptionally well in all sections - Yodel, alphorn and choir singing. The members of this group put a lot of energy and many hours of their spare time into their singing and music, and are to be commended for their commitment. They all deserve the support of the Swiss Community here in New Zealand, and we can all be justifiably proud to have this group representing Swiss Abroad from New Zealand, both in Switzerland and in Malaysia.

Looking at Club events, many people around the country have recently

been enjoying delicious Fondues. But things are winding down, with mainly only Christmas functions left on the annual agenda.

For anyone who is interested, I have been sent a video (in German) from Swiss Radio International (SRI) called "Wahlen 99, Die Schweiz - integriert oder isoliert?".

I also recently received more correspondence from the Swiss Abroad Secretariat (ASO), most of it dealing with AHV and voting rights. But it also included an interesting list of the number of Swiss Citizens resident in each country around the world, of which there are over 570,000 (registered at respective embassies or consulates). Here in Oceania, we total over 24,500. The bulk of these, 19,000, live in Australia, a further 5423 are in New Zealand, with the remaining 100 or so being scattered around a variety of Pacific Islands. We also have seven citizens from the Principality of Liechtenstein registered and residing here in New Zealand. Of the 5423 in this country, 4004 have dual nationality. The female population of 2181 greatly outnumbers the men, of which there are 1696, along with 1546 children aged under 18 years. And of the adults, 3373 are aged between 18 to 65, with 504 over 65 years. All of these 3877 adults are entitled to vote in Swiss elections and referenda, but currently, only 450, or 11.61% have registered to exercise this right.

The Swiss Abroad Secretariat is currently selling Year 2000 "Pestalozzi Calendars" at a special price for Swiss Abroad for approx. \$17.50 (normal retail price is \$25), plus postage. If anyone is interested in purchasing a calendar, please contact me on ph. 07 843 7971, or fax 07 843 7941, by Mon-



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day, 8 November, so that a bulk order can be placed to reduce postage costs.

Daylight saving is here, many of us are busy in our gardens, and we are finally enjoying lovely warm summer days - making New Zealand the best place in the world to be. And as we head rapidly towards the pre-Christmas period, I wish everyone a good and happy month without too much of the stress common at this time of year. Kind regards,

Beatrice

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