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continental airline was established in record time in an impressive example of co-operation between the public and private sectors.

Excellent work continues to be done by managers up and down the country. The Gotthard Tunnel was reopened surprisingly quickly. A majority of the people and the cantons voted in favour of UN membership, thereby opening new possibilities for ensuring our foreign policy interests. Following the allegations made against Switzerland, a great deal of effort has been made to process the difficult history of the war years revealing the shady side of that period. This was a painful process, but ultimately it has strengthened us. No other country has conducted such thorough studies of a comparable nature. The Expo 02 will, I'm sure, be a great national event with the power to shine at home and abroad. In countless ballots, the Swiss people have repeatedly demonstrated their far-sightedness and sense of proportion.

However, one might try to twist it, 'la Suiza existe'. Of course, there are still unresolved problems, but these are no greater than those faced by other countries of a comparable size. Naturally, in the age of globalisation and even more rapid change, Switzerland will continue to face challenges. But we have the strength to overcome these challenges and to ensure ourselves a successful future. Of course, with fierce global competition to attract businesses to locate, Switzerland will not have an easy ride. We will repeatedly have to reassess our relationship with the European Union, which is rapidly expanding both in depth and width. Above all, however, we will have to make sure our own house is in order, politically, economically, and socially. Only then will we be able to hold our ground in the face of global competition, even as a small country.

Nevertheless, we also wish to stand in solidarity as a member of the family of nations. Through our accession

to the UN, we are sending an important signal. Also this year, you will be able to vote on the creation of the Swiss Solidarity Foundation. With this large humanitarian project, Switzerland would send a further strong signal of solidarity both at home and abroad.

I wish you the best of luck, success and good health in your chosen homeland. I encourage you to take part in ballots and elections in Switzerland. We very much appreciate the contributions made by the so-called Fifth Switzerland!

## Proud to be Swiss:

Walter Seifert:

I would like to introduce myself to the members of the Swiss Society. My name is Walter Seifert. I was born and grew up in the Canton of St Gallen, in Azmoos, which is in St Gallen-Oberland. After nine years of schooling, I started a two year course in welding and general engineering.

At the age of 17 I started an apprenticeship as a baker. After qualifying, I worked in my trade for the next three years, during which time I met my future wife Myrtha. In 1971 we got married and I chose a career as a truck driver, driving heavy trucks all over Switzerland and Western Europe.

In 1973 we decided to immigrate to New Zealand. We arrived in Taranaki in January 1974 and started working on a dairy farm. After one season, we progressed to 39 per cent sharemilking. Four years later we purchased a dairy herd and went 50/50 sharemilking. Several years later we bought our first farm, near Eltham. We have always lived in Taranki and are still in farming! At present we own a small dairy farm at Midhirst.

We became involved with the Taranki Swiss Club and the Swiss Society shortly after our arrival in New Zealand. We have two grown children, Gabriela and Robert. Our family has always shown a keen interest in everything Swiss! I have served the club as Riflemaster and Vice-President for a number of years and for the past seven years as Club President.

I like our Swiss traditions and I am proud to be involved as a team member in the running of the Swiss Society affairs.



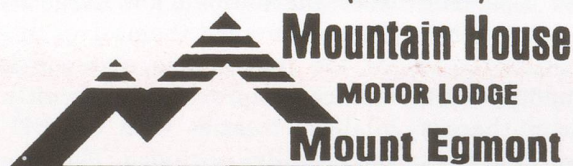
Taranaki Swiss Club President Walter Seifert has been a proud member for many years and is the new Vice-President and Treasurer for the Helvetia magazine.

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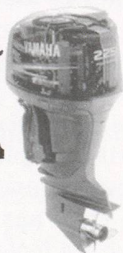
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