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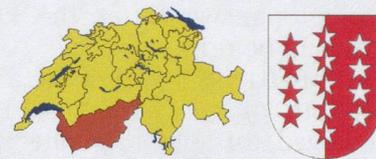
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# HELVEZIA

Magazine for the members of the Swiss Society of New Zealand Inc  
Helvetia is in its 76th year

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## Valais – Wallis



The Valais lies in the south-western part of Switzerland. The Rhône drains almost the entire canton and flows in the wide, glacial valley from east to west up to Martigny, then in a right angle

lais, however, speaks Walliser German.

The Romans called the area Vallis Poenina (Upper Rhône Valley). From 888 onwards the lands were part of the kingdom of Bur-

Confederation. In 1628 the Valais became a republic, the République des Sept Dizains/Republik der Sieben Zehenden under the guidance of the prince-bishop of Sion. The bishop remained in power until 1798 when Napoleon's troops invaded the Valais and declared a Revolutionary République du Valais, which was swiftly incorporated into the Helvetic Republic until 1802 when it became the separate Rhodanic Republic. In 1810 the Rhodanic Republic was annexed by Napoleonic France as the département of Simplon. Independence was restored in 1813, and in 1815 the Valais finally entered the Swiss confederation as a canton. In 1845, the Valais joined the Catholic separate league (Sonderbund) which led to what is called the Sonderbund War. 99,000 Swiss Federal troops under General Henri Dufour were faced by 79,000 Separatists, but in the end the Valais chose not to fight.

*from the internet*



Goms

north to its mouth in the Lake Geneva. The many side valleys vary from narrow and remote to reasonably populous.

Fifty of the Valais mountains exceed 4000m, with the highest mountain of Switzerland, the Dufourspitze, reaching to 4638m.

Only about half of the canton's 5224km<sup>2</sup> are considered productive. The canton is thinly populated. Its population is just over 300,000, including 57,000 foreigners, or about 19%.

Valais is predominantly French-speaking. The Upper Va-

gundy. In 999, King Rudolph III of Burgundy gave the lands to the Bishop of Sion, making him Count of the Valais. The count-bishops then struggled to defend their area against the dukes of Savoy, so that the medieval history of the Valais is inextricably linked with that of the diocese of Sion.

The Valais resisted the Protestant Reformation, remaining faithful to the Roman Catholic Church. On March 12, 1529, Valais became an associate member (Zugewandter Ort) of the Swiss

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