

# Swiss Federal Counsellor Guiseppe Motta passes away

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Objekttyp: **Obituary**

Zeitschrift: **Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand**

Band (Jahr): **5 (1939-1940)**

Heft 5

PDF erstellt am: **22.07.2024**

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Broadcasting in Switzerland.

(Berne) At the end of September 1939 there were 578,411 wireless subscribers in Switzerland, i.e. 5000 more than at the end of August. Since the beginning of the year the number of wireless sets installed had gone up by 30,000. (P.3934)

Well-known personages at the Swiss National Exhibition.

(Zurich) Various well-known personages from other countries visited the Swiss National Exhibition, which closed at the end of October. Among these there were Monsieur Gentin, the French Minister of Trade, the Lord Mayor of London, Mr. Grover Whalen, President of the New-York World's Fair, Mr. Cini, Senator of the Kingdom of Italy, President of the exhibition which is to take place in Rome in 1942. (P.3935)

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SWISS FEDERAL COUNSELLOR GUISEPPE MOTTA PASSES AWAY.

On January 23rd the radio news from London at 9 p.m. contained the information that the Veteran Statesman of Switzerland, her Foreign Minister, has passed away. This announcement was a hard blow to all of the Swiss people in New Zealand and, as I have already been assured, is also keenly regretted by those New Zealanders who knew Guiseppe Motta through their connection with the League of Nations. The statement over the radio was as follows :-

"The death has occurred of the Foreign Minister of Switzerland, Dr. Guiseppe Motta, aged 69 years. Dr. Motta was the son of a village postmaster and began his political career when 24 years of age. He was a member of the Swiss Federal Council for 30 years and was five times President of Switzerland. He was one of the most familiar figures at the League of Nations and was invariably Switzerland's leading delegate. He was honorary president of the first Assembly in 1920 and president in 1924. Ten years later he made a bitter attack on Communism when he opposed Russia's entry into the League."

I do not wish at this hour to relate and comment upon the facts which have made of the life of Guiseppe Motta an event of great significance in the history of Switzerland. In a few weeks' time the mail and newspapers from Switzerland will bring us the wording of the tributes of those in Switzerland who are in a position to speak with authority. At this hour we bow our heads in silent grief before his bier, and in our thoughts we are with our innumerable fellow countrymen at home, who on the 26th of January will partake in or witness his state funeral.

The life of Guiseppe Motta has been an inspiration to every Swiss patriot. His career as Federal Counsellor was accompanied by outstanding successes for the benefit of the Swiss Confederation. In addition to his achievements as one of the greatest statesmen of Switzerland, Guiseppe Motta also was recognised beyond national frontiers, partly through his activities in the League of Nations. But further than this, his philosophy, as expressed in his innumerable speeches during his long public career, will raise Guiseppe Motta to the pedestal of a "Prophet of the Fatherland." Of Italian-Swiss descent, but with a background of century old family traditions in the region of the Central Swiss Alps, natural close ties linked him with the history and people of the heart and cradle of Switzerland, the country around Lake of Lucerne. From such traditional background grew a profound understanding of the basic principles on which the Swiss Confederation must rest: Personal liberty within decentralised local democracies, religious and cultural freedom. He was a devout son of the Catholic church, and his speeches are full of religious thoughts. Being a member of the Italian speaking people of the world family, he was as true a disciple of Italian culture, as he was a true Swiss patriot. His perfect

knowledge, in addition to his mother tongue, of German and French, were the avenues leading to valuable understanding of the mentality of his Confederates of German and French speaking Switzerland. As a speaker in all these three languages, Guiseppe Motta was unexcelled. His personality was one of charm and elegance, radiating a human warmth and noble simplicity, in the presence of which any possible feeling of self-consciousness on the part of those who had the privilege to speak with him, vanished and gave way to a heartening feeling of meeting a great man, with admiration and respect, on common human grounds.

After having been officially informed of the passing away of Guiseppe Motta on January 23, I have sent the following telegram to the recently newly appointed Swiss Minister in London, Dr. Thurnheer, in my own name as well as that of my fellow-countrymen in New Zealand:

"You would oblige me offering Swiss Federal Council and bereaved family my condolences and those of my fellow countrymen in New Zealand in whose memory the defunct will live on as a great statesman and patriot."

Wellington, January 24th 1940. Dr. Walter Schmid  
Acting Consul of Switzerland

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#### NEWS IN BRIEF

RABBITS: At a Rabbit Show held at the National Exhibition in Zurich, about 2000 rabbits were exhibited representing 28 different breeds. This shows how extensive the rabbit breeding has become in latter years. It is estimated that the gross yearly turnover amounts to 10 million francs, while the invested capital is about 30 million francs.

What wonderful opportunities we are missing here in New Zealand. No other country would adapt itself more favourably for this industry than New Zealand.

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The "Sausser" of the canton Wallis enjoys great popularity as export statistics show. Siders exported 370,942 litres; Sitten 623,921; Ardon 407,174; Chamoson 381,615; Charrat-Fully and Martigny 626,216; a total of 2,941,064. Prosit!!  
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#### INCIDENTS IN THE ARMY:

Frontiers are very often the cause of very peculiar, even humorous happenings.

At A-- on the river Doubs, a bridge forms the division between Switzerland and France. At the outbreak of the war this was blocked, only a narrow doorway permitting passage for Swiss desiring to visit the nearby church, but which is standing on French soil. A Swiss living in one of the neighbouring villages had joined the colour and luckily was placed at A--. Having obtained one day's leave he asked his wife to come and pay him a visit which she readily did; but to their sorrow they discovered that the very strict regulations did not permit the good lady to enter Switzerland. If they could only have lunch together, they hoped. This was finally arranged with the guards' help. In a very short time a table was placed just inside the doorway, two legs on French soil and two legs on Swiss soil. So the two enjoyed their meal under the eyes of some highly amused guards and customs officials. The wife was in France and the soldier in Switzerland. It is hoped that the heavy Swiss military boots never transgressed into the neighbouring country to damage a dainty pair of French shoes.

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We wish to appeal to our members who have not yet paid their subscription for the present year, to meet their obligation as soon as possible. Our financial year terminates at the end of September. Prompt payment saves us considerable trouble and extra work. We thank you for an early settlement.

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We welcome as new members - Mrs. D. Dalgleish, Waymouth Rd., Birkenhead, and Mr. B. Kalin, 166, Armagh St., Christchurch.  
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