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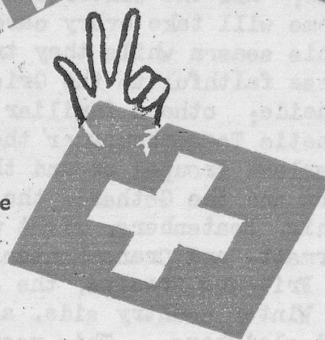
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# HELVETIA

Monthly Publication of the

SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY  
in New Zealand



Group New Zealand of the N.H.G.

WELLINGTON N.Z.  
JANUARY 1948.



Volume 1  
13th year.

"St. MORITZ AWAITS THE 5th OLYMPIC GAMES."

30th JANUARY - 8th FEBRUARY, 1948.

Once previously Switzerland has had the honour to receive competitors of all nationalities for the Olympic Winter Sports events. Those who remember the pacific contests of 1928 cannot have forgotten the ideal background of the Upper Engadine. St. Moritz indeed, appears to have been formed purposely by nature to serve as the centre for manifestations of such world wide interest. Its immediate surroundings as with its more distant snow covered slopes and trails, make this famous Engadine resort the ideal base for a winter sports meeting. Its hotels can assure the comfort of both competitors and officials as well as of thousands of spectators; a few technical installations are only necessary to constitute, on the admirable natural sites, the tracks, take-off platforms and skating rinks required for the various contests. The spotless summits, tinged with pink at sunrise and fading into shadowy blue at sunset, the vast sombre forests all combine to create a framework for these sports such as dreams are made of; the mind too, as well as the body can be exercised, for here in the Upper Engadine is the very heart of an ancient civilisation which has retained its best traditions, its dwellings and its culture, in short all which counts so highly in human values and forms such an attraction to visitors from other lands. All these conditions, as valuable tomorrow as yesterday, make the success of the Olympic Winter Sports at St. Moritz certain. The preparations have been in hand for months past. As can well be imagined the organisers have paid special attention to the sports installations. Each base is ready; as soon as snow has covered the slopes and valleys of the Engadine, the various tracks will be prepared and the runs and rinks arranged in every detail so that ski-ers and skaters, bobsleigh and skeleton teams can indulge in regular training. The same attention to detail will be given to the actual contests themselves, so that each one can be carried out under the best possible conditions, whether in succession or simultaneously in accordance with the Olympic Winter Games programme.

The olympic ideal is that all events should be contested in a true sporting spirit, without seeking to be spectacular. A loyal and impeccable organisation of the Olympic Winter Games is, for a country like Switzerland, a particularly agreeable task which will certainly be accomplished just as Pierre de Coubertin would have wished.

But the Winter season 1947-1948 will not be limited to the Olympic Games. Visitors who eagerly look forward to passing some weeks or months in the

Alpine Winter air will be welcomed everywhere. The Engadine is not alone in preparing a warm welcome; all the Winter sports centres, all the regions where the ski reigns supreme will take every care of the comfort and well-being of their visitors this season while they try to improve or recover their sporting form. Those faithful to the Grisons will find again Davos, Arosa, Klosters or Lenzerheide; others familiar with the St-Gall district will return to the sympathetic Toggenbourg or the Prealps of Appenzell. Glaris, the central Switzerland grouped around the Rigi and the Stoos, the central Alps with Engelberg and the Gothard, the splendid Bernese Oberland with Grindelwald, the Brunig, Beatenberg, right up to Gstaad; the Upper and Lower Valais, with Zermatt, and Crans-Montana; the Vaud Alps, with Villars-Chesières and the Fribourg Prealps, the Jura and its charming little valleys; all this Winter country side, all these trails and slopes await ski-ers, skaters and sleighers. This year as in the past, a magnificent Winter season will complete the benefits of an incomparable Summer; Winter holidays remain without doubt, the most delightful of all holidays.

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THE WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF  
"THE RED CROSS."  
DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR.

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This, and following numbers, will contain a summary of the activity of the International Red Cross during the Second World War thus giving readers of "Helvetia" an idea of the complexity of the work done by this committee. It may be added it consists only of Swiss nationals; the title International Committee is on account of the universal nature of its activity.

A DEED AND AN IDEA.

"Eight thousand visits to prisoners of war and internment camps. Thirty-six million parcels transported and distributed in the camps. Twenty-three and a half million civilian messages. News of prisoners of war given to their families, or vice versa, a hundred and twenty million times."

"Yes, but what about the Soviet prisoners of war, and the people in the concentration camps? What did you do for them?"

.....

Now that hostilities have ceased, questions are being asked about the activity of the Red Cross in general and of the International Committee in particular. Did the Committee really do all it could? Did it not fail to perform some of its duties? Is it to be judged by its achievements or by its failures?

The General Report on the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross during the second World War, which will be presented to the 1948 International Red Cross Conference, will make it possible perhaps, with the passage of time, to answer these questions. Yet if it is easy to evaluate a report of work done by a business concern or an administration, because its legal position, its functions and its resources are clearly defined, it is less simple in the case of an organism like the International Committee of the Red Cross, in which the various elements are ill-defined and usually little known.

In giving a brief account of the Committee's work therefore, it seems necessary, even before the General Report appears, to describe the position