

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 16 (1951)
Heft: [9]

Artikel: Swiss farming [continued]
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-942735>

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Drainage installations were at first built by the farmers themselves using fascines and building low embankments in stonework. Such installations are in use in the alps to this day. In the valleys use is made almost exclusively of pipe-system drainage installations, generally jointly owned plants of more consequence.

As a result of the Federal decree of 1884, concerning the furtherance of agriculture land improvement has recorded a powerful development. The Confederation, the Cantons, and in many instances also municipalities and corporations contribute funds. Many cantons employ official reclamation engineers, and the Confederation set up a special section for land improvements attached to the Federal Institute of Technology at Zurich.

A special agricultural building office was set up by the Swiss Farmers' Union in 1917. It controls the building of convenient new structures, and enhanced endeavours are made with a view to combining aesthetic improvements with traditional architectural forms. Buildings erected by that office have had a strong influence, and have a stimulating effect on the work of other architects and builders.

Land Improvements.—The oldest of the more important joint works of land improvement in Switzerland are the “Bisses” in the Canton of Valais, and the irrigated meadows. While the latter decreased since the introduction of the ley farming and improved meadow

The income of the Swiss people in 1950 was 17.4 billion francs, or almost as much as in the peak prosperity year of 1948. This sum is 400 million frs. above the one in 1949. Swiss economists are calculating that the value of income in 1950 was the biggest in history because all prices were below those of 1948. The wages in October, 1950, show an average value including all type of workers, helpers and journeymen alike, the following figures: Graphic arts 3.36 frs. an hour (in 1939: 1.85); metal and machine industries 2.53 frs. (1.36); watch industry 3.01 frs. (1.47). It is obvious that experienced men receive more than this average and the increases are much higher among the women employees. Swiss wage earners were never as well off as they are now.

The Swiss Federal Council has asked Parliament for a credit to install a trial television transmitter which would reach about 1,000,000 subscribers from Zurich.

EMPLOYMENT IN MAY.

The Labour Exchanges registered only 1501 totally unemployed people, as compared with 1800 in April and 5880 a year ago. On the other hand there are over 7000 vacancies waiting to be filled, so that many branches of industry are again faced with a labour shortage. Most wanted are building operatives, domestic servants, hotel staff, farm hands and metal workers.

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It is reported from Switzerland that in the course of debating the new Agricultural Economy Act the proposal was made that a general insurance against natural catastrophes should be introduced. The Federal Council agreed to look into the matter. The scheme would be carried out on a Cantonal basis but with some Federal subvention.

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Pursuing its defence measures, the Swiss Federal Government has adopted a decree which has to be sanctioned by Parliament, concerning the building of air-raid shelters in new blocks of houses in communes of more than 2000 inhabitants. The Confederation is to contribute 10 per cent. and the communes 20 per cent. for these shelters, which will involve the Confederation in the expenditure of £44,250,000.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's annual general meeting shall be held on Wednesday, October 31st, at approximately 8 o'clock, in Auckland. As last year, the meeting will be held at the secretary's office, Achilles House, 47 Customs Street East, top floor (next block to John Burns, Ltd.).

The order of business at the meeting includes: Presentation of balance-sheet, election of committee, and general discussion.

We cordially invite all members in Auckland and surrounding districts to attend.

The annual SUBSCRIPTION fee for the year 1951-52 is due again, and you are all requested to remit your contributions to the Secretary or to your district collection agents:

Swiss Consulate, P.O. Box 386, Wellington, for Wellington Province.

Mr. John Steiner, Eastport Road, Waihou, for Waikato Province.

Mr. C. Gebert, P.O., Opatiki, for Bay of Plenty Province.

Mr. J. Schumacher, Monmouth Road, Stratford, for Taranaki Province.

At the closing date of our annual balance, September 30th, we find that approximately 20 members failed to pay their 1950-51 subscription. All these compatriots have been members for many years and loyally supported the Society and we are certain that this matter has simply been overlooked. We request these friends to remit the small fee outstanding as quickly as ever possible.

NOTICES

In 1947, the Swiss people voted the introduction of a general Old-age, Widows' and Orphans' Insurance. This insurance, which is compulsory for the inhabitants of Switzerland, is also available to Swiss living abroad who wish to participate.

A maximum age limit of 30 years is set for admission. However, exception was made for the first year after the Act came into force, when persons up to 65 years of age could enrol. That time limit for joining the social insurance for these Swiss citizens (also for "dual nationals" or "Doppelburger") residing abroad who were born between July 1st, 1883, and December 31st, 1920, has recently been extended to the end of 1951. After December 31st, 1951, no applications from persons born on or before December 31st, 1921, can be taken into consideration. This affords a unique opportunity, particularly to elderly people not born prior to July 1st, 1883, to participate in the Swiss Social Security Scheme. A stipulation for admission is that the registration of the citizen with the Consulate is in order.

The annual premiums, which are payable until the age of 65 years, are to be assessed and paid with retro-active effect from January 1st, 1948. Persons gainfully occupied are liable to contribute 4 per cent. of their income in cash and in kind. The contributions of persons not gainfully occupied are levied according to the fortune and income from life annuities.

The Old-age pensions are paid out to single persons from the age of 65 years onwards, and in the case of married couples, to the husband from the age of 65 years, and to the wife from 60 years. Persons who have reached the age of 65 years, between July 1st, 1948, and June 30th, 1951, may now request the Old-age Pension. In such cases their contributions due will be deducted from their pension. The amount of the pension depends on the sum total of the contributions paid and on the number of years for which contributions have been made. Only those who have been contributing for at least 20 years will receive the full pension, which will vary according to payments effected, from Sfr.480 to Sfr. 1,500 annually for single persons, and Sfr.770 to Sfr. 2,400 for married couples. The minimum pension is paid after an average contribution of Sfr.30 or less annually; the maximum pension after an average contribution of Sfr.300 or more annually. The amount of the single orphan's pension varies from Sfr.145 to Sfr. 360 a year, and the pension of an orphan who has lost both parents varies from Sfr. 215 to Sfr. 540 per annum. The amount of a widow's pension depends on various factors.

In the event that you are interested in joining the insurance and desire more information, please contact the **Consulate of Switzerland, P.O. Box 386, Wellington;** the sooner the better.

Persons knowing the present whereabouts of

MR. PAUL MULLER,

who emigrated from Steinhausen, Ct. of Zug, in the year 1904 and later resided in Taranaki, are kindly asked to communicate with the Consulate of Switzerland, P.O. Box 386, Wellington.

MR. FRANK IMHOF,

42 Vogel Street,

HAWERA.

Is Agent of the

SOUTHERN CROSS ASSURANCE CO., LTD.

CORRESPONDENCE: Please address to the Secretary,

MR. E. MERZ,
P.O. Box 85, Auckland.

Printed by McKenzie, Thornton, Cooper Ltd., 126 Cuba St., Wellington, for the Swiss Benevolent Society in New Zealand (Inc.).