

News of the colony

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HELVETIA



MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE SWISS SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

Group New Zealand of the New Helvetic Society

22nd Year

JANUARY, 1959

Hamilton

NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

My dear Compatriots,

In 1958, I had for the first time the privilege of taking part in the celebration of our National Day with a large number of you from Wellington to Hamilton, from Taranaki to Auckland. Let me tell you what a refreshing feeling it has been for me to witness the vitality of your developing community, your dignified attachment to the old country, as well as your appreciation for the hospitality which we enjoy in New Zealand: good luck for the tasks ahead!

May 1959 hold much happiness for you all, for your families in Switzerland and in New Zealand, particularly for those in ill health and those who have been bereaved. This is the sincere wish of us all in the Swiss Consulate.

P-H. AUBARET,
Consul-General.

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NOTICE FROM THE CONSULATE

On December 11th, 1958, *Prof. F. T. Wahlen* was elected by the Federal Assembly to succeed the late Dr M. Feldmann as member of the Federal Council. A Bernese citizen and born in the Canton of Bern in 1899, the new Federal Councillor studied at the E.T.H. in Zurich, where he became an Ing. agr. and Dr sc. techn. before going to Canada where he stayed from 1922 to 1929. From 1924 to 1929 he was Head of the Experimental Stations of the Canadian Agricultural Department. From 1929 to 1943, he was in charge of the Federal Agricultural Experimental Station at Zurich-Oerlikon, from 1938 to 1942 of the section for agricultural production and household supplies in the "Eidgenoessische Kriegsernaehrungsamt," from 1924 to 1945 the Federal Council entrusted him with the agricultural development scheme which has been known since as "Plan Wahlen" and proved of decisive importance to the country during the years of the war. In 1943 he became a Professor at the E.T.H. In 1942 Dr Wahlen became a member of the Staenderat (Council of States). In 1949, he was appointed Head of the Agricultural Division of the F.A.O. (in Washington and then in Rome) and he has been Deputy Director-General of the F.A.O. for the last year. Prof. Wahlen, who had received the "Marcel Benoist Prize" in 1942, was made a Dr h.c. of the University of Zurich in 1946.

Prof. Wahlen took the oath as Federal Councillor immediately after the election.

On December 11th, 1958, the Federal Assembly elected Federal Councillor P. Chaudet to be President of the Confederation in 1959, and Federal Councillor G. Lepori Vice-President of the Confederation. Dr Carlo Pometta was appointed President of the Federal Court for 1959, and Federal Judge Schonenberger Vice-President.

The Consulate has been advised that, due to the present economic position, the New Zealand Government has found it necessary to suspend the recruitment of single Swiss migrants under the Assisted Passage Scheme which has been operating for some time. It is the intention of the authorities to deal with all applications that have been received.

CORRECTION TO PICNIC DATE

Please note that the Combined Picnic at Mercer will now be held on 25th January next and not on 31st January as previously advertised in the December issue of *Helvetia*.

NEWS OF THE COLONY

Obituary

Mrs Paul Zimmerman, although of indifferent health for a long time, died unexpectedly in the Calvary Hospital, Hawera, on November 19th last. Formerly nee Johanna Schorno, Mrs Zimmerman hailed from the Paltsflue, Goldau. She came to New Zealand in 1914 with a contingent of Swiss immigrants, mostly from the Canton Unterwalden, of whom one, Paul Zimmerman, was to become her husband in 1922. The marriage was a very happy one, although not blessed with children. Mr Zimmerman died in 1941 and after that Johanna was to become a housekeeper for Catholic Presbyteries in Hastings and Okato and for the last few years for the Maori Mission in Waitara. Her life was full of service to God and mankind. A large number of Swiss people and other friends paid their last tribute to her at the funeral in Hawera. R.I.P. —M.K.



Auckland Swiss Club

On Saturday, 6th December, our Swiss Club organised a "Klausfeier" in the Point Chevalier Park (Coyle Park). The idea of the celebration was mostly for the members' children to be entertained with sports: Tug of War, Bag Race, Lolly Scrambles, etc. Approximately at 3 p.m. the president, Mr Charles Ding, addressed the gathering of parents and children, mentioning that thanks to the generosity of two of our very good members, Mr Jacob Basler and Mrs Molly Gianotti-Steiner, the committee was able to supply everything gratis for the children and ice-cream galore for everybody. Santa Claus with a huge white bag distributed gifts to every child present. Some of the bigger boys and girls wanted to know if our committee-member, Kobi Glauser, had anything to do with Santa Claus when they were enjoying the abundance of ice-cream after Santa's departure for colder regions. Everybody agreed that it was a good show and if the weather next year would be more favourable for us as it had been this day we could expect many more parents and their families. As usual our "Kapelle"—Messrs Alf Meier and Charlie Rickenbach—gave us tune after tune and Mesdames Ospolt and Bachmann obliged with two perfect "Jodellieder."

—Ch.D.

Hamilton Swiss Club

An estimated attendance of about 150 adults and children celebrated the club's Christmas evening in the Riverlea on December 20th. The president, Mr Arnold Biland, welcomed everybody and extending Christmas greetings to them, thanked all for coming along and helping to make the evening the success it deserved. He and Mrs Biland, on the piano, with a small choir then led the singing of Christmas carols, which created a dignified atmosphere. The culmination of the celebration was the sight of the happy children, all of them eating their chocolate present, gathered round a real decorated tree with burning candles. Also the Aufschnitt and home-made cakes, donated by the ladies, contributed in no small measure to the success of the night—a night to remember.

—W.R.

Wellington Swiss Club

A Santa Claus cum Christmas Evening was held at the Brooklyn Community Hall on Sunday, December 7th, at 7 p.m. An invitation to attend this function was addressed to all Swiss residing in Wellington and not only to club-members, as on previous occasions. The committee therefore decided to hire the big hall which they very ably decorated with bells, candles and other Christmas symbols. The Christmas tree, for which Mr Aubaret very kindly lent the decorations, was placed on the stage together with a throne for Father Christmas and a few other props which put everybody immediately in the right Christmas mood.

The Consul-General and Madame P-H. Aubaret and their two sons as well as Madame C. Petitpierre and her three sons, who were on their way to Switzerland from Fiji, honoured the occasion with their presence.

About 100 people were present when the evening was opened with "Guete Sunntig mitenand," played on the accordion by Messrs Bischof and Ittensohn. Mr Messmer very kindly showed and explained some of the slides he took on his recent trip to Switzerland. Most of the shots were of mountain scenes and brought back to many of us happy

memories of walks and climbing tours we have done ourselves years ago. Zurich, the home-town of Mr Messmer, was represented with photos of the SAFFA and of a few ultra-modern buildings. A hearty thank you to Mr Messmer.

Santa Claus alias Mr Hangartner then took the stage. He called the little guests one by one to him and gently scolded them for this and that, extracted a promise not to do it again and rewarded them with a present. Some of the children were shy or afraid and had to be accompanied by their parents. Others fairly ran to meet Santa Claus.

Santa Claus, in the name of the Swiss Club, took the opportunity to say good-bye and good luck to Mr Francois Aubaret, who is returning to Switzerland to continue his studies.

The programme part of the evening was concluded with a community song, "Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht." Supper, carefully prepared by members of the committee, was delicious and plentiful and for those who liked dancing there was every opportunity. The record-player, procured and operated by Mr Augustin, was cleverly hidden on the stage behind props. The evening was enjoyed by everyone, although—because it was a Sunday night—most people left at about 10 o'clock.

SWISS SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND COMMITTEE MEETING

A committee meeting was held on the 14th December at the president's residence in Ngaruawahia. The president, Walter Risi, gave a special welcome to delegates from Auckland and Taranaki, the latter certainly being a long way from home.

Treasurer Hans Oettli gave a report of the financial position up to date. He said that, due to the reduction of the subscription fees, the co-operation of the members was of utmost importance as regards payments. The question was then raised: Who has to pay 10/- and who has to pay 15/-? Answer: Members of either Auckland, Hamilton or Wellington branches pay 10/- for the *Helvetia* because these clubs pay 2/6 to the Swiss Society for each of their members. All other members pay 15/-.

A move to make the Steinstossen a yearly national event was discussed at length and it was decided to obtain stones of the same weight and distribute them among the clubs. After each club had held their Steinstossen event, the best two, three or four men from each club shall meet in a central place for the national championship, which should carry substantial cash prizes. To finance the event a raffle was suggested. It was then decided that for this year each club include the Steinstossen in their picnic programme and that we go ahead in earnest next year.

In order to improve the secretary's job a little it was decided to purchase an addressing machine and a sum of £30 was authorised for this purpose.

The present heading of our monthly paper came in for a bit of criticism and the press committee was ordered to try to make it more impressive.

The secretary was asked to contact the Wellington branch about the annual general meeting. May 2nd or 9th would be the most suitable dates for this event.

—E.St.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Hamilton Swiss Club members please note that, due to the picnic being held on the 25th of this month, there will be no Social in the Riverlea. Next Social will be held again on the third Sunday (February 15th).

Taranaki Swiss Social Club Picnic February 15th. Keep this date clear.

HASELNUSS CREME

Now that hazelnuts are occasionally procured in grocery shops, here is a Creme with a difference:

1oz cornflour, 1½ pints milk, 13oz sugar, 3 egg yolks, 2 whole eggs, vanilla flavouring, ¼lb roasted, peeled and grated hazelnuts, ½ pint whipped cream. Make custard with milk, sugar, cornflour and vanilla essence. Add beaten eggs, just bring to boil and remove quickly. Add hazelnuts and whipped cream and chill. —H.B.

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NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

SLIGHT FALL IN COST OF LIVING IN SWITZERLAND

At the end of October, the Swiss Index of prices for consumer goods stood at 182.8 (100 in August, 1939), thus showing a decline of 0.1% as compared with the end of September, but an increase of 1.3% in comparison with the end of October, 1957. This evolution is due principally to a decrease in the price of clothing for men and women. In so far as wholesale prices are concerned, the Index stood at 214.5 points at the end of October, as against 214.9 at the end of the previous month, thus registering a decline of 0.2%.

CONSUMPTION OF BEER IN SWITZERLAND

During the business year of 1957-58, the Swiss breweries produced 3.15 million hectolitres of beer, as against 2.96 million hectolitres during the corresponding period for the preceding business year. In 1911, the consumption of beer amounted to 81.16 litres per year and per head of the population, this figure going down to 63 litres in 1957-58. At the present time, it has been observed that the sale of bottled beer is increasing to the detriment of beer drawn from the tap. Taxation on beer during the past year brought in 33 million Swiss francs to the Swiss Confederation. Thus, since 1927, when a tax was first imposed on beer in Switzerland, this beverage has procured 588 million Swiss francs for the Federal Treasury.

A PRIZE-WINNING SWISS FILM

At the Festival of the Mountain and Exploration Film, held at Trento, a Swiss film was awarded two prizes. This was a documentary entitled "Footpaths and rocks on the Saleve . . ." which was shot by André Kern and Raymond Lambert, the famous Swiss alpinist; it obtained a prize of 250,000 lire, which it shared with an Italian film, and it also got the prize of the "Deutscher Alpenverein."

THE INGENUITY OF SWISS ENGINEERS

In Switzerland, the very uneven configuration of the mountainous regions forces the engineers to have recourse, sometimes, to some extremely original methods for solving certain problems in respect of equipment and of transport. In this way, a helicopter has just been employed for the purpose of laying a line for the transmission of electricity, in the mountainous region of the Domleschg, in the Canton of Grisons. The helicopter, trailing a light but strong cord made of nylon, placed it on one pylon after another. Afterwards, this nylon cord served to pull a metallic cable along the pylons, with the aid of which the conductor was finally put into position.

In another mountainous part, this time in the Valais, a plastic conduit for drinking water has been installed in a very difficult terrain, where the placing of a metal pipe would not only have been too costly, but even quite impossible in some places. For instance, in order to span a very steep gorge, a plastic pipe was used, made in one piece, measuring 1,080 feet, having a diameter of 2.5 inches, steel-plated in order to protect it from damages caused by lightening, and suspended from a steel cable. As the transportation of this tube, made of "Somoflex," presented some difficulties in certain places, it was simply rolled out and carried by the local children, who were delighted to be able to escape for a few hours from the discipline of school. By placing a child at every two or three meters, the weight to be carried by each one of them amounted to only 4.5 to 6.5 pounds.

POSTAGE STAMPS FOR THE WHOLE WORLD

Messrs Courvoisier, an important Swiss firm belonging to the graphical branch of trade, has just received an order for the re-printing of a Ceylonese postage stamp. As a matter of fact, this is not the first time that this firm has printed stamps for the Government of Ceylon, which has informed it, on several occasions, of its complete satisfaction in the work which has been done for it.

This firm also has a great many other countries for its customers; thus, the Belgian Congo, Haiti, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Philippines, Salvador, Turkey, Venezuela, Yugoslavia and, of course, Switzerland, are among Messrs Courvoisier's regular customers. The firm has also executed orders for Angola, Australia, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Ecuador, Portuguese Guinea, India, Iraq, Iran, Iceland, Macao, Nicaragua, Poland, Portugal, the Saar and Italian Somaliland.

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF A SWISS INDUSTRY

It is in consequence of having contracted a tenacious form of rheumatism, whilst on active military service guarding the frontiers during the First World War, that Dr Schaufelberger, who manufactured speed-recording machines in his factory which was established in 1908, began to make electrically-heated cushions. The electric cushion "Solis" was the first to possess an automatic safety current cut-out, which is still being utilised today in its original form. Since then, the firm has enlarged its manufacturing programme and has become particularly renowned for its electrically-heated carpets, blankets, mattresses, etc. In order to ensure the quality of its products, the "Solis" firm itself produces nearly all the detached parts for its apparatuses.