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★ HEDY'S CORNER

NAEMME SI MAERKLE ?

To "second generation" Swiss women this question has no meaning, but to us who grew up at home, did perhaps some housekeeping before coming to New Zealand, 'Naemme Si Maerkle' brings nostalgic memories to mind. Alas—dear female compatriots, 'Maerkle' are no more!

Did you hear the broadcast from Switzerland around the middle of February? A female voice, nearly choking with sobs, recited a farewell poem to the 'Maerkle'.

Remember, every time we went shopping, more often than not we were asked in the shops, after purchasing some goods: naemme Si 'Maerkle?'. Of course we took the Maerkle. After getting home from our shopping we made our weary feet do just a few more steps, to get the Maerkle book from its drawer and then we sat down, with a sigh of relief. Soon the weary legs and feet were forgotten: what joy and satisfaction it was to lick each Maerkle and paste it on the page corresponding to its monetary value—10 cents, 20 cents, fifty cents up to Fr.5 (my memory might not serve me quite correctly, so be welcome to write to the "Helvetia" and correct me). The Konsum had its own savings book, because that is what these quaint stamps represented. A bit of modest pocket money was ours once the book was filled with Maerkle and was presented at the counter for its cash value.

Perhaps we bought a surprise gift for a dear one in the family, perhaps we 'blew' it for ourselves, perhaps we were thrifty for a long term wish fulfillment.

The purring satisfaction was the thing, every time a booklet was full. This is the main thing I remember so vividly and why I am actually a bit sad that yet another small joy has fallen victim to the ever spirally "streamlining" of business—run more economically or whatever it is called.

Together with the loss of yet another bit of "Gemuetlichkeit", there also is a fading away of "the little shop around the corner", where one shopped for this and that and had a bit of time for a chat and where the shop owner knew you by name and asked after you and your family. And so we go, in the name of progress, with more profit for the impersonal super centres, where only the fit can walk the long aisles, up and down in search for the goods!

Dear women compatriots in far away Switzerland, we in New Zealand, mostly the not so young ones, feel just a bit sad with you for the loss of the never more heard "heimeligi" question: "Naemme Si Maerkle?"

Alusuisse (Zurich, Switzerland) and Boliden AB of Stockholm, are going to create a joint firm known as Aluflo AB at Helsingborg, Sweden. This new firm, whose annual capacity of production amounts to some 15,000 tons of aluminium fluoride, will represent an investment of thirty million crowns. The raw materials used by the new firm will be aluminium hydroxide and fluosilicic acid supplied by Alusuisse and Boliden respectively.