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STATEMENT MADE BY THE SWISS AMBASSADOR

At the Annual General Meeting of the Wellington Swiss Club, which took place on Saturday, April 6th, 1974, the Ambassador was questioned about the rumours concerning financial help by the Swiss Government in the matter of the "Helvetia". He made the following statement:

Since the Swiss people accepted the new Article 45 bis of the Constitution, the "Auslandschweizersekretariat" and the Federal Political Department, studied the question of a better information service for the Swiss living abroad.

The different ways existing for transmitting information, e.g.:

Circulars sent out by the Diplomatic Missions and Consular Posts;

publications of the Swiss Societies or Clubs, as for example, the "Helvetia";

newspapers and periodicals issued by private organisations, as for example, the "Echo" or weekly edition of the "Tagesanzeiger"

have some disadvantages. One is, that circulars, the "Echo" and the publications of the Swiss Societies, all contain partly the same matter; another is that many Embassies and Consular Posts do not send out circulars, or only when there is a particular problem, such as we did some months ago with regard to the AHV.

In New Zealand, a distinct disadvantage is that only the members of the Swiss Society are the recipients of its publication "Helvetia".

As far as newspapers or periodicals sent from Switzerland are concerned, the cost is extremely high, and if sent by sea mail the news is too stale to be of interest.

The solution suggested and offered by the Swiss Government, is the issuing of a periodical in collaboration with publications of the Swiss Societies. In New Zealand, this would be the Swiss Society of New Zealand (Inc.) who publish "Helvetia". It would not affect the autonomy of the Society, and the Society would in no way be obliged to accept the suggested solution.

Eight numbers of the "Helvetia" would continue to be published as at present. They would include articles from the Editing Committee, as usual, and news from the various Clubs. These eight numbers would be sent to the members of the Swiss Society. The cost for printing and mailing these eight numbers would continue to be paid by the Swiss Society, and be sent to its members.

Concerning the other four numbers, these would appear every third month and would contain, apart from the usual texts,

various items of much general interest about Switzerland, contributed by the "Auslandschweizersekretariat", accompanied by photographs, and official news from the authorities in Switzerland, and news from the Embassy. These four numbers would be sent to each Swiss family and unmarried Swiss national (living alone) registered with the Embassy. For this special issue, the texts, written in English, and the cliches for the photographs, would be sent from Bern, to the Embassy, who in turn, would transmit them to the Editing Committee, from whom the printers would receive the material.

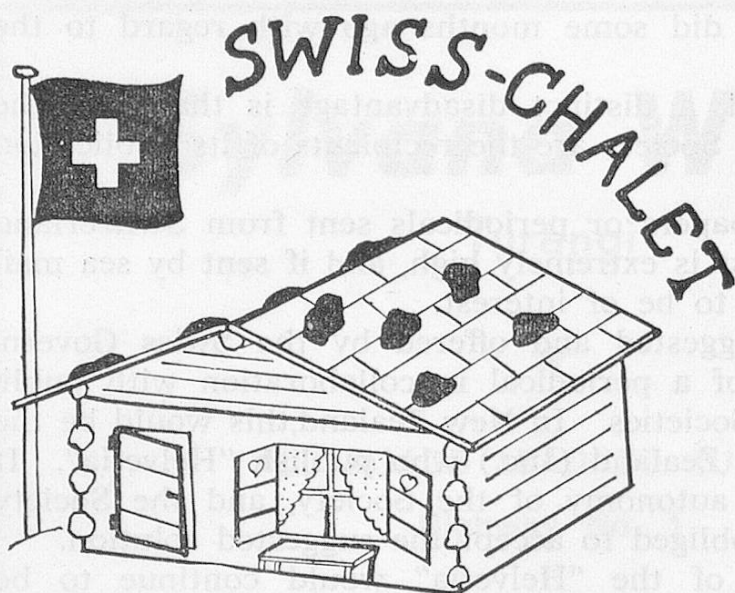
The "Helvetia" would be sent from the printers to the Embassy, who would distribute it. The total cost of these four issues would be covered by the Swiss Government.

Laugh a Little

Superstition: "Do you believe that it brings bad luck to marry on a Friday?" "Oh yes, I am quite sure, why should Friday be an exception?"

The Reason: "And why do you ask for a divorce?" asked the judge. "This I will tell you quite clearly," explains Mrs Smith; "every time I sit on my husband's lap he starts dictating letters to me."

—Nebelspalter.



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