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Editorial

Once again it is the time of the year when lots of our Swiss compatriots return from a visit to the old country, Switzerland. If I had been among the "Lucky-ones" and if I was asked about my most favoured activity while in Switzerland, I probably would answer as in the past, that it was the travelling on the Swiss federal railway system. My earliest memories of train travel in Switzerland go back to pre-world-war times and the fascination with this orderly and disciplined railway technology has never left me and maybe you feel the same way?

-One of the most frequent answers for Swiss toddlers of my days, to the question of future activity in life, would have been the profession of train-locomotive-driver. I guess, a case of "many are called, few are

chosen"!

And now the Swiss federal railway is celebrating 150 years of its existence with the re-run of the return-journey Zürich - Baden, the so-called Spanisch-Brötli-Bahn.

On 7. August 1847 (according to history books), some 140 passengers travelled the 23 kilometre distance in 3 passenger coaches and in a record time of 35 minutes. Of course today's trains need only half the travelling time and the meaning of the nick-name "Spanisch-Brötli-Bahn" may have to be explained. It appears that the well-to-do people of Zürich of the 1840th were very fond of the spanish bread-buns made of puffy pastry by the bakers of Baden. So the start of the train service between Zürich and Baden proved ideal for the delivery of this delicacy and hence the nick-name "Spanish-Brötli-Bahn" with the same initials

SBB as the federal railway (Schweizerische Bundes Bahn) uses to this day.

If we were to undertake a study of the history of Swiss railways, we would probably discover that our country of origin was late in adopting the railway technology compared with the surrounding countries. The topographical character of the countryside with high mountains and low lying valleys made it a daunting task to plan a rail-network, I presume. The Swiss have traditionally been a conservative lot and some may even have believed the warning from a medical expert of that time, that on-lookers would risk brain disease!!!! - Well we know better now, but one of my memories of early train travel is of hard wooden seats, lots of metal-grinding-noise and an enamelled notice with black writing below the window sills saying in German, French and Italian - "Do not lean out of the window" - and of course that's what we most liked to do, especially on the ever so popular School excursions.

SWISS SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

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DELEGATES TO THE SWISS ABROAD CONFERENCE IN SWITZERLAND

DELEGATE: Heinz Leuenberger, 33 Russell Terrace, Putaruru, Ph/Fax (07) 883-8537

DEPUTY DELEGATE: Marie-Therese Melville-Schöpfer, P.O Box 79-294, Royal Heights, Auckland 1230, Ph. (09) 833-4029

EDITOR: Rinaldo Rust, 242 Te Pahu Rd. R.D.5. Hamilton, Ph/Fax (07) 871-9946

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President's Message

The Society sports' medals for 1997 have arrived, and most have already been presented to the lucky winners at recent First of August celebrations, which I have heard, were all very well attended. Having had a preview of all the medal winners, it's great to see the large increase of participation amongst our junior members - my congratulations go to all these youngsters, both participants and medal recipients alike.

Thank you to all those "Society only" members who have paid their annual subs - the response has been excellent, with only about 30% now outstanding. I extend my appreciation to everyone who included small notes and messages of support, both to myself, as well as to the new Society organisation. They were a delight to receive. And to all new members of either a Club or to the Society - welcome!

In early August, I was in Christchurch for the weekend, so whilst there, I found it to be a perfect opportunity to contact the Christchurch Club. I met with Wilma and Ralph Junker, with whom I had a lovely dinner and an enjoyable evening. Unfortunately, I missed out

on their Club's "First of August Raclette" a day earlier, however it was heartening to catch up with some members from "down south". (It was very cold though!!) But hopefully, the warmer weather will be with us soon, with only one more month before daylight saving begins. I wish everyone a lovely springtime - it will be so nice to see those gardens blooming again.

Finally, a plea - we have a new section in the HELVETIA called "Your Corner", and Doris and Trudi would really like to hear from you. Make use of this space for your special input.

My best wishes to everyone
Beatrice

YOUR CORNER

Thank you to those of you who have taken the time to send us some encouraging lines.

One of our readers kindly reminded us that we have forgotten to mention the "Kirsch" in our "Basler-Läckerli-recipe".

Note: Recipes may differ according to custom, family tradition or from Canton to Canton.

Since some of us are plagued with colds and flu, we have been asked to provide you with a Mulled-wine "Glühwein" recipe. Here are a couple;

Mulled wine;

1/2 cup each of sugar and water
2 - 3 whole cloves
1 cinnamon stick
small piece of bay leaf
- Combine ingredients and cook for 2 minutes
- add 1 litre of red Table wine (does not have to be expensive), and juice of 1/2 lemon.
- **heat and enjoy!!!!**

Fruity Mulled Wine

1/2 cup each sugar and water
1 table spoon whole cloves
2 cinnamon sticks
peel and juice of 2 oranges and 1 lemon
1 litre (4 cups) fruit wine or Red wine. (make sure it's not an acid wine!, very important!)
- **Enjoy!**

Keep on sending in those letters and ideas! Looking forward to hear from you:

Doris;
Doris Rust, Bayley Rd.
R.D. 3, Te Awamutu

Trudy;
Trudy Wilson, Main South Rd.
R.D. 3, Te Awamutu

Contribution from Heinz Leuenberger, Delegate to the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad OSA.

The following resolutions were passed at the March session of the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad:

In the knowledge of the necessity to re-organise the voluntary Old-Age insurance scheme AHV/IV, the OSA is working towards a variable that will encompass the following targets:

1.) The continuation of the voluntary insurance scheme for Swiss Abroad in a difficult financial situation, or for Swiss living in a country with an insufficiently developed Social Insurance programme.

2.) Guaranties that compatriots mobility is secure, particularly for those that may be forced to look for work abroad, due to deteriorating economic circumstances at home.

3.) Continuation of a minimum level of Solidarity between Swiss nationals e.g. at home/abroad, as set down in article 45 bis. of the Federal Constitution.

4.) acceptance of a euro-compatible result, as far as such may be necessary.

The plan worked out by the federal office for Social Insurance, accepted and taken on board by the AHV/IV Commission falls short of the expectation of the Swiss Abroad Organisation. The Council of the Swiss Abroad (Delegates) is not in agreement with the following resolution accepted by the AHV/IV Commission:

1.) The restriction of participants in the voluntary AHV/IV to six (6) years. All Swiss Nationals have the possibility to re-settle in Switzerland and apply for a special grant if they are in need.

2.) Restricting the joining of the voluntary AHV/IV Insurance scheme to nationals living in countries that have no reciprocal contracts with Switzerland in place, (e.g. NZ.) or do not have an equal Insurance scheme to Switzerland's.

3.) The setting of contributions to the last salary received in Switzerland. Such a rational is illogical and discriminating particularly to those that earn less in their employment abroad.

4.) Acceptance of measures that would shut out voluntary contributors to the AHV/IV scheme after six years. This would represent an unacceptable breach of contract. Furthermore the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad is of the opinion, that should the Federal Government - if it finds a solution that is curtailing the circle of people that presently

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