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Editorial

A new year - a new beginning - and an apology.

Lots of editorials deal with the deeper meaning of life at this time of us facing a new year full of anticipations.

So, what difference is it going to make to our daily life to have to replace the number seven with the number eight on our date during the next eleven months?

Since I am no good at crystal-ball gazing I can but tell you of my usual "New Year Motto" which has stood me in good stead so far, and that is "There but for the grace of God go I!" - It reminds me of my creator God, assures me of my "purpose of being", it gives me hope that good will always triumph over evil, even in times when chaos seems to reign supreme in our "broken" world. It reminds me that because I receive so much goodwill and charity from

within the circle of people surrounding me in life, I am in turn duty bound to try and use every occasion, as it presents itself to me, to be a support and hope in someone else's life, whenever possible. It keeps me humble, reminds me that I am but a very small part in God's design and yet able to love, to hate, to mourn, to rejoice, to forgive and that I am free to choose between good and evil, free to take responsibility for all my actions.

What will this year of 1998 hold for our adoptive country New Zealand and our country of origin, Switzerland? We will know in due time; but for Switzerland I know it is going to be a jubilee-year, celebrating 150 years of modern statehood with a constitution dating back to 1848. The draft-reform of the **new constitution** prepared during the past 30 years, is due to be considered by the Federal Parliament in the coming

months. Meanwhile a wide range of official activities will mark the 150th anniversary of the old constitution throughout Switzerland. It includes a series of travelling exhibitions. The program of events was recently unveiled in the Federal Parliament Buildings by the Interior Minister Ruth Dreyfuss before an invited audience of school children.

And now in order to proceed in the new year with the ability to remember the past year with "peace of mind" I would like to apologize sincerely to the Wellington Swiss Club for a most unfortunate mistake in the December Issue of HELVETIA. During the final setting of the different articles a most important part of the report "Wellington Swiss Club 40th Anniversary Celebration, 25/26 October 1997" was inadvertently omitted. On page 10 you will therefore find the complete article printed as received originally from the Secretary of the Wellington Swiss Club, Michelle Koeppel-Schneider on the 14. Nov. 1997. Editor R.Rust.

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President's Message

Welcome to 1998 and this year's first issue of the Helvetia - my best wishes to everyone for whatever the New Year will bring you. I hope everyone enjoyed a pleasant Christmas and had a chance to relax at some stage during the recent holiday period.

As always at this time of year, many of you will have had people from Switzerland come and stay. Those visitors who came earlier in December were able to sample the festive season during the heat of our summer instead of their traditional Christmas in winter which we only really experience on Christmas cards, or by feeling sorry for "Santa" when having to wear his suit and beard! But in any case, I hope that your long unseen relatives and friends had or are having a pleasant stay here in New Zealand, and that you were, or are still able, to enjoy their company before their travel homewards. And speaking of travel, like the Delegate for the Swiss Abroad, I too have been corresponding with Swissair's agent here in New Zealand, Mr. Darragh Walshe. I'm pleased to say that a start has already been made to re-establish a