

Editorial

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Editorial

Have you heard the expression the "new poor" of today!? A couple of months ago this was the topic of discussion in Switzerland, while we in New Zealand were confronted with lively discussions on "a code of social responsibility". Here and over there it pertained to families, the backbone of any country as we have always been told. However in Switzerland the discussions revolved not so much around the responsibilities of parents or caregivers, as much as about the responsibilities of society at large towards modern-day Swiss families. Statistics, according to a study by the federal office of social security, in our country of origin show that a lot of Swiss families have become the "new poor", living below the poverty line. A study based upon such statistics has shown that it costs a staggering 800,000 Francs

to raise child Nr. 1 in a Swiss family up to the age of twenty. For a 2-child family this amount climbs to over a million Francs and for 3 children one and a half million Francs to raise them to maturity. If you think these are just exaggerated statistics, then your reaction is the same as mine. However by studying the subject a little closer it is interesting to note that the statistics include a very important modern-day component (representing approx. 70 % of total) called "lost earning-potential of the Mother"! With loss of earnings of this magnitude, to achieve the ideal of a Mother staying home to raise the children, it is proposed, that society (taxpayer and husband's employer?) contribute a monthly family-subsidy of 600 Francs for the first child and 300 Francs for each additional child. This would rectify the situation, as Switzerland is spending only a bit more than 7 billion Francs annually on child sup-

port. This is calculated at only 1/6 of total family subsidies needed according to this exercise. Apparently there is no official maternity insurance in Switzerland and only a very low level of regulated childcare. It is estimated that a so-called working mother (or working father, as the case may be), staying home with one child, loses 7 full-time working-years, with 2 children approx. 10 such years and with 3 children 11 years.

- What are all these calculations about, our grandparents would probably ask? They would say; we used to get married to have children, Mothers took it as their vocation to stay home and raise the children to the best of their ability. Not always, but in most cases parents were rewarded for their sacrifices by seeing the children grow into decent citizens. Parenthood in most cases created a bond and respect between Mother and Father and the state had it's healthy foundation with the motto "Im Hause muss beginnen was leuchten soll im Vaterland" (the state's foundation are being laid inside the family home).

We all know that in most families throughout history there were difficulties to be overcome, quite often specific difficulties due to financial constraints. Therefore discipline on personal as well as on family level became necessary and was practiced in schools, work environment society at large, as well as in local,

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cantonal and federal affairs. Maybe there is an element of "glorification of the past" in these words, but in today's Swiss society, as in others, it has become commonplace for young couples to ask themselves if the family's income allows any children at all. Despite one of the highest per-capita incomes in the world, the average Swiss family finds it hard to make ends meet. The struggle with very high living expenses, the general need for mothers to work for financial reward, peer pressure for families and children alike and modern day expectations as well as the need for the children's best possible education are all contributory factors working against families in a world that demands equal opportunities and finds little purpose in sacrificing of self. Perhaps the most disturbing factor during the lively discussions in Switzerland was the fact that a sizeable slice of Swiss society thought that couples choosing to have a family should carry the financial burden alone, or abstain from having children. Much food for thought, don't you think?

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By now, Clubs will have all completed their AGM's, some with only minor changes, and others with larger changes to their committee structure.

Over the past twelve months, a great number of Club events have taken place around the country so that members and friends have been able to come together on these many occasions to take part in and enjoy a whole variety of "Swiss" activities.

This, of course, could not happen without the hard work, commitment and dedication of the committee members and helpers, many of whom have already given many years of service to their respective Clubs. These people give so much of their time to ensure the success of the functions we all enjoy, and I'd like to encourage all members to attend and support as many Club events as possible.

At the end of this month, members from all over New Zealand (it would be great to see someone from the South Island) will once again be coming together for the Society

AGM, this year being hosted by the Taranaki Club. It seems such a short time since we last met here in Hamilton last June. I have certainly enjoyed my first year as President; I've been very lucky to have had the guidance of both several people who were part of the Society committee some 15 to 20 years ago, and also a great team of people on the current Society committee. I now look forward to seeing everyone at the upcoming AGM, and hope to see a record number come along for what I am sure will become a weekend we will enjoy immensely. With kindest regards and my best wishes,

Beatrice

SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday 31 May 1998, commencing at approx 2.00pm, at the Taranaki Clubhouse, Kaponga

AGENDA

- 1 Welcome by the President
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Minutes of the last AGM, 1/6/97
- 4 Matters arising from the Minutes
- 5 Obituaries
- 6 President's Report
- 7 Matters arising from the President's Report
- 8 Editor's Report
- 9 Matters arising from the Editor's Report
- 10 Financial Report
- 11 Matters arising from the Financial Report
- 12 Delegate for Swiss Abroad's Report

- 13 Matters arising from the Delegate's Report
- 14 Rifle-master's Report
- 15 Matters arising from the Rifle-master's Report
- 16 Setting of Subscriptions for the 1998/99 year
- 17 Election of Officers
(President/Vice President/Secretary/Treasurer/Editor)
- 18 Election of Society Committee
- 19 General Business
 - Rule changes
 - Club reports
 - Other
- 20 Setting of date and venue for 1999 Society AGM
- 21 Meeting Closure

MOTION

That the following rule be added to the Statutes in order to acquire tax exemption status with the IRD:

14. Withholding Tax Exemption Status Requirements

- a. No part of the organisation's income or funds is to be used or be available for the personal use or gain of any member or an associated person of any member.
- b. In order to prevent forfeiture of tax exemption status, no alterations may be applied to Rules 13.b or 14.a.

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