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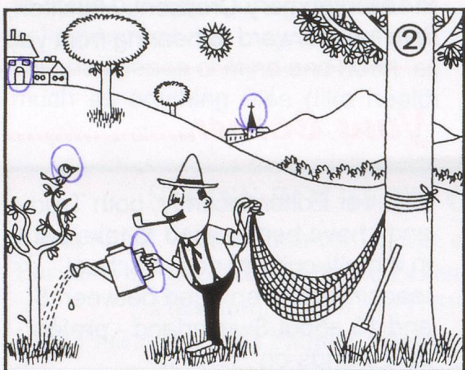
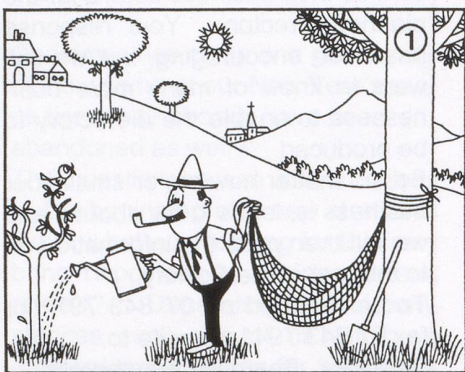
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SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

See if you can find the 9 mistakes in picture 2 - answer can be found on page 7.



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Surprise News from Switzerland

The Swiss Federal Councillors, Koller and Cotti, have announced (middle of January) their resignation to take effect in April this year. Koller and Cotti became federal councillors simultaneously but they apparently made the decision to resign independently and maintain there is no collusion in doing so.

CONTRIBUTION from our DELEGATE to the SWISS ABROAD

For those compatriots that are still interested in the well-being of the "old country", now more than ever is the time to apply and register with the Embassy for your voting rights! What happens in Switzerland may not hold much of importance for us first generation Swiss Kiwis who have no intentions of returning home to live. For the next and indeed future generations however, the question of Switzerland's position vis-à-vis the European Union may have important and far-reaching consequences, should they one day decide to go back even if only for a working holiday.

- Only 15 % of compatriots eligible to vote have so far registered.

The latest batch of material received from the Secretariat for the Swiss abroad, contained the following news:

EXPLANATION FROM THE FEDERAL COUNCIL regarding the conclusion of negotiations with the EU;

The federal Council feels that the result of the intensive, very often extremely difficult, four year-long negotiations are most positive. It is the Council's expectation that the seven contracts (all in one) will strengthen Switzerland's relationship with the 15 members of the European Union. The Council will do its utmost that the contracts are passed by Parliament and if need be, by the Sovereign as expeditiously as possible.

The conclusion of those sectional contracts provides the Federal Council with an important medium to improve our economy's compatibility and reduce the effects of our isolation within Europe.

P.S.

In this issue of "Helvetia" on page 5 you will find a flyer containing an article from the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung". The article gives you the relevant and accurate contents of the seven contracts.

- It would be presumptuous of me to try to translate it, as it's far to technical.

CHANGE OF TOPICS FOR THIS YEARS SESSION (6th to 8th August 1999 in Lausanne).

- After four years of negotiations between Switzerland and the European Union, agreement in seven selected sectors has at long last been achieved. (After a very nervous night, Federal Counsellor Maurice Leuenberger was informed at 0510).

- The sectors concerned are;
Mobility - Road/Rail Traffic - Air traffic - Research - technical Trading obstacles and Public procurements.

- The signing of the Agreement is expected to take place in March 1999, shortly after the Federal Council will submit this Document for Parliaments perusal. The two Chambers are expected to attend to this business during the Summer and Autumn Sessions. A Federal Referendum may follow as early as next year.

- During the coming months, Switzerland's relationship with the EU will no doubt provoke major public discussions not least because Federal Elections will take place on the 24. Oct. 1999. The most discussed sector of the Agreement is the "unimpeded" mobility within the EU including Switzerland. The question of mobility is as relevant to us Swiss Abroad as to everyone else. In view of the importance of the subject Europe, it would be hard to understand if it is not given a 'prominent place' at this years Congress in Lausanne. According to the regulations governing the workings of the Swiss Abroad Council (Art. 9 litt.h) the Congress agenda is chosen by the Council during its Spring Sessions (March) for the following year. In view of the importance of the upcoming discussions, Counsellors are asked to make their views and decisions known - post haste. My vote is affirmative.

Heinz Leuenberger
Swiss Abroad Delegate.

Congratulations
and best wishes to
Heidi and Heinz Leuenberger of Putaruru,
on the 40th. Wedding
Anniversary
celebrated on 26 January.
from Hamilton Swiss Club & Society