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Editorial

The second Sunday in May !

One hundred years have come and gone since the tradition of Mother's day was established somewhere in America.

- One of my earliest childhood memories back in Switzerland is associated with first-year schoolwork, printing the word "MUTTER" MOTHER in capital letters on a small black school slate with writing 'guide lines' on one side and 'calculating squares' on the other with a wooden frame on the outside needing to be scrubbed every week-end to be ready for inspection on the Monday morning. Our elderly School teacher, (she was a spinster that

had already taught my Father some 30 years earlier), used the occasion of Mother's day to instruct us about the respect we should have not only for our Mothers but indeed even for the written word MOTHER.

- And now those memories remain as we watch the next 2 generations honouring their Mothers in turn.

I'm sure there are people less fortunate than us who have but wonderful memories of loving Mothers or who can still treasure a close and loving relationship with their Mother. But we surely all have an obligation to honour either the person or the memory. Surely the sacrifice which motherhood demands in any case, in order to produce new life, is worthy of respect and reverence no matter how difficult or disturbed a rela-

tionship from generation to generation may be.



for Mother !

While we here in our adoptive country of New Zealand are and have been fortunate enjoying generous social security benefits for childbearing Mothers we may well remind ourselves that this is not so in all countries.

- Even in our so-called 'affluent' home country Switzerland there are still couples, (fortunately they are in the minority), who risk poverty by having one or more children, depending on the family income.

- On June 13 this year the Swiss are to vote on a more comprehensive, fundamental and state funded maternity benefit (Mutterschaftsversicherung), in accordance with all other European countries. Acceptance of the new law will help all Mothers but will be of special benefit, and is of urgent need, to help the 'bottom 20 %' of families which are at present in danger of falling below the poverty line raising a family.

- I suppose it was inevitable that the proponents of the new law in Switzerland would make use of the occasion of Mother's day to promote the maternity benefit.

A news item on Swiss Radio International said the following;

- *Government Ministers used Mother's day on Sunday to press their case for the yes-vote in next month's nation wide poll on maternity benefits. The President Ruth Dreyfuss told a rally in Berne that women should have the right to become mothers without having to worry about money. Speaking in Zürich, the Justice Minister Ruth Metzler said a yes-vote for the maternity benefit would be a yes-vote for the family which she described as a vital pillar of society. The day*

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