

[Impressum]

Objekttyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand**

Band (Jahr): **67 (2001)**

Heft [5]

PDF erstellt am: **22.07.2024**

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Editorial..

Achte eines Jeden Vaterland, aber das Deine liebe!" Respect everybody's 'fatherland' but love your own. And what if you have two 'fatherlands'? Well then you love them both!

I can't remember when I first was told of this 'civil commandment' and which of the Swiss philosophers coined the words, but I have remembered them well. Recently I had two occasions to talk about 'love for homeland' in public, as I was invited to speak on Switzerland at a gathering of the Te Awamutu Rotary Club and at a meeting of the Te Pahu Country Woman's Institute. I remember fulfilling the same task for a Primary School class in Hamilton some 44 years ago and I remember the lovely handwritten 'thank-you-letters' I received from approxi-

mately two dozen eight-year-olds that enjoyed hearing of cow bells and Swiss chocolate.

These days my talk about Switzerland is more comprehensive, but I still tend to highlight the positive aspects rather than dwell on the negative.

Modern living and 45 years in New Zealand with only few visits back to the country of origin, demand that I describe that small Country of our forebears in two parts: as it was then, and as it is now. Time in the lives of people has the ability to make them remember the 'good times' rather than the 'bad times' and so it is understandable that my recollection of 'early days in Switzerland' is somewhat tainted by rose-tinted glasses. However I try to counteract this hazard by talking candidly about life as a young mountain peasant farmer's son during the

dark years of the second World war with aspects of hardship, anxiety and austerity. One of the visual aids I use during my address is the large Swiss flag I usually unfold as I face 'my audience'. It's always a proud moment when I explain the white cross surrounded by a red background in contrast to the red-cross on a white background and the 'Henri Dunant'-connection between the two.

Explaining the dense population of Switzerland with diversity in language, culture and religion is standard procedure as well as pointing out the relative lack of natural resources made good by the picture-book beauty of the country as a tourist destination.

Pointing out the principal Cities of Bern, Zürich, Basel, Geneva and Lausanne is as easy as talking about the more prominent mountains, rivers and lakes of our country of origine. When it comes to describing transportation in Switzerland I tend to relive the enjoyment we always had when travelling on the Swiss Federal railways, or on one of the 'hundreds' of yellow postal cars, chairlifts to higher altitudes, cable cars, lake steamers, or to and from the country by the national carrier 'Swissair'. Looks of disbelief are common when I explain that there is a Swiss merchant navy consisting of some 20 large ocean-going vessels and nearly three hundred river barges which operate from foreign ports and from the port of Basel on the Rhine River.

I especially like to show parallel aspects of both of our countries, Switzerland and New Zealand, and when pointing out differences I like to do so in a gentle and positive way.

Using the most topical decision of the day, by the New Zealand Government to concentrate the defence capability away from air-power, I explained to my listeners that the self-governing system of democracy in Switzerland demands that Swiss voters decide at the polls on June 10 how to alter the law about Swiss peacekeeping troops in foreign countries under the mandate of NATO, of which Switzerland is not even a member yet. Explaining such differences gives me occasion to describe the binding mandate the Swiss Government has in regard to

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