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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

There is a danger of this becoming a cliché, but it is inevitable that I am writing these notes on a sweltering July afternoon, when my mind turns to thoughts of cooler Alpine meadows above Engelberg where I hope to walk next month. By the time this is seen in print, the LSE and the Verkehrshaus, the Titlis and the Trübsee will be but a memory, enhanced, no doubt, by family photographs and video.

Yet the winter months give us the opportunity of enjoying our memories of Switzerland with each other. They are the time when the Society's Branches really come into their own. The true purpose of the Society of enabling like-minded people to discuss Swiss railways, and, no doubt, other aspects of the world's smallest large country, can become a reality.

I have begun the process of visiting Branches. It is very encouraging to meet enthusiasts who want to exchange experiences of Switzerland and ideas for the Society. The question always put before me is "Does the Society have a future?" My reply to that is an unequivocal "YES!" The Society is not made up of a Committee but of Members. The very facts that Members are submitting articles to Swiss Express, that Branches have sent in their programme to the Editor, demonstrate the truth of my response. If I am asked how any member can help then my usual answer is "Submit an article or photographs to Swiss Express," because it is Swiss Express that keeps us together. There is a large number of photographers in the Society and we would all enjoy seeing their work. Slides to be reproduced in black and white require particular selection, but at least six of the illustrations in the last Swiss Express were taken from colour slides.

The membership figures for 1999 reinforce the solidity of the Society. Membership currently stands at 1005 compared with 982 and 989 at the same times in 1997 and 1998. There was a surge of 100 new members in 1997, 59 last year and 60 so far for 1999. Repeat custom is a sign of a sound company. Retention of members is an equally sure sign of a firm Society and an indication that any member encouraging a friend to join will be introducing her or him to a worthwhile organisation.

SECRETARY'S NOTES

This is the first issue of Swiss Express produced by our new Editor and the Committee would like to place on record its thanks to David Stevenson for all the hard work he has put in since his appointment. This has not only involved putting the magazine together, but he has also sought quotations for the printing and as you will see from elsewhere the appointment of an editorial team.

This matter of the magazine printing was considered in detail at the last Committee meeting held in July. Following a decision at the Committee meeting held in April quotations were sought from a number of printers, including our previous printers Systems Print. Adprint (Cheltenham) Ltd., were successful in securing our order. We look forward to this