

News from Switzerland

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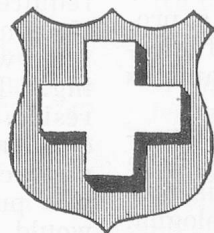
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JUNE, 1954.

AUCKLAND.

NEWS OF THE COLONY

Farewell to Compatriot

Friends from many parts of Taranaki gathered at Kaponga to farewell Mr. and Mrs. W. Risi and family, who are shortly leaving for Ngaruahia.

The evening was sponsored by fellow members of the Swiss Social Club as an appreciation of the enthusiasm and energy put into the Club by the departing guests.

Mr. John Steiner (President of the Swiss Social Club), in extending the best wishes to the Risi family, made the presentations of a chiming clock and also handed to Mr. Risi a letter advising him that they (Mr. and Mrs. Risi) would be the recipients of a brand-new washing machine on their arrival at Ngaruahia.

In replying, Mr. Risi said: "It's just too much; in fact, you have almost knocked me flat." When the applause died down, Mr. Risi continued in offering his sincere thanks to the Social Club. He also said how grateful he was to the Club for their splendid gesture. He was proud to say that the Social Club had now almost 200 members, and he wished it every success. "It is our one wish to be able to attend at least some of your functions, such as 1st August celebrations and the annual picnic," Mr. Risi said.

A varied programme completed the evening, a Swiss orchestra, comprising first and second clarinets, accordians and piano gave a feast of music. Then there was a delightful exhibition of "Fahnenschwinger" by Mr. Josef Egger, yodeling by Miss Gertrude Holdener and Mr. T. Romer.

A. SCHICKER.

Taranaki News

Award of Massey College Bursary

One of our young Swiss settlers, Mr. E. Kurman, of Normanby, has just been awarded a

Massey College bursary which will enable him to further his knowledge and study in cheese-making.

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

Swiss Industry Against Noise

Swiss industry is also taking part in the crusade against noise. The Direction of the Police of the Canton of Berne announces that an inventor, belonging to this Canton, has perfected an apparatus which makes it possible to reduce noise by means of regulating the flow of fuel. This gadget is intended more especially for motor-cycles, but it can also be adapted to other vehicles.

New Swiss Light Projector

During these last few years, thousands of visitors have been able to see the most beautiful chateaux in France, emerging out of the blackness of night, lit up in a fairylike manner. For many people, this was a revelation. The results, both artistic as well as financial, surpassed all expectations and last year it was decided to make use of this lighting arrangement in Versailles also.

These results have been obtained, for the greater part, through the perfecting by an undertaking in Geneva, Switzerland, of a very special projector, namely the "Mazda Infranor," with which it is possible to control the light and to distribute it smoothly in a rectangular pencil of rays, adjusted exactly to the dimensions of the building, whether this be a royal monument, such as Versailles, or sylvan retreats such as are to be found in the Val de Loire. Thus, at Versailles, three facades which, taken together, possess a length of 420 metres, are each lit up by means of four projectors possessing a silvered mirror and four projectors with a blue mirror. However, for the whole of the castle, where it is planned to resuscitate the splendours of the Great Epoch, it is necessary to have 45 "Mazda Infranor" projectors.

Vitaminized Cigarettes

A Genevese doctor has just discovered a process which destroys the harmful effects of nicotine, through the admixture of some vitamins to the tobacco in the cigarette.

Both Italy and the United States are apparently interested in this discovery and they have called upon Dr. Steiner, the inventor of this process, who has gone to America and to Bologna, to demonstrate the results of his researches.

A New Printing Device for Textiles

"A Revolutionary Textile Printing Development." Such was the title given by an important American journal to an illustrated article, in which it recently presented to its readers a new machine which has been produced by Swiss industry.

The invention in question is a machine, of an impressive size, which the Swiss firm of Fritz Buser, of Wiler, in the Canton of Berne, has been manufacturing for some time already. It has spread rapidly through Europe, and now also through the United States and Mexico. This is the Automatic multi-colour Screen Printing Machine for textiles.

It has, indeed, brought about a revolution in the textile branch by making textile printing absolutely automatic, by means of screens, whereas, up to the present—and for several centuries—this had to be done by hand. This machine makes possible an important economy in man-power, as it is operated by two men only, and is capable of printing as much as 350 metres of fabrics per hour, and this in eight colours.

The quality of the work achieved in this manner is perfect, the precision of the printing being still greater than when it was done by hand.

Furthermore, this machine possesses the advantage of making it possible to print all kinds of materials, the thinnest of silk fabrics and the heaviest linens.

Switzerland and World Under-nourishment

"The lack of food suffered by the population of the earth still attains very impressive quantities." This is what Mr. C. J. Abegg, doctor honoris causa and President of the Nestle Alimentaria Company, declared recently, at Zoug, to an assembly of shareholders of this company. "According to the most recent studies, he continued, world requirements in milk are only

covered to the extent of about 50 per cent. Food requirements, due to the increase in the population, must now be added to the actual penury from which large strata of consumers are suffering. The reason for this lack of food does not reside, as is believed by certain pessimists, in a deficiency of means of production, but, rather, in a purchasing capacity which is insufficient for this purpose. An increase in purchasing power would rapidly bring with it a development in respect of production, the extent of which would depend, consequently, on the financial means of the public. During the course of recent years, important progress have been realised in the improvement of standards of living. Throughout vast territories, purchasing power has increased considerably, and the population has not only been able to buy more food, but also to choose foodstuffs which were of better quality. On the occasion of the World Congress in Washington which, last November, occupied itself with the question of the utilisation of milk, it was established that, in certain countries, from 10 to 20 per cent. of the increases obtained in regard to wages, were devoted to supplementary purchases of milk and of dairy products."

These facts open up vast perspectives to the milk industry throughout the world, an industry to which Switzerland has brought an important contribution.

A New Machine for Controlling the State of Railway Lines

A Swiss firm has just created a new type of "draisine" or trolley for the purpose of controlling the state of railway lines, which will certainly render very useful service. The use of a vehicle of this kind is of great interest to all railway companies, because it makes it possible to carry out maintenance work on the very spot and at the very moment when it is required. All such work can, in future, be carried out with a maximum efficiency, by providing for it and by making the necessary preparations in a rational manner.

This inspection trolley is manufactured by the firm of MATISA in Lausanne which already enjoys an excellent reputation in regard to the manufacture of railway material. With its help, it is possible to discover the exact condition of the permanent way, as well as any imminent deteriorations. It is far less complicated and expensive than the machines which have been in use, up to the present.

The Lausanne firm has just completed an order for a certain number of these control trolleys, received from French West Africa.

Voting on New Articles Proposed to be Added to the Swiss Constitution

The Swiss electorate voted recently on the new articles that the Government proposed to add to the Constitution. The first—accepted by 670,747 votes to 158,333—enables the Federal Government to take the necessary measures against water pollution, which has dangerously increased in lakes and rivers.

The Swiss are the only European people who are called upon to vote on financial questions, and who can decide on the amount of taxes they are willing to pay.

Recently, for the second time in 18 months, they rejected—this time by 487,364 votes to 353,962—the scheme submitted to them for supplying the Federal Government with the financial means it needs.

On account of the Swiss electorate having rejected the Government's plan for federal income tax, Federal Councillor Dr. Max Weber, head of the Federal Finance Department, has tendered his resignation.

Dr. Weber was elected a member of the Swiss Government in 1952, in succession to Mr. Ernst Nobs.

He was born in Zurich, and studied economics and afterwards became Editor of the Socialist paper "Volksstimme" of St. Gall. From 1926-1940, he was an active collaborator of the "Schweizerischen Gewerkschaftsbundes" (Trade Union Council) of which he became its secretary and in 1944 its president. In 1948 Dr. Weber was appointed Professor of National Economy at the University of Berne. He has sat in Parliament (National Council) since 1939 as a Socialist.

Another example of "Fair Play" in politics was the National reception of a proposal by the Government during the last war, to exact a capital levy. This would have affected the wealthier Swiss but it was turned down by the country as a whole, for the Swiss have a profound dislike of any law or financial exaction which is not equally applicable to all members of the community.

OUR FATHERLAND

[Continuation]

ZURICH and SCHAFFHAUSEN. With a population figure (1953) just above 400,000 people, Zurich is Switzerland's largest city. It is the centre of banking, industrial, and trading

activity and rivals Geneva as a city of learning, with its Institute of Technology and the vast new University.

Today you walk along beautiful lake promenades, past luxurious hotels and the Opera House, the very spot where back in prehistoric times men built their high-stilted lake dwellings on the shore. Upon a little hill The Lindenhof, the Helvetians erected the first fortress and called it "Turicum," which in the year 50 B.C. fell to the Romans. When they withdrew after hard battles, the Alemanni became masters of the city and the Roman "Turicum" became the Alemannia "Zurich."

However, Zurich's history as an independent community begins in the year 1218 when Duke Berchtold of Zahringen who had ruled over the city, died childless. Then Zurich during her rise of importance, became the centre of culture for North-west Switzerland.

Later, under the influence of the Reformer Zwingli, Zurich became involved in serious quarrels with the Central Cantons. The dread of civil war hung heavily over all involved and a simple human incident occurred as the two armies lay facing each other, which is quite an historical event. The men of the Central Cantons had no bread and so they carried their tub of milk out before the Zurich lines, crying that they had soup but no bread to break into it. Then the Zurchers came out and broke break into the milk and ate with them, but if anyone stretched his hand over the middle of the pot, he was sharply rapped over the knuckles by a spoon of the other side, and told to eat on his own land. And the soup was so tasty that the two adversaries declared peace there and then.

Incidentally, Zwingli founded a school 400 years ago which formed the backbone of the intellectual life of Zurich for 300 years, and finally culminated in the building of the University. Over the main entrance was engraved the inscription "By the Will of the People," for it was the people of Zurich who created the University by public vote in 1833. A second vote in 1911 provided funds for the impressive main building with the great tower which has become the dominating feature in any view of the town. At this university there has always been a spirit of unrestrained intellectual freedom, so much so, that certain German Princes forbade their subjects to attend so notorious a home of free thought and free research.

Zurich's Opera and the Playhouse at the Pfauen are both known for their very high standard. The city's audiences are well known for their sound critical judgment and today world-famous musicians, singers and actors feel flattered if they