

News from Switzerland

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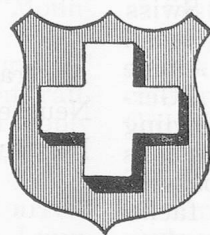
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HELVETIA

MONTHLY
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OF THE



SWISS BENEVOLENT
SOCIETY IN
NEW ZEALAND (INC.)

GROUP NEW ZEALAND OF THE NEW HELVETIC SOCIETY

19th YEAR.

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER.

AUCKLAND.

We have pleasure in announcing that Consul-General Pierre H. Aubaret, together with Mrs. Aubaret and their two sons, arrived in Wellington November 28th, to take up his duties as head of the Consulate. Both Mr. and Mrs. Aubaret are looking forward very much to meeting members of the Colony throughout the country, and wish to extend to one and all their sincere good wishes for a very Happy Christmas.

WARM CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

I wish all our members a very Happy Christmas and Prosperity throughout the New Year.

There may be some great changes in the coming year in our Society. With the help of you all, I am sure we can make our Society into a real and interesting thing and not a dead, useless movement.

As you know, we would like to nominate representatives in all the more important port cities of New Zealand, in order to welcome new arrivals from Switzerland, and to facilitate their acclimatization which, by experience, is always the most difficult during the first few days or weeks. The committee invite nominations for these posts from Wellington, New Plymouth, Napier, Tauranga, Christchurch and Dunedin, as well as Auckland. These representatives would also act as spokesmen for the members of the districts concerned.

The committee would welcome any suggestions in this respect which members of the Society may care to submit.

E. GILGEN,
Hon. Secretary.

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

The Swiss Automobile Club Launches a Big Campaign

A friendly hand signal to other drivers made at the right moment is a good way of increas-

ing road safety, of making very heavy traffic more fluid, and—by no means the least of its merits—of creating a more friendly atmosphere on the road. The campaign that the Swiss Automobile Club has just launched under the slogan: "A friendly hand signal can be a great help to your fellow motorists," has a threefold aim. First of all, it hopes by means of the friendly hand signal to succeed in eliminating the many dangerous situations which can easily result in an accident. Secondly, a hand signal helps to speed up traffic and make it more fluid—particularly in town—by doing away with uncertainty and hesitation. Thirdly, the friendly hand signal creates an atmosphere of courtesy and camaraderie on the road. In this connection, the Swiss Automobile Club has no illusions; it knows that drivers will not change their ways from one day to the next, but in the long run the good example will certainly have its effect. The driver who sees that others are being considerate towards him will gradually and quite naturally be led to behave in the same courteous manner. If the friendly hand signal had no other result than to promote a more friendly and courteous atmosphere on the roads, this alone would fully justify the Swiss Automobile Club's campaign.

How to Cross the Alps during the Winter

During the long winter months the Alps form a barrier of snow and ice between Italy and Northern Europe with only the Julier Pass, at an altitude of 6600 feet, being kept open to traffic all the year round. It is easy to see therefore the importance to the motorist of the Simplon and St. Gothard rail tunnels which are completed by the Loetschberg and Abula tunnels. The passage of cars through these tunnels has been organised with great efficiency by the Swiss Federal Railways. Special loading platforms have been constructed as well as special wagons for transporting cars, and the loading formalities have been simplified down to the last details. Consequently the flow of cars can be kept up without difficulty even at peak periods in the first days of spring when the sap is rising in the trees and all tourists feel that irresistible urge to take

to the road again. In order to make the details of these invaluable services better known, the Swiss Federal Railways have just published a small booklet entitled "Car conveyance through Alpine tunnels" which sets out in four languages (German, French, Italian and English) the unloading regulations, the maximum acceptance dimensions of vehicles and the fares for cars and passengers, not to mention timetables and special facilities for motor-cycles, side-cars, motor scooters and luggage trailers and caravans.

Air Transport of Motor-cars Between Switzerland and Great Britain

A British air navigation company is to run a direct service between the South Coast of Great Britain and Basle, during the winter months of 1955-56. This service is intended specially for the purpose of facilitating the enjoyment of winter sports in Switzerland, for British visitors. The flights will take less than three hours. This air-bridge will start operating as from the middle of December. Each aircraft will be able to carry three motor-cars and fifteen passengers.

Development of Swiss Investment Trusts

Investment Trusts have developed in a remarkable manner, in Switzerland, during recent years. In 1954, there were twenty-six such Investment Trusts, of which sixteen specialised in the investment of securities and ten in that of real estate. The total amount of certificates issued comes to nine thousand million francs. Although their headquarters are in Switzerland, the activities of these Trusts are devoted mostly to foreign markets. As a matter of fact, two-thirds of the investments are made abroad. The average yield from this kind of investment amounted, in 1954, to 3½ per cent.

Subsidies to Swiss Agriculture in 1956

More than 40 per cent. of the subsidies provided by the Swiss Government in its 1956 Budget will be devoted to agriculture. It is necessary, primarily, to ensure that the country will be adequately supplied with cereals. Wine-growing and the dairy industry will also benefit from State aid.

A Swiss Show of Industrial Production

The fortieth Swiss Industries Fair will take place in Basle from 14th to 24th April, 1956. This is the leading industrial exhibition in Switzerland, where the main export groups such as watchmaking, textiles, textile machinery, general engineering and the electrical industry will be prominently represented. At the 1955 Fair, there were 30,000 visitors from foreign countries, some 1000 of whom came from overseas.

BROADCASTS FROM HOME

Radio Time-table

Australien	HER 5	11.865	25.28
Neuseeland	07.15-09.45	HER 7	17.784 16.87
Ferner Osten	HER 8	21.520	13.94

A DOUBLE CENTENARY AT ZERMATT

By CICELY WILLIAMS

"The mountaineer's true home"—that is how a famous alpinist of the nineteenth century described the Monte Rosa Hotel at Zermatt. Today mountaineers of all nations would re-echo the words.

It is just one hundred years since Dr. Lauber's little inn—the first ever opened in Zermatt—was taken over by Alexander Seiler, who christened it Hotel Monte Rosa. By that act the Seiler dynasty of hotel-keepers was founded and from that day the development of Zermatt as a first-class resort was assured. Materially Zermatt owes everything to Alexander Seiler and his excellent wife. No place, however grand its scenery, can flourish without a good hotel. Seiler was the hotelier "par excellence" who thoroughly understood the art of inn-keeping. He knew just how to welcome the arriving guest, thirsting for mountain conquests; how best to cater for the comfort of those engaged in such pursuits; and how to bid farewell to the successful and the disappointed.

And today, let it be said, the same spirit still obtains at the Monte Rosa where the house of Seiler still reigns. The bowl of fruit in the bedroom to welcome regular guests; the personal interest shown in alpine exploits however trivial; the little comforts awaiting the weary mountaineer; the so-called "farewell chocolate" when the moment comes to leave. All these are modern expressions of the customs introduced by Alexander Seiler in 1855 and the years that followed.

1855 was a remarkable year—it saw not only the opening of the Hotel Monte Rosa but also the first ascent of the great Monte Rosa itself. On July 31st the Dufourspitze was climbed by a British party consisting of the brothers G. and C. Smythe, Birkbeck and the Rev. Charles Hudson—who ten years later perished in the Matterhorn disaster—with the Guides Lauener and Zum Taugwald. It was a great event—the highest point in Switzerland had been scaled, the Golden Age of mountaineering, and of Zermatt, was ushered in.

This summer, therefore Zermatt celebrates a double centenary and great festivities, fitting