

**Zeitschrift:** Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Herausgeber:** Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Band:** 19 (1955)  
**Heft:** [4]  
  
**Rubrik:** News from Switzerland

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

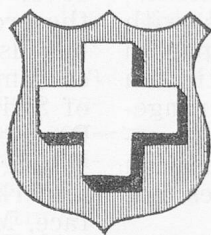
The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 15.07.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

# HELVETIA

MONTHLY  
PUBLICATION  
OF THE



SWISS BENEVOLENT  
SOCIETY IN  
NEW ZEALAND (INC.)

GROUP NEW ZEALAND OF THE NEW HELVETIC SOCIETY

19th YEAR.

APRIL, 1955.

AUCKLAND.

## NEWS OF THE COLONY

### Swiss Club Annual Picnic

The Club's annual picnic was again held at Te Ngutu Park, near Okaiawa.

The weather was beautifully fine and very warm; however, the shady trees gave some relief. The Swiss flag was hoisted in a prominent spot and waved in the gentle breeze.

Approximately 200 Swiss attended and seated themselves around the arena where the sports were held and provided a gay scene. It was a happy day for the large number of children, who appeared to enjoy the many races and particularly the lolly scrambles; as for the grown-ups, they too had their turn to show their athletic skill. Main interest, of course, centred around the "Steinstossen" contest, which attracted 28 entrants, this year's winner of the handsome silver cup was A. Muller, Eltham, who narrowly defeated last year's champion, J. Kuriger, of Oaonui; D. Meier, Stratford, was third; other results:—

Married Ladies: Mrs. Hospental 1, Mrs. M. Steiner 2, Mrs. F. Hurly 3.

Single Ladies: Miss A. Kuriger 1, Miss R. Meier 2, Miss T. Kalin 3.

Married Men: M. Steiner 1, E. Studer 2.

Single Men: J. Kaiser 1, E. Chamberlain 2.

Nail Driving: Ladies—Mrs. Gwerder 1, Mrs. Schupfer 2. Men—J. Kuriger 1, E. Chamberlain 2, W. Herman 3.

Special Competitions: Chocolates, Mrs. R. Kuriger; bottle—water! J. Fohn.

Interested spectators included Mr. and Mrs. E. Kalin and Mrs. B. Stumpf, of Tacoma, U.S.A., and quite a few new settlers. Throughout the day the Swiss accordion players provided a background of music and a few nice yodelling songs echoed through the air, which all helped to create a real Swiss atmosphere.

## NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

### Creation of a Swiss Museum of Hunting

There is serious talk at the present moment of creating a Swiss Museum of Hunting and thus realising not only the wish that has been ex-

pressed by lovers of this sport, but also by those who deal with the protection of Nature. What is being contemplated is to collect the most interesting material regarding both furred and feathered wild animals, describing their ways of life. This museum, which should also prove interesting for school children, is to be installed in the Castle of Heidegg, near Lucerne, which already is a museum since 1951. The future museum has already received important donations and the State Council of Lucerne has asked credits to fit up the premises which are to house it.

### New Swiss Invention

A new machine for binding and gumming, entirely automatic, which is being constructed by a machine-making plant in Frauenfeld, is now enjoying a striking success on the international plane. The separate sections of an entire book are introduced into one side of the machine and the bound copies come out from the other side, completely finished.

In various European countries, and even in Australia, periodicals, note-books and even telephone directories are to be found on the market, which have been bound in this way.

### The U.S. and Our Watches

The problem of watch imports in the United States is still causing a great deal of ink to flow and discussions to take place, on both sides. Recently General Omar Bradley, former Chief of the General Staff of the American Forces, made himself the spokesman for the watchmaking industry, in his capacity as President of the Board of Administration of a big American firm. In order to justify the succession of protective measures taken by the American authorities, the watchmaking circles, through the voice of General Bradley, want to lay stress on strategic reasons, that is to say, that the maintenance of a strong watchmaking industry is indispensable for the support of an American military industrial potential, especially in case of war.

On the other hand, the American authorities have announced that, without coming back on

their decision to increase duties on watches, they are ready to engage in negotiations with Switzerland with a view to arriving at a partial compensation through the lowering of duties on other Swiss export articles. Such an arrangement would be in conformity with the 1936 Agreement, but it is quite evident that a compensation could satisfy neither the Swiss authorities nor the Swiss watchmakers.

### Anniversaries of the Simplon

On September 16th, 1805, that is to say, 150 years ago, the Emperor Napoleon received a despatch triumphantly announcing: "The Alps are no longer an obstacle, the Simplon road is open and I am awaiting the artillery." Thus the Emperor achieved the project first conceived by Julius Caesar 19 centuries earlier and taken up again in 1797 by himself. A century later, on February 24th, 1905, workers tunnelling through the Simplon from the south rushed through the breach just blasted through the last remaining wall of rock. The longest tunnel in the world has been pierced through the heart of the mountain. These anniversaries deserve to be noted for they are important landmarks on the road to progress. And even though the Simplon road was originally designed for military purposes, it must be agreed that it has mostly been used for economic and touristic aims and was therefore, like its underground counterpart, the tunnel, a work of peace. With that of the Mont Cenis, it was the first carriageable road over the Alps and for a long time served as a model for macadamised and other mountain roads. Once it was open, a daily service between Lausanne and Domodossola took 33 hours to cover the distance of 137 miles. Up till 1906, the journey over the Alps from Brigue to Domodossola took 10 hours, whereas the train, thanks to the tunnel, now takes less than 40 minutes. The opening of the tunnel struck a heavy blow at the mail coaches on the road. The number of passengers transported by road fell from 13,260 in 1905 to 854 in 1906. Progress in the automobile field soon restored the attraction of the road and ever since it has lived in harmony with the railway, the one complementing the other. Thus in 1953, for example, 75,000 people went over the pass by postal bus. During recent years important improvements have been made to the road, which last summer carried more than 100,000 motor vehicles. The stage-coach has not completely disappeared; it plies between Gondo and Simplon Village when the road is no longer practicable to cars. A victim of progress, this last vestige of the past will soon disappear and be replaced by a half-track vehicle. The anniversary of the opening of the tunnel to traffic will be commemorated next year.

### Local Swiss Costumes

The Society for the Preservation of the Swiss National Heritage ("Heimatschutz"), founded in

1905, has been made responsible not only for the protection of monuments and historical sites, but also for the preservation of old local customs, costumes, dialects, etc. The National Federation of Swiss Costumes is an offshoot of this society. Recently, under the signature of Miss Louise Witzig, it published the French adaptation of a remarkable work on local costumes. In his preface, Mr. E. Laur, the president, called attention to the favour enjoyed once again by local costumes since the end of the last century. Formerly these costumes were worn as a matter of habit. Now they are worn more as a deliberate "profession of faith."

### Last Year's Swiss Cost of Living Index

For some time past there has been a lot of talk about the increase in the cost of living in Switzerland, the index figure of which stood at 172.9 at the end of December, 1954. This figure has increased by 2.4 points during last year, and, although this should not be taken tragically but followed carefully, without for that proceeding to a general increase in wages. Already in January, 1955, the index figure showed a slight decline and, if one considers the average figure for 1954, which was 171, one finds the same as for 1952. Thus, purchasing capacity has not decreased to any great extent and, if one takes into account the pre-war standard of living, the increase in wages now amounts to from 15 to 30 per cent.

### Here, There, Everywhere

In spite of rather bad weather during the recent summer, Switzerland appears to have had quite a good tourist season. Information from the Commission for Observation of Economic Conditions dealing with the third quarter of 1954 reveals that various international congresses and conferences, world football championships and European athletic championships brought a large number of visitors to Switzerland. Of ten million "nights" spent by these visitors, 9.1 million or 3 per cent. more than a year previously were spent in hotels and boarding-houses. It was noticeable that British visitors were well to the fore and that they were once again patronising better-class hotels.

### The Timber Market

Timber, which is the most important raw material possessed by Switzerland, is beginning to become a rarity. The usual foreign pre-war suppliers of this commodity to Switzerland are not even able to cover their own requirements nowadays, whilst in Switzerland activities in the building trade demand such a consumption of wood that the forests are no longer capable of meeting the increasing demand. For some years past the price for bark has never stopped increasing, from one winter to another, sometimes attaining the index figure of 250, in relation



to pre-war prices. This abnormal evolution cannot but have dangerous repercussions on the branches which are directly concerned, as well as on the Swiss economy in general. This rise in prices does nothing to contribute towards a reduction in the cost of building and certain contractors have even given up using wood, as a material. The sawmills already see themselves threatened with unemployment and the timber industry has addressed a request to the Federal Council asking that something be done to remedy the situation.

### **"IT HAPPENS ONLY FOUR TIMES IN A CENTURY"**

Vevey, Switzerland: This gay historic city and lakeside resort, conveniently reached from Geneva, Lausanne and Montreux either by rail, road or pleasure steamer, for the first time became conscious of its importance as one of Europe's wine-growing capitals in 1706 when the annual grape harvest parade spontaneously developed into an all-round celebration of Bacchus, the jovial god of the vineyards. It was Vevey's first "Fete des Vignerons," or dramatised version of grape-harvest festival originally designed for the distribution of awards to the most efficient local wine-growers. Only eleven large-scale festivals of this type have since been held here, with intervals of up to a quarter of a century in between them.

Since it was back in 1927 when natives and visitors of Vevey last danced in the streets and cheered thousands of paraders and performers of a festival play glorifying "the rhythm of the four seasons and the treasures of the cherished soil," the local celebrities concluded that it was high time to launch another artistically staged vintage and harvest thanksgiving festival in 1955.

The thorough preparations have advanced so well that the Vevey festival committee is in a position to announce practically all the details of the 1955 "Fete des Vignerons," to be held from August 1-14. In accordance with an old tradition the Festival Play which is to feature among other world-famous stars the entire ballet troupe of the Paris Opera and some 3000 singers, musicians and extras, will open in an "early-bird" premiere at 8.00 a.m. on the Swiss Independence Day, August 1st, 1955. Ten more morning, afternoon and evening performances will follow, each expected to fill the 16,000-seat amphitheatre to capacity. Historic parades and Venetian fireworks on the Lake of Geneva will be among the other lavish attractions to be offered to visitors from all over the world on an equally lavish budget of close to 333,000 Lg. It will be one of the most expensive festivals ever held in Europe—"but it only happens four times in a century," happy-go-lucky Vevey citizens explain apologetically.

Vevey 1955 Festival tickets are on sale at travel agencies throughout the United Kingdom.

Many British travel agents plan to include Vevey and its unique celebration of jovial Bacchus, or nearby Swiss cities and resorts, in their summer tours of Europe.

### **SWITZERLAND AND THE ENGLISH- SPEAKING NATIONS**

(Continued)

Let us now briefly enumerate a few of the innumerable Swiss citizens who have lived in England and the United States and risen to eminent positions there. The list includes men and women of all professions: students (certain grants and scholarships have been open to Swiss students at Oxford and Cambridge since the sixteenth century), tutors and professors, doctors, clergymen, soldiers, financiers, businessmen. Some artists of whom Switzerland has reason to be proud—Holbein, Petitot, Fuseli, for instance—made their careers in England. The founder of the Royal Academy, G. M. Moser, was also a Swiss, while another of his countrymen, Sir Francis Bourgeois, bequeathed his magnificent collection of paintings to Dulwich College. Madame Tussaud, too, it is interesting to note, was of Swiss extraction. In the ranks of the scholars and scientists, we find such names as these: A. de Lolme, famed for his juridical writings; Sir Samuel Romilly, the reformer of laws; Sir Arnold Theiler, the famous veterinary surgeon; Sir Joseph Petavel of the National Physical Laboratory; Dr. Peter Mark Roget, author of the famous "Thesaurus." Many of the Swiss who settled in England acquired British nationality and occupied high official positions. Canada had two governors of Swiss origin in the eighteenth century, Sir Frederick Haldimand, a Vaudois, and Sir George Prevost, a Genevan; in the present century, Sir Gordon Guggisberg, also of Swiss extraction, was Governor of Nigeria and later British Guiana. Another Swiss, Sir Everard Imthun, became Governor of the Fiji Islands and High Commissioner of the Western Pacific.

In the New World, many Swiss citizens shared in the struggles of pioneering days; the famous General Sutter of Sacramento for instance, and before him, Colonel Bouquet, who crushed the Indian Rebellion of Pontiac. Then, in the world of science and research, we have men like Louis Agassiz, eminent geologist and zoologist, and professor at Harvard; Ferdinand Rudolf Hassler, mathematician and astronomer, who made the first coastal surveys of the United States; Arnold-Henri Guyot, the great geographer, one of the founders of the Smithsonian Institute; Adolf Bandelier, an authority on Indian history and languages; J. H. Kruesi, inventor, and assistant to Edison; Dr. Henry Banga, the well-known surgeon who introduced the use of antiseptics in Chicago and the Western States. Many eminent doctors of the present day are of Swiss extraction.