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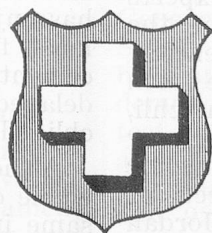
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# HELVETIA

MONTHLY  
PUBLICATION  
OF THE



SWISS BENEVOLENT  
SOCIETY IN  
NEW ZEALAND (INC.)

GROUP NEW ZEALAND OF THE NEW HELVETIC SOCIETY

19th YEAR.

MAY, 1956.

AUCKLAND.

## NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

### The Winter Olympic Games at Cortina d'Ampezzo

Cortina d'Ampezzo is a very well known Italian winter holiday resort, situated north of Venice, at the foot of the Dolomite mountains, at an altitude of 1200 m. There was not too much, but just enough snow, and for the rest, nobody had anything to complain of. The Italians proved themselves first-class organisers.

When the Swiss team left for Cortina, only very few hopes accompanied them. At best, it was thought that Miss Madeleine Berthod, of Chateau d'Oex, could possibly win one of the ski races, and there was some hope for the bobsleigh crew; but for the rest, nothing much was thought of our chances. The first days justified that pessimism, as things went even worse than expected: the male skiers were in difficulties and Miss Berthod lost in the giant slalom. Then one beautiful morning something like a miracle happened. Miss Renee Colliard, from Fribourg, a student at Geneva, was the winner of the special slalom and that was a sensational victory because it was wholly unexpected. The day before, she was completely unknown, but after her achievement Miss Colliard, who is 22 years old and an extremely attractive girl, was interviewed, photographed, televised, etc. But best of all, Miss Colliard's victory made the spirit in the Swiss camp soar sky-high, and two days later Madeleine Berthod, whom everybody seems to agree is at the present time the world's best skier, won the descent race. That was the second gold medal for Switzerland. In the same race, just behind Miss Berthod, a girl from Adelboden, Miss Frieda Danzer, was second, and won a silver medal for our country. At that time things did not look too good for the male partners of the Swiss team. In the bob race for two, Messrs. A. Angst and Warburton got only third place behind the two Italian teams, and won a bronze medal when something of a more valuable metal was ex-

pected. But then came the bob for four and Messrs. Kapus, Diener, Alt and H. Angst won brilliantly and received the third gold medal for Switzerland. Everybody would have been content with that result, but the psychological shock of the success of Misses Colliard and Berthod continued to act as a tremendous encouragement for our team, and Raymond Fellay, from the Canton of Valais, won a silver medal, in the descent race, when he got second place behind Toni Sailer, the invincible Austrian.

So the Swiss team brought home from Cortina six medals, three of gold, two silver and one bronze. Only once, in 1948, at St. Moritz, have we done better. Needless to say, the metal value is not the really important thing, but it is the moral significance. Such achievements represent months and even years of effort and sacrifice on the part of these athletes, which they have made for the honour of their clubs and last, but not least, for our national colours.

No doubt, other nations met with even greater success. The U.S.S.R., for instance, won the very important ice hockey tournament, beating Canada, which was the number one favourite—Switzerland was last but one. The Soviets won other gold medals, for instance in the 500 m., 1500 m. and 5000 m. skating races. Norway, Sweden and Finland, with Ericson, Hakulinen, Brenden and Jernberg, dominated the "epreuves nordiques," while Austria won the alpine combinations, thanks to Toni Sailer, who came back from Cortina as famous as Zatopek was after the games of Helsinki in 1952.

After Cortina, it is now Melbourne calling for the summer Olympic Games, which will be held in November and December.

### Swissair has Carried Three Million Passengers

The Swiss air navigation company Swissair has recently carried its three millionth passenger since it was founded in 1931. It took Swissair 20 years to reach the one million mark, whereas the next two million passengers were transported within 50 months only.

### Swiss Specialists Abroad

Again three Swiss have been appointed experts to the technical assistance programme of the United Nations and its specialised agencies, bringing the number of Swiss who have been engaged in this field to 107. Miss G. Bluntschli, of Berne, will be sent to Jordany for one year as councillor of UNESCO on matters of domestic economy. Mr. W. F. Vetter, an architect, of Lausanne, will collaborate with the Jordan authorities as a construction expert in the establishment of a new psychiatric clinic at Bethlehem in the Holy Land.

Mr. Ernst Metzler, engineer and head of the radio service in the board of managers of the Swiss Postmaster-General's Department, is to undertake a short expert examination of the telecommunications in Arabia.

### Australian Order to Swiss Industry

A Swiss firm is to provide the gymnastic apparatuses for the Olympic Games at Melbourne, Australia. This order, which has come from the Organising Committee of the Olympic Games at Melbourne, comprises all the classical gymnastic equipment for men and women, and will be carried out till the end of July, 1956.

### Switzerland Buys Butter in New Zealand

Switzerland has to import butter during winter time. This is due to the development of Swiss cheese exports as well as to the considerable increase of butter consumption within the country. The main butter supplier is New Zealand, the world's biggest exporter of this foodstuff.

### Social Welfare in Switzerland

Swiss employers spend more than 1,000,000,000 francs every year on a voluntary basis for Social institutions, which is more than five times the sum paid before the war. This amount illustrates the development of social welfare expenses in Swiss industry and the growing benefit of the employees in the country's prosperity. Some enterprises have even introduced the system of profit sharing, which in some cases results in an increase of salary amounting from 10 to 20 per cent.

### Swiss Economy in 1955

The year 1955 will remain in the economic annals of Switzerland as being one of the best that the country has ever known. Production, revenue and consumption attained new records and the labour market was characterised by over-employment. Ever since the spring and late into the autumn, the number of jobs offered was from five to ten times higher than that of the unemployed. Nearly 300,000 foreigners worked in Switzerland during the full season and their number would have been still greater if the necessary authorisations had been granted.

Not only is there a shortage of manpower, but also of material. The building industry, which has enjoyed an extraordinary boom, has suffered most from this lack of material, especially of cement, tiles and bricks. Deliveries have been delayed and a great many industrialists were obliged to refuse certain orders.

Although these remarks are applicable to the whole of the economy, the situation was not the same in all branches. Above all, capital investment industries were fully occupied and still have well-filled order books.

The situation was equally favourable in respect of the consumer-goods industry. The textile industry, however, proved an exception, some of its branches being a little unstable. Competition, both on the home market and abroad, has become more brisk. Prices have gone down and a good many firms have been obliged to draw on their reserves.

On the whole, however, it may be stated that Swiss economy is exceptionally prosperous. This is seen especially in a great stability in wages and prices. The index figure for prices for consumer-goods has only gone up slightly. Competition is so great on the market for consumer-goods that the increase in prices of certain raw materials has not had much influence on the price of the finished article. Thus, claims for higher wages have not been either numerous or important.

Viewed as a whole, the purchasing power of the population increased considerably; this fact is substantiated by the fact that imports went up more than exports. The provisional figure for imports stands at 6,300,000,000 francs, as against 5,600,000,000 francs for exports. Thus Switzerland's unfavourable trade balance has more than doubled, in comparison with the previous year.

As a result of the combined action of various causes, there are fewer available funds on the money market and on the capital market, and the rate of interest has increased. It would therefore appear as if the period of a superabundance of capital and of a lowering in the rate of interest has come to an end, at any rate for as long as the economic prosperity continues.

Taken as a whole, prospects for the future would seem to be favourable, especially for those industries which specialise in means of production. If it is true that the housing market is now approaching saturation-point, the building industry finds itself, nevertheless, facing other work which has had to be deferred and which is of unquestionable urgency. For one thing, the road network has to be improved. Furthermore, there are still a large number of construction jobs carried out on hydro-electric dams, which will still be going on for another dozen years. It is anticipated that new construction jobs will



have to be started soon, in order to satisfy the growing requirements of a Swiss economy which is becoming increasingly dynamic.

### The Unequal Status of Women in Switzerland

Switzerland, celebrated all over the world as a model of democracy, where the people have not only the right to elect members of Parliament but can also decide directly by referendum and initiative for or against all major measures of legislation—this old and most highly developed democracy is a genuine democracy only for men. All political rights in Switzerland are exclusively exercised by the male half or, more exactly, by the 47 per cent. of the grown-up part of the population, whereas the 53 per cent., or 1.5 million women above 20 have no say in the management of national, cantonal and local affairs. While practically all civilised countries in the world and even most of the uncivilised ones have granted their women fully equal political rights in the course of the last 40 years, Switzerland finds herself left behind in this respect in the company of Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Irak, Jordania, Yemen, Egypt, Ethiopia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua. Full political equality was granted to women first in Australia in 1901, Finland 1907, Iceland and Norway 1913, Denmark 1915, then in the Soviet Union in 1917, in Germany, Austria, Poland in 1918, New Zealand and Luxemburg in 1919, the United States of America in 1920, and the other 40-odd countries following suit—mostly before or just after the Second World War. The United Kingdom introduced political rights for women in stages which were completed in 1925. France reached that point in 1944 and Italy in 1947. Thus our dear old country has remained an island of injustice to women as well as an island of peace in the midst of a Europe that has long since recognised in law what the hard experiences of wartime, economic crisis and revolutions have established in fact—the equal claim by state and community on all available manpower irrespective of sex.

One of the reasons for this sad state of affairs may be found in the fact that in all other countries the crucial decision was taken by the Parliaments, whereas in Switzerland the whole people or rather the male section has to be won over to the change of sharing rights and responsibilities with their womenfolk. The very distinction of the system of full democracy in Switzerland has thus proved the most obstinate brake on political progress. It is far easier to win over an adequate majority of 300 parliamentarians than of two and a half million voters. Since the First World War no fewer than 23 cantonal votes have been taken in Switzerland regarding the introduction of political rights for women. While the first results registered only some 25

per cent. in favour of this reform, later votes approached up to 44 per cent. in the case of Geneva in 1946 and up to 45 per cent. in Basel Stadt in 1954. The women themselves have been slow in coming round to the support of the demand for equal rights, but officially organised test votes amongst the women of Geneva in 1952 and of Basel in 1954 and Zurich in 1955 produced very large majorities of 85 per cent., 73 per cent., and 92 per cent. in favour of partial or full political rights.

It should be remembered that in no country were the men first asked to say whether they wanted the vote, the demand for which has always been voiced by politically conscious minorities. Thus it is no valid argument against the women's vote to say that many of them do not even demand it. In many important referendums hardly half the male voters have taken the trouble of going to polling booths and in village votes the active participation sinks as low as 10 per cent. on frequent occasions.

The usefulness of women in public life has of course not remained entirely unrecognised in Switzerland. In Basle and Vaud women have access to all public functions as secretaries, treasurers, jurors, judges, trustees, care of orphans, etc. Some 30 national and cantonal commissions comprise women amongst their members, especially commissions concerned with health matters, child care, etc. In the two world wars Swiss women have not only held the fort on the domestic front and often in commerce and industry, while their menfolk were doing military service, but they have also played an increasingly important part in para-military organisations. Women in Switzerland are of course subject to exactly the same taxation as men. One and a quarter millions of women above 18 in Switzerland are unmarried or widowed or divorced, while married women number less than one million. Thus less than half of Swiss women can be regarded as being represented politically by their husbands, whereas the other, bigger and tax-paying half remains completely unrepresented even in this indirect way.

The desire and need for political rights of women in Switzerland is not only a question of principle and abstract justice. There are many inequalities in other respects to which women are subject and which may only be remedied when the women themselves can see to it through their political rights. The Civil Code of 1912 introduced many innovations in the law of inheritance, of persons, marriage and families and of ownership. It established amongst other things the principle of equality in marriage, constituting a great advance on the Code Napoleon. But it was still limited by prevailing conceptions as to the superiority of the male in many respects. It is the husband who is regarded as the *chef de famille*, who can do as he pleases, while the wife has to subordinate her activity

to his superior will. The wife loses on marriage not only her name but also her own local Heimatrecht and even her nationality on marriage to a foreigner, unless she avails herself of the recently established right to declare her desire to remain Swiss before marrying. The Swiss woman is expected to accept her husband's choice of domicile to which she can object only on strong grounds of unsuitability and establish her own domicile which the husband has no need to accept for himself. If the husband does not approve of his wife's own choice of work and profession she can continue in it only by recourse to a court of law. Worst of all the woman loses all command over her own property and income on marriage, unless she takes the appropriate legal steps to establish separation of property, a requirement of which practical use is made only exceptionally before it is too late. In most cases the wife has to account for every penny of her own income to which the husband is normally entitled as the head of the family. On separation the wife has to prove her ownership or else all property goes to the husband.

Even as regards the rights of parentage, which should be exercised jointly according to Swiss law, full equality does not exist in so far as in cases of disagreement the father has the final say. In professional life full legal equality is provided for, but actually very few women are accepted in any of the higher posts, however well qualified they may be. Equality of pay exists in many cases only on paper, while in actual fact the scales of pay are often subdivided nominally in such a way as to discriminate against the inferior sex. Often there are naked differentiations in the scales of salary for male and female teachers, etc.

No doubt there may have existed some rhyme and reason for traditional differences of rights based on different responsibilities imposed by law on the lords of creation in previous ages. But in our modern world so much more is expected from the women alongside with their men or, in the majority of cases, in the absence of men. And many of the good old traditions and conditions of a sheltered and peaceful life, which may hitherto have compensated the women for many inequalities in the eyes of the law, have vanished more or less completely. Thus these inequalities have become grave injustices crying out aloud for rectification in the interest not only of the women themselves but also of their families, their husbands and children and the community and nation at large.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Please address to the Secretary,

Mr. E. Gilgen,  
P.O. Box 2875, Auckland, C.1.

## SUMMER EMISSIONS FROM THE SHORT-WAVE STATION SCHWARZENBURG

to Australia and New Zealand, from May 1st, to October 31st, 1956.

	N.Z. time.		Rufz.		Frequency.	
					Kc/s.	m.
Australia	19.15	21.45	HER 5		11.865	25.28
New Zealand			HER 7		17.784	16.87
			HER 8		21.520	13.94

## GENERAL MEETING

All members are cordially invited to attend the Annual General Meeting, to be held at Mr. Risi's Place, Ngaruawahia (opposite the military camp), on Saturday, the 7th of July, at 2 p.m. At the same time a special general meeting is to be held to vote re the alteration of rules as provided in Art. 12 of the Society's rules. The principal points are to make the scope of the Society more universal, so as to embrace also social and cultural activities, as exposed by the president in previous reports. The rules will have to be changed accordingly. At the same time it is suggested to call the Society "The Swiss Society of New Zealand." It is important that as many members as possible attend this meeting, which will be held at Mr. Risi's place in the Waikato, so as to allow the maximum number of members of southern districts to attend.

## NOTICE CONCERNING SWISS CALENDARS FOR 1957

To enable our compatriots to procure a pictorial calendar from Switzerland for 1957, the Consulate is prepared to pass a collective order. Applicants are asked to write to the Swiss Consulate, P.O. Box 386, Wellington, C.1, and to remit at the same time the amount in question. The following calendars are offered:—

- (a) THE ALPINE CALENDAR, 1957 (Stehli); price 12/-.
- (b) SWITZERLAND, 1957 (Novos); price 12/-.

Orders for these calendars will be accepted UNTIL JULY 1st, 1956.

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