

# News from Switzerland

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand**

Band (Jahr): **19 (1956)**

Heft [6]

PDF erstellt am: **25.05.2024**

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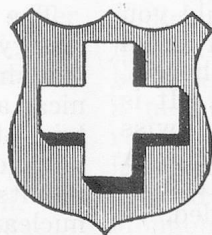
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# HELVETIA

MONTHLY  
PUBLICATION  
OF THE



SWISS BENEVOLENT  
SOCIETY IN  
NEW ZEALAND (INC.)

GROUP NEW ZEALAND OF THE NEW HELVETIC SOCIETY

19th YEAR.

JUNE, 1956.

AUCKLAND.

## NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

### 50 Years of Swiss Postal Motor Coach Service

Berne, Switzerland.—The Swiss Postal Motor Coach Service commemorates its 150th anniversary this year. A special jubilee postage stamp issued recently recalls the event, which the Swiss Postal Organisation will observe on May 3rd in a celebration. The development of this transportation outfit with a road network of over 5000 miles in own and privately operated licensed bus lines, 1216 motor vehicles, and a conveying record over 22,000,000 passengers yearly, bears witness to the amazing progress of the automobile as a means of transportation and its importance in the promotion of tourism. In the year 1916 the first postal motor coach service was inaugurated between Locarno and Brissago, and two years later the Toggenburg line, between Nesslau and Wildhaus, followed. In 1919 the bus services Reichenau-Waldhaus-Flims in the Grisons and Brig-Gondo in the Valais were opened, constituting the first proper alpine motor-coach communication, which expanded in the ensuing years from one pass to another, from the Bernhardin (1920) to the Susten (1946).

### Aegeri—the Children's Resort of Central Switzerland.

Aegeri, Switzerland.—The village of Aegeri in the Canton of Zug, due to its pre-alpine location, its unspoiled rustic scenery and wooded surroundings, has developed into one of Switzerland's best-known children's resorts. A peaceful mountain lake enhances the salubrious qualities of the climate on which it has a regular effect. The first Swiss children's recreation home was built at Aegeri in 1881, and soon more such homes mushroomed up. Today over 1000 children find health-giving rest in Aegeri's model children's homes, and many youngsters spend several years in the well-known local boarding schools. There are also establishments for children of families of modest income, with the possibility to attend public school at the village. Aegeri is not only famous as a summer resort;

its fog-free location and its mild climate also make it a favourite place for sojourns in spring and autumn.

### 44 Judges for the 12th International Competition for Musical Performers in Geneva, 1956

Geneva, Switzerland.—The list of the jury for the 12th International Competition for Musical Performers, scheduled for September 22nd to October 6th, 1956, at the Geneva Conservatory of Music, includes the names of 44 eminent artists. The jurors are from the following countries: 11 from Switzerland, 8 from France, 6 from Austria, 4 from Germany and 4 from Italy, 3 from Belgium, 2 each from England and Spain, 1 each from the United States, Hungary, Poland and Yugoslavia. Delegates of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation have also been nominated to the jury. An extensive participation of young musicians from various countries is expected. The Secretariat of this international competition has already received a large number of applications, which can be accepted till July 14th only. Folders and information pertaining to this contest can be obtained from the Secretariat, International Competition for Musical Performers, Conservatorium of Music, Geneva.

### Neopolis, a Swiss Town of the Year 2000

Zurich, Switzerland.—The most modern town of the world is expected to be built by 1964 right on the German-French language frontier of Western Switzerland, on the plateau between the Jura and the Alps, known as "Seeland" (Lakeland). This new town has tentatively been given the Greek name Neopolis, meaning "New City." The idea to build such a town and adapt it completely to the requirements of the future, featuring all up-to-date technical innovations, stems from a group of nine Zurich friends, among them architects, city planners, economic and political leaders. In a recent pamphlet issued by the prospective city founders, entitled "Let's Ask the Swiss," public opinion is tested in true democratic spirit. This pamphlet contains a description of the project and invites readers to express their views

on various questions, such as: "Should the Federal Government take the matter up? Would you like to contribute your share to the construction of Neopolis? Would you like to live there?" The outcome of this poll is not yet known. It is reported, however, that several wealthy Swiss citizens have agreed to support the project. A society for the materialization of this "City of the Year 2000" is said to have been founded.

#### **An Epilogue to the Last Mail Coachman of the St. Gotthard**

Bellinzona, Switzerland.—Isidor Christen, the last mail coachman of the St. Gotthard Pass, has died at the age of 94, in Bellinzona, the capital of the Canton of Ticino. For more than 60 years he tilled the land of his small farm on which he retired prematurely after his "resignation" from the mountain village of Andermatt, his place of origin. His father drove the much heralded yellow horse-drawn coaches over the meandering highway amidst the scenic glories of the St. Gotthard Pass from 1845 to 1879 and Isidor continued the family tradition. By 1882 he was put in charge of the mail-coach service in the Urseren Valley, a side valley of the Gotthard region, employed by a private concessionaire. The folk song, "I am the last coachman of the St. Gotthard Mail," is likely to keep alive for many more years, the memory of this romantic old-timer's realm of business.

#### **Oranges Grow on Alp Grum, 6482 ft. Above Sea Level**

Alp Grum, Switzerland.—Oranges recently were harvested on the mountain terrace of Alp Grum, 6482 ft. above sea level, in the immediate vicinity of the Bernina glaciers. After one and a half years of blossoming the golden fruits ripened on a small tree raised with the greatest of care behind a large window pane at the Rhaetian Railway Station restaurant. Due to the intense radiation of the Swiss mountain sun, it was possible for the fruits, which usually grow in sub-tropical climes only, to ripen. Besides oranges other exotic plants flourish on the sunny terrace of this mountain restaurant, which offers an unequalled panoramic view of the Piz Palu Alps.

**A reindeer recently made its appearance at the Zurich Zoo and was formally bestowed** on the school children of Zurich by Swedish friends, as a symbol of the everlasting ties of friendship between Sweden and Switzerland. To give an even greater emphasis to these friendly relations, the idea of instituting a Swedish reindeer colony right in the Swiss Alps was brought up at a press conference held on the occasion. It was pointed out that reindeers were natives of Switzerland some 20,000 years ago.

#### **Conference on Atomic Energy**

The first international conference on atomic energy, which was held last August in Geneva, has shown that, in a great many countries, technical and physical studies relating to the industrial utilisation of nuclear energy are already very advanced and have produced some important results. The question of the production of nuclear energy figures on the order of the day, and several power stations are already under construction. A congress devoted to the construction of such power stations was held in Cleveland (Ohio) from September 12th to 16th, 1955, and has brought to light a great many data which were still unknown during the Geneva Conference.

In view of the wider knowledge which has become available in this field, the Swiss Society of Engineers and Architects has with the support of the two Polytechnical Schools in Zurich and Lausanne and the Institute of Physics in Neuchatel recently organised a study conference. The object of this conference was to furnish constructors of electric power stations with information regarding the technological and economic efficiency of nuclear power plants, and to provide standards of comparison with traditional sources of energy.

The conference was attended by three hundred specialists from all parts of Switzerland, as well as from several foreign countries. There were a number of lectures by Swiss, British, French and American experts.

#### **Watchmakers' Museum in Le Locle**

The town of Le Locle, which, thanks to Daniel Jeanrichard, became the cradle of Swiss watchmaking in 1705, has just acquired a fine property on which a Horological Museum is to be set up. This project has aroused a very keen interest in the watchmaking industry and various personalities have already promised their co-operation or have donated collectors' pieces. The museum will comprise a room in which there will be a faithful reconstitution of a home workshop of the last century; then, there will be rooms in which the history of watchmaking will be retraced chronologically, and the great names of the local industry will be recalled. Finally, two rooms will be devoted to the watchmaking industry throughout the ages and to the technological development of watchmaking.

#### **Introduction of Two-class Accommodation on Continental Railways**

After June 3rd, 1956, there will be first (upper) and second (lower) class accommodation only (except in Spain). First-class compartments will have seating capacity for six, and second-class compartments for eight passengers.



Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and some other countries will apply their former second and third class rates for the new first and second class respectively.

France, Italy, Saar and Yugoslavia will apply their old third-class fares for the new lower class, while the new first-class fares will be based on the previous second-class fares increased by a small percentage.

Britain will apply the old first and second class fares to the new first (upper) and second (lower) class respectively. Only first class will be marked.

Tickets issued during the month of May, 1956, dated for travel after June 3rd, 1956, will be issued at the new fares. Tickets are not issued more than one month before date of departure.

Single and double berth compartments in Wagons-Lits and D.S.G. (German) sleepers will be available only to holders of first-class tickets. whilst sleeping-cars with three berths per compartment will be available for second-class ticket holders.

Courette accommodation (generally six places per compartment) will be available to second-class ticket holders.

The old third-class Swiss rolling-stock with wooden seats, which will have to be used for the future second-class, will, in due course, disappear (at least from the main lines), since all new carriages being built are provided with upholstery or padding.

### Switzerland's Housing Market

Recently compiled statistics show that more than 31,000 new apartments were constructed in Switzerland in 1955, 2,000 more than in the preceding year. Building permits for more than 40,000 have been granted for 1956 and it is thought that this year will see a continuation of the construction climb in Switzerland.

## SWITZERLAND AND THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Lecture delivered at the London Rotary Club on  
January 25th, 1956, by the Swiss Minister,  
Monsieur A. Daeniker.

By choosing "Switzerland and the International Organisations" as the subject of my address, I want to give you a short orientation of my country's special position in relation to the world at large.

I suppose many amongst this distinguished audience will find it paradoxical that some of the most important international conferences have been held at Geneva, although Switzerland is not a member of the United Nations. After their recent enlargement to 76 member States, Switzerland shares the position of exclusiveness with divided Germany, Japan, Vietnam, Korea, Outer Mongolia and the People's Republic of China. In contrast to those other States, Switzerland keeps aloof of her own free will and has never even applied for membership. At the same time she adheres to most of the Sub-Agencies of the United Nations and she participates like any UNO member in the Organisation of International Justice. Switzerland, which many consider the heart of Europe, and whose federal structure has often been called an example for European unification, is not a member of the Council of Europe. Switzerland, a financial centre of the Continent whose currency throughout the vagaries of the last 25 years has solidly been based on convertibility, has not joined the Bretton Wood Agreements, which led to the creation of the International Monetary Fund and the Bank of International Development and Reconstruction. Switzerland is not a member of GATT, another name closely connected with Geneva, where most of its meetings have been held, although she takes a prominent part in OEEC and EPU and has spared no effort to promote the liberalisation of trade and payments in Europe.

Let us see whether we may find a guiding line to explain this situation, which seems contradictory and could easily lead to a misunderstanding of our policy.

A small State with a population of less than five millions, situated on the crossroads of Central Europe, must obviously be interested in any international organisation destined to maintain peace and to guarantee by efficient collective measures the security of all against aggression. Particularly the principle of settling international conflicts by mediation, arbitration or judicial means was actively promoted by the Swiss Government since the beginning of this century. During the period between the two world wars Switzerland has concluded treaties of mediation and arbitration with a great number of States and has subscribed to compulsory jurisdiction in international disputes.

When in 1920 the League of Nations was founded, the Swiss people welcomed heartily this first attempt to replace arbitrary rule in world affairs by collective security. Switzerland was the only State which submitted the question of adherence to the vote; our people accepted the proposal with a large majority. We joined, however, with the explicit reservation that our time-honoured "maxime d'Etat" of permanent