

News of the colony

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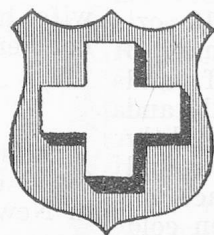
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HAMILTON

2000 YEARS CELEBRATION OF BASEL'S FOUNDATION

On Friday, the 22nd of August, the County Council of Basel had the honour of opening the 2000 years celebration. They assembled at 5 p.m., in the dignified council chamber, which the city gardeners had transformed into a bower of flowers. The County Council's president in his opening speech gave a resume of Basel's history since those faraway days. No need to recapitulate these historical facts as all Swiss, unless they wagged school at home, would have been introduced to ancient names such as "Raurachien," "Helvetier," "Gallien," etc.

The City Council president further elaborated on Basel's inheritance and obligation toward its great history, rising from the early Roman settlement, Augusta Rauracorum, through numerous vicissitudes to the status of membership of the Helvetian confederation, and evolving through all that time its individuality, which makes Basel today what it is.

A professor of history, in the course of his address, mentioned the early signs of culture which were excavated in Basel on the "Munsterplatz," where Roman tableware from upper Italy was found, dating about 20 B.C. Old coins of Emperor Augustus were also brought to light in the same excavation layer. Findings on the "Munsterhill" also proved that on that site stood an old Roman castle, commanding the mouth of the Birs River into the Rhine and the "Knee" of the Rhine.

On the following day, the 23rd, the 750 guests of the City Council wended their way to "Augst" for a memorial celebration in the Roman amphitheatre. The highlight of this function was the presentation of the bronze plaque from the tomb of leader and statesman Lucius Plancus, which, up till then, had been part of the statesman's grave in Gaeta (on the gulf of the Thyrenian Sea). The Senator from Italy who presented the plaque said that Plancus was instrumental in opening up the "North" and thus Basel's very existence.

A further highlight, of particular interest to "Ausland" Swiss, and in particular to all my fellow citizens of Basel, was the official welcome by the County Council of 400 Ausland Baslerbuerger, who followed the world-wide invitation to come to their home town to help celebrating. These guests were received in the council chamber and welcomed and feted with speeches of warmest feeling. Although most of these Basel-citizens in other lands come from neighbouring countries (the closest being Grenzach, Germany, just across the Rhine), there were others who came from America, Brazil, England, Israel, Irak, Malaya, Canada, India, and many more, one even from Australia, but unfortunately none of our New Zealand Basler were able to make it.

(To be continued.) MRS. H.B.

NEWS OF THE COLONY

Santa Claus Celebration at Wellington

To conclude our Swiss gatherings for 1957, a most enjoyable evening was spent on December 1st at the Community Hall, Brooklyn.

Santa Claus visited our party of about 20 children and 60 adults. Great excitement and happiness could be seen on the children's faces when they were presented with chocolate Santa Claus, nuts, etc.

The tastefully-decorated hall and Christmas tree put everyone into a special Christmas mood.

Amongst us were our Consul-General, Mr. Aubaret, and Mrs. Aubaret. Mr. Aubaret returned to New Zealand very recently and informed us very kindly in a short speech about the mission which he had to fulfil in Korea.

Our "Chorli," accompanied by Mr. Bischof with his accordion, entertained with various numbers, which were highly appreciated, especially the solo yodel performed by Mrs. Trachsel.

A delightful buffet supper was prepared and many Swiss specialties sponsored by clever cooks were greatly appreciated by everybody. Many thanks to all helpers!

R.M.