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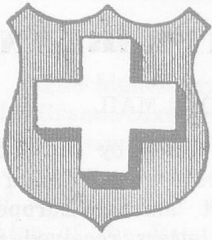
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HELVETIA

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GROUP NEW ZEALAND OF THE NEW HELVETIC SOCIETY

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NOVEMBER 1961

Hamilton

Switzerland Helps Tibetan Children

TIBET has long ceased to be an isolated, mysterious country, but it has lost none of its interest for us. On the contrary. Situated between Sinkiang in the north, and Nepal, Burma, India and Pakistan in the south, politically an autonomous region of the Chinese People's Republic since the conclusion, in 1951, of an agreement between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Government, which the Tibetan Government, however, denounced in 1959—because, as it stated in a declaration made by the Dalai Lama, contrary to the provisions of the agreement, "After its occupation by the Chinese armies Tibet did not enjoy any measure of autonomy, even in internal matters" — this country has become associated more than ever before with the West in the struggle for freedom.

That denunciation of the 1951 agreement by the Tibetan Government followed the outbreak and rapid spread of a revolt among the Tibetan people against the arbitrary rule of the Communist Chinese; since that time, arbitrariness has deteriorated into a reign of terror which the United Nations in a resolution passed in October, 1959, deplored as a series of violation of the fundamental rights of the Tibetan people. More than 60,000 Tibetans, including about 4000 children, have fled to India and the Himalaya countries. Some 300 children have been settled at a camp in Dharamsala in India, while most of the others are scattered, frequently living in most unhappy conditions.

A Swiss welfare organisation created for this particular purpose is at present carrying on a large-scale campaign in Switzerland to solicit financial contributions to aid Tibetan refugees wherever they can be reached. Another effort in the same direction was the construction of a special building in the "Pestalozzi Children's Village" at Trogen in the Canton of Appenzel to shelter and educate twenty Tibetan children. The Children's Village was founded in 1946 to receive war orphans from vari-

ous European countries; later it received other children as well who for some reason or other were found stranded in post-war Europe. The twenty Tibetan children are the first non-Europeans so far at the Village. On the occasion of the formal opening of their house, named Yambhu Lagang—after an ancient place in Chongey Province and place of origin of the first Buddhist scriptures of Tibet—the Dalai Lama from his exile in Mussoorie, India, sent a message saying, among other things: "The generous offer of the Pestalozzi Village Foundation to build a house for twenty Tibetan refugee children was most gratefully received by me and my people. Just like the Swiss and other mountain peoples, we Tibetans love peace and freedom. I have every confidence that here in this Village the Tibetan refugees will learn not only Western manners of thinking and living, but those principles of friendship among nations that will help them solve the problems that await them upon their return." While the Lama is the supreme patron of Yambhu Lagang in Switzerland, the twenty children at the Village are looked after by a former high-ranking Lama and his wife, themselves parents of a small child. The children seem to take well to the alpine climate, which in many ways reminds them of home. They are taught German and English, arithmetic (something they do not learn in Tibet), dancing, singing and painting.

When we were children we devoured Sven Hedin's books about his daring explorations in Tibet, and it seemed to us that we were reading about life on another planet; some twenty years later we must admit having thrilled to James Hilton's "Lost Horizon," the fanciful tale spun against the background of a monastery of Lamaist monks in the remote Tibetan mountains—from which President Roosevelt borrowed the name of Shangri-La for his retreat in the Maryland hills

—and we still thought Tibet a very far-away place. Now we find it an hour's train ride from our office in the faces of these children full of the sensitive strength of a people fighting for "self-determination," that much-worn phrase, which in their case means fighting for the survival of a civilisation unsurpassed in its spiritual aspiration. Yambhu Lagang, alas, is only a gesture; but it is that.

—*The Swiss Observer*

NEWS OF THE COLONY

HAMILTON SWISS CLUB

During the October evening we were fortunate to show, thanks to the courtesy of our Consulate, a film of a recent March Pass of the Swiss Army (Erstes Armeecorp).

This impressive review of our up-to-date armed strength made us proud of our traditional armed neutrality and brought back to most of us many memories of our own army service.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

AUCKLAND SWISS CLUB

This year's Christmas celebrations will take place on Sunday, 10th December, at the Professional Club Hall, commencing at 4 p.m.

Bring the children along and join in the Christmas dinner party . . . and, of course, Santaclaus will be there also.

Members 10/-

Non-members 15/-

Children free

HAMILTON SWISS CLUB

Our Christmas Evening will be held on the second Sunday, 10th December, in the Riverlea. Special entertainment . . . Christmas Tree and Santaclaus for the children.

Would ladies please bring a plate.

Door charge as usual.

Children free

PLEASE REMEMBER TO PAY YOUR
SUBSCRIPTION

The new Membership list will be issued shortly

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

SWISS RECEIVE MOST MAIL

According to the figures issued by the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union in Berne, Switzerland comes first among European countries for the number of letters received per head of the population, with 118.5 letters, ahead of Great Britain (112.1) and Sweden (88.7), the lowest figures being recorded in Italy (37.5) and Finland (29.6). With regard to the amount of printed matter received annually per head of the population, Switzerland with 127 deliveries comes second after Belgium (192) and ahead of the Netherlands (93), with Norway (21) and Finland (16.6) bringing up the rear.

SCHOOL OF ADVANCED DRIVING

An International School of Advanced Driving promoted by a French engineer, Mr Robert Souaille, was opened quite recently in the canton of Neuchatel. It is equipped with a special track for training both professional and amateur motorists, according to the very latest psychological and practical methods, to react and control their vehicles under all circumstances, particularly in the case of skids or sudden unforeseen incidents. This school is intended above all to improve the standard of professional drivers, such as for example ordinary driving school instructors. But car manufacturers and road builders as well as traffic police even could also learn many things from a visit to the new institute.

NEW GAME OF SKILL

As its name suggests, "Goalmate" is an ingenious combination of chess and football! It is not, of course, played on a pitch but with a squared board on which each of two players controls 11 pieces positioned on the squares like a football team. Some of the rules are derived from football while others—governing the movements of the pieces and the method of scoring—come from chess. Each type of piece is, in fact, moved in a particular way as in chess, goals being scored by checkmating the opposing goalkeeper. "Goalmate" is therefore a game of skill needing intelligence and thought but not allowing such elaborate combination as chess. The idea is to play it "for fun" rather than as a profound "art" In short, "Goalmate" is not an easier or more difficult version of chess nor a substitute for it, but an enjoyable pastime for quick-witted people. Devised by an Englishman resident in Switzerland, where it is manufactured, the game calls for a sporting spirit and the ability to plan ahead quick thinking, boldness and caution. As such, it will undoubtedly prove a great success everywhere.