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Swiss neutrality is no obstacle to international co-operation

When the debate preceding the drawing up of the San Francisco Charter seemed to suggest that neutrality and membership of the United Nations were incompatible, Switzerland opted for neutrality.

This does not debar her, however, from joining in the activities of several of its specialised organisations: the International Labour Organisation with its headquarters in Geneva, the World Health Organisation, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisations).

The European headquarters of the United Nations is established in Geneva, where a number of international conferences are held. The Universal Postal Union, the International Telegraph Union, the Central Office for International Transport by Railway, and the International Union for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works also have their head offices in Switzerland. In the scientific field, this country collaborates in the work of the European Centre of Nuclear Research (CERN), whose laboratories are on Genevan soil; the International Atomic Agency and the European Organisation for Space Research.

The Swiss universities, particularly the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, attract a large number of foreign students, who account for almost 8000 out of a total of 24,000. A growing number of foreign firms are opening research laboratories in Switzerland.

Switzerland became member of the European Payments Union and the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation at their inception and is a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which has succeeded the latter. It plays an active part in the meetings of GATT (General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade) whose object is to liberalise trade.

Although it is not a member, the Swiss Confederation co-operates with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The International Bank of Settlements has its headquarters in Basle.

Finally, although Switzerland is not a member of the European Economic Community (EEC), it is a member of the European Free Trade Area (EFTA). And then there are innumerable economic, scientific, and cultural undertakings, both public and private, which are members of hundreds of international organisations. It will also be recalled that the International Committee of the Red Cross, which is made up entirely of Swiss, is permanently engaged in various activities and carries on its good works in every part of the world through representatives who are all Swiss by nationality.

In short, the network of Switzerland's international relations is one of the most extensive there is and its interchange of ideas with the rest of the world — in spite of, or perhaps because of, its neutrality — is at least as brisk and lively as that of any other country.

—Swiss National Tourist Office.

NEWS OF THE COLONY ★ ★ ★ ★

Auckland Swiss Club

GENERAL MEETING — PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Another year has gone by and with some satisfaction we can look back to a year full of activities and successful entertainment. In the first place I would like to refer to the considerable increase of members; we started last year with 57 members and have now 118, proving that the Club has never enjoyed such a popularity as it does not. This, I believe, is mostly due to the big social nights we had, offering real good entertainment, such as the Fashion-Show, the 1st August Celebration, the Maskenball, which becomes more and more a favourite, and the "Tahitian-Night" was a real hit—more than 200 guests were present and amazingly, though we are only amateurs, it was very efficiently organised. The Christmas Picnic proved also popular, parents and children seemed to enjoy it so much more out in the open.

For the first time we might say, the shooting section, so far rather neglected, has been organised in a proper manner. Mr Hans Enzler, chairman of this section has devoted a lot of time for it and succeeded against all odds to organise a team of volunteers to build a "Schuetzenstand." Naturally, a Schuetzenfest followed, being the last social night we had for this current year.

All these activities involved a lot of work and even more enthusiasm, but it has brought us a very satisfactory reward, for the benefit of the Club of course. Some members might be of the opinion that profit was not really necessary, but where would be the compensation for all the work involved to the very few who give so much of their time? It would be indeed poor encouragement for the next committee to come. Furthermore, we had the advantage to be in a position to entertain overseas visitors, which really is one of the functions the Club is here for. Perhaps, in the far future, we might be able to have our own premises, but whether or not we ever reach this goal, it is important to go rather ahead than to have a loss at the end of the year.

Coming to the conclusion of my report, I wish to express my sincere thanks to all members and guests who supported the Club during the year and an offer to those who opposed an opportunity