

Letters to the editor

Objekttyp: **Group**

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

Band (Jahr): **34 (1971)**

Heft [3]

PDF erstellt am: **23.05.2024**

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ever and the day was hot and the sun-lovers really had to be careful not to get sunburnt.

Everybody looked forward to the arrival of Mr Erb's family towards midday. They had promised to come along with Mr and Mrs Ritter, the new secretary of the Embassy, who had arrived in New Zealand only two days previously. It must have been exciting for them to swim in the Pacific after a real winter at home.

Packing our tents was quite a job on a hot day like this. Then we had to say goodbye to everybody and the place, hoping to come back again next year. —M.K.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

WOMEN'S POLITICAL VOTING RIGHTS

Sir,—Congratulations Mr Biland for stating your point of view. I too believe that our ladies are too good and too pure to be involved in political intrigue.

Today, many Swiss women are full-time workers. Participation in the running of the State will leave even less time for the three K's and their god given task in the home might well be neglected. There could indeed be a future with no one to vote.

As a duty, the "Frauenstimmrecht" could prove to be a burden on the fairer sex. As a privilege it means little. It is far more important, surely, that all men uphold a fine and noble attitude for if a nation would give its women a thousand votes, at the same time would not respect their dignity, honour and purity, it would indeed have no cause for satisfaction, but only cause for shame. We find it easier, however, to respect a mother humbly raising our future citizens than a conceited "Fräulein Ständerat" angrily debating political hotcake in the Bundeshaus.

Doch glücklich ist, wer leicht vergisst;

was nun einmal nicht zu ändern ist.

FRANZ KRIEGER, Huntly.

Dr Jean-Pierre Weber, former Charge d'Affaires in Wellington and currently Consul-General in Saigon, writes in a purely private capacity:

Sir,—As an eager reader of "Helvetia", may I add just a few words on the decision of the Swiss male voters to grant voting right to their female compatriots.

Although writing in a private capacity as a Swiss citizen, I shall of course, being a civil servant in the diplomatic service, not approach the controversial aspects of this question. What I would

like to point out is that, as far as I know (and I shall be grateful to be disabused if I am wrong), Switzerland is the first, and probably only, country in the world where voting right has been granted to women **by a popular vote.**

In all other countries, if I am not mistaken, this duty and responsibility (I, indeed, consider voting as much as one of the duties and responsibilities of the citizen as one of his rights) has been entrusted to women by the government or by a parliament elected by male voters whose majority may not have agreed with their elected representatives or government on this particular point but had no means of imposing their views on this specific matter in the absence of the possibility of a popular referendum.

Whatever one may think of voting right for women, we should be proud of being the first country in the world which applied an absolutely direct democratic procedure to decide on that important question. Together with the fact that the Swiss (male or female) voter participates directly to the political life of the country by voting several times a year on many subjects, and not only every third, fourth or fifth year to elect representatives, this fact might also be tactfully reminded in a friendly way to those of our foreign friends who display witty irony upon the fact that Swiss women were granted voting right "only" in 1971.

GROUP TRAVEL 1971

To enable the Group to leave for certain on May 26th we would like to have **at least** one additional person on our travelling list. Would any member still contemplating a visit to Switzerland please assist by joining the above group **WITHOUT DELAY.** Applications should be sent together with the deposit to Mrs R. Messmer, 15 Fortification Rd., Wellington, immediately. Come on, take advantage and fly now to Switzerland!

GREETINGS FROM U.S.A.

Fifteen years ago a couple and four children, all born in New Zealand, boarded a ship in Auckland for a three-week voyage. An adventure but it paid off. The family has grown to 16 with the grandchildren.

Best New Year's Greetings to the ones that remember us.

The Kominoths.

[This notice should have appeared in our December issue. We apologise for this delay.—Ed.]