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Editorial

Yes, I'm back! Well, not quite 100% of my health, but I'll be optimistic and say I'm 95% recovered!!! Hey, we all have to be optimistic most of the time, don't we? Otherwise we will only worry ourselves into an early grave! And no one, I'm sure, deliberately wants this! It's OK to be a pessimist for a short while sometimes, when everything seems to go "haywire" all at once, but if you pause, take a good look at all your problems from an optimistic point of view, you will surprise yourself how soon you can find a solution to most of your problems!!!

Sailing off on a different tack, I'm sitting at my dining table trying to gather my thoughts to focus on the job at hand, (with poor success so far!!!). I'm gazing through the windows and admiring

the beautiful summer weather we are having in the autumn, and my thoughts immediately went back to a phone conversation I had ten days ago with a cousin in Switzerland. I called Hans because I heard a mutual cousin over there had a bad fall on an icy slope, and was seriously injured in hospital. Old Franz, the victim, never married, so has no family of his own, and five of his eight siblings are already gone from this life! Franz made the trip to New Zealand twice, some years ago, to visit and, in many instances, make the acquaintance of his many "Kiwi" relations! As he was one of my two closest maternal cousins in the "old country", we had kept in touch over many years.

It is a time like this when I experienced

a feeling which I'm sure very many of my readers have also had a time or two during their life in New Zealand, and you get a sudden message from the old country of the sudden illness of a relative with whom you always felt a particularly close kinship.

The feeling I refer to is this : a tremendously strong wish that New Zealand was no further from the old homeland than the UK or even western Russia! It would be so much easier to grab a couple of friends, pack our bags into a car and head overland to the old homeland for a week or two to visit our sick friend, and healthy ones as well!!! It wouldn't matter if it might be a three-day drive with a couple of overnight stops at nice little country hotels to catch some sleep! It would be so much more interesting and fun with a couple of good friends!!! And as I said, travelling overland instead of packed in like sardines on a jumbo-jet for nearly thirty hours!!!

Oh well, dream on, sweet wishes, none of us can change the geographical setup of our Planet Earth! We are not alone in this situation, spare a thought for the several hundred thousand other Europeans who migrated to New Zealand since WW2, the vast majority from the UK and Holland. They are just as far from their old homelands as we are!!! And I'm sure most of them had the same thoughts, once or twice, as I've just had, again!!!

Getting back to my phone conversation with my cousin Hans, he told me they had had permafrost for a straight six weeks, with day temperature never reaching above one degree at best and nights falling to minus 12 to 16C, and never had so much low-level snow since twenty-five years ago!!! He lives only 450m above sea level, which is the lowlands for Switzerland!!!

In conclusion I would like to express my appreciation to our Presi. Marianne for "filling the gap" for me last month, as always, she and the rest of the team did it with enthusiastic flair!!! I'm sure you all enjoyed reading her wealth of information on the Bernese Highlands, as much as I did! Many thanks, Marianne and Team!!!

Cheerio for now,

Paul

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