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AHV matters

Heinz Leuenberger wrote to the Rt Hon Winston Peters, Associated Minister for Senior Citizens, regarding AHV/NZ Superannuation, and he got the following letter back:

Dear Heinz Leuenberger

Thank you for your letter of 16 May 2007 regarding overseas pensions.

As you will be aware, New Zealand First secured the government's agreement to investigate ways to improve options for senior citizens who may be eligible for foreign pensions as well as New Zealand Superannuation, as part of its Confidence and Supply Agreement.

New Zealand First is committed to this initiative and has been engaged in a number of discussions with the government on this front. During these discussions we have considered a range of options in administering overseas pensions, eligibility issues and the impact of spouses on entitlements, as examples, along with the nature of our international agreements, and a wide range of pension related matters.

The government is well aware of New Zealand First's firm resolve to address these matters, however they are by nature complex and multifaceted, and take time to progress. That said, progress is being made and we expect a cabinet paper addressing several aspects of this policy to be submitted in the near future.

However, the responsibility of overseas pensions and associated matters ultimately falls upon Hon David Benson-Pope, Minister for Social Development and Employment, to resolve as part of his portfolio. For this reason I have referred a copy of your letter to Mr Benson-Pope's office for his information.

In conclusion, it is our desire to see some real action on the portability of pensions, and you can be assured New Zealand First remains committed to honouring the undertakings contained within the Confidence and Supply Agreement.

Once again thank you for taking the time to share your views on this important issue.

Yours sincerely

signed Winston Peters

Swiss Casinos and Lotteries have a Jackpot Year

The Swiss spent more on lotteries and gambling in 2006 than ever before, parting with SFr 2.8 billion. The casinos' profits (SFr 955 million) were higher than the lotteries in 2006 for the first time.

Under Swiss law, all profits made from gambling and lotteries are turned over for social or public utility causes. No less than SFr 586 million was transferred to cantonal lottery and sports funds, as well as sporting associations. Switzerland's 19 casinos paid a total of SFr 495 million in taxes last year, funds that were used mainly to prop up the national pension system.



Francis Thomas Walker (Tom)
Husband of Otilia Pauline Walker
(nee Engelberger)

Tom passed away peacefully surrounded by his family on 9 June 2007 aged 86 years in Tauranga. He died the day after their 64th wedding anniversary. They were married in Hawera in 1943.

They moved to Reporoa and then to Tauranga where they spent the last 16 years, before moving to the retirement apartments 3 1/2 years ago after Tom had a mild stroke. Both Tom and Tilly supported and enjoyed the Swiss community for many years and would make every opportunity to join in the activities of the Taranaki Swiss Club especially family events, the 1st August and Swiss Picnic celebrations.

Tom was a true gentleman, and he was always supportive of his family. His wife Tilly was the most important person to him and he always put her first and took special care of her. She was the apple of his eye. With his children he was always there to support them and help them in any way he could.

When at family gatherings he would always have a dance with every one of his children and grandchildren. He loved dancing and at his granddaughter's wedding in March of this year, even when he was on a walking frame, he made a special effort to dance with Tilly. That was a truly special moment.

At the funeral there was a special moment where the whole church sang together "The Last Waltz" and it was a fitting tribute to such a wonderful man.

A great husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, he is survived by his wife Tilly, his four children Faye, Christine, Frank and Ann-Marie, 10 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

The Taranaki Swiss Club and The Swiss Society of New Zealand extend their deepest sympathy to Tilly and family.