

Swiss AHV / New Zealand superannuation (NZS) and section 70 - "Window of opportunity"

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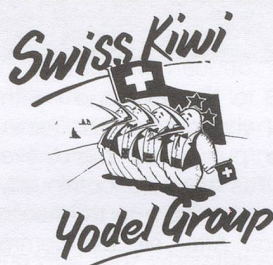
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Swiss AHV / New Zealand Superannuation (NZS) and Section 70 – “Window of Opportunity”

At the end of the sabbatical I returned to Switzerland for a year, to my previous career as a secondary school teacher. During this year I realised that what really matters in life persists despite distance. At the beginning of March, six months after my return to Wellington, I started a new professional adventure, at the Embassy of Switzerland. I am proud to work in such a stimulating environment while keeping contact with both the Swiss and the Kiwi realities. For me, going to work is like going back home a little every day, which makes me happy. I am grateful for this opportunity and I look forward to meeting you soon!

Tamara Winkler



The Swiss Kiwi Yodel Group is a fun loving group of guys that really bring on the homesickness when singing their wonderful Swiss Yodels. We are always on the lookout for younger Swiss male singers or recent immigrants with sound knowledge of the Swiss dialect and an interest in traditional Swiss Folk music who wish to keep up the tradition. Any one interested please get in touch with:

Erich Widmer: e.r.widmer@xtra.co.nz
<http://yodelgroup.wix.com/swiss-kiwi-yodlers>

Over the last 15 months I have received an abundance of feedback from all over the country concerning the New Zealand government's treatment of our Swiss Pension (AHV). It is a relief to hear so many people are waking up to this injustice. Unfortunately most of them realise the trap they are in after they have filled out the application for NZ Super. Over the last two years I contacted and talked to a number of New Zealand politicians on this issue - the direct deduction of overseas pensions from New Zealand Superannuation (NZS) under Section 70 of the Social Security Act. I have also been in very close contact with the Swiss Embassy concerning this unjust saga and I can assure all, the Embassy in Wellington is taking this issue very very seriously. I would like to thank the Ambassador David Vogelsanger and Jürg Bono for all their dedicated and committed work behind the scenes on this.

I now consider it necessary to get political.

Without political action from within New Zealand, I do not see any possibility of a change in the near future. Unfortunately the governing National Party has no interest in changing the present system. Labour and the Greens have at least realised that it should be looked at some time in the future but have no clear strategy. I have also approached New Zealand First Party, the only party actively working to change this unjust system. I have written about their plans and concepts on previous occasions.

In the short, medium or long run, every Swiss living in New Zealand who has worked in Switzerland prior to immigrating has paid AHV; and on reaching the age of 65 is entitled to a Swiss pension based on the amount contributed into the AHV insurance system. Sooner or later, we will all be affected by Section 70 robbing and looting each one of us of our pension which we have paid for ourselves.

At the present time there are over 85,000 super annuitants affected by Section 70 in New Zealand, increasing every year. 85,000 votes equates to about 3.5% of the total voter turnout (based on 2014 turnout). Why have successive governments ignored such a powerful voter issue? The reason is because the Section 70 group is seen as disjointed, conflicted and fragmented. These dispersed factions include us Swiss, but also established UK migrants (the largest group), recent UK, Dutch, German, Austrian, US, returning expat Kiwis who have worked overseas coming back to New Zealand to retire, and their affected New Zealand spouses.

Imagine the political strength if all those affected (now or in the future) by Section 70, unite under one strong political voice.

In the last financial year (2015), the New Zealand government collected NZ\$ 322'778'017.75 from people receiving an overseas pension of which NZ\$ 1'458'670.53 was from Swiss pensioners.

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Swiss AHV / New Zealand Superannuation (NZS) and Section 70

One of the biggest problems for any political party is the multitude of issues lobbying for attention. For NZ First to promote the Section 70 issue, all of those nationalities affected need to unite our huge numbers into a coherent lobby group. The coordination stage has been completed and this process has now commenced.

Political Action Proposal

There is an identifiable window of opportunity for political action for the 2017 General Election. If Winston Peters is in a position to negotiate coalition conditions after the general election as Kingmaker, there will be a number of issues fighting to be on Winston Peters' 'blacklist' at the bartering table.

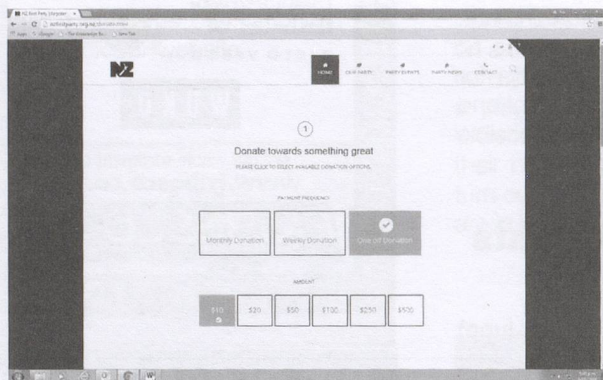
As Section 70 will sooner or later affect just about all of the Swiss living in New Zealand, we have the numbers to add pressure to prioritise this issue.

What matters to a political party are voters, members and of course, donors. Frankly, Votes are anonymous. NZ First membership fee is \$10, but most of this goes into processing the membership. Below, I outline how a \$10 donation can be directly attributable to Section 70, and better, Swiss Section 70s.

As I rally the Swiss contingent, other factions will respectively rally UK, German, Dutch, US, Canadian and other countries as well as expat Kiwis with overseas pensions.

This is the exact process to donate so we Swiss are clearly identifiable;

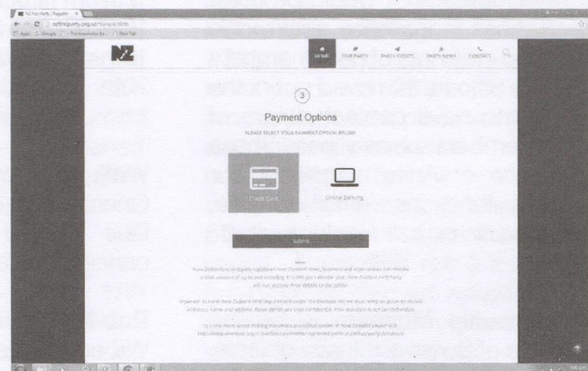
1. <http://nzfirstparty.org.nz/donate.html>



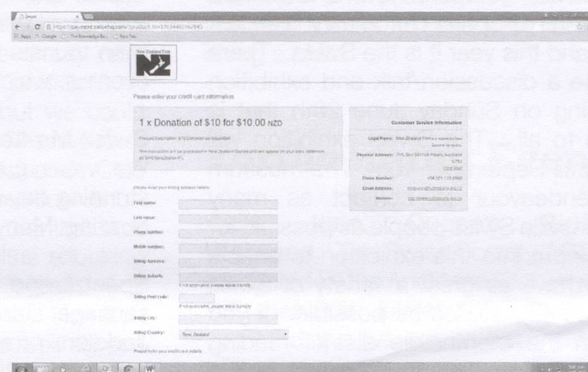
2. Under First Name write Section70SUI (do not write your name in there). This will identify you as a "Swiss Section 70". The SUI stands for Switzerland. Likewise Section70GBR (UK) or Section70GER (Germany). Under Last Name write your First and Last Name (like Peterehrler)



3. Payment must be made by Credit Card to get an automated bank receipt of your \$10 donation



4. Fill out your credit card details and you will receive an automated bank receipt



5. The automated receipt is your proof of donation

Please forward this receipt to section70.nzf@gmail.com to re-confirm your donation to the Section 70 /NZ First Party email.

If Section 70s, and especially those of us who donate under Section70SUI constitute a critical mass of donors (this together with all of the other factions), then no doubt the Section 70 issue will be at the forefront if Winston Peters is in a position to negotiate coalition terms. Only donate \$10. If you wish to donate say \$20 or \$30, then fill out 2 or 3 donations at \$10 each. You can put your cat's, dog's name or children's name, or whoever you want as donors. At the end it is the numbers and not the amount that is of importance.

Although my wife and I still have 3 years to go until we receive our Swiss pension, we are both convinced our \$10 donations is a good investment and is worthwhile spending and in return applying political clout. In my opinion this window of opportunity will only open or come once and we should all grab the opportunity. It does not help making "the fist" in your pocket moaning and complaining, we need to make our voice heard!!

Bluntly, if Section70SUI donors (like my wife and I) are not happy with the way NZ First fights for our rights in 2016/2017, NZ First loses our support, financial and otherwise. It is as simple as that.

Peter Ehrler
Elected Council Member of the Swiss Abroad
Representing New Zealand