

# Why should the Rätoromanic language be recognised?

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

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

Band (Jahr): **3 (1937-1938)**

Heft 9

PDF erstellt am: **12.07.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-943135>

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WHY SHOULD THE RÄTOROMANIC LANGUAGE BE RECOGNISED ?

It is the mother tongue of 45,000 Swiss citizens living in the many mountain valleys of Graubünden, that is in the Oberland, Mittelbünden, Oberhalbstein, Albulatal, Engadin, Münstertal, as well other smaller valleys. Not only is it spoken in ordinary conversation, but also in School, Church and Court proceedings. Like the French, Italian and Spanish tongue the Romanic originated from Latin. Notwithstanding the very limited space in which this language has always prevailed, it has maintained its long existence. It has its variations in dialects, of which the two chief groups are the so-called Ladinisch, spoken in the Engadin and Surselvanisch spoken in the Oberland.

Romanic chronicles can be traced back to the time of Charles the Great, but in literary speech it seems to go back to the time of the Reformation. The magnitude of its literature is astounding, when you consider the smallness of the territory in which this tongue is spoken. They can boast of four newspapers, and many other publications.

In Old Freerätien and to this day it has always been recognised as legal speech in all cantonal affairs. When our Federal Constitution was founded in 1848, the Rätoromans in their natural modesty omitted to claim recognition of their speech. But conditions have changed since, to a very great extent, due to the ever-growing tourist traffic. Railways were built and caused an influx of foreign speaking element, especially of German and Italian origin. While the German element exercised rather heavy pressure on the Romanic speech, growing interest in this language could be noticed on the Italian side and popular opinion was expressed in these parts that the Italian language should be official. Being continually hemmed in by these two elements, is it surprising that these Mountain people desire protection and recognition?

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NEWS IN BRIEF:

Foreign Auto Visitors in Switzerland:

Official Statistics, compiled by the responsible authorities of Switzerland, show that during 1937 about 294,000 foreign motor vehicles brought approximately 1,076,000 visitors into Switzerland. Their stay in our country amounted to 2,8 million days. A quarter of these visitors travelled by Service car at an average of 22 passengers per car. Travellers by automobile stayed 3 days in the country, that is, twice as long as those by Service cars. According to statistics the stay of foreign visitors amounted to 7,946,000 nights, of which 1,726,000 were registered by Auto visitors.

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T S .

MR. JOHN STEINER of Eastport Rd., Waihou, has been requested to find Swiss Sharemilkers for some very fine farms in his district, ranging from 80 to 120 cows, at half shares. Good and genuine families of 3 to 4 milkers with a little cash would be readily financed. Applicants may communicate with Mr. Steiner, or Mr. W. Ungemuth, Secretary.

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