

News in brief

Objektyp: **Group**

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

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

Heft 12

PDF erstellt am: **12.07.2024**

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low-lying districts the loss in stone-fruit is from 80-100%, Bern's loss is from 50-100%. Tessin estimates the damage in the vineyards at two-thirds, while stone-fruits have come off more lightly. In Wallis, where in some of its districts fruit-growing is one of the mainstays of the people, this frost has been nothing short of a calamity. Since 1913 this canton has never experienced a frost of such severity. The whole crop of apricots, cherries, is practically done for, and other stone-fruit nearly so. Vineyards have suffered to the extent of 30-100% according to the more or less sheltered positions of the vineyards. The entire loss in fruit in this canton is about 80-85%. A later message states that the damage in Wallis is estimated at 12½ million francs.

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SWISS OVERSEAS.

Yet there is another countryman whose name stands prominent in the annals of history of the United States of America. A short time ago a soldier of the Old Brigade was buried in the Arlington National cemetery with all military honours. His name was Brigadier General Léon A. Matile, born in Neuchatel on the 28th September, 1844. He was the son of a Scientist, Professor G.A. Matile. As a soldier of the U.S. Army, he had a very distinguished career and just before his death he was the Guest of Honour at the annual banquet of the "Military Order of the Carabao", a society of ex-service officers who fought in the Spanish-American war and in the Philippines. The Army and Navy Journal, a very important and exclusive paper, gave the following resume' of his activities :

" Leon A. Matile who came as a youth with his father to the United States, entered the army when 19 years of age. As a soldier he fought in the American civil war, and was wounded at Atlanta, on the 7th August 1864. After the Civil War he remained in the regular army and until the Spanish-American War, served in the West and South-west, taking part in the activities against Indians of the Sioux, Crow, Pintes and Apache tribes. In 1898 General Matile occupied an important position in Alaska. When the war with Spain broke out, he was ordered to the Philippines where he was soon actively engaged. For bravery in action against the Rebels of Luzon he was decorated with the Silver Star. He returned home wounded, but 1901 found him once more in the Philippines. For this service he received the Order of the Purple Heart. In 1903, after 40 years of continuous service, he retired, but he still led an active life and never missed military functions. For many years he lived in Washington, but moved later to Plainfield. "

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NEWS IN BRIEF.

The Mammoth locomotive built by Sulzer Brothers of Winterthur, has been on its trial trips between Winterthur and St. Gall and has proved most satisfactory. With a train composition of 600 tons consisting of 4 axled passenger wagons, this giant was asked to do 100 kilometers per hour. Representatives from England, Spain, France, Bulgaria, Rumania, Japan and Germany were present; another proof of how interested foreign countries are in our Swiss products.

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Now and again we hear of Swiss who have made their name famous in foreign parts. Not only in war service but also in civil service, as well as in politics, do they appear in every country of the world.

During the last 25 years the South American Republic of Paraguay can boast of no less than two Presidents of Swiss origin. Between 1912 and 1916 Eduardo Schaerer of Vordemwald, Canton Aargau, held the most important office of that country. Today he lives in retirement in Asuncion, the capital of Paraguay. From 1928 to 1932 Dr. José Guggiari, a solicitor of Mator Di Savoia, Canton Tessin, held this position. During his term of presidency, a conflict broke out between Paraguay and Bolivia, about the Chaco district, which under his successor led to war. True to the old motto of our countrymen in foreign parts "Honour and Faith", these two men have put their name foremost in the service of foreign countries.

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Switzerland still leads the world in the watchmaking industry. Official reports from Teddington (England) where international examinations of chronometers have just taken place, state that Switzerland once again has gained the first place. The well-known Omega brand has again taken pride of place with 97,3 points. The same brand also gained second place with 97,2 points. The Zenith brand figures as a third, while a product of Patek Phillippe & Co. of Geneva follows on with another Omega in its wake. The first 20 places include 9 Omegas, 4 Zeniths, 4 Patek and 3 Movado products. Since 1933 the Omega chronometer has always reached the largest number of points; in fact in 1936 it gained 97,8 points, this being the highest number of points ever reached by any contestants. We may well be proud of the fact that Swiss products always bear a reputation second to none.

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A grass drying machine has been invented by a mechanic, F. Wahli of Interlaken. It is worked by a wood gas generator, which can be fuelled with rubbish and wood. From the time the grass is put into the machine, it is continually turned until it is perfectly loose dry hay. This machine can deliver 120-150 kilograms of hay per hour. With some further improvements the inventor expects to make the machine moveable on wheels.

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THE ROMANCE OF THE ST. GOTTHARD (continued)

The trains, of course, were run by steam, but with the passing of years accentuating the importance of the line as an international highway, the necessity of adopting electric traction was realised. Other electric railways were being constructed in Switzerland and, costly as the adaptation must prove, it was evident that the Gotthard could not lag behind. The plans were finally decided upon in August 1913, and apart from the consideration of gain in speed, and in comfort by the elimination of smoke, the Swiss Federal Railways were anxious to render themselves as far as possible independent of coal, which Switzerland is compelled to import. Exactly a year later the outbreak of the great European war, during which Switzerland was completely surrounded by belligerents and thus cut off from the world, emphasized this point most strikingly. In addition, it more than doubled the cost of the scheme. Nevertheless, the undertaking was proceeded with, and since 1924 the whole line from Basle to Chiasso, together with the branch line from Zurich, has been operated by electricity derived from water-power, of which there is an abundance in Switzerland. The utilisation of water-power, however, necessitates costly machinery and huge schemes scarcely inferior to that of tunnelling a tremendous mountain barrier. (To be continued) ...

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MR. JOHN STEINER, late O/o. L. Schuler, Skeet Rd., KAPUNI.

Anyone knowing his present address, please communicate with the Secretary. Mr. Steiner's last copy of the "Helvetia" has been returned through the Dead Letter Office.

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A letter has been delivered at the Swiss Consulate in Wellington by the Post Office addressed to MR. JOST-RIBARY. This letter was posted at Rapperswil by a Family SCHONMANN.

Anyone knowing his address, please communicate with the Consulate, P.O. Box 386, Wellington, or the Secretary of the Society.

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

MR. P. CATTIN, Te Kauwhata, "Scintilla" Wine, Fruit and Honey.
MR. G. KERLER, 477, Karangahape Rd., Auckland, Prams, Wickerwork,
Toys, &c.
MR. E. CATTIN, 19, Willis St., Wellington, Jeweller & Watchmaker.

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CORRESPONDENCE:

Please address to the Secretary, W. UNGEMUTH,
Clarence Rd., Northcote, Auckland, N. 4.