

News in brief

Objektyp: **Group**

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

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

Heft 4

PDF erstellt am: **09.08.2024**

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mich auch besonders feststellen zu koennen,dass der Schweizername in diesem Lande einen guten Klang hat,was wir Schweizer in der Heimat zum grossen Teil Euren Vorgaengern und Euch zu verdanken haben. Meinen besondern Dank nochmals der Delegation Eures Vereines,welche mich bei meiner Ankunft in Auckland in Empfang nahm und der sich nachher noch einige andere Landsleute anschlossen. Ich werde,wenn mir die Redaktion Eures Monatsblattes "Helvetia" diese Gefaelligkeit erweist,ueber die Aufgaben meiner Mission in diesem Lande,in den kommenden Nummern Eures Vereinsorgans,berichten koennen. Fuer dieses Mal will ich mich damit begnuegen, Euch allen freundeidgenoessischen Gruss zu entbieten und der Hoffnung Ausdruck zu verleihen, im Laufe der naechsten Zeit noch recht viele von Euch persoendlich kennen lernen zu koennen. Auch moechte ich Euch heute schon versichern,dass mir persoendlich und dem naechstens in Wellington zu eroeffnenden Konsulate keine Muehe zu viel sein wird, Eure Vereinsbestrebungen foerdern zu helfen und Euch zu Diensten zu stehen. Es ist mir bereits gelungen eine Sekretuerin aus Euren Kreisen zur Mitarbeit beim Konsulate zu gewinnen, naemlich Frl.Hanley Marie Dahinden aus Oeo bei Opunake,Taranaki.

Wellington, den 21 Dezember,1937.

Dr.Walter Schmid, Vizekonsul und Verweser.

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SPORTS IN SWITZERLAND.

GYMNASTICS: The fame of Swiss Gymnasts has long ago spread far beyond the frontiers. The gymnasts of today are following up the unbroken tradition of more than a century. It speaks for itself that over 150,000 members are today enrolled in the Federal Gymnastic Association. The tradition is nation wide, free from all class distinction,a sport in its purest sense. Rich and poor, high and low, all are judged by their ability. Swiss gymnasts have also been instrumental in developing this fine sport in other countries, and in international contests they again and again demonstrated their ability and set up new standards of proficiency. Nearly every district -every parish - in Switzerland has its Gymnastic Club and a gymnasium of its own. And everywhere hard work and good fellowship are the watchwords.

Next to the Gymnastic sport,the Football (or Soccer) is the most popular pastime in our country. Small as the country is,some outstanding teams have been produced,and,for instance, during the Olympic games at Amsterdam,the international eleven conquered all competitors excepting the final match which was lost against Uruguay.

LIGHT ATHLETICS: Practically every category of light athletics is enthusiastically practised in our old country. The number of athletes is legion and the general standard of performance exceptionally good. In spring cross country races are held in all parts of Switzerland; in early summer local meetings take place as preliminary canters for the national championships and international contests,which are usually held between July and September on the excellent sports grounds and running tracks of Basle,Berne,Lausanne and Zurich

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NEWS IN BRIEF.

Large Foreign Loan: Recently a loan of 200 Million Swiss Francs has been taken up by the big combined French State Railways. The interest is fixed at 4% and the subscription at 99. The big transaction is negotiated by a Syndicate of leading Swiss Banks.

Never has such a storm of protest been heard in Switzerland against foreign investments. It is well known that the State railways of France work under great difficulties and economic stress, but the fundamental resentment against such large loans abroad, is probably more due to the uncounted millions of good Swiss Francs which have been lost straight-out in Germany during recent years. On the other hand the big banks are forced to invest the gigantic reserves pouring in from abroad. During 3 recent months alone, the reserves of the National Bank increased by 250 Millions, chiefly from France due to the flight from the constantly devaluating French currency.

Berne: On October 12, our Bundesrat appointed Minister Walter Stucki as Embassadeur to Paris, to succeed Monsieur Alphonse Dunant, who acted for 20 years as Switzerland's representative in the French capital.

Berne: The Federal Budget for 1938 has just been published and the summary of the principal figures indicated below, show some interesting reading.

<u>Income: (In Million Frs.)</u>	<u>1937</u>	<u>1938</u>
Customs	186,9	209,1
Petrol	55,0	53,0
Tobacco	43,0	40,0
Tax on beverages	19,0	12,0
" " oil & fat	5,5	6,0
Stamp duties	51,4	60,5
"Crisis" Tax	28,0	30,0
Military Tax	4,0	4,0
 <u>Expenses:</u>		
Interest Service	89,1	97,8
Amortisations	79,1	83,9
State subsidies: ordinary	104,6	102,9
" " "Crisis"	69,1	61,9
Defence	80,6	95,6
State personnel	67,8	70,0

The year's deficit is assessed at approximately 12,4 Mill. Frs.

FOOT & MOUTH DISEASE: This dreaded plague still appears to spread, particularly in Western Switzerland. Likewise the much feared Colorado beetle is prevalent. In the early summer cantonal and federal agricultural organisations were doing their utmost to combat the pest. Apparently a permanent extermination cannot be expected, as even air currents seem to help spreading the plague.

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CHEAP TRAVELLING IN SWITZERLAND.

A most commonly used concession of the Swiss Railways has been lately introduced in a 30% price reduction for visitors from abroad. Today an 8 day Season Ticket only costs frs.45,- a 15 day Season Ticket only frs.63.

These reductions may be obtained from the agencies of the Swiss Federal Railways and touring offices abroad, or at any Swiss frontier station. Season ticket holders are entitled to travel at their pleasure over 5,000 kilometres of Swiss railway and steamship lines.

Owing to the devaluation of the franc, the £ and the \$ are now worth 40% more all round Switzerland, and yet there are no increases in fares, hotel prices, etc. No formality with money is necessary; prices are to suit every pocket, and solid comfort assured everywhere.

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