

Change of committee

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S.S. "St. Gotthard" 8.339 tons.	S.S. "Eiger" 8.137 tons
S.S. "Saentis" 6.690 "	S.S. "Chasseral" 4.206 tons
S.S. "St. Cergue" 7.600 "	S.S. "Calanda" 7.470 "
S.S. "Maloja" 2.640 "	S.S. "Albula" 2.030 "
S.S. "Lugano" 9.300 "	S.S. "Generoso" 2.360 "

These Swiss vessels as well as the following 8 Greek ships, which are at present still in the Swiss service, namely

S.S. "Helene Kulukundis" 10.000 tons	S.S. "Master Elias Kulukundis" 10.000 tons
S.S. "Kassos" 9.535 "	S.S. "Marpessa" 8.732 tons
S.S. "Mount Aetna" 7.935 "	S.S. "Nereus" 9.500 "
S.S. "Stavros" 9.214 "	S.S. "Thetis" 7.600 "

are marked as vessels for the provisioning of Switzerland and are recognised as such by both of the belligerent parties. On both sides of each vessel "SWITZERLAND" is painted in big letters and these ships are fully lit at night; their departures and routes are communicated in advance to the belligerents; they only carry goods coming from Switzerland or destined for Switzerland. Through these precautions and the agreements made with the two belligerent parties losses through warlike action so far have been avoided.

On account of the shorter distance and in order to make use of the available tonnage in the most rational manner, grain is mainly imported from U.S.A. Rather less frequent traffic is proceeding to Central America, Argentine, Brazil and Portuguese East and West Africa for the importation of sugar, coffee, rice, oil, fats, cocoa etc.

The Swiss Federal War Transport Office, which is organising all sea transports from and to Switzerland, gave its attention to the transport of Swiss goods to the different overseas countries very soon after the regular shipping services of neutral lines had ceased to operate.

From the beginning of 1941 on, direct departures from Genoa to New York, Philadelphia-Baltimore took place at regular intervals. This direct traffic was complemented by a shuttle service from Genoa to Lisbon whence the goods are transhipped to U.S.A., Central and South America on Spanish and Portuguese boats.

However, Swiss ships are now also going direct from Europe to South American ports. The first Swiss steamer carrying a valuable cargo of Swiss goods direct to Buenos Aires-Montevideo was the S.S. "St. Cergue", which left Genoa on the 21st September, 1942. The Swiss ship "Eiger" followed a few weeks later, also with a cargo of Swiss goods. Loaded with South American products destined for Switzerland, these ships then return direct to Genoa, whence the goods are transferred to Switzerland.

The maintenance of a regular direct trade with the principal overseas markets is of vital importance for Switzerland. With this view in mind, the Swiss Federal War Transport Office, therefore, will continue to try their utmost to keep this service going.

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CHANGE OF COMMITTEE.

Pursuant to the request published in the August issue of the "Helvetia", a number of Swiss compatriots of Auckland had a meeting on Saturday the 11th, for the specific purpose to nominate a new committee to the Swiss Benevolent Society in New Zealand.

All members present expressed regret that the Wellington Committee found reason to resign. It is considered that the leadership of the Society was in good hands during the past two years; in particular, the able Secretary, Mr. Schlatter, has done a great deal of useful work.

Members throughout New Zealand will realise the difficulties in finding patriotic minded fellow-members to take charge of the Committee, particularly in these times when almost everyone works long hours. However, the Auckland group has always willingly sacrificed time and efforts, and is again ready to do its share.

The following nominations are now put before the members of the Society:

F. Steyer :	President
A. Peyer :	Vice-President
E. Merz :	Secretary
W. Ungemuth :	Treasurer
A. Mossberger :	Executive Member.

We now request every member to write to the Secretary, Mr. Schlatter of Wellington, whether he approves of these nominations or not. Those not recording their vote before September 30th, shall be taken as supporters.

The newly proposed Committee pledge their wholehearted co-operation to foster the welfare of the Society and to strengthen the bond of friendship in our community. This, however, is considered possible only provided they are given better support by their fellow-members. This refers in particular to the prompt payment of the annual subscription fee. In every issue of the "Helvetia", the Secretary has to request defaulting members to forward the fee. This should not be necessary as it is known that every member, almost without exception, can well afford to "sacrifice" the few shillings every 12 months. The new Committee, if elected, proposes to allow three months' time to pay the subscription, after which period all names of defaulters will be published in this paper. Moreover, non-financial compatriots will then be deleted from the membership list. No doubt everyone will agree that such a procedure is proper, as evidently it is only negligence in failing to pay this small amount.

A further important consideration is the formation of numerous "Collection Agents" throughout the Country. To facilitate the task of the Committee, particularly the Secretary, we should have one to three members in each locality where Swiss are more numerous, to take care of collecting the fee. For instance, Taranaki and Waikato should appoint, say three each, with the specific duty to collect among the more intimate compatriots. The same time such "Agents" would also make it their business to enrol every Swiss residing within a reasonable boundary. Surely, a small number of willing compatriots can be induced to take on this task once every 12 months?

Written comments on this subject, or any other useful suggestion, are encouraged and everyone may communicate with the Secretary at any time.

In conclusion, the Auckland group wishes to thank our Patron, Dr. Schmid, most heartily for the special interest he has taken as intermediary between the Wellington and Auckland Associates.

Auckland, 13th September, 1943.

SWITZERLAND AND AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION.

As a reply to certain attacks of American newspapers which accused Switzerland of having made a business out of the war, The "New York Times" has published an article entitled "Invincible Switzerland", containing the highest praise of the determination and the courage with which the Swiss Government and the Swiss people defend their traditions and their independence in these difficult times.

This article denies that Switzerland is doing a flourishing business with the belligerents; it reveals the privations which the Swiss people have to take upon themselves and their efforts to maintain their independence. It quotes the opinion of influential American journalists, among them Walter Lippmann, who commend very highly the intelligence of the Government and the discipline of the Swiss people. The Americans who are submitting a second time to the difficulties of a world war cannot help admiring the foresight and the practical spirit which