

652nd anniversary of the foundation of the Swiss Confederation 1st August 1943

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straining their vocal chords in an effort to entertain you.

Supper will be provided and the small charge of 2/6d for admission will be made to cover expenses.

It is to be held in the Overseas League Rooms on the 3rd Floor of the Queen's Arcade, Queen Street.

If any of those intending country visitors have a "Handoergeli" it would be appreciated if they would bring it along.

B.R.HALTMAYER, SECRETARY.

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WELLINGTON.

We have the pleasure to inform members and friends, that they are invited to a Social Evening on the occasion of the celebration of the Swiss National Day. As the 1st of August falls on a Sunday, this gathering will take place on SATURDAY, 31ST JULY in the clubrooms of the New Zealand Educational Institute in the "Evening Post Building", Willis Street, Wellington. These are the same rooms where we celebrated the 650th Anniversary in 1941.

In order to give members and friends living near Wellington a chance to spend some hours amongst their countrymen, and still catch their last trains, if they cannot make arrangements to stay the night in town, we shall start at 7 p.m. and we would ask everybody to come on time.

The ladies have been good enough to consent to provide the supper, and sh. 5/- will be collected from every man towards the expenses for rent and drinks.

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652ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION 1ST AUGUST 1943.

On the occasion of this 652nd Anniversary of the Foundation of the Swiss Confederation, I propose that my fellow-countrymen in New Zealand imagine they have returned to Switzerland on a radiant winter day in order to spend a few weeks in the homely village of Engelberg amidst the majestic winter splendour of our Swiss mountains. At the termination of these happy holidays, one of the Federal Councillors would arrive from Berne specifically to address you on behalf of the country, and to bid you farewell before your return home.

Such a dream came true, in January of this year, for a group of 250 young Swiss from abroad. They were very lucky. The weather was beautiful, snow conditions were excellent, and when their stay came to an end, a Swiss Federal Councillor arrived from Berne accompanied by the Adjutant of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, to take leave of them in an impressive address. Federal Councillor Kobelt of St.Gall spoke to his young listeners at an open-air meeting in the main square of Engelberg, in an address unexcelled for clearness of expression and formulation.

In anticipation of our celebrations in New Zealand of the 652nd Anniversary of the Foundation of the Swiss Confederation, I should like to convey to you this recent message of one of our highest federal officials: -

"You have returned from afar to Switzerland for a short time to our mutual homeland for this is also your country, your heritage. You have sensed how much you belong to this country, when you met again people of your own kith and kin, people with the same spirit of loyalty to your Swiss homeland. It is this spirit which unites all your fellow-countrymen, and makes them deeply conscious of the fact that they are members of a free nation in which the mental and spiritual forces of man can develop freely and unrestrainedly. It is true Swiss tradition, to recognise that man is not merely body but contains a Divine spark. In the spiritual life of man lie the sources of those forces which value humanity and justice more than power, money or possessions, and which form the basis of a true community.

Our first aim is to preserve peace for our country. Our efforts to preserve peace are not motivated by fear of war. It is courage rather than fear. We have no claim against anybody and nobody has a claim against us. We are not indifferent towards the belligerent nations. We bear with them, to a great extent, the sufferings of war, and try to alleviate these miseries, as far as it lies in our power.

The aim of human longing is never war, but always peace. All the plans which are being made and published in all countries for the post-war years, are proof of the longing of all nations for a lasting peace, a peace which does not contain the seeds of future wars. The most important guarantee for a lasting peace is for humanity and justice to prevail in the life of all peoples.

I assure you, my fellow-countrymen from abroad, in the name of the Swiss people and the Swiss Government, that we are continuously striving for that aim so that we may contribute our share to the future peace of the world.

It may be premature to talk of peace. There is still a danger of our country being involved in the war, and this danger may even increase as time passes. We must always reckon with the worst possibility, and be prepared for it, but deep in our hearts we must not abandon hope that the worst will not happen. I can assure you that we shall do everything possible to preserve the independence of our country, without which all our great plans for the future cannot come to pass.

The fate of our country is the outcome of external circumstances - of course an unknown and changing factor. On the other hand it is the outcome of the morale of the people, which is a known and constant factor. The thing which counts most is the morale, which is the decisive factor in any event, and which means that we must have the determination and courage to face up to any danger. The people and authorities in Switzerland are convinced that this determination prevails; they are ready to take up arms if and when our independence should be threatened or our country attacked, without considering who the attacker is and how successful we may be. In such an event we should be determined not to lay down our arms until the freedom of the people had been restored. Even if every soldier had to die, the last man, when dying, would clasp the Swiss flag to his breast, and our Swiss youth would not rest until the bonfires on the tops of our mountains could proclaim that freedom was regained.

We are constantly endeavouring to fulfil our duty of neutrality and we hope that our frank, unequivocal and unchanging attitude in this respect is duly recognised. We trust in Divine Justice and thank God that our country has so far been spared the most severe trial.

We know, my dear Swiss boys and girls, who are now returning to your adopted countries, that in your hearts you are with us always, and that in all your actions you will bear in mind the honour of Switzerland."

In conclusion I desire to extend to all of my compatriots who are celebrating this year's Anniversary, my best wishes for happy and successful gatherings. May our country in the future also be spared the devastations of war, and may our watchword, at home and abroad, remain "Courage not Fear".

DR. WALTER SCHMID, SWISS CONSUL.

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1st of August Badges: We wish to inform members, that 150 of these badges have been ordered by cable about three months ago, but owing to slow postal communication these have not yet come to hand and we can only hope that they will still arrive in time for our celebrations. This year's badge is a product of the St.Gall embroidery industry and shows in colour the Swiss flag surrounded by the coat-of-arms of the 22 cantons. These badges are sold as usual for sh.2/6 a piece and the proceeds of this year's collection will be used for the "Furtherance of the vocational training of the Swiss Youth". As soon as these badges come to hand they will be sent to the district representatives of our Society for distribution and we are sure that these badges will be welcomed by our compatriots.

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