

News of the colony

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the production of the American watchmaking industry, that the Government of the United States will have recourse to other means than those which carry with them serious obstacles to international trade. Moreover, this restrictive attitude is in contradiction with the principles of international trade, which President Eisenhower so strongly reaffirmed in his last message to the American Congress. The most recent statistics concerning trade between the United States and Switzerland confirm the justification of the Swiss claims. From them we perceive, in fact, that in 1954 Swiss exports to the U.S. declined to 640,000,000 francs as compared with 852,000,000 in 1953, whereas Swiss imports from the United States increased considerably from 619,000,000 to 710,000,000 francs.

Record Production of Sugar

The transformation into sugar of the 1954 beetroot harvest was completed on January 6th last. Nearly 30,000 tons of sugar were manufactured at Aarberg, the only sugar refining factory in Switzerland, representing the largest annual production registered up to the present. Nevertheless, the fact remains that this quantity of home-produced sugar corresponds to only about one-sixth of the total consumption in Switzerland.

NEWS OF THE COLONY

Switzerland as a Fatherland

The magnetic attraction of the homeland has invited many of our settlers to make a trip overseas.

Recently back are Mesdames M. Kuchler, M. Schicker, and J. Zimmermann, also Messrs. D. Chamberlain and Maurice Schicker, of Kaponga (for them the first visit).

Messrs. J. Beeler and W. Niederberger came back happily provided with a "Schweizer frauely."

Late February saw the departure of Mr. and Mrs. F. Steiner, of Eltham, Mr. and Mrs. F. Nolly, and F. Zimmermann, of Stratford, and E. Schicker, Hawera.

Swiss settlers from America, Mr. and Mrs. Eberhart Kalin, and Mrs. B. Stumpf, came to visit their brother, Alphons Kalin, of Manaia, and other relations in New Zealand. Being interested in agriculture and business, and coming from Jacoma (quite a Swiss settlement), they have been making many interesting comparisons. Mr. and Mrs. Kalin and Mrs. B. Stumpf are proceeding to Switzerland by air before returning home.

E.G.

On Saturday evening, February 19th, there was a gathering of settlers and friends in the Bird Road School, Stratford, to say au revoir

and make a presentation to Mr. and Mrs. Nolly, who left on the 24th for a trip to their homeland.

It was a happy gathering with plenty of refreshments.

Accordian items were given by Messrs. J. Fohn and L. Schonbachler, accompanied on the piano by Mrs. J. Widmer.

Mr. and Mrs. F. Steiner, Eltham, and Mrs. F. Zimmermann, Stratford, fellow-travellers, were also present.

Piano and piano-accordian items were also given by friends.

We wish them all a happy holiday in Switzerland.

L.S.

THE WINEGROWERS' FESTIVAL

The Origins of the Festival

The culture of the vine in the upper basin of Lake Lemman goes back, they say, to the Roman epoch. In any case, one knows that the Chapter of the Cathedral of Lausanne, in one thousand, possessed thirty-one vineyards round about Vevey and that the vineyards of Lavaux at the Dezaley had been planted in the twelfth century by the monks of the Abbey of Haut-Cret, near Oron.

In order to encourage and develop the culture of the vine, an "Abbaye" of agriculture called St. Urbain was set up in Vevey itself; the origin is lost in the darkness of centuries. This corporation, besides being interested in the growth of the vine handed out rewards to the most deserving winegrowers. At the end of the eighteenth century this "abbaye" took the name of Agricultural Society and then became the "Abbaye of the Vinedressers" and finally, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the "Honourable Brotherhood of Vinedressers." The aims have remained the same but the rewards are distributed at a three-yearly ceremony, which takes place in a day of rejoicing with a "bravade" or "parade," that is a procession through the town and a banquet. This "bravade" has become little by little a show with many participants.

Since the end of the eighteenth century, these shows became so significant that they took place every six years, then, occasionally, according to the international situation. Here, moreover, are dates of the Festivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: 1819, 1833, 1851, 1865, 1889, 1905 and 1927. Each time they became more important and several local authors and composers placed their talents at the disposal of this beautiful Festival.

A magnificent popular Fete

The Winegrowers' Festival, "a national masterpiece" as the Swiss poet, Juste Olivier, has called it, glorifies the daily work of Mother Earth. In a glamorous evocation of Nature, it exalts the peaceful activities of our people.

It is above all a drama which brings into evidence the art of the painter, of the musician, of the poet and of the dancer, a brilliant hymn