

# News from Switzerland

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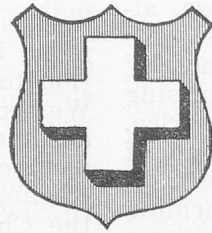
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# HELVETIA

MONTHLY  
PUBLICATION  
OF THE



SWISS BENEVOLENT  
SOCIETY IN  
NEW ZEALAND (INC.)

GROUP NEW ZEALAND OF THE NEW HELVETIC SOCIETY

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19th YEAR.

SEPTEMBER, 1955.

AUCKLAND.

## NEWS OF THE COLONY

### Obituary Notices

Mr. Karl Anton (Charlie) SCHICKER, 113 Waihi Road, Hawera, died suddenly on August 8th, 1955.

Mr. Anton (Tony) HURLIMANN, died on April 18th, 1955, at the Public Hospital at Stratford.

Mr. Joseph Fridolin GABRIEL died, as the result of an accident, on August 3rd, 1955, at the Auckland Hospital.

It is with very much regret that we announce the passing away of these three members of the Colony, and we wish to extend our sincere sympathy to their relatives.

On Sunday, July 31st, Mr. Joseph Gabriel went to a stack of baled hay on his farm to move some of the bales, and while burrowing underneath, the stack began to sway. When endeavouring to jump clear, his legs became caught in some barbed wire and the stack fell on top of him. His plight was discovered by Mr. D. H. Gregory, a neighbour, who took his dog Girly, a Great Dane-mastiff cross dog, to search for Mr. Gabriel. Girly picked up the scent and found him with his legs pinned across a log of wood and completely covered with loose straw. He had been buried under the stack for 50 hours, and had lost all count of time. He was taken to the Auckland Hospital, where he died early on the morning of August 3rd.

## NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

### The Gothard Road

From "Auto," the official review of the Swiss Automobile Club, we quote the following: "A hundred years ago, the inhabitants of Uri decided to replace the old mule track over the Gothard with a carriageable road 16½ to 20 feet wide. They were well aware of the importance of the pass, and the future was to prove them right to an extent they little dreamt of at the time. Traffic over the Gothard continued to increase and, after the first World War, it developed at

an extraordinary rate. This development necessitated repairs and alterations which gradually improved the road. But the most difficult and wildest part on the north slopes of the Gothard, the Schodlenen Gorge, had been left untouched and traffic had to make do with a road originally constructed for coaches. The following figures will give an idea of the traffic that had to pass through this narrow bottleneck. In the summer of 1953, an average of 3000 motor vehicles was counted over 12-hour periods (7 a.m. to 7 p.m.) on weekdays, only during the month of August. Last summer on August 4th the average worked out at 3708 vehicles for the same period of time, which is 23.5 per cent. more than the previous year. Foreign vehicles are the most numerous (53 per cent.), which confirms the international importance of this Alpine pass.

This defect is now being made good; so far approximately two-thirds of the Schoellenen has already been modernised and opened up to traffic, and next year motorists will find their patience rewarded with a fast modern road taking them through the romantic gorges separating Goeschenen from Andermatt.

It has been possible to follow the old road, naturally making the necessary improvements, except for a section about five-eighths of a mile long, to the north of the Trou d'Uri, where an entirely new road had to be constructed. Some 50 yards below the Trou d'Uri it will branch off from the old road and cross the Reuss Gorges over a new bridge. The gradient never exceeds 9.3 per cent. and is 8 per cent. on the average. The effective width of the new road is just over 20 feet on the straight stretches. In addition to this there is a bank 1ft 7½in wide on the valley side and a space of the same width on the mountain side, sometimes used as a covered ditch for drainage purposes."

### Inauguration of the First Swiss "Motel"

"Motels," a combination of hotel accommodation and a garage, are well known to the American public. Indeed, the number of parks which,

under the name of "motel" group together a certain number of cabins for individual use, already exceeds 50,000 in the United States. Although the conditions for running such "motels" are different in Switzerland, an enterprising Swiss, on his return from a visit to America, has had the idea of founding a first group of such cabins. This new "motel" has just been inaugurated near Interlaken where, in a charming situation, on the banks of the Aare River, some twenty cabins have been established. Although American in origin, this Swiss "motel" has been realised in accordance with European ideas, and it is thought that with the prodigious development of motorised tourism, it should prove successful and thus make it possible for this experiment to be renewed in the vicinity of other Swiss towns.

#### Swiss Textile Firm Creates a New Kind of Fabric

On the 18th of June, 1955, the firm of Messrs. J. G. Nef Ltd., at Herisau, was able to celebrate the 150th anniversary of its foundation. This important Swiss textile firm exports 80 per cent. of its production throughout the entire world. Its manufacturing programme, which comprises all the specialties of the textile production of Eastern Switzerland, has just been completed on the occasion of this jubilee, by the creation of a new fabric which is unique of its kind. This material, called "Disciplined," although manufactured from cotton, possesses both the appearance and feel of silk.

#### Swiss Watches are Strong

The most varied tests have been imagined in order to prove the legendary resistance offered by Swiss watches to any kind of damage. Following upon a test which consisted of a chronometer crossing the Atlantic under water, a demonstration intended to prove the anti-shock qualities of resistance of Swiss watches, took place recently in Japan. Thrown from a helicopter, at a height thirty metres above ground, three watches bounced upon the pavement of a busy street in Osaka. The two watches which were found were keeping perfect time. As for the third, it is thought that a spectator took it away, as a souvenir!

#### A Gift from Churchill the Painter

Sir Winston Churchill recently gave one of the pictures he painted during the last few years to his paint supplier, Willy Say, at Urdorf, a small village in the canton of Zurich.

#### Raymond Lambert to Attempt the Ganesh Himal

It is announced that the Swiss alpinist, Raymond Lambert, is to lead a Franco-Swiss expedition to the Ganesh Himal, a 23,000-foot peak in Western Nepal. The attempt will be made next autumn and the expedition comprises six to nine members, including the French climber Claude Kogan, who, last year, reached the summit of the Cho Qyu, a 24,500-foot peak north-west of Everest.

#### Swiss Factories

The number of factories in Switzerland is steadily on the increase, thus testifying to the progressive industrialisation of the country. At the end of June, 1955, their number had increased by 47 since 1954, bringing the total to 11,682 plants. Moreover, no fewer than 692 new factories are now in the course of construction.

#### World Tourist Congress at Lausanne

The twenty-fifth General Assembly of the American Association of Travelling Agencies "ASTA" is to be held in Lausanne, from October 9th to 16th. Going beyond the purely American cadre, as this Association groups together tourist organisations in the whole world, the Assembly will bring together more than 1500 delegates.

#### The Alpine Museum Celebrates its Fiftieth Anniversary

The Swiss Alpine Club has just celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Alpine Museum at Berne. This museum is unique of its kind. Only those of Turin and Munich resemble it in any way. It displays everything connected either directly or indirectly with the Alps: people and things, ways and customs, maps, geology, fauna and flora, climate, etc.

#### The Aar Gorges Lit Up

Electric light has just been installed in the Aar gorges, near Meiringen, Bernese Oberland. These gorges, which are about a mile long and have for some sixty years been made accessible to the public by means of tunnels and foot bridges, will now be able to be visited by night, at least the most interesting sections.

#### Swiss Timber

Timber is one of the rare raw materials possessed by Switzerland, and its exploitation con-

stitutes an appreciable source of revenue for the Alpine and agricultural populations. According to Swiss forestry statistics, the volume of timber obtained from the forests amounted to 2,500,000 cubic metres in 1953, and the yield from this exploitation attained no less than 158,000,000 francs. It should be stated, however, that it is the Cantons and, more especially, the Communes which own most of the wooded surface in Switzerland.

#### **"Swissair" Activities During the First Six Months of 1955**

Pursuing its favourable expansion, "Swissair" activities have developed in a remarkable fashion during the first half of 1955, during which period the company carried more than a quarter of a million passengers. This is the first time that such a figure has been attained and thus, the Swiss Company for Air Navigation has carried as many passengers over its network of 50,000 kilometres as it did during the whole of 1951.

#### **At the Lausanne National Autumn Fair: September 10th to 25th, 1955**

The national dog show, which will be held on Sunday, September 18th, this year, will be an added attraction to the thirty-sixth Swiss Comptoir.

More than 400 dogs with their pedigrees entered in the Swiss pedigree book and representing some 70 different breeds, are registered. The eight judges, chosen for their experience of international competitions, will have to select for each breed the dogs meriting the classifications "Excellent," "Very good," or "Good." Two additional attractions are planned: first of all, a magnificent parade of the prize-winners, and secondly, an interesting demonstration showing the training of dogs. In addition, the Swiss Kennel Club will be holding in a special hall aptitude tests for poodles of all types: Lion, Kerry Blue, Zazou, etc.

#### **Football Match Between the Swiss National Team and the Hungarian Team**

The big international football match between the Swiss national team and the amazing Hungarian team which made such a vivid impression on spectators during the 1954 world championships in Switzerland will be taking place in Lausanne on September 17th. Although this match is being held at the beginning of the season, when the players have not yet had time to reach the top of their form, it promises to be an exciting one. The Swiss traditionally put up a "good fight" when they are faced with players better than themselves, and this will add to the attraction of seeing such fine players as the Magyars (Kocsis, Puskas, Hidegkuti and others).

#### **Festival of Swiss Customs and Costumes at Unspunnen**

A hundred and fifty years ago, the shepherds of Switzerland met on the meadows of Unspunnen, near Interlaken, to hold the first mountain "Olympics." The aim of the organizers was to draw the attention of other peoples to the country, its customs and inhabitants, and above all to strengthen the national spirit. It was a festival in the grand style which, for Switzerland, has kept all its significance. In her "Memoirs," Madame Vigee-Lebrun, who attended the second festival in 1808 in the company of Madame de Stael, describes it with great feeling. "This festival," she said, "showed me what life really is." In order to celebrate the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the first festival, this year's event will also be held at Unspunnen-Interlaken from September 3rd to 5th at the same time as the National Festival of Swiss Costumes.

The review "Costumes and Customs" has just devoted its second number to this event. It contains very interesting articles on flag waving, yodelling, the Alpine horn, wrestling as practised by Swiss shepherds, and stone throwing. It also includes the programme of the anniversary celebrations at Unspunnen, from which we note: Saturday, September 3rd, in the afternoon, folk dances, and in the evening, night festival; Sunday, 4th, in the morning, procession; in the afternoon, competitions, dances and yodelling; and in the evening a William Tell pageant in the open air.

#### **The Vineharvesting Festival at Neuchatel, October 2nd, 1955**

There are numerous festivals in Switzerland connected with the growing and harvesting of the vine, several of them dating very far back in time and keeping a very distinct character of their own. After the Winegrowers' Festival at Vevey, which has just met with such success, the Vineharvesting Festival at Neuchatel will be presenting, on the first Sunday in October, a traditional celebration the fame of whose splendour has spread far beyond the frontiers of the country. During two whole days, the town of Neuchatel will be in a festive mood. Everyone joins in. People come flocking in from the country. There is dancing everywhere, in the streets, in the public squares and even in and out of the stately pillars of the Town Hall. The Collegiate Church, the Castle, the Market Hall, as well as the main monuments are illuminated and decorated with flags. Neuchatel is gay with joyful songs and cascades of flowers. Colourful banners displayed everywhere and graceful farandoles contribute to the carnival atmosphere which culminates in wild battles of confetti, leaving the streets and lawns of the city ankle-deep in a multi-coloured carpet.

The high-spot of the Neuchatel Festival—and it is also the climax of the vineharvesting in Switzerland—is the traditional vineharvesting procession, which will be taking place this year at 3 p.m. on Sunday, October 2nd, with its magnificent floats decorated with brightly coloured flowers, with its mobile scenes where fantasy is combined with the grace and charm of the models and dancers, with its many comic groups which cause carnival laughter and gaiety along the whole route, with its numerous orchestras and bands, its dancing couples, its groups of laughing children delighted to be among the 1200 performers in this brilliant parade.

### Storks for Switzerland

In November, 1952, Air France transported young swallows over the Geneva-Casablanca air route, the birds being too young to migrate and yet unable to face the cold of winter in Switzerland. This year, Air France has undertaken "Operation Stork" for Switzerland.

In the last twenty years, the annual migration of storks to Switzerland has become extremely scanty. The idea has therefore been conceived of bringing young storks to Switzerland from Algeria, in the hope that the second generation would return to this country the following year after wintering in warmer climes.

An "Air France" Constellation plane has therefore brought 30 storks to Switzerland this summer—the birds being aged 4 to 7 weeks and captured at Mirabeau, in Kabylia. From Geneva Airport, the storks were taken to nests already prepared for each couple at Zurich and Solothurn.

The first phase of Operation Stork has succeeded. Let us hope that these lovely birds will condescend to bring up their families there.

### NEW PROCEDURE—RE-ENTRY PERMITS

Any person intending to leave New Zealand and wishing to re-enter should read the following very carefully.

A **new procedure** has been introduced for procuring a Re-entry Permit. Any person requiring such a Permit should procure a special Application Form from their local Collector of Customs, **complete it and forward it together with their PASSPORT and TWO IDENTIFICATION PHOTOGRAPHS TO:—**

The Secretary of Labour,  
Department of Labour and Employment,  
P.O. Box 6310, TE ARO,  
WELLINGTON.

**IT IS ESSENTIAL** that such application should be made **WELL IN ADVANCE**, particularly in the case of a person living in a country district where time for mailing has to be taken into consideration.

### NOTICE CONCERNING SWISS CALENDARS FOR 1956

To enable our compatriots to procure a pictorial calendar from Switzerland for 1956, the Consulate is prepared to pass a collective order. Applicants are asked to write to the Swiss Consulate, P.O. Box 386, Wellington, C.1, and to remit at the same time the amount in question. The following calendars are offered:—

- (a) THE ALPINE CALENDAR, 1956 (Stehli), price 10/-. Size 11½ in. x 11in., with twelve monthly sheets, each showing a beautiful Swiss scene in natural colour lithography. This calendar is also published in German under the title "Berge und Taeler der Schweiz."
- (b) SWITZERLAND, 1956 (Novos), price 10/-. This calendar can also be had in German, "Die Schweiz." It contains 125 sheets of photographic views.

Orders for these calendars will be received until October 1st.

For a certain reason the orders have to be limited to one or two calendars.

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CORRESPONDENCE: Please address to the  
Secretary,

Mr. E. Gilgen,

P.O. Box 2875, Auckland, C.1.