

The referendum and initiative in Switzerland's electoral law

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THE REFERENDUM AND INITIATIVE IN SWITZERLAND'S ELECTORAL LAW

(A timely dialogue to the general election in New Zealand.)

In Switzerland's Constitution the Referendum and the initiative are undoubtedly the greatest factors in safeguarding her democracy. It gives the ordinary citizen the power to challenge any new law and force the Government to bring before the people an amendment to, or revocation of any existing law at any time. Thirty thousand signatures are needed for a referendum on something that is just being passed in Parliament, where as it needs 50,000 signatures for the initiative, to demand an amendment to an existing law, or bring about a new law.

The power of the referendum and initiative is two-fold, because it not only gives the voter the right to decide, but what is probably more important, it has a steadying effect on the politicians. Their approach to a problem is much more sober and gives consideration to the voter's point of view, avoiding extremes in any direction. Party politics becomes less important and quite frequently the people ignore the party altogether and vote for the man they consider to be the best man for the job. This explains the fact that amongst the collegium of the seven highest ministers the Bundesrat, who each in turn holds the *præsidium* for one year, are representatives of every major party. Thus Switzerland's democracy deserves justly the regulation of being the only ideal democracy, because the referendum and initiative are the safety valve to prevent democracy from deteriorating into a party dictatorship.

—W.R.

The Committee of the Swiss Society extends to all members our best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. —A.B.

QUESTION AND ANSWER COLUMN

"Correspondent" asks: What is the best and cheapest way of airmail deliveries to Switzerland?

Answer: Air-letters to Switzerland cost eightpence (you can buy those air-letter forms by the dozen in the Post Office very cheap). Ordinary airmail letter up to $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. costs one shilling and ninepence. Second-class airmail (small packages and Christmas cards) cost one shilling for each $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

—A.B.

Forward your questions on any subject to the Secretary. If he does not know the answer, he will know where to get it for you. You may write under a *nom-de-plume* and remain anonymous.

INTENDING IMMIGRANT

Swiss Girl, single, 28 years old, wishes to settle in New Zealand. Speaks and writes fluently German and French and has reasonable knowledge of English, Italian and Spanish. She is commercially trained and has absolved course in home science and dressmaking. She would also consider domestic employment, is adaptable and would do her utmost in whatever position that may be offered to her.

Anyone interested, please write to the Secretary.

—A.B.

Two Members of the Wellington Swiss Club Wed

A wedding of much interest was solemnised in Wellington recently when Christine Schmidhauser married Fred Fluhler.

The bride wore a very lovely gown of off-white embossed brocade, ballerina length and featuring a full skirt and short jacket to match. A small hat of the same material held her beautifully embroidered veil and she carried a bouquet of white roses and lily of the valley. She was attended by Miss Lotti Hess, who made a most attractive bridesmaid in a chiffon gown in a delicate shade of lilac and carried a bouquet of roses and carnations to tone.

After the wedding a reception was held at the future home of the young couple, and in the evening the guests returned to enjoy dancing and typical Swiss music.

Swiss Recipes

SAUCE NORMANDE

The "queen" of sauces.

In a small saucepan mix together 2 egg yolks, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. butter, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. thick cream and a little salt. Put over very low heat and beat with egg whisk. The butter melts—look out, now it has melted! Heat for a further minute and the most delicate of all sauces is ready.

"HYPOKRAS"

(A favourite Christmas drink from Basle)

One ounce broken up cinnamon sticks, 20 cloves, a small knife tip of nutmeg and the thinly peeled rind of a lemon; these ingredients are soaked in one-third of a pint of best high-grade alcohol (obtainable from chemist). Let stand for two days. Then filter this essence, add 2 lbs. of cube sugar (loaf sugar, if obtainable) and dissolve the lot in a little less than a gallon (8 liter) of dry, red table wine. This drink improves if it can be left standing when bottled for a week or two. (Cinnamon sticks are available from Harris' Delicatessen, Hamilton.)

—Mrs. H.B.

Send your favourite recipe to the secretary.