

News of the colony

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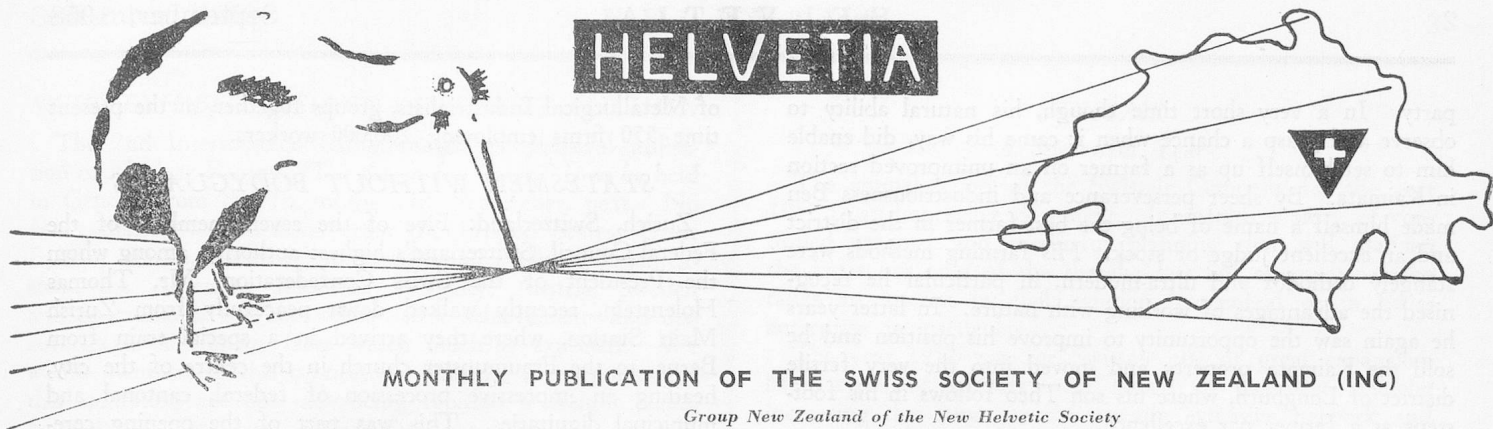
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SAFFA

WOMEN OF SWITZERLAND—THEIR LIFE, THEIR WORK

The SAFFA is an exhibition devoted to the life and activities of Swiss women. It is exclusively the work of women, and its entire aim is to show the part played by women in the national community. An important section of the SAFFA will illustrate the Swiss woman's contribution towards the economic development of the country.

There are 650,000 women in Switzerland who take part directly in the economic activity of this land. Nearly 200,000 of these women are married, widowed or divorced, and one-third of them have one or more children who are minors.

In Switzerland, as elsewhere, the absence of the mother from the home during the greater part of the day raises serious problems. The concurrent servitudes—of the job, the household and the education of the children—imply a danger of overwork and of tension which is prejudicial to family happiness. As for the children, the fact that the mother has an outside job has a bad influence on their upbringing. The inadequacy of the husband's wage or salary is one of the principal reasons which incite so many mothers to take on an outside job.

But, although so many women have to face an extenuating task and are obliged to work for some eighty to ninety hours per week, there are others, who are childless or whose children are already grown up, who have not got enough to do. Household chores do not take up all their time, and they would like to accomplish something useful. In this connection, more thought should be given to the establishment of part-time work—this also for those mothers who have small children. They could, moreover, help to lighten the burden of nurses in hospitals, or that of the mothers who have to go out to their jobs. There are still some very fine initiatives open to feminine solidarity.

If, however, both the number of women who have jobs and the number of jobs that are now open to them are constantly on the increase—in Switzerland as well as elsewhere in the industrial countries—the fact remains that, for equal work, their remuneration is still inferior to that of the men. This social injustice is universal, but very difficult to extirpate. This is not due so much to the fact that they do not always have the same opportunities for courses of study and for technical

training as the men, but because, as a rule, they do not make use of them to the same extent as the men do. There still exists the prejudice, which is far too widespread, that it is not "worth while" for a girl to attend a high school or to serve an apprenticeship. No error could be greater, however, than that of considering a trade or profession as being a mere "side-line," just something to do whilst waiting for marriage—which may never take place. The girl who has not served an apprenticeship or gone in for higher studies finds her activities limited, right from the start, to unskilled labour and to work of a subordinate kind; and it is always unskilled labour which is the first to suffer from the consequences of economic depressions. The fact should also be borne in mind that a married woman, also, may be obliged one day, as a result of unforeseen circumstances, to go back to work. It will be very much easier for her to find a job if she has had some proper training.

It is only to that degree to which women, while not underestimating domestic work, will adopt a more positive attitude towards their chosen trade or profession, that it will prove possible to do away with those barriers and discriminations which still exist. It is to these problems that the SAFFA will strive to draw the attention of women—and also of men. Such problems being of a universal character, it would be desirable if similar exhibitions were to throw light on them in all other countries, too.

—By Theo Chopard.



News of the Colony

OBITUARY

When I landed in Wellington 19 years ago, Mr. B. B. Zurcher from Longburn, Palmerston North, was the first Swiss I met in New Zealand. Leaving the Wanganella, he took a fatherly charge of me and gave me a lot of well-meaning advice of what and what not to do. Of course every new arrival in a strange country is very grateful to accept advice, especially when it comes from somebody who himself made good, and worked himself into a position to give advice.

Ben Zurcher, as the people used to call him, came to New Zealand as a lad of twenty, 65 years ago. He settled first in the Inglewood district, working in the bush with a surveyor

party. In a very short time though, his natural ability to observe and grasp a chance when it came his way, did enable him to set himself up as a farmer on an unimproved section in Kaimata. By sheer perseverance and industriousness Ben made himself a name of being the best farmer in the district and an excellent judge of stock. His farming methods were stangely orthodox and ultra-modern, in particular he recognised the advantages of working with nature. In latter years he again saw the opportunity to improve his position and he sold the Kaimata property and moved into the very fertile district of Longburn, where his son Theo follows in his footsteps as a farmer par excellence.

Mr. Zurcher's death follows only a few months after the death of his wife whom he dearly loved and sadly missed. He contributed his success in life very largely to her credit. The marriage was actually a chance encounter, which happened on board ship, when he came back from Switzerland from a holiday, and proved to be a very happy one. Two sons and 3 daughters were the result of it of whom one son and one daughter died in younger years leaving Mr. Theo Zurcher, Longburn, Mrs. V. Wickham, Inglewood and Miss B. Zurcher, Longburn.

In the last few years Mr. Zurcher was very interested in the Taranaki Swiss Club movement. He patronised their functions regularly and donated a cup to be competed for annually in some Swiss sport. The Swiss people will miss this popular old man; the Swiss Society also is losing another one of its members since foundation time 21 years ago. We will cherish the memory of friendship. From a friend. —W.R.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Hamilton Swiss Club:

The Hamilton Swiss Club is holding the regular monthly evening every third Sunday in the Riverlea Cabaret, Hamilton. Next evening: 21st September. All welcome.

Special Orchestra for this function and Spanferkel supper. Half price for ladies bringing a plate. Bring and Buy postponed.

Auckland Swiss Club:

Just a reminder to all our Swiss friends in Auckland.

Don't forget that the Auckland Swiss Club holds its monthly Social at the Epiphany Church Hall, Gundry St., Newton, on the first Tuesday in the month. Come along and spend an enjoyable evening among friends. Everybody is made most welcome.



News from Switzerland

THE SWISS MACHINERY MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

The Swiss Society of Machine Manufacturers recalled, on the occasion of its last General Assembly, the fact that it had been founded three-quarters of a century ago. In his report, the President drew attention to the fact that Swiss exports of machinery, vehicles and apparatuses had increased still further in 1957, and had surpassed the sum of two thousand million Swiss francs (USA \$466,200,000). For some months past, however, there has been a decline in new orders. There would not appear to be any reason for an exaggerated pessimism. The Swiss Society of Manufacturers and the Swiss Employers' Association of Machine Manufacturers and

of Metallurgical Industrialists, groups together, at the present time 550 firms employing 200,000 workers.

STATESMEN WITHOUT BODYGUARDS

Zurich, Switzerland: Five of the seven members of the Federal Council, Switzerland's highest authority, among whom the President of the Swiss Confederation, Mr. Thomas Holenstein, recently walked down peacefully from Zurich Main Station, where they arrived in a special train from Berne, to the Fraumunster church in the centre of the city, heading an impressive procession of federal, cantonal and municipal dignitaries. This was part of the opening ceremonies of SAFFA, the Second National Exhibition "Women of Switzerland, Their Life, Their Work," which was inaugurated in Zurich on July 17 and will last till September 15. Many a visiting tourist was overwhelmed by the thoroughly democratic appearance of these leading Swiss statesmen walking through the streets of the city without bodyguards or police escort whatsoever. The President received a warm applause from the public, and flowers were showered on him and his cabinet members from the windows.

MOTOR CARS AT THE DISPOSAL OF SWISS

RAILWAY SEASON-TICKET HOLDERS

For some time past, the Swiss Federal Railways have arranged, in certain towns, for motor cars to be available for the use of travellers who have season tickets. These cars, which are of current makes, are hired out, without a chauffeur, at reduced rates by licensed garages and are kept at the disposal of would-be renters at the stations. At the present time, this arrangement is in force in Basle, Berne, Bienne, Geneva, Lucerne, St. Gall and Zurich.

NEW SUCCESS OF SWISS MOVING PICTURES PRODUCTION

Even if Switzerland produces only very few feature films, it makes up for this by shooting a great number of documentary and scientific pictures, of which several have received awards this year. Thus "Rendez-vous avec Svea," a film in colour devoted to the Loetschberg Line (which connects Berne with the big Simplon artery) obtained the First Prize awarded by the Congress of Publicity Films, which took place in Brussels.

THE SWISS TOPOGRAPHICAL SERVICE IN HONOUR

The United States have just asked the Swiss Topographical Service to plot a map of Mount McKinley, the highest point in North America. In an official communication, the Department of Commerce, in Washington, states that this work, in which the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research will also collaborate, has been entrusted to the Swiss institution, because of the great experience it possesses in regard to the topography of mountainous massifs. An exhibition which has just been opened in the capital of the United States shows the various degrees of technique developed and used in Switzerland. Prepared by experts from the Swiss Federal Military Department, one finds there the oldest national geographical map. Switzerland, which enjoys the reputation of being the country possessing the best topography in the world and of being the best mapped, has a cartographic history, which goes back to the 15th century.