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Embassy Of Switzerland

CANBERRA, February 14, 1963

Dear Swiss compatriots in New Zealand,

On January 23, I presented to His Excellency the Governor-General of New Zealand the credentials through which the Swiss Federal Council has appointed me as Ambassador to New Zealand.

I am already Ambassador in Australia, and will continue to reside in Canberra with the intention of visiting New Zealand as often as possible. This appointment has been made in recognition by the Swiss Government and people of the growing importance of New Zealand for the world in general, and for Switzerland in particular. It is also due to the fact that the world has become smaller and that New Zealand is today—in the jet plane age—much closer to our homeland than it was only a few years ago, as some of you have experienced recently when visiting Switzerland.

After completion of formalities in Wellington, I paid a short but interesting visit to the North Island under the competent and amiable guidance of Dr. Rossetti. I was deeply impressed by the beauty of the countryside, its rich farmlands and in particular, by the flourishing Swiss communities whose friendly and sympathetic representatives I had the pleasure of meeting on different occasions. From what I have seen and from what I have been told, I got the conviction that Switzerland can be justly proud of its sons and daughters who have sought a new existence so far away from home and who have done so well in their new homeland.

As to Switzerland itself, you may be interested to hear that its mountains, valleys and plains are lying at the present time under a deep cover of snow and ice such as has not been seen for many years. Most of our lakes are frozen over, to the delight of the skaters, young and old.

This does not mean, however, that the country is asleep in hibernation—on the contrary, it is bristling with activity and has attained in the last few years a degree of industrial development and expansion which in the eyes of many leaders has reached alarming proportions. For instance, labour has been so short in Switzerland, a country of five million, that we had to increase its labour force by over 65,000 foreign workers recruited from Italy, Spain, Greece and even Turkey. The Swiss Government, together with Swiss banking and industry, is trying to cut down this over-expansion to reasonable proportions.

But as a whole, the country lives of course in a happy prosperity and at peace with the outside world as well as within itself. In fact, as I may point