

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 30 (1967)
Heft: [8]

Vorwort: "Helvetia"
Autor: Bischof, K.E.

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“HELVETIA”

IN A WORLD where the colour of the skin can stamp you as an enemy, political aspirations cause uncounted upheavals and the starvation of millions is a daily occurrence, there still exists a country that is a haven of peace and, in addition, is admired throughout the world for its humanitarian deeds. This reputation of Switzerland has not been gained without struggles, deep devotion and self-sacrifices of its people. Men like Tell, Dunnant and Pestalozzi are but the shining examples of the people's will to help mankind. We Swiss have always cherished the right to freedom of speech and, indeed, in every sphere of life, and have in the past clearly shown that we are prepared to give our life to defend this right; and so we will in the future, should the need arise. But this right also carries a responsibility with it. We cannot be bearers of the truth, banner-carriers of a freedom-loving country if we are not prepared to shape our own lives accordingly. All too often do we expect our neighbour to accept our viewpoint without due regard to his own opinion. Should we not strive harder in the way of giving rather than receiving? We can only make a better world by giving freely of those gifts we have received from God, although they may be small in themselves. It could simply be a good word, a smile, a forgiving gesture or a token of sympathy.

As your newly elected president of the Swiss Society I have the privilege of a first-class committee. It is our desire to foster a better understanding among all members. To this end we hopefully rely on each one of you. If we all realise the great inheritance we share and the need to carry it into the future we cannot but make the world around us a better one. I am firmly convinced that every one of us has his or her special characteristics and gifts. We do not want a uniform spirit, but we do anticipate that each one of us realises that only with a certain amount of self-sacrifice can we as individuals assist in shaping a better world and a better understanding amongst members. In this way we can best repay our gratitude to our chosen, beautiful New Zealand. I realise the great honour which you have bestowed on me, and assure you that I will do my utmost to assist you as best I can.

Your President,
K. E. Bischof.