

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 62 (1996)
Heft: [3]

Vorwort: Editorial
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EDITORIAL

The recent re-shuffling of the New Zealand Cabinet makes you reflect on the differences between the Swiss system of government and that of New Zealand. Whilst in Switzerland we have 7 Federal Councillors or Ministers who each has control over one department, New Zealand has 24 Ministers, of whom, strangely enough, 4 are not even part of the Cabinet. These 24 Ministers control a staggering 75 different ministries, give or take a few. The 7 departments in the Swiss system are clear cut and straight forward: Economy, Justice and Police, Interior, Foreign Affairs, Transport and Power, Finance and finally Defence). In the New Zealand system, some of the ministries admittedly make good sense, just as in Switzerland: Foreign Affairs and Trade, Finance, Justice, Defence, Police, Transport, Internal Affairs. Others such as Health, Energy, Agriculture, Education, Tourism, Commerce, Industry, Customs and Cultural Affairs can still find some justification. But then you find a whole group of ministries which are doubling-up with the main bunch. If you have a Minister of Finance, why do you need a Minister of Revenue as well? (probably to ensure that no one escapes the double-taxation through direct and indirect taxes). Since we already have a Minister for Foreign

Affairs and Trade, why do we need also a Minister of Pacific Islands and a Minister for Trade Negotiations? There is a Minister of Transport, but there is also a Minister of Railways. Maybe even New Zealanders no longer consider the Railways as a mode of transport but something that keeps running off the tracks. Perhaps someone should suggest to the Prime Minister to create a ministry of Derailment. With so many trains leaving the tracks, that ministry might well become the busiest of the lot! In Switzerland we have a department called Justice and Police since these two functions go hand in hand. But not so in New Zealand. Here we have not only 2 separate ministries, but on top of this we also have a different Minister again in charge of the Serious Fraud Office and a fourth Minister for Courts. Four ministers to run what should be only one department and all pulling in different directions, no wonder our pampered assassins, robbers, rapists, muggers, burglars and assorted white collar criminals get away with murder. We have a formidable and somewhat intimidating Minister of Health. So what is the function of the Minister of Crown Health Enterprises? To keep an eye on the other minister? But is this not supposed to be the role of the Opposition? Would it not be better to have no ministers of Health at all rather than two who cancel one another

out? The Minister of Internal Affairs has a whole range of colleagues biting into his apple. The poor guy has to cope with 12811 different ministers: Labour, Environment, Employment, Local Government, Housing, Social Welfare, Consumer Affairs, State, Immigration and State Services (which is apparently different from the ministry of State). We have a perfectly capable Minister of Broadcasting. So what on earth is the Minister Responsible for Radio New Zealand Ltd. there for? And then there is the Minister for Sport, Fitness and Leisure (We all know that ministers do not work very hard, but a Minister for Leisure is really advertising this fact a bit too bluntly!) And how about the Minister of Fisheries and the silliest title of them all, the Minister for Racing. Should Switzerland follow New Zealand's lead and create a Minister for Jassen or Kegeln or have a Federal Councillor for Hornussen? This is lunacy. But the Kiwis are quite serious about their ministry for Racing. Do not be surprised if in the next Cabinet there might be a Minister for Casinos and perhaps even one for Lotto. Anything is possible when it comes to dishing out at taxpayers expense some cosy and well paid government jobs. Further down the line there are these particular ministries which seem to have no clear purpose whatsoever: ministry of Corrections (what on earth is that), ministry for Accident Rehabilitation and Compensation Insurance (quite a mouthful), ministry for State Owned Enterprises, ministry of Research, Science and Technology fighting against the ministry for Crown Research Institutes, the ministry of Survey and Land Information which seems to have nothing to do with the

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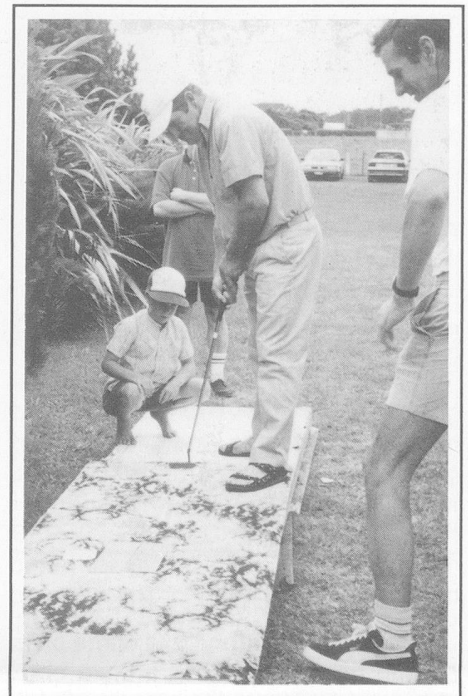
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ministry of Lands. Then there is a ministry for Information Technology (this is not even good English) and a ministry of Business Development. We wonder if the Ministers who are supposed to run these weird ministries really know themselves what these ministries are there for and what they are supposed to be achieving. Then there are still all the so called Ministers "in Charge of": War Pensions, Audit Department, Public Trust Office, Government Superannuation Fund Department, Education Review Office (different from the Education Dept.), National Library (yes we have a Minister for Books), Valuation Department and the most peculiar one: the ministry in Charge of Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations. And can anyone tell us what on earth the Minister Responsible for Contact Energy Ltd is really there for? And what does the Minister of Forestry do? Count trees? We have a Minister of Defence but we also have the luxury of a Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control and another Minister again of Civil Defence. Considering this labyrinth of interwoven, overlapping ministries, it should not come as a surprise that we also need a Minister of Communications and a Minister of Statistics. Since our Government has already gone totally made in its frenzy of creating more and more ministries, here are a few more we could through in for good measure: For instance, there is a Minister of Maori Affairs, but why

isn't there one for Chinese or Dutch Affairs (after all these groups are just as numerous as the Maoris). Then there is a Minister for Senior Citizens and one for Youth Affairs. So what about a Minister for the Middle-Aged? And finally we have a Minister for Women's Affairs but not one for Men's Affairs which is of course straight out discrimination, particularly when you consider that in these modern times of equal rights, it is really the men who need help more often than the women. As you can see, New Zealand's cabinet is such a complex affair, no minister has stayed there long enough to fully grasp its intricacies. If our Ministers find it hard to make out the workings of their own Cabinet, how can we expect them to handle the complexities of running our country? Good question.

NEW JOB FOR SWISS ARMY

As from last January, one of the duties of the new Swiss army is to assist the Swiss border patrols in their job of controlling the influx of refugees and illegal immigrants. As these functions are primarily of a civil nature, every effort has been made to avoid any misunderstandings or clashes with the civil authorities. The duties of the new Swiss army have now been clearly defined. Apart from its main mission to defend the country and to promote peace, the army must now also assist civil authorities in all cases of catastrophes, rioting and now also in controlling and assisting in cases of sudden influxes of refugees.



SPECTACULAR EXPLOSION

In Renens near Lausanne, an explosion occurred in this house. The explosion totally destroyed the inside of the house and ripped out one side of the building. Three people who were in the upstairs flat were thrown out into the street and miraculously only suffered minor injuries. How the house managed to remain upright on its foundations is also a miracle.

NOTE TO SECRETARIES

Next issue of the Helvetia magazine: MAY 1996. All contributions must be in by 15 April. Many thanks for your kind cooperation.

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OBTAINING A NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT RESIDENCE PERMIT OR A WORK PERMIT HAS BECOME MUCH MORE DIFFICULT SINCE THE IMMIGRATION POLICY CHANGES INTRODUCED BY THE GOVERNMENT IN NOVEMBER OF 1995.

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