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HELVETIA

Monthly Publication
of the Swiss Benevolent Society
in New Zealand.



AUCKLAND, 1st October 1935.

No. 1

SWISS IN NEW ZEALAND

JOIN THE

SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.



WHY A BENEVOLENT SOCIETY?

For a long time it has been felt that a closer contact should be obtained among the Swiss people living in New Zealand, but the great distances between the settlements made it very difficult to achieve this contact. The forming of a club was useless as club activity could never have been developed. After careful consideration and as a result of many suggestions from all parts, we have come to the decision of forming a Society which will have as its aim a benevolent character, because we know by experience that the benevolent idea appeals to most of the Swiss people.

By making the annual subscription for members very low, we hope to have every Swiss living in New Zealand as a member, and by issuing a monthly publication, we hope to form a close contact among our country people. The surplus of the subscription which is not used for the issuing of the publication, will go to a benevolent fund and will help to assist needy people in urgent cases, surely a very just cause and one which should induce every Swiss to give his share to this newly formed society.

The publication which will appear monthly will discuss all problems of interest to Swiss living in New Zealand, furthermore, bring news from Switzerland, and finally give room to every member to express his views on any subject that may be of interest to the Community. We are perfectly sure that after a very short time this publication will prove a most valuable asset among our country people. The Society will be governed in accordance with the 184 other Swiss Benevolent Societies spread all over the World. New Zealand Swiss will not stay behind, but will join in great numbers; 10/- is a very small sum and can be afforded by everybody. We also hope that those who are more fortunate will help the benevolent spirit of the Society by giving higher donations.

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SWISS IN NEW ZEALAND

YOU DO A GOOD TURN BY JOINING THE

SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY IN NEW ZEALAND.

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FOREIGN FUNDS FOR SWITZERLAND

Extract from the Journal of Commerce and Commercial,
New York.

The decision of Swiss banks to allow interest at the rate of one-half of 1 per cent per annum on foreign deposit balances represents a sudden reversal of their previous attitude toward deposits from abroad. During the past three years, Swiss banks have refused to pay interest on such balances and in some instances have even charged foreigners a commission for keeping funds. This policy was based largely on the view that foreign funds subject to withdrawal on demand have endangered the stability of the Swiss currency and banking system, and therefore constituted "bad money".

This reversal of policy reflects two interesting developments in Switzerland in recent months. In the first place, a continuous heavy outflow of funds from the country has materially reduced the cash balances of the Swiss banking institutions. Not desiring to call loans, they have met more recent withdrawals of deposits for transfer abroad through allowing cash on hand to decline and through drawing on balances with the Swiss National Bank. The effort to attract new foreign funds, therefore, shows that the Swiss banks wish to increase their liquidity.

This move would not have been feasible, however, but for the earlier rejection by the Swiss people last June of the proposal to adopt anti-deflationary measures which might well have involved currency devaluation. As long as the threat of monetary tinkering overhung, the Swiss banks had no other alternative but to discourage foreign deposits, for any step in that direction would have led immediately to heavy withdrawals of foreign funds. Since that threat has been removed, the banks feel free to invite an increase in their foreign balances. The mere fact that Swiss bankers have taken this position is a significant sign of strength in the Swiss franc.

The uncertain political situation created by the Ethiopian incident already has caused smaller amounts of foreign capital to seek refuge in Switzerland. Whether this trickle will develop into a stream is as yet uncertain. The offer of the Swiss banks to pay interest on foreign demand deposits, would tend to divert funds which otherwise would seek refuge in the United States, and so may contribute to a diminution of our imports of gold.

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SWISS IN NEW ZEALAND

HE WHO HELPS OTHERS HELPS HIMSELF.

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THE CONQUEST OF OUR ALPS

The love of mountains was virtually unknown in both the ancient and the medieval world. The first alpine peak of any consequence to be climbed took place in 1492, when Charles VII's chamberlain ascended Mont Aiguille near Grenoble. In the course of the centuries that followed various peaks of minor importance were climbed, but it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that a peak of first-class importance was ascended. That peak was Mont Blanc, the monarch of the Alps. The credit of this ascent belongs to a great Genevese patrician, Henri de Saussure.

This gentleman may be described not only as the father of mountaineering, but also as the father of modern geology. As a mountaineer he was first to make a regular practice of climbing mountains every year. His mountaineering journeys took him far afield; to Sicily where he climbed the Etna, to Zermatt where he ascended the Klein Matterhorn, and to Chamonix whence he finally reached the summit of Mont Blanc. He paid his first visit to Chamonix as a young man and came to the conclusion that Mont Blanc could be climbed. He offered a reward for the discovery of a practicable route to the summit, a reward which was claimed many years later by Jacques Balmat, a native of the Chamonix Valley. Balmat was a man of iron constitution and he once spent 3 consecutive nights among the upper-snows of Mont Blanc in the course

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of his explorations. In 1786 Balmat and de Saussure succeeded in the first ascent to the summit.

During the course of the next 60 years mountaineering ascents of some importance were made at long intervals. The Jungfrau was climbed in 1811, the Finsteraarhorn in 1812, etc. Mountaineering as an organised sport commenced only after 1850. In a decade almost all the great alpine peaks were conquered. The noblest of all, the Matterhorn, was one of the last to fall. The story of Ed. Whymper, making his first attempt on the Matterhorn in 1861 and succeeding only in 1865, is well known. On July 13th, he left Zermatt with a party of 7, including the 2 famous Taugwalder guides, father and son. They struck camp next morning at dawn, and were overjoyed to find that the great north-eastern face of the Matterhorn, which had never been seriously attacked, provided an easy route to the snowy shoulder 800 feet below the summit. From the shoulder the difficulties steadily increased, but nothing could arrest the determination of the invaders. At 1.30 p.m., July 14th 1865, the Matterhorn was conquered and the dream of many years had come true. Unfortunately, disaster followed rapidly on the heels of triumph. On the descent, about half-way between the summit and the shoulder, one of the climbers slipped, dragging 3 others with him. The rope broke, and 4 men were hurled four thousand feet below. The two Taugwalders and Whymper escaped.

No sketch, however brief, of the conquest of mountains would be complete without some reference to the mechanical conquest, of which the Jungfrau railway is the most striking example in the world. Guyer-Feller, who conceived this railway, unfortunately did not live to see it completed. It was begun in 1896 and took eighteen years to build. The tunnel is five and three-quarter miles in length, and for the last four miles it is cut out of solid rock, so hard that it requires no lining of masonry. The maximum gradient is 1 in 4. This astonishing feat of engineering, accomplished entirely by Swiss skill and determination, like the world-famous St. Gotthard and Simplon tunnels, reaches its terminus at the Jungfrauoch 11,140 feet above sea-level. A lift brings the tourists up to the luxurious hotel built out on the rock face. Through its balconies and windows, the tourist can admire the most wonderful panorama, whether he be an infirm or a cripple.

A MAGICAL PALACE.

In the valley of Cassarate, above Lugano, stands the castle of Trevano. A mere glimpse at its simple exterior would never suggest to the average spectator that the interior of this dwelling is of overwhelming magnificence. A handful of old people in this southland may tell you of the days when royalty and nobility were guests at night fêtes in the illuminated park, and when the Russian Czar, Alexander III, Queen Victoria of England, Queen Elizabeth of Austria, and the former Empress Eugenie of France, lent brilliance to the spectacle by their presence.

Baron von Derwies, a Russian millionaire and private secretary to the Czar, built the Chateau Trevano between 1860 and 70 at an outlay of some 12 million Francs. He was a lover of music and fine art, and, as such, he maintained in the castle a high-class orchestra and a small theatrical company, so that Trevano soon became a rendez-vous of the musical world. The generous owner died in 1891, and the castle remained unoccupied for almost 20 years.

Its second owner was Louis Lombard, a Frenchman by birth, and an outstanding violinist by profession. His artistic career and phenomenally lucky stock speculation brought him great wealth. On a trip through Switzerland he discovered Trevano, with its luxurious rooms for entertaining, its concert hall with organ, and its perfectly equipped theatre and spacious auditorium. Some of the foremost musicians of his day played at Trevano, and an orchestra under his direction gave over 900 symphony concerts, which were attended by the very elite of Europe's musical and social leaders. Louis Lombard died in 1927, and his property then came into the possession of the Canton of Ticino for a surprisingly small sum. The future of Trevano is again being

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considered, and plans are under way to develop it into a seat of open-air international festival plays.

SWISS NEWS.

Among the outstanding events of Swiss political and economical history of recent times are two votes, which were made necessary by the freely-used institution of the referendum. One took place on the 2nd June of this year; a so-called Krisen-initiative, or something like a new deal system, wished the state to have economical matters in hand and by large borrowing make capital available for a restoration of the depressed economy of the country. The vote was not accepted by the Swiss people. The reason of rejection may be explained by the fact that the borrowing of this large sum would have endangered the Swiss franc, and in this case the proposed measures for salvation would have been annulled. On the other hand, the majority of the Swiss people do still believe, that a too great state interference in economics is detrimental to trade and industries. A third fact is also very important and has been pointed out from the more conservative sides, that borrowing is typically un-Swiss, that is, goes against the tradition of our forefathers to leave a heavy burden of loans.

The second great vote on the 8th September concerned a complete revision of our constitution and was brought forward by the extreme parties of our political structure. The conservative spirit of the majority, and a great majority too, was not willing to go to such kind of experiments. The motion was rejected.

Times are hard, all over the world, the economic balance is swinging wildly round, and Switzerland is naturally affected just the same as any other country because Swiss economic features are very closely linked with World affairs through our export industries and the tourist traffic. In moments of hardships, there are always elements who think that they have the way for a great solution, if given the necessary power. However, unfortunately their systems do mostly not stand a serious test, and it is therefore pleasing to have an opportunity to consult the public opinion, an opportunity afforded by the referendum and vote.

NEWS IN BRIEF.

The case Jacob, known as the Basle Kidnapping affair, will shortly be dealt with by an International Arbitration Court, the judges having been appointed by Switzerland and Germany.

On the 26th. of this year, the election of the National Council and Council of State will take place in Switzerland — their term of four years coming to an end.

Our countryman, Sir Arnold Theiler, the greatest veterinary surgeon of to-day, has returned to South Africa to complete some of his scientific researches. Sir Arnold represented Switzerland at the Veterinary Congress in New York, and it will be remembered by most of the Swiss in New Zealand that he visited this country in November of last year. After a short stay in Australia, he returned to South Africa where the Swiss Colony gave him a great reception in honour of the Gold Medal received from the British Agricultural Society.

Admiral Emil Belart, the highest commander of the Brazilian Navy, and a native of Brugg, Switzerland, died recently at the age of 70 in Rio, Brazil.

The readers who are lucky enough to possess a short-wave wireless set, will be interested to know that on every first Monday of each month, official news from Switzerland will be broadcast from the League of Nations Station, Prangins, wave lengths H.B.L. 31.27 m, at midnight, Swiss time.

The Federal Council of Switzerland has charged the Police Department of the Kanton of Tessin to arrest the publishers and to close the office of the Adula Newspaper in Bellinzona; their

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publication and doings being in contradiction to the welfare of the country and endangering the good understanding between German and Italian speaking Swiss. The publishers of this newspaper will most likely be tried for state tralatition.

In considering the World crisis, the Committee for the National Exhibition, which was intended to be organised for 1936 in Zürich, has decided to postpone it until 1938.

Our countryman, Prof. Courtesy, will commence touring New Zealand on the 23rd October, in Hastings. Prof. Courtesy, with his partner known as the St. Moritz Skaters, or Wonders on Wheels, is one of the leading skaters. He has given exhibitions before practically all Royalty.

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Outside a Bank an Italian is busily engaged roasting chestnuts. An acquaintance stops and starts the following conversation :

- A. How is business?
 I. Splendid, couldn't be better.
 A. Well, if that is so, what about lending me a quid?
 I. I am very sorry but it can't be done. I have come to some agreement with the bank. They are not going to sell roasted chestnuts and I mustn't lend any money.

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ADVERTISEMENTS:

For your Christmas presents — remember Mr. Kerler,
 477 Karangahape Road, Auckland.

When passing Te Kauwhata, stop at our countryman's orchard —
 Scintilla Brand of Mr. P. Cattin.

Lovely Swiss embroidered Frocks and Lingerie —
 From Exclusive Textiles Ltd., Dilworth Bldgs., Auckland, (E. Merz.)

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NEW MEMBERS OF THE SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY :-

ALTHERR, Konrad, 13 Fenton Street, Rotorua.
 BACHMANN, Jost, P.O. Box, Opotiki.
 GAFNER, Miss, 81 Vivian Street, New Plymouth.
 KELLER, Mrs. B., Opotiki.
 KERLER, George, 477, Karangahape Road, Auckland.
 MERZ, Ern., Exclusive Textiles Ltd., Dilworth Bldgs., Auckland.
 PEYER, A., 84 Moa Road, Pt. Chevalier, Auckland.
 STEINER, John, East Port Road, Waihou.
 SCHLAEPFER, John, Ostrich Farm, Pukekohe.
 STEGER, A. E., Otawa, Waiuku.
 UNGEMUTH, Werner, Clarence Road, Northcote, Auckland.
 STEYER, Frederich, 82, Walker Road, Pt. Chevalier, Auckland.
 GUNTREN, Rudolphe, "Evergreen", Dairy Flat, Auckland.
 BLAU, A. C., Swiss Consulate, Auckland.
 MAURER, J., Jeweller, Whangarei.