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NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND



NEW ZEALAND SWISS IN THEIR HOME COUNTRY

(Extract from "Berner Tagblatt," 31/5/1964)

Eighty Swiss from New Zealand arrived here lately and are going to stay in Switzerland for a holiday of several weeks. Some of them have not seen their home country for as many as 30 years. One of the reasons for this long trip half way around the world was of course, the visit of the Expo, at Lausanne. The New Zealand Swiss met for one day at Berne, where they were received by Federal Councillor F. T. Wahlen, who greeted our guests in the Hall of the "Bundeshaus." For his address to our Swiss from abroad, Federal Councillor Wahlen mentioned the problems arising from the overcrowded population of Switzerland. For our Swiss abroad, a change in the Constitution of Switzerland is planned, which would enable them to regain and effect their political rights during a longer sojourn in their home country. **A. Biland**, president of the Swiss Club, Hamilton, N.Z., replied on behalf of the guests.

He pointed out how our Swiss in New Zealand still show strong bonds to their home country and that they were not ashamed of their tears and emotion when they met in Hongkong, on their trip to Switzerland, the first aircraft of Swissair. All were very impressed to see how our small home country has advanced economically and technically and compares favourably in every respect with all other advanced big countries. As other Swiss abroad, the Eidgenossen living in New Zealand, as the furthest part of the world, they consider it as a matter of course and honour to serve Switzerland and its reputation through honesty, integrity and deeds.



MR ARNOLD BILAND

After the reception in the Bundeshaus, the New Zealand Swiss were guests of the New Helvetic Society at Berne. —H.O.

SWITZERLAND SUPPLIES BIG PLANT TO SCOTLAND

The huge brand new Rootes Group motor-works have been in operation in Glasgow (Scotland) since the end of 1963. The new plant has been designed exclusively for the production of the new British mini-car—the Hillman Imp.

The general conception of this car represents a complete break-away from British tradition in regard to motor-car manufacture. The engine is made almost entirely of aluminium, and all aluminium parts used in the engine complex are produced by the pressure die casting process. These parts include important items like the gear box, the rear axle, the cylinder heads, as well as a large number of smaller parts such as the bearings, for instance.

The complete aluminium pressure die casting plant was supplied by the Swiss firm of Buhler Bros, Uzwil. It consists of 15 machines; 2 have a closing force of 100 tons, 6 of 300 tons and 7 of 600 tons. These machines were delivered complete with the moulds.

THE SWISS NATIONAL EXHIBITION HAS JUST OPENED ITS GATES

Since April 30, Switzerland has been on show to the world in Lausanne, along the shores of the incomparable Lake of Geneva, a gem set in an amphitheatre of vineyards, greenery and mountains. The National Exhibition, a festival of the Swiss way of life, is held once every 25 years. True to its motto "Have faith in and work for the Switzerland of tomorrow," Expo 1964 will, for a period of six months, present to the crowds of visitors a thematic synthesis of Swiss achievements in all fields of science and culture, using daring architectural innovations, new materials, original and striking symbols, a fairly-like setting and revolutionary attractions.

AN EXPLANATION OF SWISS STABILITY

Our period is very fond of statistics of all kinds, and in fact figures sometimes explain a situation far more clearly than long commentaries. GALLUP INTERNATIONAL and the Swiss Institute of Public Opinion have carried out a poll in 7 countries in order to try and find out to what extent people feel satisfied with the lives they lead and the institutions that govern them. Three small countries — Switzerland, Denmark and Norway—have the highest rate of positive replies: 92 per cent of the Swiss are satisfied with the work they do, 74 per cent with the income they earn, 79 per cent with the leisure they enjoy and 88 per cent with their standard of living.

To the question: "Do you look to the future with optimism?" 80 per cent of the Swiss reply in the affirmative, but only 54 per cent of the English and as few as 45 per cent of the French. 79 per

cent of the Swiss are content with the position their country occupies in the world, but only 43 per cent of the Americans, 42 per cent of the French and 34 per cent of the English. This difference reflects the absence of all political ambition, due to Switzerland's deliberate policy of remaining aloof from any active part in world power politics, but also the difference between the weight of the international responsibilities borne by a small country and a big nation.

This does not in any way mean that the Swiss Confederation tries to evade its responsibilities. Far from it, on the humanitarian level it fulfils them wholeheartedly; it frequently represents other nations' diplomatic interests abroad; it takes an active interest in the future of countries in the process of development; it co-operates in the work of countless international organisations in different fields; it sees to its own military defence.

What consequences can be drawn from this poll for Switzerland? The figures would seem to show that the Swiss population considers its institutions open to improvement, without however any need to turn them completely upside down.

GREEN LIGHT OPENS TRAFFIC THROUGH THE GREAT ST. BERNARD

MARTIGNY: — The longest automobile tunnel of the world at the historic Alpine pass of the Great St. Bernard was recently given free to traffic. In addition to the actual Alpine tunnel, which is almost 4 miles long, the remarkable structure comprises a series of galleries at the Northern and Southern ramps, protecting traffic on a total stretch of over 9 miles from whims of the weather, avalanches, earthslides and falling rocks.

On the Swiss side, the motorist enters the tunnel at an elevation of 6300 ft. above sea level, whereas the Southern entrance is at 6188 ft. a.s.l., i.e. approximately 1980ft. below the highest point of the road and the famed hospice which remains snowed in far into spring each year. Considering the fact that the pass is now open to traffic throughout the year, this advantage was well worth the 150 million Swiss Francs invested by the Italian-Swiss Society for the Operation of the Great St. Bernard Tunnel, though the way from Martigny (Switzerland) to Aosta (Italy) has been shortened a mere 6.2 miles.

The high construction cost has made necessary tunnel tolls which are levied according to the size of vehicles and range from Fr. 9- to Fr. 20.- for passenger cars, from Fr. 17.- to Fr.80.- for trucks with or without trailers and from Fr. 30.- to Fr. 80.- for motor-coaches. Drivers are requested to carry either Swiss or Italian money.