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HOME VISITOR'S FLASHBACK

Departing from New Zealand many of us realised that after a lifetime or more, this country had become not only an adopted, but a real home.

We were all the more deeply touched by the overwhelming welcome we received in Switzerland, organised by the Auslandschweizer-Sekretariat. Sitting on the chairs of our parliamentarians in the Bundeshaus, admiring in front of us the huge canvas depicting the three men on the Ruetli, we were no strangers coming from far away . . . we belonged.

When later on we listened to Bundesrat Wahlen, so unassuming, and modest, talking like a father to his family and telling us of the problems our country is facing . . . we belonged.

When with his last words he promised to look after our little country, that was no idle boast, that was a personal promise from one Swiss to another . . . we belonged.

Reading later in all the Swiss newspapers of our arrival, describing us not as strangers but as Swiss visiting home, once again . . . we belonged.

I would wish that each year more of our people here could go home and feel, as we did, that deep bond which still exists and holds us to our homeland and the knowledge that we are part and parcel of it.

—Arnold Biland.