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Citizenship campaign

We have given information on several occasions regarding the development of the work in this field. As you will be able to see from the following article – it was written by the parliamentary correspondent of the «Journal de Genève», Mr Jean-Pierre Gattoni, and was published in August 1980 – the campaign on citizenship started some three years ago is on the best way to success.

We cannot, however, be jubilant too soon. Even though the parliamentary initiative by the President of the Organization of the Swiss Abroad, Dr. Alfred Weber, (called «Initiative Weber») has found agreement with the parliamentary commission of the National Council, numerous obstacles have still to

be overcome. The most important are the acceptance by Parliament and the plebiscite of the electorate and the Cantons, which will probably take place in three to four years. The acceptance by the above-mentioned commission is an important step forward, in parts due no doubt to the many interventions by you, the Swiss abroad. We shall continue to inform you in these pages on the progress of parliamentary activities in this matter. In due course, probably in the final phase, we shall ask for your cooperation again. Please fill in already now the form obtainable from the Embassy or Consulate where you are registered, which will entitle you to take part in federal plebiscites and elections.

Lucien Paillard

Draft for a constitutional change:

Citizenship rights: the same law for all children of Swiss mothers?

It is only a question of time: Once Parliament is in agreement and – in a second phase – electorate and Cantons accept it, there will in future be no obstacle for children of Swiss mothers and foreign fathers to obtaining Swiss citizenship. Subsequent to the parliamentary «Initiative Weber», a commission of the National Council has presented a draft for a constitutional change, which gives equal rights to the child of a Swiss woman and to that of a Swiss man, regardless of the origin of the mother or the place of residence at the time of birth.

The initiative of the former National Councillor Weber was handed in on 23rd March 1979. He was, however, not the only one who wanted to improve the status of children born

to a foreign father and a Swiss mother. Quite a few parliamentarians treated this problem on postulates and motions. Let us mention the postulates Luder (1972) and Felber (1977), the motion Christinat (1978) and the initiative brought in by the Canton of Geneva eight years ago. Finally, the Council of Europe recommended its members to eliminate every discrimination between man and woman (and subsequently between their children) in this field.

The commission of the National Council chaired by Mr Paul Zbinden (Fribourg) stated that the present citizenship law regarding transmission of citizenship to children treats man and woman in a different way, also those Swiss women who are