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and jobs come first

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# **Under the banner** of reform

Two subjects will be put to the vote on June 9: a new draft constitutional article on agriculture and a new law which is part of the ongoing reform of the government and the federal administration.

n March 1995 Swiss voters rejected of which defined a new role and

#### Pierre-André Tschanz

and make it more ecological.

#### More ecological, more competitive

now worked out an agricultural reform natural fertilisers. programme entitled "Agriculture 2002", and parliament has responded to draft constitutional article would not a popular initiative by drafting a new

#### Federal referendums

June 9, 1996

- Federal Assembly counter-proposal to the popular initiative "Farmers and Consumers - For an Agriculture in line with Nature"
- Federal law on the organisation of the government and the administra-

September 22, 1996 Subjects not yet decided

December 1, 1996 Subjects not yet decided

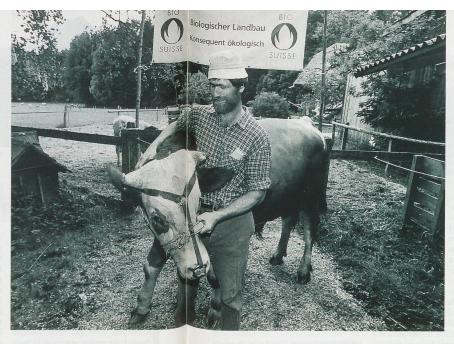
constitutional article on agriculture. This is the result of a compromise between all those concerned and has enabled the group of ecologists, consumers and small-scale farmers to withdraw their initiative, "Farmers and Consumers - For an Agriculture in line with Nature".

The proposed constitutional article is more wide-ranging than the one rejected by voters last year. It would give three proposals on agriculture, one the federal government the power to supplement the mutual aid which must administrative framework for this in any case be undertaken by the agrisector. The government and parliament cultural sector with measures to encourage farmers cultivating the soil. To this end Berne would top up farmers' incomes by direct payments provided a interpreted this triple No as a desire to number of ecological requirements hasten the liberalisation of agriculture were satisfied. Incentives are also planned to promote agricultural techniques which pay increased respect to the environment and animal life, a mandatory quality declaration for foodstuffs and preventive measures In consequence, the government has against abusive use of chemical and

As was the case last year, the new change the general direction of agriculture in practical terms. On the contrary, its intention is to provide a framework for the new agricultural policy which has gradually been developed since the beginning of the decade and which aims to adjust Swiss agriculture to the requirements of both the market and

#### Government reform

Last October both houses of parliament approved with big majorities an initial series of measures to reform the government and the administration. But one of the changes contained in the new law to increase the number of secretaries of sures aimed at supporting Romansh and state - is opposed by some right-wing Italian and encouraging exchange groups, who have collected 72,000 between the linguistic communities.



signatures against it and thus forced a

The main aims of the new law are to improve the conditions in which the government works and to increase its efficiency by freeing officials from some of their administrative duties to allow them to concentrate on the real tasks of government. There are two important changes. The first - which gives the Federal Council sole responsibility for organising the administration (creat-

ing, abolishing, regrouping and transferring posts) - has raised no objections. However, the second - giving the Federal Council power to appoint additional secretaries of state led to a referendum campaign by some rightwingers who consider this would mean useless and expensive bloating of the administration.

The maximum number of secretaries of state would be increased to ten there are only three at present - and their job would be to assist federal councillors by lightening their tasks and taking over ministerial functions in a number of departmental or in some cases inter-departmental fields. They would also - subject to approval by the Federal Assembly - be able to represent the Federal Council before par-

More ecology in agriculture one of the main aims of the revised constitutional

Keystone)

the federal constitution YES 1.046.685 (76.1%) All cantons article. (Photo: NO 329,057 (23.9%)

Referendum result

Transfer of the Bernese municipality of Vellerat to Canton Jura YES 1,245,363 (91.7%) All cantons

NO 113.881 (8.3%)

Revision of the language article in

Abolition of cantonal responsibility for the acquisition of the personal equipment of military personal YES 602,441 (43,9%) Cantons: BL, BS, GE, ZH NO 772,415 (56,1%) Cantons: AG, AI, AR, BE, FR, GL, GR. JU. LU. NE. NW. OW, SG, SH, SO, SZ, TG, TI, UR, VD, VS, ZG

Abolition of the federal obligation to buy distilling equipment and to take responsibility for hard liquor

YES 1,086,041 (80.8%) All cantons NO 258,550 (19.2%)

Abolition of federal subsidies for railway station car park facilities

YES 737,243 (54.0%) Cantons: AG, AI, AR, BE, BL, BS, GE, GL, GR, LU, NW, OW, SG, SO, TL ZG, ZH NO 630,382 (46.0%)

Cantons: FR, JU, NE, SH, SZ, TG, UR, VD, VS

Voter participation: 29.9%

Results of the federal referendums of March 10, 1996

# Regional policy and jobs come first

Less than 30% of voters turned out for the federal referendums of March 10. This very low participation was mainly due to the relatively minor importance of the decisions to be taken. Of the five subjects put to the vote only the centralisation of the purchase and maintenance of personal equipment for the military was refused, by a majority of both the people and the cantons. The new draft constitutional article on languages was approved by more than threequarters of those voting. In general terms the results demonstrate voter support for regional policy and jobs.

• The constitutional article on languages: The change in Article 116 of the federal constitution is limited to mea-

parliament to make up its mind on this military personnel, with only the canmatter, the new text was approved com- tons of Basle, Geneva and Zurich in fortably by 76.1% of those voting and favour. by all cantons. It should be said, however, that the final version did not cantons approved the abolition of the contain anything to threaten linguistic federal obligation to buy back distilling harmony, which is very delicately equipment and to take responsibility for balanced in Switzerland.

- Vellerat: The ratification of the transfer of this municipality of 70 inhabitants the federal budget, will save about from Canton Berne to Canton Jura was Sfr. 3.5 million a year. approved by more than nine out of ten • Railway station car park facilities: voters and all cantons.
- Personal equipment for the military: A majority of voters agreed with opponents of this measure which would have saved Sfr. 15 million but would have threatened the jobs of 2,000 tailors and saddlers. 56.1% voted against the centralisation of the purchase and main-

Although it took several years for tenance of personal equipment for

- Hard liquor: 80.8% of voters and all hard liquor distilled in Switzerland. This measure, also aimed at balancing
- The third austerity measure, to abolish federal subsidies for station car parks, will produce annual savings of about Sfr. 20 million. Regional and transport policy were the main reasons for the relatively high proportion of those who said No (46% of voters and 9 cantons).