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Federal Elections 1999

As a Canadian citizen I had over the years opportunity to learn and compare different political systems and I have come to learn that the system in Switzerland is one of the weirdest and strangest in the democratic societies in the world. It is the only country where the government stays in the same composition no matter how the outcome of the election will be. What it also means is that there is naturally no real leadership for the country. No person or party is in charge, nobody can really provide new directions and therefore nobody can really be blamed or held responsible and accountable.

Beat Klossner, Canada ■

Olympic fire (SR 6/98)

I hope that the canton of Valais will succeed in winning the competition for the Winter Olympics. And I hope that by the time the Games take place Switzerland will succeed in changing its attitude, if only to a very modest extent, towards the past and its vision of the role it wants to play in the common European house and in the world of the 21st century.

Alfred Sennhauser, Austria

Asked about Switzerland's dented reputation casting a shadow on the Sion 2006 project, Mr Mudry mentions mercenary troops, and that no-one has forgotten that part of Swiss history. Who exactly does Mr Mudry

Readers' letters

The editors of the "Swiss Review" are pleased to receive the numerous responses from readers. But please note that we cannot publish all your letters in the "Dialogue" section and also reserve the right to abridge them. We do not engage in correspondence about reader's letters.

mean by "no-one"? Anyone who has travelled abroad could tell Mr Mudry that, apart from the Swiss themselves and perhaps a few French, no-one knows or cares about Switzerland's mercenary past.

Roland Isler, Australia ■

A reader's appreciation of the "Swiss Review"

As a dual national Swiss subject, I enjoy reading the "Swiss Review". It keeps me up to date with goings on in Switzerland. I have registered and am able to vote on Swiss affairs and the background information you give on political issues is a great help as are the cassettes which are sent to me regularly.

Miss J. Houlmann, England ■

Coming to terms with the past

I really don't see why Switzerland should need to be ashamed of its past today just because of the actions of American lawyers which cannot be said to be based principally on disinterested motives.

Switzerland was never responsible for perpetrating any genocides. The Americans would perhaps do better to look at their own country and pay compensation to the survivors of the Indians who they had eliminated so savagely. And what about the Australians with their Aborigines? Without mentioning Germany or the former Soviet Union, nor all those other countries responsible for genocides which occurred in the past and continue to take place today before our very eyes and which the West prefers to ignore.

J.P. Laurance, France (son of a member of the French Resistance who died after being deported to Buchenwald) ■

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