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barriers, who have a totally different way of life and, in brief, absolutely nothing in common with you.

Strike a conversation with any New Zealander about Sierra Leone (another British Commonwealth country) and you meet with a blank stare. Most New Zealanders have probably never heard of the place, they would not have a clue where it is, let alone know the name of its capital. For all it matters, these commonwealth countries could just as well be on a different planet.

The close relationship between Australia and New Zealand would have eventuated just the same even if neither country had been a member of the Commonwealth, because it is a logical and natural relationship.

So to all intents and purposes, the British Commonwealth is now only a figment of imagination in the minds of a few politicians, but for the average person it has been long dead. And the sooner our politicians realise that, the better. For outsiders such as us Swiss, the British Commonwealth is an anachronism which has no place anymore in this modern world where relationships between countries are based on economical survival and not anymore on old out-dated imperialistic ideals.

## NEWS FROM THE EMBASSY

### NEW SWISS "BUNDESPRÄSIDENT" FOR 1994

On December 8, 1993, the Swiss Government elected **OTTO STICH** as the new "Bundespräsident" for the year 1994. He obtained 167 votes (absolute majority 111 votes). **Kaspar VILLIGER** received 24 votes and **Ruth DREIFUSS** 23. But then Kaspar VILLIGER went on to be elected vice-president by 198 votes with Ruth DREIFUSS getting 17 votes.

### SWISS FOREIGN POLICY IN THE 90'S AND NEUTRALITY:

*Two reports from the Swiss Government.*

The Swiss Government recently submitted to Parliament a report on foreign policy in the 90's and a report on neutrality.

In the foreign policy report, the Government puts forward the concept of a Swiss foreign policy taking into account the changes occurring in the international environment since the beginning of the decade. It formulates its global strategy: it is participation in international decisions which more and more shapes Switzerland's future, thus better affirming her sovereignty. The needs and aspirations of Switzerland define the national interests, which have to be served by foreign policy, in harmony with the internal policy. The Government is therefore resolved to im-

prove the relationship between citizens and foreign policy.

Participation in the European construction is part of the foreign policy priorities of Switzerland. This policy follows the conviction that only a united Europe, strong and open to the world, can face the challenges of the 21st century. The new parameters of the international environment make integration into Europe an important stage which will permit Switzerland to reinforce her universal relations and to pursue the defence of her interests on a global scale.

In its report, the Government shows the contribution that foreign policy can bring to the upholding and promotion of security, to the growth of community prosperity and to the preservation of the natural environment. It retains amongst its principal policy objectives two main values inherent in Swiss society, democracy and social cohesion. It also determines to promote these values through the country's external relations.

With respect to these objectives, the Government is analysing the facilities at Switzerland's disposal, and those she will have to add to better defend her interests. In consequence, it established three priorities:

- Raising of the insufficient level of Swiss participation in international decisions, with the goal of adhering to the European Union and the United Nations, and the strengthening of the institutions of which Switzerland is already a member;

- Developing ways and means in which Switzerland can act in maintaining peace and preventing conflicts, supporting, in particular, the most underprivileged countries and the promotion of Swiss economic interests abroad;

- Defining principal guidelines to be followed: promotion of an open international economy with sustainable development, defence of human rights and of democratic institutions, respect of international law and generalization of peaceful settlement of disputes, protection of the victims of war and support of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), control of armament, disarmament and non-proliferation, and finally, extension of Switzerland's capacity to contribute to the settlement of global questions, in particular in the area of the fight against poverty and of protection of the environment.

In the report on neutrality attached to the report on foreign policy, the Government reaffirms the validity of neutrality strongly emphasizing, however, that international cooperation is an increasingly important factor of security. It mentions particularly the contributions to international security which a neutral state must be capable of supplying. The Government acknowledges that, member or not of the European Union, it is in Switzerland's own interest, for solidarity and her own security, to participate in the measures aimed at promoting stability and peace in Europe.

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