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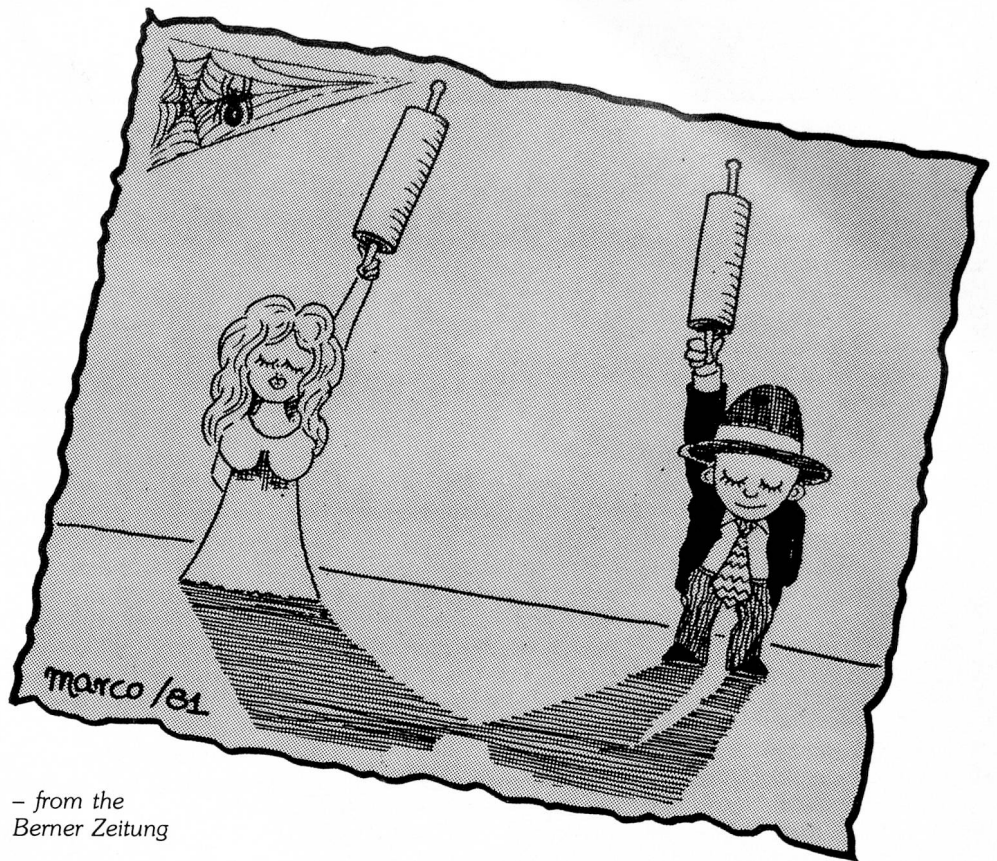
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The nation votes
on equal rights

Swiss women win the day



— from the
Berner Zeitung

THE Swiss people have voted by a six-to-four majority in favour of a constitutional amendment granting women equal rights.

The result of the mid-June vote means that Switzerland's three million women — 10 years after winning equal political rights — have now been granted equality in all other fields as well. Voting was 797,679 in favour and 525,950 against.

The proposed article, although only three sentences long, took

six years of drafting and debate to reach the nation's voters. It reads:

Men and women are equal in rights. The law provides for equality in particular in the domains of family, instruction and employment. Men and women have the right to equal salaries for work of equal value.

Even before the vote it had drawn eager endorsement from Switzerland's major political parties, trade union bodies and professional organisations.

All the western French-speaking cantons polled in favour of equal rights. But nine full and half cantons opposed the move, among them the small and trad-

itionally conservative cantons of Uri, Schwyz, Glarus and the two Appenzells.

Overall approval of the equal rights move surprised few people, but there was general consternation at one figure — the low 33.5 per cent turnout of Switzerland's voters in what was widely considered to be a key national issue.

In a pre-poll message on the equal rights issue the government had noted: "In public life, as in politics, women are often relegated to fulfilling tasks. They have hardly any access to positions of responsibility and are rarely part of the decision-making process."

The Trade Union Federation noted that 45 per cent of adult Swiss women (compared with 15 per cent of Swiss men) have no professional training — an imbalance attributed largely to the traditional Swiss "man-at-work women-at-home" attitude. Average pay for Swiss women is 30 per cent less than male salaries.

Now, under the new article, women may seek legal redress if their salary does not correspond with that of a male colleague doing the same type of work.

The Swiss electorate also approved inclusion in the federal constitution of a new article on consumer protection. This article will empower the government to enforce consumer protection measures and will also strengthen the position in Switzerland of consumer protection societies.

Colin Farmer

How the cantons voted

	Equal rights		Consumer protection		Turnout
	For	Against	For	Against	
Zurich	63%	37%	66.2%	33.8%	38.4%
Berne	61.4%	38.6%	69.6%	30.4%	30%
Lucerne	50.5%	49.5%	57.9%	42.1%	36.8%
Uri	43.6%	56.4%	61%	39%	32.4%
Schwyz	37.8%	62.2%	45.9%	54.1%	33%
Obwalden	52.6%	47.4%	46.5%	53.5%	33.2%
Nidwalden	49.1%	50.9%	56.1%	43.9%	37.6%
Glarus	42%	58%	60.6%	39.4%	35.5%
Zug	58%	42%	61.9%	38.1%	45.7%
Fribourg	64.5%	35.5%	68.1%	31.9%	25%
Solothurn	57.5%	42.5%	70.2%	29.8%	65.6%
Basel City	72.4%	27.6%	80.6%	19.4%	35.4%
Basel Land	68.6%	31.4%	68.6%	31.4%	32.5%
Schaffhausen	58.3%	41.7%	58.3%	41.7%	69.4%
Appenzell (AR)	42.2%	57.8%	52.4%	47.6%	37%
Appenzell (IR)	31.8%	68.2%	31.8%	68.2%	30%
St. Gall	37.8%	62.2%	59.4%	40.6%	33%
Grisons	56%	44%	63.4%	36.6%	29.5%
Aargau	52.1%	47.9%	60.6%	39.4%	31.5%
Thurgau	48.3%	51.7%	52.6%	47.4%	37.8%
Ticino	66.3%	33.7%	76.3%	23.7%	28.5%
Vaud	68.9%	31.1%	61.6%	38.4%	25%
Valais	46.1%	53.9%	45.4%	54.6%	24.1%
Neuchâtel	66.1%	33.9%	68.6%	31.4%	31.7%
Geneva	85.2%	14.8%	79.6%	20.4%	37.4%
Jura	76.5%	23.5%	81%	19%	27%
Nationwide	60.3%	39.7%	65.5%	34.5%	33.5%