

One for all and all for one?

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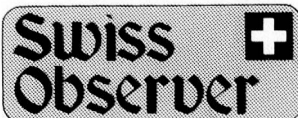
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One for all and all for one?

THIS year we are meeting in the calm and peace of Yverdon-les-Bains, in a setting of beauty and prosperity, in a country which is proud of its tradition and neutrality, proud of being the birth-place of the Red Cross.

One of the richest countries in the world, whose motto is, "One for all and all for one".

Sometimes, alas, we may feel regretfully that the practical application of this fine motto leaves much to be desired and that it stops short at the national boundaries. As we are all aware, our sharing and solidarity have still not reached the internationally accepted level of 1 per cent of the Gross National Product for international co-operation, Switzerland's average contribution at present being 0.19 per cent.

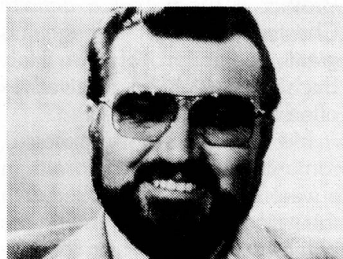
The recent failure of the "Solidarity" referendum, initiated and sponsored by groups close to the churches, which aimed to ensure juster treatment of the migrant workers who contribute so much to the prosperity of our country, has shown yet again just how difficult it is for a people to

feel and practice solidarity.

Many people in Switzerland are seriously concerned about their country's image in the international community. A wealthy country, home of the banks which harbour the capital of people who exploit the Third World; home, too, of some of the transnational corporations whose activities require constant vigilance and supervision.

A country which manufactures and sells armaments on the pretext that other countries do so too, which amounts to saying that what is normal and legal is also moral.

A country which still sends conscientious objectors to prison as common criminals; which is at



Jean Fischer of the World Council of Churches

a loss to know how to respond to the aspirations of its young people who are ill at ease and calling in question the very rigid society offered to them.

Yet at the same time a hospitable country which does its best to welcome its small share of refugees. Which is capable of great generosity when a neighbouring country is devastated by an earthquake.

Which preaches the value of order and hard work. Which wishes to contribute to international peace and harmony and stands aside from all conflicts and from the United Nations.

A country made up of cantons jealously guarding their own sovereignty which has nevertheless managed to create a balance between people of very different languages, cultures, religions and traditions. And which has very diverse and democratic forms of federal, cantonal and popular government.

Switzerland is a country which is both admired and envied - depending on whether one comes from another 'rich' country or a 'poor' one.

Swiss citizens are the world's wealthiest

IF you're Mr or Mrs Average and you want to be rich, be Swiss! Because, based on 1980 statistics, the citizens of Switzerland are the wealthiest in the industrialised non-Communist world.

So says the newest book on comparative data on the West published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which guides the economies of 24 nations of Western Europe and North America plus Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

The United States, once richer and healthier than the other 23 countries, fell behind in many of the latest statistics.

For per capita gross national product - the slice of the production pie that each citizen of a

country theoretically owns - Switzerland led the pack for 1980 with \$14,970.

Denmark was second with \$12,940, Sweden third with \$12,820, West Germany fourth with \$12,450. Luxembourg fifth with \$11,640, Norway sixth with \$11,360, Belgium seventh with \$11,000, Iceland eighth with \$10,980, France ninth with \$10,680.

The United States barely made the top ten with \$10,650.

In per capita consumer expenditures, the Swiss again were champions, spending \$9,560 on average. Then came Denmark, Belgium, the United States, West Germany, Sweden, Iceland,

France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

Switzerland had the lowest inflation rate in 1980 among OCED countries - 4.4 per cent. It was followed by West Germany, Austria and the Netherlands, all below 7 per cent.

Infant mortality in Sweden was the lowest, with 7.3 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1980.

Although ranking 12th lowest in infant mortality rates, the United States had the most children between the ages of 15 and 19 at school - 75 per cent. Japan was second ahead of Switzerland, Finland, Norway, Netherlands and Canada.

C.F.