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THE SWISS ABROAD

(DER AUSLANDSCHWEIZER)

EVERY SWISS who resides outside of Switzerland for more than three months becomes legally an Auslandschweizer. This is right and proper and how it should be.

However, there is a big difference between one who lives just across the border and can walk back to his homeland if he so wishes and the one who lives in another continent or like us here, on the other side of the world. The first can walk or fly home in an hour, the second cannot and I do not see why he should be at a disadvantage to the other who lives close by.

Recent reports indicate that voting rights on federal issues may be granted to the Auslandschweizer but would require his territorial presence. In other words, the second would be left out in the cold. The distribution of postal voting papers (together with the pros and cons of the issues involved) sent by and returned to our embassies (on an entirely voluntary basis), should be a simple enough matter and would remain a personal transaction between him and his embassy.

I do not think for a minute that our votes could sway a poll one way or another. The main purpose is, and would continue to be the strengthening of our bonds with our country and perhaps we would be able to judge more objectively than those on the spot who are in the centre and turmoil of political controversies.

— Arnold Biland