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EDITORIAL

New Zealand and Australia Customs Authorities recently made a great discovery: Instead of checking out through Customs at the point of departure and then standing in another queue to go through Customs and Immigration procedures again at the point of arrival, they thought it would be a fantastic idea and an absolute novelty to clear passengers through both NZ and Australian Customs at one place only, the place of departure.

A novel idea indeed. Or is it? They obviously do not know what is going on in the rest of the world. That system, which

New Zealand and Australia believe to be a world's first, has been in operation between Switzerland and France for the past 60 odd years or more. At both railway stations and airports in Geneva and Basle, Customs and Immigration officers of both countries have been working along side by side of one another for more years than your Editor cares to remember. So what is so new about it?

As it seems to be such a logical arrangement between two countries as close as New Zealand and Australia, it is rather a shame that the system has not been introduced years ago. It would have made travelling between these two countries so much simpler and so much less frustrat-

ing for the hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders and Australians who cross the Tasman Sea every year. Anyone who has done the trip and got caught at either end in one of those massive bottlenecks and had to stand in a queue for an hour or more just to get through Immigration and Customs will understand what we are talking about. The arrangement that has been going on for years between Switzerland and France has worked absolutely smoothly. It is so much simpler to go through both controls in one straight line and to be free to walk off the aircraft or the train at the other end that you may well wonder why no one here thought of it any sooner. But then Kiwis and Aussies are a bit like that. When looking for inspiration, they invariably turn to the UK, the USA and Canada, but seldom do they ever think of using the experiences of the "Old Continent". Just look at the present big argument about Proportional Representation in Parliament, a system, because it is not British, cannot possibly work in New Zealand according to our politicians and some other interested parties, whilst it has been quite successfully in operation in Europe for over one hundred years. But that is a different story, worth telling another time...

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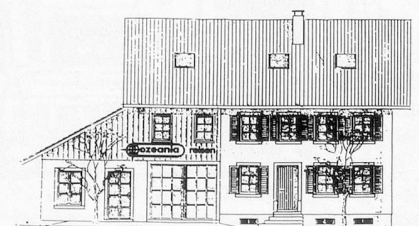
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