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hour Mass.

*regards future Swiss legislation, it is  
by no means certain that the country  
would adopt an eventual proposal to  
amend the Constitution to the effect  
that all Swiss mothers' children  
automatically become Swiss.*

*The same considerations apply,  
by the way, in the purely Swiss  
context of acquiring Cantonal and  
Communal citizenship. The Gov-  
ernment has just published a  
whitepaper on a new marriage law  
based on the principle of equal rights  
and obligations for both partners; it  
felt nevertheless unable to confuse  
the clear-cut present situation of one  
citizenship per family (the father's)  
for reasons of equality (which may  
appear in this case as rather formal).  
That is how the Government feels  
about it, but the Swiss voters will  
have the last word. So, the question  
remains still wide open.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*After reading the November 1979  
issue of the SWISS OBSERVER I  
have deduced that, if all those years  
ago had I not legalised my union with  
an Englishman, my children would  
be illegitimate but would be Swiss  
citizens. How sad.*

*Any Swiss wanting to return to  
Switzerland seem also to be faced  
with formidable difficulties which I  
find intimidating. Is this deliberate  
policy?*

*I find it increasingly difficult to  
accept the exclusion of my very able  
family from any Swiss rights. How  
can I engender in them any interest  
in my so-called 'heritage'?*

*Perhaps you could emphasise the  
difficulties which women in my  
situation face, particularly when  
younger. Perhaps the SWISS  
OBSERVER could help a little to  
decrease the alienation.*

Mrs. A. S. F.

Dear Mrs. F.,  
Thank you for your letter with regard  
to the question of citizenship of  
children born by Swiss mothers  
married to foreigners.

It appears that the rights of a  
Swiss woman are severely curtailed  
once she decides to marry a  
foreigner and to leave the native soil.

I put your particular plea to the  
legal adviser of the Swiss Embassy  
in London and would like to pass on  
his considerations on the subject,  
hoping that they may help all of us  
who are in the same boat to  
understand the reasons for this  
legislation as it stands at present a  
little better. I also hope that it might  
help you in particular to know that  
you are by no means struggling on in  
isolation.

The wide interest the citizenship  
question finds was clearly illustrated  
by the vast amount of letters the  
Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad  
received last year on this subject  
(around 2500).

*The Swiss authorities are quite  
aware of the somehow paradoxical  
situation created by the ruling that  
children born out of wedlock by  
Swiss mothers (at home or abroad)  
become Swiss citizens, whereas  
they acquire only their father's  
foreign nationality, if born by a  
married Swiss woman. Formerly, an  
illegitimate child lost its Swiss  
nationality when its Swiss mother  
subsequently married the foreign  
father — a loss which may seem  
even harder to bear than the fact of  
never having acquired Swiss citi-  
zenship at all. But as we are now  
moving towards an era of more  
equality between the sexes, those  
instances of discrimination against  
Swiss mothers (as regards the  
citizenship of their children), which  
were not prescribed by the Constitu-  
tion, have been abolished recently.  
The only case where this was not  
possible, because the Constitution  
clearly rules it out, is when children  
of a married Swiss mother and a  
foreign father are born abroad —  
obviously a situation frequently  
occurring.*

*As much as the desire of Swiss  
mothers (married abroad) to see  
Swiss citizenship bestowed upon  
their children can be understood, it  
must not be forgotten that dual  
nationality is not in all respects a  
desirable condition. It has advan-  
tages as well as drawbacks, and  
Governments generally tolerate it at  
best, intent to treat it as the  
exception rather than the rule. As*

### On this month's front cover:

H.E. Ambassador Claude Caillat on his way to Buckingham Palace to present his Letters of Credence from the Swiss Federation to the Queen.