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EDITORIAL

Most likely all readers will have learnt from the daily newspapers that on December 6 the citizens of Switzerland have rejected the proposal to join the European Economical Area. What the New Zealand newspapers did not mention was who exactly voted for or against the referendum, a fact which makes interesting reading. Sixteen Cantons voted against (*Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Luzern, Zug, Graubünden, Tessin, Appenzell, Aargau, Thurgau, Zürich, Bern, Solothurn, Schaffhausen, St Gallen and Glarus*) whilst 7 Cantons voted for the referendum (*Genf, Waadt, Neuenburg, Freiburg, Wallis, Jura and*

Basel). Nationwide voting was: NO: 1.786.121 votes (50.3%), YES: 1.763.016 votes (49.7%).

So although the majority of the Cantons declined the proposal, the overall difference between Yes and No is relatively small, just 1%. But a more ominous note is the fact that once again the result shows a clear difference of opinion between the German Swiss and the French Swiss. Apart from Basle, all the approval came from the French Swiss Cantons, whilst all the German Swiss Cantons voted against. The difference in attitude clearly follows the language demarcation line. The ominous "Rösti" trench between German and French Swiss is get-

ting deeper and wider.

The overall result, with its very small difference of only 1% between Yes and No votes is a clear indication that the Swiss citizens as a whole are undecided as to what role Switzerland should play in the new European structure. On one side, joining the Common Market seems a logical move from a financial and economical point of view. On the other hand, the risk of loosing some of the old established independence, neutrality and democratic rights is abhorrent to many Swiss. Never before has Switzerland been facing such a serious dilemma.

That the Swiss take this matter very seriously has been illustrated by the large turnout of voters: 78%, the highest for many years.

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