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Le Ministre de Grande-Bretagne à Berne, E. A. J. Harris, au Conseil fédéral

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Berne, December 28th 1859

The unprecedented state of prosperity enjoyed by Switzerland at the present moment, the absence of any question either at home or abroad calculated to agitate the public mind, and the legitimate influence with which a wise and energetic policy has invested the Central Government, have induced me to consider the present a favourable moment to call the attention of the High Federal Council to the restrictive laws which still exist in some of the cantons, and which bear so hardly on that comparatively small but peaceable and loyal class of Her Majesty's subjects who profess the jewish religion. Your Excellency is aware of the anxiety felt by Her Majesty's Government at the time of the negociation of the existing treaty between Great Britain and Switzerland, that the words proposed by them in Article I¹ should be retained, which would have conferred on the British jew in Switzerland the same advantages of free choice of residence and the exercise of his industry which the British Constitution affords to the Swiss jew in the United Kingdom and its colonies and if the Government of Her Majesty were induced to give way, it was because they were unwilling to delay the signature of a treaty which was to rivet still closer the bonds of friendly alliance between the two countries; and because they confidently anticipated that in this country where free institutions had been so extensively developed, laws so harsh in their operation,

1. *Traité du 6 septembre 1855*. RO, V, p. 257–259.

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and so much at variance with the spirit of the age as well as with the legislation of neighbouring cantons, must by the force of public opinion be speedily abolished. In accordance with instructions from Her Majesty's Government to seize every favourable opportunity of urging this matter on the attention of the High Federal Council, I appeal to them now respectfully, to use their influence towards obtaining the abolition of laws which I feel sure their own enlightened minds as well as those of the great majority of the inhabitants of this free country must condemn.²

2. *Circulaire du 4 janvier 1860, non reproduite.*