

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1962)

Heft: 1415

Rubrik: News from Switzerland

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

Download PDF: 01.04.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

FEDERAL

A new agreement between Switzerland and France was signed regarding the watch industry. This agreement has been accepted by the two watch organisations concerned and has been put into operation. The Swiss have increased the import of French watch parts by 33% and the export of Swiss watch machine tools and machines to signatories of the new agreement has been freed. France, on the other hand, has liberalised the import of all products of the Swiss watch industry and agrees to a reduction of customs tariffs on such goods.

The Federal Council has asked Parliament to accept an agreement on commerce and technical co-operation between Switzerland and the Ivory Coast Republic. This agreement was signed in Abidjan at the end of June.

The Federal Council sent a telegram of congratulation to Sir Alexander Bustamante, Prime Minister of Jamaica, on the proclamation of its independence. This telegram is tantamount to official recognition.

The new Swiss Ambassador to Turkey is Dr. René Keller, at present Ambassador to Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali and Togo. Monsieur Keller is a citizen of Marthalen (ZH) and Cologne (GE). He studied at the universities of Cambridge and Geneva and is a Doctor of Law. He has been in the service of the Swiss Political Department since 1940 and was at one time at the Swiss Embassy in London. In 1960 he became Ambassador in Accra.

The new Chief of the Federal Police is Dr. André Amstein, from Wila (ZH). He is a lawyer and a Lieutenant-Colonel in the General Staff.

CANTONAL

The Landrat (Legislative Council) of Uri finished its working year in July and elected a new president, Erich Müller. The new session began with a long discussion and final approval of the generous proposals for new salaries for the Uri civil servants. A motion was then tabled asking the authorities to reconsider the introduction of a profits tax on property, which was narrowly rejected by the electorate last October.

* * *

The Cantonal Council of Schwyz elected Balz Faesi from Freienbach as the new "Landammann". The Council agreed at the same meeting that the Canton of Schwyz should join the North Eastern Concordat of September 1955 for the exploitation of crude oil, deposits of which have been found in Schwyz.

At a cost of 1.9 million francs a new afforestation scheme will be carried out during the next five years in the region between Holzegg and Schwyz.

* * *

In the Cantonal Council of Obwalden, Alois Omlin from Sachseln was chosen as the new president. The accounts for 1961 finished with a surplus of receipts over expenditure of more than $\frac{3}{4}$ million francs with income standing at 5.2 million.

A smaller surplus was shown for Nidwalden with a total income of Fr.9,373,700. The Council decided to spend Fr.10,000 on a radar apparatus for speed checking, and on various building schemes.

The new Landrat of Nidwalden started its new period of work (four years) with a church service at Stans.

Twenty-one out of the sixty members had been newly elected and took the oath of allegiance. The new president is Josef Wyrtsch, from Buochs.

* * *

The Grand Town Council of Lucerne chose Engelbert Lammer as president for the new period.

The citizens of the Town Commune of Sursee voted in favour of large purchases of land as a reserve and also to preserve the oldest agricultural winter college in Switzerland. These measures should protect the town from land speculation.

Fr.2,134,000 have been voted for a new school building by the citizens of Meggen (LU).

Fr.50,000 have been promised by the well-known firm of Schindler & Co. to the Commune of Ebikon (LU) for their new school building. 10% of this is to be used on artistic decoration.

* * *

Before the holidays, the Cantonal Council of Zurich dealt with questions of personnel of the police force, which stood at 529 — a figure which should be increased in order to ensure better service. The Children's Hospital it to get 19.33 million francs for a much needed renovation. The District Hospital of Pfäffikon will receive 4.1 million as the state's contribution towards major alterations. The new health law was accepted and a lively debate took place on the subject of extra land for additional university buildings and the replanning of the present high schools. The proposal that the agricultural college Strickhof should be moved from Zurich and its grounds used for new university buildings was almost unanimously rejected. The students had staged a quiet demonstration in favour of uniform university buildings before the meeting. A commission was set up to study the whole problem. The findings should cover the next forty years. As regards schools, it is proposed to split the present Cantonal School Zurichberg into three local and decentralised parts (left and right bank of Limmat and Lake and Oerlikon/Glattal).

The Zurich Town Commune Council discussed a motion proposing the early closing of shops at 3 p.m. (5 p.m. at present) on Saturdays and on the eve of a public holiday. In September a consensus of opinion had been taken by Zurich stores and as the result was 61.3% in favour of the present arrangement the Council decided to reject the motion for the time being.

A credit of 13 million francs was allowed for a new recreation and sports ground with swimming pools in Seebach. The scheme will have to be put to the voters yet. A sum of nearly two million francs has been approved for the purchase of land in Volketswil on behalf of the National Museum. In a night session the Council decided to join the society "Regional Planning of Zurich and Surroundings" which will involve Fr.35,213 (8 Rappen per head of population).

The voters of the Canton of Zurich accepted by a large majority the two proposals put before them, one regarding tax reliefs, the other a credit of 12.9 million francs for the improvement of the Cantonal School at Wetzikon.

The new director of the Central Library is Dr. phil. Paul Scherrer, at present director of the university library of the ETH.

A project for a subterranean passage under the Zurich station square is to be worked out. It should enable smooth crossing for 6,000 pedestrians an hour.

The Commune Council of Winterthur has accepted the accounts for 1961, which showed a surplus of Fr.24,315 with a total income of 51.29 million. The Council also decided to build flats for large families.

Prof. Dr. Walter Honegger from Rueti (ZH) has been elected director of the technical college (Technikum) Winterthur. A project for a bus service between Winterthur and the airport at Kloten has been put to the Council. It is expected to run at a loss.

The Commune of Maennedorf approved a project for the enlargement of the cemetery, estimated to cost Fr.662,300.

Several school buildings have been planned and approved; Illnau voted more than half a million, Oetwil nearly 1½ million, Elgg two million, and Rümlang over three million francs for school buildings.

The Commune of Opfikon, which numbers only 8,000 inhabitants, voted 13½ million francs for land purchases as a safeguard against speculation.

* * *

The Landrat of Glarus has elected Hans Meier from Niederurnen as its new president. The minutes of the "Landsgemeinde" were accepted and a debate took place regarding the appointment of the Cantonal Surveyor, who had accepted presents and bribes from contractors. In spite of his great abilities as an engineer the Council decided not to re-elect him.

The filling of the basin at the new power works of Linth-Limmern (GL) has been started. The installations are expected to be complete by next spring and the basin will be wholly filled later in 1963.

* * *

The Cantonal Council of Zug was concerned with the pollution of the Lake, and a number of increases of salaries and pensions were approved.

The Town of Zug showed a balanced account for 1961 (Fr.9,290,000). Extra land was purchased, too, as a reserve for future planning. Half a million was approved for road improvements. The citizens of Zug accepted the project of the hospital enlargement at a cost of 11.5 million francs.

* * *

The accounts for 1961 of the Town of Berne showed over ½ million francs excess of income over expenditure with a total income of Fr.122,857,228. As in most towns and cantons, a deficit had been budgeted. The accounts of Pruntrut also show a surplus of Fr.138,234, with expenditure amounting to 2½ million.

The Canton of Berne has spent over 100 million francs on subsidies for school buildings during the last ten years.

The new "Staatsarchivar" (Keeper of the State Archives) of the Canton of Berne is a teacher, Gymnasiallehrer Fritz Haeusler.

An exception is the Town of Bienne, whose accounts for 1961 showed a deficit of just over one million francs with a total income of 42 million.

Early in August, the Bonstettenpark at Gwatt near Thun was opened. It is a beautiful park on the shores of the lake, with rich trees and adjoining a natural reserve area.

* * *

The Council of the Canton of Fribourg has created an inspectorate of buildings with architect Marcel Matthey as its director.

* * *

The Cantonal authorities of Solothurn have approved a project for a new prison as the present building is a protected patrician mansion and consequently cannot be improved or enlarged.

* * *

The teachers of Basle are to get increased salaries, 4% for the primary schools, 6% for the middle and upper schools.

The number of presidents at the Basle Court of Law will be increased to eight. This will require a revision of the law.

* * *

The Canton of Schaffhausen, too, has voted a credit of five million francs for the purchase of land as a reserve. Nearly ½ million was voted for the acquisition of houses in the "Lower Town" required for traffic improvements. Schaffhausen Town had a practically balanced account in 1961 with an income of Fr.21,180,477.

* * *

Another favourable balance was shown in the accounts of the Town of St. Gall, where the income amounted to 46 million francs and the surplus to 2.3 million.

Automation has been gradually introduced in the St. Gall administration and this has allowed the number of civil servants to remain at the 1948 figures in spite of an increase of 10,000 in the population. It is now suggested that automation should be extended to the "Einwohnerkontrolle", and a credit of 4.2 million francs for electronic computers has been asked for. New buildings for a day nursery and a new fire brigade post are projected.

New buildings for the OLMA, the Swiss exhibition of agriculture and dairy farming, are to be erected at St. Jakob in St. Gall at a cost of 13 million francs.

The Council of Rorschach proposes new sports grounds and a new administration building for the municipal electricity works. A technical college is planned at Buchs (Rheintal).

* * *

The Rural Council of Davos has unanimously decided to propose to the electorate the building of a swimming pool of olympic standard. It will have glass walls facing south which can be opened in the summer. A heatable open-air pool is also visualised. The whole project is planned on the old golf course next to the Kurpark. Cost: 4.5 million francs.

The Commune Assembly of St. Moritz agreed to a new ski-lift from Salastrains to the Plateau on Piz Nair. The proposed ice rink at St. Moritz-Bad was rejected.

* * *

The Canton of Aargau's accounts for 1961 show a surplus of 1.4 million francs with an income of 150.1 million. The Town of Aarau also made a profit of Fr.646,000 (total income 9.106 million).

The Commune Assembly of Aarau voted 9.02 million francs for the erection of a new art and craft school building. It rejected the proposed parking scheme on the Schanzmätteli.

The Commune of Zurzach is to have a new Town Hall on the site of the old one, which dates back to 1778.

The accounts of Baden showed a balanced picture with a total of five million francs. The Citizens' Assembly accepted them, but rejected the plan to have shops closed on Mondays which was tentatively introduced early this year and had not proved successful.

The old Roman town of Windisch (Vindonissa) is to have new administration buildings at a cost of 2.5 million francs, and the Commune of Wohlen has agreed to a 6½ million francs project for a new school building.

The Thurgau Police are to have new barracks at Frauenfeld. This was decided by the Cantonal Council. They also debated far-reaching proposals for the new education laws, as well as new salary scales for doctors, judges, school-teachers and policemen.

* * *

The Cantonal Council of the Ticino has for some time been discussing the project of an oil pipeline which would be carried through the Ticino from Genoa to Southern Germany. There is a great deal of opposition to this scheme. The Urban Council of Lugano wants to take the matter to the Federal High Courts, based on an opinion by experts of the ETH (Federal University of Technology) with regard to pollution of the water sources in the Vedeggio Valley in case of a possible leak in the pipeline. On the other hand, a group of citizens has announced its intention of starting an initiative in favour of the pipeline. If the 5,000 required signatures are collected the Council will be empowered to start the pipeline project.

The first Ticino life insurance company was floated in Lugano. The "Ticino" has a capital of 15 million francs.

The dam of the new hydro-electric works in the Blenio Valley is nearing completion. Mid-July the millionth cubic metre of cement was filled into the wall in the presence of several official visitors.

* * *

The head of the primary school section of the education department of the Canton of Vaud, Adrien Martin, has resigned after devoting himself to the Vaudois schools for 45 years.

* * *

The Cantonal Council of the Valais has agreed to a project for new administrative buildings in the centre of Sion, including a cantonal school.

The foundation stone of a holiday village was laid at Nax (south-east of Sion). It is the idea of the "Confrérie Libre" of the Geneva suburb, St. Gervais, and is intended for old people, children and guests from Geneva.

* * *

School reform has been occupying the Neuchâtel cantonal authorities; new proposals will have to be worked out since the electorate rejected the first ones. Apparently women voters went to the poll in especially large numbers.

The Lake of Neuchâtel shows signs of dangerous pollution and the Councillors have urged that the first filter installation be begun soon. They received assurance that it will start work in 1965.

New laws regarding the sale of alcoholic beverages were debated, including a decree prohibiting young people under 15 from entering some public places after certain hours.

* * *

Five million francs is the surplus shown in the annual accounts for 1961 in Geneva (total income 66.5 million). The proposed garbage disposal plant will cost 36 million francs, and a floodlighting system will be installed at the Frontenex Stadium. Fr.400,000 will be spent on a promenade, over a million on the improvement of the Carl-Vogt Boulevard and a credit of 35 million is asked for to start on the erection of the first group of buildings of a new congress centre, one of which will have accommodation for 3,000 people.

Mariann.

(Based on news items received from the Agence Télégraphique Suisse.)

1962 THE ROUSSEAU YEAR St. Peter's Island in the Lake of Biene THE FIFTH STROLL

By JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

I have stayed at many delightful places, but none has made me so truly happy or left me with such deep nostalgia as the Isle of Saint Pierre in the centre of the Lake of Biene. This islet, called the Isle de La Motte in Neuchâtel, is little known even in Switzerland. Nevertheless, it is pleasant to a degree and its location is ideal for the lover of solitude. I may have been the only man in the world forced by circumstances to dwell in isolation, but I cannot believe that I am unique in loving it, though I have yet to find this taste so highly developed in others.

Being more closely fringed by woods and cliffs, the Lake of Biene is wilder and more romantic than the Lake of Geneva, but its shores are no less idyllic. While there is less arable land, fewer vineyards, townships and hamlets, there are more expanses of natural woodland, more meadows, more sheltering grooves; there is a greater variety of hill and dale, light and shadow. As these happy shores are bereft of highways, the countryside is seldom frequented by travellers and is hence a refuge for those of a contemplative and solitary disposition, who delight in savouring the charms of Nature at their leisure and dreaming in a silence untroubled but for the cry of the eagle, the twittering of birds and the sound of torrents descending from the hills.

This beautiful lake, in form almost circular, bears two small islands in its centre. One, inhabited and cultivated, is about half a league in circumference; the other, smaller, lies deserted and fallow, and will in time be destroyed by the constant removal of its soil for use in repairing damage caused by waves and tempests to its larger neighbour. Thus must the weak ever suffer for the benefit of the strong.

There is but one house on the island. It is spacious, pleasant and comfortable and, like the island itself, belongs to the hospital at Berne. Here dwell the tax collector, his family and servants. He maintains a thriving poultry yard, fish tanks and a pigeon run. Though small, the island is so varied in form and aspect that it abounds in attractive sites and can be used for every kind of culture. It encompasses ploughland, vineyards, woods, rich pastures shaded by coppices and shrubs of many species, all kept fresh by the nearby water. A high terrace, planted with two rows of trees, runs the length of the island; half way along it stands a pavilion, where people from the neighbouring shores assemble and dance during the vintage.

On this island I took refuge after the stoning at Môtiers. I was so delighted with the place and led a life so well suited to my tastes that, resolved to end my days there, I had only one misgiving: would I be permitted to fulfil this wish, which did not accord with the idea of sending me to England, the first effects of which I was already beginning to feel? With this foreboding, I prayed that my refuge might become a prison for life, where, in perpetual confinement and without means or hope of escape, I would be denied all communication with the outer world. In this way, being out of touch with society I would forget its very existence, as society would forget mine.

I was allowed to spend only two months on the island, but I could have stayed there two years, two centuries, indeed eternally, without a moment's tedium, even if my good friend and I had enjoyed no other company than that of the tax collector, his wife and servants, all of