

Elections in the Canton of Vaud

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The Swiss people definitely do not like this delay, they already show themselves impatient. It is argued that there are many old people, widows and orphans in our country who have great difficulty in living and who need our help and that it would not be equitable to deprive them for another three years of the indispensable relief this great social institution would offer to them. For this reason the Federal Council has now decided to work out an intermediary solution, which will make it possible to bring help to these needy people in Switzerland until the whole of the Swiss people will benefit by an insurance which is worthy of its name. This decision has been warmly welcomed. The time gained by this step now offers an opportunity to build up this great institution on a really solid and lasting basis.

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SWITZERLAND AND AIR TRAFFIC OF THE FUTURE:

At present, the Confederation is making a big effort along a very special line. The idea is to again resume contact with the outside world. Plans are being put on foot for our future air traffic.

A Swiss delegation took part last Fall in the Air Conference in Chicago. They took part in drawing up plans for the organization of international air service after the war. Our delegates had barely returned home when the Federal Council proposed to the Chambers that a big intercontinental airport be installed at Zurich and that continental airfield be built at Geneva, Basle and Berne. Last week, the National Council voted the necessary credits for these undertakings; the States Council will follow suit next June.

In the field of air traffic, we are working out the necessary legal and technical measures in order to be ready just as soon as circumstances permit. Switzerland which has not been ravaged by the war will be able just as soon as peace is returned to us and at a time when numerous other lands will have to give their best efforts to reconstruction, to place at the disposal of others an equipment not only intact but greatly improved.

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ELECTIONS IN THE CANTON OF VAUD:

These days the Swiss papers remark with satisfaction or regret according to their political position the results of the Grand Council elections in the Canton of Vaud last Saturday and Sunday, elections which marked a definite strengthening of the political left. The open exaltation of the Socialist papers over the fact that the left parties have been able to increase their representatives from 22 to 69 is not hard to understand. On the other hand, the elections were a severe disappointment for the bourgeois parties. The Radicals lost 30 of their former 130 seats, and the Liberals 17 of their former 52.

The effect was sensational in Lausanne where the leftist block has won 40 of the city's 53 seats in the cantonal legislature.

However, victor and vanquished are united in the conviction that all the political parties must get together and work for the common good of the country. Socialist comment stresses the point that the battle was fought with the weapons of democracy.

The "Nationalzeitung" emphasizes the fact that the Radicals of the Canton of Vaud held for a full 100 years an absolute majority and that the elections last Saturday and Sunday therefore introduced a new epoch in the political history of the Canton.

The Lucerne "Vaterland" expresses the opinion that the bourgeois defeat in the Canton of Vaud in no way means a disaster for the parties concerned.

"The Gazette de Lausanne" says: 'We refuse to believe that the 10,000 citizens of Lausanne who voted for the Workers' Party agree in full with the opinions of their leaders. The greater part of these citizens only wanted to give vent to their bad humor and a desire for a change. The first task confronting us now is to study seriously the causes of this discontentment,

with the sole purpose of getting at the truth, unbiassed and with no pre-conceived ideas, with the sole desire of serving the country the very best way possible.

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SUNDRY NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

Statistics are available regarding the amount of Switzerland's Easter traffic by rail. The Federal Railways operated 372 special trains which was a few less than last year. Receipts on the other hand were larger than last year. The most favored regions were the Ticino, Lake Lucerne, Lake Geneva and the Bernese Oberland.

The present shortage of coal in Switzerland is now having its repercussion on the whole of our industry. Heavier restrictions have also been imposed on the Swiss textile industry by the Federal War Office for Industry and Labor. From now on our textile enterprises will no longer be able to satisfy immediately all demands from the Swiss trade and public.

Switzerland is preparing to name her Minister to Rome. In turn, Italy will shortly appoint a representative in Berne. As a result of military and political events the two countries only had Charge d'Affaires in the two capitals.

It is announced in Berne that the new French Ambassador to Switzerland Mr. Henri Hoppenot has arrived in the Federal Capital. This is the third time during his diplomatic career that M. Hoppenot is in office in Berne. He was there as Embassy attache in 1917, and from 1931 to 1933 as Embassy counsellor.

About the Franco-Swiss financial agreement signed in Berne on March 22, 1945, the following points have now been revealed: The two countries are granting each other payment facilities up to a total of 250 million Swiss francs or the equivalent in French francs. The agreement has been concluded for three years and after that can be prolonged tacitly every year. It includes not only France but also Algiers, the French Colonies, countries under French protectorate or mandate, as well as Syria and Lebanon. The payment facilities will above all be used for commercial purposes and for the regulation of services.

According to the report of the Federal Political Department which has just been approved by the Federal Council, 164 Swiss citizens have lost their lives in air raids in Europe during the past year. A number of other compatriots have become the victims of other war events. In France, 30 Swiss citizens have been put to death either by German troops or elements pretending to be members of the French forces of liberation. Damage suffered by Swiss citizens abroad is enormous. The program of reparations will be one of the main questions after the war. The Federal Council is doing its best to receive the same indemnities for our compatriots as the foreign states are paying to their own nationals. For the time being, however, Swiss citizens only receive indemnities in Germany and Great Britain, whereby the reparations in Germany are practically only of a theoretical character.

The Federal Health Office reports that the state of health of the Swiss people has remained satisfactory in 1944. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that so far the greatest part of our population has not suffered from undernourishment or has not been forced to live on inferior food. Nevertheless, there have been slight influenza epidemics of 54,660 cases. In 1939, a similar epidemic brought 54,749 cases while the years 1940 to 1943 were free of epidemics. The number of cases of tuberculosis has decreased from 4,374 to 4,304 last year.

The two delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross who organized the distribution of the foodstuffs in Holland, shipped by the S/S "Henri Dunant" have just returned to Switzerland. The goods which were unloaded in the North of the country are shipped by canal boats to the three