

Humanitarian aid

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objekttyp: **Article**

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

Band (Jahr): **- (1969)**

Heft 1566

PDF erstellt am: **29.04.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-690571>

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ELECTORS AT THE POLL

With voting participation of 55%, the *Grisons* voters elected the Liberal Jakob Schutz (Filisur) into the Cantonal Government, replacing the recently retired Dr. H. Ludwig.

In *Basle*, the Reformed voters agreed to abide by the Synod's decision to do away with the capital-gains tax.

The Reformed *Lucerne* voters accepted the Church Constitution (voting participation 17%), which, will bring the Protestant Communes under one roof. Voting age will be 18, and women have a vote, too. The Constitution is to come into operation in 1970, but has to be accepted by the Cantonal Parliament first.

In the *Valais*, complaints have been lodged against the recent elections, and a demand for re-elections has been made in Brigue as well as in Sion.

The *Schwyz* district rejected the introduction of secret ballots, and at *Steinen*, the electors accepted at long last the project for a 4-million school and multi-purpose building — they had rejected it three times.

The town of *Zug* had once again to vote on an increase in tax rate and again rejected it, also the proposed improvement of a certain road.

In *Geneva*, the citizens accepted the "Eldorado" project, a new building in place of the Grand Casino, comprising a theatre, three conference halls, a hotel and other amenities.

The citizens of the widely-dispersed Commune of *Lauterbrunnen* accepted plans for schools at Lauterbrunnen and Muerren and garbage incineration plants at Wengen and Muerren — total cost over 7 million francs, the largest amount ever spent.

Berne municipal voters agreed to all three projects: revision of pay rulings, which will give an increase of 6% and larger social benefits for the Commune personnel; 2.33m. francs for a new *Werkhof* at the Schwarztorstrasse; and a new credit limit of 20m. which will enable the Commune Council to purchase property.

For the first time, women voted in *Thun* (total participation only 29.9%), when three projects were accepted dealing with increased allowances and general Commune finance questions.

Arosa men have granted their womenfolk suffrage in all Commune matters.

The elections at *Roveredo* (Grisons) deserve mention for the high voting participation of 90%. The Conservatives won a seat at the expense of the Progressives.

Almost unanimously, the voters of *Vevey* have agreed to introduce consultative voting powers for people between

16 and 20 years of age, following the successful example the Commune of Payerne has set.

[A.T.S.]

HUMANITARIAN AID

The Red Cross has carried out a second operation to unite refugee families from Syrian camps. Help was also sent to the 30,000 victims of the grave floods earlier in the year.

13 large cases of drugs and nursing material were sent to Dr. Maggi in Zinah, Cameroon, where the Ticinese doctor is establishing his fifth hospital. Within two months, the collection in the Ticino amounted to 500,000 francs.

The International Committee of the Red Cross and the Swiss Red Cross received offers of services from 28 Swiss doctors in 1968. For some of these, their time was set against military service, either partly or fully.

The former Federal Councillor Wahlen spoke on the assimilation and naturalisation of Hungarian refugees. Zurich has most of the Hungarian refugees, and of the 80 expected to ask for citizenship, 300 applications have been made. Twelve years of residence in Switzerland is the minimum requirement for naturalisation.

In Zurich, various demonstrations took place in support of the Czech freedom fighters. Czech students went on a fast out of protest, and Zurich students supported them. A further grant of 4.5m. francs has been made by the Federal Government for the care of Czech refugees, not counting the scholarships for Czech students.

Collections of funds for Nigeria/Biafra continue in Switzerland. Starvation in Biafra is getting worse. The "Caritas" organisation has collected over 5.8m. francs, and the International Red Cross Committee has transported over 8,000 tons of material to Biafra. A whole hospital plant, including medical and nursing personnel and material left for Biafra. A number of badly injured Biafrans have been flown to Switzerland to be looked after. In the week of 26th February to 1st March, the Red Cross made 65 transports to Biafra. The "Migros" collection amounted to about a million francs; it was doubled by the company. The Red Cross has just announced its 1,000 flight to Biafra. Dr. Lindt, Commissioner-General of the Red Cross, said that the recent allegations were unfounded and that the Red Cross had not reached its "Marignano". A new long-term plan was being worked out for the war in Nigeria.

[A.T.S.]

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