

**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:** - (1965)  
**Heft:** 1470  
  
**Artikel:** It happened in the cantons of Vaud and Valais  
**Autor:** [s.n.]  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-686389>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. 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. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **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. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **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. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 09.07.2025

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

# IT HAPPENED IN THE CANTONS OF VAUD AND VALAIS

## VAUD

In an article in "The Times" last August, Lausanne was called "a city of youth; a university city, abounding also in international schools and colleges. Since the war it has been engaged on a modern building spree and today it boasts one of the few skyscrapers in Switzerland". Nevertheless, the old *Cité* remains, "clustering trustfully round the cathedral of Notre Dame". In the same article, the author refers to Lausanne's historic past.

"Lausanne, so modern in so many ways, has retained one very ancient custom — the night watchman still keeps guard every night of the year on the tower of the cathedral. He is known as the *guet*; he watches from 10 p.m. until 4 a.m. in summer and from 9 p.m. until 5 a.m. in winter. Every hour as the great bell called "Mary Magdalene", largest of the seven bells in the tower, prepares to strike the *guet* hurries to the gallery on the north side of the tower. He cups his hands to his mouth and calls "C'est le guet. Il a sonné dix", or whatever the hour may be. He repeats this same call from the east, south and west galleries of the tower so that all parts of the city shall hear him."

Today, Lausanne has about 136,000 inhabitants. In the federal census on 1st December 1960, the number of inhabitants was 126,328. In the whole Canton of Vaud, the population of the 388 Communes increased from 377,585 in 1950 to 429,512 in 1960. This is all the more surprising as 257 Communes showed a decrease, in half a dozen of them as much as 30% or more. Leysin's number of inhabitants went back by 47.2%, due to the decrease of patients in the sanatoria. On the other hand, five Communes increased by 70% and more: Prilly by 111.2%, Renens 87.8, Lonay 87.3, Pully 78.9 and Ecublens by 76.5%.

In the 110 years from 1850 to 1960, the population of Vaud increased by 215%. On 1st December, 87.4% of the inhabitants were Swiss citizens, and of the 54,293 foreigners, nearly 30,000 were Italians, followed by 6,700 Frenchmen, 3,800 Germans and 9,000 other Europeans and 4,000 foreigners from outside Europe.

In 1860, 93.6% of the inhabitants were Protestant, in 1950 78.1 and ten years later 70.1%. In the same period, the Roman Catholic population increased from 0.6% to 19.1 and 27.1%.

Among the new building projects in Vaud are a grammar school in Lausanne for one thousand pupils (already completed and inaugurated in September), an agricultural domestic college at Marcelin s/Morges, the completion of the old age home at Chamby and a students' home in Lausanne at the cost of nearly 4½ million francs of which the firm of Nestlé will pay one million francs. The new gas works of Lausanne, the most modern of its kind with three fully automatic units, started operating in the autumn.

In order to continue the construction of national highways and the completion of motorways the Canton needs one hundred million francs annually. In November, the Grand Council granted a credit of 31 million francs for the improvement of three main and twenty-two subsidiary roads. The necessary funds have also been granted to fight erosion on the southern shore of the Lake Neuchâtel, which lies on the territory of Yvonand.

The Vaudois Council of State elected Councillor

Pierre Schuhmacher as its President and Councillor Edouard Debétaz as its Vice-President for 1965.

The new Vaudois Attorney General is Dr. iur. Willy Heim in succession to Dr. Pierre Chavan who retired after thirteen years.

Lausanne has now co-ordinated its civil defence with emergency assistance in a catastrophe such as floods, explosions, fires, etc. The Civil Defence Chief of the town, Roger Parisod, has worked out an alarm plan according to which all branches of the fire service, police, civil defence, hospitals and Red Cross, blood donation service and other units can be called upon in any emergency.

Three jubilees were celebrated in the Canton of Vaud recently: the "Fanfare des Collèges de Lausanne" observed its Golden Jubilee, the Vaudois Society of Authors was twenty years old, and the "Théâtre de Beaulieu" in Lausanne could look back on ten years of activities.

At Nyon, a commemorative plaque of the famous pianist, conductor and composer Alfred Cortot was unveiled at No. 4 Rue de la Gare, where he was born on 26th September 1877. Cortot was an honorary citizen of Nyon and died in Lausanne in 1962.

Owing to the EXPO, many organisations chose Lausanne and other Vaudois places as venue for meetings and conferences. Among international groups it was the Federation of Towns, the Soroptimists and the Academy for Tourism. At the 16th General Meeting of the European Federation of Agriculture at Montreux, Federal Councillor Wahlen gave an official address. It had been preceded by the 6th International Congress for Technology in Agriculture. The Chamber of Commerce of Belgium and Luxembourg in Switzerland celebrated its Golden Jubilee at Sauvabelin.

Schools associated to UNESCO in Switzerland, met in Lausanne in September. So did the Swiss Federation of Librarians and the Evangelical Federation of Workers and Employees. At Caux, there were Agricultural Days a few weeks after some three hundred women from twenty-four countries had met there for a conference. In October, it was the Swiss medical practitioners and specialists who gathered in Lausanne for the "Schweizer Aertztetag 1964", to be followed by the women police assistants of Switzerland, the veterinary surgeons and the Swiss university women. Later in the month, the Swiss Federation for European Law, the Swiss Trade Chamber (at Vevey) and the Federation of Swiss Millers (at Montreux) chose the Canton of Vaud for their meetings.

## VALAIS

At the end of October, the "Basler Nachrichten" carried a picture of a slope near Visperterminen, showing the innumerable terraces laboriously constructed by the farmers in order to grow vines on the steep terrain. The article by Adolf Fux accompanying the picture was called "The Valais — heroic countryside" or "Canton des catastrophes"? It was Rainer Maria Rilke who had called the Valais "Heroische Landschaft". Karl Alfons Meyer in his essay on the Valais had come to the conclusion that the really heroic part of the Valais was the fight of its people for the soil, the men and women who loyally remain tending their precious small holdings, who have built thousands of miles of artificial water ducts to irrigate their

land. But modern methods, too, have come into their agriculture. The farmers of the Turtmanntal in the Upper Valais have decided to amalgamate seventeen pastures for more efficient working. Some 900 head of cattle will then be accommodated on half a dozen separate pastures. The milk from the cows' pastures will be collected daily by tank lorries and taken to Brigue or Sion. The project will cost some four million francs, but it is estimated that two-thirds of the present staff can be done without, and the nett increase in the result per litre of milk will be over 25 centimes.

"The Times" carried several pictures on 31st October: "The Long Descent from Summer Pasture", showing the men of Blatten taking down their sheep which have been grazing between the large and upper Aletsch glaciers. It takes two days to collect the animals and lead them down to the village. Many of the lambs have to be carried.

Much was said and written about the hundreds of tons of Valais tomatoes which were destroyed last summer. Many tons, too, were distributed free of charge to welfare organisations. A strange sickness befell larch trees in the Valais, and at the end of December, foot and mouth disease broke out as periodically happens in other parts of Switzerland. On the other hand, the wine harvest was only a little short of the record of 1959. The total was 30 million litres of white and 9 million litres of red wine.

The whole Binn-Tal has been declared a protected area. On the other hand, Zermatt has fallen to the motor car, and the electors have agreed that the village should be linked with the Visp valley road. Cars, however, will not be allowed to enter Zermatt. The new cable cars for the Zermatt-Trockener Steg aerial cable way are supposed to be the largest in the world, with a capacity of one hundred people each.

Martigny has a new bridge over the Rhone, completely built by the Army. It will be in use for several years until the concrete bridge is ready. New roads have been opened in several parts of the Valais, and it is hoped that the project of the Rawil tunnel will be realised this year.

The Valais heads the Swiss Cantons as regards output of hydro-electric power, roughly a quarter of the whole production in Switzerland. The first electricity works in the Valais was opened at Leuk-Bad in 1889, to be followed by Martigny, Zermatt, Vernayaz and Gampel. In this century the works of Chippis, Aproz and Ackersand were built. The Swiss Federal Railways constructed Massaboden in 1899, needed for the building of the Simplon Tunnel, and then came Barberine and Trient. The Grande-Dixence and Mauvoisin works are being followed by Mattmark which is still in course of construction.

Waste water plants have been started or already completed. The typhoid epidemic of Zermatt has had its effect on local authorities. The project for Zermatt alone costs six million francs.

The "Collegium Brigue" which is over three hundred years old, is to be enlarged and partly rebuilt at a cost of 13½ million francs. Brigue is also to have a grammar school. A psychiatric home for mentally handicapped children is to be erected at Malevoz, and three new vocational training schools are to be built at Martigny, Brigue and Monthey. 3.15 million francs are required for renovating and enlarging the cantonal agricultural college at Châteauneuf.

The electorate of Sierre rejected the introduction of a legislative General Council (1,001: 281). St. Maurice and Hérémence accepted the proposal to introduce a "Conseil

Général". The new Municipal Presidents of Sion, Martigny and Sierre are Emil Imesch, Edouard Morand and Maurice Salzmann respectively. The new General Council of Sion, which consists of 60 members, has now 36 Conservative/Christian Socialists (gain of 2), 13 Radicals (3 losses) and 11 Socialists (1 gain).

It is interesting to note that in the polling in December several young men under thirty were elected into Commune Councils. The President of Ulrichen is 23-year-old Emile Garbely. Several Councillors are only just of age.

Sion was host to the Swiss Chemical Industries in September, when Federal Councillor Bonvin addressed the meeting on the relationship between the Army and the chemical industries. The Swiss Society for Public Relations and the Federation of Selfemployed Architects also met in Sion.

Martigny held its 5th Comptoir in September, and 300 Swiss lawyers met at Zermatt.

In the Upper Valais the two papers "Walliser Bote" (Conservative) now appearing five times a week, and "Walliser Volksfreund" (Christian/Socialist) have been joined by a neutral bi-weekly paper "Briger Nachrichten". The "Journal de Sierre et du Valais Central" celebrated its Golden Jubilee last summer.

Finally, two items of news from the Valais: the Protestant Parish of Saxon celebrated its Golden Jubilee in October, and in the same month, the old mill of Eggen was acquired by the National Museum in Zurich. It was taken apart on the spot, then transported in twelve flights by helicopter to Visp.

In the article in the "Basler Nachrichten" mentioned earlier, the writer recalls that Richard Weiss called the Valais "a Religious Countryside". This is, no doubt, true to a large degree, and the Valaisans in their family community, in the protection of the Village Church and the narrow isolation of their valleys are a God-fearing people. Yet it was a religious man, Valais Councillor of State Karl Anthamatten who once in the Grand Council called his Canton "un Canton des catastrophes". The modern visitor to the Valais may barely realise heroism, religion or catastrophe in the countryside. But problems exist, and nature and economics will have to be brought into a balanced relationship in order to secure the Canton's future. Industry and tourism may play vital parts in this.

*(Based on news received by courtesy of the Agence Télégraphique Suisse.)*

## THE SWISS CHEMICAL INDUSTRY ON THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

With an annual output valued at 650 million dollars, Switzerland is the biggest exporter of chemical products in the European Free Trade Area. The chief products of this branch are organic chemicals, in particular the active substances for the pharmaceutical industry, products for dyestuffs derived from tar, and synthetic perfumes. In the chemical sector, the balance of trade was a favourable one for Switzerland in 1962, imports totalling 245 million dollars and exports 416 million. The percentages are as follows by groups of countries: — Common Market: 68% of Swiss imports, 35% of Swiss exports; Free Trade Area: 11% of Swiss imports, 16% of exports; United States and Canada: 14% of Swiss imports, 7% of exports; Other countries: 6% of imports, 41% of exports.

In the fields of dyestuffs derived from coal tar, pharmaceutical products and synthetic perfumes, Switzerland is among the most important suppliers on the world market.

[O.S.E.C.]