

**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:** - (1967)

**Heft:** 1531

**Artikel:** It happen in the Grisons and the Valais

**Autor:** [s.n.]

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-695747>

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# IT HAPPENED IN THE GRISONS AND THE VALAIS

## GRISONS

Early in May, the *Kreiswahlen* took place in the Grisons. The Conservative-Christian Socials and the Liberals gained one seat each (40 and 29 respectively), and the Democrats and Socialists lost one each (38 and 6). At the same time the electorate accepted the partial revision of the law regarding road financing — by the end of 1967, the road debt will have grown to 52m francs, and the legal limit of 42m had to be raised to 60m by public vote. The voters also agreed that the Grisons Women College shall be taken over by the Canton and that various other schools for women should be given subsidies. The electorate also accepted the plan for intercommunal financial equalisation; the sum involved is 1.5m francs. A month earlier, the people had accepted plans for the introduction of a *Verwaltungsgericht*.

The Cantonal Bank made a profit of over 4m francs. But the annual accounts of the Canton ended with a deficit of 5.5m, revenue standing at 310.3 million francs. The budget estimates revenue of 24m. less than in 1966 and forecasts a deficit of 5.5m. These estimates stood after the Cantonal Parliament had made a number of cuts.

The *Grosser Rat* rejected the project to enlarge the Cantonal Women's Hospital at a cost of 16.8m. francs. They agreed to an increase of civil servant pay of 3% 3.2m. francs was voted for the *Neutechikum* Buchs.

The Federal Government granted 10.27 francs towards the cost of correcting the two rivers Maira and Orlegna. 1966 was a good year for the Grisons railways; a profit of 7.1m. The Cantonal Government has asked again that the Confederation should take over the Grisons railways in a similar way as the Berne-Loetschberg-Simplon line. The new Chairman of the Board is *Regierungs-präsident* Dr. Gion Willi. The new President of the Cantonal Parliament is Dr. Josias Sprecher, the new Cantonal Archaeologist Christian Zindel and the new Chief Surgeon at the Cantonal Hospital Dr. Martin Schamaun from Gruesch; he is the successor to Prof. Dr. Martin Allgoewer who now holds a Chair at Basle University.

The Hinterrhein Power Works celebrated their 10th anniversary in April. The cost of construction amounted to 623.5m. francs, but the stations have been most beneficial to the district. The Cantonal Government have asked a group of experts to work out a report on planning. The Canton has great worries regarding the future of its forests which are a vital source of income to many Communes; they will be hit due to the lowering of EFTA customs rates.

At the first week-end in July, the foundation of the *Gotteshausbund* was commemorated, the largest and oldest of the three Federations from which the Canton of *Gräubünden* emerged. With its foundation, the basic principles of democracy and freedom were put into practice. The event was commemorated in several parts of the Canton, with a particularly splendid celebration taking part in Chur.

Thanks to gifts by private donors, the Cantonal Government and the Chur Commune Council, a bust by the famous artist Giacometti has now been practically paid for (100,000 francs). The bust, a woman's head, has been in the Chur Art Museum for a year and completes the Giacometti collection which had been lacking any of the artist's world-famous sculptures.

The "Freier Raetier" is in its hundredth year and remains a stronghold of Liberal ideas.

## COMMUNES

Early in the year, the electorate of Arosa agreed to the plan for the new building of the powerworks Arosa-

Litzirueti at a cost of 12m. francs. Whilst Arosa has the most modern of all RHB stations, it also suffered one of the biggest fires last winter when the largest hotel, the Tschuggen Grand burned down completely. The renovation alone had been insured for one million francs.

Chur now has 30,000 inhabitants. Its citizens agreed to a revision of the voting laws, which allows for voting by post. Votes for Chur women have been asked for, and a scheme is being worked out on similar lines as the Cantonal Government is preparing. The Democrat George Fischer is the President of the Chur legislative Commune Council of 21. New pay rates for municipal staff have been agreed to by the Commune Council. In the "Bettlerküche", a modern mechanical-biological waste water plant is to be constructed and, nearby, a garbage incineration plant. A leisure centre for foreign workers has been in use in the town for some months and has proved successful. The temporary traffic training courses for children are changed into a permanent *Kinderverkehrsgarten* in the skating rink which is not used in summer. Accidents involving children have been reduced from 32 in 1964 to 14 last year. Dr. med. vet. Christian Gadien is the new Municipal Veterinary Doctor.

The Davos electorate accepted a project for a congress hall at a cost of 6m. francs. A 2.2-million franc project for a home for medical and nursing staff of the *Krankenhaus* was accepted by the *Grosser Landrat*. The *Kurdirektor* Georges Haesler resigned, and the *Wirteverein* celebrated its Golden Jubilee. The Davos schools now have a metal work shop for sixteen pupils. The new Manager of the *Parseennbahn* is Ing. Peter Trechsel in succession to *dip. el. ing.* E. Fischer who held the post since 1948.

Ilanz is to have a swimming pool and Klosters an artificial ice rink. The Commune of Ebikon in Lucerne, itself not exactly wealthy, has undertaken to help the poor Grisons Commune of Paspels. Their *Patenschaft*, the twelfth of this kind in Switzerland to help needy Communes, enables Paspels to build a water supply works, together with Pratval and Rodels.

The *Diavolezzabahn* celebrated its tenth anniversary in June. At Pontresina, the special mobile exhibition of the Zoological Museum of Zurich University "Der Steinbock — Lebensbild eines Alpentieres" was shown in July and August; the largest Swiss colony of ibexes live near Pontresina (750).

St. Moritz is to have a bypass, and there are two projects for multi-storey car parks. In June, the tower of the Palace Hotel burned down; fortunately the Western part of the building could be saved.

The new automatic telephone exchange at Scuol became operational in April. A new first-class hotel was opened at Savognin (4010 ft) on the Julier Pass.

## VALAIS

The cantonal accounts for 1966 end with a deficit of 6.9m. francs. After the Cantonal Parliament had accepted a Motion to work out a plan for women's suffrage, the Government, too, has been asked to look into the matter.

The new Valais Government's President (Ernest von Roten's successor) is Marcel Gross from Saint-Maurice. The new President of the Cantonal Parliament is Albert Biollaz. (Cons.) The Grand Council debated the freedom of Radio and T.V., its duties and rights.

Sales of land to 200 foreigners were made in 1966 (101 Frenchmen, 42 Germans, 37 Belgians and 14 Italians).

At Montane-Grans, 65 foreigners bought ground and 54 at Verbier.

74 people were killed on Valais roads last year, a small increase. There has been more protest against a *Waffenplatz* at Siders.

East of the Mont Blanc, the new storage power works of Emosson will be built. René Masson is the new manager of the Grande Dixence power station. There are 1000 people engaged in the Valais watch industry.

The Valais farmers have been asked to grow more tobacco. By 12th August nearly 5m. kilos of apricots were sent from the Valais. Too many strawberries, but not enough milk—between 3 and 5m. litres leave to be imported into the Valais. All wine became dearer in February—40 cts. a litre.

The Grammont and Tanay Lake districts are to be protected. The Plyn Forest which was badly damaged by fire three years ago, is to be re-grown, the Canton bearing the cost.

Jubilees: the 100th Anniversary of the birth of the Valais composer Charles Haenni was celebrated in May, and three Golden Jubilees were held: Historic Research Society of the lower Valais, Cantonal Bank, and the *Raiffeisen: verband* of the Upper Valais.

There are over 200 mountain guides in the Canton—they had their Cantonal festival at the end of June. On the last day of July a large wooden cross was erected on the top of Mont Noble—to be seen from the whole Rhône Valley.

The oldest inhabitants, Mrs. Louise Parchet, celebrated her 104th birthday—some one hundred descendants were present. A committee has been set up to look into the question of erecting a monument in honour of the late Hermann Geiger, famous “Glacier Pilot”.

#### COMMUNES

The Commune authorities of Betten have decided to prohibit all motor traffic in the Bettmeralp resort. The new Municipal President of Brigue is Councillor Werner Perrig (Conservative).

The Cantonal Costume Festival of the Valais took place at Martigny on 20th August. All summer, there is an exhibition of works by the well-known Lucerne artist Hans Erni. The old post office was gutted by fire at the end of July.

Carl Zuckmayer and Baroness Tita von Oettingen, known for her research into Walser history, received deeds of citizenship of Saas Fee. Saxon has opened a historic museum, and at Sierre, a new home for spastics was opened this summer.

The Citizen Commune of Sion has a new President, Councillor M. de Torrenté. Sion now has 20,000 inhabitants. The new school centre of Saint-Guérin was opened in May, in June, 30,000 people took part in the Cantonal Music Festival in June, and during the international music month in August, the “Festival Tibor Varga”, 18 concerts took place. Sion has kept up friendly relations with the German town of Augsburg since 1508. For the first time last year, the Sion marksmen went to Augsburg, accepting an invitation issued 450 years ago, and last Whitsun, Augsburg riflemen visited Sion.

Super-Nendaz above Sion is to become the “Village without Noise”, a new summer and winter resort is to be constructed there. A chapel was blessed at 3,700m. in the Monte Rose region, which had been built by mountaineers and students in memory of a charitable parson from Turin, Don Aristido Vesco.

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