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FEDERAL, CANTONAL AND COMMUNAL PLEBISCITES

On 18th February, the Swiss electors had to vote on a draft proposal regarding a general tax amnesty. The first of these had been granted in 1945, and the federal authorities made another proposal which was rejected forcefully by the electors and the majority of the Cantons on 2nd February 1964. Last October, Parliament recommended a new draft proposal to come into force on 1st January 1969 and which would enable the Confederation to order a general amnesty for Confederation, Cantons and Communes from 1969 to 1973.

This time, with a participation of 40.8%, the Swiss citizens and all the Cantons accepted the proposal by 402,542 to 247,162 votes. In most Cantons, there were large majorities, except Berne, Baselstadt and the Ticino. Highest voting participation was registered in Schaffhausen (72.6%), Aargau (67.6%) and Solothurn (61.2%) and the lowest in Vaud and Geneva (both over 19%) and Baselstadt (only 18%).

The Cantonal Government of Schaffhausen received a stained glass panel from the TV Programme "Doppelt oder Nüt" for the record number of voters. The Canton shows an average of a 77.3% participation in federal plebiscites of the last ten years.

At cantonal level, the Ticino accepted the new law regarding public houses and inns, and in St. Gall, citizens decided on joining the intercantonal agreement on higher schools by accepting the Neu-Technikum-Buchs proposal. The Canton will pay 7.7m. towards the cost of construction and half a million francs for the annual upkeep. All members of the Cantonal Government were re-elected and in place of the retiring Dr. Scherrer, *Kantonsrichter* and *Stadtammann* Alois Schmucki, Lichtensteig, was chosen. Thus, there are again 3 Liberals, 3 Conservative Christian Socialists and 1 Social Democrat at the helm.

In Baselland, electors accepted the cantonal building law, the changes in the Cantonal Constitution and the law on foster children, but rejected the proposed *Ladenschlussgesetz* by which evening opening of shops would have been legally anchored. In the Thurgau, National Councillor Josef Harder was elected as successor to the retiring Dr. W. Staehelin as member of the Cantonal Government; all the others were confirmed, and the distribution remains unchanged, i.e. 1 Social Democrat, 1 Farmer, 2 Liberals and one Catholic.

The Aargau electorate rejected a proposed change in the Constitution which would have enlarged the Government from 5 to 7 members. They accepted a proposal according to which a member of the Cantonal Government may now remain in the Federal Parliament for 12 years only. The Liberal Dr. B. Hunziker was elected as successor to the retiring Dr. K. Kim. In Schaffhausen, the Roman Catholic Church has been acknowledged in legal matters by the citizens, and women have been given the right to vote in Church affairs. The children allowances law was accepted, and thus the minimum has been increased from 20 to 30 francs. A change in the election law was also agreed to, allowing for postal voting in case of illness and absence. (Participation 80%).

Solothurn has defeated the proposed introduction of women's suffrage in cantonal matters, but accepted the new law regarding animal diseases. On the other hand, the electors of the Canton of Berne have granted their

women the right to vote in communal matters. They refused the 40-million-franc credit to subsidise private railways by a very small majority and accepted a proposal which enables the Grand Council to fix the price of cooking salt.

The Uri citizens granted a credit for avalanche protection in the Geissberg-Gurtnellen district.

Communes took the opportunity of the federal and cantonal plebiscites to submit various local matters. Large credits were granted for school buildings in Lucerne and Zurich (for the *Töchterschule* 3 on the Bodmer site), and at Duebendorf, though the additional credit for a swimming pool was rejected. The new school building of Brunnen has at long last been decided on after previous rejections of various projects. In Biel, the citizens did not agree to the proposed *Gymnasium* at the lakeside, but accepted the contribution proposal to the Foundation "Mother and Child". The Winterthur citizens agreed to an increased subsidy from 70,000 to 300,000 francs to the Municipal Orchestra and from 22,000 to 165,000 francs to the *Musikschule*.

Various Communes had to elect officers, and in a number of towns and villages large sums were granted for road correction and construction, and in Zurich, the proposed increase in fares for public transport was accepted; the minimum fare will be 50 and the next price 70cts, which is expected to raise an additional 3.65m. francs per annum. Invalids will have cheaper rates. They and needy old people will be granted a one-time winter allowance to help with the increased cost of living. The citizens also granted over 3m. for a new cemetery at Leimbach, and Uster is to have its cemetery enlarged.

For the *Tir Fédéral* in Thun in 1969, there will be a new rifle range, since the citizens have accepted a credit of 5.5m. francs. Zollikon voters have agreed to an extension of the home for old people with a garden at the lake accessible by an underpass. Adliswil (Zurich) has granted 2.3m. francs for the purchase of the restaurant "Sonne" with a communal hall and 3.1m. for the "Wilhof". In some Communes, agreement had to be given for river and stream corrections, notably at Salmsach (Thurgau) where the Aach needs attention.

After a fierce campaign, the Wallisellen citizens (81% participation) agreed to the 8-million credit for a sports and recreation centre, but they refused to grant the 4 million francs needed to rebuild the old doctor's house as an inn. The Commune of Neuenhof in the Aargau accepted the proposal to spend 4.2m. on the purchase of land for a centre (school, administration offices, gymnasium, cultural premises and workshops).

The Spiez voters accepted the plans for a waste-water plant (5.4m.), and Waedenswil voted for 3.5m. francs for the next stage in their waste water scheme.

Kirchberg (Berne) proposed to its citizens to accept an additional grant for the school building inaugurated last year; but the voters rejected it.

St. Moritz is to have a "Parkhaus" where 500 cars can be parked; the scheme will be financed from private sources. The Lyss electorate agreed to further credits to finance the artificial ice-rink.

The R.C. Church of the Thurgau has granted voting rights to their women by a majority of its voters. One of the credits the Burgdorf citizens granted their authorities is for the rebuilding of the town wall. The Olten electorate agreed to a gym and game-site in the *Stadtgarten*.

(*Agence Télégraphique Suisse*.)