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IT HAPPENED IN THE CANTONS OF VAUD AND NEUCHÂTEL

VAUD

Over 8% of the total Swiss population lives in the Canton of Vaud. Very soon, it will reach the half-million mark. 40% of the population live in Lausanne which, with the outlying Communes numbers over 200,000. In the Pays d'Enhaut, the Jura and the predominantly agricultural part of the Canton, there has been a decrease, on the shores of the Léman, thanks to the expansion of Nyon and Morges, numbers remained stationary, whilst in the Vallée de Joux, an increase was registered. A few decades ago, the Canton was truly agricultural, but it has experienced a rapid change: 25 years ago, there were 18,000 farming estates — today, there are only 8,000, nearly half of which are farmed by lessees and no longer by their owners. The development of trade and industry necessitates increased training and the intake of new labour; in this connection, Communes were asked as to their requirements, and 76 of them are willing to accept a total of 9,000 new foreign workers. New tourist centres are also being developed, one is the region of Chaux above Gryon, another is the winter resort of Les Mosses, and at Villars-sur-Ollon, a holiday community centre with 7,000 beds is planned. The Villars Palace, hotel of international repute, two others, as well as garages, swimming baths and ice rink, were sold to the Frederic Tissot organisation for 6.5 million francs. The "Continental" in Lausanne with 116 rooms was put up for auction due to bankruptcy of the owners (Fuchs Concern). The "Central-Bellevue" is being demolished to make room for a department store. To make good the loss of beds, a new hotel centre at Ouchy is being built. An old idea, that of a tower hotel near the "Comptoir" has been brought out again for consideration. The *Ecole Hotelière* in Lausanne celebrated its 75th anniversary. Erich Gerber, Berne, is the new Manager in succession of Siegfried Weissenberger who has been in charge since 1959.

There are still eight Vaudois Communes where no communal taxes are paid, thanks to considerable revenue from forestry. The number, however, is decreasing. The Canton's annual budget for 1969 estimates expenditure of 597m. francs and a deficit of less than half a million. The figures for 1968 are not yet available, but in the previous year, there had been a surplus in revenue of 9.5m., as well as a decrease of 30m. in debts (from 61m.). In 1965, the Cantonal Parliament decided to invest 33m. francs in the new University at Dorigny. Additional credits for the purchase of two other sites (6.5m.) have been granted.

The new President of the Vaudois Council of State is the Radical Pierre Schumacher. The Council are in the course of internal reorganisation; a new Office for Social Welfare and Insurance is proposed. Of the 200 members of the Vaud Parliament, 16 are women, and for the first time, a woman representative of the Farmers' Party has been elected. The Federal Military Department has paid compensation to enable the fishermen of the Hongrin district to restock the Neirvaux and Argnaulaz Lakes, where all fish had died on account of Army waste material having been dumped in the water. The matter has been settled amicably, and the lakes, including the new one created by the power station, now operational, will be inspected regularly.

The Canton of Vaud is one of the last ones in Switzerland where the position of the R.C. minorities is still a

problem; they complain that the State does not use taxes to support their Churches, but only the Protestant Cantonal Church. Even Protestant personalities agree that the two Churches should be treated alike, as for instance in Zurich, and a special commission is now studying the matter. The Civil Chamber of the Cantonal Tribunal have prohibited the publication of an anti-semitic book by a former medical practitioner from Vevey. The books have been destroyed, and for the Jewish community the verdict means a case of precedence.

The town of Lausanne has now its own water purification plant to which twelve Communes are attached. The cost was 30m. francs, and it works absolutely without fouling the air, nor does it spoil the landscape next to the Bourget Park where the EXPO 64 was held. The Confederation has granted 6.8m. towards the cost of other waste-water plants in the region of Vevey. A cultural centre is planned for Lausanne, and a special movement has been started for the preservation of historic relics, sites and monuments of the town. 1,700 students from Lausanne and 2,300 from the rest of the Canton follow extramural courses of Lausanne University. The St. Gall musician Rainer Boesch has been appointed Director of the Conservatoire in succession to the late Carlo Hemmerling. The "Nouvelle Revue de Lausanne" has just celebrated its centenary, and the local home for the blind its 125th anniversary. A very successful Berlin Week was held in Lausanne recently. The new Editor-in-Chief of the "Gazette de Lausanne" is François Landgraf, in succession to the retiring Frank Bridel.

The Castle of Aigle is to be given over to a cultural centre, and the prison which it housed, to be removed. On New Year's Day, the new church of Corsier-sur-Vevey was gutted by fire. The Liberal Democrat Madame Nelly Payot has been elected Commune Council President of Grandson. The Hospital of Lavaux received a legacy of one million francs from the late Madame Louise Buttin, whose mansion is in the care of the old town of Lausanne. Pully has a new school centre, la Tour-de-Peilz a modern telephone exchange with closed circuit TV. The Council of State has granted extra money to enable the restoration of the Abbey of Payerne to be completed. Finally, an all-time record has been set up by Miss Alice Nicollérat at Vevey, who has been in the service of the same family for 76 years.

NEUCHÂTEL

The population of the Canton of Neuchâtel numbered 165,797 at the end of December, an increase of 1,101 in twelve months. The three districts of the *Bas-Canton* showed increases, the three watch-making districts registered decreases. The Canton is now in its 121st year, for which the budget estimates revenue of 132.4 million francs and a deficit of 40,000 francs. The head of the Cantonal Government (Council of State), is Councillor Carlos Grosjean. The Cantonal Parliament agreed to the creation of a new office for factory medicine and industrial hygiene, which is to protect employees from accident risks and occupational diseases. The Canton contributed 17m. francs towards the Cantonal grammar school at La Chaux-de-Fonds, started in November, and 8.6m. for the first phase in the erection of a University Centre.

In November, a home for the mentally handicapped was opened at Malvielliers in the Val-de-Ruz, financed by the Foundation "Les Perces-Neige". The Neuchâtel Friends of Nature have appointed keepers whose task it is to report unscrupulous tourists who spoil plants. A farm house dating to 1505 near la Brévine has been restored and will be used for exhibitions by Neuchâtel artists.

The Neuchâtel Underwater Research and Sports Centre recently inaugurated a "Diving Centre", the first of its kind in Europe and a project that took two years of effort and work to complete. Along with a research centre, it will house a fresh-water diving school.

Cultural life of the town of Neuchâtel is to be promoted; the former Mayor Georges Béguin was elected President of this "Fondation pour le Rayonnement de Neuchâtel". The Natural History Museum has been enlarged and improved. In November, the town's General Council voted a credit of 1.68m. francs for the completion of the renovation of the Municipal Hospital. The new Chief of the Municipal Police is Lieut. R. Habersaat, in succession of the retiring W. Bleuler.

La Chaux-de-Fonds, as usual, is progressive in its views and actions. A new sports training centre is now in use near the town, the Legislative have agreed to the creation of a "Musée et Technorama de l'Horlogerie Suisse"; a permanent theatre commission has been formed for the promotion of theatre life; the "Théâtre Populaire Romand" is to stay in the town and will receive a subsidy, and to mark the 50th anniversary of Debussy's death, a special concert was given. In the Commune Council, the Socialists declined a third seat in favour of the National Progressive Party, a decision made entirely for reasons of fair representation.

A waste-water plant was opened at Col des Roches in the autumn, which will serve the town of Le Locle. At Cernier, the first woman president of a legal tribunal in Switzerland, has taken office — Mrs. Ruth Schaer-Robert.

(Compiled from news and information received by courtesy of Agence Télégraphique Suisse and O.S.E.C.)

ANGLO-SWISS NEWS ITEMS

Ten paintings, drawings and sculptures, belonging to Swiss collectors, were sold at Christie's in London for nearly 400,000 francs mid-December. The highest price was realised by an Utrillo "La Rue du Mont-Cénis", owned by Prof. W. Hadorn, Berne.

On the newly-elected Executive Committee of the World Wildlife Fund whose headquarters are at Morges, there are two British members (Peter Scott and Ernest G. Kleinwort) and two Swiss (Dr. Lukas Hoffmann and Dr. Samuel Schweizer), in addition to one American and one Dutchman.

Great Britain was official guest at the "Microtecnic 69" in Zurich. The international fair on precision technique and dimensional measuring and checking had 140 exhibitors representing 300 firms in 15 countries.

The Swiss Winston Churchill Foundation, founded in 1966, arranged this year's lecture at Basle University. Prof. F. W. Deakin, D.S.O., Warden of St. Antony's College Oxford from 1950-1968, gave a lecture on "Sir Winston as an Historian". The Government of the Canton of Basle gave a dinner at the "Schuetzenhaus" afterwards.

The 13th British-Swiss Parliamentarians' Ski-ing Race took place at Davos on 12th January. The Swiss won and National Councillor Dr. Fred Rubi, Grindelwald, was individual winner.

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