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IT HAPPENED IN THE CANTON OF BERNE

THE SEPARATIST MOVEMENT IN THE JURA

The Separatists in the Jura are still active and are resolved to work for a separate Canton Jura. In June, a detailed report was published by the Bernese Government based on the findings by experts. It dealt with the seventeen proposals made by the Jura Deputation in the Bernese Grand Council. The Jura problem is one of minorities, and it is only fair that the French-speaking Jura minorities should be considered. The three experts, Prof. Dr. Hans Huber (Berne), Prof. Dr. Max Imboden (Basle) and the former Federal Judge Louis Python (Fillistorf) have now been entrusted with the study of the legal side of the proposals.

In the meantime, the "Rassemblement Jurassien," the militant and rebellious movement, continues to demonstrate. At the 18th festival of the Jura people in Delemont in September, their leader maintained that the problem had ceased to be a purely Bernese one and had now reached federal level. An anti-Government resolution was accepted by the demonstrators. The organisation of Jurassiens living outside Jura territory deplored this resolution and appealed to the people of the Jura to realise the danger some of the separatists were for the country, especially where they asked for support from foreign States. The new domestic science teachers' training college at Porrentruy should have been inaugurated on 18th September. The ceremony had to be postponed as the demonstrations announced by the separatists would have caused grave disturbances. The college was then opened on 7th October without any upset.

According to a decision by the Bernese Government in March 1964, cantonal accounts for 1964 were again to show the proportion both in revenue from and expenditure for the Jura. At the end of October, the results were published. State expenditure per head of the Jura population amounted to Fr.539.—, for the rest of the Canton only Fr.499.—. On the other hand, per capita revenue reached only Fr.467.— in the Jura, whereas in the other parts it was Fr.536.—. The Jura was responsible for larger revenue in 1964 than in the previous year, but also caused much heavier expenditure.

The Bernese-Jurassien Working Party, an independent organisation of personalities from all walks of public and private life, at their recent meeting under the chairmanship of National Councillor Walo von Greyerz, declared their willingness to support any action which dealt fairly and objectively with the problem, but condemned the activities of the extremists who did more harm than good.

In the Bernese Parliament, the Jura problem was debated, but the result was postponement of any action until the next report by the experts is published; it was expected for the end of November.