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# IT HAPPENED IN CENTRAL SWITZERLAND

Central Switzerland now has a **Fernmaturitaetsschule** in Lucerne, the Institute "Akademos." Its aim is to fill the gap in Central Switzerland's educational standard. The region also desires increased industrial development.

1966 was a good year as regards foreign tourists, in spite of bad weather, but guests spent shorter holidays there than before. The British tourists showed longest stays, followed by the Belgians. Most nights were registered by the German guests, fewest by the Scandinavians.

The biggest cattle show in Central Switzerland was held in Zug early in September, combined with a farmers' meeting at which "Animal factories or rural cattle breeding?" was the main theme. A first goods-train diesel engine now runs on the Lucerne-Stans-Engelberg line to cope with the vastly increased goods traffic, 19241 tons last year as against only 712 in 1964.

Early in the year, the Lucerne **Naturschutzbund** invited all nature protection groups of the Cantons concerned with the Lake of Lucerne to discuss co-operation in protecting the lake shore and in legislating jointly. In 1655, a fishing agreement came into force between Lucerne and Nidwalden which has been causing strife ever since. The Federal Tribunal was approached in 1934 and worked out a new contract. This has now been accepted at last by the two Cantons, and a bone of contention has been buried.

The fishing communities of the Lake are against racing on the Vierwaldstaettersee. The Cantonal Police of Lucerne had to start treasure diving near Stansstad to lift a safe stolen at Zofingen and dumped in the lake. The thieves who had been committing crimes for a whole year, have been apprehended.

## URI

In 1964, the Canton's Government appointed a study commission on economy and communications. A synopsis of the finding is ready and has been agreed to. The main stress will be on finance, and a first report is now being worked out. The ordinary accounts for 1966 show a deficit of 1½m. francs, about half of what had been budgeted, and the extraordinary accounts covering road construction, water protection, river correction, etc., finished with a deficit of over 4m. francs with expenditure standing at 7.4m.

The Canton of Uri possesses great riches in water which have been well planned and used in the course of the last 50 years. The Federal Railways alone pay nearly 400,000 francs p.a. for the SBB power station Amsteg, Goescheneralp-Reuss, Furka-Reuss, Andermatt-Goeschenen and for conducting the Unteralp-Reuss into Lake Ritom.

In 1928, the "Landsgemeinde" was abolished in Uri. Nevertheless, the first Sunday in May has remained traditional voting and election day. The Cantonal Judges were elected, all but one who had to be re-elected a fortnight later. The electorate accepted the regulations proposed in connection with the federal sickness and accident law. The Corporation Communes of Uri and Urseren elected the Corporation authorities on May 21st. The new member of the Government is Werner Huber, Altdorf, in succession to Dr. M. Huber who has become the new **Ober-gerichtspraesident**.

The Schoellenen Railway celebrated its golden jubilee; it was built by Engineer Richard Zschokke at a cost of 2.6m. francs; at that time it meant the death to the postal carriage.

At the end of June, the first **Alpauflahrt** by helicopter in Switzerland took place in Uri, when a dozen calves were transported by a "Heliswiss" machine from Attinghausen to the Gitschental. Much criticism was voiced, but the Cantonal Government has given its full support.

In July, the Uri Cantonal Utility Federation for garbage removal started work in nine Communes for the time being. An incineration plant will be the next step in the scheme.

The increase in traffic accidents in 1966 amounted to about 13%, roughly corresponding to the higher number of vehicles on the roads. 80% of all accidents happened on the Gotthard route. The Cantonal Government has approached the Confederation's planning authorities with a view to eliminating the awful bottleneck at Altdorf. In Uri's capital, the fifth International Mineral Exchange took place early in September; 2800 visitors came.

The largest credit ever asked for in the history of Goeschenen was granted by the electorate with 1.325m. francs for a new Commune power works. The 16th-century castle A Pro at Seedorf has been fully renovated and is now open again, probably the most valuable historic building in Uri. The foundation stone for a new R.C. Church at Sisikon was laid in June.

### SCHWYZ

The Schwyz Cantonal Constitution is to be revised; a committee of twelve is to study the matter and work out proposals. The new President of the Cantonal Council is the Social Democrat Walter Kuerzi.

Revenue and Expenditure in 1966 were nearly balanced (on the right side) at under 50m. francs, whilst the deficit on road construction and building amounted to 1.5m. francs (expenditure of 12m.). The budget estimates a loss of  $\frac{1}{2}$ m. francs in the ordinary and 5.7m. in the extraordinary accounts.

An unfavourable decision by the electorate in January has had important consequences. The new election law was rejected for the second time, also the law regarding promotion of cattle breeding, and, worst of all, the proposed increase by 20% of



motor-vehicle tax. This means that road construction on Schwyz territory will be held up for lack of revenue. In April, however, the electorate agreed to two proposals, one regarding an increase in dog-tax and one on interest rates and repayment of **Grundpfandschulden alten Rechts**. The district "Landsgemeinde" of the old part of Schwyz took part in May, and the main subject was the mismanagement of investments of the power works Glattalp. In June, the electorate of the Canton accepted three proposals handsomely: the new building project of a trade school Auserschwyz at Pfaeffikon, the revised finance equalisation law and the law concerning measures for improved housing. Finally, another definite "No" in July when the electors refused to have a full-time school psychologist (Referendum). In August, another Referendum was started against the proposed increase in pensions to members of the Cantonal Government. The Canton doubled its contribution to hospitals of 2 francs per person per day. The College of Nuolen is to be enlarged.

The decline in building activities in 1966 was 11%, though building projects between 1967 and 1971 show an increase of 83% over the previous period. The Schwyz **Rathaus** is to be renovated, and the Cantonal Bank has donated its old home — it has just moved into a modern building — to the Canton; it will house police and other administrative offices. Its value is over 1m. francs.



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At the end of August, the new hard-surface runway of the Wangen Airfield was inaugurated. The field was started in 1949 — a site which had been nothing but rushes, moss, clay and water.

The Etzel electricity works near Einsiedeln produced 301m. kwh in 1966, for the first time above 300m.

65% of all the visitors to the Canton were foreigners in 1966. Brunnen is the resort at the top of the list, followed by Gersau and Einsiedeln.

A new State forest is needed in the Canton to improve the soil in the Sennegbach district where subsidence has been considerable. A film has been created in three years called "Land und Alpwirtschaft im Kanton Schwyz", which is of great interest and value.

A roundabout is being planned to improve traffic conditions at Arth. At Brunnen, a new holiday centre is to be built on the site where the "Schiller" Hotel used to be before it burned down; it will consist of hotel, restaurant, skyscraper block of flats, shopping centre and private houses. The cost will be 60m. francs.

**Stift** Einsiedeln is to have the first shelter for cultural treasures in Switzerland; this can also be used in peacetime, for instance as study rooms for visiting scholars who are not allowed access to all parts of the monastery.

Kuessnacht-am-Rigi is to spend 2.2m. francs for a home for old people, and Lachen is to have a modern sports ground. The Lehnenviaduct in the March district is to be replaced by a concrete bridge, and the Schwyz-Stoos Railway is to be improved.

The new training centre of the Franciscan Lay Order at Morschach was opened in June.

The R.C. Commune of Seewen, with a participation of 73% of its voters, has granted women the vote in Church matters. Seewen is 750 years old. The event is being celebrated with an exhibition of graphic art by the Seewen artist Moritz Kennel, and a gold coin worth 200 francs has been minted. The citizens renovated their railway station themselves as a communal gesture to commemorate the jubilee. Another unusual jubilee was celebrated by Mrs Frieda Schuler-Steiger who has been midwife of Siebnen for 60 years. Tuggen has the first woman finance administrator in Schwyz, Miss Paula Bamert.

Wollerau also celebrates its 750th anniversary. The Munich publisher Wilhelm Goldmann donated 15,000 francs to the school Commune of Wollerau.

## OBWALDEN

The Cantonal Constitution dates back to 1902 and lacks clarity and uniformity due to numerous partial revisions. The electors agreed in May that it was to be revised completely. The draft will be submitted to the electorate in May 1968. A Constitution Council of 38 members has begun to study the draft



under the chairmanship of **Oberrichter** Oskar Imfeld, Lungern. Seven commissions are considering the proposals made by experts and jurists.

1966 was a good year for the Canton, economically speaking. Building construction went up by 5m. to 43m. francs, and for 1967, the total should reach 60 million francs. The Cantonal Parliament has considered a finance plan for the next four years, especially regarding new sources of income (though the 1966 accounts ended with a small surplus (ordinary) and a small deficit only in the extraordinary accounts).

The Owalden "Landsgemeinde" took place in spring, and the business was transacted in two hours. It included the election of a new **Landammann** (Christian Dillier), a **Landstatthalter** (Leo von Wyl), both from Sarnen; confirmation in office of Judges, Presidents and Vice-presidents of the Tribunals, Clerks, **Oberfoerster** and Cantonal "Vet". Credits were granted for road construction and various building projects, river correction and avalanche protection.

Girls are to have an improved curriculum at Sarnen, where Latin and Algebra have been added. The question whether girls could join the **Gymnasium** is under consideration. At Alpnach, a special school is planned for handicapped children.

Three months after the publication of "Die Tierwelt in Obwalden", a new work "Die Landammaenner des Standes Obwalden und ihr Wappen" has been published. The author is Dr Pater Ephrem Omlin, Benedictine from Engelberg. The book contains 134 short biographies of all the Cantonal Heads of Government from 1300 to the present.

In spring it was 500 years since Brother Klaus began his hermit's life "im Ranft". A gold and silver coin has been minted and the proceeds are to be used for a Bruder-Klaus-Museum at Sachseln. During a commemorative exhibition, a wooden statue of the Holyman of the Ranft, dating to 1504, which is in the **Landratssaal** of Nidwalden, has been lent to Obwalden.

In June, the **Regierungsraete** of Obwalden joined their colleagues of Nidwalden to a meal and **Kaffeejass**, in order to forget the quarrel dating back to 1792. This event has been successfully arranged annually for many years, alternately in one or the other of the two Cantons. The "Tschiffeler" (Obwaldner) hate to be called this as much as the Nidwaldner dislike the expression "Reissaeckler".

On 21st August, the **Trachenfest** took place at Melchsee-Frutt (2,000m.), and about 200 took part from Central Switzerland. There was folk dancing, and coffee was served from huge copper cauldrons hanging above open fires.

On 15th August, fire badly damaged the aerial cableway Lungern-Schoenbueel. The damage amounted to millions of francs. Already, reconstruction work has begun, and it is being

combined with modernising the whole installation. Helicopters are used to transport materials.

#### NIDWALDEN

The smallest Police Corps in Switzerland is that of Nidwalden. But its 21 men had to make 3000 police reports and 1200 written reports in 1966. The rapid increase in work is largely due to a rise in traffic, road accidents and offences. In the Canton, there are 140km. of rambling paths. For the first time, the authorities have supported financially the Nidwalden section of the Swiss Working Party for Rambling Paths.

Fourteen items were on the agenda of the "Landsgemeinde" at the end of April. It was held in the "Ring" at Wil and attended by 3000 citizens. The visitors included the full Council of State of Geneva, high officers and foreign diplomats. The new **Landammann** is Walter Vokinger, and his deputy is once again the former **Landammann** Dr Alfred Graeni. Dr Edward Amstad, Stans, is the new **Standesherr**, i.e. Councillor of States. **Landschreiber** Werner Wagner retired after 49 years in office. The electorate accepted the proposed "cantonalisation" of the hitherto private **Kantonsspital**, introductory laws regarding traffic, vocational credits for road construction. The only effective opposition to one of the proposals by the Cantonal Government resulted in the grotesque situation that, as the increase in **Landsteuer** was rejected, none could be levied for 1968 unless an extraordinary "Landsgemeinde" was summoned. That was done for 1st October, when the citizens accepted the Government's proposals to anchor 1.5 units as basic tax, and agreed to an increase of 1/10th of a unit for 1968.

The annual accounts for 1966 showed a deficit of half-a-million francs in the ordinary accounts and of 4.7m. in the extraordinary accounts where 18.4m. were spent on national road construction, the new building of the cantonal hospital and water protection. The budget estimates losses of 1.57m. and 2.4m. francs respectively.

The resident population again showed a considerable increase in births in 1966; the six registrars' offices in the Canton registered 165 deaths, but 576 births.

The Commune of Buochs has voted 1.28m. francs for a new **Gemeindehaus** with civil defence quarters, offices, meeting rooms, flats and a bank. A similar sum was voted for a new school building.

The St. Clara Convent at Stans celebrated the 350th anniversary of its foundation. The first skeleton dating back to Alemannic times has been found at Stans. The village now has a Pestalozziweg leading to the projected upper school building, and the first skyscraper was opened, including "Motel Rex".

The mountain jackdaws which are part of the Stans village picture in winter, have proved a menace, for they are gradually ruining the church walls by picking the limestone.