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HELVE**IA**

Jura - Switzerland's newest canton
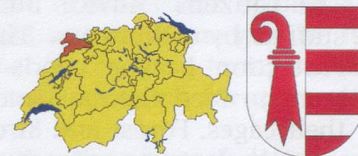
Canton Jura was formed 30 years ago after voters in the north-western region bordering France decided to split from canton Bern. The decision to establish a new canton was the culmination of one of the most bitter territorial conflicts in modern-day Switzerland.

Thirty-five years ago voters in the Jura took the first step to-

but most Jura residents are French-speaking Catholics.

The Jura region became part of canton Bern back in 1815 as Europe's major powers reshaped the political map of Europe following the downfall of Napoleon.

Matters came to a head more than a century later in the late 1940s, as Jura residents began to criticise the authorities in Bern

The Jura authorities are still seeking to bring the three remaining districts into the canton. In 1994, a special Jura Assembly was set up to encourage a spirit of cooperation in the region.

In canton Bern, meanwhile, attempts are underway to grant its French-speaking districts more autonomy in the areas of culture and education.

Jura landscape
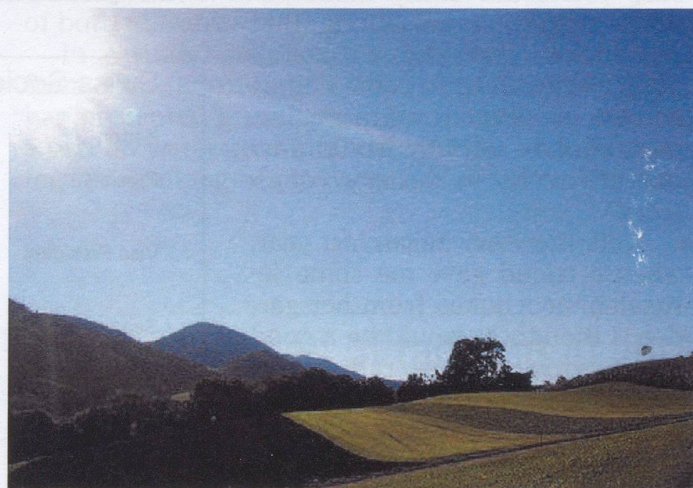
Rolling farm land

wards establishing their own canton. The ballot in 1974 was the first in a series of votes which led to the establishment of canton Jura five years later.

The moves to split from canton Bern went against the political mood of the time, when the country's politicians were rallying behind the idea of national unity in the decades following the Second World War.

At the heart of the conflict were underlying linguistic and religious differences as well as economic and political problems between the authorities in Bern and the Jura.

Canton Bern is predominantly German-speaking and Protestant,

for ignoring the region and its population.

Efforts to defuse tensions failed and led to the launch of several separatist groups, some of which resorted to violence in a bid to win independence for the region.

The moves to create a new canton also led to divisions within the Jura region itself. In the first ballot in 1974, all seven of the districts in the Jura voted in favour of severing ties with canton Bern. But in a later vote three of them decided to remain under Bern's control. After a series of polls, canton Jura was finally established in 1979 as the 26th canton of Switzerland.

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Secretaries: Please send in your club notices for the July edition of Helvetia by June 15, 2009