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IT HAPPENED IN THE CANTON OF BERNE

CANTON

The Youth Service of the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad in Berne publishes a special periodical for the young compatriots living outside Switzerland, called "Weltschweizer". Its last issue was dedicated to Berne and gives an interesting, compact picture of the history, geography and many aspects of the large Canton. One of the chapters deals with the Jura crisis. The Jura separatists have lost a lot of sympathy by the disturbances at Les Rangiers last summer and again recently by the questionable methods used on the occasion of the recent anniversary. In spite of the negative result in the plebiscite in 1959 when 16,354 Jurassiens were against and 15,163 for separation, the *Rassemblement Jurassien* continues to fight. In January, the Jura deputation presented a new catalogue of seventeen demands to the Bernese Government. The Church have been discussing the problem, and organisations like the Nouvelle Société Helvétique have studied the problem in order to find a possible way of mediation. More practical problems have been looked into, so for instance, it has been found that a new Canton Jura which the separatists want, would be financially weak and would have to increase its taxes by at least 15% if the Canton wanted to live as well as at present.

The accounts for 1964 of the Canton of Berne closed with a deficit of nearly 41 million francs. Expenditure had increased by nearly 71 million francs to 395 million francs in a year. The budget for 1965 estimates a loss of 35 million francs.

Road construction in 1965/66 will cost the Canton 55 million francs. Social housing for which a credit of 8.8 million francs had been granted, is to continue. In May, the Cantonal Parliament debated the construction of a new power station at Neu-Bannwil which is to replace an old one in bad condition. At present there are 970 electricity works in the Canton, and opposition to new hydro-electric stations is based on the assumption that atomic power would soon be used.

The question of Berne being connected to the international air traffic net still goes on. There has been a slight increase in the use of Berne Airfield Belpmoos over the previous year. The navigation company on the lakes of Thun and Briez registered a record of passengers in 1964, 1,731 in all. A new organisation has been formed whose aims are the protection of the water and the preservation of the landscape. Another new body is the Cantonal Office for Public Relations in Berne whose Director is Mr. A. Ory from Bienne. The University Extension Courses for Adults number 3,200 members in the whole of the Canton, and the 433 courses and twenty separate lectures held in 1964, were visited by 10,500 students. New regulations have been made in order to facilitate the study of theology to teachers. In April, 52 new cantonal policemen were sworn in at the Castle of Spiez. Two new patrol and lifeboats were also launched on the same day.

In March, there were two landslides on the BLS railway near Kandergrund, which interrupted traffic. Blocks had to be blasted away and the track re-laid. The scene became quite a tourist attraction. Other landslides occurred at Obersteckholz in February and between Ringgenberg and Niederried (Lake of Brienz) in April.

BERNE TOWN

At the beginning of 1964, Berne's population numbered 167,434 and at the end of the year 166,555. This decrease was due to more people leaving the town and a slowing down of the birth rate.

The accounts for 1964 closed with an excess of income over expenditure of nearly half a million francs. For school buildings, road construction and maintenance, waste water plants, etc., 27.7 million francs were spent. The budget for the present year estimates an income of three million francs more than in 1964, but also mounting expenditure, and a deficit of 4.8 million francs is visualised. Grants for new school buildings, kindergartens, waste water plants, renovation of the Gurtenbahn, a civil defence centre on the Allmend, widening of the Felsenau Bridge, an underground garage near the "Rathaus" and other schemes have already been granted or at least prepared. In 1964, over 600 new flats were made available in Berne, nearly a third of which are three-roomed flats. The new building of the "Gymnasium Neufeld" was opened in April. The new Evangelical Church of St. Matthew in the Rossfeld was inaugurated in April.

1962 and 1963 had shown a decrease in Berne's tourist traffic. This tendency was again reversed last year by 6.6% and thus reached a record. Amongst foreign visitors, Germans were still leading, followed by Frenchmen and Americans.

In October, an international symposium for physics and the use of Laser-Rays was held in Berne, and in November, an exhibition on fashion, home and art, the eighteenth "MOWO", was organised in the capital. There was a symposium on the diseases of the aorta. A Swiss Council of Music was founded, and also in November, the annual congress of the Europa Union was held in Berne under the theme "Switzerland and the European Convention for Human Rights". In December, the General Assembly of the Jewish Community elected Dr. Roland Gradwohl as new Rabbi of Berne, and in January, a Swiss Central Office for Tumor Research was opened in the grounds of the Tiefenau Hospital. The U.S.A. Embassy in Berne presented the twenty-six volumes of the Warren Report to the Swiss National Library in Berne early this year.

In March, the Executive of the Council of European Ministers of Transport met in Berne; Switzerland was represented by Federal Councillor Spuehler, head of the Federal Department of Communications and Energy. The "HOGA", the catering trade fair, was held in April, and so was a world exhibition on photography. Eighteen countries sent delegates to the congress of Zoo Veterinary Doctors and a new research centre was opened by Dr. Wander A.G. On 1st May, the Bernese students traditionally welcomed spring by singing, and the "Foyer de la Presse Etrangère" was moved from the Schauptplatzgasse to the Hotel Bellevue-Palace.

The Berner Liedertafel organised its 40th "Bundesabend" in March. The Swiss "Käseunion" marked its Golden Jubilee by a special Jubilee Market at the end of the year. The "Berner Verein zur Verbreitung Guter Schriften" celebrated its 75th anniversary and the federation of Bernese lawyers its centenary. On 1st May, the "Bernische Musikgesellschaft" looked back on 150 years of successful activities.

The "Stella Bernensis", the organisation for French-speaking students, has been re-started. A Mid-day Leisure Club for Girls was opened by the "Amies de la Jeune Fille", and for the last few months, Berne has also had women in the postal delivery service.

OTHER COMMUNES (in alphabetical order)

In order to do away with the unsightly mass of TV aerials on the roofs of **Aarberg**, a central aerial has been constructed which enables excellent reception.

At **Aarwangen**, an Initiative has been launched to ask for the electorate's opinion regarding the renovation of the Oberaargau-Jura railway. From **Adelboden** comes the news that in spite of great efforts the trees which were uprooted during the catastrophic storm two years ago, have not yet all been sold. This creates concern as valuable timber lies neglected.

Basseccord has a new secondary school built in a novel way: four buildings are grouped around a courtyard, which allows the sun to penetrate the last corner.

The town of **Bienne**, a centre of the Swiss Watch-making industry, is not normally connected with tourism. Yet it has attractions which appeal to travellers, such as the beautiful position on the shores of Lake Bienne and at the foot of the Jura mountains, the old town, where time has stood still since 1800, a selection of over a dozen excellent hotels, a night club, banqueting and conference rooms. Particularly rewarding excursions are those to the St. Peter's Isle — a real jewel — and the Jura mountains with their deep gorges. The population of 67,000 is composed of French- or German-speaking inhabitants, the town being on the linguistic border.

Though much building has been done in Bienne, there is a shortage of housing. The College for Applied Arts is being enlarged, and a third settlement for old-age pensioners has been opened in the "Mett". The Lake Police has a new lifeboat, and problems facing the authorities concern Bienne's drinking water which is in danger.

The Commune of **Brienz** is against an aerial cableway to the Brienz Rothorn, and the organisation "Mys Schwyzenderfli" is planning an open-air museum on the Ballenberg near Brienz. At **Burgdorf**, part of the historic town wall collapsed early in May. The fifteenth exhibition of Swiss agricultural machinery was held at Burgdorf a few weeks ago. At **Corban**, four young men were killed when their aeroplane crashed in the Bernese Jura.

The old orphanage of **Delémont** has been sold. The proceeds will finance the new school building. At **Interlaken**, the famous "Tellspiele" celebrated their Golden Jubilee. "The Times" devoted a long article to these open-air productions with their natural stage and their appeal as patriotic play, and as a "pastoral and thriller". The jubilee book showed a photograph taken during the first performance of Wilhelm Tell at Interlaken in 1912, portraying the small son of the hero, at that time none other than the present Federal Councillor Schaffner.

Koeniz has now a department store, and last year's accounts of the Commune closed with a deficit of one million francs. 25.7 million francs have been granted for the extension of the hospital at **Langenthal**. The new teachers' training college was opened in April. The water supply system has to be brought up to date owing to a large increase in the population. The "Langenthaler Tagblatt" has celebrated its centenary.

Early in March, a group of hunters were able to kill nine wild boars in the district of **Laufen**. Emil Balmer who was awarded one of the literature prizes of Berne, gave the prize money to the old-age home of his place

of origin **Laupen**. The citizens of the same Commune decided to replace the annual citizens' allotment of timber by an old-age pension. **Lengnau** is to have a skyscraper and **Lyss** a vocational training college. Of **Moutier's** 8,026 inhabitants, 1,216 are foreigners. The monastery church of **Orpund** is to be renovated, and **Reichenbach** is to have a waste water plant at the cost of 2.2 million francs.

Spiez has a new church community centre, and **Thun** organised a competition for the extension of the Applied Arts College (cost: 7-8 million francs). The citizens of **Tramelan** agreed to a credit for renovating the slaughterhouse. Early in April, Tramelan was the home of the "HOR EXPO", an exhibition concerning the various branches of the watchmaking industry. **Uetendorf** is to have a new primary school and **Urtenen-Schoenbuehl** a new church. The Commune Assembly of **Worb** agreed to a project of a new school building at the cost of 4.8 million francs. (By courtesy of Agence Télégraphique Suisse.)

NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE

At Easter there were anti-atom-bomb marches and demonstrations in several Swiss towns. On 1st May there were traditional processions and demonstrations by Socialists, Trade Unions and workers' organisations.

A working party was organised at the Philipp-Albert Stapfer House at Lenzburg Castle to discuss the question of whether Switzerland should have an international centre on the pattern of Wilton Park. It was decided to make a start with courses intended to further international relations.

At a meeting in St. Gall, the experts on the Swiss language expressed concern that the mother tongue of part of Switzerland, German, which acts as an umbrella to all the different varieties of "Schwyzerdütsch", was in danger of becoming shallow, and that there should not only be organisations for the protection of monuments and countryside, but also of the language.

The "Jerusalem Prize" was awarded to the Swiss author and playwright Max Frisch. The literary competition of the "Schweizer Spiegel" was won by Ursula Isler-Hungerbuehler for her novel "Am Ufer".

Max Daetwyler is known as "Apostle of Peace" in many parts of the world. He has been joined by a second Swiss, an "Apostle for Education" in the person of Jacques Muehlethaler, from Geneva, who is touring Europe with his "Charter for Men".

The Swiss Federal Railways have prohibited the sale of a German illustrated magazine at their book stalls on account of a series of articles on nudist culture.

His Holiness Pope Paul received a book "Pour l'Europe" by Robert Schuman and the three volumes "Histoire Illustrée du Catholicisme" on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. The presentation was made by the Geneva publisher Louis Nagel.

The Swiss Pharmacopoeia, the official drug list, has been compiled for one hundred years.

Julius Mueller, a well-known Swiss-American business man, now retired at Zollikon, has given one million Swiss francs to Swiss Cancer Relief.

An American, John Jeffries, who died in 1964, has left his fortune of several hundred thousand dollars to the Swiss Evangelical Church.

The 1964 contest "Come and paint the Ticino", sponsored by the Ticino Tourist Association, has met with an excellent response. Mr. Charles W. Cadley of Manchester won third prize. [A.T.S.]