

It happened in the canton of Neuchâtel

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IT HAPPENED IN THE CANTON OF NEUCHÂTEL

Monday, 1st March, was a holiday in the six districts of the Canton of Neuchâtel. This was to celebrate the 117th anniversary of the Republic of Neuchâtel. All public buildings had the flags out, and an artillery salute was fired in Neuchâtel harbour.

At the moment the Canton has a population of 158,934. Of these only 58,202 are local citizens, 74,820 come from other parts of Switzerland and 25,912 are of foreign nationality. Women are in the majority by 7,000.

The annual accounts for 1964 closed with a surplus of over 4½ million francs, revenue standing at 91½ million francs. The budget for 1965 operates at a lower level and with a deficit of 2.8 million francs. Taxable property in the Canton amounted to Fr.2,096,196,000.—, an increase over the previous year of Fr.158,644,000.—. Taxable income stood at over 959 million francs.

The new manager of the Neuchâtel Cantonal Bank is Monsieur Jean-Pierre Zahnd, hitherto manager of the International Credit Bank in Geneva. His predecessor Monsieur Théophile Bringolf retired on 30th November.

The 115 seats in the Cantonal Parliament have been redistributed according to the census of December. Members of Parliament will be elected this spring, also the Government. The district of Neuchâtel (with 47,026 inhabitants) will have 34 seats, La Chaux-de-Fonds (43,016) 32, Boudry 18, Le Locle 14, Val de Travers 10 and Val de Ruz 7. The doyen of the Grand Council, Monsieur Emile Losey, will retire after thirty-four years of service in Parliament. (*Many of our readers know Monsieur Losey as former Secrétaire Romand of the Schweizerischer Kaufmännischer Verein, an Honorary Member of the Swiss Mercantile Society in London.*)

The Neuchâtel penal code is to be revised, and a Bill regarding public places and cinemas has been worked out. Parliament accepted increases in family allowances in agriculture and viticulture. A credit for Fr.180,000.— was granted for the creating of an institute of pathological anatomy. 43 distillers of absinthe — an illegal occupation in Switzerland — who had been fined by various tribunals in the Canton appealed to Parliament, and their fines have been reduced by more than half.

At the end of March, four Russian women attended a meeting of the Grand Council, one of them Mrs. Lydia Pushkarjawa, a member of the Supreme Soviet.

The University of Neuchâtel has had 1,120 students during the winter term, 450 from the Canton, 315 from other parts of Switzerland and 355 from abroad. For the next ten years, 26 million francs will be spent on enlarging the University, 7 m. for an institute of chemistry, 11.2 m. for general quarters and 3.8 m. for an institute of physics.

In March, there was a conference of *Rectors*, *Chancellors* and *Vice-Chancellors* of European Universities in Neuchâtel. Prof. Jacques Courvoisier (Geneva) is the President of the permanent conference of 175 members.

Ten African clergymen have been attending special courses in Neuchâtel and subsequently worked in parishes. They hold scholarships from the Ecumenical Council of Churches and are all over forty.

Considerable controversy has been caused by the proposed Jura oil pipe line with a refinery at Cressier. This is being built by "Shell Switzerland". Many Communes have protested, also the society for the preservation of the countryside.

The district between the Lakes of Neuchâtel and Bienne (Zihl-Thiele-plain) is being re-planned. New

industries and the construction of highways have brought many changes. There will be a green zone especially along the Zihl. An Initiative has been launched for the preservation of the Jura hills with protected zones.

In 1964, the professional fishermen of the Lac de Neuchâtel registered 420,500 kg of captured fish. Well over half of it was perch.

Wine lovers will be pleased to hear that the 1964 vintage was "excellent". It was said that in 1963 with its rainy summer, nature had done little and man much for the wine, whereas last year it was nature which contributed most and man only little. Over four million litres were produced, mainly *Le Landeron*, *Auvernier* and *Bevaix*. Accordingly, the Fête des Vignerons in October was particularly brilliant.

The town of Neuchâtel had a population of 36,116 at the end of last year, 570 more than in December 1963. The annual accounts for 1964 ended with a small surplus, whereas the budget had estimated a deficiency of nearly two million francs. The budget for the present year visualises an even greater loss.

The Municipality is to have an electronic centre for its administration, which will also be used by the University. The Library has been presented with a valuable letter by Jean-Jacques Rousseau dated 1760.

Within the framework of an international effort to synchronize the clocks of the various Continents, two quartz clocks arrived at the Neuchâtel Observatory, and it was found that the difference was no more than a ten-thousandth of a second. At the annual competition for chronometers arranged by the Observatory, 591 chronometers took part. Several records for accuracy were beaten, and the winners were products of factories in Neuchâtel, La Chaux-de-Fonds, Le Locle, St. Imier, Bienne, Lausanne and Japan (23 Japanese chronometers were sent in).

The first "Y Men's Club" in Switzerland was founded in Neuchâtel, men of good will, prepared to help others. Youth problems were put at the top of the list of their tasks. The charter was sent to the club from Amsterdam.

In the autumn there was an art exhibition on boats in the harbour, arranged by thirty local artists. This "Salon Flottant" was organised because the hire of suitable premises is too expensive.

The population of **La Chaux-de-Fonds** will soon reach the 42,000 mark. The rapid growth has brought problems, and the new hospital on which already 35 million francs have been spent, will require another 3½ m. Electricity supply has to be increased, a new transformer and a pumping station are needed. School buildings will have to be enlarged, and a dental clinic for schools has been planned. The theatre will be renovated, too. A study party was held concerning the various occupations within the watch industry. Some seventy journalists took part in it. The electronic and metronomic watch laboratories of Le Locle were visited, the modern workshops of the watchmakers' school in La Chaux-de-Fonds and the watch sector of the "Modhac 64", the fashion exhibition.

Le Locle's inhabitants numbered 14,716 at the end of 1964. For the first time, diplomas for nuclear technologists were awarded to twelve students who had followed a special post-training course. It lasted 22 weeks, and six visits to European atomic centres were made. There was a congress on spectrology in October, at which one of the most prominent participants was Father Joseph

Junkes, founder and director of the Vatican Laboratory for Astro-Physics.

At **Auvernier** there was an exhibition of Old-Persian Art, and at **Colombier**, a bronze bust of Corps Commander Jules Borel was unveiled. Early in March, a serious fire badly damaged the workshops of a decorator, and valuable furniture and machinery were destroyed. A new periodical is being published at Colombier, "Le sous-officier Neuchâtelois".

The wines of the "Hôpital Pourtalès" at Cressier were auctioned in February, a total of 67,500 l. white at an average price of Fr.2.84 per litre and 3,560 l. red at between Fr.5.35 and 6 francs.

From **Fleurier** comes the news that, owing to shortage of staff, the "Courrier du Val-de-Travers" would have no more issues on Saturdays.

The energetic protest by the Commune of **Geneveys-sur-Coffrane** has resulted in the rifle shooting command of Colombier prohibiting shooting on Saturdays to enable people to go for walks on the neighbouring heights.

The only Institute for Psycho-Dynamics in Europe is at **Lignièrès**. At its third annual meeting it was stated that valuable findings had been made which would increase safety on the road.

At **Prises sur Pesieux** the school had to be closed as the number of children was too small.

Three hundred farmers took part at the traditional rally of **La Sagne** on the first Saturday in February, and **St. Blaise** celebrated its patron saint whose name the Commune has had since the beginning of the thirteenth century. The young men and women just come of age were welcomed into the adult world of citizenship.

The new production centre of the united tobacco manufacturers at **Serrières** was opened in the autumn, the most modern cigarette factories in Europe. On the road to **Valangin** large quantities of earth and rocks fell on to the road in the Gorges du Séyon on 23rd March.

(News by courtesy of Agence Télégraphique Suisse.)

NEW LIFE ON THE RIGI

On 9th February 1961, the Grand Hotel Rigi Kaltbad was gutted by fire. Eleven people (staff and visitors) lost their lives. Now a new chapter in the history of Rigi hotel life is being written: a brand new kind of hostelry will arise, a hotel centre allowing for living quarters for holiday makers, with studios, family rooms, various refreshment rooms and snack bars, a shopping centre as well as sports grounds for curling, skating and a heated swimming pool fed by water from the well-known Kaltbad Spring. A block of flats is included in the set-up with small and large flats which can be bought. A new funicular is planned within this unusual tourist centre which is expected to be finished in the summer of 1966.

Information regarding the flats may be obtained from Stadt/Land Immobilien A.G. St. Petersstrasse 17, Zurich.

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MEMORIAL OF AIR DISASTER

The final investigation into the air disaster at Duerenaesch on 4th September 1963 took place in February. There were no new discoveries, and the final report will be published in due course.

On 21st March, a monument commemorating the disaster in which 74 passengers and the crew of six lost their lives, was unveiled. The tragic event is symbolised by a falling angel and a farmer who drops his spade in horror. The simple stone is the work of the Aargau sculptor Eduard Spoerri. Authorities from the Cantons of Aargau and Zurich, relatives and friends of the victims, pilots and stewardesses of Swissair and large numbers of visitors were present at the ceremony.

[A.T.S.]

NEWS AT RANDOM

The Salvation Army in Switzerland employs over 600 members. 120 meeting halls are at the S.A.'s disposal. Their night homes (6) offer places to 2,000 guests. They also run 4 work centres, 4 second hand shops, 3 country camps, 2 educational homes for girls, 5 children's homes, 7 womens' homes, 1 hotel, 7 assistance stations for the sick and the poor, and 3 youth centres for holiday camps.

The foundation "Für das Alter" has just announced a record collection of Fr.1,599,216.— (net) for 1964, Fr.97,000.— more than in 1963.

There are nine centres for Tibetan refugees in Switzerland (Samedan and Buchen in the Grisons, Unterwasser and Ebnat in St. Gall, Waldstatt in Appenzell A.R., Münchwilen in Thurgau, Oetwil and Rikon in Zurich, Reitnau in Aargau), the number of refugees is over 230.

The Swiss boy scout and girl guide movement shows an increase in membership for 1964. At the end of the year there were 14,707 guides and nearly 50,000 scouts. The figures include 357 handicapped guides, 5,584 rovers and 397 clergymen.

The Tate Gallery in London recently paid £3,800 for a sketch by Henry Fuseli of Mrs. Siddons as Lady Macbeth seizing the daggers.

(Mainly by A.T.S.)

ZURICH — A THEATRICAL CENTRE

Besides the opera house and playhouse (Schauspielhaus), and the stages at the Kongresshaus and Volkhaus used mainly for guest performances, the current theatre season has brought the opening of five small stages. The "Theater am Neumarkt", recently taken over by the city, and the "Theater an der Winkelwiese" which is housed in the cellar of an old villa specialize in experimental and avantgarde productions. The same mansion-like villa which belongs to the city is further host to a delightful one-room theatre. Shows, musicals and light entertainment are the main features on the programmes of the "Theater am Hechtplatz" and the "Rudolf Bernhard-Theater", located also in the city-owned premises.

[S.N.T.O.]

A NAUTICAL EXHIBITION IN LUCERNE

The 2nd IBA "International Nautical Salon" will be held in Lucerne from 8th to 16th May, 1965. The first salon took place in 1964, with some sixty-five exhibitors displaying over 130 boats of all categories, as well as accessories and equipment of all kinds for nautical sports.

[O.S.E.C.]