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IT HAPPENED IN CENTRAL SWITZERLAND

INNERSCHWEIZ

Twelve representatives of the Cantonal Governments of Central Switzerland met for a first conference regarding improved co-operation amongst the Cantons of Uri, Schwyz, Nidwalden, Obwalden, Lucerne and Zug. For 1967, the Government of Schwyz has been entrusted with chairmanship and secretarial duties. The aim is that problems which are too big for some of the smaller Cantons, should be solved jointly.

The "Verband Landwirtschaftlicher Genossenschaften der Zentralschweiz" celebrated its 75th anniversary.

On 10th December, the new motorboat "Pilatus" had its maiden voyage on the Lake of Lucerne. It is 40 metres long and can carry 400 passengers.

The Literature Prize of the Innerschweiz has been awarded to Pater Dr S. Frick, Sarnen, for his works on Federer.

The first accounts of the "Zentralschweizerisches Technikum" in Lucerne since alterations and additions were made, show that the credits granted of 6.1m. francs have been overspent by nearly a quarter of a million francs.

URI

The Canton of Uri has great financial worries. The results for 1965 showed a deficit of Fr.313,000.— in the ordinary and 2.6m. francs in the extraordinary accounts. The latter is mainly due to road construction, and the Government consider the vast sums needed "unbearable" for such a small Canton. The budget for 1967 estimates a deficit of 2.5m. francs in the ordinary accounts, and the uncovered debt amounts to 22m. francs.

The Cantonal Parliament decided to increase the tax on motor vehicles, which would bring in an additional quarter of a million francs.

Whilst the Canton of Uri was spared the epidemic of foot and mouth disease early in 1966, it nevertheless cost over Fr.100,000.— to immunise cattle; all 12,625 heads were vaccinated. Cattle is insured for 25m. francs.

The St. Annakapelle at **Altdorf** has now been fully renovated. The oldest teacher in Switzerland, Prof. Kaspar Schnyder (84) at the "Kollegium Karl Borromeus" retired after 57 years of teaching.

The new station building at **Andermatt** has been opened. The Protestant Church at Andermatt has been given an organ by the Church Parish Zurich-Albisrieden.

The Wattigwilerturm at **Buerglen** has been renovated and turned into an historic Tell museum. The Commune Assembly

defeated a project to have secret ballots for elections. The restoration of the "Wasserschloesschen" at **Seedorf** was completed some time ago, and that of another valuable cultural monument, the Baroque church of the Convent of St. Lazarus (1696) was finalised in November.

SCHWYZ

Schwyz, too, has financial worries. The estimated results for 1967 show a deficit of nearly a million francs in the ordinary and nearly 6m. francs in the extraordinary accounts. New schools show losses of 1m., the Gewerbeschule Goldau of 2½m. and road construction of 2.7m. francs. The total amount spent on the latter will amount to 27m. Motor vehicle taxes are to be increased by 20 per cent.

Vocational training will in future be centred in Goldau and Pfaeffikon. The latter college is to be built according to a project chosen in a competition. A full-time school psychologist has been proposed for the Canton's educational establishments.

An "oil brigade" has been formed in Schwyz, whose duties are similar to those of the fire brigade, viz. to prevent and fight damage caused by defective oil tanks, especially in connection with water supplies.

The foot and mouth disease epidemic early in 1966 cost the Canton 177 head of cattle, and the damage amounted to over a quarter of a million francs.

The new electricity works of Neu-Wernisberg belonging to **Schwyz** became operational in the autumn. Schwyz will have its Council Chambers (Rathaus) renovated at the cost of 2m. francs. Canon Dr Carl Kuendig (95), celebrated his seventieth anniversary as priest.

At **Arth** citizens rejected projects for one and accepted those for another school. A new home for old people has been opened, and road construction has eliminated traffic congestion both at Arth and **Biberbrugg**. **Buttikon** which belongs to Schuebelbach politically, has become a separate Church Parish. **Feusisberg**, too, now has its own home for old and sick people.

The citizens of **Freienbach** granted credits for schools, for a school psychology service, new salaries for the authorities, road construction and street lighting, but rejected plans for a central rifle range and parking facilities for the Badeanstalt.

Gersau's former "Villa Flora" has become the new attractive Rathaus. Its extensive gardens are now open to the public. **Ibach**, too, voted for a new school building, and the **Illgau** organist, Mrs Betschart-Buergler, received a gold medal from the Pope for special services rendered in 45 years.

At **Kuessnacht**, the new "Phrundhaus" was opened some time ago and now houses cantonal police and has a civil defence shelter

for 180 people. At **Lachen**, the first civil defence emergency hospital in Switzerland was opened in October. **Wollerau** opened a home for 44 old people, and at **Lauerz** the old school house was burnt to the ground in November.

The traditional celebration in memory of the Battle of Morgarten took place near **Sattel** on 15th November. 1400 marksmen took part in the Morgarten Shooting Contest. The citizens of **Tuggen** rejected the sanitary installation project and the proposal that the Commune Council should in future engage Commune staff. **Wangen** is yet another small Commune which has granted large sums of money for a new school building with gymnasium.

OBWALDEN

The Government of the Canton of Obwalden appealed to the citizens to take a more active part in public affairs and to submit suggestions regarding the revision of the Cantonal Constitution. Many proposals have already been received, amongst them one asking for vote for women.

Obwalden's budget for 1967 estimates nearly ½m. francs on the wrong side in the ordinary accounts and over 1m. in the extraordinary accounts. The latter are again mainly due to road construction. The 28.5 km.-long National Road on cantonal territory will cost a total of 200m. francs.

The Cantonal Parliament decided to increase vehicle taxes by about 20 per cent to bring them in line with the rest of the country. The first fully biological water purification plant of the Canton became operational at the end of the year; it is at Melchsee-Frutt. The annual accounts for the electricity works at Kerns finished with a small surplus in 1965.

The last celebration of **Engelberg's** entry into the Canton of Obwalden 150 years ago took place at the end of November. A casket containing the most important historic documents was buried on the station square. The same month, a new telephone exchange became operational. Since last summer, an ultra-modern church building resembling a fortress, adorns the Obwalden capital. It will be dedicated to St. Martin.

NIDWALDEN

Nearly a million francs will be missing in the Nidwalden annual accounts for the present year, and 1.4m. francs will be added to the cantonal debt through an estimated deficit mainly due to road construction, waste water plants and building of the Cantonal Hospital. The national road from Hergiswil to Stans has been open since last summer and has greatly improved traffic conditions in the area.

Stans has a new station building which houses the Commune Chancellery, the tax and registrar's offices. The first stage of a modern waste-water plant was completed at Stans in November.

LUCERNE

Deficits are forecast also for the annual accounts in Lucerne: 6¼m. francs in the ordinary (179m. revenue) and 12.6m. in the extraordinary accounts (60m. revenue). Deficits of between 6 and 13m. francs will have to be covered in the next few years, and plans are being worked out to establish priorities. Tax increases will have to be made, motor taxes increased, and subsidies will have to be cut. Every 'Staatsstelle' is being urged to make savings. A sum of 6.7 m. francs has just been asked for by the Government for building projects alone. Cost of living grants of a further 2½ per cent have again been made for all civil servants. For 1966, 62 Communes will receive a cantonal grant.

The Protestant citizens of the Canton accepted the proposed Cantonal Church Constitution.

The new Verwaltungsdirektor of the Cantonal Hospital is Dr iur. Markus Renggli from Meggen. The Cantonal Government has declared the Egolzwilersee as protected area, so far on a temporary basis.

The town of **Lucerne** will spend 5.3m. francs on road construction; this credit has been granted by the electorate who also agreed to 6.5m. francs last summer for an indoor swimming pool.

The Municipal President Paul Kopp has stated that he would resign at the end of the present term of office (June).

Federal Councillor Gnaegi gave an address on 11th January, in which he outlined the general conception of energy production and deplored the lack of conception in reactor construction in Switzerland. The address was given during one of the courses on Staatsbürgerkunde organised in Lucerne.

The "Kaufmannischer Verein" of Lucerne celebrated its centenary, and the painter Max von Moos has been awarded the art prize for 1966. A record number of visitors went to the Transport Museum in 1966: 340,000 people.

An international cheque forger of German origin could be apprehended in Lucerne early this year thanks to the clever conduct of a bank cashier.

In November, an extremely bold robbery was carried out at the **Emmen** post office when the thief got away with Fr.29,000.—. **Gisikon's** Restaurant "Zur Post" was gutted by fire in October, and the inhabitants of **Horw** accepted waste-water and school building projects for 4.2m. francs. At the end of November, the new Gondelbahn was opened at Marbach, and on private initiative, a small indoor pool has been constructed at **Meggen**, seeing that preparations for a public scheme have been delayed too long.

Richenthal awarded honorary citizenship to Prof. Emil Achermann, Hitzkirch, for his great achievements in the interest of teachers' training. **St. Urban**, like its political sister Commune of

Phaffnau, is to have an expensive school building with gymnasium (nearly 2m. francs). An old traditional custom was again adhered to at Sursee when the "Gansabhauet" took place on 11th November. If one of the contestants wearing "sunmasks" succeeds in beheading a hanging goose (blindfold), he may keep it. The farmers' periodical "Landwirt" at Sursee has just celebrated its centenary. The former country house of Uetenberg today houses a rich collection of costumes and various antique seals and jewellery, as well as the archives of the Swiss Yodelling Association.

—The Swiss Observer

News of the Colony

WELLINGTON SWISS CLUB

The Annual General Meeting of the Wellington Swiss Club took place on Saturday, 8th April, in the Matterhorn Coffee Lounge. Thirty-seven members and a few non-members were present. Our Charge d'Affaires and his wife honoured us with their presence.

Mr Frick, our president, opened the meeting at 8.30 p.m. The minutes of last year's General Meeting were read, then the President's Report followed, from which we learned that this year once again was a very successful one for our club. We had four indoor meetings, namely the Chilbi, our National Day Celebration, a Metzgete and the Christmas Party, and six outdoor functions, consisting of walks, picnics and our already traditional Car Rally, as well as Shooting. Most of these functions were very well attended. The Treasurer's Report followed. Our club funds have risen again during the past year and the membership too. The voting of our new rules followed. The present members agreed to all of them.

The next item on the agenda was our 10th Jubilee. Mr Frick gave us a short essay about the arrangements already made for this occasion. We ordered some Cantonal flags and a Swiss flag from Switzerland.

Mrs Messmer was proposed as an honorary member and the Assembly accepted it. Mr Schaerer was called in the chair for the election of the new Committee which consists of.—President: Mr Werner Frick. Vice-President: Mr Walter Gaehwiler. Treasurer: Mrs Ruth Messmer. Secretaries: Miss Gaby Mueller and Mrs Lotti Napp. Members: Mrs Ann Rufer, Messrs Anton Tresch, Enrico Homberger and Andrew Staehelin. Auditor: Mr Nick Matt.

The official part of the meeting closed at 10 p.m. Thank you once again Mr and Mrs Tresch for letting us have the Matterhorn.

—G.M.