

Vellerat joins the Jura

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The ruins of the Berghotel as it looks today, a sorry sight indeed.

FALLIHÖLLI IS NO MORE

In the April 1995 issue of the *Helvetia*, we reported about the disastrous landslides which engulfed the newly created holiday resort of Fallihölli in the canton of Fribourg. The incessant downward movement of the soil eventually destroyed 35 houses, several holiday chalets and one whole hotel. The authorities of Fribourg have now decided to wipe Fallihölli totally off the face of the earth by bulldozing out of sight all that is left of the once proud dream village. The site will be abandoned and given back to nature to deal with it as best it can and the name of Fallihölli will no longer appear on any future maps. Most affected home owners have been compensated by the insurances but some of them have decided to take legal action against the authorities of Fribourg on the grounds that the local government should never have allowed the construction of Fallihölli in the first place, particularly on a slope which had been declared as unstable by expert geologists well before the building permits were issued.

MODERN SPIES

Three Swiss hackers have managed to break into the Swiss army's computer system and for months obtained access to classified information on ammunition depots and lay-outs of the army's mountain fortifications. Naturally the army is very embarrassed about this breach of secrecy and has ordered an inquiry. The hackers first claimed they only did it for fun but then subsequently admitted that the idea was to obtain some personal financial gain for their hard work....

VELLERAT JOINS THE JURA

The little-known village of Vellerat (70 inhabitants) in the Bernese Jura, high above the valley of the Birs, is celebrating its attachment to the canton of Jura following a nationwide poll which approved the move with a record 92% of votes in favour of it. In Vellerat itself, the voting was 100% for the move, not a single citizen being against it. This in itself is a record too. The authorities of the canton of Jura expect now that other localities in the French speaking

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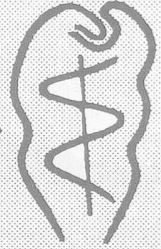
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Bernese Jura will want to follow in Vellerat's footsteps. They have their eyes on the important township of nearby Moutier as their next target. So the battle between Jura and Bern has still a long way to go. One point of interest though. Why does the whole country have to vote on such an issue? Would it not be more logical and far simpler to leave the decision to each village or township as to which canton they want to belong to? After all, how much would a person living in the Engadin for instance care about whether Vellerat is part of the Jura or not? It was not as if Vellerat wanted to break away from Switzerland, all it wanted was simply to be united with a canton where people speak the same language. But we suppose that under the motto "Einer für Alle, Alle für Einen" it was necessary for 4 million voters to be asked to decide the fate of just a handful of citizens.

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The local Mayor of Vellerat together with members of the Jura Government during the celebrations in front of a huge Jura flag.