

It happened in the Cantons of Grisons and Ticino

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no longer ignore the fact that half the people in the world are hungry, the threatening existence of the atom bomb, that civilization is becoming a worldwide affair — we are all part of the anxious, unstable and agitated universe, and, on leaving “Switzerland Examines Herself”, the face of Christ reminded us of the permanence of the Christian message, but at the same time it also represented a searching question which concerns all of us.

“A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE”, the last subdivision, was an act of faith in the country’s future. Through frank self-examination, loyal to ourselves, we shall be able to create the Switzerland of tomorrow. We must foresee and prepare with individual sense of joint responsibility. “*Let us forge ahead, loyal to ourselves, our country and our tradition. Forge ahead in the development of our national territory, in education, instruction and economics, in the service of our country’s defence. Forge ahead towards ever-vaster horizons — neutrality, solidarity, participation. Forge ahead through clear reflec-*

tion and thought and break away from the confusion of contradictory opinions and discover, experience and proclaim the truth.”

That, briefly then, is a recapitulation of “The Path of Switzerland”. Much there is of a tremendous and priceless heritage. What are we going to add to it in the future? The picture overleaf seems to represent something of what we are feeling at the beginning of this new year. We have to go forward into unknown space of time. We shall be struggling along like the men in the picture, uphill for all of us in one way or another. We shall need patience, courage, a lot of honest goodwill and undaunted determination to reach the summit. Even then the sky may not be clear and fog may cover parts of the landscape. But the promise is there. The reward will be ours if we let our courage be tempered with concern, our good will with unselfishness and our determination with charity, our hopes and endeavours with faith.

IT HAPPENED IN THE CANTONS OF GRISONS AND TICINO

GRISONS

The Grisons are called the “Country of 150 Valleys”. The man from the lowlands who only knows the beauties of the Grisons as a holiday paradise hardly realises the problems and difficulties this, the largest but sparsely populated Swiss Canton, has to cope with. The sacrifices needed by the mountain Communes to stop their young citizens from emigrating and to build alpine roads and tunnels, viaducts and avalanche protection dams are not generally known in other parts of Switzerland. A quarter of the Swiss road network and half all the alpine roads are situated in the Grisons. Equally difficult are the problems the 395 km. Rhaetian Railways has to contend with. Its inclusion in the Swiss Federal Railways is becoming more and more urgent. Another seven million francs were voted by the Grand Council in November to make improvements. In addition, the economic boom has reached the Grisons less spectacularly than other more accessible parts of Switzerland. It is vital that the Grisons communications should be joined to the international rail and road networks.

Ninety years ago, the small people of 90,000 inhabitants managed to build a road network which was three times the size of that of the rest of the Confederation. It cost the Grisons 16.7 million francs of which only one million was paid for by the Confederation. After the opening of the Gotthard and the Brenner, it was no longer used for transit traffic, but the Grisons used it in their effort to develop tourism. In 1940, the Julier Pass road was opened, and the Grisons had the first dual carriage way in Switzerland, without level crossings.

At a cost of over a milliard of francs, the national highway, all main roads and most of the subsidiaries are to be extended over a period of fourteen years.

The most important project today is the construction of the thirteenth national highway from St. Margarethen, via Sargans and Chur, to Bellinzona through the Bernhardin (tunnel of 6.6 km.). There has been much disappointment that owing to the measures to curb the excessive boom, this project is being delayed, and it is feared that the full use of the road will only be possible in about ten years. In addition the “Evangelisch-Rhaetische Synode” sent an “Open Letter” to the Swiss Home Office and the Federal Department of Communica-

tions and Energy, in which the Confederation is asked to keep its promise regarding the “Ostalpenbahn Project”. There has been much dissatisfaction and protest which were not allayed by the answers sent by the two respective Federal Councillors.

In September, the Parliamentary Press was invited to visit the Grisons and see for themselves what the problems are. As a typical example, the journalists were shown the village of Guarda which had 266 inhabitants in 1880 and only 163 in the last census. Much progress has been made in rationalising and mechanising farmsteads; milking machines replace the missing manpower on the “Maiensässen”, and milk is being sent to the valleys in pipelines. The 229 cattle breeding co-operatives in the Grisons count 8,087 members who own 33,000 head of cattle. Over 90% of the cows are under integral milk production control, a percentage which is believed to be the highest in Europe, if not in the world.

A very expensive venture for the relatively poor Canton are the power works. For a time it looked as if the Engadine works (Zernez) would not be completed for lack of capital, but a solution has been found, and work will continue. There has been opposition at Grabs to the planned thermal power station in the Rhine Valley. The first transmission of electric energy of 380 kV. in Switzerland became operational on 20th November. It connects the two Grisons power works Tavanasa and Sils with the new station Breite between Zurich and Winterthur. Up to now only transmission of 220 kV., have been made.

In September, the Swiss National Park celebrated its Golden Jubilee. During the last hunting season of 1967, the game hunted numbered 24,000, among which were 678 stags, 824 does, 2,756 chamois, 5,909 marmots, 568 roebucks, 2,118 brown and 1,066 white hares, 1,707 foxes, and 237 badgers.

Building, too, is going on in the Grisons, and the Grand Council granted a credit of 20.7 million francs for a new building and the extension of the present one of the Cantonal School in Chur. The cantonal electorate however, at the end of October, rejected an 8 million credit for an administration building for the cantonal police and vehicle control office, though all Parties had recommended acceptance.

The budget for 1965 estimates a deficit of 3.6 million francs with an income of 242.2 million francs.

News from various individual Communes includes the acceptance by the electors of **Arosa** of a project to join the new power works Arosa-Lueen which will provide electricity for Chur, Arosa and the other villages of the Schanfigg. **Chur** has now not only a full-time Municipal President, but three full-time members. The old patrician building "Planaterra" has been renovated and now houses a Migros Club School for adult education. In October, an interdenominational week was held in Chur, and the cantonal governments of Eastern Switzerland met in the capital of the Grisons early in November.

Nearly 65 years ago, the foundation stone for a German sanatorium was laid at **Davos**. Early in October, the completely renovated west wing was opened with a new department for asthma and allergies. The small Commune of **La Punt-Chamues-ch** has not seen much building during the past few years. But recently permission for the construction of over twenty holiday houses has been applied for which necessitates planning. The first project for the construction of a sewerage system was rejected by the Commune Assembly. But after talks by experts, the Assembly granted the credit of Fr.33,000.—. This is remarkable as the Commune's income from taxes is only about Fr.40,000.— annually.

The small village of **Lue** has to be protected from avalanches at a cost of 2½ million francs. This includes extensive afforestation.

The cantonal justice court, sitting at **Samedan**, acquitted the German Olympic skier, Herr Willy Bogner, who was charged with the manslaughter through negligence of his fiancée Fräulein Barbara-Maria Henneberger and Mr. Wallace Werner — both of whom were also Olympic skiers. The two victims were buried under an avalanche and killed on 12th April near Samedan while working on a sports documentary film. ("The Times.")

Samedan is to have a new school, and the church of **Fex** is to be restored. King Gustav Adolf and Queen Louise of Sweden spent a holiday at **Schuls** this summer. The electors of **Thusis** rejected the service agreement of the oil pipe line. This does not mean that the citizens of Thusis are against the proposed pipe line, but they want to ensure absolute safety which the present proposals do not seem to guarantee.

TICINO

All the local news of the Canton of Ticino is published in the "Notiziario" in every issue of the "Swiss Observer". We shall, therefore, confine ourselves to a few items of news of general interest.

The organisation "Pro Lugano" celebrated its 75th anniversary in June. When it was started it was called "La Società della Buona Gente". Since then there has been much change in the tourist traffic in the Canton. Last year, there was a decline in the numbers of visitors probably due to the bad weather, and in 1964 a further decline was due to the EXPO which attracted many visitors who would otherwise have gone to the Ticino. Two reasons were given for consideration, a marked increase in the "Hôtel Garni" type of inn managed by inexperienced staff, and the exorbitant charges made by many restaurants.

For the wine growers in the Ticino, last year was a particularly good one, specially for the Merlot. In the Verzasca Valley, a new experiment was made: a helicopter service was used to transport material to and cheese from the alpine pastures. It is planned to extend the service to include radio communication and transport of veterinary

surgeons. Eagles are counted in Switzerland at present in order to register whether the bird is on the decline or not. The first counting was done in the Ticino — a hazardous action as the eagle nests are not easily accessible and the young birds have to be fitted with rings to make the control effective.

Lugano has 21,315 inhabitants. Of these only 3,583 are Luganese citizens, 3,713 Swiss from other Cantons and 7,517 Ticinese from other Communes. Of the 6,502 foreigners, 5,000 are Italians. The chief architect of the EXPO, Alberto Camenzind, was awarded honorary citizenship of the town. In August, there was an UNESCO information meeting for Ticinese women in Lugano.

Bellinzona now has a museum for art and folklore in the Castello del Sasso Corbaro, and at Montagnola, a Hermann Hesse Foundation was started (seat in Berne). All buildings and land are being rated in the Canton. In Locarno, the value of private houses has gone up from 242 to 668 million francs. The increase amounts to 38% for the buildings and 601% for the land.

The Blenio power works became operational early in November, the two main ones at Olivone and Biasca, the minor ones at Luzzzone and Sommascona.

The flag of the Council of Europe — a wreath of stars — was handed to the famous Italian mountaineer Walter Bonatti in Locarno on 18th November. His task will be to plant the flag on one of the summits of the Mont Blanc.

(Based on news received by courtesy of the Agence Télégraphique Suisse.)

FEDERAL NEWS

Switzerland has been asked to look after the interests of Venezuela in Cuba. This brings the total of foreign States which Switzerland represents there to eight. It began in January 1961 when U.S.A. requested the Confederation to act on her behalf. The grand total of countries represented by Switzerland abroad is now thirteen.

An agreement has been arrived at with the United Arab Republic concerning compensation for Swiss citizens who were hit by nationalisation in Egypt. A so-called consolidation agreement was reached between Switzerland and Brazil which provides for financial help to the South American State. A new double taxation agreement with Sweden was worked out in Stockholm recently.

The Federal Council has recognised Malta and Sambia and was represented at the independence celebrations by the respective Swiss Ambassadors. This was also the case at the wedding of the King of the Hellenes.

At the end of August, the American Consulate in Basle was closed, which caused much disappointment in Basle. Steps were taken to have the Consulate re-opened, and a special delegation from commerce and industry went to Washington. It seemed at the time that their mission had not been successful, and at the carnival they were made fun of "Mit Bärt sin alli haimzue gschliche — Amerika het d'Flagge gstriche". Nevertheless, their and other efforts bore fruit, and at the end of October, the Consulate was re-opened with ceremony and festivities.

The French Consulate in Berne has been closed, and the Consular Section of the French Embassy will deal with the business. The Consular Section of the Italian Embassy in Berne, on the other hand, has been closed and the Italian Consulate has been re-opened.

(A.T.S. and "Basler Nachrichten".)