

It happened in the canton of Berne

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of Swiss economy, particularly Swiss export. Switzerland knew she had to exchange goods abroad and was aware that she had to face keen competition. A proof that Switzerland was ready and willing to accept such competition, from the traditional trading nations as well as from the new industrial countries.

The Federal Councillor then referred to the long-felt need for a Swiss Centre by the Swiss community in Great Britain. Such a centre would also be an important place of contact for the young Swiss temporarily in the U.K., of contact above all with their resident compatriots. He mentioned the Federation of Swiss Societies who had initiated this scheme of eminently practical importance. The multi-purpose room was to be a real cultural and economic Forum of Switzerland.

Bundesrat Schaffner expressed his wish that this great undertaking should be an unqualified success, this venture started by private spirit of enterprise, but in the interest of the country as a whole.

MM

SWITZERLAND AND RHODESIA

The Federal Council stated that no steps would be undertaken with regard to Rhodesia for the time being. There would be no formal recognition yet of the new Rhodesia. A *modus vivendi* would have to be found to look after the interest of the 400 Swiss citizens in Rhodesia. The Swiss Consulate in Salisbury was endeavouring to do this.

[A.T.S.]

THE CATASTROPHE AT MATTMARK

Early in October, work started again at the Mattmark Barrage district where a glacier avalanche buried 88 victims at the end of August. Bad weather prevented work for a while. By the time the S.O. went to print, 81 bodies had been recovered. Identification is difficult, but with new methods, including the use of X-ray pictures, it has been possible to identify all but two victims so far. Amongst the victims was a well-known personality from the Saaser-Tal, Emil Anthamatten, former Commune President and Judge, father of five children; his brother was also killed by the avalanche.

A "Fondation Suisse de Mattmark" has been founded to assist the victims' relatives. The Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein has sent Fr.10,000.—. The Swiss National Circus Knie gave Fr.6,000.— from the takings at the farewell performance in the Valais. These are only two examples of private help. Eight million francs have been paid out by SUVA (Accident Insurance).

Some 400,000 cubic metres of ice have been removed so far. Experts begun with their investigations; two internationally known glaciologists and one geologist have been entrusted with the task: Prof. Dr. L. Liboutry (University of Grenoble), Prof. Dr. B. Brockamp (University of Muenster, Westphalia), and Prof. Dipl. Ing. Leopold Mueller (Universities of Technology in Munich and Karlsruhe). There is still much uneasiness in the valley, especially with regard to any possible further glacier movement — a crack has been discovered in the barrage; it is said to be of no danger. Snow has fallen and impedes work.

[A.T.S.]

IT HAPPENED IN THE CANTON OF BERNE

THE SEPARATIST MOVEMENT IN THE JURA

The Separatists in the Jura are still active and are resolved to work for a separate Canton Jura. In June, a detailed report was published by the Bernese Government based on the findings by experts. It dealt with the seventeen proposals made by the Jura Deputation in the Bernese Grand Council. The Jura problem is one of minorities, and it is only fair that the French-speaking Jura minorities should be considered. The three experts, Prof. Dr. Hans Huber (Berne), Prof. Dr. Max Imboden (Basle) and the former Federal Judge Louis Python (Fillistorf) have now been entrusted with the study of the legal side of the proposals.

In the meantime, the "Rassemblement Jurassien", the militant and rebellious movement, continues to demonstrate. At the 18th festival of the Jura people in Delémont in September, their leader maintained that the problem had ceased to be a purely Bernese one and had now reached federal level. An anti-Government resolution was accepted by the demonstrators. The organisation of Jurassiens living outside Jura territory deplored this resolution and appealed to the people of the Jura to realise the danger some of the separatists were for the country, especially where they asked for support from foreign States. The new domestic science teachers' training college at Porrentruy should have been inaugurated on 18th September. The ceremony had to be postponed as the demonstrations announced by the separatists would have caused grave disturbances. The college was then opened on 7th October without any upset.

According to a decision by the Bernese Government in March 1964, cantonal accounts for 1964 were again to show the proportion both in revenue from and expenditure for the Jura. At the end of October, the results were published. State expenditure per head of the Jura population amounted to Fr.539.—, for the rest of the Canton only Fr.499.—. On the other hand, *per capita* revenue reached only Fr.467.— in the Jura, whereas in the other parts it was Fr.536.—. The Jura was responsible for larger revenue in 1964 than in the previous year, but also caused much heavier expenditure.

The Bernese-Jurassien Working Party, an independent organisation of personalities from all walks of public and private life, at their recent meeting under the chairmanship of National Councillor Walo von Greyerz, declared their willingness to support any action which dealt fairly and objectively with the problem, but condemned the activities of the extremists who did more harm than good.

In the Bernese Parliament, the Jura problem was debated, but the result was postponement of any action until the next report by the experts is published; it is expected for the end of November.

CANTON

In 1955, the Canton of Berne recorded revenue of 285.8 million francs and expenditure of 273.4 mio. The accounts for 1964 ended with a deficit of 41 million francs, and the budget for the coming year estimates revenue at 593.4 and expenditure of 643.1 million francs. Under the circumstances, the Cantonal Parliament decided to increase taxes by one-tenth from 2.1 to 2.2.

In a report by the municipal administration, it was stated that the nine members of the Cantonal Government were members of a total sixty-four companies, societies, federations and other organisations, apart from those directly connected with their positions.

The Canton of Berne needs over 5¼ million francs to cover the deficits incurred by the private railway lines (sixteen of them) on its territory. The Bernese Government recommend that the Confederation should take over the Berne-Loetschberg-Simplon line whose extension to double tracks would require 234 million francs. A special commission for regional town and country planning has been proposed to solve the problem facing the Communes.

5.6 million francs have been granted to buy land for road construction purposes. The Gerzensee has been put under protection, and a campaign "Rettet das linke Brienzseeufer" has been started in opposition to the road planned on the left shore of the lake.

For the extension of hospitals (Tiefenau, Langenthal and Sumiswald), 22.6 million francs have been granted, and it is estimated that hospital building schemes will require 124 mio during the next five years. A plan to enlarge the Bernische Heil- und Pflegeanstalt Muensingen will cost about 30 million francs over the next ten years.

The University of Berne has great problems. For the first time, the number of students surpasses the 4,000 mark — during the past seven years, the number has doubled. There is acute shortage of room, and lectures have to be given outside, for instance in cinemas. The sums needed to bring accommodation, lecturing staff and amenities up to date are of such magnitude that the question must be asked whether the Canton can continue to be responsible. This applies to other Cantons as well. The new law concerning the training of teachers was accepted. It replaces that of 1875. One of the new regulations that newly graduated teachers had to commit themselves for a period of two years caused much debate, but was accepted in the end. There is a great shortage of teachers. The same can be said regarding Protestant Ministers, and the Synodal Council meeting in August considered with concern the statement that in a few years, one hundred vacancies will have to be filled in the Canton of Berne.

In the Bernese Oberland, there was a salmonella epidemic. Several hundred people and an even higher number of farm animals were affected. Rigorous measures, brought the outbreak under control in a few weeks.

TOWN OF BERNE

The administrative body of the Municipality of Berne had in their services 7,649 persons fully employed at the end of 1964, 250 more than in the previous year. Their pay increased from 117 mio in 1963 to 124 million francs last year.

The Commune Council proposed to the Town Parliament that the Town President's office should be restricted to two years at a time.

The budget for 1966 expects a loss of nearly seven million francs, expenditure being estimated at over 176 mio. The cost of living grant to Commune staff has been increased by 4% and the necessary credit of 3.6 million francs granted.

Rent control will be continued, but a general increase of 7% in the rent has been allowed.

The Municipal Government has asked the Commune Council for a credit to start planning the re-development of the inner town. New arrangements have been put into force for the Bundesgasse in order to facilitate traffic. The

market as such will not be affected. Twenty new trolley buses (7.6 mio) have been ordered.

The famous "Staatsperron" in the main station was put out of action in August. A special ceremony took place for the official farewell. The event did not lack in funny mishaps. The Munich-Zurich-Berne-Geneva express was to be the last to use the platform. A State reception was arranged. The train, however, was delayed by a thunderstorm, and the brass band, girls in costumes, prominent personalities — all had to wait until the train finally arrived. When it did, the specially arranged red carpet was in the wrong place, and there was great amusement as it happened to be the goods trucks which came to a halt beside it!

The Solothurn-Zollikofen-Bern-Bahn no longer terminates on the Bahnhofplatz, but reaches the new main station by a tunnel. The Schanzen tunnel and the dual railway bridge at Worblaufen have also become operational. The first offices of the Schanzenpost in Berne, the present largest PTT building scheme, have been moved into, and the "Annahmeamt" of the new main post office was opened in October. The postal centre cost 60 million francs and is part of the main station re-development.

Other new buildings planned or already completed, are the new Press Centre in the Hotel Bellevue Palace, the renovated Frauenschule, and a new "Alterspflegeheim" at the Alexandraweg. Berne is planning a "Haus der Begegnung" for students in order to facilitate contact with foreign students.

After school fees had been dropped by the upper departments of the municipal middle schools in April, all fee paying has been stopped for pupils from Berne at the "Lehrwerkstätten" and the "Frauenschule".

The inhabitants of the town may in future be compelled to use gas, as in the interest of ample fuel supply, gas and electricity will have to be used side by side.

The new Chief of the Bernese Municipal Police is Fuersprech Kurt Kessi in succession to Fuersprech Dr. Werner Roethlisberger who has been with the Corps for 35 years.

The BEA (Exhibition for trade, agriculture, industry and commerce) was held in Berne in May. 146,000 visitors attended it, 34,000 more than last year. In August, the seventh national stamp exhibition took place in Berne, and in September, the Swiss art and antiques fair was held. The world congress of Christian women tea-totallers chose the capital for their twenty-third meeting; 500 delegates attended, and the Federal President gave an address.

The Bernese "Heimatschutztheater" and the "Pro Ticino" both celebrated their Golden Jubilees recently.

The "Verkehrsverein der Stadt Bern" (its new Manager is lic. rer. pol. Ernst Hegner in succession to W. H. Rubli) can look back on 75 years. The students' organisation "Burgundia" celebrated its centenary.

BIENNE

The population of Bienne has gone down by over 5,000 in a year. It now stands at 63,051. The number of foreigners has decreased from just over 12,000 to 11,850.

Commune Councillor Walter Koenig is retiring, having been appointed head of the Federal Office of Civil Defence.

In 1964, the accounts of the Municipality balanced at about 55 million francs. Credits recently granted cover the re-building of the "Verwaltungsgebäude 2" in the old town, damaged by fire in February 1964, the purchase of a Kindergarden in Mett, the planning of an old-age settlement in Madretsch, and the redevelopment of the Bahnhofplatz.

The waste water plant has been started in the Mooswäldli, and a project is being studied regarding the filling in of the Bielerseebuch. During the summer, Bienne has been celebrating the 150th anniversary of its entry into the Confederation. The traditional "Braderie" was therefore of a special nature, and Federal President Tschudi attended it. The "Altstadtchilbi", too, a few weeks later, marked the anniversary.

The Bienne schools will have 900 new pupils next spring, 310 of French and 590 of German language. As regards boys and girls, the latter are very slightly in the majority. In spring, too, the introduction of the "Handelsmaturitaet" will take place. The new director of the Conservatoire is Francis Engel from Thun. Having been at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin for five years, he was called to the Conservatoire by Wilhelm Arbenz whose successor he has become.

THUN

The accounts for 1964 ended with a surplus of 1.6 million francs, revenue standing at 21.5 mio. The ARA, the waste water plant of the fifteen Communes in the Thun region (on the Aare near Uetendorf), will cost 35.8 million francs. It will start functioning by 1970. The new river power station will cost 12.6 million francs, 1½ mio higher than estimated.

The fleet of the Lake of Thun has been renovated. Its oldest boat, the "Thun", which can take 400 passengers and has a crew of only three, has been overhauled and improved. The tourist traffic in the Bernese Oberland has had a record summer season, the second best since its beginning.

Several events of importance have taken place in or around Thun during the summer and autumn. The self-help organisation of TB patients "Das Band", celebrated its thirtieth anniversary. The 66th "Tonkünstlerfest" took place in the town, and on 1st September, a new school for social work was opened at the "Reformierte Heimstätte Gwatt". Later in the month, the international motorised police organisation met in Thun; 920 cars with 1,200 policemen and 1,000 members of their families gathered. A new "Verbandsmolkerei" was opened; it will ensure the supply of milk and dairy produce to the Bernese Oberland.

OTHER COMMUNES

At **Aarberg**, the "Aufrichtefest" of the new hydro-electric power plant took place at the end of October. The "Caisse d'Epargne" at **Bassecourt** with branches in many parts of the Jura, celebrated its centenary. At **Bolligen**, the electorate accepted two schemes in a plebiscite, one for the construction of 84 flats at cheap rents, the other the extension of the cemetery. The inhabitants of **Bremgarten** approved the plans for the development of Seftau, which should provide 300 flats in nine eight-storey and nine-storey blocks.

The traditional youth festival "Solennitaet" in **Burgdorf** took place this summer, and the new secondary school was officially opened in September. Dr. W. R. Matthews, Dean of St. Paul's in London, stayed in Burgdorf this autumn. The historic town wall is being reconstructed.

The educational institute "St. Germain" at **Delémont** celebrated its 75th anniversary in summer. Delémont now has a new kind of gas ("Propan/Luftgemisch") which

is absolutely free from poison and has a high heat value. The plant is fully automatic.

Duerrgraben in the Emmental will be called Heimisbach after 1st January 1968, to honour the author Simon Gfeller whose 100th birthday will be celebrated that year. **Huttwil's** church will be renovated. To commemorate the last postman who used to collect the mail for Huttwil in Langenthal, Daniel Minder (he finished his work 120 years ago), the young rifleman organised a march in which 1,500 men took part.

The six "Boedeli" Communes of the **Interlaken** district have jointly decided to build a waste water plant near Unterseen. **Ittigen** is to have its own Commune crest following its 150th anniversary. **Langenthal** is introducing the "Blue Zone" parking system which has been successful in many Swiss places. A new firm "Frischbeton A.G." started operations in September. Its tower (30 m. high) contains eight gravel silos. The plant is worked electronically and produces 69-80 cubic metres of concrete per hour in dust-free conditions.

The **Langnau** Commune Assembly rejected the plan to build a Commune House. **Lotzwil** and **Madiswil** will be constructing a waste water plant at Lotzwil. From **Meiringen** comes the news that the Grimsel barrage walls will be heightened to increase the capacity of the lake. **Moutier**, too, is improving its water supply network. The "International Farm Youth Exchange" had its first world conference at **Muensingen**. Federal Councillor Wahlen attended the event.

The new "Regierungsstatthalter" at **Pruntrut** is Jean Jobe in succession to the late Jean Gressot. The "Communauté des Oeuvres Hospitalières" celebrated its bicentenary. **Roggwil** has a new administrative building, and at **Rumisberg**, a Hans Roth fountain has been unveiled to commemorate the heroic deed of 650 years ago when Roth prevented a surprise attack. **Saignelégier** has a new Commune House and a new secondary school. In August, the 62nd horse exhibition and market took place in this equestrian centre of the Franches Montagnes. The home for horses at **Le Roselet** is to continue. **Sigriswil** will join the waste water plant of Thun.

At **Schuepfen**, at the Minger memorial place, the tenth anniversary of Rudolf Minger's death was commemorated in August. Two thousand people assembled to honour the memory of one of Switzerland's greatest Federal Councillors. Bundesrat Wahlen gave an address.

From **Schwarzenburg** comes the news of a landslide near Riffenmatt. At **Sonceboz** a large centre was opened in September, comprising a gymnasium, a kindergarden and several administrative offices. In order to collect the money to restore the church of **Sornetan** (Petit Val), the smallest Protestant Church parish, 33,000 little bags with coloured photos were distributed; to judge from the generous contents of those returned, the prospects for completely renovating the church are favourable.

Nearly a million francs have been collected for the district hospital of **Sumiswald**. **Wengen's** new school is in operation, and **Wyssachen's** parishioners have decided to become a separate parish; up to now they were together with Eriswil.

(News by courtesy of the Agence Télégraphique Suisse.)

LAST MINUTE INFORMATION

Snow has fallen in Switzerland, and there is as much as 50 cm. in some places — such as the Saentis. Many wintersports places have plenty of snow for ski-ing.