

An old Swiss Carnival Custom

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As was reported earlier, a Foundation was set up by private industry for a new Aargau Technical College. Last summer, the Foundation began to collect money. A large sum of half a million francs was immediately donated by Brown, Boveri & Co., Baden. The commission studying the question of whether the Aargau should have its own university has already gathered a lot of material which will be most useful as a survey on university education in Switzerland. Several models have been prepared.

The Cantonal Parliament debated the problem of damage from fluor to the farmers of the Fricktal. An agreement for compensation by the Aluminiumhütte Badisch-Rheinfelden has been reached. From 1st October, electricity rates were put up considerably (average 23%). This means that the Aargau now pays the same as the Canton of Zurich, i.e. about 9.4 cts. per kwh.

This year in June, **Aarau** will be the scene of the 24th Federal Musical Festival. The town has always been particularly suited to have nation-wide gatherings. The new "Stadtammann" is again Dr. Willy Urech (Liberal), his deputy Municipal Councillor Willi Marti (Socialist). The first time, the Commune Assembly met at the end of November, there was no quorum, and the citizens had to be called again in December when they agreed to two new schools and a civil defence station. The budget for 1966, balanced at 15.17 million francs, was passed. A new Applied Arts College and a Printers' Training School are now in operation in Aarau.

The Commune Assembly of **Aarburg** granted a credit of 5.4 mio for a waste-water plant. New excavations outside the old Roman town at **Augst** have brought to light finds which seem to confirm the theory that they were of a Roman "mansio", an inn.

The new "Stadtammann" of **Baden** is the Liberal Max Müller (re-elected), his deputy the Conservative/Christian Socialist architect Josef Rieser. Baden's Commune Assembly appointed the relevant Institute of the ETH in Zurich to investigate Baden's air pollution. At the same meeting, the salaries of the Commune Councillors were increased to Fr.44,800.— for a full-time and Fr.7,000.— for a part-time Councillor. Baden has become a most progressive district. For the last four years, a new railway tunnel has been going through the Schlossberg. The new road tunnel (85m.) below the ruins of Schloss Stein (Schlossberg) was opened with a "Tunnelfest" in October. Also in the rocks of the Schlossberg, parking garages are being built which will serve as civil defence shelters. Near Neuenhof, the new national road Baregg tunnel is being constructed. On the NW town boundary towards Turgi, the large water purification plant is under construction. The Commune Assembly of Baden accepted a general development plan for the town at a meeting in December.

Bellach is to have a convalescence station built by the SUVA (Schweiz. Unfallversicherungs Anstalt Lucerne). Due to the increase in accidents, the centre at Baden is no longer adequate. After the new Reformed Church at **Bremgarten** had been inaugurated in summer the community decided to build another Church centre on the Mutschellen. But the Commune Council rejected the proposal on the grounds that that particular zone was scheduled for road and industrial building construction.

The present "Stadtammann" of **Brugg**, the Liberal Dr. iur Eugen Rohr, was re-elected. His deputy is the Socialist National Councillor Walter Gloor. The Commune Assembly has now been replaced by an Inhabitants' Council of fifty (15 Liberals, 11 Social Democrats, 9 Con-

servative/Christian Socialists, no Party 7, Farmers 3, Landesring 3 and Evangelicals 1). The new Technical School ("Höhere Technische Lehranstalt") of Brugg-Windisch was opened in November. **Entfelden** celebrated its millennium in summer.

As was reported previously, the Commune of **Habsburg** refused to elect a Commune Council. The cantonal authorities had to step in. After the problems had been discussed, a second Assembly was called and a new Council was elected. By this the citizens showed that they preferred a Council to a Cantonal Commissar who would have had to be appointed according to the law. **Hornussen's** electorate granted a credit of 1.5 million francs for a school and **Koelliken** 1.8 mio for a waste-water plant.

Laufenburg has a new "Stadtammann" Dr. Binkert, lawyer and "Grossrat". Dr. Hans Theiler, Socialist, has been re-elected to the same position at **Lenzburg**. The firm of Saager & Co. at Duerrenaesch has donated over a quarter of a million francs for church building operations of the parish of **Leutwil**. **Neuenhof**, too, has now an Inhabitants' Council of forty in place of the Assembly.

For 37 years, Dr. Bruno Beetschen has skilfully acted as "Stadtammann" of **Rheinfelden**. He has now retired and become an Honorary Citizen. His successor is the Liberal Richard Molinari. The largest Swiss salt store was opened at **Riburg** in the autumn. It is built of wood and holds 20,000 metric tons of salt destined for consumption all over Switzerland except the Canton of Vaud. **Schupfart's** Commune Clerk Xaver Ruffin was celebrated by his fellow citizens when he completed sixty years in office. He intends to go on with it. Schupfart is the home of the new airfield of the Aeroclub of Switzerland.

The former idyllic village of **Spreitenbach** is developing so fast that it will soon be a town. Its citizens have approved a large building project of a town centre, with shops, supermarkets, hotel, restaurants, quarters for doctors, lawyers, for artists, and including homes for old people and kindergardens, not to forget ample parking facilities. **Suhr** voters agreed to a 7-million "Bezirksschulhaus" and a new rifle range.

The new Reformed Church at **Untersiggenthal** now houses the bells from the EXPO. The last Commune Assembly of **Wettingen** took place in December. An Inhabitants' Council of fifty has now taken its place. One of forty has taken over at **Wohlen** where the electorate rejected a proposal for a full-time "Gemeindeammann".

A most modern home for mentally retarded children was opened at **Zetzwil** (towards Oberkulm). With a participation of 88%, the citizens of **Zofingen** elected the forty members of their new Inhabitants' Council in November.

*(News received by courtesy of the
Agence Télégraphique Suisse.)*

AN OLD SWISS CARNIVAL CUSTOM "Sparks Sunday" in Liestal

As part of its annual carnival festival, Liestal, the picturesque capital of the Canton of Baselland, will celebrate its "Sparks Sunday" on 27th February. Wearing all kinds of fancy costumes, townspeople carry torches and burning brooms through the darkened city streets. The procession ends at a public square where all the firebands are thrown into a pile and continue burning, to everyone's enjoyment. Of pagan origin, the rite symbolizes the driving away of winter.

There are similar customs in many parts of Switzerland, one of the best-known is the "Sechseläuten" in Zurich. [S.N.T.O.]