

It happened in the Canton of Schaffhausen

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IT HAPPENED IN THE CANTON OF SCHAFFHAUSEN

In an article on "Switzerland beyond the Rhine" on 1st February, "The Times" described Schaffhausen as an essentially Swiss town despite its geographical isolation. "Originally a market town built around the Benedictine monastery of All Saints, it became a free city in 1415, made an alliance with the Swiss Confederates in 1454, and became one of the Swiss cantons in 1501." The writer goes on describing the Munot Castle built in the sixteenth century and the Rhine Falls, the bridges and the Allerheiligen Museum and calls Schaffhausen a "successful blend of modern amenities with old buildings lining narrow streets."

In the years between 1950 and 1960, the inhabitants of the Canton of Schaffhausen increased by 14.7% from 57,515 to 65,981. The census of 1960 — the twelfth cantonal volume of twenty-five on its findings was published in January and covers Schaffhausen — showed that in 1960 out of one thousand inhabitants 255 originated from their commune of residence, 151 in other Schaffhausen communes and 478 in other Cantons. This amounted to a total of 88.4%; just over half of the 11.6% foreigners were Italians and a good quarter Germans.

Classified according to mother tongue, 91% of the inhabitants speak German, 7% Italian, 0.9% French and 0.9% other languages. As regards denominations, the number of Protestants has gone back from 9.4% to 7.1% during the last hundred years, whilst that of Roman Catholics has increased from 5.8% to 27.4%. Other denominations amounted to 0.2% in 1860 and to 1.2%.

In 1860 there were 4,831 buildings with 7,766 households. A hundred years later, 10,560 buildings housed 20,007 families. This means the number of persons per household and of inhabitants per building has gone down. Since 1950 the number of flats has increased by 3,200 to 19,868.

In 1962 an initiative was started to incorporate the commune of Herblingen into the municipality of Schaffhausen. The government was against it, but in September, the electorate accepted the proposal with 8,210 against 5,579 votes. Herblingen itself, whence the initiative originated, participated with 93% of its electors, Schaffhausen with over 80%. This incorporation means that Schaffhausen now counts 35,228 inhabitants, nearly two thousand more than before.

The budgets for 1964 for town and Canton visualise deficits. Both reckon with increased revenue and expenditure. The budgets were discussed with regard to possible reductions in spending in view of the excessive economic boom the Federal Government is trying to curb. But it was found that none of the projects could be postponed. The largest amounts will be needed for road construction, canals, trade and craft schools, water maintenance, electricity works and various buildings. This includes the restoration of the cathedral tower. Other building projects have already been accepted and are partly in the course of construction. There will be a new agricultural college to replace the now inadequate Scharlottenfels at Neuhausen. There is a project for a new home for old and chronically sick people near the cantonal hospital. The goods and shunting yard of the Schaffhausen station is to be enlarged. The Swiss Federal Railways have worked out a project which will allow a considerable improvement allowing twice the number of wagons to be handled. The scheme will be carried out in collaboration

with the German railway authorities. The whole project will cost fifty-three million francs and will take about eight years to complete. The electorate of the town accepted another project for an artificial icerink and swimming baths. The firm of Georg Fischer has donated Fr.400,000.— towards its realisation. This firm has also made an agreement with the town according to which several pieces of land are being exchanged. There will be new factories in the Herblingertal, and the municipality becomes the owner of certain plots nearer the town.

The commune of Neuhausen voted a credit for the erection of a home for old people in the "Rabenfluh" with a subterranean first aid post. There will be a new chapel in the re-constructed cemetery, and the Bahnhofstrasse will have to be moved in parts to allow for a new goods yard in connection with the re-planning of Schaffhausen station.

Last October, the commune of Neunkirch declared against crude oil and fuel oil tanks being built on their territory, after the commune of Wilchingen had already refused a request for permission to build such tanks. The new power station started work early in December. The station cost some seventy-five million francs and has been constructed by the town of Schaffhausen and the North Eastern Power Works. When the whole scheme is completed it will produce 160 million kwh. It uses the water of the Rhine above Diessenhofen, and a twenty-metre wide roadbridge is being constructed nearby.

Schaffhausen is planning a communal TV aerial in order to prevent the ugly array of individual aerials, especially in the old town. The Church Synod made an appeal last year against advertisements for alcoholic drinks, tobacco, drugs and gambling on television.

Early this year, the government of the Canton expressed an opinion against the scheme to regulate the waters of the Lake of Constance near Hemishofen. There had been some anxiety in Schaffhausen about the project. Since more and more water reservoirs have been constructed in the Grisons and in Vorarlberg, the danger of flooding has been considerably reduced, and it is no longer necessary to take preventative steps. There is great opposition in Schaffhausen against possible navigation on the Rhine as far as the Lake of Constance.

The electorate of Schaffhausen accepted the project of a communal water purification plant in March 1963. A few days before the plebiscite, a change was made in the plans, and the case was taken to the Federal Court of Justice by the opponents. All work was ordered to be stopped. But the Municipal President Bringolf disregarded the order, as an interruption would result in considerably higher costs. The opponents to the project (their objection was not to the scheme as such, but to its location in the "Roeti") appealed to the Federal Court. In October, the Federal Court rejected the appeal, but individual Judges nevertheless censured President Bringolf for autocratic action. Now the work is in progress, and its completion means better water for four more communes. Other such schemes are being planned.

The "Galliwiess" in the Bergener Muehlethal was made a nature reserve, and the lower Rhine island of Ruedlingen was declared out of bounds for boats in order to protect bird and plant life. The Egelsee near Thayngen was also made a protected area.

In 1963, 63,500 guests spent 126,500 nights in Schaffhausen, the total being a little lower than in the previous record year. About two-thirds of the visitors came from abroad. One of the biggest attractions was the exhibition "The World of Impressionism" at the Allerheiligen Museum. The pictures had come from all parts of Europe and had to be insured for seventy million francs. 85,000 visitors saw the show which had been opened in June by the President of the Confederation. In February and March this year, an exhibition of the works of Arthur Schachenmann was held in honour of the artist's seventieth birthday.

To go back to parliamentary business, it should be said that a revision of the legal system has been planned. In December, the electorate accepted a proposal to limit the number of seats in the Grand Council (cantonal parliament) to eighty seats. A Socialist motion has been handed in demanding the vote for women in the Canton. So far the women had the vote only in the cantonal and local Protestant Church organisations. The Roman Catholic Church Commune had now also decided to give the vote to their women members.

When the budget was discussed in the Grand Council towards the end of February, concern was expressed at increasing juvenile delinquency, specially grave indecent moral behaviour. It was agreed that more should be done by parents and authorities to keep youngsters away from dangerous pastimes. In this connection, a large basement hall in the old town is being transformed into a youth hall. The young people themselves are prepared to finance it by two-thirds, contributing manual labour or money. Over a thousand pupils are undergoing training at the College of Music, and the Municipal Council of Schaffhausen voted an increased annual grant from Fr.30,000.- to Fr.80,000.-. The educational authorities have organised an EXPO competition in which boys and girls could take part with drawings, paintings, photographs, needlework, poetry, prose and musical compositions. The best entries will be awarded cash prizes, and nearly two hundred participants will receive a free trip to Lausanne.

Finally, to show that the Schaffhausen youngsters are no worse than others, two creditable efforts should be mentioned which, admittedly, were made some time ago, but which are still worth naming. The young people organised a jumble sale (called "Flohmarkt") which resulted in Fr.53,000.- in aid of two villages in India. When the Rhine had a particularly low water level, a lot of rubbish became exposed. The boys and girls of the upper school classes undertook to clear the banks. The rubbish filled nearly three lorries. The voluntary helpers were rewarded with a "Wurstessen" (sausage meal).

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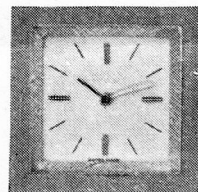
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