

# The catastrophe at Mattmark

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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.

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### 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.]

## 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.

### 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. Lliboutry (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.]

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.