

650 years since the battle of Morgarten

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650 YEARS SINCE THE BATTLE OF MORGARTEN

In November 1315, the old Swiss fought their first battle. They beat the army of 2,000 knights of the Austrian Duke Leopold, by leading them into a trap on the Morgarten Pass. This great feat was commemorated this year. First, in September, about 450 men and women teachers of the Canton of Schwyz prepared the marching rally which was to be repeated a month later by the school children of the Canton. On 21st October, the young people gathered on the site of the battlefield for a "Landsgemeinde", an open-air Parliament. There were delegations from other Cantons. The youth of Switzerland has collected money to purchase the site.

To commemorate the battle, gold and silver coins have been issued, and a special illustrated brochure was published by the Schwyz Government. By the end of November, the 14,000 silver coins (@ Fr.6.—) and 2,500 gold coins (@ Fr.200.—) were sold out.

Dr. Paul Kramer, Schwyz, is the author of a play in which past and present are ingeniously blended. Federal President Tschudi appealed in a speech in Schwyz that the "Letzinen" used in 1315 to barricade the country against the enemy and which were used as symbols in the play, should not be erected between people and between classes, between God and the world. Another "Letzi", said the Federal President, was our neutrality. It was a safeguard, but we had to be careful not to use it for isolating ourselves.

The main celebration took place on 15th November. It was snowing as the long procession moved on to the battlefield: military detachments, organisations of many kinds, local, cantonal and federal authorities, flag bearers, delegates from all parts of the country, representatives from the Army and colourful historic groups. Apart from the Federal President, Federal Councillors Chaudet and von Moos were present and three Army Corps Commanders.

The service was conducted by a Protestant and a Catholic Minister. The battle chronicle was read. Landammann Josef Diethelm gave a patriotic address. The traditional "Morgarten Schiessen" took place at the same time, and Corps Commander Colonel Frick addressed the 1,200 sharpshooters who had gathered for the contest.

[A.T.S.]

ITU CONGRESS AT MONTREUX

A century has passed since the founding of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). The occasion was commemorated by festivities in Paris last Spring, and by a congress which met at Montreux from September to 12th November, with representatives from 128 countries. This conference, which took place on invitation of the Swiss government, was chaired by G. A. Wettstein, President of the Directorate of the Swiss Post, Telephone and Telegraph System (PTT), and had as its main theme the revision of the international telegraphy treaty. The ITU also discussed the expansion of the communications networks in developing countries with the assistance of UN aid programs. In the presence of representatives of the Canton and city of Berne, the Federal President H. P. Tschudi presented the ITU with a memorial tablet in the Swiss capital.

[S.N.T.O.]

150 YEARS OF JURA BERNOIS

On 18th November, a special service was held in Berne Cathedral to commemorate the day when the Jura Bernois and the town of Bienne became part of the Canton of Berne. It was the Congress in Vienna in 1815 which decided the boundaries of the Canton. On the whole, relations have been fruitful during the 150 years. Mistakes have been made on both sides, but the hope for closer relations exists in spite of some recent extremist action in the Jura.

The question had been asked whether it was wise to hold a celebration during the present tense relationship. But it was considered right and proper to commemorate the fact in a suitable way and use the occasion for reflection and resolution.

The Parliament and Government of the Canton of Berne were the hosts. There were speeches from both sides, i.e. the old Canton and the Jura. The languages used were German as well as French. The officiating clergy were both Protestant and Catholic. The music items were impressive in their multilingual appeal. Many personalities from public life in both parts of the Canton attended the service. The thought to remember comes from Prof. von Greyerz's address in which he sketched the history. "Not fraternisation is needed — it is a quickly dying fire. We need cool determination to accept and endure the other party, and patient efforts in the working out of the best possible solution to the problem of co-existence. That complies with the political law according to which we serve".

(By courtesy of "Basler Nachrichten".)

DUKE OF EDINBURGH VISITS GENEVA

The Duke of Edinburgh, who arrived in Geneva on 17th November in his private aircraft, is very serious about his task as President of the International Equestrian Federation, an office which he took over from Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands in December 1964. When he was sworn in, he promised to attend every official riding event held by the Federation during his four-year term in Office. The Concours Hippique International, held in Geneva from 13th to 21st November, was the first such occasion outside the United Kingdom in which the Duke participated, and his presence lent a special glitter to the socially and athletically important event.

(S.N.T.O.)

LATE NEWS FROM PARLIAMENT

On going to press, we have just heard that Parliament elected the present Vice-President, National Councillor Pierre Graber (Socialist), as President of the National Council. He is from La Chaux-de-Fonds, but has lived in Lausanne since 1933. By profession he is a lawyer; age 57; M.P. since 1942.

Dr. Dominik auf der Maur (Conservative/Christian) from Schwyz was elected President of the Council of States. He is 69, a lawyer and historian and has been a member of the Council since 1950.

Dr. Willi Rohner (Radical) is the new Vice-President of the Council of States. He is 58 and hails from St. Margrethen/St. Gall. He is an economist and head of a building firm at Altstaetten. Entered Parliament in 1951 and the Council of States in 1962.

(By courtesy Agence Télégraphique Suisse.)