

Zuercher Sechselaeuten

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): **- (1966)**

Heft 1501

PDF erstellt am: **29.04.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-694837>

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The Canton has decided to improve subsidies to school buildings. A Technical Evening College has been asked for in Schaffhausen, and the scholarship system is being improved.

Two million visitors went to see the Rhinefalls last year. During bad rainfall in February, the level of the Rhine rose alarmingly, and in March, considerable damage was caused by storms throughout the Canton.

The town of **Schaffhausen** had a population of 37,122 at the beginning of the year, 813 more than twelve months previously. 6,609 inhabitants were foreigners, and 62.3% Protestant. 954 of the total of 1,947 electors attended the Citizens' Assembly last autumn to elect National Councilor Walther Bringolf an Honorary Citizen.

Due to the rejection of the proposed increased rate of taxes by the electorate, the budgeted deficit went up to 2.2 million francs. To reduce this, the Municipal Council now proposes to cut some of the construction work planned for this year. A protest has been lodged with the Cantonal Government against the plan to demolish some old buildings near the Schifflande and to use it as provisional parking grounds. Parking facilities in the town are limited. A by-pass will only be constructed later, and for the time being, an express road through the town, partly underground, has been planned. There will in future be no more cattle markets; the area will partly be used by the extension of the goods yard. The Referendum was used against a Council decision to purchase new vehicles to be used for goods transport; the electorate has supported it and vetoed the necessary credit. The *Grosse Stadtrat* has agreed to join the "Gasverband Ostschweiz A.G."

The four Communes of **Altdorf, Bibern, Hofen** and **Opfertshofen** now have their own communal central school building opened in the centre of the four villages which, together, have 660 inhabitants. The *Baureferent* of **Neuhausen**, F. Beer, resigned, and the elections on 24th April did not produce an absolute majority for any of the four candidates. A full-time civil defence job is to be created at Neuhausen, and late last year, the new home for old people was opened.

There are now only five dailies in the Canton, the "Steiner Anzeiger" of **Stein a/Rhein** having gone out of publication after 73 years. The "Schaffhauser Nachrichten" are now carrying it as a supplement.

(Based on news received by courtesy of Agence Télégraphique Suisse, "Basler Nachrichten" and "Swiss American".)

ZUERCHER SECHSELAEUTEN

This year's Zurich most important pageant, the "Sechseläuten", was held on the traditional third Monday in April. Last year, on account of horse influenza, no horses could be used which took away much of the interest and enjoyment. This time, they turned up in large numbers, and not even the inclement weather could spoil the fun. Most of the costumes worn by the Guild members date back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Guilds have as their aim to keep up the interest in history and tradition. Already in 1351, they played an active part in the signing of the treaty between Zurich and the Confederation. From 1798-1803, there were no Guilds, but with the beginning of the Mediation period, they flourished again to serve as additional bodies for the Cantonal Parliament. In 1820, they re-introduced their communal dinners. Already in the old Zurich (before 1798), the arrival of spring was celebrated. The first procession of some significance was arranged for the quingentenary of Zurich's entry into the Confederation, and since then, the processions (a special children's one is held on the previous day) have become as much part of the "Sechseläuten" as the burning of the "Böögg", the effigy of winter, itself.

The number of children in the Monday procession and the large amounts of flowers carried by groups of various kinds, surpassed the usual total. Many thousand onlookers lined the route, and it took eighty minutes for the whole procession to pass. At 6 p.m. sharp, the "Böögg" was lit, and in no more than eight minutes it was burnt, though the last eight Guilds still had to canter the traditional three times round the bonfire.

In the evening, heavy rain fell, but it could not mar the festive atmosphere reigning in the old town where the various Guilds visited one another. For hours, the lanterns carried by the visiting groups could be seen, and merrymaking went on until the early hours of the morning.

(Mainly A.T.S.)

300 YEARS SINCE THE DEATH OF A GREAT SWISS STATESMAN

On 12th April 1666, one of the greatest Swiss statesmen and diplomats died in the person of Johann Rudolf Wettstein. Originally a citizen of Russikon (Zurich), his father had settled in Basle where young Johann Rudolf grew up. His youth was turbulent — for some time he was a mercenary in Italy — but as a young man already he entered public service in Basle. He worked in the Courts, in finance and in the administration of the Baslebiet. He became Chief Guild Master and finally, Mayor of Basle. He emerged as a diplomat of great importance for the whole of the Confederation. He attended the big Peace Congress of Westphalia, which was to set an end to the Thirty Years' War, and he defended the independence of Switzerland and actually succeeded in getting the big powers to seal Switzerland's independence in the peace treaties. Wettstein used his diplomatic gifts also in the *Bauernkrieg* and in the first Villmerger war between the Reformed and the Roman Catholic parties.

The great statesman has an epitaph on black marble in the Cloister of Basle Cathedral. That is where, on the anniversary of his death, the *Zunft zur Weinleuten* honoured his memory by a simple but impressive ceremony. In proud Latin words, the gratitude of Basle and the Confederation is engraved for all times to the great Mayor, "Keeper of the Peace, Saviour of Freedom and Father of the Homeland".

(A.T.S. and "Basler Nachrichten".)

THE BOAT RACE WON BY A SWISS BOAT

The annual boat race between Oxford and Cambridge on the Thames was won this year by the Oxford rowing a Swiss-made boat. In order to leave nothing to chance, Oxford had ordered their boat from the Alfred Stämpfli shipyards in Zurich. The boats made by this boatbuilder are well known throughout the rowing world: last year, in the United States, a Stämpfli boat enabled the University of Harvard to beat Yale by ten lengths and at the European Championships, thirteen medals were won by boats built in Zurich out of a total of twenty-one medals awarded. The boatyard in question builds from 200 to 240 boats each year, so that it is obvious that its experience in this field plays a by no means negligible role in the victories won.

[O.S.E.C.]