

A fairytale castle in the mountain wilderness

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Chaux-de-Fonds. With it they also hoped to induce women to go to the poll. In two elections in April and May (the first time some irregularities in the counting had been discovered, and the elections for the Cantonal Government had to be held again) gave the Socialists 42 seats (increase of 2), the Radicals 31 (loss of 3), the Liberals 22 (loss of 2), the National Progressives 10 (loss of 1) and the Communists 10 seats (increase of 4, 3 of which in La Chaux-de-Fonds). Among the M.P.'s are eight women, 4 Socialists, 3 Liberals and one Communist. When the Parliament assembled, the election of the two Councillors of States took place. The two former representatives were re-elected, the Radical J.-L. Barrelet and the Liberal Blaise Clerc, each with 63 votes. Madame Schweizer, though not successful, nevertheless received the remarkable number of 52 votes. The new Government now has two Socialists, two Radicals and a Liberal member.

Incidentally, the former title of Commune President for all Neuchâtel Communes has now been replaced by that of Mayor.

The new director of the cantonal grammar school is Herbert Suter. In November, a Society for Sociology and Political Science was founded.

Also in November, a credit for 47 million francs for construction and improvement of cantonal roads was asked for the fifth stage in the road construction programme. The Zihl bridge on the boundaries of Berne and Neuchâtel is to be replaced. Some 20 mio francs will be required for main water supplies. Flats at reduced rents are to be built in several Communes with the help of the Canton.

The part known as "L'entre-deux-lacs" in the Eastern part of the Canton is getting more and more industrialised. An oil refinery (at Cressier) and a cement works are being built. The refinery is one of four being built in Switzerland with two pipelines from the Mediterranean.

The blue char, "Bondelle", the excellent fish for which the Lake of Neuchâtel used to be famous, is slowly disappearing from the lake, and measures have been taken to increase the species again. The white wine harvest for 1965 was lower by nearly 15,000 hl. than that in the previous year. The *Fête des Vendanges* in October was a great success just the same, with 80,000 visitors applauding the picturesque procession.

Of the 36,488 inhabitants of the town of **Neuchâtel**, 5,491 are foreigners. The President for the new term of office of the General Council, is the Liberal Jean Charbonnier. The Council accepted a proposal to build flats at reduced rents for people in need. The plan to erect a "Palais des Manifestations" has been dropped as the project would have cost at least 15 million francs. New avenues are being explored. The high cost for exhibition halls induced some Neuchâtel artists to hire a boat for a floating exhibition of their works. One of the most modern buildings in Switzerland was opened in Neuchâtel in November; it belongs to the important firm of dealers in pharmaceutical products, Galenica s.a. The town now has an automatic Telex centre. A foundation has been started with the aim of procuring workshops, machines and tools for invalids. The new head of Neuchâtel University is Prof. Claude Favarger.

The small Commune of **Le Cerneux-Péquignot** celebrated the 150th anniversary of belonging to the Confederation.

La **Chaux-de-Fonds** now has 42,442 inhabitants, 521 more than a year ago. Of the 7,614 resident foreigners, 4,809 are Italians, 1,115 Spaniards and 979 Frenchmen.

1965 was a year of important jubilees. The watchmakers' college celebrated its centenary. Over 4,000 watch engineers and technicians have so far been trained at the college. For the special occasion, the watch manufacturers of the town presented a laboratory for electric and electronic manipulations. The celebrations took place at the same time as the French Weeks. Also 100 years old was the *Club Jurassien Neuchâtelois*; as befitted a nature lovers' organisation, the meeting took place in Switzerland's oldest nature reserve on Creux du Van. The *Ecole Supérieure de Commerce* celebrated its 75th anniversary in October. A month later, the Salvation Army could look back on the same span of time.

A school centre is being built in La Chaux-de-Fonds, the *Maison Populaire* will be renovated, and a cantonal centre for invalids is to be built there. The first collective electronic installation in Western Switzerland is in operation in the watchmaking centre of the Canton of Neuchâtel, and in October, a new large factory of the Portescap A.G. was opened. This important undertaking employs 1,200 workers in La Chaux-de-Fonds alone. Also in October, the administration building of the town, dating back to 1890, was gutted by fire.

Air traffic in the Neuchâtel mountains is on the increase. The airport at **Les Eplatures** is ideally situated at an altitude of 1,000 m. and for 350 days of the year completely free from fog. It also boasts excellent snow-clearing equipment. The *Club Jurassien de Fleurier* celebrated its centenary in summer. For the first time, a Socialist woman is in the Commune Council of this Val-de-Travers Commune.

Two jubilees took place at **Le Locle**: the 150th anniversary of the children's home "Les Billodes", founded by Marie-Anne Calame, and the 75th anniversary of the opening of the railway line Le Locle — Les Brenets. In November, a Celtic bridge-head was discovered near **St. Blaise**.

(News by courtesy of the Agence
Télégraphique Suisse.)

A FAIRYTALE CASTLE IN THE MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS

Located in the wildly romantic Bergell district of the Grisons, the fairytale-like castle known as Palazzo Castelmur is a little-known point of interest in the vicinity of the ancient Roman Septimer-Julier Highways. A powerful torrent, the Mera, separates the Mediterranean-looking structure, with its towers and gables, from the busy Maloja Road, the main traffic artery connecting the Engadine with Lake Como. Castelmur was originally the name of a medieval fortress which was erected upon old Roman foundations on a rocky outcropping between the present villages of Stampa and Promontogno in the Bergell; in the twelfth century the name was taken by a prominent family. It was Baron Jean de Castelmur, who received his title from Napoleon III, who built the present castle in the mid-nineteenth century and furnished it in that epoch's glittering style. Some years ago his heirs, living abroad, ceded the palazzo to the Bergell District, and it was restored under the expert guidance of Dr. H. Erb, Curator of the Rhaetian Museum in Chur. The palazzo, with its precious furnishings, its collection of old weapons and its archives of ancient documents, is open to the public from May to October.

[S.N.T.O.]