

Baselland and Baselstadt remain independent

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hours are devoted to restful recuperation, that leaves another eight hours of the day to be filled. Resorts, and especially their hotels, are now faced with the task of entertaining innumerable customers. They must therefore be equipped with "après-ski-ing" facilities. These consist primarily in agreeable "Kellers", "chiesas" and "carnotzets" where one may enjoy wine and fondue. Naturally, night-clubs and shows by well known entertainers must also be included in the picture. Most resorts also have cinemas, although the films that are shown have usually passed through the cities long ago. Resort-hoppers just want to find the pleasures of the town when they go on a ski-ing holiday. The ideal of breaking from

the throng of humanity, the rush of affairs and relaxing in unspoilt and natural surroundings appeals to a minority of those who can afford a hotel or a bingé at the "Club Méditerranée".

Big Money

Those villages that have become rich thanks to the fancy for winter sports, ski-ing, après-ski-ing and plenty of spare money know this well and are already providing for these increasingly exacting tastes. So are investors from the towns. About eight billion francs are actually tied up in tourist investments in Switzerland. The turnover from tourism is estimated at

five billion annually, well over half of it coming from winter tourism. Resorts have indeed been relying increasingly on the winter season. In summer, most Swiss like to go abroad, especially, to the sunny beaches of the Mediterranean. This means that snow is big money. The French have invented a new metaphor to describe it they call it "white gold", a sure hint of the profits to be reaped from Alpine investments. Gold is said to be an unalterable and undepreciating metal. White gold will exist as long as snow falls from the sky. With the rush for the slopes, there's no risk that the new metal will depreciate in the near future. The fact that it is not inexhaustible will even enhance its value. (PMB)

BASELLAND AND BASELSTADT REMAIN INDEPENDENT by MM

At the week-end of 6th December, the people of the two Half-Cantons Baselstadt and Baselland (men and women) went to the poll and rejected the draft Constitution of a re-united Canton Basle. To be exact, the electors of the town accepted it with 44,000 for and 22,000 against (44% voting participation). The voters of the country opposed it with 33,222 for and 48,183 against (voting participation 76%—in the Upper Baselbiet between 80 and 100%); only the Arlesheim District showed a majority in favour.

The campaign preceding the plebiscite was carried out with tremendous vigour by the opponents of the WV (re-unification). This was considered by many an uninitiated outsider as petty and ridiculous — why should there be two administrations; surely one Canton would be simpler and certainly more logical at a time when Switzerland is ready to renounce part of her independence in order to become European. Others were inclined to say why change something which has worked not too badly? But like with most problems, the roots go far deeper, and in order to understand the pros and cons, it is necessary to go back into the past.

Unrest Rebellion, Uprising

Up to the year 1400, Baselland as it is today, was divided into several larger and smaller domains. Episcopal nobility, but also churches and monasteries owned land and people, usually with patriarchal relationship. During the following 134 years, the town of Basle bought all the domains in one way or another, and the whole region was called "Baselbiet", i.e. land and people subordinate to Basle. From then onwards, the citizens of Basle were the lords, and on their behalf the *Rat zu Basle* ruled the Baselbiet

which was subdivided into seven districts ruled by bailiffs. In 1525, in connection with the Reformation, the farmer subjects rebelled and demanded back old rights and privileges. Under the threat of the rebellion, the Council in Basle issued freedom charters, but soon enough, they withdrew most of them again. Before the end of the sixteenth century, there was more revolutionary unrest on account of increased indirect taxes.

In 1653, more rebellion like in other parts of the Switzerland of that time. Basle occupied the countryside, the leaders were beheaded or hanged, Liestal humiliated and the people disarmed. The next uprising took place under the influence of the French Revolution, but the threatening civil war was stopped in general friendship and freedom festivities. Serfdom and bondage of the Baselbiet were lifted in 1790 and vassalage eight years later. Formally, the Baselbieter had equality of rights. Baselland became an administrative district (Canton) of the Swiss Helvetic Unity State which did not prove successful. From 1804 to 1813 and in the wake of the Mediation Acts, Baselland became an independent Canton, and democratisation took over: vassalage was virtually ended, and freedom of traffic, commerce and trade was introduced.

The French "Freedom Armies" broke down, and the patricians reacted strongly. Their aim was to re-introduce the rule of the townships and the guilds. In Basle, this restoration remained moderate.

The Congress of Vienna in 1815 divided up the former Sovereign Episcopate of Basle. That was when the Jura came under Berne. The Baselbiet became the property of the State of Basle (*Stand*). Fifteen years later, the Liberals and Radicals of the Baselbiet demanded restitution of equal-

ity of rights, freedom of trade and commerce, and representation according to the number of inhabitants, dissolution of the guilds' rule. The conservative citizens of Basle opposed this vigorously. And their tough resistance led to the founding of an

Independent Canton Basel-Landschaft

on 17th March 1832. The Council of Basle had withdrawn the administrative officers from 45 Communes by way of punishment. These Communes installed their own authorities (*Landrat*, = Parliament, *Regierungsrat* = Government and Tribunals). They made their own Constitution. The new Canton constituted itself as representative democracy. On 3rd August 1833, the town of Basle tried to use military force, to subjugate the rural Canton, but their action miscarried deplorably on account of the determined resistance of the Baselbiet. The Federal Diet declared complete separation and independence, with the proviso for a *voluntary* re-unification. Basle hoped in vain that the Baselbiet would not be able to manage and that it would voluntarily ask for a return to the town. But Baselland and Baselstadt have remained independent Half-Cantons (so-called because each has only one representative in the Council of States, where other Cantons have two each; the other Half-Cantons are Appenzell and Unterwalden). The two parts have had their own Parliaments, Governments, Tribunals, Constitution, electorate, legislation and coats of arms; Baselstadt has the black crozier facing left, Baselland the red one facing right with seven red dots representing the seven districts along the rounded top. One of the characteristics of Baselland has been Commune autonomy and decentralised administration.

Independence, Freedom and Emancipation

The new Canton was poor. Its only riches were the woods which were given to the Communes. Education was negligible, and development slow. But the young Canton worked determinedly, and gradually agriculture flourished, education was tackled, roads were built, industry (watches, saltmines, building etc) developed, and increasingly, Baselland improved its status in every respect. It was one of the first Cantons which introduced election by the people of the Cantonal Government.

It was uphill work, but progress was only interrupted by the first world war and the years of depression (*Krisenjahre*). An example of how successful efforts were all round is the fact that up to 1930 — apart from the endowment capital of the Cantonal Bank — the Canton managed with practically no financial help from outside. Then in the 'thirties, things were difficult not only in Baselland, but in other Cantons and indeed countries and continents. The re-unification Initiative dates back to 1932, and it was no doubt a product of the economic crisis; Baselstadt began to have difficulties of spacial expansion — it consists of the large town and two small villages, and Baselland's densely populated Communes near the town were attracted by the then considerable social security advantages of the town. Today, these reasons do not exist any more. An important point is, too, that the formerly mainly agricultural Baselsbiet developed more and more into an industrial Canton.

A Federal Problem

It would go too far to describe the uphill work of the 1932 Initiative. Suffice it to say that when the electorates of the two Cantons were asked for preliminary agreement, they accepted, also in the Baselsbiet. In February 1936, the vote was 20,171: 7,450 in the town, and 12,722:10,823 in the country for re-uniting. Similar results in later plebiscites. The war retarded the campaign, but afterwards it moved on. Three times, the Confederation was involved. For any Constitution for a re-united Canton Basle would have to be vouchsafed by the two Federal Chambers, and that would only be done if a clear majority in both Cantons were established. In 1947/8 Parliament refused to sanction additions to the Constitution of Baselland, accepted by the electorate by 11,080 to 10,278. The question of getting a Constitution vouchsafed by the Federal Chambers is also uncertain because the question of separating a Canton or re-unite two halves is not regulated in Federal Law (Jura!). And even once a Constitution has been vouchsafed by Parliament, the Swiss people as a whole would have to accept it on the principle of majority not only of the voters but also of the Cantons.

Constitutional Council

The original Initiative which was launched in identical terms in both Cantons in 1932 asked for a Constitutional Council of 150 members, equal numbers from both Cantons. In the autumn of 1960, the two electorates finally chose their respective members for the Council, and in eight years, a great deal of painstaking work was accomplished. It was heavy going, for however unbiased members tried to be, great difficulties were met at every step, and solutions were not by any means always satisfactory. When the draft Constitution for a Canton Basle was ready to be voted on in the Council, not only were half the Baselsbieter members against it, but a good number of Basle representatives. On 6th September, 1968, the work of the *Verfassungsrat* was officially ended. And it was left to the voters to decide.

Lively Propaganda

The opponents as well as the supporters of WV had been busy all along, and large sums of money were spent. It is estimated that a quarter of a million francs was spent by the adherents to unification, and the antagonists spent 300,000 — 330,000 francs. Let there be no mistake, there were plenty of opponents in Baselstadt; there was an action committee *beider Basel* against WV. Their propaganda rested to a large extent on the weaknesses of the new Constitution and on the principle that the Swiss Confederation would remain strong as long as the Cantons were independent (Charles Redard). They pointed out all the achievements of the Baselsbiet, naturally helped during the post-war economic boom. They argued that close co-operation between the two Cantons already existed, and the problems to be solved would not disappear by a re-unification.

What now?

By the decisive rejection of the draft Constitution, the wider legal issues as it affects the Swiss Confederation, will not have to be met. Will there be a demand for another *Verfassungsrat* which would have to work out a new draft? It seems unlikely, and even if eventually, a Constitution found favour with majorities in both Cantons, and all the federal legal problems could be solved, there would follow a transition period of at least ten years, and by then conditions would have changed again so much that a revision would immediately become necessary, and who knows, by then there might be a second Jura problem — one is enough for Switzerland. National Councillor Dr. Albert Oeri, Basle, said that one should not experiment with the existence of the State. The old Latin maxim should be followed *experimentum fiat in re vili* — to experiment one should use materials only which don't matter.

The extremely hard electioneering campaign was an endurance test, but also a successful trial of Swiss democracy. The watchword for the future must be co-operation. The two Basles will have to do pioneering work in this sphere, collaboration of a new integrated kind not yet established in Switzerland, but needed increasingly to solve the problems of the modern State.

PETER DURRENMATT LEAVES THE "BASLER NACHRICHTEN"

Mr. Peter Dürrenmatt, professor and national councillor, has resigned at the end of last year from the chair of chief Editor of the "Basler Nachrichten". He will be replaced by a "triumvirate" consisting of Mr. Rudolf Suter, responsible for cultural matters, Mr. Heinz Kreis, in charge of local news and Mr. Hans Stark, home news editor. Mr. Dürrenmatt entered the "Basler Nachrichten" in 1943 and was appointed chief editor in 1949. Through his parliamentary and professoral activities he has greatly contributed to extend his paper's influence. Although he now retires as chief editor, he will continue to contribute to the "Basler Nachrichten". (ATS)

ONE WHO HATED SKIERS

A café owner from Hinterholdingen (Sg), Mr. Otto Hurliman, dug a hole 10 m long across the "Atzmaennig" ski-run. Fortunately, no serious accidents were to be deplored. One skier broke his skis. During another similar action, he had spread earth, stones and cinders on the run. On yet another occasion, he had fired a few shots against the employees of the ski-lift. Having acknowledged the reprehensible nature of his act, he had provisionally been set free, but his latest antic has cost him a forced stay in a psychiatric hospital. (ATS)

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