

It happened in the Canton of St. Gall

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IT HAPPENED IN THE CANTON OF ST. GALL

St. Gall, the capital of the Canton of that name and of North-Eastern Switzerland, is best known for two reasons. Firstly, it is the seat of the Swiss textile industry — who does not know of the famous St. Gall embroidery? — and secondly, the Swiss University of Economics is situated in the town. Of the four most populated Cantons St. Gall had to wait longest for its university. It must be remembered, however, that the one time famous college of the "Stift" of St. Gall was called "the first European university". In the old Confederation St. Gall occupied first place as world trading centre, and it was not surprising that St. Gall should become the seat of a Swiss University of Economics. It was the educationalist Theophil Bernet who urged his fellow-citizens to consider the idea. He was then only 27, and the year was 1895. His efforts were crowned with success when the St. Gall parliament decided in 1898 to have a college of communications and an academy for trade, communications and administration. It opened its activities on 3rd May 1899 with seven students. There were many ups and downs, and it was not until 1938 that the "Handelshochschule" St. Gall became an independent institution with juridical personality, which was entitled to confer the decree of doctor and other academic degrees.

In February 1954, a new Bill was accepted by the electorate, which provided for equal allocation of the running cost of the university to the Municipality and Canton. Of the 519 students at the time, only 88 hailed from the Canton of St. Gall, whereas 119 came from Zurich. A collection was made in Swiss industry and trade, which resulted in over three million francs for the new university building. Out of 117 designs submitted, that of the two young Basle architects Foerderer and Otto was accepted. Parliament and electorate agreed to the project at the end of 1959, and the new buildings on the Rosenberg (2,500 feet above sea level) became usable in April last year. At the end of June, the official inauguration, lasting four days, took place. There were eminent guests from all over the country and abroad, and Federal Councillor Tschudi gave the official address. During last winter, 1,150 students were registered, and 1,345 men and women attended the public evening lectures. Of the 1,150 students, 817 were Swiss and 333 foreigners, with a preponderance of Germans and Norwegians. The number of students has doubled in eight years. At the end of November, the federation of Swiss students' organisations held their annual congress in St. Gall. Incidentally, for the first time a woman has been elected into the executive committee of the St. Gall students' association.

Other national and international meetings and functions held in St. Gall included an international dog exhibition, "Danish weeks", the a.g.m. of the Swiss wine merchants, the "International University Contact for Management Education"'s first congress in Switzerland, the annual meeting of the "Liberal World Union", and the conference of the cantonal building Ministers. On the other hand, St. Gall was one of the Swiss towns where the Russian Army Choir was *not* allowed to perform. As in many other towns, specially in the German-speaking part of the country, there was much protest that permission was given the choir to enter Switzerland.

In April this year, the delegates of the Swiss boy scouts met in St. Gall. In May, the regional town and

country planning group of North-Eastern Switzerland organised a course for over 120 young architects and engineers. The Swiss federation of bank employees met in St. Gall on 1st June, so did the association of the Swiss army medical personnel and, finally, the delegates of the OLMA, the Swiss agricultural fair.

Important art exhibitions have taken place in St. Gall, too, and the late Dr. Max Kuhn not only bequeathed his valuable art collection to the art museum, but also left four million francs for a new art museum.

The Swiss newspaper publishers met at Rapperswil for their sixty-sixth general meeting. Talking of newspapers and Rapperswil, it should be mentioned that the editor of "Republikaner", a weekly paper founded in 1798, has informed his readers that the paper will cease to exist. The publishing of the "Ostschweizerische Tagblatt" was taken over by a firm at Heerbrugg, though it is edited and administered as hitherto at Rorschach.

The embroidery industry of North-Eastern Switzerland and Vorarlberg forms the largest embroidery centre in the world (some two hundred machines). The two countries had taken the necessary measures in the past to stop the export of embroidery machines so as to prevent any competition in other countries. The production of such machines became possible again, and in several parts of the world potential competition centres have developed. Nothing much had to be feared at first because they were lacking experience in fashion. Recently, however, there has been an increased export of so-called "punch cards" to be used in automatic machines, which allow up-to-date patterns to be reproduced. Measures may have to be taken against these exports in order to eliminate any future competition which is above all a question of lower prices. The Swiss embroidery exporters met delegations from seven European embroidery manufacturing countries in St. Gall in January. Concerning textiles, the congress of the Swiss textile workers, when meeting in St. Gall in the autumn, declared that pay in the textile industry was lagging behind that in similar industries. The delegates also asked for three weeks' holidays for all their workers and for better conditions generally. Meanwhile, Swiss textiles, especially embroidered materials, are still great favourites with the smart clothes designers. At the International Horse Show in St. Gall last summer, an exquisite fashion display took place, and its novelties delighted an elegant international public.

In the Canton of St. Gall, as elsewhere, there has been a great deal of building. There will be a new work-school for mentally retarded children and primary schools in St. Gall (Boppartshof and Riethüsli), and the town is to have a new municipal theatre and a new youth hostel. The "Waaghaus am Bohl" dating back to 1584 has been beautifully renovated. Much money has been voted for water purification plants — the citizens of Altstaetten granted over four million francs for one and Walenstadt half that amount. Rheineck is to have a water reservoir and Wil a new hospital. There will be an electronic computer centre in St. Gall, run by the "Ostschweizerische Bürgschafts- und Treuhandgenossenschaft". In March, the first concrete factory became operational near the town of St. Gall (Heggen-Bruggen). Sennwald's citizens have agreed to the project of a refinery in the Rheintal, but the communes of Gams, Grabs and Buchs protested against

having a thermal power station in the Rhine valley. With equal determination, the citizens of Buchs are for a technical college which has been the subject of much activity for several years.

The restoration of the Cathedral of St. Gall has been progressing satisfactorily, and the churches of Haegenschwil and Schmerikon have been or are to be renovated. The Protestant parish of Tablat (St. Gall-East) is to have a church. The historic townlet of Werdenberg is being restored and preserved in its beauty. Ebnat-Kappel will be the home of the second Swiss Mormon temple. The same village has now a "Heimatmuseum", the so-called "Edelmann-Haus", home of the late artist and teacher Albert Edelmann, and it contains works of art and precious antiques.

The St. Gall parliament, like others, debated the measures taken against inflation and to curb the economic boom. On 11th May, the "Grosse Rat" met for its first session of the new legislative period 1964/68. Kantonsrat Willy Herrmann (Wattwil) was elected President and Dr. J. Bossart, Gossau, Vice-President. The new parliament consists of 204 members as against 193 in the previous period. The accounts for 1963 showed a surplus of receipts over expenditure of 2.5 million francs with a total income of nearly 180 million francs. The St. Gall Cantonal Bank made a surplus of Fr.5,191,912.— last year.

At the end of 1963, a serious poaching affair was disclosed in the district of Werdenberg, in which seventeen men, most of them from Liechtenstein, were involved. In January there was a big fire in a partly finished factory at Goldach and in February at Bad Ragaz. The mountain inn Schafboden near Wildhaus (Toggenburg) was destroyed by an avalanche, and several hundred fish were poisoned in the river Goldach. News of a theft of a valuable coin collection preceded that of another fire at Rebstein in which two houses were gutted. In May, several buildings of a farm at Eggersriet was destroyed by fire, and fifty pigs and 300 hens died in the flames.

News of a happier character reached us from Lichtensteig, Baldach and Buchs where three couples could celebrate the rare iron wedding (65 years).

At Sevelen, Mrs. Anna Schaepper died in February. She was 86 and left one hundred descendants. Of her ten children eight are still alive, she had twenty-eight grandchildren, sixty great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren — a record hardly possible to beat!

(A.T.S. and "Nordostschweiz".)

AGENT FOR ENGLAND

Important Swiss manufacturers are looking for an agent in England. They produce elastic stockings and back warmers of first class quality.



Anyone interested may get further details from LA GAINE VISO, Saint-Blaise, Neuchâtel, Switzerland.



SWISS CONDOLENCES ON THE DEATH OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

The President of the Swiss Confederation sent a telegram of condolence to the President of the Indian Republic, in which he expressed deep sympathy with the Indian people. He also stressed that the government and people of Switzerland realised the tremendous loss Mr. Nehru's death was for India. They were aware of his friendly feelings for Switzerland and would treasure his memory.

Mr. Nehru paid an official state visit to Switzerland in 1949, and in June 1953 he presided over a conference of heads of Indian diplomatic missions in Europe on the Buergenstock. But also privately, the Indian Premier was in Switzerland at different times and showed great interest in Swiss industrial and trade undertakings whose branches in India Mr. Nehru promoted wherever possible.

On receiving the news of his death, the head of the Swiss Foreign Office, Federal Councillor Wahlen, accompanied by its Secretary General and the Chief of Protocol, paid an official visit of condolence to the Indian Ambassador in Berne.

On 5th June, a number of personalities of Swiss political, cultural and diplomatic life attended a ceremony in memory of Mr. Nehru. It was held in Berne at the invitation of the Swiss-Indian Society. Amongst those present was the former Federal Councillor and Foreign Minister Dr. M. Petitpierre.

[A.T.S.]

EXPO 1964

THE FIRST CONCLUSIONS

The Swiss National Exhibition is in full swing. By 31st May 1,594,094 visitors had been admitted, a total which was only very slightly (6%) under the estimated number. The organisers knew from experiences made at the National Exhibition in Zurich in 1939 and at the World Fair in Brussels that it takes a few weeks to get really going. Numbers are steadily rising, and whereas the daily average was 46,456 visitors in the first week in May, it rose to 52,584 during the last week of the month, with the heavy holiday months still to come. Food and drink consumption has so far surpassed expectation. The use made of the various transport media within the exhibition has come up to estimates, and it is only the income from parking which has been insufficient so far. Many motorists are obviously not yet aware that the roads leading to the exhibition grounds are in excellent condition.

Thus the first results justify the optimism of the organisers, and it looks as if the financial success of the EXPO will not lag behind the moral one.

[A.T.S.]