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# IT HAPPENED IN THE CANTON OF BERNE

## CANTON

On 17th April, the electorate of the Canton of Berne went to the poll to decide in six important matters. Participation was 27%, and all the proposals were accepted. They included the new law regarding the training of teachers. This had been opposed by the teachers, as it proposes a period of 36 weeks of practical work for young teachers on leaving college. Children's allowances have been increased for non-agricultural workers, and 60 million francs are to be earmarked for furthering the construction of houses.

In 1965, 7,241 dwellings were completed in the Canton, a reduction of 2.9% as compared with the previous year. The cost of building index has hardly been increased.

At the end of November, the Solothurn-Zollikofen-Berne railway was inaugurated as a partly underground railway. A few days before, the railway bridge across the Aare at Worblaufen was opened to rail traffic. The railway Interlaken-Boenigen is to be replaced by a bus.

Activities at Berne Airport increased considerably in 1965: nearly 70,000 movements, 18,000 more than in 1964. The number of passengers using the Airport more than doubled to 34,581, and freight more than trebled to 176 tons.

A new nature reserve has been created "Sense und Schwarzwasser", about 30km. of river banks.

## JURA BERNOIS

The separatist movement in the Jura still goes on with more or less vehemence. At the official celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Jura's union with Berne and the Confederation, 7,000 *Jurassiens* thanked Berne for its help and assistance during that time. The gathering expressed the hope that existing differences could be solved by the goodwill and fairness of the Cantonal Government in co-operation with the Jura Deputation. The planned demonstration by the separatists was prohibited by the Berne Government, and they moved to Les Breuleux where they protested against taxation policy. The separatists commemorated the 225th anniversary of the death of Pierre Péquignat a week later. This patriot had rebelled against the Bishop and was beheaded at Porrentruy in 1740.

A special book "150 Jahre Berner Jura — Jura Bernois 1815-1965" was published by the Bernese authorities in December. The preface was written by the former Federal Councillor F. T. Wahlen.

In February, a new Party was founded, the Christian/Socialist Party of the Jura.

The trial of three members of the so-called Jura Liberation Front took place at the Federal Tribunal in Lausanne. They were accused of sabotage, arson, theft, illegal use of force, etc.

In April, a Jura Federation of Young Social Democrats was founded at Moutier. On the 20th of the month, the separatists issued another declaration regarding the "liberation of the Jura people from Bernese domination". At the end of the month, thirty personalities made an appeal in favour of the Jura, asking the public and the Confederation to take steps so that the "worthy and proud people" could decide its own fate.

## THE TOWN OF BERNE

During the past year, the population of Berne has gone down by 603 inhabitants to 165,967. 15% of the total

number are over 65 years old, and only 1,360 places are available in homes for old people.

The accounts for 1965 ended with a small deficit, revenue standing at Fr.178,520,000.—. The budget estimates slightly lower expenditure, but a deficit of 6.9 million francs. The municipal electorate accepted the budget, but rejected the proposal to have a limited term of office (two years) of the Municipal President.

The two new *Gerichtspräsidenten* are Ernst Flueck (Social Democrat) and Ueli Hofer (proposed by a supra-Party committee. The new chief physician at the Ziegler Hospital is P.D. Dr. Rolf Hoigne, and the new *Stadtarzt* is Dr. A. Stucki (Zweisimmen) in succession to Dr. F. Oesch who has been in office since 1939.

More higher schools (*Gymnasien*) are needed in Berne, and primary school buildings are also required; in order to bridge the gap, removable pavilions have been ordered. An Italian elementary school has been in existence in Berne for two years under the direction of the Italian R.C. Mission. The English school, founded in 1961, is planning its own building. The Foundation of the cantonal baby and maternity home Elfenau is to be enlarged.

The Lodge "Zur Hoffnung", founded in 1803, inaugurated its new home at the Brunngrasse at the end of January. 2.1 million francs will be needed for the new R.C. Church at Tiefenau. A 2.5 million-franc credit for a sports stadium at Wankdorf was rejected by the electorate in April, and various other schemes for swimming and sports establishments have to be postponed under the measures to curb the excessive boom.

The R.C. Church community in Berne celebrated its silver jubilee. In November, the various Service Clubs (Kiwans, Lions, Rotary, Soroptimists, Table Ronde and Zonta) held a first communal meeting. At the traditional "Zybelimärit" a week later, nearly 55,000 kg. of onions and large quantities of other vegetables were sold. In March, the "Union Chorale" celebrated its Golden Jubilee. In April, Spanish Weeks were held in the capital. In June 1967, the Federal Gymnastic Festival will take place in Berne.

## BIENNE

The accounts for 1965 were balanced at about 59 million francs. The electorate rejected the budget for the present year, which estimated a deficit of nearly 2m. francs, revenue at 65½m. A new budget has to be submitted to the electors in May.

A scholarship fund was started in Bienne to benefit students and apprentices of Bienne and the Jura. On 1st April the indoor swimming pool was opened.

## OTHER COMMUNES

**Aarwangen** citizens granted 1,625 million francs for water protection and purification plants. A small sensation was caused when the new buildings of the **Burgdorf** Technical College were opened: thanks to strict saving measures, costs were lower by over one million francs than the budget! A. R.C. chapel at **Court** was consecrated in February, and a credit of over 11 million francs was granted for a home for aged people at **Delémont**. The Commune of **Etzelkofen** awarded honorary citizenship to the President of the Cantonal Government Dewet Buri. **Huttwil** now has its own bus. At **Interlaken**, a new dairy centre was opened in December. The gas works, one hundred years old, will be closed; in their place, a fully automatic *Propangas* installation will take over production.

The Loewenbrücke at **Langenthal** will be replaced by a new bridge, and the Farbgassee will be renovated to take into account the increased heavy traffic. The new goods station is in use; it is to relieve the shunting yards of Olten station. At the beginning of the new school year, the *Gymnasium* building was opened. The Crematorium is to be renovated. Langenthal has now also become a cattle auction centre.

A *Volkswirtschaftskammer* for the Emmental was founded at **Langnau**, and at **Lauterbrunnen** the last horse was sold in February; this means that for funeral transports at Stechelberg and Lauterbrunnen, horses will have to be hired elsewhere. At **Muensingen**, the corner stone for a large children's home of the Salvation Army was laid in February, and over 1m. francs are needed to renovate the "Heil-und Pflegeanstalt".

On 20th March, **Orvin** celebrated its millennium. **Sigriswil** will spend 6.75 million francs on school buildings, and **Spiez** is to have a by-pass and a waste water plant (Heimberg). **Thun**, too, is to have an "Ara", a waste water plant as well as a new *Gymnasium* building. The *Versuchskäserei* of the "Eidg. Milchwirtschaftlichen Versuchsanstalt Liebefeld" was opened at **Uettlingen**.

(Based on news received by courtesy of the  
Agence Télégraphique Suisse.)

### ZURICH'S NEW "STAPI"

In the first round of the Zurich elections in March, none of the candidates for the municipal presidency received the required majority. The electorate had to go to the poll again on 24th April. The Zurich Commune Council, therefore, had to be chaired by the old *Stadtpraesident* Dr. Emil Landolt who has been in office since 1950. The first meeting opened on 6th April with 125 elected members. Twenty-nine of these are new. The average age of the Councillors is nearly 48; the youngest is 22, the oldest 68. There are 91 Protestants and 25 Roman Catholic members.

Right to the last moment, it was not sure who would win the elections, *Stadtrat* Dr. S. Widmer (Landesring der Unabhängigen) or *Stadtrat* A. Maurer (Social Democrat). The former was supported by the Democrats and the Evangelical People's Party, the latter by a number of well-known personalities and the *Partei der Arbeit*. As no generally accepted "bürgerlicher" candidate could be put forward, the Liberals, the BGB and the Christian Socialist Parties declared *Stimmenfreigabe*.

With 40,655 votes, Dr. S. Widmer carried the day. His opponent collected 32,288 votes. Dr. Sigmund Widmer was born on 30th July 1919 in Zurich, a citizen of Zurich and Winterthur. He is Protestant, married and has three children. He was educated at the *Gymnasium* and Cantonal School and at the Evangelical Teachers' Training College in Zurich. He studied history, German and French at the Universities of Zurich, Geneva and Paris, and taught German for two years at the Brown-University in Providence U.S.A. He studied political economy at the same time. In 1949, he returned to Zurich to become an Assistant at the University of Zurich (Institute of History) and chief teacher of history, German, French and sociology at the *Töchterchule*. He was elected Commune Councillor four years later. In 1963, he entered the National Council. He is a Regimental Commander of infantry and an author of some repute. Amongst his writings are a Swiss History and a biography of the retiring "Stapi" Dr. Emil Landolt.

[A.T.S.]

### RECENT DEATHS IN SWITZERLAND

The following deaths have been reported from Switzerland:

Frédéric Reusser (79), Moutier, former *Jugendanwalt* and Central President of "l'Association pour la défense des Intérêts du Jura" Vice-President of the "Schweizerischer Schützenverein".

Fritz Moser (81), Herzogenbuchsee, former printer and publisher of the "Berner Landbote"; ornithologist and President of the Bernese Cantonal Society; on the editorial side of "Die Tierwelt".

Pinin Farina, Lausanne, the famous Italian car body builder; died at the Nestlé Hospital.

Jakob Reinhard Meyer (84), Langenthal, secondary teacher from 1910 to 1953; local historian and author; was offered honorary citizenship of Langenthal, but refused it in his modest way.

Walo Bertschinger (63), Zurich, well-known building contractor.

Dr. Eduard Fritz Knuchel (75), Basle, for forty years on the editorial staff of the "Basler Nachrichten"; for years Secretary of the Basle Literature Commission, founder of the Swiss Press Federation; author; distinguished in the Swiss and International Odd Fellow Movement.

Luigi Sommazzi (84), Lugano, former bank employee and member of the Commune Council of Porza since 1912 and its President from 1920 to 1960; when he retired he left a Commune with an admirable financial position.

Prof. Dr. theol. Emil Brunner (76), Zurich; famous theologian. He was born in Winterthur and went to the Zurich *Gymnasium*. He studied at the Universities of Zurich and Berlin and at the Union Theological Seminary in New York. He got his doctorate in Zurich in 1913; teacher in Leeds and from 1916 to 1924 Minister at Obstalden (Glarus), when he was called to Zurich University. His writings soon gave him a name in Switzerland and abroad. In the 'forties he was Rector of the University and for some time a member of the Zurich Church Synod. In 1948, he was delegate to the World Church Conference. He was a member of several ecumenical study groups, President of the Swiss American Society for Cultural Relations and was awarded honorary doctorates of the Universities of Muenster, Edinburgh, Utrecht, Oxford, Oslo, Princetown and Berne and was holder of the "Grosse Verdienstkreuz" of the Federal German Republic. He toured the world giving lectures, and for six months, he was Visiting Professor at Tokio University. On his retirement, he was made an Honorary Professor of Zurich University. Amongst the many publications, the most important are the three volumes of his "Dogmatik". [A.T.S.]

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