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IT HAPPENED IN CENTRAL SWITZERLAND

INNERSCHWEIZ

Twelve representatives of the Cantonal Governments of Central Switzerland met for a first conference regarding improved co-operation amongst the Cantons of Uri, Schwyz, Nidwalden, Obwalden, Lucerne and Zug. For 1967, the Government of Schwyz has been entrusted with chairmanship and secretarial duties. The aim is that problems which are too big for some of the smaller Cantons, should be solved jointly.

The "Verband Landwirtschaftlicher Genossenschaften der Zentralschweiz" celebrated its 75th anniversary.

On 10th December, the new motorboat "Pilatus" had its maiden voyage on the Lake of Lucerne. It is 40 metres long and can carry 400 passengers.

The Literature Prize of the Innerschweiz has been awarded to Pater Dr. S. Frick, Sarnen, for his works on Federer.

The first accounts of the "Zentralschweizerisches Technikum" in Lucerne since alterations and additions were made, show that the credits granted of 6.1m. francs have been overspent by nearly a quarter of a million francs.

URI

The Canton of Uri has great financial worries. The results for 1965 showed a deficit of Fr.313,000.— in the ordinary and 2.6m. francs in the extraordinary accounts, the latter is mainly due to road construction, and the Government consider the vast sums needed "unbearable" for such a small Canton. The budget for 1967 estimates a deficit of 2.5m. francs in the ordinary accounts, and the uncovered debt amounts to 22m. francs.

The Cantonal Parliament decided to increase the tax on motor vehicles, which would bring in an additional quarter of a million francs.

Whilst the Canton of Uri was spared the epidemic of foot and mouth disease early in 1966, it nevertheless cost over Fr.100,000.— to immunise cattle; all 12,625 heads were vaccinated. Cattle is insured for 25m. francs.

The St. Annakapelle at **Altdorf** has now been fully renovated. The oldest teacher in Switzerland, Prof. Kaspar Schnyder (84) at the "Kollegium Karl Boromäus" retired after 57 years of teaching.

The new station building at **Andermatt** has been opened. The Protestant Church at Andermatt has been given an organ by the Church Parish Zurich-Albisrieden.

The Wattigwilerturm at **Buerglen** has been renovated and turned into an historic Tell museum. The Commune Assembly defeated a project to have secret ballots for elections. The restoration of the "Wasserschlösschen" at **Seedorf** was completed some time ago, and that of another valuable cultural monument, the Baroque church of the Convent of St. Lazarus (1696) was finalised in November.

SCHWYZ

Schwyz, too, has financial worries. The estimated results for 1967 show a deficit of nearly a million francs in the ordinary and nearly 6m. francs in the extraordinary accounts. New schools show losses of 1m., the *Gewerbeschule* Goldau of 2¼m. and road construction of 2.74m. francs. The total amount spent on the latter will amount to 27m. Motor vehicle taxes are to be increased by 20%.

Vocational training will in future be centred in Goldau and Pfäffikon. The latter college is to be built according

to a project chosen in a competition. A full-time school psychologist has been proposed for the Canton's educational establishments.

An "oil brigade" has been formed in Schwyz, whose duties are similar to those of the fire brigade, viz. to prevent and fight damage caused by defective oil tanks, especially in connection with water supplies.

The foot and mouth disease epidemic early in 1966 cost the Canton 177 heads of cattle, and the damage amounted to over a quarter of a million francs.

The new electricity works of Neu-Wernisberg belonging to **Schwyz** became operational in the autumn. Schwyz will have its Council Chambers (*Rathaus*) renovated at the cost of 2m. francs. Canon Dr. Carl Kuendig (95), celebrated his seventieth anniversary as priest.

At **Arth** citizens rejected projects for one and accepted those for another school. A new home for old people has been opened, and road construction has eliminated traffic congestions both at Arth and **Biberbrugg**. **Buttikon** which belongs to Schuebelbach politically, has become a separate Church Parish. **Feusisberg**, too, now has its own home for old and sick people.

The citizens of **Freienbach** granted credits for schools, for a school psychology service, new salaries for the authorities, road construction and street lighting, but rejected plans for a central rifle range and parking facilities for the *Badeanstalt*.

Gersau's former "Villa Flora" has become the new attractive *Rathaus*. Its extensive gardens are now open to the public. **Ibach**, too, voted for a new school building, and the **Illgau** organist, Mrs. Betschart-Buergler, received a gold medal from the Pope for special services rendered in 45 years.

At **Kuessnacht**, the new "Pfrundhaus" was opened some time ago and now houses cantonal police and has a civil defence shelter for 180 people. At **Lachen**, the first civil defence emergency hospital in Switzerland was opened in October. **Wollerau** opened a home for 44 old people, and at **Lauerz** the old school house was burnt to the ground in November.

The traditional celebration in memory of the Battle of Morgarten took place near **Sattel** on 15th November. 1,400 marksmen took part in the Morgarten Shooting Contest. The citizens of **Tuggen** rejected the sanitary installation project and the proposal that the Commune Council should in future engage Commune staff. **Wangen** is yet another small Commune which has granted large sums of money for a new school building with gymnasium.

OBWALDEN

The Government of the Canton of Obwalden appealed to the citizens to take a more active part in public affairs and to submit suggestions regarding the revision of the Cantonal Constitution. Many proposals have already been received, amongst them one asking for vote for women.

Obwalden's budget for 1967 estimates nearly ½m. francs on the wrong side in the ordinary accounts and over 1m. in the extraordinary accounts. The latter are again mainly due to road construction. The 28.5 km.-long National Road on cantonal territory will cost a total of 200m. francs.

The Cantonal Parliament decided to increase vehicle taxes by about 20% to bring them in line with the rest of

the country. The first fully biological water purification plant of the Canton became operational at the end of the year; it is at Melchsee-Frutt. The annual accounts for the electricity works at Kerns finished with a small surplus in 1965.

The last celebration of **Engelberg's** entry into the Canton of Obwalden 150 years ago took place at the end of November. A casket containing the most important historic documents was buried on the station square. The same month, a new telephone exchange became operational. Since last summer, an ultra-modern church building resembling a fortress, adorns the Obwalden capital. It will be dedicated to St. Martin.

NIDWALDEN

Nearly a million francs will be missing in the Nidwalden annual accounts for the present year, and 1.4m. francs will be added to the cantonal debt through an estimated deficit mainly due to road construction, waste water plants and building of the Cantonal Hospital. The national road from Hergiswil to Stans has been open since last summer and has greatly improved traffic conditions in the area.

Stans has a new station building which houses the Commune Chancellery, the tax and registrar's offices. The first stage of a modern waste-water plant was completed at Stans in November.

LUCERNE

Deficits are forecast also for the annual accounts in Lucerne: 6½m. francs in the ordinary (179m. revenue) and 12.6m. in the extraordinary accounts (60m. revenue). Deficits of between 6 and 13m. francs will have to be covered in the next few years, and plans are being worked out to establish priorities. Tax increases will have to be made, motor taxes increased, and subsidies will have to be cut. Every *Staatsstelle* is being urged to make savings. A sum of 6.7m. francs has just been asked for by the Government for building projects alone. Cost of living grants of a further 2½% have again been made for all civil servants. For 1966, 62 Communes will receive a cantonal grant.

The Protestant citizens of the Canton accepted the proposed Cantonal Church Constitution.

The new *Verwaltungsdirektor* of the Cantonal Hospital is Dr. iur. Markus Renggli from Meggen. The Cantonal Government has declared the Egozwilersee as protected area, so far on a temporary basis.

The town of **Lucerne** will spend 5.3m. francs on road construction; this credit has been granted by the electorate who also agreed to 6.5m. francs last summer for an indoor swimming pool.

The Municipal President Paul Kopp has stated that he would resign at the end of the present term of office (June).

Federal Councillor Gnaegi gave an address on 11th January, in which he outlined the general conception of energy production and deplored the lack of conception in reactor construction in Switzerland. The address was given during one of the courses on *Staatsbürgerkunde* organised in Lucerne.

The "Kaufmännischer Verein" of Lucerne celebrated its centenary, and the painter Max von Moos has been awarded the art prize for 1966. A record number of visitors went to the Transport Museum in 1966: 340,000 people.

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An international cheque forger of German origin could be apprehended in Lucerne early this year thanks to the clever conduct of a bank cashier.

In November, an extremely bold robbery was carried out at the **Emmen** post office when the thief got away with Fr.29,000.—. **Gisikon's** Restaurant "Zur Post" was gutted by fire in October, and the inhabitants of **Horw** accepted waste-water and school building projects for 4.2m. francs. At the end of November, the new *Gondelbahn* was opened at **Marbach**, and on private initiative, a small indoor pool has been constructed at **Meggen**, seeing that preparations for a public scheme have been delayed too long.

Richenthal awarded honorary citizenship to Prof. Emil Achermann, Hitzkirch, for his great achievements in the interest of teachers' training. **St. Urban**, like its political sister Commune of Pfaffnau, is to have an expensive school building with gymnasium (nearly 2m. francs). An old traditional custom was again adhered to at **Sursee** when the "Gansabhaut" took place on 11th November. If one of the contestants wearing "sunmasks" succeeds in beheading a hanging goose (blindfold), he may keep it. The farmer's periodical "Landwirt" at Sursee has just celebrated its centenary. The former country house of **Utenberg** today houses a rich collection of costumes and various antique seals and jewellery, as well as the archives of the Swiss Yodelling Association.

(Compiled mainly from news received by courtesy of Agence Télégraphique Suisse.)

THE "WHITE BOOT"

Switzerland helps Florence

The flood catastrophe in Florence has resulted not only in nation-wide sympathy in Switzerland, but also in substantial material help. Many local and cantonal authorities granted monetary assistance, and the Federal Council, via the Swiss Red Cross, sent a first consignment of blood plasma, vaccines and food to the amount of 100,000.— Swiss francs. In addition, Switzerland sent 500 metric tons (54 railway trucks) of hay. The two parts in Austria affected by bad floods also received a contribution of Fr.50,000.—.

A team of twenty-five men with twelve mud suction trucks left almost immediately and helped considerably in alleviating the chaos due to broken-down sanitary installations. Men and machines came from Berne, Bienne, Geneva, Lausanne, Lucerne, Lugano, Neuchâtel and Zurich.

The Swiss Red Cross received over four million francs by the middle of December, and many other collections were supported simultaneously. Not only money, but clothing, furniture and household goods were sent, and a shoe factory in the Aargau gave 1,000 pairs of rubber boots, flown to Italy by a Balair plane.

The "Schweizerisches Arbeiterhilfswerk" put one million lire at the disposal of the victims and appealed to the Swiss population to support the collection. The Swiss Salvation Army sent money and helpers, and the Protestants of the Ticino sent clothing, blankets and food to the affected Swiss families in Florence. Several theatre performances and concerts were given in aid of the victims, and many artists sold paintings; in the Ticino, sixty-one such works of art were "raffled" for the price of Fr.50.— each. The Cantonal School of Lucerne gave their pupils a free day to do odd jobs, and over Fr.35,000.— resulted.

In Basle, the Christmas sale of candles by the students has become a tradition. This time, not only hand-painted

candles but also plates were sold. 150 prominent men and women, *Regierungsräte*, journalists, actors, even a Federal Councillor, tried their hands, and the plates were auctioned. In former years, the candle sale was for various schemes which needed assistance, and this time, the Florence victims were added. Students volunteered to go to Italy for personal service.

A Committee "Pro Firenze" has been formed to look into the problem of saving some of the valuable art treasures.

A most original campaign in aid of the afflicted population was the "White Boot" organised by Swiss TV. On 1st December, an express train put at the disposal of the organisers free of charge by the Swiss Federal Railways, left Zurich to stop at several places in German-speaking Switzerland on each of the eight days. During this good-will tour, money was collected by prominent personalities travelling on the train, and television recordings were made. Schools, local authorities and clubs went to meet the train, and the resulting TV programme each night was varied and interesting. The train was a special combination which will only come into use in 1968, and thus the success of the short-term programme and timetable is most creditable. As regards the collection, Basle holds the record with Fr. 40,000.—. Carnival *Cliquen*, brass bands, three members of the Government turning up in frock coat and top hat on an old-time waggon, artists performing at the station, groups of people serving refreshments — all helped to achieve this splendid result.

On 8th December, Swiss TV organised a special gala "Doppelt oder Nüt" at the Kursaal in Berne. Many famous artists contributed, and the Berne campaign resulted in nearly a quarter of a million francs. To total amount of 3½ million Swiss francs collected by the "White Boot" was handed over to the Swiss Red Cross for use in Florence.

The President of the "Colonia Libera Italiana" in Solothurn, announced that the Italians in Switzerland had decided to launch a blood donation scheme out of gratitude for the splendid results of the "White Boot".

[A.T.S.]

A SMALL INVENTION OF GREAT IMPORTANCE

Modern man, always busy telephoning, dictating, jotting down a message or an instruction, glancing through a report and checking an account, sometimes has to put and take off his glasses nearly every other minute, all of which only increases his irritability. With this in mind, a Swiss specialist has created a new frame "Permatic", protected by eight patents, whose branches fitted with springs can be opened at a touch and automatically close again when taken off ready for putting back into one's pocket. This is sufficient to ensure the success of this item for everyday use.

[O.S.E.C.]

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