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IT HAPPENED IN THE CANTONS OF SOLOTHURN AND AARGAU

SOLOTHURN CANTON

The accounts of the Canton of Solothurn for 1966 ended in a deficit of 6.8m. francs, with revenue standing at 179.1m. If all the granted credits had been used up, the deficit would have amounted to nearly 29m. The budget for 1967 estimates a deficit of over 20m. The Finance Department issued a 128-page report on how savings could be effected in the future. In it, improved administration, increased death duties, better co-operation between Canton and Communes, etc., are proposed. The Canton faces big tasks in the next twenty years; the population may increase to over half-a-million, State expenditure may rise from 34 to 108m., the number of foreigners could go up from 1,400 to 22,000 and that of motor vehicles from 3,400 to 45,000. Even today, the Canton of Solothurn, *per capita* of its population, is at the head of all Cantons as regards the number of factory workers. In 1966, there were 5,000 works with a total of some 82,000 hands. Educational, social and cultural tasks will be considerable.

The total revision of the Cantonal Constitution of 1887 is to be studied. A first partial revision concerns the vote for women in cantonal matters. Another new law concerns culture; the electorate will have to vote at the end of May. Castle Waldegg near Solothurn is to become a cultural centre.

Another law has been published concerning sickness and accident insurance. In future all inhabitants from one month to sixty years are to be insured. Maternity benefits have been increased, and the Cantonal authorities have worked out an agreement with the Citizens' Council of the town of Solothurn regarding increased financial participation of the Canton in the *Bürgerspital*.

The high schools of the Canton are to be extended: a new building for the *Lehrerbildungsanstalt* in Solothurn (33m.), the new Cantonal School at Olten (16.8m.), a *Pro-gymnasium* at Laufen in co-operation with the Canton of Berne (State contribution of one million francs). The Canton is also to give a subsidy to the Bernese Research Centre for History and Sociology and to the *Gewerbliche Fortbildungsschule* in Solothurn. The new Headmaster of the Cantonal School is Prof. Dr. Hans-Rudolf Breitenbach, Aetingen, in succession to Prof. Dr. Georg Huber.

Regional and local planning within the Canton is to be increased and improved. It includes comprehensive planning at the Guldenthal, though there is still some objection to this, especially by the *Heimatschutz*. Those concerned believe that the beauties of the valley could not be preserved by overall planning which would include the use of some parts by the military.

In all parts of the Canton, serious steps are being taken regarding waste-water plants. So far, the Canton has subsidised such plants to the tune of 18.5m. francs.

The new Solothurn *Landammann* is *Regierungsrat* Willy Ritschard, and his deputy Dr. Franz Josef Jeger. The new *Staatsschreiber* is *Gerichtspräsident* Dr. Alfred Roetheli, Olten. (Members of the *Nouvelle Société Helvétique* in London may remember him as an interesting lecturer a couple of years ago).

The Bishop of Basle and Lugano, Dr. Franziskus von Streng, celebrated the 30th anniversary of taking office. A special service and ceremony took place.

COMMUNES

At the beginning of the year, the town of Solothurn counted 18,727 inhabitants (100 more than in the previous year), 2,598 of them foreigners (2,478). Extensive plan-

ning in and around Solothurn covers a garbage incineration plant near a water purification plant, both of which will be able to co-operate. The Bruehl district is to be developed as a new residential area which should house 12,000-15,000 people. The plans include a shopping centre, schools, churches and playgrounds. New road planning in the old town should improve traffic conditions.

A Foundation for *Alterswohnungen* has been created with the aim of constructing flats and houses for old people in Solothurn and immediate neighbourhood. In the "Weststadt", a Reformed Church Community Centre was inaugurated in the autumn, and the R.C. Church Community has introduced the vote for women. In the St. Peter's Chapel, excavations have brought to light interesting finds: at least five church buildings have been discovered, the first going back to the fifth century. The present (sixth) church was built in 1654. A new picture gallery "Erato" was opened at the Dornacherplatz early this year.

The R.C. and Protestant Communities of Olten have granted voting rights to their women members. The population of the town has gone down from 21,747 to 21,290; the number of foreigners has decreased from 3,921 to 3,603.

The Village of Balsthal is to have a new Commune Centre including *Gemeindehaus*, fire brigade and civil defence quarters, and a *Werkhof*; costs will amount to over 4½m. francs. 20m. will be spent on road and pavement construction at Biberist which is also to have a cemetery hall.

Grenchen's R.C. Community has introduced the vote for women. The Foundation "Alterssiedlung Grenchen" has worked out plans for housing for the aged costing 4.3m. francs, of which 2.7m. has been collected so far.

Messen is to be the place where the swimming baths for the Limpachtal (half Solothurn, half Berne) are to be constructed. The popular Swiss writer, *Bezirkslehrer* Albin Fringeli, has recently been awarded honorary citizenship of Nunningen. The waste-water plant of Riedholz has become operational.

The Aarmatt at Zuchwil is to be redeveloped to allow for better traffic conditions. The R.C. Community has introduced voting rights for women.

The following Communes have opened new schools: Grenchen and Hubersdorf, and Olten has a new commercial school and a new training centre for trade apprentices at the Froburg. New schools or school centres have been planned for Dulliken, Haegensdorf, Heinrichswil, Gerlafingen and Selzach.

New churches are to be built at Lostorf (Reformed), Bettlach (R.C.), Langendorf (Reformed), Lommiswil (R.C.) and Olten (Reformed).

AARGAU CANTON

The cantonal accounts for 1966 were better than expected, with a deficit of "only" 30m. francs. The deficit budgeted for 1967 is 53m. The long-term finance plan shows an alarming picture — the State debt will amount to 600m. francs by 1975, mainly due to ever growing contributions for water protection, schools and hospitals. The Canton's electorate agreed to a 5% increase in State taxes. Teachers and civil servants will get a rise of 3%. The Cantonal Government has asked for 1.8m. francs for various water protection schemes of individual Communes. The melioration of the Reussthal is progressing. More Communes have objected to the Rhein-Limmat pipeline.



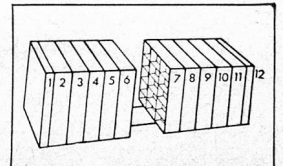
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The Canton is working out a plan to grant women the vote. The Aargau is not to realise the projects for a university in the near future. On the other hand, an Academy of Medicine and a *Bildungswissenschaftliches Institut* are being planned.

In December, the electorate agreed to a contribution by the Canton to the Swiss Epileptic Clinic in Zurich, but at the end of April, three new draft laws were rejected: road construction, civil defence and social housing. Voting participation was nearly 70%.

The Aargau Electricity Works celebrated their Golden Jubilee and the Church Synod its Centenary, whilst the "Aargauer Tagblatt" can look back on 120 years.

COMMUNES

The town of **Aarau** has the most modern first-aid centre in Switzerland (Pestalozzistrasse). There are 300 beds underground, tanks for half a million litres of drinking water, power works and emergency hospital installations.

In the autumn, the large water purification plant of the Aarau region was inaugurated. At the end of March, there was a serious fire at the Cantonal Hospital, destroying the whole central heating, hot water plants and steam installations (kitchen).

At **Augst**, four beautiful bronze statuettes were excavated; they are on show at the workshop of the Roman Museum. The remains of a Roman bridge have been found at **Baden**. The town's new Honorary Citizen is Emil Reinle, in recognition of his merits in various economic matters concerning **Baden**.

Early in January, a fire destroyed part of the hotel "Rotes Haus" at **Brugg**; the damage is estimated at half a million francs. The new airfield at **Fricktal-Schupfart** was opened in November, created at the initiative of the Fricktal section of the Swiss Aero-Club. The Reformed Church at **Gebenstorf** is to be renovated. The Commune of **Haegglingen** has raised strong objections regarding the planned military training centre at Rueti.

Before Christmas, a large wholesale store was opened at **Hendschiken** near Lenzburg. It works on a cash-and-carry basis, and its range covers some 10,000 articles. The Commune Assembly of **Moehlin** granted a 5.4m.-franc credit for a new school and sports centre. Another school building project has been accepted at half that amount by the electorate of **Reitnau**. The renovation of the Protestant church building at **Unterkulm** has been started, and **Wettingen's** churchgoers have agreed to a credit of 2.6m. francs for a Commune centre which is to include a house for the verger. Nearly 2.7m. francs has been granted by the Inhabitants' Assembly of **Wildeggen/Moeriken** for a new school centre, and also a holiday home on the Bettmeralp.

Zurzach's Council Hall has been rebuilt; the outside is similar to the former Baroque building, but the inside is modern. When the old Hall was demolished, coins and other relics were found dating back to the first century. The old Baroque church at **Zuzgen** is being restored.

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

RECENT DEATHS IN SWITZERLAND

The following deaths have been reported from Switzerland:

Hugo Schraner (83), Zurich, well-known publisher of several papers and periodicals such as "Limmattaler

Tagblatt" and "Altstetter Quartieranzeiger"; also editor and author.

Mrs. Berta Huggenberger-Schmid (85), Elgg (Zurich), widow of the late author Alfred Huggenberger who died in 1960 at the age of 92; during her husband's absence from home, she ran the farm herself; gifted writer in her own right who helped her husband considerably in his work.

Dr. h.c. Gustav Bohny (72), Basle, Honorary President of the Trade Federation of Basle, its President from 1939 to 1955; active in the trade union movement; master carpenter; for his merits in keeping labour peace, Basle University awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1936.

Otto Gfeller (72), Buempliz (Berne) ETH engineer and Chairman of the family concern Chr. Gfeller A.G.; former member of the Bernese Cantonal Parliament; founder of "Pro Telephon" in 1927.

Josef Supersaxo (52), Saas-Fee, owner of the oldest hotel of Saas-Fee.

Mrs. Claude Blancpain (Bertrande d'Astier de la Vigerie), Fribourg, wife of well-known industrialist and daughter of French General, prominent member of the French resistance; in Switzerland since 1942 when it became too dangerous for her in France; killed in a road accident.

Léon Desalmand (68), Bienne, former Municipal and Commune Councillor (Conservative).

Colonel von der Weid (73), Villars-sur-Marly and Berne, Commandant of the Federal *Militaerpferdeanstalt* from 1941 to 1956.

Domingo Sans y Bofill (57), Bienne, well-known watch manufacturer; left Spain in the civil war and became Swiss citizen.

Jean Eng (87), Berne, the last member of the "Oltener Aktionskomitee von 1918"; engine driver.

Charles de Loes (71), Geneva, banker, President of the Swiss Bankers' Federation from 1950 until 1965 when he was elected Hon. President.

Jakob Nüesch (76), Balgach (St. Gall), from 1936-1945 *Gemeindeammann*, well-known for his support of the embroidery industry; for some years National Councillor.

Alphonse Louis Marie Méterie (80), Lausanne, French writer; in Switzerland since 1951.

Dr. Etienne Gombo (76), Lausanne, former Hungarian Minister, first representative of Hungary in U.S.S.R.; active in the League of Nations; one of the Nazi opponents who took refuge in the Swiss Embassy in Budapest; broke with the Communists in 1946 and settled in Geneva where he looked after the Hungarian refugees.

STOP PRESS NEWS

[A.T.S.]

Glarus is the first *Landsgemeindekanton* which has granted women partial voting rights.