

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band: - (1968)
Heft: 1540

Artikel: It happened in the canton of Fribourg and Neuchâtel
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-688522>

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IT HAPPENED IN THE CANTON OF FRIBOURG AND NEUCHÂTEL

FRIBOURG

The President of the Fribourg Cantonal Parliament for 1968 is Councillor Robert Pilloud (Conserv. Chr.) from Châtel-St. Denis, whilst Councillor of State Georges Ducotterd (Farmers) has been elected head of the Cantonal Government. The lawyer Charles Guggenheim is the new President of the Tribunal. The budget for 1968 estimates revenue of nearly 159 million francs, expenditure 4.2m. more. The original deficit had been bigger, but adjustments were made so as to prevent an increase in taxes, which would have been necessary the moment the estimated shortage had been more than 3% of the expenditure. The deficit in 1966 was 2.9m. francs. The road and vehicle taxes are to be increased to realise an additional 3.6m. So far, vehicle owners paid a cantonal tax to which was added a communal levy in 173 out of the 284 Communes. The new law drops the communal but increases the cantonal tax by 65%. There are 60,000 vehicles in the Canton.

The Canton spent 3.9m. francs on the University the previous year, whilst the federal subsidy amounted to 3.7m. The total cost reached 9.2m. The University had been planned for 15,000 students, but was now used by 3,000, and additional buildings were urgently needed.

The "Institut Fribourgeois" which looks after cultural matters and whose members are writers, painters, architects and other artists, celebrated its first decade by an exhibition at the art and history museum. "Le Fribourgeois" which appears at Bulle three times a week, has entered its second centenary; it was founded by the grandfather of the Manager of the Fribourg Power Works, Joseph Ackermann.

The costs of building the new Cantonal Hospital were estimated at 49m. in 1965, but they will now amount to 71m. francs. The Cantonal Parliament voted the required additional credit without opposition.

The town of Fribourg now has 40,000 inhabitants and an annual budget of 21½ million francs. A garbage incineration plant was opened in October, a waste-water plant (20m.) will be ready by the end of the year, and new parking facilities, sports and playgrounds and road improvements are among the schemes at present under construction. There is also a plan for a satellite town, Torry, where 3-4,000 people will live.

The well-known College of St. Michel is the first school in Western Switzerland to introduce a computer to be used with instruction in banking and other economic subjects. The whole S.W. wing of the Teachers' Training college was gutted by fire just before Christmas.

The citizens of Duedingen granted 3.3m. francs for a water-purification plant. At Tavers, a new telephone exchange has just been opened which will serve 3,000 subscribers. An extraordinary Commune Assembly at Ueberstorf granted a credit of nearly 2m. for a new school centre with gymnasium and Army billets.

NEUCHÂTEL

The budget for 1968 estimates 118½m. francs in expenditure and a deficit of about 700,000 francs. This is 17m. higher than the accounts in 1966 when the deficit was just over ½m. A report presented to the Cantonal

Parliament shows that regular expenditure would rise by 20m. per annum by 1971 and extraordinary expenditure to a total of 134½m. The Cantonal Bank increased its profit from 1.4 to 2.1 million francs.

With a voting participation of 20.8%, the men and women electors of the Canton accepted three draft laws in December, one on sickness insurance which allows for a reduction in contributions by the better-off, one on help for hospitals and another concerning special institutions for children and young people.

One of the problems the Canton has to deal with is housing. In 1966, there were 162,850 inhabitants, and it is estimated that by 1985, the population will increase to 180,000, which means over 6,000 new homes.

A plan is being studied for the possible introduction of a Faculty of Medicine at Neuchâtel University. The Teachers' Training College has celebrated its centenary. The Evangelical-Reformed Church Synod has decided to extend its campaign for more churches. Since 1963, five out of seven projects have been realised, and in order to complete the plans, another million francs is needed by 1970.

The 42nd "Fête des Vignerons" took place early in October. Over 80,000 spectators watched the pageant procession whose motto was "Tunes in the Air". A British Regimental Band took part.

After 34 years on the "Feuille d'Avis de Neuchâtel", its Editor-in-Chief René Braichet retired at the end of the year. The former weekly founded 113 years ago, "Le Courrier du Val-de-Travers" will again appear once a week, the regional daily news having been taken over by the "Feuille d'Avis de Neuchâtel".

The budget of the town of Neuchâtel estimates a surplus of 1.1m. francs for 1968, with revenue expected to reach 52.3m.

The Commune authorities have received a computer which will ease their administrative work. Their decision to reduce rubbish collection from three to two days was rejected by the citizens. There will be a children's playground in the middle of the town covering an area of 3,200 square metres. The ground which has been claimed from the lake by dumping matter, will be used for a shopping centre, a landing stage, a sports ground and a swimming pool. Over 2m. francs will be required.

The citizens of Boudry made use of the Referendum against a decision of the Commune authorities to erect an administrative building. The opposition was directed against the site. At the end of November, the electors (voting participation 64.4%) agreed to the Referendum, and new plans will now have to be worked out. As regards the participation of women voters, it was the highest ever recorded in the Canton.

The population of La Chaux-de-Fonds numbered 43,036 on 15th December, an increase of 393. Amongst the 8,443 foreigners, there were 5,390 Italians, 1,172 Spaniards and an almost equal number of Frenchmen. The town continues with its exhibitions and special events. After a commemorative exhibition on the engineer Guillaume Ritter who was responsible for the town's water supply in 1887 and on his son William, the artist and author, the "Quinzaine Culturelle des Montagnes Neuchâteloises" (opened by Federal Councillor Tschudi), the 20th "Festival of the Watch", an exhibition on the events of

1967 opened early in December, followed in January by three more on posters, table clocks of the sixteenth century, and photographs. The Library Edmond Privat left to the town a few years ago, was officially opened in November. An experimental theatre and the first private art gallery "Le Manoir" have been started, and the largest school centre is now in use. The longest road in Switzerland, the Avenue Léopold-Robert was decorated by 12,000 candles for Christmas. The prisoners helped with the preparations for this imposing Yuletide decoration. The site where the "Hôtel Central et Paris" used to be, has been taken over by an insurance company for offices.

At Les Geneveys-sur-Coffranes in the Val-de-Ruz, the new youth and education centre "Le Louverain" was opened in the early autumn. It was built by the Church. It houses 80 people and contains a cinema, a library and various meeting halls. Sports and recreation facilities are yet to come.

The third Commune in the Canton of Neuchâtel after Marin-Epagnier and Le Landeron, Hauterive, has a woman President of the General Council. Le Locle now has 15,000 inhabitants. The Rousseau House at Môtiers was re-opened after having been renovated.

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

REPETITION OF THE MECHANICAL HANDLING EXHIBITION

"Rationalise goods conveyance — increase productivity" was the motto of the International Fair for Mechanical Handling organised for the first time in February 1966 in Basle. The result of the exhibition provided adequate proof that it meets a clearly defined need. Having regard to the wide range of means of conveyance offered in Switzerland, it represents an important factor in the marketing of such goods, and the holding of the first exhibition secured for it a high degree of international recognition, so that its motto now has more than ever a direct application to modern conditions.

275 manufacturers of both European and overseas origin were represented with 154 stands on an exhibition area of 35,000 sq.m. The range of industrial exhibits covered cranes and hoisting appliances, continuous conveyors, cableways, goods lifts, floor conveyance equipment, industrial vehicles and special railway transport material, accessories to machinery and technical gear used for goods conveyance purposes, as well as storage equipment in its many forms. The exhibition was visited by more than 27,000 people from Switzerland and abroad. It aroused great interest amongst all classes of traders and was given appreciative mention in technical papers.

The organisations forming the patronage committee and consisting of the Swiss Materials Handling Society (SSRG), the group "Materials Handling" of the Swiss Association of Machinery Manufacturers (VSM), the Materials Handling Association, and the Association of Swiss Manufacturers and Traders of Construction Equipment (VSBM) decided, together with the Swiss Industries Fair, which carried out the actual organisation of the show, to repeat the technical fair in two years' time, that is to say from 7th to 14th February 1968. This allows the IFM to take place at a suitable time in the schedule of similar exhibitions held in Europe, and enables the groups of machinery manufacturers, who alternate their participation in the Hanover Fair, to be present in Basle. A feature of the 1968 exhibition will again be the holding of various technical meetings.

A NEW SWISS INVENTION

A "personalised" perpetual calendar for watches

A Geneva inventions laboratory recently presented to the press a new perpetual calendar movement for watches. Unlike simple calendar movements, which have to be corrected five times a year, this "personalised" calendar requires manual adjustment only once every four years (end of February in leap years) and is, in addition, much less bulky than the usual perpetual calendar movements. Without any correction, it indicates the date throughout the four years of the cycle and, for certain dates of the year which one particularly wishes to remember, can be provided with coloured reminder marks.

[O.S.E.C.]

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