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IT HAPPENED IN THE GRISONS, TICINO AND VALAIS

GRISONS

One hundred and fifty valleys unlock the stronghold which is the Grisons. According to an old historic legend, the three Federations (the "grey" *Bund*, the *Gotteshausbund* and the *Zehngerichtenbund*) united by oath at Vazerol in 1471. The "Uniung Rumantsche da Surmeir" asked the Grisons Government to examine all data, and historians are now agreed that there is no proof of the exact date and that it would be wrong to organise a quingentenary in 1971. The truth is difficult to ascertain, but the most likely facts are that the "Grey Federation" did unite with the *Zehngerichtenbund* on 21st March 1471, at Ilanz. Individually, the three Federations were already united by pacts, but for the formation of the whole Canton, the foundation of the Free State of the three *Bünde* by way of the *Bundesbrief* is decisive, and that happened at Ilanz in 1524. So the next celebration in the Grisons will take place in 1974: the 450th anniversary.

The cantonal budget for 1969 estimates a deficit of nearly 14 million francs, with revenue expected to bring in not quite 364 million. Road accounts should show income of 120m., but may carry expenditure of over 129m. The ceiling for the road construction debt is to be raised from 60m. to 90 million francs. Last year there were 36,289 motor vehicles in use in the Canton.

The Grisons have tried for years to get better link-ups with international air communications, and now, some scheme for an airfield near Maienfeld is under consideration. The citizens of Maienfeld and Jenins are, however, against the project.

On 16th October, the international barrage basin for storing water power was put into operation at Livigno and Ova Spin. The barrage Punt dal Gall was finished a few months ago. The barrage not only dams the water of the Spoel and the Gallo rivers, but with its crown road, it forms a bridge to the Livigno Valley in Italy.

The cantonal authorities pay over 1.4m. francs in subsidies to six private middle schools; according to the respective law, the Canton has to pay per pupil at a private school three quarters of what he pays for a pupil at the cantonal school, and for last year, that sum was 3816 and 2862 francs respectively. A school psychology service is to be introduced in the Grisons.

The Shah of Persia has been granted tax exemption in the Canton as Head of State; he has been spending winter holidays at St. Moritz for many years and has now bought the "Villa Suvretta".

Ausserkantonale Freunde der Bündner Fischweid have protested against the new fishing law, according to which they are no longer to get season tickets and now have to take out short-term cards at an increase in cost of 300 to 350%.

The Grisons authorities have done a great deal to help the needy mountain farming community, especially since the federal law of 1951, and a later decree in 1960, and now new plans are under way to further extend improvements. Income limits are to be raised for families who qualify for subsidies.

And talking of mountain farmers, the new Councillor of States who has joined Dr. Arno Theus (Chur) to represent the Canton in Berne, is the son of a mountain farmer at Andiast. His name is Dr. Gion Clau Vincenz, agricultural engineer (ETH), and he is the successor to Dr. Gion Darms who retired.

For many years, there has been a regional planning group. It has recently been re-activated, and Dr. Duri Capaul (Chur) is the new President. "*Ma Bella Val Mi' Engiadina*" sings the inhabitant of the Engadine. In the Upper Engadine, there is great concern that the building boom will soon destroy the beautiful landscape. There are plans according to which the small Commune of Sils with barely 300 inhabitants (3000 during the season) is to be turned into a town Neu-Sils of between 18,000 and 30,000 inmates. Opposition is tremendous. Last year a number of well-known personalities from all parts of Switzerland formed a group for the protection of the Upper Engadine. Several local glaciers have retreated considerably since records of measurements were first kept in 1894. The Palü Glacier is shorter by 1148 metres, the Rosegg Glacier by 1200 and the Morteratsch Glacier even by 1370 metres. A plant protection area has been declared in the region of Surlej — Corvatsch — Albula — Julier and surroundings.

Within a year, the population of Chur — not counting the seasonal influx — increased from 29,163 to 29,580. By a decree issued in Rome in February last, the *Bischöfliche Priesterseminar* St. Luzi has been raised to a theological faculty with the right to grant graduate diplomas. The Bishop of Chur has appointed Dr. Alois Sustar as its first Rector.

The Bergell has its own TV programmes now, transmitted from the Ticino. The Celerina By-pass is still a bone of contention, and the lovers of nature and local landscape are not satisfied with the project as conceived by the federal authorities. The *Heimatschutz* has been drawn in, and the argument whether the whole Innschlucht is to be used for the by-pass goes on. Celerina has agreed to join the regional waste water plant, together with St Moritz, Pontresina, Silvaplana and Samedan.

The Davos *Heimatismuseum* has been put under *Heimat- und Denkmalschutz*. New avalanche protection measures are being taken in the district. The new zoning plans means that the Davos-Dorf school is in second-line danger. This prevents any further extension of the school, and a new site will have to be chosen, possibly on "Buenda". Davos plans a garbage incineration plant and a new church parish hall at Davos-Platz. The walls of the new congress house are up, and the former military hospital has been turned into a hotel, *Sportshotel* Pisch. The founder of Davos as a holiday resort, Alexander Spengler, also founded the meteorological station. This celebrated its centenary last year, although Spengler himself had started his records already in 1966. The oldest ski-lift in the world at the Bolgenschanze at Davos has been in use since 1934. It has now been demolished and is being replaced by a modern lift. In the *Landschaft* Davos, there are 190 independent farms, owning between them 1788 heads of cattle, 412 sheep, 878 pigs and 59 horses. Cattle and horses have gone back considerably.

A modern drinking water plant became operational at Disentis in November, and the Commune Assembly of Ilanz voted 5.8m. francs for a new school. Klosters will join the future garbage incineration plant new Untervaz/Trimmis. Kueblis has joined, too, but Trimmis citizens are against it.

Due to political tensions, Mesocco has had three Commune Presidents within a year. The renovated mountain restaurant on the Diavolezza has been given a modern waste water plant. Pontresina is to have a public indoor swimming pool, and the Evangelical Church at Sils-Baselgia has

been presented with an organ by the Herisau engineer Bertold Suhner. Samedan's apprentices' home has been opened, and the first 32 boys and girls are housed there.

TICINO

A special commission has reported on the possibilities of economic expansion in the Canton of Ticino, based on a preliminary report handed in by Prof. Kneschaurek of St. Gall in 1964. The proposed measures would mean great changes in economic and social structure. The aim of both financial and economic planning is to get a standard of affluence which would be near the average of the whole of Switzerland. At the moment, it is 20% below. The cantonal budget for 1969 estimates a deficit of nearly 4 million francs, with expenditure reckoned to reach 360 million. A deficit of 38m. is expected in the extraordinary accounts which include 28m. for cantonal road construction. State Councillors are to get an increase from 45,000 to 70,000 francs. Subsidies of nearly 4.7m. francs have been given to eleven Communes for new school buildings, and a further 9m. to twelve Communes is proposed, in addition to 5.7m. for a grammar school at Biasca. The "Cetica" Palace in Lugano will be bought by the Canton for 2.5m. francs.

The Cantonal Constitution has been revised, was accepted by the electorate last year and has now been given to the Confederation for appraisal.

Due to bad rains, one of the walls of the Uri Castle in Bellinzona collapsed. Bellinzona will have a new swimming pool, and the airfield is to be enlarged. The Park of the "Berner Schloss" at Orselina will be the home of a new amphitheatre, whilst the school for mothers will be housed in the main building.

Lugano wants to spend 57 million on a new hospital, and the Commune have bought a site in order to save the airfield. There is also a new prison, one of the most modern of its kind, each cell has its own sanitary installation.

VALAIS

"Es ist diss Wallis mit den höchsten Bergen umgeben; Und hat gleichwol Getraid/Weinwachs/allerley Thier/Fruochte/Bergwerck/Gesundbäder..." These words which appear in the text in Matthäus Merian's "Topographia Helvetiae (1654), characterise the Valais to perfection. The Valais resorts are world-renowned; there are 500 km of ski pistes and 280 ski lifts, chair lifts and aerial cableways. The old Leuca Fortis is still a well-known spa (Leuk) and has celebrated its 1450th anniversary. Various precious ornaments have recently been excavated, dating back to 200 B.C. Zermatt, one of the most famous of all resorts, is to have a helicopter airfield, a heliport, at the same time that an old Seiler hotel, the Victoria, is being demolished. Several other hotels are to be modernised. Out of nothing, a Swiss/French/Belgian group have, after five unsuccessful attempts, succeeded in creating a new holiday resort at Anzère, with 2000 beds available for tourists and many amenities.

Anniversaries of various kinds have been celebrated in the Valais: The Quingentenary of the birth of Cardinal Matthaeus Schiner is one. He was born at Ernen and became the greatest representative in Swiss foreign-political life in the first half of the 16th century. A statue in his honour was unveiled at Ernen at the impressive celebration on 29th September. Picturesque costumes, musicians, papal and other guardsmen, students and 650 guests of honour attended the event. Two Cardinals and various other prominent personalities attended, and Federal Councillor Bonvin gave the main address. He also attended the festival of the Valais mountain guides at Salvan above Martigny where 200 sturdy guides assembled.

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At Martigny, they commemorated a terrible tragedy of 150 years ago, when part of the Giétroz Glacier broke off, blocked the Mauvoisin lake and thus prevented the waters from flowing away naturally; the most awful floods devastated the whole valley from Bagnes to Martigny on 16th June 1818. A happier event was remembered at Sierre: the centenary of the first train arriving at 30 km p.h. or just over. With the advent of rail and motor traffic, horse and mule have had to take a backseat. A village like Savièse, once renowned for its excellent mule stock of over 250, now has three of these animals only.

Another item from our description at the beginning is fruit. The Valais vegetables and fruit have quite rightly an excellent reputation. Who does not know of the luscious apricots, strawberries, peaches, tomatoes and asparagus, not to speak of the grapes and the Valais wines! But weather and bad planning often mean disaster, and the growing production brings increasing problems. Eight years ago still, tomato production was about 5 million kg a year, and by 1966 that was doubled. The total fruit and vegetable production amounted to 68,710 tons in 1966, whilst in 1934, it had been a mere 8.8 million kg. Last December, there were still 14m. kg in the Valais cool stores, carrots, celery, cabbage, onions, apples and pears. By May, the stock of apples still reached a million, mostly "Golden Delicious". This year, the apricot harvest reached over 10m. kg and the authorities had to subsidise with 200,000 francs; the Swiss market absorbed 300,000 kg a day, but it needed 500,000 in order to stabilise the position. For tomatoes and apricots, the Confederation had to pledge support in order to save the surplus. The worst worries were caused by a glut of Williams pears; the normal harvest is some 5m. kg, and this year, some 12 million were produced. The largest part went to the distilleries. In the Vétroz plane near Sion, 4000 fruit trees were felled in October, whose produce it was no longer possible to sell.

The Valais authorities have other worries too. The budget for 1969 estimates a deficit of over 19m. francs, expenditure expected to be in the neighbourhood of nearly 311m. The total cost of the Chavalon thermal power station will amount to 250m. francs. The first part was inaugurated at Vouvry last year. It is operated by oil transported by pipe line from the Colombey refineries. The hospital St. Maria at Visp needs a big subsidy to renovate and expand, and in Sion, an electronic centre was installed.

The industrial development of the Canton has made progress, and within 15 years, some hundred undertakings have been improved, one milliard francs invested and work created for an extra 3,000 people. In 1951, there had been only two watchmaking shops; now there are thirty.

Finally, a few items of news from Communes: The Cantonal Parliament has finally agreed to the fusion of the two Communes of Bramois and Sion; the former has only 900 inhabitants. At Brigue, the old "Napoleon" barracks have been put under protection (Monument Act). The Martigny "Comptoir" showed an increase of visitors of 30% over last year — 65,000 people went to see this Valais Fair. To mark the Roman origins of Martigny, the municipal authorities of Rome have presented the town with a bronze statue of a Roman she-wolf.

Sembrancher's new school and the Val d'Illiez's renovated church have both been inaugurated. The foundation stone for a new Protestant Church in Sion has been laid, and the Sion authorities are trying to find a new site for the *gymnasium*, the old building being inadequate.

(Compiled by the Editor from news received by courtesy of Agence Télégraphique Suisse and "Basler Nachrichten").

RECENT DEATHS IN SWITZERLAND

The following deaths have been reported from Switzerland:

Miss Traute Carlsen (81), Zurich, well-known actress who appeared successfully at the Zurich Play House Theatre until recently.

Dr. iur. Adolf Boner (67), Lucerne, President of the Federal Insurance Tribunal; originally from Laupersdorf (SO); lawyer at Balsthal; member of the Cantonal Parliament from 1933 to 1959; for 20 years in the National Council (from 1939); elected to the Federal Insurance Tribunal in 1959; Colonel of Artillery.

Dr. h.c. Friedrich Oederlin (88), Winterthur, prominent member of the Sulzer concern; he joined the company in 1911, member of the management since 1930; he was awarded the honorary doctorate by the ETH in 1942 (technical sciences).

Dr. Herman Bleuler (77), Kuesnacht, chief teacher of history and German at the Zurich Cantonal School from 1932 to 1957.

Roger Châtelain (59), Geneva, from Reconvilier; Chief of the finance department of the International Telecommunications Union in Geneva, which he joined in 1930.

Robert Kurt (54), Solothurn, lawyer and notary; since 1953, *Stadtammann* of Solothurn.

Youssef Beidas (56), Lucerne, former Manager of the Intra Bank in Beirut, who had defrauded his bank by several tens of million Swiss francs; he had been wanted all over the world and had finally been arrested in Lucerne a year ago, but had been ill practically ever since, and that was the reason why he had not been handed over; his wife has expressed thanks to the federal and cantonal authorities for the fair and just treatment received; he leaves some interesting memoirs.

Dr. med. Philipp Sarasin (80), Basle, well-known psycho-analytic expert, a personal student of Freud who introduced him to the art of psycho-analysis; President of the Swiss Society for Psycho-analysis and member of the international board; for 45 years consultant for nervous diseases in Basle.

Luigi Manazza (72), Meisterschwanden (AG), well-known music teacher and composer who taught some 4,000 pupils; he composed several hundred pieces played by bands all over Switzerland; in 1925, he founded an *Unterhaltungssorchester* with his five small sons, which later became known as "Kurorchester Mario Manazza".

Fritz Frey (105½), Niedererlinsbach (SO), the oldest citizen of the Canton of Solothurn.

Dr. Karl Mueller, Breitenbach (SO), *Amtsschreiber* of the Thierstein district.

Prof. Oskar Wyss (52), Chur, theologian and priest; teacher of Greek and Latin at the Mariahilf College in Schwyz.

Alfred J. Fuchs (84), Basle, former General Manager of Hoffmann-La Roche in charge of the financial department.

Ernest Willy Meyer, Geneva, former delegate to the Red Cross and for 15 years head of foreign relations in the UNICEF organisation in Paris; as high official he had been sent to the Congo and Hungary, and recently he was stationed in Dakar.

Gustave Moppert (80), Geneva, well-known surgeon; during the war, he was medical officer-in-chief of the first Army Corps. [A.T.S.]