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An exhaustive list of the reasons for approval or refusal constitutes one of the major changes. "Justified interest" is defined rather narrowly. The purpose of this new definition is to limit the scope of Cantonal approval policies. A stiffening of Federal supervision will also have a limiting effect. However, no major changes were made as to the penal provisions in case of violations of the "Lex Furgler". This means *inter alia*, that any abetting by Swiss nationals to circumvent the provisions of the new law will be considered as an offence and as such be subject to punishment. When the "Lex Furgler" became law as of 1st February, 1974, the executive order by the Federal Council barring any purchase of Swiss real estate by persons residing outside Switzerland was in turn abolished. It is hoped that the new law will alleviate the problems now existing in certain sectors of the economy.

(by courtesy of Swiss Volksbank)

LETTER FROM SWITZERLAND

A CRUCIAL PLEBISCITE THIS SUMMER

The 23rd June will, this year, be an important date for the Canton of Berne, and possibly for the whole Swiss Confederation as such. For on that date all men and women of voting age in the Jura will be called upon to decide in a plebiscite whether the Jura is to become a separate entity of its own, thus ending what the separatists call "the wrong done to them in 1815". If a majority of "Jurassiens" decide on secession from Berne, the Jura will then become the 23rd full canton inside the Confederation, with its own Legislature, Executive and Judiciary — provided the Confederation as such, which has the last word, finally approves such a fundamental change. The struggle for "the liberation of the Jura" has been going on for between 25 and 30 years. The argument of the "Jurassiens" who want to form a canton of their own is not so much that they are "Romands", but that they are not Bernese. They invoke "a thousand years of history" to justify their claim to form an ethnological entity with an identity of its own and irreconcileable with the one of Berne.

Two groups of separatists have been active to further their aim for a good many years past. They are the "Rassemblement Jurassien" with the temperamental Roland Béguelin as their main spokesman and the much more

radical (and dangerous) "Front de libération Jurassienne" (FLJ). The latter one has sometimes been compared with the IRA Provincials owing to the similarity of their methods. Not so long ago they have seen fit to protest against what they call "suppression by Berne" by destroying military installations, by laying fire to farms, by pelting a train with heavy stones and, relatively recently by forcefully occupying the Swiss Embassy in Brussels. They have even prevented, in the summer of 1964, a Federal Councillor from making a speech while at the same time smearing the Soldiers Monument in Les Rangiers with insulting slogans. Their declared aim is to draw the attention of the public at home and abroad to what they call their plight by doing much damage, both materially and ultimately to their own cause.

The problem of the Jura shows conclusively that even Switzerland's federalistic structure, which is so often praised abroad, and praised with justification, has not succeeded in all cases to solve the problem of how minorities with differing temperaments and traditions can be housed peacefully under one roof. The question the "Jurassiens" will have to answer on 23rd June will be simple: "Do you want a Canton Jura — Yes — No?"

But if the question to be voted on is simple, the future is not. Because if a majority of "Jurassiens" decide on the

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creation of a new Canton Jura, those antiseparatist districts in the Jura who (may) want to remain united with Berne, will after 6 to 12 months have another plebiscite about the same question. If, on the other hand, a majority of "Jurassiens" decide on 23rd June against the creation of a separate canton, then the separatist districts will have the same right to vote once more as to whether they still want to form a separate, smaller canton with reduced territory. All this adds considerably to the complexity of the situation.

In Berne — meaning in the cantonal, not the federal Capital — the hope expressed is, above all, that as many "Jurassiens" as possible will vote on 23rd June and that the decision, whichever

way it goes, will be a clearcut one. Berne also promises — in case the Jura does not go its own way, and no doubt in order to influence the decision — the creation of a regional parliament in the Jura and increased representation of the Jura in the Cantonal Government in Berne, as well as one (of two) seats in the Council of States (Ständerat) in the Federal Parliament. In a "Statute for the Jura" debated in the cantonal parliament in Berne in November last year it is also stated that "German and French are the recognised official languages in the Canton Berne. The schools in the French-speaking parts of the Canton will be given wide autonomy . . ."

These are by no means all the

aspects of this complicated problem. There have, for example been long preliminary discussions about the question *who* should have the right to vote on 23rd June: only those who actually live in the Jura and pay local taxes, or also those "Jurassiens" who were born there, but live in different parts. Then there is the problem about what kind of majority is needed to alter the Cantonal Constitution of Berne and many more. But I have tried in this letter to reduce a truly complicated problem with ethnological, cultural, legal and political components to as simple as possible a description of what 23rd June is about.

Gottfried Keller

NEWS FROM SWISS WINTER SPORTS RESORTS — WINTER 1973-74

Every winter season, new ski-lifts and aerial cableways are opened in Switzerland, hotels are modernised, and facilities such as indoor swimming-pools and saunas are added to hotels. The following information is only a selection of the most important new developments.

ADELBODEN (4,593 ft.), Bernese Oberland

Thanks to the inauguration of the aerial cableway from Lenk (3,609 ft.) to Metsch (4,822 ft.) and the connecting two ski-lifts to Metschberg (5,806 ft.), the link-up with the Hahnenmoos area, Adelboden's main ski-ing region, has been completed. The area Adelboden/Lenk/St. Stephan can now boast a total of 40 means of transport. A very attractive combined season ticket is available to skiers for periods of 3, 7 and 14 days and 1 month, valid on 18 ski-lifts, 7 chair-lifts, 2 aerial cableways, 2 gondola cableways and two motor-coach lines. A second cross-country ski track has been opened up at Engstligenalp (6,560 ft.). The approach road from Frutigen to Adelboden has been improved, and an additional car park is available at the village entrance.

ANDERMATT (4,868 ft.), Central Switzerland

A new trainer ski-lift has been constructed from Andermatt to Nätschen, running parallel to the main ski-lift, but over less steep slopes. The opening of the Hotel Alpina garni (30 beds) is planned for February, 1974.

ANZERE (4,921 ft.), Valais

On 1st December the Hotel Zodiaque was opened, offering 125 rooms/studios with private bath, balcony, radio and telephone. The hotel complex also includes a shopping centre,



discothèque, sauna, snack-grill, bars and conference facilities.

AROSA (5,905 ft.), Grisons

A new Tschuggen chair-lift has been constructed, running from the Carmenna lower station (6,052 ft.) to Tschuggen (6,717 ft.), with a transport capacity of 800 persons per hour. The cross-country ski school opened last year has been further extended, and more tracks are available this winter. Ski-runs, skibob-runs and walking paths have also been improved. The Pension Gspan (26

beds) has been completely modernised.

BRAUNWALD (4,921 ft.), North-Eastern Switzerland

Braunwald — a sunshine terrace high above the Linth valley — is one of the Swiss resorts located off the motor roads. At Linthal, below Braunwald, there is heated indoor parking for 140 cars. Braunwald now offers skiers no less than six mountain transport systems, including the new gondola cableway Braunwald — Grotzenbüel, which has a carrying capacity of 600 persons per hour.