

It happened in the canton of Solothurn

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Chairman urged patience and reported that a meeting of the Executive Committee of the ASK with Federal Councillor von Moos had been arranged to discuss the matter further. Any cases of discrimination against Swiss abroad would be taken up immediately by the ASO who had been successful in every instance so far. The Chairman reminded the members that nothing should be done which could harm the cause of the Swiss abroad and he said that if we wanted to become a political body we would have to consider the whole rather than to dissipate our strength on individual points.

There was little discussion on the withholding or anticipated tax (Verrechnungssteuer) as the Colonies had had no chance to discuss the matter.

The suggestion to call the assembly "congress" was rejected after some lively discussion. It was felt that there were congresses of many kinds but only one "Journée".

Item seven concerned the Assembly of the Swiss Abroad next year which will be held in Lausanne from 28th to 30th August. The proposed theme "Switzerland and the Developing Countries" was accepted as most suitable seeing that the Assembly would take place during the time of the National Exhibition.

The next meeting of the Commission was fixed for early February to coincide with the Centenary Celebration of the New Helvetic Society.

Mariann.

IT HAPPENED IN THE CANTON OF SOLOTHURN

When the authorities of the Canton of Solothurn budgeted for 1963 they foresaw a deficit of nearly twenty million francs. In actual fact the fiscal year ended with a surplus of 1.7 million francs (the income amounted to Fr.134,658,717.—).

At the end of May the people of the Canton voted on five proposals with a participation of 47.2%. 16,900 citizens accepted and 7,800 rejected a credit of nearly half a million francs as the Canton's contribution to the EXPO. The credit increase to the melioration bill covering drainage schemes, bridge and road building and river corrections was accepted by a similar majority. A slightly smaller number of citizens agreed to the Canton's joining the concordate for the creation and running of an agricultural technical college (of the cost of 8.5 million francs the Confederation will contribute 3 million). The proposal for the Cantonal School was accepted, too, and so was the public hospital bill after the people of the Canton had already accepted a three million credit in February.

The family allowances bill was altered to grant Fr.25.— instead of Fr.10.— per child per month, and the constitution of the state pension scheme was adjusted to allow more realistic pensions.

The report of the inspectorate of factories showed that 1962 beat all previous records — 39 new factories and the closing down of 10 old ones gave a nett increase of 5.06% for the Canton as compared with 3.15% for the whole of Switzerland. On 1st January 1963 602 firms were under the Solothurn factory law with a complement of 48,265 workers. 33% more overtime was worked than in the previous year, whereas the rest of Switzerland showed a decrease of 5%. In the course of 1963, however, Solothurn, too, has been showing a decline.

Building activities were on the increase all over the Canton by the end of the year. First class road building had used 6.9 million francs, roads of the second and third class had cost another 4.5 million francs. The technical renovation of the Birsigtal railway will amount to seven million francs to which the Cantons of Baselland and Baselstadt will also contribute, as well as the Confederation.

SOLOTHURN TOWN

The capital of the Canton showed a slight favourable balance in its accounts for 1962. Income and expenditure reached the 14.5 franc mark.

Individual accounts showed deficits for forest administration on account of the bad winter and for the Birsigtal.

The PTT (Federal Post Office) intend putting up a new head office at the Schaeuzliplatz. In the east and north of the town a number of road schemes are scheduled which were sanctioned by the Inhabitants' Commune. A skyscraper (34½ metres high) is to be built on the western outskirts of the town.

The Swiss Youth Parliament held its fourth annual meeting in Solothurn. 160 young parliamentarians were welcomed by Landammann Dr. Urs Dietschi, and Federal Councillor Bonvin praised the work of the young citizens and appealed to them for responsible civic activities.

Two delegate meetings took place in Solothurn in May, that of the Swiss Association of Chiropractitioners, and that of the Central Association of Swiss Folktheatres.

OLTEN

The citizens of Olten agreed with an exceptional majority of 1,379: 38 to join the waste water scheme of the Olten district. With this another important step has been taken towards the realisation of a water purification plant which is to be built together with twelve other Communes (cost: 23 million francs).

The Commune Assembly agreed to the compulsory sickness insurance for all inhabitants whose income does not surpass the nine thousand franc mark after deduction of tax allowances.

The general assembly of the Swiss Organisation of Citizens' Communes was held in Olten. In a unanimous resolution it proclaimed that naturalisation should be facilitated in order to prevent "Ueberfremdung" at a time when 700,000 foreign workers were employed in Switzerland.

In July the Olten schools celebrated their traditional "School Festival" which takes place every two years.

The Society of Travelling Salesmen held their annual meeting in Olten in June, and a month later 2,000 members of the Workers Touring Club competed at their festival (cars, motorcycles and bicycles).

GRENCHE

The Grenchen accounts, too, showed a surplus of 1½ million francs for the past year. The Commune Council proposed to the Assembly the purchase of land and houses to the value of four million francs. Only 81 out of over 5,000 citizens entitled to vote attended. The same proposals also had to go to the voters who accepted them. (Participation 40%).

BIBERIST

The Commune of Biberist also showed a favourable balance in their accounts. When the Commune Assembly accepted them they were informed that the Commune had made considerable land purchases during 1962. This industrial village with its 7,500 inhabitants is a classical example of a scattered community without a real centre. A zoning plan has now been worked out which visualises a new Commune with about 16,000 inhabitants by 1983.

The tiny village of NUGLAR-ST. PANTALEON was the first village of the Canton of Solothurn to have a water purification plant. A new task with considerable financial consequence is facing the village this year, as the roads will have to be rebuilt.

In connection with the proposed new marshalling yard at Olten-Niederamt, the Commune of GRETZENBACH has to surrender 400,000 square metres. Considerable opposition has been made.

Another Commune who had budgeted a deficit for 1962 is SCHOENENWERD. It, too, managed to have a surplus of nearly half a million francs.

The Commune of TRIMBACH also agreed to join the waste water scheme of the Olten district. A new Justice of the Peace, Hans Merk, was elected for the remainder of the period of office 1961-1965.

The largest Rural Commune of the Canton is ZUCHWIL, outside Solothurn, which counted 7,846 inhabitants at the end of June. It thus leaves Biberist behind with its 7,500 inhabitants.

EDUCATION

There is a shortage of teachers in Solothurn. Some 45 positions were vacant at the beginning of the scholastic year in spring. New scales of improved teachers' salaries have been proposed with effect from 1st January last. A second course for the training of teachers from amongst other occupations has been decided on. It will begin in spring 1964 and will last 2½ years. This is in addition to the usual training classes for primary teachers.

The Solothurn watchmakers' college, the only school of its kind in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, showed a slight decrease in students in 1962. The testing office checked the quality of nearly 44,000 watches.

The "Schülerkosthaus" (school meal house) of the Cantonal School in Solothurn which burned down in January is to be rebuilt and enlarged.

Solothurn has one full-time and six part-time vocational guidance offices for boys and girls. This service is to be enlarged. The service for child psychiatry and school psychology is also to be improved.

ART

Several art exhibitions took place in Solothurn, amongst them one of the works of the local painter Hans Jauslin (1909-1958) and another of Solothurn artists belonging to the Association of Swiss Artists. At the same time, an unusual exhibition of 150 artists' self-portraits from five centuries took place at the Central Library.

Olten has decided to create an art prize, and Open-Air Plays were started for the first time in Solothurn at the end of August. The magnificent steps of the St. Ursen Cathedral formed the stage. "David and Goliath" was produced, and it is hoped to organise such Solothurn Festivals on biblical themes every two or three years.

The 21st Cantonal Singing Festival of Solothurn was held at Grenchen when 3,000 singers belonging to eighty

choirs took part in the 21st contest. It was also the centenary of the "Kantonalgesangverein" of Solothurn.

VARIOUS

The Canton of Solothurn issued a decree last year which put all historic monuments under state protection. The Canton subsidises restaurations of churches, castles and other historic buildings. After the thirteenth century Zeitglockenturm in the Market Square was renovated last summer, a Roman villa has now been excavated and restored. A further credit has been granted to renovate well-preserved Roman baths in Olten which was originally built on the remains of a Roman Castrum.

The State of Solothurn has become the owner of the Castle of Waldegg, at Feldbrunnen near Solothurn, built in 1682/3 by Johann Victor Peter Besenval. A hundred and eighty years later the von Sury Family purchased it and has been living in it ever since. The Castle is beautifully furnished and reflects the history of Solothurn. The Castle will be used as a museum.

The teachers of the Canton of Solothurn have been asked to instill love of nature into the youth of today. On 27th June the traditional "Nature Day" was celebrated when the "Storchenbatzen" was collected for the preservation of the stork reserve at Altreu. At present sixty storks live there, and last year four stork couples built their nests and hatched their young.

The Solothurn Tourist Office reported that owing to systematic propaganda more and more foreign visitors now came to the Canton. 113 hotels with a total of 1,800 beds were registered in 1962. Solothurn was thus above the average for North-Western Switzerland.

(Based on reports received by courtesy of the Agence Télégraphique Suisse.)

SWITZERLANDS SIGNS MOSCOW TEST BAN TREATY

On Friday, 23rd August, the Federal Council issued the following communiqué:

"The Federal Council, at its meeting of 23rd August, has decided to sign the Treaty to ban atomic experiments in the air, in space and under water signed by the United Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America on 5th August in Moscow. This agreement is subject to acceptance by the National Council and the Council of States.

The Treaty is significant as it aims at putting an end to further radio-active pollution of the elements vital to the human race. To guarantee the success of the Treaty will be the task of the states which can effectively or potentially dispose of nuclear weapons. The joining of the Treaty by other countries is of moral and symbolic value."

The Communiqué continues to say that the Federal Council is well aware of certain inadequacies in the agreement, but, on the other hand, appreciates the psychological and humanitarian value of Swiss participation in the Treaty. This aspect is decisive for the Federal Council as the question of Switzerland's neutrality is not affected.

"If the Federal Council, by signing the partial agreement to ban tests, wishes to express the desire that the world should live in real peace, it considers it important to state that Switzerland keeps its freedom to decide on atomic armaments. Further development in this field will influence its decisions."

("Basler Nachrichten".)