

It happened in North-Western Switzerland

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IT HAPPENED IN NORTH-WESTERN SWITZERLAND

CANTON OF BASLE

The Constitutional Council for the re-uniting of the two Half-Cantons of Baselstadt and Baselland (*Verfassungsrat*) continues its work. The Chairman for 1967 is Prof. Dr. Heinrich Ott, Socialist (Muenchenstein), in succession to Prof. Dr. Alfons Burckhardt (Basle). It is expected that the Council will finish its preparatory work on the Constitution by the end of the year. Basic changes which were made at the meetings early this year include vote for women in cantonal matters and the introduction of *Bezirksräten* for the purpose of supervising the work of Communes. The difficulties regarding a budget have been increased, seeing that the previously accepted accounts for 1964 as a basis for discussion are no longer valid, i.e. they give a wrong picture, for since then, accounts have been entering the deficiency trend.

BASELSTADT

It is an old truth that the people of Basle and Zurich are at loggerheads, and the finest thing that each of the two towns has to offer the citizens of the other is the fast train home! It is rather amusing, therefore, to find an extremely appreciative article on Basle "Expanding the Crossroads of Europe" *By Our Zurich Correspondent*. This was in the "Financial Times" a few months ago, and the writer dealt with the tremendous efforts Basle, one of the nerve centres of Europe, was making to develop large-scale transport facilities and the effective lines of communications ever more important in inter-Europe commerce.

Yet, the annual accounts for 1966 showed a surplus of 6 million francs against a budgeted deficit of 14.4m. Expenditure amounted to nearly 431 million francs. The budget for 1967, after a number of cuts by the Cantonal Parliament, now estimates a deficit of more than 14m. francs (originally over 19½m.). Expenditure should be 42m. less than in 1966.

Basle has the first Jewish Parliamentary President in Switzerland in the person of the former *Statthalter* Dr. Jules Goetschel. National Councillor Dr. Edmund Wyss is the new *Regierungsratspraesident*. Both are Socialists, whereas the new *Statthalter*, Peter Mueller, is a member of the "Landesring der Unabhängigen". Early in April, Dr. Agnes Metzener, was elected *Strafrichter*, beating the two male candidates overwhelmingly. For the first time, women had election rights, and it was estimated that 22.8% of the male voting population and 21.9% of the women went to the poll.

The Cantonal Parliament debated the cost of the *Bürgerspital* at great length. It is estimated that the agreed sum of 250m. francs will be surpassed by 117 million. In view of the shortage of nursing personnel, some 20% of the beds (150 to 170) will have to be put aside. A commission of 25 has been appointed to study the whole problem of cost, etc. The fight between the doctors and the *Krankenkassen* still goes on, and no agreement has yet been arrived at.

The CIBA company opened their 17-storey building for biological research in May.

The first projects for a *Tiefbahn* in Basle are to be submitted to the electorate next spring. 21½m. francs have been asked for the construction of a *Sportshalle* St. Jakob.

A referendum has been taken against the plan. The State is to take over the artificial icerink at a cost of 3.3m.

40m. francs will be needed for the rebuilding of the Municipal Theatre.

The chemical firm of F. Hoffmann-La Roche and Co. is constructing a subterranean garage and staff building including a swimming pool. The garage will have parking facilities for 960 cars on three floors and it alone will cost 30m. francs.

The British Vice-Consulate in Basle has been made into a Consulate.

Councillor of States, Dr. Eugen Dietschi, has retired as an Editor of the "Nationalzeitung" after 46 years. Prof. Dr. Adolf Portmann was awarded an Honorary Degree by the Medical Faculty of Heidelberg University on the occasion of his 70th birthday. The biggest birthday party ever held in Basle took place on 29th May when the popular cabaret artist Alfred Rasser celebrated his 60th birthday. The Police Corps Band led a procession of over 60 taxis, with the artist in an open landau. At the "Fauteuil Theater" he entertained the guests, and the performance was followed by a *lampion* procession to the hotel where camels (Circus Knie) stood guard, and a monkey presented Rasser with flowers.

The Basler *Volkssymphoniekonzerte* celebrated their silver jubilee at the end of April.

The Basler *Frauenzentrale*, an organisation in charge of several social institutions and schemes, is 50 years old. The oldest section of the Academy of Music, the School of Music in Basle, celebrated its centenary. Among the Directors have been several famous musicians like Selmar Bagge, Hans Huber, Hermann Suter, Felix Weingartner, Hans Muench and, since 1964, Paul Sacher. The "Rebleuten-Zunft" celebrated its sexi-centenary in the autumn.

The Basle Science Prize for 1966 was awarded to Pfr. Emanuel Kellerhals. Pfr. Franz Ch. Blum (St. Clara) has been appointed *Päpstlicher Hausprelat* by the Pope. A young Basle student *cand. iur.* P. M. Gutzwiller has been awarded an international Rotary Scholarship to read international and constitutional law at the University of Columbia (South Carolina).

On 20th May, an extensive campaign to keep Basle clean "*Basel blyb sauber*" was started. Twenty years ago, 18,000 tons of garbage a year was collected — today it is 90,000 tons. Formerly, 800 to 1,000 men applied for a single vacancy in the road cleaning service. Two years ago, after concerted efforts in the whole of Switzerland, 35 new workmen could be found. Of these, only two are still in the town's road service; the others left for work in the chemical industries. 200 years ago, the "*Gnädige Rat*" of the town of Basle asked its population to clean the streets. This year's campaign is by way of an anniversary.

On the death of its owner, the Bank German was closed and declared insolvent. The late Walter German got into the news after his conviction in New York last year, because he had refused to disclose the names of his American clients who had numbered accounts at his bank.

A drug ring of some twenty young people could be caught by the Basle Police; no evidence was found of any extensive trade. Early in June, a modern tramcar with 50 passengers upset in a bend near the Claraplatz, due to an error made by the driver. Seven people were injured.

BASELLAND

The annual accounts of Baselland showed a deficit of 9.7 million francs. Revenue stood at 157.6m. After some cuts, the budget for 1967 estimates a similar deficit, but with revenue expected to bring in 194.8m. A special commission has since studied the requirements for building and road construction and has cut a figure of 1,323m. to 500 million francs. The electorate had refused the proposed increases in taxes in the poll of 27th November, which would have brought additional revenue. On 4th June, the voters accepted a plan for gradual introduction of women's suffrage. Also accepted were the water supply law and the *Grundwassergesetz*. The Commune Council of Liestal has agreed to a one-third increase in the price of water. A 20% rise in the price of electricity was accepted by the Elektra Birseck. The Cantonal Parliament, the *Landrat*, approved an increase of 2 to 32% in the cost of living grant to civil servants and teachers.

On 17th April, the first part of the T2 road in the Ergolz Valley was opened to traffic which enables, at long last, elimination of two very dangerous level crossings near Sissach and Lausen. Towards the cost of 22m., the Confederation contributes just under one-third. During the construction of the road tunnel near Sissach, an accident cost two lives at the end of February. Also, near Sissach, a new water purification plant became operational at the end of April.

At the end of May, the two small Communes Biel and Benken inaugurated their new school building which they had built jointly at the cost of 3m. At the Fraumatt school in Liestal, day classes for mentally deficient children were opened. The educational authorities have introduced compulsory film education in the upper schools.

The ashes of the late sculptor Jakob Probst, world-famous creator of the *Wehrmännerdenkmal*, were interred near the monument at a small ceremony at the end of March.

There are nearly 60% Protestants and 36½% Catholics in Baselland. The R.C. community approved votes for women in Church matters. Other news of women is of a third woman in a public office, this time at Ramlingen, where Miss Hedwig Heid has been elected Commune Treasurer.

In mid-March, the newly renovated Bad Maisprach was gutted by fire; the damage amounted to at least half a million francs.

(News received by courtesy of Agence Télégraphique Suisse and "Basler Nachrichten".)

ANGLO-SWISS NEWS ITEMS

The author of the successful play "Sister George", Frank Marcus, congratulated the actors on their excellent performance after the 25th showing of his play in German ("Schwester George muss sterben") at the Zurich *Schauspielhaus*.

As sole representative of a third country, Mr. Hans Rudolf Neururer, Zurich, has been appointed member of the Joint Mission for Malta, which is to replan the island's economy.

Two Chief Detectives of the Metropolitan Police went to Geneva in connection with the robbery of 140 gold bars valued at nearly 11m. francs. Several of these bars have been found by the Geneva Police, others at Chiasso, where the gold foundry "Argor" was offered several ingots. ("Argor" handles a quarter of the world's gold).

The British Minister of State at the Foreign Office, Mr. Frederick Mulley, attended the 47th Annual Meeting of the British-Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Berne. Mr. C. A. Staehelin, Basle, was elected President, the first time a Swiss national has been in this position.

[A.T.S.]

VOTING IN ZURICH AND SCHAFFHAUSEN

The Zurich electorate, Canton and Communes, went to the poll on Sunday, 28th May. Two cantonal proposals were accepted with a voting participation of 47.6%. The first (66,449 to 57,779) concerned a credit of 148 million francs for a new *Frauenklinik* in Zurich with new central service installations at the Cantonal Hospital. The Winterthur district rejected it. The second matter was the new law regarding the Zurich Cantonal Bank (81,708 to 35,119). In future, the managers will be elected by the Bank Council and no longer by the Cantonal Parliament; this should ensure political independence.

The Zurich municipal electorate accepted all four proposals: compulsory ninth school year; definite introduction of the *Maturitätsschule für Berufstätige* at the Trade College; 1.45m. francs for the construction of flats for the forestry workers of the *Stadtforstamt*; an annual contribution to the welfare centre for alcoholics.

Nineteen Communes of the Zurich Oberland have already agreed to a garbage incineration plant; Uster has joined by accepting the proposal, but Wetzikon voters rejected it.

The Winterthur electorate agreed to all four projects: a large hall for Toess, various road construction schemes and the purchase of the Geiselweid swimming baths. Voting participation was 63.4%.

1.6m. francs was granted for the construction of a road and an underpass at Meilen, 5.3m. for the Sonnenberg school centre and 1.9m. for a first aid post at Adliswil. The Kloten voters agreed to an electricity sub-station and a rainwater purification plant (total 2.6m. francs). Dietikon voters rejected the so-called general traffic scheme.

The men of the Canton of Schaffhausen have followed the example set them by Zurich earlier and rejected a proposal to give women the vote in cantonal matters — voting participation 85%. Again like in Zurich, the town itself accepted, but the 32 rural Communes opposed it. The President of the Schaffhausen section of the Swiss Federation for Women's Suffrage, Mrs. Judith Widmer, said that the result was progress as compared with the vote of 1959 and "There are defeats which are not only the beginning of coming victories, but in which the victims feel happier than the victors". The credit of 6.7 million francs for the extension of the Cantonal Psychiatric Clinic was accepted by the cantonal electorate.

[A.T.S.]

IRON AND DIAMOND WEDDINGS

Two couples recently celebrated their Diamond Wedding: Mr. and Mrs. Alessandro and Anita Martinaglia-Laveni (Riehen/Basle) and Mr. and Mrs. Louis Fleury-Farine (Courroux/Berne). Mr. and Mrs. Alfred and Marie Wachs-Kohler celebrated their Iron Wedding at the "Asyl Gottesgnad" at Mett near Bienne.