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IT HAPPENED IN THE CANTON OF ZURICH

HISTORY AND POPULATION

The territory of the Canton of Zurich was largely purchased by the town, and it is remarkable that as early as the middle of the fifteenth century, most of today's Canton of Zurich already existed. Soon after the birth of the Confederation in 1291, Zurich was an important political focal point of the German Empire and a centre of commerce and trade. The Municipality made use of the commercial vein of its citizens, and with foresight and astuteness more and more territory was acquired. We read in an article by Eberhard Brecht in the "Tages-Anzeiger" on 5th January, that in 1358, Zurich bought the deeds of Stadelhofen and Zollikon, and soon afterwards, Charles IV presented the lake up to Hurden to the town. Within a few years, the shores on the right side were added as far as Meilen, also Thalwil and Hoengg. And so it went on, at first at small expense, but later large sums had to be spent to acquire land. At irregular intervals, a tax was levied on property, and credits were taken up with Fribourg and Basle citizens and Jewish money lenders. Grueningen and Kyburg cost the large sum of 9,000 gilders, Greifensee 6,000 and Andelfingen 2,300. On the other hand, 1,600 gilders were spent on cobblestoning the town's roadways and over 2,000 on the tower of St. Peter and a new fountain in the Rennweg.

Today, Zurich is the largest Swiss Canton as regards population. On 1st January 1965, there were 1,032,000 inhabitants, 12,900 or 1.3% more than at the beginning of the previous year. The general trend, however, is a slowing down in the increase. Foreign nationals still account for most of the additions, specially seeing that every fourth baby born in the Canton in 1963 was a foreigner.

The population of the town of Zurich went down in 1964 by 1,200 people and 42.5% of the total population of the Canton live in the cantonal capital Zurich; this was 50.2% in 1950 and 46.2% in 1960. Together with the outlying 39 (so-called "agglomeration") Communes, Zurich now has 651,000 inhabitants, 63% of the total Canton. Winterthur, on the other hand, has increased its population, and so have Dietikon, Duebendorf and Kloten. Sixteen of the 171 Communes show a decline over the past four years.

The seventh volume of the "Chronicle of the Canton of Zurich" was published by H. A. Bosch in February. It deals with the "Bezirk Zurich" and has been compiled by the historians Nussberger and Schneider. It is a well-written and often amusing account.

FINANCE, BUILDING AND ROAD CONSTRUCTION

The ordinary cantonal accounts for 1964 show a deficiency of 11.5 million francs with revenue of 717.7 and expenditure of 729.2 million francs. A loss of 25.8 million francs alone are on account of national road construction in the extraordinary accounts. Tax revenue of the previous year — no figures are yet to hand for 1964 — amounted to 581 million francs. The budget for 1965 visualises an income of 780.9 and expenditure of 778.1 million francs in the ordinary and 102.2 : 160 million francs in the extraordinary accounts. The cost of the whole road construction programme is estimated at 170 million francs, most projects have already been started or are nearing completion. Some schemes may have to be cancelled, specially with a view to the restriction measures whose continuation the electorate of Switzerland decided

on in February. In 1964, 8,539 flats and houses were built in the Canton of Zurich, much the same number as in the previous year, between 1,400-2,800 fewer than in the record years 60/62, but still 1,200 more than on average during 1955-1959. 88% was due to private construction, 10% to building co-operatives and only 2% to communal efforts.

A circular motorway around Zurich is planned and a tunnel through the Milchbuck. In 1964, 4,367 traffic accidents happened on cantonal territory (1963: 4,074), in which 102 (119) people were killed and 2,313 (2,320) injured.

Financial grants and credits agreed to by the Cantonal Parliament included schemes to renovate dwellings in mountainous districts, old-age houses and homes; 3.3 million francs towards a municipal nursing home for chronic diseases in Winterthur, Fr.2,860,000.— for the extension of the emergency station at the Cantonal Hospital, and a grant for the sanatorium for rheumatics at Leukerbad. Further, the Canton of Zurich's share in the increase of capital in the NOK (Power Works of North-Eastern Switzerland) was agreed to at Fr.9,187,500.—. The present share capital of 80 million francs was increased to 130 million francs at the A.G.M. of NOK early in March. It was stated that the company was entering a new phase after the first fifty years of its existence, with the construction of its first atomic power station in the Beznau (Doettingen, Aargau), the cost of which will be about 350 million francs.

WATER

The Greifensee area is to be protected in as much as special sites will be reserved for camping and others for parking, so that the main shores may be kept unspoilt. The federation for the protection of the Zurichsee landscape has more and more worries, the "forest of TV aerials", addicts to water ski-ing, an overgrowth of dulse and an accumulation of waste material in bays, the decline of good fish and an increase in fish diseases — in 1964 fifty-four poisonings were registered in the Canton of Zurich, 18 from liquid manure, 14 from industrial waste water, 8 from domestic waste water. Due to this water pollution 15,000 trout were lost. In the previous year the cases of poisoning were "only" twenty. Red bream is found more and more, but as it is not an approved delicacy, fishermen are reluctant to land too much of it, which results in about sixty tons of this fish dying and rotting in the lake of Zurich annually. A Zurich store organised an exhibition "Water — a Vital Element in Danger" which showed in an impressive way that the increasing water pollution will in time endanger our very existence.

EDUCATION

News from the field of education includes more grants for new schools; school buildings are urgently needed, and so are more teachers. This spring, 250 primary school teachers will have to be replaced, and applications from Communes for 173 new posts have been received. Only 300 newly trained primary teachers and, for the first time, 20 graduates of the "Reallehrerseminar", are available to fill the posts. 67 million francs will be needed for the new school buildings in the Raemibuehl (Literaturgymnasium, Realgymnasium and Oberrealschule).

Early in February, the new academic professional guidance centre was opened at the "Vorderen Florhof"

in the Hirschengraben in Zurich. The shortage of space at Zurich University is becoming acute. Just over fifty years ago, it was given its own building "by the will of the people" and left the premises of the ETH. At that time, a generous estimate foresaw two thousand students. For this winter term there were 5,697 students (4,776 Swiss and 921 foreign), 633 more than in the winter of last year. In the same period, the number of lecturers was augmented by 45 to 493. In ten years' time, there will probably be 10,000 students, not counting those of the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH). Even if enough room were found for teaching them, where are they going to live? More homes are being built and planned, but there is an acute shortage of "digs" at reasonable prices. The housing committee of both Zurich Universities applied for permission to use the Gothic building "Fliegender Fisch" as temporary accommodation for students; the house is scheduled for demolition. The students themselves made the dilapidated building habitable. The students' home at the ETH has remained the same size for thirty-five years and yet has to cope with an ever-growing demand for meals. Even the expensive eating places nearby are not sufficient to satisfy requirements. In November, the Zurich Cantonal Parliament agreed to a competition regarding a project to use the Strickhof site for additional buildings for the University. Early this year, an Institute for Social Ethics was opened at the Theological Faculty of the University.

PRESS

Professor Siegfried Frey, Director of the Swiss Telegraphic Agency (A.T.S.) recently said farewell to his students. He was one of the three lecturers on journalism (with the former Professors Wettstein and Weber) who have been instrumental in establishing a responsible coming generation in the Press. After a break of fifteen years, the Swiss Press met once again for a general meeting in Zurich last October. Questions of professional training, pay and agreements were discussed and resolutions passed. The new Central President of the Swiss Press Association is René Langel, Editor of the "Tribune de Lausanne". The paper "Die Tat" celebrated its Silver Jubilee last October, formerly the "Wochenblatt der Unabhängigen" and now circulation-wise in fourth place amongst Swiss political dailies.

ART AND HONOURS

A number of Zurich scholars and artists have been honoured, some at home, some abroad, so for instance Prof. Linus Birchler who has been awarded the Grand Cross of Merit of the German Federal Republic. (*Prof. Birchler is the author of the article on "Switzerland — Land of Castles" which appeared in the last issue of the S.O.*) The Zurich Art Prize 1964 was awarded to the stage architect Teo Otto and the Georg Naegeli Medal to the concert pianist Adrian Aeschbacher, the music writer Dr. Paul Sieber and the founder and conductor of the Zurich Chamber Orchestra Edmond de Stoutz. This orchestra, internationally famous, recently celebrated its tenth anniversary. The young Zurich Conductor Niklaus Wyss won the big conductors' competition in New York.

CRIME

Crime has also provided news. It is, however, not nearly as serious as an aggressive article in a Milan periodical "ABC" would have it and in which Zurich is called "moral swamp". In a Canton with more than a million inhabitants and with a large town the size of Zurich

it is inevitable that criminal acts are committed. The Zurich Cantonal Police Force is to be increased again, though it is mainly the traffic side which causes more and more problems. In 1962, the Force was increased from 520 to 620, and the proposal is now for a further augmentation to 800. These numbers do not include the Municipal Police. The Cantonal Police have an up-to-date laboratory, too, and Police dogs are increasingly and successfully used. The first year of the patrol car service has been well worth-while — it acted in 30,400 cases. The Zurich Court of Justice (Obergericht) is overworked and has asked the Cantonal Parliament for three more Judges, which would bring the number to thirty.

The crimes which were committed in the Canton ranged from thefts (cheques, 45 gold bars, valuable stamps at the Stamp Exchange, jewellery at Uster, 201 valuable breeding rabbits at Bonstetten), forgeries and extortions, to the murder of an Italian by one of his compatriots. Several international criminals were arrested, also two cheque and passport forgers from Italy, and a bank robber from Germany. Gustav Girard and Max Bickel were both sentenced to fifteen years for murder in two long trials. A bombing attempt was made at Thalwil where a woman received a parcel containing a bomb. Two of a group of thirteen who have been criminally active (car thefts, larceny, insurance fraud) have been arrested, and Ilga Kaufmann who has frauds up to half a million francs to her account, has been "put away" again. A Greek who was involved in an extensive art swindle concerning the copy of a Pissarro picture was also arrested. Finally, the last member of the infamous "Nobel band", Arnold Nobel, was tried for robbery, fraud and receiving of stolen goods and sent to prison again for four and a half years.

ZURICH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

The Zurich Airport at Kloten is to be enlarged further and, in particular, the roads leading to it are marked for improvement and extension. The Cantonal Parliament was asked to agree to the Canton's participation to the tune of 2.25 million francs in the increase of capital of FIG (Flughafen Immobilien Gesellschaft). New regulations to combat noise, which became valid last September, have already had the desired effect, and the Commune Council of Embrach expressed thanks for the great improvement.

ZURICH MUNICIPALITY

There was a discussion in the "Tages-Anzeiger" about what was "typically Zurich" and what should be preserved. Most participants were for keeping the old town but to integrate it somehow in modern planning. From the contributions it was deduced that "sober, contemplative and efficient" was typical for Zurich. Reading through piles of news relating to the affairs of this, the biggest Swiss city, I am inclined to agree with the verdict. The authorities have been busy allocating money for large building schemes, the solution of traffic problems, art and culture. The accounts for 1964 were balanced at 426 million francs. The budget for 1965 shows a slight excess of income at a figure 14 million francs higher than last year. Extraordinary expenditure will increase considerably, mostly due to building and road construction. A 5% increase in taxation has been agreed by the Commune Council. The interest on the loan to the Uetliberg railway has been declined. Daily allowances for members of the Commune Council have been increased.

Grants include various sums for old age housing, the "Pro Helvetia" Foundation, the Giacometti Foundation,

renovation fund of the mountain inn on the Bachtel, educational fund of the Pestalozzi Foundation, sanatoria at Davos, the building of an art studio in the "Cité Universitaire" in Paris, the school for psychiatric nursing in Zurich, land purchases at Stettbach-Duebendorf, pay increases for employees at Zurich art institutions.

At the Zurich Cantonal Hospital, a new wing for cancer research was opened in October, also the new school for the "working year", where youngsters who are sick of school can spend a practical year instead of a ninth year at the ordinary school. The primary school Staudenbuehl will cost nearly ten million francs. The school summer holidays will be extended from five to six weeks.

With the recent opening of the Zurichhorn Casino, Zurich once again has a large restaurant on the right shore of its lake, with a splendid view of the lake itself and the mountains behind. It is on the same spot once occupied by the old Casino, which was torn down to make room for the Swiss National Exposition of 1939. The new Casino boasts a large foyer, suitable for receptions and meetings, and a garden restaurant for three hundred guests. The modern kitchen facilities of two-storey, cube-like structure have a capacity of 900 meals per service.

The Zurich Commune Council is for the continuation of the aerial cabin cable way across the lake, though there is considerable opposition. The longest bridge in Switzerland, the Europabrücke was opened in Zurich (Hoengg-Altstetten) last year, and now the latest project is to claim land from the lake for the General Guisan Quay between Buerkliplatz and the Arboretum. Traffic problems are on the increase — unlike in the town of Zurich in Ontario (Canada) with its population of 760.

The famous leading fashion house of Grieder in the Bahnhofstrasse celebrated its 75th anniversary, and the Officers' Association of Zurich and surrounding districts its centenary. Many were the distinguished visitors to the town; they included Prince William of Sweden, the Soviet Transport Minister, the Italian Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Austrian Minister of Defence, the Israeli Foreign Minister, President Johnson's Special Envoy and H.M. King Bhutan.

After a scientific congress and the international congress for graphic art had taken place in Zurich last summer, the "Zürcher Herbstschau" and the famous exhibition of photography "Man" were held in autumn. Zurich artists exhibited successfully at the Helmhaus, and a thousand youngsters from Zurich's countryside met in February for the "Grosse Tag der Zürcher Landjugend". In March, there was an exhibition of bicycles and motor-bikes, and one of photographs taken by medical and nursing staff of the Cantonal Hospital.

The Conference of the German-speaking Evangelical Church took place in Zurich. In February, the assembly of the Neumünster Parish decided to form a new parish of part of its large area by 1966, called Balgrist. The reformed electorate rejected the project for renovating the Grossmünster Chapel last September, and now there is a plan to put it under the protectorate of the "Denkmalschutz". During the renovation of the Predigerkirche, some interesting and valuable finds came to light from Pre-Reformation times. During the first year of the "Telebibel" which provides daily services of devotion over the 'phone for Roman Catholics and Protestants, some 445 calls were made every day.

WINTERTHUR

The town's ordinary account for 1964 showed at small surplus with revenue standing at over 63 million francs.

In the extra-ordinary accounts, the deficit of nearly nine million francs was due to road construction and building. The budget for 1965 is balanced at around 57 million francs. Credits and grants are required for sewerage installations in the Toesstal, for twelve underground garages in the Steinberggasse, a new building for the Municipal Theatre, a dental clinic for schools, 2¼ million francs for the extension of Neumarkt old age home and a new fountain in the Lindstrasse. The Municipal Council has declared itself against the project of making the Upper Rhine navigable. The President of the Council, Dr. Hans Rüegg, has celebrated his silver jubilee of holding this office. The Winterthur Municipal Police are to have new uniforms, blue instead of black.

The Municipality generously put a house at the Steinberggasse at the disposal of the town's youth in 1963, and the "Jugendhaus" has proved a great success. Every evening 2-300 young people visit it, and there is a café, music and special attractions and programmes — a scheme to be recommended.

In September, there was a huge fire at the Steigmühle in Winterthur-Toess, and the damage is estimated at three million francs.

[A.T.S.]

OTHER COMMUNES

The sacristan of the R.C. Church of Adliswil, Johann Deuber, has received a gold medal of merit from the Pope, to mark 72 years of service in the Church.

The old mill at Albisrieden, first mentioned as property of the "Grossmünsterstift" in 1230, has been transformed into a listening library for the blind. This will be a godsend for blind people who never learned Braille.

Buelach has a woman chimney sweep, and the Commune Assembly has decided to re-build the "Goldene Kopf", the historic inn which was gutted by fire in 1962.

In Dietikon, the largest Commune in the Limmat Valley, the new works of the electricity authorities of Zurich were opened in the autumn.

At Fehraltorf, a fire caused considerable damage at the mechanical joinery of Adolf Richner, and the similar firm of Girardi at Hedingen was completely destroyed by fire, and a third "Schreinerei" (Rupper) was damaged by fire at Pfaffikon.

Hombrechtikon has a new school building "Im Eich", and Switzerland's most modern hotel is being built at Horgen, with 150 rooms, 150 bathrooms. The Seehotel Meierhof will have several bars, restaurants, a large conference hall, a swimming pool and a shopping centre.

The Kistenfabrik Meier at Ruemlang was damaged by fire, and so was a car firm at Schlieren.

Early in March, there was a bad fire at the "Hirschen" inn at Tagelswangen, and Uster's cotton spinning firm Heusser-Staub was also gutted by a fire which lasted thirty hours; damage is estimated at five million francs. At the traditional Uster Day in November, which is already 134 years old, Prof. Hofer gave an address in which he suggested that Swiss parliamentary reform should follow American procedure. The building programme of the Commune of Uster visualises expenditure of over sixty million francs, twenty of which alone for schools.

Wetzikon is building a school for cerebro-paralysed children.

(News received by courtesy of "Agence Télégraphique Suisse" and "Tages-Anzeiger".)