

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band: - (1966)
Heft: 1501

Artikel: It happened in North-Western Switzerland and Schaffhausen
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-694754>

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IT HAPPENED IN NORTH-WESTERN SWITZERLAND AND SCHAFFHAUSEN

BASELSTADT

Basle has enjoyed special prominence ever since Roman times, and its importance has grown steadily. It is not by chance that the first official United States representation in Switzerland was in Basle, and it happened as early as 30th April 1830. Early in March, the 500th anniversary of the death of the first Rector of Basle University, Georg von Andlau, was commemorated. Nine other well-known citizens of Basle's past have been honoured recently, when their names were given to roads in the "Bäumlihof" area; names like J. R. Geigy-Merian, the chemist, La Roche, the banker, Mechel, the artist, Melchior Berri, the architect, Stueckelberg, the painter, Beurmänn, Liebrich, Baerwart and the two great names of Widmann and Spitteler. Visits to the various Basle museums increased by 10% in 1965, and amongst the town's cultural events were a reception for Nobel Prize Winner Prof. Woodward, an exhibition of works by Graham Sutherland, a Shakespeare week and finally, the opening of a new Museum of Antiquity, the only one of its kind in Switzerland. And then, of course, Basle had its world-famous Carnival when the citizens made fun of things and people in their inimitable way.

Basle also has the biggest "Co-Op" in Switzerland with over 106,000 members. Repayment dividends in 1965 were well over 20 million francs. In April, a mobile bank was opened in an outsize caravan fitted exactly like a bank right down to security devices. An old tradition has been kept up by the Basle Trombone Chorus for many years, every Saturday evening, a group of their musicians climb on to the *Georgsturm* of the Cathedral and play evensong melodies.

No other Zoo in the world has such a high quota of births in captivity as the Basle "Zolli". In 1965, there were 158 births in 36 different mammal breeds and 36 different bird species. In March, the 94th "Erlenfest" took place, a dinner for friends of the Deer Park of the Lange Erlen, at which 350kg. of venison was served to 500 guests.

But Basle, too, has its financial preoccupations. The accounts ended with a surplus of 1.42 million francs (revenue at Fr.377,162,732.—), and a finance plan has been asked for to establish the financial strength of the Canton. The Cantonal Parliament decided to participate in the increase of share capital of the "Balair" aviation company with 1.2m. francs. The new President of the Parliament is Dr. Max Ziegler.

On 13th March, two members of the Basle Government had to be elected, and Dr. Lukas Burckhardt, a lawyer, and Arnold Schneider, the Basle *Waisenvater*, were successful against the candidate of the "Landesring" Walter Allgoewer. The retiring *Regierungsrat* Dr. Schaller has begun his duties as delegate of the Board of the Schweizerische Reederei A.G. In February, the Grand Council voted by 71 to 27 in favour of giving women the vote.

The Birsigthal railway is to have new rolling stock. Dipl. Ing. Peter Matzinger has been appointed head of the Birsigthal and the Birseck railways in succession to Dipl. Ing. E. Felber. The new building programme of the *Bürgerspital* causes concern, as the original budget of 130

million francs has already been exceeded by 25%. The Canton's share in the running cost amounts to 25.7m., the deficit for 1965.

The new building of the Aeschenbank was opened in March, and the construction of the biggest viaduct over the Heuwaage (cost of 52m.) has begun; it should be completed by 1970. 2.51m. have been voted for a light petrol catalyst at Kleinhüningen.

The new College of Theology at Basle University has been opened, and a new Station for Astronomy and Meteorology is to be built. Special courses for retraining men and women from other jobs as primary teachers are again to be held to ease the shortage of teachers.

Twenty-one members of the Cantonal Parliament undertook a three-day air trip to Sweden to look at modern sports halls. (*Konjunkturdämpfung?*)

Two polls were needed for the elections at **Riehen**, Switzerland's largest village. Forty members for the Larger Commune Council had to be chosen, six members for the Inner Council and the Commune President; the latter was re-elected in the person of Wolfgang Wenk.

Baselstadt has presented the Chapel of **St. Chrischona** to the Mission who had hitherto paid a nominal rent of Fr. 5.— p.a. The Gothic Chapel was purchased together with the hill on which it stands in 1513.

BASELSTADT

The electorate of the Baselbiet had to decide on 9th March whether the women should be given the vote, and if so, whether the *Landrat* or the *Verfassungsrat* should make the necessary changes in the Cantonal Constitution. 8,321 were for and 6,210 were against the proposal, and the *Verfassungsrat* which is dealing with the Constitution for a new Canton Basle was chosen. Its new President, incidentally, is Dr. Alfons Burckhardt. The Church Council of Baselland has decided to accept women Ministers.

The Cantonal Parliament has rejected the budget for 1966 which estimated a deficit of 20 million francs. The debate lasted five hours. An Initiative has been launched for "just taxes", and the Referendum has been taken against a 9-million credit for an *Arbeitserziehungsanstalt* Arxhof. The *Gewerkschaftskartell* Baselland has asked for arbitration in connection with the new Labour Law.

During excavation work at **Aesch**, vines were discovered which are believed to be 1600 years old. Fr.4.25m. are to be spent for a new building of the *Bezirksverwaltung* at **Arlesheim**. A refuse incineration plant is to be constructed at **Fuellinsdorf**. The first stage will cost nearly 10 million francs. **Bad Ramsach** was gutted by fire on 22nd March, and **Sissach** is to have an ice rink, and its church dating to 1525 has been renovated.

SOLOTHURN

The deficit of the Solothurn cantonal accounts for 1965 amounted to 10.7 million francs, revenue standing at 159.4m. The law governing midwifery is to be totally revised. Dr. iur. Adolf Kellerhals has been elected the new *Staatsanwalt*, in succession to Dr. Alfred Hartmann who has become *Oberrichter*.

There has been much opposition to the rifle range scheme at Guldenthal and to the projected power works of Neu-Bannwil and Flumenthal. 4.5 million francs will be needed for constructing some of the connecting roads to the national highways. Like other Cantons, Solothurn will require vast sums for the construction of roads, both national and cantonal. Most cantonal hospital buildings are in the process of being enlarged, and so far, over Fr.48m. have been spent. This includes a contribution towards the projected Foundation "Alterssiedlung Grenchen".

In Solothurn, too, courses to re-train men and women as teachers have been held, and the Cantonal Schools in Solothurn and Olten have to be enlarged. The Domestic Science College Hohenlinden is to get a subsidy, and the new Commercial School "Rosengarten" in Solothurn has been opened. The new head of the Watchmakers' College in Solothurn is Hans Straumann from Waldenburg.

The municipal accounts of **Solothurn** showed a surplus of 1.1 million francs, with expenditure amounting to 17m. A new art gallery has been opened, "Galerie Zinnober". The church of **Gempen** has been renovated according to the directives of the Ecumenical Council. **Grenchen** is to contribute 16.6m. towards the communal waste water plant; the town now has 20,000 inhabitants. **Gretzenbach** awarded honorary citizenship to Pfr. Andreas Jaeggi, and **Lohn** is to have a new R.C. church. The Commune Assembly voted 2.1 million francs for a new school at **Messen** — there are only 700 inhabitants. The **Kurhaus Bad Lostorf** was destroyed by fire, and **Schoenenwerd** elected primary teacher and **Ammann** Leo Hersperger as an honorary citizen. The heirs of the late Councillor of States Iwan Bally presented the family estate "Clarahauss" to the Commune.

AARGAU

The Aargau Cantonal Parliament has elected Otto Zeller, Socialist, from Biberstein, as President for the new period of office. The Cantonal Constitution is to be revised. In the Aargau, too, the accounts for 1965 ended with a deficit: revenue 227.8m., expenditure 248.9 million francs. Up to 70 million francs will have to be spent on road construction. There are now 109 waste water plants in the Canton.

In June, the Federal Music Festival will take place in Aarau, and a film has been commissioned on the characteristics of the Canton. The Bishop of Basle and Lugano has appointed Stadtpfarrer Felix Schmid and Dean Emil Obrist at Rheinfelden as new *Domherren* of the Aargau.

Birr will forever be connected with Pestalozzi. A monument to him is in the churchyard. One of his admirers, a Japanese Professor from Hiroshima, Arata Osada, 1887-1961, Honorary Doctor of Zurich University, also has his grave there according to his wish as an ardent admirer of Pestalozzi. At the end of January, a serious fire caused extensive damage at the model agricultural establishment of the Pestalozziheim.

At **Bremgarten**, a Soldiers' Home has been inaugurated by the "Schweiz. Verband Volksdienst-Soldatenwohl". **Brugg's** last Commune Assembly voted nearly 7 million francs for a new building for the District School, and **Gebenstorf** has just decided to have a new church.

Buchs has approved the plans for a new school, and at **Kaiseraugst**, an old Christian *baptisterium* has been found. The firm of Motor-Columbus A.G. intend to construct a nuclear power station at Kaiseraugst. Work has stopped at the power works on the Rhine at **Koblentz**. The decision had to be taken because of the increased dearth of capital and the possibility of cheaper production of power elsewhere. The Commune of **Moehlin** has again been given considerable sums of money for educational and cultural purposes by the Manager of the Bata Schuh A.G., Josef Simsa. Damage amounting to several million francs was caused by a fire at the plant of Lanz A.G. at **Murgenthal**. The Horticultural Women's College at **Niederlenz** celebrated its 60th anniversary in March.

The village of **Rietheim** is sinking slowly, but steadily, and it may have to be moved. At **Safenwil**, too, there was a fire in April, which gutted the car import firm of Frey A.G. A *Seminar-Zweigschule* was opened at **Wohlen** at the end of April, and the new President for the **Zofingen** District Tribunal is Dr. Willy Lorétan. During the renovation of the Verena Church at **Zurzach**, foundation walls of two spires and a number of skeletons were discovered. The Commune is to have a new thermal swimming bath and a centre for rheumatic diseases.

SCHAFFHAUSEN

The budget for 1966 estimated a loss of Fr.4m. By taking off some of the expenditure and reconsidering revenue, it was reduced by another million francs. A detailed plan for the next few years shows an increasing tendency of mounting revenue as well as expenditure. The Cantonal Parliament agreed to some slight alterations in the boundary lines between the Canton and Germany, but the Government is against a regulating weir in the Lake of Constance.

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The Canton has decided to improve subsidies to school buildings. A Technical Evening College has been asked for in Schaffhausen, and the scholarship system is being improved.

Two million visitors went to see the Rhinefalls last year. During bad rainfall in February, the level of the Rhine rose alarmingly, and in March, considerable damage was caused by storms throughout the Canton.

The town of **Schaffhausen** had a population of 37,122 at the beginning of the year, 813 more than twelve months previously. 6,609 inhabitants were foreigners, and 62.3% Protestant. 954 of the total of 1,947 electors attended the Citizens' Assembly last autumn to elect National Councilor Walther Bringolf an Honorary Citizen.

Due to the rejection of the proposed increased rate of taxes by the electorate, the budgeted deficit went up to 2.2 million francs. To reduce this, the Municipal Council now proposes to cut some of the construction work planned for this year. A protest has been lodged with the Cantonal Government against the plan to demolish some old buildings near the Schifflande and to use it as provisional parking grounds. Parking facilities in the town are limited. A by-pass will only be constructed later, and for the time being, an express road through the town, partly underground, has been planned. There will in future be no more cattle markets; the area will partly be used by the extension of the goods yard. The Referendum was used against a Council decision to purchase new vehicles to be used for goods transport; the electorate has supported it and vetoed the necessary credit. The *Grosse Stadtrat* has agreed to join the "Gasverband Ostschweiz A.G.".

The four Communes of **Altdorf, Bibern, Hofen** and **Opfertshofen** now have their own communal central school building opened in the centre of the four villages which, together, have 660 inhabitants. The *Baureferent* of **Neuhausen**, F. Beer, resigned, and the elections on 24th April did not produce an absolute majority for any of the four candidates. A full-time civil defence job is to be created at Neuhausen, and late last year, the new home for old people was opened.

There are now only five dailies in the Canton, the "Steiner Anzeiger" of **Stein a/Rhein** having gone out of publication after 73 years. The "Schaffhauser Nachrichten" are now carrying it as a supplement.

(Based on news received by courtesy of Agence Télégraphique Suisse, "Basler Nachrichten" and "Swiss American".)

ZUERCHER SECHSELAEUTEN

This year's Zurich most important pageant, the "Sechseläuten", was held on the traditional third Monday in April. Last year, on account of horse influenza, no horses could be used which took away much of the interest and enjoyment. This time, they turned up in large numbers, and not even the inclement weather could spoil the fun. Most of the costumes worn by the Guild members date back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Guilds have as their aim to keep up the interest in history and tradition. Already in 1351, they played an active part in the signing of the treaty between Zurich and the Confederation. From 1798-1803, there were no Guilds, but with the beginning of the Mediation period, they flourished again to serve as additional bodies for the Cantonal Parliament. In 1820, they re-introduced their communal dinners. Already in the old Zurich (before 1798), the arrival of spring was celebrated. The first procession of some significance was arranged for the quingentenary of Zurich's entry into the Confederation, and since then, the processions (a special children's one is held on the previous day) have become as much part of the "Sechseläuten" as the burning of the "Böögg", the effigy of winter, itself.

The number of children in the Monday procession and the large amounts of flowers carried by groups of various kinds, surpassed the usual total. Many thousand onlookers lined the route, and it took eighty minutes for the whole procession to pass. At 6 p.m. sharp, the "Böögg" was lit, and in no more than eight minutes it was burnt, though the last eight Guilds still had to canter the traditional three times round the bonfire.

In the evening, heavy rain fell, but it could not mar the festive atmosphere reigning in the old town where the various Guilds visited one another. For hours, the lanterns carried by the visiting groups could be seen, and merrymaking went on until the early hours of the morning.

(Mainly A.T.S.)

300 YEARS SINCE THE DEATH OF A GREAT SWISS STATESMAN

On 12th April 1666, one of the greatest Swiss statesmen and diplomats died in the person of Johann Rudolf Wettstein. Originally a citizen of Russikon (Zurich), his father had settled in Basle where young Johann Rudolf grew up. His youth was turbulent — for some time he was a mercenary in Italy — but as a young man already he entered public service in Basle. He worked in the Courts, in finance and in the administration of the Baslebiet. He became Chief Guild Master and finally, Mayor of Basle. He emerged as a diplomat of great importance for the whole of the Confederation. He attended the big Peace Congress of Westphalia, which was to set an end to the Thirty Years' War, and he defended the independence of Switzerland and actually succeeded in getting the big powers to seal Switzerland's independence in the peace treaties. Wettstein used his diplomatic gifts also in the *Bauernkrieg* and in the first Villmerger war between the Reformed and the Roman Catholic parties.

The great statesman has an epitaph on black marble in the Cloister of Basle Cathedral. That is where, on the anniversary of his death, the *Zunft zur Weinleuten* honoured his memory by a simple but impressive ceremony. In proud Latin words, the gratitude of Basle and the Confederation is engraved for all times to the great Mayor, "Keeper of the Peace, Saviour of Freedom and Father of the Homeland".

(A.T.S. and "Basler Nachrichten".)

THE BOAT RACE WON BY A SWISS BOAT

The annual boat race between Oxford and Cambridge on the Thames was won this year by the Oxford rowing a Swiss-made boat. In order to leave nothing to chance, Oxford had ordered their boat from the Alfred Stämpfli shipyards in Zurich. The boats made by this boatbuilder are well known throughout the rowing world: last year, in the United States, a Stämpfli boat enabled the University of Harvard to beat Yale by ten lengths and at the European Championships, thirteen medals were won by boats built in Zurich out of a total of twenty-one medals awarded. The boatyard in question builds from 200 to 240 boats each year, so that it is obvious that its experience in this field plays a by no means negligible role in the victories won.

[O.S.E.C.]