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FOUR WISE MEN JUDGE THE JURA

An attempt at solving the Jura problem has been made.

A series of plebiscites, from district to federal level, to decide the future status of the Jura region of Canton of Berne, is recommended by the Commission of "Four Wise Men."

In its first report, the four-man commission, set up by the Bernese Cantonal Government last year and headed by the former Federal Councillor Dr. Max Petitpierre, makes clear that the status of the Jura should in any case be changed.

They say the first step should be the drawing up of a statute giving the Jura a degree of autonomy. The population of the Jura should then vote on whether they want a separate Canton or prefer to remain a part of Berne while maintaining their autonomous status.

This autonomy, the Commission stresses, would not be absolute, but the Jura could be made a separate parliamentary constituency, have some kind of a Council and its own administrative centre.

The Commission recommends that if the proposed plebiscite brings an overall majority for a separate Canton, the South Jura districts — which contain many anti-separatists — should then be given the chance to hold their own plebiscite to see if they wish to stay with Berne.

Conversely, if the Jura vote is against separation, the largely pro-separatist North Jura districts should be able to hold their own vote on whether they want to become a Canton of their own.

The entire procedure would involve five plebiscites — two on the cantonal level, two in the Jura or parts of the Jura, and one Federal vote — because the changes would involve modifications of the Federal Constitution.

It opposes the demand of the main separatist organization, the *Rassemblement Jurassien*, that Jura people living in other parts of Switzerland should be able to vote on the Jura's future.

The Commission's report ends on a pessimistic note. It says political and psychological conditions in both German-speaking Berne and the Jura are unfavourable not only for settling the Jura question but for the mere search for an objective solution.

While criticising the Bernese Government for past errors, the Commission says the authorities genuinely want to resolve the problem.

The report also takes the *Rassemblement Jurassien* to task for its attitude "which might once have had positive effects in bringing the problem to notice, but is no longer justified."

"Weekly Tribune" Geneva.

3,500 NEW HOTEL BEDS FOR ZURICH

In Zurich, seven new hotels are about to be opened, under construction or still in the planning stage, one of them a big hotel with 1,000 beds, an unusually large number for Switzerland. Should it be possible to realise all these plans, the supply of hotel beds available in Switzerland's largest city would rise within a few years from the present number of 8,000 to 11,500. At

the same time, in addition to the "Kongresshaus" (Conventional Hall) dating back to 1939 and urgently in need of a facelift, modern convention rooms of all sizes are to be built in the hotels. By the spring of 1970, exactly one year after the corner stone laying, it is hoped that a part of the Zurich Airport Hilton will be opened to the public. In its final stage it is going to have 300 rooms with 600 beds. One of the largest hotels whose construction has already begun is the International with 750 beds.

(S.N.T.O.)

LONGEST ROAD TUNNEL IN THE WORLD: The Gotthard

The Swiss Government has given the green light for the Gotthard Road Tunnel, 16.4 km. long and thus the longest in the world. It will link the South of Switzerland with Central Switzerland. The route from Göschenen to Airolo will cost a total 306 million francs. The choice is that of a special commission which has recommended a tunnel with four ventilation shafts, in preference to an alternative version with two shafts and side ventilation galleries. The Government have decided, however, to add a side gallery with its own ventilation system, a measure designed to increase safety. The cost includes purchase of land, plant and equipment and all planning and work already carried out. It is reckoned that construction will take seven years. Nine companies had made tenders, four of them Swiss. The Swiss estimates were well below the foreign ones. 60% of the tunnel will be in Uri and 40% on Ticino territory.

(Mainly A.T.S.)

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