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REPORTS BY DIVISIONS AND GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN
THEIR REGIONS AND COUNTRIES AND ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN
THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE
FIRST UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE STANDARDIZATION
OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Paper submitted by the Swiss Government

Following the 1967 Geneva Conference, the Swiss delegation submitted to the Federal Government a final report on the work carried out and the resolutions formulated and adopted by that Conference. The report emphasized particularly the need to establish a national body and to prepare and publish a glossary of geographical names for the whole country. During the period 1967-1971, no steps were taken to carry out this plan.

There is still no national commission, partly because cantonal bodies are responsible for the work now under way. In addition, standardization policy varies in the four linguistic areas. This situation has so far prevented the compilation of a glossary. The idea of an exhaustive work of this nature evokes little interest among specialists. At present the most comprehensive compilation is to be found in the National Map (scale 1:25,000), containing a total of approximately 200,000 geographical names. This series of maps, consisting of almost 250 sheets, will be completed for the entire territory of Switzerland in 1974; by the end of 1971, 225 sheets had already been published.

Lists and card-indexes exist for all these names and, in addition, a large number of toponyms appear in the Property Register. In order to set them out in a form suitable for general use, automatic data processing will be necessary. The absence of a national body to deal with this is compounded by a lack of personnel, which has so far made it impossible to undertake this task.

Internationally, Switzerland has participated as far as possible in the work of the Dutch-speaking and German-speaking group, which has held four meetings since the 1967 Geneva Conference. It has not yet been possible to organize the participation of the French-speaking linguistic group in the work of the Group, since no French-speaking body exists which is concerned with problems outside the field of national standardization.

In conclusion, the paper "Compilations and treatment of geographical names in Switzerland", submitted by the Swiss delegation at Geneva in 1967, which provides an over-all picture of the legal position and the work under way, remains entirely valid. Reference might also be made to the republication of the Schweizerisches Ortslexicon ^{1/} which is the most complete and concise source of information for the names of towns and places in Switzerland.

^{1/} Arthur Jacot, Schweizerisches Ortslexicon (Lucerne, Verlag C.J. Bucher, 1969).