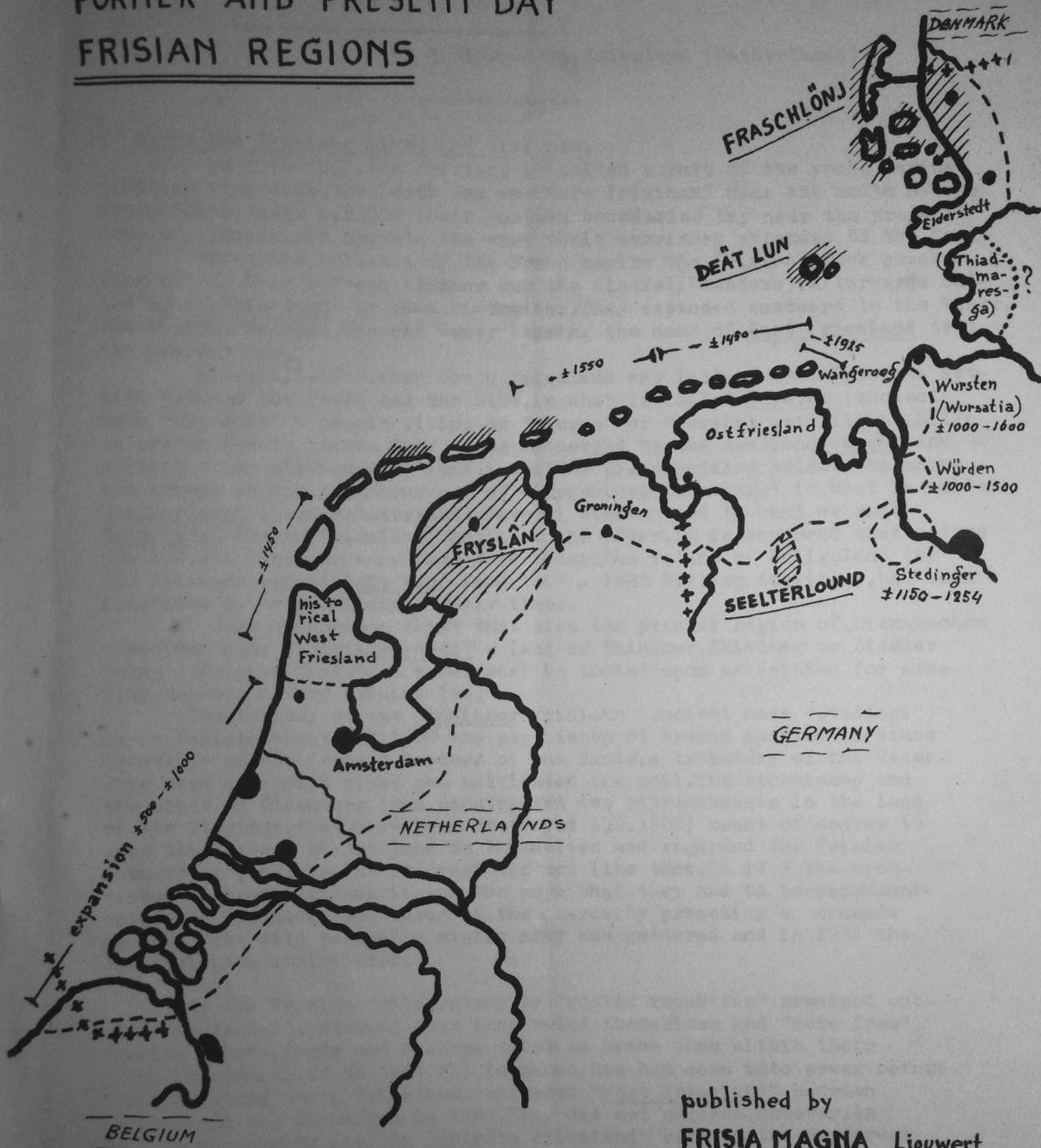


BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN FRIESLAND


≡ 1963 ≡

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FORMER AND PRESENT DAY FRISIAN REGIONS



published by
FRISIA MAGNA Ljouwert
1962.

--- APPROXIMATE HISTORICAL BOUNDARIES
 FRISIAN SPEAKING TO DAY

FRISIAN EDUCATION TO DAY.

by G.R.Groustra, Friesland (Netherlands)

I Where the Frisians lived and live now.

About 100 B.C. the Frisians inhabited a part of the young marine clayland alongside the North Sea or "Mare Frisicum" near the mouth of the river Rhine. Until A.D. 500 their western boundaries lay near the present town of Alkmaar, and towards the east their territory extended to the Ems.

After the collapse of the Roman empire the Frisians took possession of the land between Alkmaar and the Sincfal (Flanders), afterwards called "South Friesland" by some historians. They expanded eastward to the Weser, the regions between Ems and Weser bearing the name of East Friesland till the present day.

After A.D. 1000, when South Friesland was lost, several Frisians settled between the Weser and the Elbe, in what is called Wursten (ancient name "Wursatia" = people living on "therps" or "wurthen", artificial hills to prevent their houses from being submerged by the sea), and Würden, and perhaps other stretches of land. A smaller group settled amidst the moors and swamps in the neighbourhood of Cloppenburg (Oldenburg) in what is called Seelterlound (German: Saterland). Several others went to what we call Fraschlönj (North Friesland) north of the Eider. It is supposed that before 500 B.C. all Frisians came from this coast. The island of Heligoland (by the Frisians called Deät Lun), from 1807 - 1890 British territory, has been inhabited by Frisians since early times.

Some historians think that also the present region of Ditmarschen - (ancient name : "Thiadmaresga" = land of Thiadmer, Thiedmer or Tiadmer being a Frisian Christian name) must be looked upon as Frisian for some time because it had Frisian law.

The tragedy of the Stedinger Frisians (ancient name "Stadingi") is as follows. About A.D. 1000 the archbishop of Bremen invited Frisians to settle on the fertile borders of the Hunte, a tributary of the Weser. They came and built dikes and cultivated the soil. The archbishop and the count of Oldenburg (who constructed two entrenchments in the land of the Stadingi, that have been destroyed A.D. 1200) meant of course to keep the harvest of the land to themselves and regarded the Frisian farmers as predials. The Stadingi did not like that. In 1233 the archbishop succeeded in convincing the pope that they had to be excommunicated and put under the curse of the church. By preaching a crusade against "the wild pagans" a mighty army was gathered and in 1234 the Stadingi were annihilated.

As the Frisian tribes, clans or "rustic republics" remained outside the feudal system, so that they ruled themselves and "were free", foreign rulers, lords and bishops, tried to bring them within their power. The counts of Holland, for instance, who had come into power before 1000 in former South Friesland, conquered "West Friesland" between Alkmaar and the Suydersea in 1289. They did not succeed, however, in 1345 in conquering Fryslân ("Middle Friesland" between the Suydersea and the Lauwers). Danish and German rulers threatened and partly conquered, from the 13th to the 19th century, the whole stretch of Frisian land between the Lauwers and the present Danish border. In several parts the Frisians were "Saxonized" that means : absorbed by a "Saxon" population and the language became Low German instead of Frisian.

II Frisian language.

To day historical West Friesland is a part of the Netherland province of North Holland. Since the XVth century the language is Dutch and people as a whole do not call nor feel themselves Frisians.

The old Frisian regions between Lauwers and Ems became "Saxonized" in the XVth century, by the influence of the town of Groningen. In the XVIth century, town and regions were put together as the Netherland province of Groningen. The dialect today is Low German and people object strongly to calling themselves Frisians.

East Friesland is now a German district and a small part of it belongs to Oldenburg. The Frisian language died out there in the XVth century, except on the island of Wangeroog, where the inhabitants spoke Frisian in the XIXth century (the last few Frisian speakers died in the first half of the XXth). People now speak Low German but are proud of their Frisian tradition and name.

In the regions between Weser and Elbe the Frisian language died out at different times, although some specimens of Wursatia-Frisian have been collected.

In Seelterlound and on Deät Lun the Frisian language is still vigorous: in Seelterlound its position is weak since there is no longer isolation from the Low German speaking areas.

In Fraschlönj the Frisian language has been driven back to the islands and the northern half of the mainland. It is still threatened by Low German - every Frisian in Fraslönj having Low German as a second language. For some the official languages are High German and Danish. The position of North Frisian is ostensibly weak, but it is certainly not true, as some historians or "antiquarians" claimed in the XIXth century, that it "would die out presently".

In Fryslân (the province of Friesland in the Netherlands) the position of the Frisian language is strong, although you can not say that there is no danger.

- In Fryslân we have nowadays four clearly distinct species of Frisian language. From the central dialects has been formed a "standard Frisian", used in literature, books, newspapers, churches, schools, etc. and from which the dialects of the South-Western and Eastern regions do not differ much. The other varieties are those of the small town of Hylpen (Dutch: Hindelopen) and of the islands of Skylge (Dutch: Terschelling) and "Schiermonnikoog" (called by the islanders "de lytje Pole" and in Dutch: Schiermonnikoog). The native population in the towns has a mixed Dutch-Frisian dialect, and there are smaller parts of Fryslân with non-Frisian dialects.

- In Fraschlönj there are five main dialects, viz. those of the island of Söl (German: Sylt); Fehr (German: Föhr) and Oomram (German: Amrum) together; Maurenger or Bökinghiirde-Frisian; Wisinghiirde-Frisian and the dialect group of the (Norther-) Goeshiirde. (N.B. "hiirde" is a Frisian form of "Herred", a province formed during the time that North Friesland belonged partly to Denmark and partly to the duke of Slesvig)

- The other regions have one dialect each, though in Seelterlound some words are pronounced somewhat differently in the three villages; but we find that in other regions, too, of course.

III Teaching Frisian.

The Frisian language has been written only since about 1200. Some runic texts from earlier time, however, may be looked upon as Frisian as well. Those who could write Old Frisian, the monks, used the letters of the Latin alphabet. Although the Frisian language had already by that time more speech sounds than the alphabet had letters, we can form for ourselves a fairly good idea of the pronunciation of Old Frisian.

When the great philologist Franciscus Junius, in the XVIIth century came over from Britain to Fryslân to learn Frisian from our famous poet Gysbert Japicx, our language had already split up into several more or less different dialects, according to the separate groups of Frisians who lived in different regions and who had become more and more isolated from each other. (Middle Frisian)

A. FRYSLÂN. The XVII century poet Gysbert Japicx, who was a schoolmaster and who spoke the South-Western dialect, devised a new spelling, mostly based on the Dutch system. He made a kind of "standard" Frisian out of the S.W. dialects. Till the first half of the XIXth century most Frisian writers used more or less their own system of spelling. In the middle of the former century the well-known Frisian writer, historian, philologist and theologian Joast Hiddes Halbertsma established a spelling on which our present system is based.

The first printed grammar of modern (West-) Frisian was edited in 1863 written by Gerben Colmjon. Others followed in 1892 (P. van Blom), 1902 (S. K. Feitsma), 1904 (Postma & De Clercq), 1924 (Sytstra & Hof), 1948 (lector Dr. P. Sipma), 1948 (Prof. dr. K. Fokkema). These grammars are written in Dutch, except for Dr. Sipma's, which is in Frisian. In 1913 the same Dr. Sipma edited a Frisian Grammar in English: "Phonology and grammar of modern West-Frisian" (Oxford University Press; today out of print)

In the first half of the XIXth century the schoolmaster Harmen Sytstra, one of the founders of the Frisian Movement, devised a spelling, that was partly based on the Old Frisian, and intended as a new link between the different speech groups from the Suydersea to Denmark. His spelling proved to be difficult for ordinary readers, the remoteness between written text and pronunciation being too great, and there was no strong pan-Frisian movement to secure a permanent status for it. After the death of Sytstra, who died when he was 45, his spelling was dropped.

Our recent orthography dates from 1945

Before 1900 there were only very few courses for Frisian writing. In 1907 the Provincial Government raised a fund for spelling courses for children of the elementary schools. They were given, however, outside the ordinary school-hours and were not an intrinsic part of the school-programme. In the same year nearly 300 pupils were registered.

In the next years three associations helped to increase the number of courses of this kind. In 1925 the AFUK (Universal Education Committee) was established by the associations of the Frisian Movement to start new courses in public and confessional schools and gave financial assistance. The Provincial Government founded the Provinsiale Underwiisrie (Provincial Education Committee) for giving advice and providing money.

The Fryske Underrjocht Liga (Frisian Education League), founded again by the Frisian Movement, provided the propaganda. It compared, for instance, in a pamphlet, the teaching of the mother tongue and the second language (the official language of the State) in Wales and Friesland.

In 1937 a new Education Law from the Netherland minister Slotemaker de Bruïne, made it possible to teach Frisian during the school hours and as part of the school programme. In 1955 nearly the half of the elementary schools in Friesland where Frisian was the mother tongue, were registered for teaching according to this law, but the teaching of the language was for the most part superficial.

Another advance was made in 1948.

In July of that year the school-inspector Mr. A. L. J. Wytzes, a Frisian who had been director of a teachers training school in Friesland and who had always strongly objected to the claims of the Frisian Movement, published a small booklet about "Bilingualism in Friesland and in the schools". He cited several pedagogues of international fame (e.g. prof. John Hughes) and quoted parts of the publication of Mr. D. J. Saer, the Welsh schoolmaster, "An inquiry into the effect of bilingualism". Mr. Wytzes thought it would be necessary that during the first two years in the elementary schools (for children from 6 to 12 years of age we have "lagër onderwijs" elementary education in the Netherlands) Frisian should be the only language. During the third school year the Dutch language should be taught. Mr. Wytzes stressed the necessity of comparison of the two languages, especially in the idiom.

In October of the same year 1948 a Frisian Education Congress was held at Ljouwert. The head-inspector for the education in the northern provinces of the Netherlands, Mr. L. F. Kleiterp, was the chairman. Lecturers were the Welsh school-inspectors Mr. W. Thomas and Mr. John D. Powell, and Mr. P. Post from the Pedagogical Seminary at Amsterdam.

And so in 1950 eight schools started a new system according to the ideas of Mr. Wytzes and the Congress. Mr. Wytzes himself wrote a method for these schools; one school, however, had a system of its own, written by Miss W. L. Zylstra. In these schools children and teachers during the first two school years (with children of six and seven years of age) used Frisian exclusively. During the second half of the second school year reading of Dutch texts is introduced for one hour a week. During the last quarter of the year some attention is given to Dutch grammar. From the third year the teaching language is Dutch, while Frisian becomes a subject: during the third school year $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours, during the fourth $1\frac{1}{2}$ and later only one hour. For singing, religion, natural history and geography of Friesland the Frisian language can be used as well, however.

As a result of the success of these eight schools, more schools began to work according to this system. To day their number is about 80, and the Frisian Movement helps to increase this number. There has been from the start of the bilingual system a Pedagogical Advisory Office at Ljouwert. There is also a new propaganda-league called "De Fryske Skoalle" (the Frisian School); it edits a small booklet for parents, school boards and municipalities about the bilingual school.

It has been proved that pupils from schools of the new bilingual type in Friesland can express themselves better in Dutch than those of schools who follow the old system that does not differ from other parts of the Netherlands. Their spelling is a little better and the result has been gained in a shorter time.

After leaving the elementary school at 12 or 13 years of age, the children of the bilingual schools can read their own language satisfactorily and write it fairly well; better in any case than those from schools who have Frisian lessons in the 5th and 6th schoolyear only. We can say that the present system has improved the active and passive knowledge of both languages that Frisian children need in their later life.

It must be said that the present bilingual system in the elementary schools in Friesland in itself is not enough, if an education is claimed for Frisian children to be truly Frisian. Much depends on the attitude of the teachers, the atmosphere in the training colleges and the prestige of Frisian language and history.

Most of the secondary schools in Friesland have Frisian courses, but they are not compulsory. Of the six universities in the Netherlands five have Frisian courses, all with professors, some with a special Frisian Institute. In Ljouwert is a college for teachers who want to teach Frisian, Dutch, English, German, French, etc. at secondary schools. Foreign languages are taught in the same way as in other provinces: with the help of Dutch. Certificates for teaching Frisian are given by the Netherland minister of Education, Arts and Science.

B. FRASCHLONJ (North Friesland)

There was not much written North-Frisian before 1800. Some school masters (who were sextons as well) and a few clergymen collected vocabulary and wrote dictionaries. Some wrote short stories or poems. We find them in several dialect-areas. In the XIXth century one of the North Frisian dialects - that of Oomrem - was studied by the clergyman Mechlenburg and by his sexton Moritz Nissen; each of them wrote a lexicon and they followed their own system and spelling.

Today each dialect has its own spelling-system and the Maurenger has three systems. This is partly due to the divided political situation. In 1920 a part of the North Frisians joined the Danish minority in Slesvig, and after 1945 they would not use the same spelling as the "German" Frisians. The two spellings of the "Danish" Frisians in the Maurenger area, that are in use nowadays, are both the result of efforts made by Frisians from Fryslân to bring the "Danish" and "German" together. The first of those two is used in the small monthly "Uûsen Mine Wâi" (Our Own Way), the second in the one trilingual school (Maurenger Frisian, Danish, German), since 1961/'62 working according to the principles of Welsh and Fryslân bilingual schools.

Before the time of the Hitler régime and after the Second World War the German government was willing to help the teaching as much as it could. On the 11th of November 1947 the school-inspector of "Kreis" Süd Tondern (the northern part of Fraschlönj) advised his schools that in 22 of them teaching Frisian should start at once, in 14 other schools two extra hours a week should be added to the time-table for teaching Frisian. The Frisian hours should start in the fifth school year and end with the ninth. The teachers got their extra hours and their travelling paid. The learning of Frisian reading, writing and grammar was free, but when a child was enlisted for it, it had to follow the lessons unto the end.

The Minister of Education in Schleswig-Holstein, Kuklinski, had written a letter to the school-inspector in North Friesland on 17-10 '47 about stimulating the teaching of Frisian in this way. He stressed expressly that the Frisian language should be stimulated in the Frisian speaking villages. Outside the Frisian hours there was quite a great deal could be done, he said. The teachers should take care that during the lessons of German grammar and reading, of religion, singing and history, attention was drawn to Fraschlönj. Some ten years ago money was provided for new reading books for the language of Söl, Fehr and Oomram and for Wisinghiirde and Bökinghiirde. (The book for Fehr and Oomram together was ready in 1957, written by Reinhard Arfsten; the man who prepared the book for Wising- and Bökinghiirde, died in 1962 before his work was completed) x)

In 1961 seven teachers from Fraschlönj went to Fryslân in the Netherlands to study bilingual schooling. It proved to be impossible to get the help of the Schleswig-Holstein government for the establishing of the bilingual system in Fraschlönj in the "German" elementary schools in those years. In the next few years, however, introduction of the bilingual system in one or more German schools in Fraschlönj may be possible.

At three Danish schools in the Bökinghiirde (Maurenger Frasch) some Frisian was given after 1945. In 1961 one of them started with the bilingual or rather trilingual system (look page 5 last few lines) This is the school of Mrs. Vriesema at Risem (German: Risum). In 1962 the system was officially acknowledged by the Danish "Skoleforening"

C. SEELTERLOUND

Seelter Frisian has been written since the XIXth century. As far as we know no Seelter Frisian is taught in the schools, though maybe teachers mention the "national hymn" ("Liude rakt et ful un loande") etc. There are two recent little books for children and there is a dictionary Seelter-German-Frisian from Fryslân (Neth.) Dr Matuszak edited a study "Die Saterfriesische Mundarten von Ramsloh, Strücklingen und Scharrel inmitten des niederdeutschen Sprachraums" Phil. Diss. Bonn, 1951. In the bibliothecary of the University of Aarhus (Denmark) is a list of 3000 words of the dialect of Strûkelje (German: Strücklingen) of about 1881.

x) This man was the school teacher Broder Clausen

D. DEÄT LUN (Heligoland)

The Frisian language of Deät Lun has been written from the XIXth century. During the first half of the XXth century a reading book for children was edited ("Van Boppen en Bedeelen"). Parts of the periodical of the Club of "Haluner Moats" (Heligoland mates) are in H.-Frisian. After the Heligoland Frisians, who had been driven away from their island by the German government during the first World War, and between 1945 and 1952 because of the Allied bombing, settled once more on their native ground, education commenced anew. During recent years there are Frisian lassons in the elementary school, but only children whose parents are interested take them. In general it can be said that the Heligolander loves his language.

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We append a few figures.

Fryslân in the Netherlands has some 480.000 inhabitants
Fraschlönj, in Germany since 1864, belongs to three "Kreise" (districts) of the "Land" Schleswig-Holstein. These Kreise have together nearly 200.000 inhabitants, but the Frisian speaking area lies between 10.000 and 20.000.

Seelterlound has about 6850 inhabitants

Deät Lun 2500 of which the major part returned to the island.

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Ljouwert (Fryslân-NETHERLANDS)
Autumn 1962.

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CHANCES FOR THE REQUIRED TEACHING OF FRISIAN SEEM FAVORABLE

"A language which one does not teach is a language which one kills. To kill a language is a crime." These words of Camille Julian, a French author, were recently quoted by Dr. Klaes de Vries, MP, in the Netherlands senate. The occasion was a discussion held by the members of the Upper House with the members of the Ministry of Education. At this debate the policies of the Netherlands government in regard to the teaching of Frisian were also touched upon. Dr. De Vries once again clearly set forth the wishes of the Frisian people as these have been repeatedly expressed in statements by the Frisian States, the Frisian Movement, and the majority of the Frisian political parties. These wishes, he underscored, include the introduction of Frisian as a required subject in the elementary schools of Friesland. At the close of the discussion he handed Minister Van Veen a list of questions to which he requested a public answer as soon as possible.

A week later, again in the Upper Chamber, Minister Van Veen made reply to De Vries' questions. He said his ministry was in favor of teaching Frisian, on a compulsory basis, at least one hour a week in the elementary schools of Friesland. He was, however, not ready to say how and when such a new program could or would be introduced. Such matters, he said, he would first like to talk over with the members of the Frisian States.

One of the problems to be discussed is whether Frisian is to be made compulsory in such regions of Friesland where Frisian is not the predominant language. Among such regions are It Bildt and the so-called Stellingwerven. Another matter requiring further study is the tempo of introduction. There are not enough books, teaching aids, and teachers to put the new program into effect over night.

Understandably, the promise given by Minister Van Veen gave rise to some cheerful and grateful comment in Friesland. The Ljouwerter Krante, in an editorial, spoke of "a new springtime" and of "a joyous sound." It went on to say: "Little by little the teaching of Frisian in the schools is making progress. There is now every reason to believe that there are more wholesome times ahead for the education of the children of Friesland. As we enter upon a new phase, it is proper to wish the authorities much courage and wisdom."

In regard to the tempo of introduction, the editorial said: "That, no doubt, will depend for a large part on Friesland itself. As soon as possible a time and work schedule will have to be drawn up for the preparation, guidance, and implementation of the Frisian language program in the schools. Fortunately, the Frisian Academy will soon, in the person of Krine Boelens, have an expert in the field of bilingual education. He, no doubt, can be of great help in the transition period. Friesland has had to wait a long time for the Hague in regard to action on Frisian language teaching. Let us take care that it will never have to be said that in the end The Hague had to wait for Friesland."

The present activity on the part of the Netherlands government is the result largely of the so-called Van Ommen Report, prepared for the Dutch authorities by an inter-departmental committee (Departments of Education, Justice, and Culture). It recommends an improved status for Frisian in the schools, a liberalization of the use of Frisian in the courts, and an increased subsidization of Frisian cultural projects.

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DUTCH OFFICIALS SEEK RESTRUCTURING OF FRISIAN GOVERNMENT

The Department of Internal Affairs in the Netherlands has asked the various provinces to make a careful study of their internal governmental structure. There is need, according to the Department, for creating larger governmental units. It contends that the merging of many small units into larger ones would eliminate inefficiency, overlapping of functions, and financial waste.

In answer to this request a study committee in Friesland some time ago suggested that the 44 municipalities there be reduced to 24. Right now there is pressure from the Department to create even larger units, called gewesten (regions, districts) which call for a minimum of 75,000 to 100,000 inhabitants. In answer to that further request the Deputy States submitted to the Department a plan which would divide Friesland, like Gaul, into three parts: Gewest Ljouwert (150,000 inhabitants), Gewest Snits (100,000), and Gewest Drachten (175,000).

There is much opposition among Frisians to this attempt from above to interfere with the internal affairs of Friesland. It is felt that Friesland ought to be able to decide its own local matters. In any case, say Frisian leaders, if there are to be changes in the Frisian governmental structure, those changes should come from the people below and not from Dutch bureaucrats at the top. The negative reaction to The Hague is getting to be all the stronger as it is gradually becoming clear that some Dutch authorities want to merge not only municipalities but even provinces. This would mean that Friesland might possibly lose its name, its historical boundaries, and the little autonomy which it has still managed to maintain after the French Revolution. Such an upheaval would pose an almost fatal threat to a distinct Frisian language and culture, and in fact might spell the end of Friesland's national existence. Incidentally, such a tragic merger was once actually accomplished during the Napoleonic regime. In 1798 Friesland lost its ancient name and together with the province of Groningen became "The Department of the Ems." Fortunately, this lasted for only three years.

In their letter accompanying the plan for three gewesten, the Frisian Deputies make clear that they do not favor the plan they are submitting. They state as their opinion that, at least for Friesland, gewesten are wholly unnecessary. Many feel that the Deputies should have expressed their opposition in much stronger language. For instance, De Stiennen Man, organ of the Council of the Frisian Movement, says: "The Deputies should have told the Minister: 'The homework you assigned to us is so stupid that we are sending back to you, instead, a solution of our own which, in our opinion, makes a lot more sense.' But this they apparently did not dare to do. No, like good boys they did their homework. They did not want to risk getting a bad mark from their boss."

"It would be a good thing," De Stiennen Man continues, "if the Deputy States and that other component of the Frisian government, the States themselves, would now clearly demand: (1) that Friesland remain an autonomous province and (2) that the right to restructure or not to restructure its internal government be left to Friesland itself."

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MORE DELAY FORESEEN IN DUTCH HANDLING OF FRISIAN PROBLEM

This spring it looked as if 1972 might become an important and decisive year in the history of the Frisian cause. After much delay--due to the accident of Minister Klompé and the elections of 1971--it seemed assured that the Netherlands parliament would definitely, no later than this fall, take up the recommendations of the Inter-Departmental Committee for Frisian Language Policy, commonly known as the Van Ommen Report. That report, begun in 1968 and finally published in 1970, was called by the *Ljouwerter Krante*, Friesland's leading newspaper, "an historic document in the history of the struggle for the Frisian language."

The Van Ommen Report clearly acknowledges that Friesland is a bilingual country, that the Frisian language is alive and vital, and that Frisian culture is an enrichment of the over-all Netherlands culture. Moreover, it establishes that the Netherlands has a definite obligation in regard to the language and culture of Friesland. It proposes an annual government appropriation of at least 100,000 guilders for the promotion of Frisian cultural programs, expresses itself favorably in regard to the use of Frisian in the kindergarten, and offers no objection to the use of Frisian as the medium of instruction in classes above the second grade (the grade to which such use has thus far been restricted).

To be sure, the report advises against the introduction of Frisian as a required subject in the schools. But two ministers of education, Grosheide and Van Veen, subsequently have indicated that they did not agree with this part of the report and that they were willing to meet the demands of the Frisian people on this score. The current Minister of Education, C. Van Veen, at a hearing in *Ljouwert* on January 11, said: "In principle I am for the required teaching of Frisian in the elementary schools of Friesland. I definitely believe that this is the direction in which we should go." Some time later, in answering questions posed by Senator Klaes de Vries, he stated in the Upper Chamber that this ministry was in favor of teaching Frisian, on a compulsory basis, at least one hour a week in the elementary schools.

Few, if any, in Friesland now expect 1972 to be the important year that they had hoped. The Van Ommen Report, with the cabinet amendments, are indeed found on the fall agenda of the Netherlands house of parliament. But no one expects the report to remain on that agenda much longer. In view of the upcoming elections (the result of a cabinet crisis), many other things are likely to get priority. Moreover, a report of a special parliamentary committee on the Frisian problem, held as far back as April 20, still has not been published. When it is, it will first have to go to the members of the committee for correction and approval, and after that to various bodies in Friesland for the same purpose. All this may take as long as two months. In the meanwhile the elections will no doubt bring changes in the cabinet. This, in turn, will lead to new discussions and new delays. "The Hague, which always drags its feet on Frisian matters, could hardly ask for better excuses," sighs the editor of the *Ljouwerter Krante*.

SEELTERLOUND GETS HELP IN STRUGGLE FOR LANGUAGE

Saterland, the only region in Germany where East Frisian is still spoken, is located some 60 kilometers to the west of Bremen, a bit southeast of Leer. The West Frisians of the Netherlands call it Sealterlân, but the natives themselves speak of Seelterlound. The heart of this Frisian enclave in Germany centers around three villages: Strukelje, Roomelse, and Schâddel--known in German as Strücklingen, Ramsloh, and Scharrel.

For centuries Seelterlound was an isolated sandstrip in the midst of a large fen or moor. Because of its isolation, Seelter Frisian continued to flourish as the language of the region. After the Second World War, however, the language became seriously threatened. It was then that Seelterlound had to absorb a great influx of refugees from East Germany, who for the most part spoke High German. Since then, in addition, highways have been laid through the region, increasing the contact of the population with its German-speaking neighbors. With only German taught in the schools, fewer and fewer children any longer speak Frisian.

Still another threat to Seelterlound and its language has developed recently. There is some agitation for restructuring the government of the region. The plan calls for the splitting up of Seelterlound administratively. The Council for Inter-Frisian Affairs, which promotes Frisian interests in all parts of Greater Friesland, has petitioned the Minister of Internal Affairs of Lower Saxony, in Hannover, to allow Seelterlound to remain a single governmental unit. It makes this plea on the basis that the people of Seelterlound are of common origin and language, and have the same customs. Seelterlound, incidentally, once again has a representative in the Inter-Frisian Council. He is Wilhelm Kramer of Bollingen, in the county of Stukelje. He fills the vacancy occasioned by the death of the late Wilhelm Awick of Schâddel.

In the struggle to preserve its language, Seelterlound is now getting help from several sources. One of these is the Philological Section of the Frisian Academy of Ljouwert in West Friesland, Netherlands. A particularly active member of this section is Pyt Kramer of Elst. Kramer has already done a considerable amount of work for the promotion of Seelter Frisian. He has compiled a Seelter dictionary, Seelter Woudebouk, and has for years edited a modest quarterly by the name of Seelter Trjoue. He is now in the process of assembling a work group which, after learning the language of Seelterlound, will seek to organize meetings there. Some help is also coming from East Friesland in Germany, where Jan Drees of Aurich has become active in behalf of the Seelter cause.

In the interest of teaching the ancestral language to the children of Seelterlound, a new book has been published. It is a translation-reprint of Little Black Sambo, as this has recently appeared in an illustrated London edition. The children's book, called Litje Swotte Sambo in Seelter Frisian, was brought out by the North Frisian Institute of Bräist (Bredstedt) and the East Frisian Landschaft of Aurich.

JOAST HALBERTSMA PRIZE FOR HISTORY GOES TO OEPKE SANTEMA

The Joast Halbertsma Prize, awarded biennially by the States of Friesland to the person who has done distinguished work in the field of Frisian history, will be granted this year to Oepke Santema of Ljouwert. The prize, though in recognition of Santema's entire oeuvre, is being awarded particularly for his most recent publication called Alde Doarpsgesichten, a two-volume work on the history of Frisian villages. It will be presented to the winner on October 19 at special ceremonies in the historic city hall of Boalsert.

Oepke Santema was born on August 16, 1904 in Skearnegoutum. Now retired, he was for many years connected with the Central Frisian Library in Ljouwert. He has published several works in the field of local history, including Skearnegoutum troch de ieuwen hinne (1937) and Ta de skiednis fan Toppenhuzen en Twellegea (1939).

OUTSTANDING DATES IN FRISIAN HISTORY (II)

- 830 The first big raids of the Norsemen (Vikings) begin. These continue throughout the 9th and 10th centuries.
- 834 By the Treaty of Verdun, Friesland becomes a part of the Frankish central empire, ruled over by Lothar I.
- 950 North Friesland, in Slesvig, is colonized.
- 1000 A chain of dikes is gradually being erected about Friesland to protect it from the sea.
- 1000 The feudal system, prevalent in the other countries of the continent, does not develop in Friesland. The Frisians acknowledge a direct allegiance to the Empire, but resist the feudal lords.
- 1100 The first meetings of the Upstalbeam are held. This Union of the Seven Frisian Sealand seeks to promote internal peace and to present a united front against foreign aggression.
- 1153 The East Frisians defeat Henry the Lion.
- 1164 The catastrophic Juliana flood brings death to nearly 20,000 people.
- 1219 The Frisians, in the Fifth Crusade, help in the capture of Damietta (Egypt).
- 1251 King Albert of Denmark is defeated and slain by the North Frisians.
- 1256 William II of Holland loses his life in a battle with the West Frisians.
- 1289 Floris V subjugates the West Frisians (now the inhabitants of the Province of North Holland).
- 1323 The meetings of the Upstalbeam are resumed (until 1337).
- 1345 In the historic Battle of Warns (September 26), Mid-Friesland maintains its liberty against the onslaught of the aggressive Dutch Count, William IV. The count himself is killed on Frisian soil and the flower of the Dutch, Flemish and Henegouw nobility is disastrously beaten and driven back across the Zuider Zee.
- 1365 The Marcellus Flood causes the island of Rungholt in North Friesland to disappear under water. Along the Frisian mainland the Jade is widened and the Dollart appears.
- 1400 The Frisians have their "War of the Roses," in which Skieringers and Fetkeapers are the contending parties. The internecine strife lasts till 1524.
- 1464 The House of Cirksena arises in East Friesland. This famous House rules till 1744.
- 1496 Menno Simons, Protestant reformer and founder of Mennonites, is born in Wytmarsum.
- 1498 Friesland comes under the control of Saxon rulers (Albert, Henry, George). These discontinue the use of Frisian as a language of government; they also forbid the annual commemoration of the Battle of Warns.
- 1514 Greate Pier, a gigantic Frisian warrior, rallies his bands to regain Frisian freedom.
- 1523 Janko Douwama, a Frisian nationalist who tries to preserve the autonomy of his country over against the advances of Charles V and his centralistic government at Brussels, is imprisoned at Vilvoorde.

OUTSTANDING DATES IN FRISTIAN HISTORY (III)

- 1524 Friesland is joined to the Austrian Empire (Charles V).
- 1526 The first edict against the teachings of Luther appears.
- 1530 Menno Simons begins his work as church reformer.
- 1531 The Anabaptist Sikke Frearks, also known as Sikke Snider, is beheaded in Ljouwert. He becomes the first martyr of the Reformation in Friesland.
- 1535 The monastery of Aldkleaster, near Hantwert, is seized by the Anabaptists. It is later retaken by soldiers under the governor, Schenk van Toutenberg; as a punishment, many Anabaptists are beheaded and drowned.
- 1550 The Inquisition makes its appearance in Friesland.
- 1555 Charles V abdicates in favor of his son Philip II of Spain; the latter initiates strong measures against the Reformers.
- 1568 The Battle of Hilligerlie (in the Frisian environs of the Ems River) marks the beginning of the Eighty Years War - a struggle against the Spanish in behalf of political and religious liberty.
- 1579 Friesland, with six other Lowland provinces, joins the Union of Utrecht, thereby virtually declaring itself independent of Spain. In the Union, Friesland is an autonomous state with an independent government, army, and admiralty.
- 1580 William I (the Silent) is elected governor of the Frisians.
- 1584 Count William Louis of Nassau becomes governor of Friesland; he gets to be affectionately known as "Us Heit".
- 1585 The University of Frentsjer (Franeker) is founded.
- 1593 Karel Roarda and his followers (the "Roardists") reject the foreign rule of the Nassaus; they aim at the establishment of a separate Frisian state.
- 1603 Gysbert Japicx, eminent Renaissance poet, is born in Boalsert.
- 1614 The Englishman Jan Jans Starter comes to Friesland; in 1621 he brings out his "Friesche Lusthof", containing some work in the Frisian language.
- 1648 The Peace of Munster ends the Eighty Years War.
- 1668 The "Fryske Rymlerije" of Gysbert Japicx appears (two years after the poet's death).
- 1675 As a result of religious tolerance, a flourishing congregation of Labadists is established in Wieuwert.
- 1678 Death comes to Anna Maria Schuurmans, noted leader of the Frisian Labadists and a woman of considerable artistic fame.
- 1680 The House of Cammingha, long in control of the island Amelân, dies out.
- 1782 The Parliament of Friesland, an autonomous body, recognizes the independence of the United States of America.
- 1795 The Revolution in Friesland (a counterpart of the Revolution in France) is accomplished peacefully; the States of Friesland are abolished and new "representatives of the people" are chosen.
- 1796 Jacobin elements, encouraged by the Dutch and French, force the Revolution into a second and violent phase. They seek to destroy the federalism of the Union and to establish the "one and indivisible state". They succeed by illegal and terroristic methods, and so cause the last remnants of Frisian sovereignty to disappear.

