

Home affairs

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HOME AFFAIRS.by **PIERRE BÉGUIN.**

About once every 25 years there is a big Swiss National Exhibition. The next of these will be held in 1964. The Swiss government has decided that the exhibition will take place in Lausanne, and it is a happy sign that arguments are already going on as to what shape it will take.

The last two national exhibitions took place in Berne, the Federal City, in 1914, and in Zurich, Switzerland's largest town, in 1939. Each time was on the eve of a world war and during these periods of great danger, they helped to strengthen Swiss morale and to make the Swiss people more aware of the reasons why they should be ready to defend their independence.

This was particularly true of the Zurich exhibition of 1939. It brought together all the different branches of Swiss material power, both in industry and agriculture, but it also stood for all the things that Swiss people believed in. It showed the reasons why they should preserve what makes life worth living. Above all, it helped to reaffirm the spirit of Swiss independence. Looking back upon this exhibition one might think that the organisers and builders had foreseen the role which it would be called upon to play. Its whole conception seemed to have been planned to bring about the revitalising influence which it in point of fact did have. One wonders what overall conception will rule the design and building of the 1964 exhibition. It can only be hoped that those in charge will show the same far-sightedness as their predecessors in Zurich and will be, at the same time aware of present needs.

Naturally enough, there have been discussions about certain plans which follow an established tradition. They are concerned with the task of showing in a relatively small area all the many facets of Swiss national life. Every branch of Swiss economy will have its place, but technical prowess will be emphasised. Achievements in political rights, social security, health services and education will be shown by statistics, diagrams and models. And to make sure that the whole thing is a success there will be amusements of all kinds.

This is the completely traditional plan and can be justified. But perhaps it is rather too conservative. That is why an unexpected plan should be mentioned here. It will have the support of all kinds of people, especially the young. And in fact the young architects who are the followers of Le Corbusier have come forward with an original idea for the exhibition. Le Corbusier, who is of Swiss origin, is considered by them as the greatest urban architect living. It was he who designed the famous City of

the Sun near Marseilles in France and is responsible for the design of a whole new town in India. These young architects envisage an exhibition not of the past, nor the present, but of the future. One which would suggest solutions to the most urgent problems of the time, especially those of big cities. It is a fact that life is becoming unbearable, or at least inhuman, in modern towns. It is necessary to find new solutions to the problem brought about by the growth of population, the increase of traffic and the spreading of the towns into the countryside. These solutions should allow modern men and women to find rest and quiet in spite of town-life and excessive mechanisation. Le Corbusier has suggested a new way to solve these problems.

Thus, there came into being the idea of a national exhibition aimed at showing the way forward. This will apply first of all to the city of Lausanne and its environs. Switzerland will be paying homage to one of the most famous men born in that country and at the same time will suggest large-scale solutions for existing problems, not only in Switzerland but in many countries.

Once again a National Exhibition would make an important contribution to Swiss life — but this time in a different way. By creative initiative and daring, this exhibition will be a completely new way for the Swiss people to reassess their powers and ability. The idea has been launched and is much discussed. It is hoped that its central feature will remain unaltered.

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HOME AFFAIRS.

By MAX NEF.

At a recent meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation in Paris, Switzerland was represented by its Foreign Minister, Mr. Petitpierre, and Mr. Holenstein, Minister of Public Economy. Since the OEEC is neither political nor military but an economic organisation, Switzerland, in spite of its neutrality, is one of the 17 members.

The OEEC was established nearly 10 years ago, when the United States began its Marshall Aid to European countries devastated by the war. One of the primary conditions for carrying out the Marshall Plan was co-operation between the Western countries and the intention was that, as time went on, the Marshall Plan should be replaced by self-help on the part of Western European countries. Results were successful.

The Organisation of the OEEC requires close and permanent contact between countries taking part. As far as technical matters are concerned, naturally, they are handled by groups of experts, but when matters come up which have to do with the national interests of member states, then the various governments send their representatives. This was the case with a previous Paris meeting.

In 1950, at the suggestion of the then French Foreign Minister, Mr. Schumann, six of the 17 countries belonging to the OEEC formed the so-called Montan-Union. The countries concerned, France, Western Germany, Belgium, Holland, Italy, and Luxembourg, set up the Coal and Steel community which, now firmly established, is steadily increasing its importance and efficiency.

The six countries concerned recently worked out a plan for a Common Market for Europe. A Common Market does not simply mean doing away with customs barriers between the six countries concerned, but also means having joint trade and economic policies which would lead to a certain amount of standardisation in legal matters and in welfare.

In this way a great many obstacles which hindered the economic life of the countries involved would be done away with. But other obstacles would arise as far as trade with countries outside the Common Market were concerned.

To deal with these problems a suggestion was made that a Free Trade Zone should be set up which would include all 17 member-countries of the OEEC, and not only the six united in the Common Market scheme. This would facilitate trade relations between the six Common Market countries and other OEEC members.

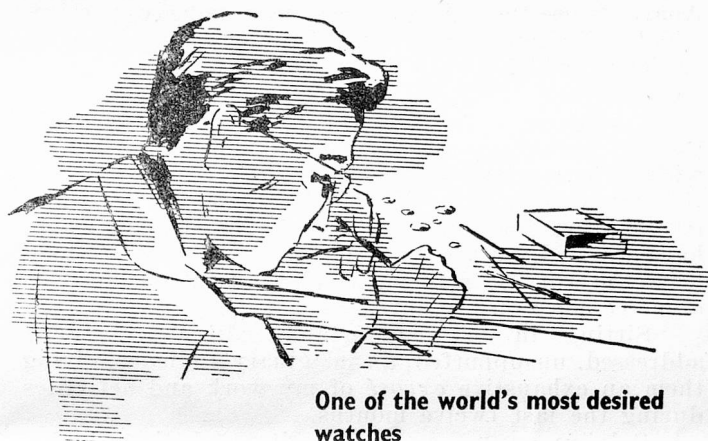
This Free Trade Zone idea was approved, on the whole, at the Paris discussions. There are, all the same, many technical questions to be dealt with, and the effects of the plan on the countries concerned must still be gone into. For instance, not all of them are equally developed in the economic field.

For Switzerland it is important that politics should not creep into the economic union, as is the case with the Common Market of the six countries of the Coal and Steel Community. Politics would make

Switzerland's co-operation more difficult, because of our neutrality. One major point of policy for Switzerland is that every effort should be made towards the greatest possible freedom in trade relations with countries *outside* Europe as well as those concerned in the Paris meetings.

A COCKTAIL PARTY.

The Management of "Swissair" gave a cocktail party — with an Oriental flavour and Music from the East — on Monday, 25th March, 1957 in the Orchid Suite at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1. on the occasion of the opening of their New Route to Tokyo.



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