

An Editor speaks

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By PIERRE BÉGUIN.

A forthcoming big national event.

In six years' time, that is to say in 1964, a new National Exhibition is to be held in Switzerland; it will take place in Lausanne. Although definite plans have not yet been completed, enough is already known about it to show that the organisers have decided to abandon the beaten track. It is not going to be either a fair or a place for amusement. What is intended, on the contrary, is to stress the future tasks which await us. Instead of being a mere balance sheet, this National Exhibition will be a programme of activities. This, in itself, is sufficient to enable us already to gauge the extent of its interest.

We hope and trust — and it is our duty to do so — that in 1964 we shall not be living in the fear of a possible new conflict. We also hope that the prosperity which we have enjoyed during recent years will continue, even if it be somewhat attenuated, to spread its benefits. Under such conditions, an attempt might be made to turn this Exhibition into an inventory of all that we have achieved in the domain of national economy and in the improvements brought to our social institutions, whilst at the same time organising in its neighbourhood various opportunities for enjoyment, in order to attract as many people as possible.

Such an inventory will certainly be drawn up. It is not a bad thing for each citizen to be shown what is being achieved outside the restricted sphere in which he lives and works. Nor is there any question of eliminating from this show pleasant hours of recreation and fêtes of a popular character. But there are other things that must be done. And it is with great satisfaction that we are able to observe that this fact has been grasped by the organisers, who have been busily at work for more than a year now.

Indeed, it has already been decided that a very important part of this Exhibition will consist of a picture directed towards the future. It is planned to select a relatively large region, in the vicinity of Lausanne, which is still quite agricultural, but which is under the threat of being shortly transformed into suburbs of the capital of the Canton of Vaud. It is intended to lay out this region in accordance with quite new ideas, in fact in accordance with ideas which are very close to those of that great architect, Le Corbusier, who is of Swiss origin.

This will serve as a demonstration of the fact that large urban concentrations need not have, as an inevitable consequence, the lessening of the superficial area necessary for agriculture and the destruction of natural beauty, such as forests, fields and large open

spaces. It will also be demonstrated that there is no necessity to concentrate populations into big urban agglomerations, where they lose all contact with Nature. It will be proved that housing units, which are built on the model of skyscrapers, far from serving the civilisation of the masses, make it possible, if they are well imagined, to restore to modern man that solitude and original way of living, that privacy which he requires in order to maintain his balance. Similar proofs will be put forward in regard to all the domains of social life. There will be an industrial centre, an agricultural centre, a centre for studies, a centre for recreation and sport, and a centre for research work and intellectual life.

In point of fact, what is being proposed is to show, within a limited space, what the cities of the future should be like, if one wishes to put back into the forefront of our preoccupations, not merely material efficiency, but also the sense of what is human. This is pioneer work. It is a fine thing to point out original ways and to strive to resolve the problems of the future, rather than to content oneself with highlighting those reasons for satisfaction which we derive from the present. Let us wish "good luck" to these brave ventures, the realisation of which we are looking forward to seeing in six years' time.

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