

Bicycles, cars and waterskis

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EXPO 1964

The building programme has been realised so far. This has been possible partly due to the help of army units whose assistance was invaluable when the bad winter — with its heavy snow and ice and the following tremendous thaw — created difficult conditions. Three hundred architects and designers are already working intensively on the preparations for interior decorations.

Journalists were shown over the exhibition site at the end of May to see the progress made by the builders. They also heard the Expo March played for the first time — composed by the well-known Swiss composer, Hans Haug, who was present at the first performance.

131 designs for a souvenir medal to be on sale by the end of the year had to be judged, and eight prizes were awarded. The first two designs are to be executed in gold and silver.

The Swiss sculptors had been invited to design a seven-metre-high figure symbolising man as centre of the Switzerland of tomorrow. An abstract figure by Zurich artist Odon Koch has been chosen.

The best series of seven posters was selected from amongst fifty-three designs. The winner is Hans Falk, who has already been awarded some thirty first prizes in various competitions.

The Comptoir Suisse will not take place in 1964 on account of the National Exhibition. But there will be a notable art exhibition at the Palace de Beaulieu in Lausanne from 5th May to 20th October. It will be called "European Art in Swiss Collections" and will show some three hundred masterpieces.

(Based on A.T.S. reports.)

PLEASE NOTE that an illustrated folder of the Swiss National Exhibition may be obtained free of charge from the Swiss National Tourist Office, London.

MOUNTAIN CLIMBING IS NOT SO EASY

In the classical days of Alpinism, over one hundred years ago, the British mountaineers had licensed Swiss guides initiate them into the secrets of mountain climbing and teach them the techniques required in snow, ice and rock. The next generation, too, wanted expert training. Ever since, we can speak of a "guideless" period when the foreigners who came to the Swiss mountains sought to achieve Alpinistic feats on their own. The reaction has now come and we have returned to the methods of the old days with the establishment of special mountain climbing schools. The best known establishment of the sort is that of Rosenlauri in the Bernese Oberland, the region of the Wetterhorn and the Engelhörner. The pupils are taught by experienced guides from Oberhasli, the Alpine valley intimately connected with the history of Alpinism. Other resorts such as St. Moritz and Pontresina are about to organize mountain climbing schools. In the Valais, too, in La Fouly at the foot of Mont Dolent where the Italian, French and Swiss frontiers meet, the centre for summer and winter alpinism directed by licensed mountain guides is doing an excellent job. Thus, in keeping with the appeal, "Back to Nature", the Swiss mountain climbing schools have a gratifying and responsible mission to fulfil. [S.N.T.O.]

BICYCLES, CARS AND WATERSKIS IN SWITZERLAND, THE BICYCLE IS STILL GOING STRONG!

Ten years ago, the Swiss Federal Railways together with a number of private companies started a bicycle rental service at railway stations. This novel idea met with great success, not only among visiting businessmen but also among tourists. During the first ten years of this rental service, some 570,000 rentals have been handled at 700 stations. The number of cycles used in this scheme amounts to 1,500. Rental is carried out on a basis of trust, without deposit or guarantee. Thanks to the heavy demand, the rental fee has remained the same very low charge since the scheme started.

[O.S.E.C.]

SWISS AUTOMOBILES

How many of Switzerland's 700,000 car owners know that before the first world war this country possessed a well developed automobile industry? In fact, of the 5,000 cars licensed in Switzerland in 1914, approximately one-third were of Swiss make. Even today Switzerland possesses three heavy-road-vehicle factories and 72% of all Swiss motor coaches and buses are made in Switzerland. With regard, however, to the private cars formerly made in Switzerland, their memory would soon be lost if a number of models were not preserved at the Swiss Transport House in Lucerne, where visitors can see, in particular, the last surviving model of the famous "Ajax" car built in 1908.

[O.S.E.C.]

A SWISS NOVELTY: AN "AQUAPULL" FOR WATER SKI-ING

It was only to be expected that Switzerland, the land of ski-tows and aerial cableways, would one day extend her inventiveness to the field of water ski-ing. This has now been done! The preliminary trials carried out last summer having proved satisfactory and all the necessary official permits having been obtained, Geneva Beach will be equipped with this novelty from the middle of July this year. The "Aquapull", as it is called, produced by a Swiss firm specializing in the construction of aerial cableways and ski-tows, consists of a cable forming a closed circuit sunk several feet below the surface of the lake and driven smoothly by three 60 h.p. electric engines. To this cable secured below the surface by a special system are attached a number of small floats, which in turn pull the water-skiers holding onto the end of another cable. These floats are equipped with a special spring enabling skiers to start smoothly — without sudden jolts. The advantage of water ski-ing in a closed circuit is that it makes it possible to learn this sport and to train rationally, at a constant speed, in a radius easily supervised so as to avoid accidents.

Furthermore, it does away with the annoying noise of the usual speedboats used and allows water-skiers to practise their sport without endangering the lives of swimmers and people in small boats. The "Aquapull" at Geneva Beach, which has four towing floats, will describe a narrow elliptical circuit about 1,000 feet in length terminating at each end with a loop 130 feet in diameter. [O.S.E.C.]

Imposer sa volonté aux autres, c'est force. Se l'imposer à soi-même, c'est force supérieure.

(Lao Tseu.)