

The swiss private school

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THE SWISS PRIVATE SCHOOL

By Dr. J. OSTERMAYER

The main objective of a democracy is, after all, the main objective of real education: to unite a sense of individual freedom with that of social responsibility. It is toward this goal that the objective of real living is directed. Real education comes only from real living. Without genuine humanitarianism even the most independent, the most intelligent, the most successful man is without human dignity, and he lives an unrealistic, inhuman, even brutal life.

Throughout the entire country there is a just but still conservative estimate of 400 recognized private schools, with 4,000 instructors and 40,000 students. The majority of these private school children are in the "middle" or "junior-high and high" school level, that is to say the span between the 5th and the 13th academic year. A reliable estimate is that about 20% of all "middle" school children attend a private school.

The private secondary schools teaching youth in the age bracket of 10-18 years may be divided into four groups: (1) the denominational schools, chiefly those of Catholic and Protestant faiths, (2) the international schools, consisting mostly of foreign students, (3) the so-called Landerziehungsheime, which have for fifty years followed the pattern of the English public schools, and (4) the technical and college preparatory schools of the larger cities. The schools of the first three groups are mainly boarding schools. In regard to the number of these schools and their development it may be said that the first group is the most common (and the most important), the second and fourth groups are increasing rapidly while the number of schools in the third group has in the last ten years somewhat declined.

The essential internal difference between the private and the public school lies in the teacher-student relationship. The private school takes the maturing boy as he is and places him in the midst of work. The instructor is always there to aid the student and to help him in his difficulties but not merely to relay material knowledge. This type of association leads the student to develop confidence in himself as well as esteem for others. In this way the student discovers that confidence, trust and faith in his fellow man is even more important than the formal tools of his profession. He comes to understand that he should not avoid evil from fear of punishment nor do good in the hope of reward.

The boarding school is able to contribute to an important part of a boy's development much more than even the home can. The young man learns to adapt himself to strange, unfamiliar surroundings. This is often not easy for it means admission of each weakness and a renunciation of all his selfish desires. The strict, intelligent division of the day forms and strengthens good habits, especially in regard to his development of good work-habits, forming a healthy, balanced daily life, and in sharpening his sense of order, punctuality and duty. Sensible house-rules teach consideration for his neighbour. Even on that first day with his initial adjustment to these rules begins his self-discipline and thereby his development of character.

Naturally his instruction profits from this. The formation of character through community living often explains the scholastic success of students who did not progress so easily in a public school. Yet, it is by no means true that in the private school the student has to work less.

The private school is recognized by the state and at the same time must conform to the basic curriculum and standards of education as the state establishes for its public schools. Obviously, the smaller classes of a private school permit the teacher to demand less homework. The very difference in relation to the public school with its larger classes lies not in the quantity of subject matter presented, but rather in the manner of presentation, i.e. not in the What but in the How.

Switzerland has developed a type of private school which justifies hope in the future: the international school. Here are young men from all lands who learn the true meaning of international understanding and co-operation. They come to know the love of truth and of non-prejudice, respect for all nations and much good will. They try to understand and to respect that which is unknown and often very foreign to them, and thus they open the doors into a world which each day becomes smaller. Leading young men to the understanding of the common human values, and at the same time to the respect of the different ways of living, is an enterprise of real human significance.

[S.N.T.O.]

EXPO 1964

Fourteen to sixteen million visitors are expected to attend the Swiss National Exhibition in Lausanne next year, of whom about four million will be foreigners. 75,000 arrivals are visualised each week-day and 200,000 on Sundays. Half the visitors are expected to arrive by car, and parking facilities will be provided for 12,500 vehicles. One reckons that 20% of the cars will come by motorway Geneva-Lausanne, 5% on the road from Vallorbe, 12% on the road from Neuchâtel, 35% from Berne. The visitors from the Valais are asked to motor via Le Bouveret to Evian and to take the boat across the Lake from there.

Many visitors travelling by train will alight at Sebeillon Station, where a train will arrive every five minutes. At the main station 10,000 to 12,000 visitors are expected per hour to be transported by coach via Ouchy. These coaches are expected to leave every 26 seconds. Lausanne-Ouchy will have a new funicular railway which will transport 3,000 visitors per hour from the shore of the lake to the centre of the town. 6,000 taxis are expected to be at the service of another 5,000 people. No vehicles will pester the visitor to the exhibition once he has arrived there, though there will be a monorailway and other transport in the exhibition area.

[A.T.S.]

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