

Expo 1964

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EXPO 1964

For thirty years a delegation of the Tourist Office of the Lake of Geneva Region have come to London in the autumn. They usually give a luncheon to British travel agents and the Press at the Dorchester Hotel to induce them to encourage visitors to the Lac Léman.

Last October and again this year the delegation came with members of the General Management of the National Exhibition. The luncheon took place on 30th September in the attractive ballroom of the Dorchester Hotel. A huge horseshoe-shaped table accommodated travel agents, journalists and a number of specially invited guests. The Swiss Ambassador sponsored the event and welcomed the guests. On behalf of the delegation of the Lake of Geneva Region Tourist Office, Mr. H. Guhl, its Chairman, thanked the Ambassador for the help he had given during his stay in London and regretted that he would shortly be retiring. He presented Monsieur Daeniker with a pewter jug from the Canton de Vaud and a salver from the Canton of Geneva; Mr. Guhl also thanked the British friends for their efforts, which were showing such good results. In the Lake of Geneva region there were more British tourists than in 1962, and overnight stays by British travellers, while going down in most of the country, had increased in their region. He said there would be three interesting things next year which should attract visitors even more — the EXPO, an aerial cableway to the Glacier on the Diablerets, and the new road tunnel through the St. Bernard Pass.



Presentation to the Swiss Ambassador.

The Editor of the "Swiss Observer", who was one of the guests, was very curious to hear what would be said about the National Exhibition. Having read reams about it every week, she thought it highly improbable that she would learn anything new. But a pleasant surprise awaited her; Mr. P. Ruckstuhl, Director of Finance and Exhibiting, a member of the Executive Board, gave a most interesting address, which was very well received:

Only four times in a century do all the Swiss meet together as a nation. They do so by virtue of a tradition that is well established today: the National Exhibition.

By reason of their very diversity, the Swiss feel that it is necessary for them to come together every twenty-

five years and to unite in a common effort. The National Exhibition in a different city each time affords an opportunity for striking a balance and making sure that our democracy is really what it is supposed to be. It is also an opportunity for us to show the part we play in the community of nations and to make it clear that we are anxious to contribute to the peace and dignity of the world.

At first sight, a *national* exhibition may well appear to be an outmoded undertaking, particularly for so international a country as Switzerland. Yet we think it has retained all its meaning if its aim is not to glorify any jingoistic nationalism, but to make us all take thought of our responsibilities, honestly and in a spirit of international co-operation. If we are to do any serious work — and you know how serious the Swiss can be — is it not better for us to start by sweeping away the rubbish in front of the door?

But what will this Exhibition be like? First of all, it is to be noted that it is not an economic fair in which commercial interests find their expression. It is in fact something quite different, what I will call a marvellous picture-book, a book showing Switzerland as she was in the past, as she is to-day, and as she would like to be in the future. All this with the help of a wonderful landscape on the shore of the Lake of Geneva, with new buildings of original design, works of art, products of our industries, our craftsmen and our farmers; with the help of films, the circarama, scientific demonstrations and theatrical performances. All these means will be used not, as in an economic fair, to say *how* things have been achieved, but to say *why*.

Why is Switzerland what she is?

Why must our industry produce specialities?

Why are we neutral?

Why must the various branches of industry work together?

Why is it necessary to anticipate the world of tomorrow?

These are a few examples from the hundreds of topics that will be suggested by the Exhibition in its eight sections, created in fact by the entire nation:

— the Confederation and the twenty Cantons;

— groups with idealistic objects;

— the industries, large and small, and the craftsmen.

It may be claimed that all the Swiss will be taking part in one way or another.

I am weighing my words when I say that our Exhibition will be an extraordinary spectacle, a fairy-tale in its colours, its scenery and the happiness of those who visit it, but at the same time it will be a forum that will see the birth of new ideas and of passionate enthusiasm for life in this fascinating century that is ours.

This is why we should be so happy to meet there a large number of people from other countries, and in particular our British friends.

And as you are all great travellers, I should like to reveal a few secrets to you. We invite you to make a journey, inside the Exhibition, by means that you have never seen or used before. Have you ever seen a railway with moving stations that catch up with the train as it travels? Have you ever seen a railway with a train that never stops? No! But you will see this at the Exhibition: a moving station, a station that is a huge turntable round which the train moves forward. The traveller enters the station through the centre of the turntable, and then he goes from the centre to the rim, where he finds the train. As the train moves forward at the same speed as the turntable, he gets into a train that is in motion. This may be a revolution in the world of transport, Gentlemen.

I hope so, for I should hate to be a revolutionary without knowing it — they are such dangerous folk!

Again, the monorail, two miles long, is a novelty which will take you into the exhibition buildings, through the park, on the lake and into mysterious regions underground.

There will be an underwater trip by submarine.

We expect to welcome between twelve and fifteen million visitors, and we shall have parking space for twenty-five thousand vehicles. If I were speaking to Americans I would say that we are planning to make the Swiss National Exhibition one of the biggest things in Europe next year. But as I am speaking to Englishmen I say it will be a jolly good thing. You may reach it by air, by boat, by train, by car, by bicycle, in a sedan chair or on foot. But be sure to come so that we, as a nation that owes much to the British people, may bid you welcome.

VINTAGE CUSTOMS

Festivities in connection with the gathering of the grapes start in September, to reach their climax in October. In the region around the Lake of Bienna, known for its fragrant, sparkling wine, celebrations are set for 6th, 13th and 20th October. The two most important festivals which reflect an ancient tradition are the "Fête des vendanges" in Neuchâtel and the "Festa delle vendemmia" in Lugano, with the processions of flowered floats and a general fair which took place on 5th and 6th October.

A SPORTS CENTRE IN THE ENGADINE

A joint committee of the various resorts in the Upper Engadine has been formed with the purpose of building a special sports centre. Competition has now been invited for the project with due consideration to be given to best aesthetic effect in a landscape reputed for its natural beauty. The site suggested is near Celerina, on the way towards Pontresina. Facilities are to include an indoor swimming pool, an artificial ice rink, a restaurant, a hall for conventions and concerts (to be used also for indoor tennis and golf training) and outdoor tennis courts. [S.N.T.O.]

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