

# Geneva Motor Show

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tonal legislation or jurisdiction. All corporeal punishment is forbidden including the death sentence, except in times of war in cases of high treason.

Within the frame of these legal and juridical principles the Cantons are free to establish and conduct their juridical system, both civil and criminal, as they please and as their Constitutions prescribe. The Cantons make actual use of this freedom to the fullest extent which results in extreme differences of contrast from Canton to Canton. Nevertheless there are some common features to which the Cantons adhere principally on democratic grounds. Thus there are no judges appointed for life time as for example in England. All Swiss judges on whatever level have to be re-appointed from time to time. The members of the highest cantonal courts are as a rule appointed by the Cantonal Parliaments or by the "Landsgemeinden". The members of the lower courts by contrast are usually elected by popular vote especially in the Cantons of German-speaking Switzerland. The candidates are proposed by the political parties and elected by majorities for certain periods, a system which works perfectly satisfactorily as good judges are invariably re-elected on their proved merits without regard to their party allegiance. There is no constitutional requirement of juridical qualification of judges and in the smaller Cantons practically all judges are lay-judges. This is necessary, mainly for reasons of economy, but it also ensures the advantage of judgments given by men deeply rooted amongst the people with the fullest understanding of their problems. For this reason also lay-men are elected on the lower level of courts in most of the bigger Cantons. Often only the presiding judge and the clerk of the court are trained lawyers while the assistant judges are lay-men. Both local, cantonal and federal courts usually act as full courts in all cases of importance by reason of the values involved or the seriousness of the crime. But the presiding judges of cantonal and local courts often deal individually with less important cases in order to speed up the jurisdiction and to keep the costs of litigation as low as possible. In the bigger Cantons the preliminary proceedings to establish the facts to be judged are the task of special "Untersuchungsrichter" who then pass on the case to the court of judgment. In smaller Cantons the presiding judge fulfils both tasks: the preliminary proceeding and the presiding at the main proceedings. This is often criticised on principle, but has never led to any complaints about the result. The cantonal and local judges are paid modest fees as lay-men who continue in their own profession and act only part-time as judges. The full-time judges are paid salaries with pension rights. They may not follow other occupations nor in most cases accept directorships.

The Federal Court is composed of twenty-six full members and eleven complementary persons who are called in only to replace full members when they cannot attend. The judges are elected by the Federal Assembly for six years and usually re-elected. All three languages as well as all parties in Parliament are traditionally represented in the Federal Court according to some sort of proportional concept. While any Swiss citizen could be elected to the Federal Court, in fact only trained lawyers are chosen for practical reasons. They receive fixed salary, may not exercise another profession nor belong either to Parliament or any Government. They may on no account, of course, accept any presents or honours from foreign countries. The President of the Federal Court is nominated by Parliament for two years. The court functions are usually divided in several chambers in order to cope expeditiously with the work in hand. The Criminal Chamber of three

judges is reinforced by twelve jurors in cases of high treason, as mentioned before, when the court is called the Federal Assizes.

No doubt, the practice of jurisdiction in Switzerland with a multiplicity of cantonal differences could usefully be improved in many ways, about which much public discussion is taking place in Parliament, in the press and in legal circles. Thus the possibility of unifying the rules of civil procedure to enable lawyers to appear in all cantonal courts is being studied by the Association of Jurists. For minor traffic offences the introduction of a ticket system is aimed at. The protection of citizens against arbitrary administrative measures is to be extended and the establishment of a Federal Constitutional Court to deal with complaints about federal laws impinging on the constitutional rights of citizens is called for ever more urgently. The modernisation of Assize Courts, the election of women as judges, etc., are among the questions discussed. Improvements, no doubt, will be made and are being made. They are slow in maturing in democratic countries, but they will be lasting improvements, when made, that correspond with the need and the will of the people whom they have to serve.

## GENEVA MOTOR SHOW

The Geneva Motor Show (Salon de l'automobile) took place from 12th to 22nd March. When the first "Salon" took place in 1905, the motor car was still in an historic and heroic epoch. Geneva played an important part in the development, with its inventors, constructors and the famous models Dufaux, Sigma, Pic-Pic, Hispano, etc. At the first show, fifty-nine exhibitors took part. The federal government delegated Federal Councillor Forrer and thus started a tradition which is still being observed.

This year's exhibition, the thirty-fourth, was opened by the President of the Confederation, Federal Councillor von Moos. 1,164 exhibitors from twenty-one countries showed their models. Over 32,000 more visitors than last year came to the "Salon", making a record total of 411,677. Amongst the visitors were car manufacturers and racing drivers from many countries, a delegation of the town of Moscow and the national ice hockey team of Czechoslovakia. Visitors arrived by train and aeroplane and above all by car, many, no doubt, curious to drive on the new motorway Lausanne-Geneva. A meeting of the official Swiss Fairs was held at which the Swiss Industries Fair in Basle, the Comptoir Suisse in Lausanne, the OLMA in St. Gall and the Motor Show in Geneva were represented.

Besides private cars and racing models, this year's "Salon" featured trucks and other commercial vehicles, building machines and accessories for cars. Last year, this additional show was devoted to boats and trailers, camping material as well as bicycles and motorcycles. The exhibits were displayed on the largest surface ever available in Geneva to date, namely about 40,000 square metres. And yet, some exhibitors had to be refused or were obliged to cut down on their original plans. Therefore, interested circles in Geneva have taken the initiative with regard to the construction of new large facilities near Cointrin airfield. For 1965 and 1966, it is hoped that the existing halls may be further enlarged to cope with the ever greater needs of the International Automobile Exhibition which ranks among the most important shows of its kind in the world.

(A.T.S., S.N.T.O. and  
"Salon de l'automobile".)