

Switzerland at the Montreal International Exhibition 1967

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): **- (1967)**

Heft 1516

PDF erstellt am: **29.04.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-687610>

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SWITZERLAND AT THE MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION 1967

Next year, the Canadian Confederation will celebrate the centenary of its foundation. The anniversary of this first century of existence will also mark the opening of the Universal and International Exhibition of Montreal 1967, which will be the highlight of the centenary celebrations. Another confederation, of even more venerable age, Switzerland, has been invited by the Canadian Government to take part in the Montreal Exhibition. Many reasons militated in favour of Switzerland's participation: the fact, first of all, that this country maintains close relations with Canada, not only on the cultural but also on the commercial and financial levels. In addition, and this is a very strong argument, the Swiss who have emigrated to Canada form a comparatively large and very active colony. Finally, the fact that all the industrial nations would be represented at this big event was not the least persuasive of the arguments convincing those who decided that Switzerland should take part.

Aspects of economy and culture

It should be pointed out that Canada and Switzerland have maintained close economic ties for over a century now. The reason these two countries have for so long been trade partners is to be found in the very nature of their economies, which are complementary. In 1965, Switzerland imported 42 million dollars' worth of goods from Canada, while exporting in return products totalling a value of 48.2 million dollars. The flow of trade between the countries is therefore appreciably the same.

The Swiss pavilion is at present in the process of construction in Montreal, on a site measuring some 38,000 sq. ft. very well situated on St. Helen's Island, between the lots reserved for the Netherlands and Austria. Thanks to the co-ordination provided by the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade, the country's main industrial branches — watchmaking, chemical products, the machinery industry and textiles — will be on display on the banks of the St. Lawrence. The drawing up of the plans and the actual construction of the pavilion have been entrusted to the Zurich architect Werner Gantenbein, who previously designed the Swiss pavilion in Brussels in 1958.

In addition to the display of the country's main economic activities in the pavilion, the organisers have taken special care to give prominence to the various aspects of Swiss culture (arts, social achievements, education, etc.). The various problems of this nature as well as those closely bound up with Switzerland's position in the world today and the importance of her tourist trade, will be presented in several places. In this connection, mention should be made of the general section situated on the ground-floor of the pavilion, as well as the film to be made specially for showing at the exhibition; the three parts into which it is divided, lasting from five to eight minutes each, are devoted in turn to the beauty of Switzerland's scenery, the notion of Swiss precision, and culture in Switzerland.

Gastronomy, the ambassadress of good taste

As most of the foreign pavilions are having their own restaurants in Montreal, it was only natural for Switzerland to do likewise. In fact not only is this country considered the birthplace of tourism in Europe, we also find all over the world in the most famous establishments —

and the White House in Washington is no exception — hotelkeepers, gastronomic experts, chefs and other Swiss hotel personnel, who are highly appreciated for their services. The Swiss restaurant at the Montreal Exhibition will therefore symbolise hospitality and the arts of the table as practised in Switzerland. This restaurant will be housed on three floors and will have an overall seating capacity of over 200. Switzerland's four linguistic regions will be represented, not only as regards interior decoration but also in the choice of dishes.

The message of art and folklore

With regard to cultural events, throughout the whole duration of the International Exhibition, both in Montreal and within the Exhibition premises, there will be performances of all kinds: drama, concerts, lectures and folklore, sports events, etc. The management of the Exhibition, who are sparing no efforts in this field, are counting on the assistance of all countries invited in the measure of their possibilities. Switzerland will comply with this wish: the relevant organisations are at present planning, in co-operation with the "Pro Helvetia" Foundation, the Association of Swiss Musicians and the National Federation of Swiss Costumes, a programme which will enable visitors to the Exhibition as well as the general Canadian public to see for themselves the value and vitality of culture in Switzerland.

(Swiss Office for Development
of Trade — O.S.E.C.)

WEATHER NEWS

After a rather unfriendly, wet and cool July and August, September was a dry and warm month. October brought record temperatures to several towns; Basle registered 28°C., and in Zurich, the 4th October was the hottest day of the century with 28.7°C. In the Valais, grapes were harvested in great heat. But in the second half of the month the weather deteriorated. The Ticino reported flooding, and on 18th October, there was an explosion at the barrage works of Hongrin, a *Schlagwetterkatastrophe* which cost six lives.

Early in November, snow fell, even in Lugano, and the first avalanches began to descend, some of them causing loss of life and damage to property. The last grapes in the Valais were gathered in snow.

300 men were cut off on the construction sites of the Vorderrhein Power Station on the Lukmanier Pass, and they had to be rescued by helicopter. The Gotthard line was interrupted due to rocks and snowdrifts on the route. 26 workmen were stranded on the Schilthorn where strong wind had damaged the temporary building site railway. By 10th November, fifteen passes were closed. On 24th of the month, heavy snowfalls were reported from many parts of Switzerland. Zurich had 19 cm., and from then to the end of the year, 466 men were fully employed, apart from casual helpers, to remove the snow. Clearing costs amounted to Fr.200,000.—.

Before Christmas, there was more snow in many parts of the country, and heavy storms raged. Early in January, extraordinarily mild weather in the Ticino caused lemons and oranges to ripen. Elsewhere more snow began to fall, and it grew colder. As usual, the lowest temperatures were registered in "Swiss Syberia", at La Brevine where minus 33.5° centigrade was reached. On going to press, the latest reports are of cold weather and snow, with fourteen passes closed on 12th January.

[A.T.S.]