

Zeitschrift:	Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber:	Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band:	25 (1962)
Heft:	[1]
Artikel:	The need for the National Exhibition : (30th April to 25th October 1964)
Autor:	[s.n.]
DOI:	https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-942391

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HELVETIA

Monthly Publication of the Swiss Society of New Zealand (Inc)

GROUP NEW ZEALAND OF THE NEW HELVETIC SOCIETY

25th Year

JANUARY 1962

Hamilton

The Need For The National Exhibition

(30th APRIL to 25th OCTOBER 1964)

SWITZERLAND is a country rich in contrasts and variety. Its existence is not the outcome of any principle of geographic, cultural, technical or religious unification. It is the result of an act of will, a pact freely entered upon, and based on a shared conception of the liberty and dignity of man. For Switzerland to continue to exist, this pact needs constantly to be renewed. That is why this country, more than any other, requires an event held at regular intervals to unite the whole population and remind the Swiss of the features that are common to all of them and are expressed in certain ideals, institutions, achievements and a way of life all their own. This event, the National Exhibition, also provides an opportunity for a periodic stock-taking of the nation's activities and a consideration of the possibilities the future holds in store for the country. It likewise affords a possibility of calling attention to new aspects of internal problems such as, for example, access to higher education, woman's place in the national community, and technical and social progress.

The Exhibition is also necessary from the point of view of Switzerland's relations with the rest of the world. On the whole the Swiss have lived on the fringe of big world-shattering events and their consequences. They frequently lack an eye for the future and are in danger of failing to realise the full significance of the changes taking place around them: European integration, the promotion of coloured peoples, aid to countries in the process of development, etc. The National Exhibition will enable the Swiss to become aware of the place their country must take up in a world in the throes of evolution. A prefiguration of a United Europe, Switzerland does not wish to play the part of an onlooker in this evolution. She must take full part in it, not merely by suffering it passively, but by endeavouring to mould it to

her own particular needs. The Exhibition will reveal Switzerland's community of interests with Europe and the world.

Aims of the National Exhibition

The Exhibition's aims are the direct outcome of the general ideas expressed above—

- to be an instrument of national cohesion
- to produce an awareness of the new problems
- to stimulate the country's creative activity
- to be, finally, a means of making the country known throughout the world.

The Exhibition, which will last from 30th April to 25th October 1964, will occupy a total area of over 6 million square feet on the shores of the Lake of Geneva, immediately to the west of Ouchy. It will thus be set in the midst of splendid scenery lying between the sparkling waters of the lake and the rising tiers of the hills on which Lausanne is built.

The Exhibition will be divided into two main parts:

A "General Part," the work of the Exhibition itself, which will present the highlights of Swiss history, a picture of the country today and the possibilities facing the Switzerland of tomorrow;

A "Special Part," organised by the exhibitors in co-operation with the Exhibition management, which will show what has been achieved in all fields of activity and give an idea of future prospects.

The "General Part" will comprise three subdivisions: "History," "A Day in Switzerland," "Switzerland Looks to the Future." This part therefore will give a vivid picture of the country's past and present as well as a glimpse into its future.

The "Special Part" will be divided into five sectors: "The Art of Living," "Transport and Communications," "Industry and Craftwork," "Trade," "Soil and Forests."

The Exhibition will be thematic; that is to say that the subjects dealt with will be grouped and illustrated in accordance with a general idea. But the themes will be integrated, and this integration will be expressed in a special architectural form. In fact, each theme will be treated not in a series of distinct pavilions but all together in a sector, which will be in the form of a "multicellular" architectural unit consisting of buildings, open spaces and gardens. Within each sector, the particular aspects of the general theme will be illustrated in sections and groups, which will form the "cells."

Let us take, for example, the "Industry and Craftwork" sector. It is divided into nine sections as follows: the requisites of industrial and craft activity; energy; the chemical industries; machinery and metals; metering techniques; wood and paper; the building trade and civil engineering; foodstuffs, beverages, tobaccos; textile machinery. Each of these sections is in turn divided into groups, that of energy, for example, being broken down into five groups: nuclear energy, electricity, liquid and solid fuels, gas, and oil refineries.

The multicellular architectural solution has made it possible to plan three different circuits for the visitor's convenience. In each sector, the visitor will be able to select, according to his interests or the time at his disposal, the "quick tour," which will give him a general overall picture of the subject dealt with, or the "concentrated tour," which will permit him to delve more deeply into the subject, or the "detailed tour," which will enable him to get to know the whole of the sector under consideration.

Basic Facts

According to the very detailed studies that have been carried out on the basis of past lessons and present demographic and economic details, some 13 to 16 million visitors are expected to attend the Exhibition. Such a flood of visitors spread over a comparatively short period of time raises complex problems, especially with regard to transport and accommodation.

The transport facilities have to be capable of coping with the maximum number of visitors and consequently all calculations are based on the figure of 16.5 million travellers, about 50 per cent of whom are expected to come by road, 30 per cent by rail, and 20 per cent from Lausanne and the surrounding districts.

With regard to road traffic, by 1964 a big motorway will connect Lausanne with Geneva and Geneva-Cointrin airport, while considerable work

will have been done on the other routes from the north (Berne) and east (Simplon) in the way of the removal of level crossings, widening of existing roads, etc. In addition a bypass will divert traffic from the north and east bringing it direct to the Exhibition area without passing through the town. Parking space will be provided near the Exhibition entrances for 12,000 cars and motor coaches, with emergency parks for a further 13,000 vehicles.

As for rail traffic, the Lausanne railway station facilities are quite sufficient, but transporting passengers from the station to the Exhibition grounds by the various means of urban transport would be almost impossible. Consequently, the organisers decided to build a temporary station at Sevelin, on which work has already begun.

The lake, also, will provide a means of access to the Exhibition. It is planned to build a landing stage not far from the mouth of the River Flon and a rapid service of motor-boats will run between the Exhibition and Ouchy.

The question of accommodation will not present any particular difficulty, except perhaps on special days, which are expected to attract a particularly large number of visitors to Lausanne. But the accommodation facilities of the town of Lausanne and the Lake of Geneva region will be quite sufficient to cope with the situation.

Exhibitors' committees have been formed and, in conjunction with the Exhibition management, are about to examine the projects of the architects of the different sectors, whose provisional plans and models are already completed. All exhibitors, whether from economic, cultural, scientific or sporting circles, are showing an extremely gratifying spirit of co-operation.

The timetable of work provides for the completion of the preparation of the site by the end of 1961. An area of 2,400,000 square feet, some 1,540,000 square feet of which is to be reserved for the Exhibition, is being reclaimed from the lake.

This filling in along the shores of the lake was finished within a few months, as well as the complete roofing over the Flon. At the beginning of this year, work started on the foundations, that is to say the laying out and preparation of the sites, the laying of water and gas pipes and of electricity cables, the construction of approach roads, as well as roads within the grounds, etc. About the middle of 1962, the construction of the buildings and superstructures in general will begin. This stage will last up to about June 1963. The time from June 1963 until the opening of the Exhibition will be devoted to interior decoration and fitting up. So far, all work is well up to schedule and even in some cases ahead of it.