

The Reason for Switzerland Stability

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EXPO 1964

In the lakeport of Ouchy the new hydrofoil "Albatros" of the Lake Geneva Navigation Co., ardently awaits its maiden voyage for the opening of the Swiss National Exposition on April 30th. In the whole world there only exist about twenty such means of transportation which hover over the surface of the water and are a cross between a hydroplane and a ship. The winglike floaters enable it to reach a speed of 28 m.p.h. The "Albatros" was constructed in a wharf at Messina, Sicily, from where it set out on a hazardous voyage to Marseilles, braving up to ten feet high waves on its way. From Marseilles it was shipped by road-truck up the Rhone valley to Lausanne. The "Albatros" is 68.8 feet long, 16.5 feet wide (with the wings it spans 24.75 feet) it weighs more than twenty tons, is equipped with a Mercedes-Benz engine and it accommodates eighty passengers. During the EXPO it is to travel between Lausanne and the city of Villeneuve at the Eastern tip of the lake, and between Lausanne and Evian on the French shore. The crossing of the lake to France — for which normal ships take thirty-five minutes — will be made in only twelve minutes.

In the gay port section of the Exhibition the connoisseur may add culinary experience to his sightseeing feats. The diversity of the various Swiss regions are reflected also in the fourteen restaurants where 4,000 guests can be served at a time to be given a "practical course" in the many regional specialities for which Switzerland is known. Centre of night life is the Casino, most intriguingly given the shape of a huge butterfly settled on the quay. Characteristic for this entire section devised for the pleasure, entertainment and relaxation of the visitors are the high-gabled buildings reminding of coloured sails, a most original conception by the Genevese architect M. J. Saugey, while the interior decorations by the Vaudois artist and stage decorator René Creux help to underline the specific traits of the different parts of the country.

The so-called "Telesofa" is a novelty among modern means of transportation, a sort of "aerial easy chair" to convey visitors to the Swiss National Exhibition from the North gate to the centre of the exhibition site and back (capacity 8,000 passengers per hour). The "Monorail" of rather futuristic appeal takes the visitors through the main parts of the exhibition, offering a general survey and a glance even at the interior of several buildings (capacity: 5,000 passengers per hour). In the port and amusement section, there will be a miniature railway — adults admitted! — while the section "Food, Beverages, Tobacco" places oversized, fourseater market pushcarts, so-called "Télépaniers", at the disposal of the weary.

In the coming spring visitors to the EXPO '64 in Lausanne will enjoy special performances of opera, drama, ballet and orchestral music, for there will be a number of recitals and concerts by visiting musicians giving added brilliance to this Exhibition season. It will be heralded by the "Cantate Expo" at the opening of the Expo on 30th

April. The "International Festival of Lausanne" from 2nd May to 24th June will present "Jeanne d'Arc au Bucher" by Arthur Honegger.

The influx of tourists from all over the world promises to be particularly heavy this summer in view of the Exhibition in Lausanne. This prospect has nothing alarming for Geneva where, according to official figures, eighteen new hotels have been built in or very near the city during the last three years, increasing the number of hotel beds available by some 1,200. Another six hotels totalling 1,500 beds are to be inaugurated this year or have already started operations. By the end of this year, Geneva will have a total of 9,200 hotel beds available, a further point of interest to add to the reputation Geneva enjoys as centre for international conferences.

[S.N.T.O.]

THE REASON FOR SWITZERLAND'S STABILITY

We live in an age of statistics. They often throw more light on a situation than columns of print. Gallup International and the Swiss Institute of Public Opinion have recently carried out a survey in seven countries to find out how satisfied people feel with their lot in life and with the institutions of their country. In terms of positive responses three small countries top the poll: Switzerland, Denmark and Norway. Switzerland comes first with 79%. Among the Swiss 92% are satisfied with the work they do and 74% with the income they earn, 79% with the free time they have, and 88% with their standard of living. The percentages recorded in the other six countries (Denmark, United States, Norway, Western Germany, Great Britain and France) are lower. To the question: Do you view the future with optimism? 80% of the Swiss replied yes, but only 54% of the English and 46% of the French. 79% of the Swiss are satisfied with their country's position in the world, but only 43% of the Americans, 42% of the French and 34% of the English. This gap no doubt reflects the total absence of political ambition stemming from Switzerland's resolve to stand aside from world embroilments, and also the difference between the international responsibilities falling to a small country and to a great one. This does not mean, however, that Switzerland shirks responsibilities she is capable of assuming. In the humanitarian sphere she leaves no call unanswered: she lends her good offices in diplomatic matters; she joins in the activities of a vast number of international organizations in very different fields; she bears the entire costs of her military defence. Yet the satisfaction of the Swiss people implicit in these figures is not absolute. It is not shared by a substantial minority. It is they who are the leavening necessary for making the dough into bread — who set in motion the changes which are necessary in Switzerland as everywhere else. Taken all round, however, these figures show that the Swiss believe their institutions, although in need of improvement, should not be discarded, lock, stock and barrel. They can see little sense in changing the shape of the instrument simply because of one or two discordant notes. All that is needed is a little more skill in the player. This philosophy helps to explain the stability of Switzerland revealed by these figures. And perhaps this stability will in turn play its part in the peaceful development of the world towards a greater happiness shared by all.

[S.N.T.O.]