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EXPO 1964

Well over five million visitors have been to the Swiss National Exhibition. On Saturday, 15th August, 101,371 entries were registered, double the number of the highest daily average for May. Surprisingly, Sundays are not specially crowded, in fact, they figure amongst the least well-attended days of the week. The Confederation has granted another loan of ten million francs to the EXPO to meet its present liabilities.

Since our last report, Appenzell held its Cantonal Day, a great success. The procession included not only folkloristic groups, but also the drums and fifes of the "Landsgemeinde", children from the Pestalozzi Children's Village, a group of Tibetans and a contingent of foreign workmen — to make the picture of the Appenzell of today complete. Indeed, "Short is not little" — the Appenzellers' witty answer to the fun made of their short and stocky figures.

There is no lack of entertainment at the EXPO. There are special days of winegrowers, conferences take place, sports contests are held, there are concerts, the national circus Knie, horse shows, plays and pageants, the famous art exhibition, weaving classes arranged by the "Heimwerk", the Mesoscaphe is working overtime and dives to the depths of the Léman every day except Monday. In the beautiful Bourget Park, the show "Field and Forest" shows a model farm with fine cattle, pigs and poultry. There is a dairy centre and an experimental garden. Nature has produced some surprises: in order to demonstrate a weed killer, a bed was planted with weeds, but they refused to grow. Elsewhere a remedy for celery blight was to be shown. Celery plants were infected, but they refused to become sick, and the excellent remedy could not be used!

In the beauty salon, over 20,000 women have had their hair done, and Nestlé's "Children's Paradise" looks after many hundreds of children every day. Half of the 1,200 essays chosen from a great many sent in by school children from all parts of the country, are exhibited at the Palais de Beaulieu; the competition was arranged by the organisers, and the theme was a description of the area in which each child lived.

"Vom Schifflibach zum Monorail" was the heading of a programme on Radio Zurich, in which 236 couples took part in a competition, all of whom first met at the "Landi" in 1939. Four of these couples visited the EXPO in July.

The EXPO visitor who wants to leave the exhibition grounds and return within a short time without paying again, gets an invisible mark stamped on his hand. This impression is checked by ultra-violet rays on his return. After five hours, the ink does not register any more, and the visitor has to pay again.

In the fisheries' pavilion one had to revert to cleaning with the old-fashioned broom — the vibrations of the cleaning machines disturbed the little fishes so much that they knocked against the walls of their aquarium and died. Incidentally, talking of cleaning, every day, one hundred men remove one hundred metric tons of rubbish with the help of twenty-five machines.

At the end of July, jewelry worth about £200,000 was stolen from the exhibition of "Montres et Bijoux" at the Palais de Beaulieu. The thief was found with all the

loot intact. Several large Cantonal flags — they measure 3 x 3 metres — have been stolen. Each flag costs Fr.350.—, and then people are surprised if there is a deficit . . .

On the whole, however, behaviour seems to be good — surprise has been expressed at the small number of drunks and the absence of "ladies of easy virtue".

Many famous personalities have already visited the exhibition. These include the only woman Prime Minister in the world, Mrs. Bandaranaike of Ceylon, the Premiers of Belgium and of Trinidad and Tobago, Bundeskanzler Klaus of Austria, the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, the Mayor and Corporation of Munich, diplomats, journalists, thirty EFTA representatives and 1,100 members of the International Labour Office. Ex-Queen Victoria Eugenie of Spain and Lord Snowdon (I'd love to see the photos he took), the American Cotton Queen, Anita Ekberg, Walt Disney and Petula Clark — just to mention a few celebrities who have been to the EXPO.

Six hundred Paris school children did the trip to Lausanne and back in a day, and from many parts groups and individuals arrived on foot. The Cycling Club "Schoenau", Oeschgen (AG) travelled in period costumes on ancient bikes — the oldest dating back to 1868!

Swiss from abroad have come in very large numbers — whole clubs and societies have travelled by charter plane from U.S.A. and South America.

Julius Binz, aged 92, from Winznau, visited his fifth National Exhibition — 1883 Zurich, 1896 Geneva, 1914 Berne, 1939 Zurich and now Lausanne.

One of the quaintest visits was "The Old Lady", viz. the "Landi" 1939. In three carriages, members of the organising committee of 1939 arrived, bringing with them "Landi" fanfares and a giant photo-album mounted on one of the carriages.

Members of the EXPO travel on good-will trips to many parts of Switzerland, and their visits as well as new and better posters should induce many more Swiss to make the journey to the Léman. Even at peak periods there is no need to worry about accommodation — there is plenty of room in hotels, hostels, tents and private houses. Accommodation should, however, be booked in advance. And finally, forty-eight establishments with 20,000 seats are available for a great variety of food and drink . . .

(Compiled from news received by courtesy of Agence Télégraphique Suisse.)

Nouvelle Société Helvétique

London Group

Tuesday, 22nd September, at 7.45 p.m.

Swiss Hostel for Girls,

9/11, Belsize Grove, N.W.3

OPEN MEETING

Monsieur W. ROCH, First Secretary, Swiss Embassy, on the eve of his departure from London, a talk on "PICTURESQUE EGYPT" with his own slides.

All Swiss and Friends are Welcome