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EXPO 1964

LAUNCHING OF THE WORLD'S FIRST TOURIST SUBMARINE

The 27th February marked an historical event in the small village of Le Bouveret on the Lake of Geneva, near the mouth of the Rhone river, as the world's first submarine to serve tourist purposes exclusively was launched. The "mesoscaph" was built by Dr. Jacques Piccard, son of the famous Swiss stratosphere and deep sea explorer. She was christened by the widow of the late scientist to bear his name "Auguste Piccard". The maiden voyage took her to the port of the Swiss National Exhibition at Lausanne-Vidy from where she will sail for training purposes until the time has come when she can take on a leading part at "EXPO" as probably the most popular means of conveyance for excursions on and under water. The submarine was built in the metal works at Monthey from where the ship had to cover seventeen miles by rail to the small lake port. The usual transport had necessitated considerable preparations and was followed by cheering crowds. The "Auguste Piccard" can take forty passengers who through the portholes get an excellent view of the under-waterscape. Builder Piccard explained that the mesoscaph as regards construction, shape and equipment had been developed by him as prototype of a vessel to serve the purposes of deep-sea explorers.

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The historic background and development of Switzerland is portrayed at the "EXPO" in a most impressive way for the visitor to see and understand step by step as he follows "The Path of Switzerland" which forms the backbone, so to speak, of the exhibition. It leads right down to the lake where a group of pyramid-shaped buildings by their dissimilarity stand for "Swiss unity in diversity". The German, French, Italian and Romansh language group is represented by a pyramid each, while the fifth flies the flags of Switzerland's three thousand communes.

* * *

The highest crane in Europe was recently set up on the site of the Swiss National Exhibition 1964 in Lausanne-Vidy. It is to serve for the construction work on what will be one of the main attractions of the "EXPO 64", the spiral tower. Erected in the colourful port section, the social and gastronomic centre of the exhibition, the cylindrical steel construction towers 262 feet above the unique lakeshore park with its lovely old trees. A two-storey elevator car for sixty passengers climbs like a spiral up the elegant tower. The novel system of rotation adopted here affords the passengers a steadily changing view of what is rightly called the most beautiful setting in the world for an exhibition. The "EXPO 64" will open on 30th April. It is the first Swiss National Exhibition since World War II, the last having taken place in Zurich in 1939.

NO SHORTAGE OF BEDS IN SWITZERLAND

According to the calculations made by OECD, Austria boasts forty-six hotel beds per thousand inhabitants, thus setting a new record for Europe. The tourist country of Switzerland comes second with forty-one beds, followed by the United States with twenty-eight, France with twenty-three, Great Britain with twenty, Italy with eighteen, Canada with fourteen, Eire with thirteen, West Germany and Belgium twelve, Spain eleven and Denmark ten. As these figures show, visitors to Switzerland need have no fear of having to sleep out in the open. Swiss hotels are quite capable of coping with the invasion of summer vacationers and winter sports enthusiasts without any difficulty at all.

[O.S.E.C.]

SWISS HOTEL-KEEPING ALL OVER THE WORLD

If sales are reckoned per head, Switzerland ranks amongst the greatest exporters in the world. But her exports are not restricted to goods like precision machines, watches, apparatus, instruments, high-quality textiles, etc; they also include ideas and services, which account for 37% of the value of her foreign sales. Like other industries, the hotel industry has exported men, ideas and services. Young and enterprising men in their thousands left their homes behind to seek their fortune and to show their mettle. Whether the scions of great hotel-keeping families, cook's boys, boots, secretaries, accountants, chief receptionists, polyglot hall porters, managers or directors, they did their tour of Europe or of the world. They made their mark everywhere by their tenacity and their organising ability. They were men who could be relied on and who knew how to run their business. The majority of those who returned home helped to develop the Swiss hotel industry. They brought back a knowledge of languages and men, and that breadth of mind which is the hall-mark of those who have travelled abroad. In former times it was the custom in Venice to send the sons of governing families to stay a few years with the Sublime Porte in order to learn how to conduct affairs and to manage men. This stay prepared them for the great tasks that lay ahead. It was much the same (and is still much the same) with the Swiss hotel business.

Men like César Ritz in France, Italy or England, Escoffier, Charles Baehler — the "condottiere" of tourism in Egypt and Palestine — Kraft of Florence and the Emery Brothers on the Côte d'Azur are all typical of the way in which Swiss hotel-keepers have hived off abroad. These pioneers still have many emulators in various countries. It is from among the ranks of this illustrious company that the best elements of the Swiss hotel industry are still recruited.

[S.N.T.O.]

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