

A CENTURY OF ACHIEVEMENT

Centrepiece of the Festival, London's South Bank Exhibition opens on schedule and 14-thousand invited guests arrive to await the royal visit. For Herbert Morrison - Lord Festival they call him - it's a proud moment. Ministers and visitors from abroad are there and our own great statesmen; the Archbishop of Canterbury; the Lord Chancellor ... And now the fanfare sounds! The King is here!

The royal party will begin their inspection at the great Dome of Discovery.

Escalators carry visitors to the top floor - an indication of the vastness of this ultra-modern building. In the Dome, exhibits tell the glorious story of Britain's lead in discovery and exploration, both on this planet and the universe beyond. Below is the giant 74-inch reflecting telescope built for Australia. And high overhead is the 365-foot span of the great roof.

From the Dome to the Hall of Transport. In all the exhibition covers 27 acres. On the way is that miracle of engineering, the giant skylon, its beautiful but substantial bulk ingeniously carried by cables.

In the Hall of Transport is told the story of travel and communications. Full size examples such as the engine in the background and working models help to make a complete picture of progress from the earliest days of steam.

The ill-luck that has buffeted the exhibition from the first, mars this great day with foul weather. But neither grey skies nor chill wind can dampen royal enthusiasm. "We enjoyed it very much," the King assures Mr. Morrison, "and we hope to come again."

Now the great exhibition opens its doors to the cash customers and in spite of the weather, 15-thousand stream in. Which annoys Jupiter Pluvius more than somewhat and down comes the rain, mocking the man-made sun.

But as evening comes, the skies clear and Thames-side becomes a fairyland of lights. The old Shot Tower becomes a flashing beacon, the skylon a feather of gold. We have a great story to tell - not of wars and conquests but of pioneers and builders; of men who lighted the way to a better life. That is the purpose of the Festival of Britain.