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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Press visits research institute.

A Swiss firm of world-wide renown, Dr. A. Wander, Ltd., of Berne, which is particularly famous for its dietetic products, recently invited the Swiss Press to visit its Institute for Scientific Research, which has been successively enlarged and developed to a considerable extent during the last three years. Endowed with the most modern equipment, this Institute comprises numerous departments, each of which is devoted to a well-defined task, *e.g.*, chemistry, analysis and physical chemistry, pharmaco-biology, bacteriology, medicine. In close collaboration with a similar establishment in Freiburg-in-Breisgau, Germany, it carries out practically all the research work of the Wander organisation, which now extends to twenty-three establishments which are to be found in eighteen countries, and maintains agencies in about sixty other countries.

New Swiss ultra-rapid machine tool.

The important Genevese firm of Tarex Ltd., which specialises in the manufacture of precision machinery, has just produced a new automatic lathe, which it intends to show at the next European Exhibition of Machine-tools, to be held in Paris in September. From the practical point of view, this single-spindle lathe makes it possible to reduce by nearly 40 per cent the time required for production. One of its features is the pre-selection of the spindle speeds by means of electronic control; in this way, it is possible to fix any desired speed in respect of any position of the turret-head, which is thereupon automatically thrown into gear during the cycle of work.

Swiss Railways constantly seek to save time.

The Swiss Federal Railways possess about fifty standard carriages with multiple control; it will be possible to use these for the set of so-called "push-and-pull" trains which it is intended to put into service, in the Spring, on a number of big "transversal" lines. These push-and-pull trains will be composed of a rail-car, some standard carriages (with a dining-car) in the middle, and a pilot-car. As their name indicates, these trains will be able to run equally well in either direction, without the need to detach the locomotive at terminal or dead-end stations.

Foreign Press Association entertained by industry.

Being all in favour of new ideas, and particularly those relating to public relations, the Genevese metallurgical industry, which has not remained immune from the general slowing down of business perceptible since the middle of 1927, is now multiplying its efforts, with a view to greater publicity on the local, national, and international planes. The Union of Metallurgical Industrialists in the Canton of Geneva, which groups together twenty-five firms belonging to this branch of industry, recently sent an invitation to the Foreign Press Association in Switzerland. For the benefit of the members of this Association it had prepared two remarkably well-organised days, devoted, *inter alia*, to a certain number of visits, which made a very favourable impression on the journalists.

One-thousandth of a millimetre.

During its famous trip across the North Pole, travelling 248 miles under Arctic ice, the American submarine "Skate" was equipped with a new inertial navigation system built by the North American Aviation Company, on precision machines provided by the SIP, Société Genevoise d'Instruments de Physique, in Geneva.

This attests to the world renown of SIP which has a century of experience in high precision metrology and has specialised in the manufacture of jig boring and milling machines accurate to within 1 or 2 10,000ths of an inch.

SIP was recently entrusted by quite a number of States with the re-conditioning, that is to say, the re-dividing of their basic length standards. It may be noted that a unique equipment enables this firm to rule on steel 1,000 lines equally spaced in a millimetre, or 2,500 lines in an inch.

Swiss propaganda stamps.

On 9th March the Swiss Postal Administration will put on sale four new postage stamps designed with a view to propaganda. The 5-centime stamp will commemorate the inauguration of the "Transport House" in Lucerne; the 10-centime stamp will be devoted to the National Exhibition of Philately, NABAG, which will take place this year at St. Gall, from 21st to 30th August. A 20-centime stamp will be issued in favour of the protection of animals, whilst the 40-centime stamp will celebrate the 400th anniversary of the University of Geneva. These vignettes will be valid until the end of the year. Furthermore, whilst the philatelic exhibition is taking place, the Postal Administration will issue non-perforated blocks of both the 10 and the 20-centime stamps.

Switzerland helps to finance new British reactor.

Switzerland has consented to participate financially in the construction of a new European atomic test reactor which is being built in a British research centre. Out of a total budget of 160 million Swiss francs, Switzerland will furnish, as will also each of the three Scandinavian countries, a contribution amounting to four million Swiss francs.

Current rectifiers for use at very low temperatures.

An important Genevese firm belonging to the electro-technical branch proceeded recently, under the eyes of specialists from various countries, to carry out some successful tests with current rectifiers for railway engines, in that it was able to make them function in temperatures that were lower than those in which the locomotives actually run. These experiments, which were conducted under very severe conditions, proved that the rectifiers were capable, as a result of their special construction, of functioning in an impeccable manner in a temperature of less than 44 degrees; those electric locomotives which will be equipped with them will be able to face, without any risk, the coldest winters in the sub-polar regions. One of these appliances will be exhibited this year at the Swiss Industries Fair at Basle.