

75 years in the service of electricity

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75 YEARS IN THE SERVICE OF ELECTRICITY

Brown Boveri celebrate

The largest engineering firm in Switzerland and second biggest industrial concern after Nestlé, was 75 years old in October. The company began by constructing generators, and today, "BBC" market a comprehensive production programme in the fields of generation, distribution and utilisation of electrical energy, electric traction, electronics, communication and telecommunication technique. In fact, wherever there is electricity, there is a strong possibility that Brown Boveri have in some way taken part in the manufacture of corresponding equipment.

Genius and Vision

This world-wide concern of today was founded by two exceptional men on 2nd October 1891: the ingenious inventor Charles Brown whose ancestors were British, but who grew up in Winterthur (1863-1924), and the far-sighted organiser Walter Boveri from Bamberg (1865-1924). The two men met at the engineering works of Oerlikon, and they joined forces. Since then their company has progressed with the advance in electrical know-how and thanks to its innumerable pioneering achievements, has gained considerable success. The company employs 15,660 people (staff 5,020, workmen 9,450, apprentices, etc., 1,190) in Switzerland; these are distributed in the works at Baden which erstwhile spa has become a town of engineers, scientists and technicians, at Birr, Tagerhard-Wettingen, Turgi and Muenchenstein. The total number of people employed by the whole organisation is 76,300. Over 1,000 specialists are occupied with research and development at Baden. Turnover in 1965/6 reached 2,991 million Swiss francs.

A Comprehensive Production Programme

In the field of power generation, Brown Boveri manufacture steam and gas turbines and generators up to the greatest output and power. The first steam turbine was delivered as early as 1901, and today, in many countries, reliable turbo-sets are to be found. The firm was directly concerned with the development of the gas turbine; its share of the international market is significant.

In the thermal field, Brown Boveri have built compressors and blowers, turbo-chargers for diesel engines, etc.

For the distribution of electric power, large and small transformers are manufactured, also mutators and silicon rectifiers for the conversion of AC to DC.

To power consumers the company supplies motors of every size and description. It equips locomotives, cable-cars, and trolleybuses with everything electrical. Transmission and receiving apparatus are built for medium, short and ultra-short waves and for telecommunication. Brown Boveri have devoted a great deal of time to electronics, and with the 35 MeV Betatron the Company has brought on the market a successful ray-transformer for therapy and material testing.

Subsidiary Companies throughout the World

At a very early stage, subsidiary companies were founded in all the major marketing countries of the world. Brown Boveri Mannheim was started in 1900. The

German company has grown into a large undertaking with about fifteen manufacturing centres. The Baden head office have a share in the control of subsidiary manufacturing factories in nineteen countries. There are sales organisations in a further twelve countries and sales and agents' offices in over a hundred countries. In addition, there are licence agreements with certain firms in many countries. In 1965/6, the Brown Boveri Group of Companies exported altogether 731m. Swiss francs' worth of goods to 120 different countries.

Progress and Social Welfare

In such a vast undertaking, the need for personnel is great. Practically all professions and trades concerned in some form with metal or electricity are represented; toolmakers, machine and large equipment fitters, welders, mechanics, turners, electro-winders and erectors, joiners and glass blowers. There are several training schools for apprentices.

The management attach great importance to the welfare of their employees. In 1953, a large club house was built for the factory employees at Martinsberg. For other personnel, there is a club house for spare-time use: the mansion formerly belonging to the founder, Walter Boveri. There is also a football field and, for the Italian workers, bowling greens for *boccia*. In the cultural interest, entertainment (theatre shows, concerts, recitals and film shows) is provided free of charge.

Since 1898, Brown Boveri have helped their employees with accommodation problems, and today there are 1,100 homes at their disposal, including 600 modern houses on the "Wyden" estate at Birr. For single people, particularly for employees from overseas, various types of accommodation are provided. The largest, "Brisgi bei Baden", has been altered from a barracks to a modern living quarter with three fully equipped main blocks for around 2,000 people.

75th Anniversary Celebrations

For the past sixty years all Brown Boveri interests have been represented in the United Kingdom by British Brown-Boveri Ltd. Their offices are at Glen House, Stag Place, London, S.W.1. Like companies in other countries and of course, in Switzerland, the London branch marked the 75th anniversary by a special celebration. It was held at the Savoy Hotel on 16th November, and distinguished personalities from important industrial concerns in the U.K. attended the party, as well as a number of special customers and business friends. A very interesting film on the Company's activities was shown.

In Switzerland, the parent company marked the anniversary by a celebration at their works in Birr, when the President of the Confederation, Federal Councillor Schaffner, gave an address. A large number of guests attended the ceremony — 2,000 in all; personalities from political, economic, scientific and industrial spheres, from the Army, the Diplomatic Corps, the Press. On 15th October, the Company held "Open House" at Baden and Birr, and it is estimated that 100,000 people visited the works.

Earlier in the year, the Commune Assembly of Baden had elected Dr. h.c. Theodor Boveri an Honorary Citizen, a gesture both as a personal honour and to mark the 75th anniversary.