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Obituary

ALICE BURGNER

From friends in Switzerland we have learned of the sad news of the passing away of Mrs Alice Burgner.

Alice Burgner was a well known personality among the Swiss community here in Auckland. Her hospitality to all Swiss, especially to new-arrivals, for whom she often went to no end of trouble to help and give a start, was characteristic of her. Whoever called at her place in Edenvale Road was invited to stay for a meal, which was always a treat to everybody.

With sad feelings in their hearts her friends and neighbours bade them good bye when Leo and Alice Burgner decided in 1958 to return to Switzerland. Although she was looking forward to seeing her country again, her heart remained here, where she had spent many years as a young girl. Meeting them both at home, one could feel how very much she longed to see her devoted friends in Edenvale Road again.

To her husband and her relatives we wish to convey our deepest sympathy.

—A.L.M.

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

NON-RETURNABLE PACK FOR LIQUIDS

Plastics have revolutionised packaging techniques. A striking example of this is the non-returnable pack for liquids and pastes produced on the Formseal machine. The whole idea has been very well thought out and is at the same time extremely simple. The package is a shaped container tapering slightly towards the bottom and formed from a reel of thin but rigid thermoplastic film. The container and its flat preprinted lid are sealed together so as to form a double flap which forms a spout when cut. In order to use, one has only to cut open the flap with a pair of scissors and squeeze the container lightly while pouring. As soon as the pressure is released the flow of liquid stops and the flap closes, preventing any dust from entering and contaminating the rest of the contents, which need not be poured out all at the same time. The operations by which the pack is produced, that is to say the making of the container from a reel of thermoplastic film, the filling of the required amount of liquid, and the sealing with a lid, are synchronised, so that production is rapid, economic and hygienic. It is possible to produce three or six packs at the same time or even more depending on their diameter. This new pack is ideal for packaging cream, fruit juices, concentrates, sauces, detergents, etc. in quantities up to a maximum of $\frac{1}{2}$ pint.

SWISS PACKAGING MACHINERY ABROAD

Swiss packaging machinery enjoys an excellent reputation abroad. Convincing proof of this fact is that the biggest ice-cream factory in Germany recently acquired 6 SIG packaging machines which work twice as fast as the plant previously used. In the space of one minute, each machine wraps 200 ice-creams, each on its wooden stick. Thus during the hot weather the output easily exceeds 1 million ice-creams a day. It is interesting to note that the order was no given on the basis of a prototype or a set of manufacturing plans but quite simply on the strength of the international fame of the manufacturer in question.

DEATH OF SWISS INVENTOR

The inventor of the zip-fastener, Mr Othmar Winterhalter, has just died at the age of 72. This Swiss industrialist was the first to exploit his own invention industrially on machinery of his own construction at the well-known "Ri-Ri" factory he had created for the purpose at Mendrisio (Switzerland). It is therefore to a Swiss inventor that we owe the revolutionary of the zip-fastener, which very rapidly spread all over the world and exerted a decisive influence on several industries such as the clothing and Morocco-leather goods branches, to mention but two.

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF SWISS MACHINERY INDUSTRY

The machinery industry is occupying an increasingly important position in Switzerland's national economy; it has taken the place, in fact, previously occupied by the textile industry. Today the machinery industry alone employs some 40 per cent of the total number of workers and office staff coming under the Federal Factory Laws and accounts for 1/3 of Switzerland's exports. 55 per cent of its output which exceeds 5 billion Swiss francs in value (U.S. 1.16 billion dollars) is exported, the rest being absorbed by the home market.

REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT

The new T.E.E. (Trans-Europe-Express) trains that have been running since July 1st on the Zurich, Gothard, Milan and the Milan, Simplon, Paris lines make the trip between the French and Lombard capitals, for example, in 8 hours. Electric traction has been adopted for these remarkable trains. Two Swiss firms specialising in the manufacture of rolling stock have achieved a noteworthy success by constructing four complete trains of five coaches containing the necessary electric traction equipment for the four systems of current used on European railways. The new T.E.E. train has a total length of 410 feet and weighs approximately 250 tons. Its traction power is 3300 H.P., which enables it to climb the steep inclines of the St. Gothard and the Simplon at a good 50 m.p.h. and to reach a speed of 100 m.p.h. on the flat. It seats 126 passengers.

PRACTICAL ADJUNCT TO MODERN LIFE

For Swiss watch manufacturers, the problem of novelty is by no means restricted to the search for new mechanical devices and original or luxury styling. Teams of research workers are concentrating all their efforts on discovering new possibilities of use for timepieces so as to make them increasingly practical adjuncts to the professional life of modern men and women. In this connection mention should be made, for example, of the "Sherpa" line of watches, which offers a very highly perfected range of models carrying out, thanks to combinations of dials, all sorts of calculations required in various professions. First of all, there is a special watch for amateur and professional divers, which has been perfected in close collaboration with diving experts. By means of a graduated scale on the glass, the diver can see at a glance how long he requires for a safe return to the surface. The revolving bezel is also provided with a movable index for calculating intermediate times. Another model is designed for the calculation of average speeds and outputs. Average rates are in fact becoming more and more important daily, for it is necessary nowadays to calculate not only land, sea and air-speeds but the output of a machine, for example. All these complicated calculations become mere child's play with the new watch in question, which is in addition an exceptionally sturdy, high precision chronograph, in a super-waterproof steel case. A third model, with calendar mechanism, makes it possible to clock the passage of time simultaneously in any two parts of the earth; a movable ring enables pilots or businessmen to know exactly what time it is in any part of the globe. Nothing has been left to chance in this remarkable model since time changes (summer-winter) are accounted for thanks to a special inscription. Finally, a model for stewards and stewardesses allows them to indicate in flight the correct time and the time still to go before arrival; thanks to a revolving bezel, this information can be obtained at a glance. It should be added that the same factory also makes a dashboard chronograph for rally motorists, which is extremely easy to read and greatly simplifies the calculation of average speeds.

NEW POWER STATION ON THE RHINE

Work has just started on the construction of a new electrical power station at Sackingen on the Rhine. This electricity works represents the last stage in the use of the waters of the Rhine between Schaffhausen and Basle, along the German-Swiss frontier. The dam will raise the level of the river about 18 feet in order to supply 5 groups of turbo-generators capable of producing some 400 million kWh annually. The power produced will be shared equally between Switzerland and Germany. The total cost of the project is estimated at 190 million Sw. Fr. (U.S. 44.4 million dollars).

SWITZERLAND AT THE SYDNEY TRADE FAIR

Switzerland took part in the first International Trade Fair at Sydney (Australia), which was held from August 1st to 12th this year. Against a huge panoramic backdrop of the Swiss Alps, supplied by the Federal Topographical Department in Berne, were displayed the main products of Switzerland's industries: Fine cottons and embroideries of St. Gall, watches and clocks, metallurgy and electro-technics, precision apparatuses, and chemical products as well as the products of a chocolate factory and a paper mill. The Swiss Comptoir in Lausanne, in which Australia took part as guest of honour last year, was also numbered among the exhibitors, alongside the Swiss National Tourist Office in Zurich, Swissair and a Swiss Transport firm. At the inauguration of the Swiss Pavilion, organised by the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade, Mr J. Huber, the Swiss Consul General in Sydney, read a number of messages including one from the new Federal Councillor, Mr Hans Schaffner, head of the Political Department of the Public Economy.

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