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News from Switzerland

GSTAAD PREPARING FOR 21st CENTURY

One of the most elegant indoor swimming pools and also one of the most interesting ones from the technical point of view in any Swiss mountain hotel was recently inaugurated at the world famous Palace Hotel in Gstaad, the rendezvous of international celebrities. At the same time with the swimming-hall with its futuristic forms, artificial sunlight and bubbling fountains there was also opened adjacent to it a nightclub called the GreenGo, equally surprising due to its original architecture and to its name. Plans are also afoot for the construction in the near future of the "Residence Palace" which is to be a pyramid-shaped building leaning against a mountain slope. It is to offer luxurious apartments on an annual rental basis with all the amenities of hotel life.

A SWISS GADGET: THE "MINI-PEDALO"

Although aquatic sports are all the rage, not everyone can afford his own yacht or sailing boat. Thanks however to the "mini-pedalo" produced by a Swiss metal goods factory at Morrens (canton de Vaud), "boating" on the sea or lake has been brought within the reach of all. This firm has invented a mechanical device for converting any inflatable mattress into a boat driven by a propeller and capable of being steered. For this, it is sufficient to fasten a tubular framework over the mattress, and to pedal. The tubes being coated with a highly resistant plastic varnish, the boat can very well be used on the sea. Apart from its very low weight — only 7½ lb — the framework has other advantages; once dismantled it fits easily into the boot of a car, for example, since it takes up no more room than a folding camping chair. The "mini-pedalo" was presented at the last Inventors Salon in Brussels where it won a silver-gilt medal. (osec)

SWISS RAW MATERIALS FOR SWISS WATCHES

With the production of "Grilamid" synthetic fibres by the Ems Works Co. Ltd., Zurich, we see for the first time in the history of Swiss watchmaking the use of a raw material produced entirely in the country. Thanks to its high resistance and great dimensional stability, this thermo-plastic material can replace stainless steel in the manufacture of watch cases. The switchover from metal to plastic shows the determination of the Swiss watch industry to use the very latest techniques for strengthening its position with regard to foreign competition. (osec)

SUCCESS OF SWISS COMMERCIAL ARTISTS

The famous Royal Agricultural Fair in Toronto holds an international poster contest each year, in which some thirty countries take part. Swiss posters satisfying the exacting standards laid down by the organisers are regularly displayed at this contest by the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade, with the assistance of the Swiss Consulate General in Toronto. This autumn, the first prize in each of the five categories was awarded to Swiss posters, one of which even won the contest's Grand Prix. The prize-winning posters were those for the Tramelan Horse Show, Provins Fendant Wines, Cardinal Beer, and a campaign for the protection of wild-life organised by the "National Zeitung". This brilliant success shows the interest aroused in Canada by the work of Swiss commercial artists, and represents an unprecedented record.

TELECOM 71

For 10 days, Geneva will be the capital of the world's telecommunications, with the World Conference on Space Telecommunications organised by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) starting there on June 7th. Throughout the conference, the biggest ever held, the halls of the Geneva Exhibitions Palace will house the first World Telecommunications Exhibition, TELECOM 71. This exhibition, covering an area of some 330,000 sq. ft. and extending to all sectors of telecommunications, i.e. broadcasting, TV, electronics, data transmission, audio-visual media and related spheres, will offer a unique opportunity of seeing in the same place all the latest achievements in these fields. Let us mention that among the 150 exhibitors already announced, including many government and intergovernmental organisations as well as leading firms in the telecommunications industry, there are 25 Swiss firms. (osec)

THE WORLD AT THE OTHER END OF THE LINE

In order to cope with the continually expanding transoceanic telephone traffic, the Swiss Telephone and Telecommunications Service is constantly having to increase the number of its lines. Recently nine new circuits were put into operation with the U.S.A., Canada and Israel. In addition, four others were inaugurated between Zurich and Beirut. Switzerland's overseas telecommunications thus comprise 103 circuits via satellite and cable, keeping Switzerland in touch with the United States, Japan, Israel, Canada, Beirut, Rio de Janeiro, Teheran and Buenos Aires; in addition, 21 short-wave radio-electric circuits make it possible to establish direct calls with 14 countries and islands. (osec)