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COMMERCIAL NEWS

An important international Congress will be held in Lausanne in 1959.

It is in Lausanne that the Fourth International Congress of the International Association for the Distribution of Foodstuffs, will be held, in June, 1959. This show will be enriched by various specialised exhibitions. It will take place in the vast premises of the Comptoir Suisse and it is estimated that it will attract about 3,000 persons to the banks of Lake Leman. The Association in question proposes to improve productivity, methods of distribution and the quality of foodstuffs.

A "drive-in" bank building in Basle.

In the business quarter of Basle (a city which ranks second in importance in Switzerland) a big bank intends to build a new edifice, made of concrete and of glass, in a very modern style. This building will contain a subterranean garage, where clients can park their cars. Moreover, special pay-desks will be reserved for customers who are in a hurry, so arranged that they will be able to conduct their business without leaving their cars, as is already being done currently in the United States. The construction job will be carried out in two stages, of two and a half years each.

Geneva will build a Palace for Congresses.

The town of Geneva has the intention of building a Palace for Congresses. Its choice for the site has fallen on a magnificent private estate which is in the vicinity of the U.N.O., of the World Health Organisation and of the seat of the International Committee of the Red Cross. The property in question belongs to the Martin-Du Pan family, and it will be bought for nearly three million Swiss francs.

The University City of Geneva will be built.

In 1959, Geneva will celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the foundation of its University. It is hoped that on this occasion it will be endowed with a modern "University City", the plans for which have already been approved by the competent bodies. This "City" is to consist mainly of two large modern blocks of buildings (one of them being thirteen stories high) calculated to be able to house two hundred male students, whilst the other will provide housing for two hundred girl students and some thirty married couples. Both these groups of buildings will be provided with all possible conveniences, such as assembly halls, play-rooms,

canteens and even a nursery. It is also intended, later on, to arrange suitable grounds for various kinds of sport.

Diplomatic personality as head of Swiss horological association.

Mr. Gérard Bauer, Minister and Permanent Delegate for Switzerland at the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, has just been appointed President of the Federation of Swiss Associations of Watch Manufacturers. The great competence and independence possessed by the new President will, no doubt, make it possible for him to solve the difficult problems entailed by the organisation of Swiss horological production.

A new improvement of the wrist watch.

The watch-bracelet is such a simple and rational instrument that it would seem difficult to bring any further important perfectioning to its outward appearance. Nevertheless, a Swiss firm now announces an interesting novelty, namely an automatic watch, without any winder. This, as you know, is the little rowel-like device used for winding up the watch and for setting the hands at the right time. An automatic watch does not need to be wound up, but one must be able to do this when not wearing it, and also in order to set the hands. In this new model, however, these two operations are per-

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formed by the action of the rim of the watch-case, that is to say by the little metal circle surrounding the glass. This ingenious device offers both technical and aesthetic advantages, in that it does away with an obstacle to the absolute water-tightness of the watch-case, as also with the asymmetric asperity which is sometimes inconvenient in the case of jewelled watches and can be the cause of a breakage of the stem of the winding apparatus.

Switzerland-France trade agreement prolonged.

The Trade Agreement between Switzerland and France, of the 29th October, 1955, which is valid until 30th June, 1957, has just been prolonged for a further period of one year by means of an exchange of letters dated the 29th May, 1957, between the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Swiss Embassy in Paris. The Agreement will, therefore, remain in force until the 30th June, 1958.

News in Switzerland's air traffic.

Switzerland's national airline "Swissair" has just put into service two new aircraft. They are the last of the eleven Convair "Metropolitan" and the third of the four Douglas DC 7C "Seven Seas", purchased by the Swiss company. In addition, a new service run by a British company has just started between Southampton and Montreux on the Lake of Geneva. The flights are by 36-passenger flying-boat.

A new railway central station has to be built in Berne.

For a long time past it has been intended to replace the old main railway station in Berne by a modern building. Demolition and reconstruction work started on the date fixed for this purpose, at the end of May. This work will go on for ten years, its cost being estimated at 150 million Swiss francs.

News from the Swiss electric economy.

The firm of Motor Columbus, at Baden, which finances electrical undertakings, now proposes to increase its capital from sixty to seventy million Swiss francs.

The Swiss scientific research at the Brussels World Exhibition 1958.

Swiss scientists have been invited to interest themselves in the International Palace of Scientific Research, which is to be erected at the Universal and International Exhibition, to be held in Brussels, in

1958. Switzerland will thus be represented in this particular section, in addition to the official Swiss pavilion. The Swiss National Fund for Scientific Research will co-ordinate the work of the scientists. Four Swiss scientists are already at work on the Swiss exhibits in the sections "atom", "molecule", "crystal" and "living cell"; the projects will be carried out in close co-operation with Swiss industry.

A Swiss firm builds a giant elevator for the Brussels World Exhibition 1958.

One of the principal attractions of this Universal Exhibition in Brussels, in 1958, will be the "Atomium", an immense construction made of steel tubes and globes, symbolising the structure of an atom. It is a Swiss firm of Schlieren-Zurich which is to furnish the lift which will take the public to the top of the "Atomium". This lift will be able to carry 3,550 pounds or twenty passengers to a height of 100 yards in 28 seconds. The control panel is a "Variotron", an invention of the firm concerned. The mechanism of the lift is in itself an interesting exhibit.

Swiss movies production adopts Cinemascope.

A Swiss producer of documentary films, of Berne, who is fully conscious of the future reserved for the cinematographic projection of films on to a large screen, has just provided himself with the necessary equipment for taking photographs in accordance with the Cinemascope process. He has already started upon the preparation of a film in accordance with this system, with a view to showing it at the Universal Exhibition in Brussels.

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