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COMMERCIAL NEWS

A sensational improvement in Swiss watchmaking.

A sensational improvement has been brought to watch-bracelets which are wound up automatically, an improvement which in the watchmaking industry is looked upon as being the greatest invention in this branch to occur during the last sixty years. It is in respect of the device for automatic winding called "Gyrotron", invented by the technical director of one of the three oldest watch factories in Switzerland.

This tiny device possesses the merit of reducing the friction among the mechanical parts to a minimum, so that the watch is wound up even by the almost imperceptible movements of the wrist. Moreover, the decrease in friction means that there will be less attrition of the watch-parts. This result is obtained through the use of a new type of clutch possessing a double alternation, which transforms the reciprocating motion of the oscillating mass into a one-way rotation. The clutch in question is made with rubies, the polished surface of which is practically immune to wear, and does not require any oiling. The "gyromatic" watch thus contains thirty-nine rubies, the function of which is purely mechanical and not ornamental.

A new creation of the Swiss watchmakers.

The alarm watch-bracelet is a valuable modern invention. Very discreetly it gives its wearer the assurance that he will not forget any of the thousands of appointments with which a busy man's life is filled nowadays. The watch with automatic winding has also conquered the market because of still other advantages: the certitude that it will never stop because one has forgotten to wind it up, the improvement in timing, etc. It was therefore very tempting to seek for a combination of these two innovations, but the problem was not an easy one to solve if the watch was to be kept within the usual dimensions. A well-known watchmaking factory in Geneva has just succeeded in solving these difficulties and has put on the market the first watch-bracelet in the world which combines automatic winding with an alarm device in a watch-movement possessing the greatest precision. Whoever wears such a watch-bracelet need never fear to be late.

An exhibition of hygiene and sport to be held in Berne.

In order to replace the motor races which have now been prohibited in Berne it is intended to organise a big exhibition in this city in 1960. What is being planned is an exhibition of hygiene and sport, something like the one which under the name of "Hyspa" proved so successful in 1931. The budget for this exhibition is estimated at approximately nine million Swiss francs, and the municipality of the town of Berne has proposed to the Legislative Council the granting of a credit of 400,000 francs and of a guarantee capital of one-and-a-half million Swiss francs. It is intended that a medical personality from the Berne University shall take over the scientific organisation of this undertaking.

An articulated trolleybus in Zurich.

The first articulated trolleybus of Swiss manufacture is now being tested in Zurich. With its length of sixteen metres the new articulated trolleybus, even if it is longer than the two-axled trolleybus now in service, is, nevertheless, five metres shorter than an ordinary autobus with a trailer. The radius within which it can turn, however, is no greater than that required by ordinary two-axled vehicles. It is capable of carrying 123 passengers; the service will be operated by two men. This bus has been produced by a firm of Schlieren-Zurich, which specialises in the manufacture of railway carriages and lifts.

A Swiss loan to Austria.

Negotiations have just come to an end, in Berne, between delegates of the Austrian and Swiss governments, which resulted in an agreement by which Switzerland will lend Austria, for a period of 15 years, the sum of fifty-five million Swiss francs for improvements on the Austrian Arlberg Railway, which leads into Switzerland.

First trade agreement between Switzerland and the Benelux countries.

A first trade Agreement between Switzerland and the Benelux countries — i.e. Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg — was recently signed in Berne. This first agreement in common concluded by Switzer-

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land with the Benelux countries constitutes an important step forward towards the total liberalisation of industrial products.

Creation in Switzerland of an advisory council for hydrology.

In Switzerland, the waterways and the lakes are being more and more exploited for hydro-electric power, for navigational purposes, for agriculture, industry, etc. As a result of the upward trend taken by economy and by civilisation, the volume of available water is diminishing. The organisations concerned are obliged to solve a great many problems of considerable importance. They have, therefore, come to the conclusion that it is necessary to create a permanent body, membership of which is voluntary, within which all the questions pertaining to hydrology will be examined in common. This is the origin of the new "Swiss Consultative Conference for Hydrological questions", the Secretariat of which will be attached to the Federal Water Service in Berne.

Insurance against the risks due to atomic radiations in Switzerland.

Licensed Swiss insurance companies recently founded a "pool", for the protection of risks proceeding from the peaceful utilisation of nuclear power. This group intends to begin by covering risks encountered in Switzerland, and, later on, will also

extend its activities to other countries, by means of re-insurance. The first branch of this new insurance is that of civil responsibility. The pool's headquarters are on the premises of the Swiss Re-Insurance Company in Zurich.

The work of the Swiss horological research laboratory during 1956.

The Swiss Laboratory for Watchmaking Research carried out 756 special studies during the course of last year, in addition to general research work extending over longer periods. Research is now being done on ways to improve the quality of certain materials used in the manufacture of watches, the perfecting of methods for the checking of the quality of manufactured articles, of inventions in the domain of molecular time-keeping and of electronic devices for miniature time-pieces.

A Swiss surgical film wins an award.

A sound film, in colour, produced in Switzerland, has just obtained a silver medal at the 3rd International Festival of the Medico-scientific film. This film deals with the new method of grafting an artificial kidney, which has been perfected by a Swedish scientist. The film was shot at the poly-clinic of the University of Berne, with the collaboration of Swiss doctors and of a big Swiss factory for pharmaceutical products, by a Zurich film company.

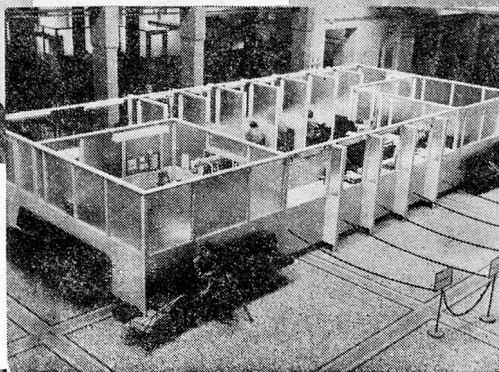
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