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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Very high voltage transformers in Switzerland.

A machine-manufacturing plant in Oerlikon, near Zurich, has just built for the Power Station of the Rhine, in Switzerland, two three-phase transformer units, each possessing a capacity of 400,000 kilo-volt-amperes. These pieces of apparatus are among the largest of their kind to be installed in the country. They will be used for transmitting to the Swiss distribution network the power produced by the two new plants and, later on, will be able to ensure a liaison with the European super-network of 380,000 volts.

Switzerland builds the biggest turbo-generator in Europe.

A turbo-generator intended for a Dutch electrical power station is being built at Baden, near Zurich. This machine, which will be the largest of its kind in Europe, is composed of a steam turbine having three main parts and a generator of 260,000 kva. In view of the fact that it possesses considerable power, this machine may be considered to be the prototype of future generators possessing still greater power, attaining as much as 500,000 kilo-volt-amperes. In order to achieve such results it is necessary to provide special appliances, more particularly for cooling purposes, for which use is made not only of oil, but also of hydrogen and of nitrogen.

The tallest brick building in the world just completed in Switzerland.

A firm in Zurich has recently built the highest brick structure in the world. This eighteen-storey-high building is 53 metres in height and was put up in fifty weeks, 850,000 high-resistance bricks being used. These bricks, which are a new Swiss speciality manufactured by a brickyard in Schaffhouse, are made of special clay, which when hardened in a brick-kiln possessing a very high temperature, obtains a very high resistance. The construction in question was only undertaken after thorough technical and financial studies had taken place, the results of which showed that high-resistance bricks make it possible to build in a more rapid and cheaper fashion than when using concrete. Concrete, however, has been used for the foundations.

Switzerland makes her own tele-guided missiles.

A Zurich firm has just presented to the Swiss Press news of two new tele-guided instruments of an original conception, devised and built in Switzerland. One is an anti-aircraft weapon and the other an anti-tank weapon. The first is an anti-aircraft rocket of medium range, its field of action attaining 30 kilometres and its ceiling 20 kilometres. It is guided automatically by a directing pencil emitted by radar. The other apparatus is an anti-tank rocket controlled by wire and having a range of from 1,600 to 2,000 metres. This weapon, which bears the name of "Cobra", possesses the advantages of being extremely light and of being very easy to handle. It can therefore be used from vehicles, as also directly by the infantry.

Swiss machinery abroad.

A well-known firm in Zurich is exhibiting in Brussels the rotor of a steam turbine, which is made out of austenitic steel and can function at temperatures up to 600°C. A similar rotor has already ensured a regular service of more than 30,000 hours for the production of electric power in an industrial plant at Reutlingen, Germany. Furthermore, the same firm is to deliver an electrogenic unit with a steam turbine to the power station at Baudoir, in Belgium, while another Swiss firm, in Winterthur, has already furnished for the said power station a steam generator of the mono-tubular type. This boiler is 44.5 metres in height.

Swiss industry in the service of mankind.

The Belgian Government has given an order to a Swiss firm for three betatrons of a new kind, which are intended for the principal anti-cancerous centres in Belgium. These appliances, the radiations of which develop a power of 31 million electron-volts, are the most modern and the most powerful to be used at present in the fight against cancer. One of them is to be put into service very shortly at the Cantonal Hospital in Lausanne.

Swiss watchmaking novelty.

One of the most recent novelties to be found in the Swiss watchmaking industry is a wristlet-watch which has an indirect electric lighting system. This solves the problem of seeing what time it is, in the dark, much better even than the radium figures on the dial. By simply pressing on the push one obtains a uniform lighting-up of the dial by means of a tiny bulb, cleverly dissimulated in order to avoid any dazzle, which is connected with a miniature, water-tight accumulator. The latter can be recharged by means of a very simple gadget, which is sold together with the watch, after which it is ready for use again for a period of from six months to one year, according to how much use is made of it.

An old Swiss industry that is still going strong: the musical box.

In an era of juke-boxes, the continued popularity of musical-boxes is somewhat surprising. They are greatly in favour in a number of countries, especially the United States. Swiss exports of musical-boxes exceed, in value, twenty million francs per annum, and their manufacturers are always striving to put some interesting novelties on to the market. Thus, in St. Croix, in the Jura vaudois, which has remained the centre of this industry, one firm has just completed a miniature movement with tiny wheels, such as are to be found in watches, which is so minute that it can be fixed on to a very small object, such as a cigarette-lighter or a key-ring. It has even proved possible to equip pieces of jewellery with these tiny musical-boxes, especially rings.

Neither too hot nor too cold.

To take one's bath or one's shower at exactly the temperature that one wishes, is now very easy. A firm in Geneva has perfected an entirely automatic mixer, the essential element of which is a tube made of folded metal, filled with a liquid possessing a high coefficient of dilatation. All one has to do is to regulate this apparatus by means of a button graduated from 10 to 85 degrees Centigrade, and to turn on the tap, when the water flows at the required temperature.