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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Swiss watchmaking masterpiece in America.

During a trip to Switzerland, an American banker one day saw a very decorative universal clock, and he immediately decided to have a similar one placed in the hall of the new bank which he was having built, at East Orange, in New Jersey. That is how it came to pass that Messrs. Gubelin Sons, of Lucerne, received an order for a replica of their universal clock. This is a clock which not only shows the local time, but also the time it is, at that very moment, in any part of the world. The apparatus ordered consists of a universal clock, a perpetual calendar, which takes into account Leap Years, and an indicator of the phases of the moon, the whole being driven by a central electric time-piece. It possesses a mechanical complexity which it is impossible to describe; one of its cog-wheels takes four years to accomplish one revolution. It took eighteen months to make this clock, and the two dials, the enamelling on which has been designed and executed by famous artists, are in themselves works of art. Only three clocks of this type are to be found in the whole world.

Head architect of Swiss National Exhibition chosen.

The Organising Committee of the Swiss National Exhibition has just appointed the head architect. He is Mr. Alberto Camenzind, architect in Lugano, and President of the Federation of Swiss Architects. This National Exhibition is to be held in Lausanne in 1964.

Simplon Orient Express forty years old.

It was in 1919, a year after the Armistice of the First World War, that the Simplon Orient Express was first created. That famous train, which passes diagonally through Switzerland, from Vallorbe to Brigue, connects London and Paris with Milan, Trieste, Belgrade, Bucharest, Istanbul and Athens, passing through the Simplon tunnel, which, with its twenty kilometres, still remains the longest tunnel in Europe.

Centenary in the Swiss watchmaking industry.

The watchmaking factory of Ernest Borel & Cie, at Neuchâtel, recently celebrated the hundredth anniversary of its foundation, in a particularly brilliant manner. This firm recently caused a stir by launching a luminous watch equipped with an electric accumulator.

Renovation of a famous Swiss lift.

Innumerable tourists, coming from all parts of the world, know the lift at Bürgenstock, near Lucerne, of which the immense steel structure, crowned with a bell-turret, rises above the lake, along the rocky wall of the mountain. This lift, which was built in

1905, is 540 feet high and is the highest lift in Europe to be built in the open air and in one piece. During the 55 years of its existence it has carried about a million persons. Its speed, which was originally 3.3 feet per second, was increased in 1936 to 8.8 feet per second. A recent renovation of the lift, which was carried out by the firm of Messrs. Schindler, of Lucerne, has now provided it with a cage which can carry 1,980 pounds, *i.e.*, twelve persons, at a speed of 13 feet per second. This new means of transport is provided, needless to say, with all the necessary safety devices.

New premises for the Lausanne medical school.

The inauguration has recently taken place in Lausanne — where the University is attended by a large number of foreign students — of a new group of buildings, attached to the Faculty of Medicine, which are to house university Institutes for anatomy, histology and embryology. These buildings have cost more than 7 million Swiss francs. At the same time, thanks to clever measures taken by the architect, their price, per cubic metre, is lower than that relating to similar establishments in other towns, and this without the necessity of having recourse to economies detrimental to their quality, the space occupied, or their aesthetic appearance.

Race between radio and television in Switzerland.

The number of radio listeners in Switzerland, which up to the present has been steadily on the increase, has now, for the first time, shown a decline during the first three months of 1959. As a matter of fact, it is quite considerable, amounting, as it does, to the loss of 1,325 listening licences. During the same period, Swiss television has gained 11,763 viewers, thus bringing the total of TV licences granted to 62,067. Nevertheless, the number of licensed radio listeners in Switzerland, at the end of April 1959, amounted to approximately 1,348,000.

Switzerland and amateur cinematography.

A quarter of a century has elapsed since the famous Paillard-Bolex E.16 camera for substandard films of 16 mm. was first put on the market. Although its shape may have remained the same, its mechanism has been constantly improved. The latest model adds to all its previous refinements, that of a variable shutter, which opens and closes automatically, thus making it possible to modify the length of time required for posing, and to achieve blendings similar to those obtained with professional cameras. The same Swiss manufacturer now produces, also, cinematographic cameras of 8 mm. equipped with three lenses fitted



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into a turret and with an exposure meter incorporated behind the objective. This model, which enables one to take pictures at seven different speeds, also possesses an automatic changeable obturator. The range of Bolex cameras is completed by a third novelty, namely an 8mm. pocket camera which, in spite of its simplified construction, offers numerous advantages and, like all the other products of this firm, a mechanical performance of the highest precision.

Brown Boveri build a new factory.

The firm Brown, Boveri & Company Ltd., which was founded in Baden sixty years ago, employed twenty-five executives and a hundred manual workers when it first started. At the end of 1958, however, its personnel consisted of 3,300 executives and nearly 10,000 manual workers. Feeling that it required more space than was available on its property at Baden, the firm gradually acquired more ground in the same region, at Birr, near the town of Brougg. The firm now possesses grounds there extending over 420,000 square metres, *i.e.*, space which represents about two-and-a-half times the superficial area occupied by the plant at Baden. Brown Boveri have built a new plant there for the manufacture of heavy and medium electric machines. These buildings, which were recently shown to the Press, consist of three large workshops, measuring 270 metres in length, and 36, 24 and 10 metres in width, respectively. A furnace-room, provided with a tower, 46 metres high, supplies the heating. The big workshop, measuring 270 by 36 metres, will be used for the manufacture of very large machines, so that its useful ceiling has been fixed at 24 metres. The foundations of the necessary powerful machine-tools have been made the subject of particular care, as has also the lifting apparatus. By coupling two movable bridges, of 150 tons each, it is possible to lift loads weighing as much as 300 tons. The machine-tools which are to be installed in this workshop are really gigantic: a revolving lathe with a working diameter of 14 metres and weighing 730 tons, which can machine-finish articles weighing as much as 200 tons; a double drill-press, with a drilling capacity of 21 metres in length, etc. It is anticipated that this new plant will be put into service in April 1960. As a result, the biggest Swiss works for the manufacture of electrical material and machines for the production of electric power, will then be in a position to tackle successfully the problems relating to development, which are to-day facing all large business concerns. (1 metre = 1.09 yard).

Swiss industry during the First Quarter of 1959.

An official enquiry on the situation of Swiss industry during the first quarter of 1959 shows that, in spite of a slight decline in the number of workers employed, the state of employment and prospects of business for the near future would appear to be more favourable than they were during the preceding quarter. In the building trade, employment shows a revival which is more marked than the usual seasonal activities.

Switzerland and Eurovision.

The Eurovision network connects the national televisions in Europe. When it is operating fully, it extends over more than 15,000 kilometres. Its highest connecting point is to be found in Switzerland, on the

Jungfrauoch, at an altitude of 11,500 feet, where it forms an important junction between the North and the South.

Horological Museum in Switzerland.

A new Horological and Historical Museum has just been inaugurated at Le Locle, a Swiss watch-making city in the heart of the Jura. This new institute is complete and attractive. In it can be seen, arranged with infinite taste, a large number of rare clocks and watches, as well as mechanical figures.

The development of telephony in Switzerland.

It is expected that very soon Switzerland will be able to register her millionth telephone subscriber. Two other important figures will be attained about the same time, namely: 1,500,000 telephone posts in service, and 800,000 telediffusion subscribers, *i.e.*, subscribers to the transmission of six radio programmes by telephone wires. These figures are really very impressive when one remembers that Switzerland's population at present numbers 5.2 million.

THANK YOU!

The editor wishes to thank the many subscribers who have so kindly sent him messages of congratulation on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the paper, and his 70th birthday, which have been greatly appreciated.

He also expresses sincere thanks to the Swiss Ambassador and Madame Daeniker for the reception given to him at the Embassy, and to the Swiss Societies who very kindly presented him with personal gifts.

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