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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Construction of nuclear station in Switzerland.

The "Suisatom", which was founded in 1957 by the ATEL, FMB, NOK and EOS Electricity Companies, has just applied for a permit to build a nuclear station on the left bank of the river Aar, in close proximity to the Würen plants. This request marks the beginning of the phase for the carrying out of a project possessing a practical aim, which interests the four biggest companies producing electricity in this country and covering 80 per cent of Switzerland's requirements in energy.

The reactor which has been selected belongs to a type which has already been thoroughly tested abroad. The station will be installed in a cavern, hollowed out of the rock itself, thus guaranteeing a maximum amount of security against radiation. The work is to start in January 1960, and it is estimated that it will be finished during the first half of 1963.

International Exhibition of Contemporaneous Medals.

An International Exhibition of Contemporaneous Medals is now taking place at Deurne, in Belgium. Switzerland is taking part, officially in this show; the collection she is showing comprises the work of twenty-four artists and has been put at her disposal by the Federal Mint, at Berne, and by the firm of Messrs. Huguenin Bros. & Co. Ltd., of Le Locle.

25th anniversary of Tavano S.A. in Geneva.

The firm of Tavano S.A., one of the most important Genevese plants belonging to the metallurgical branch, has just celebrated its 25th anniversary. Having started in 1934, with a staff of 47, it now employs counting its sales organisation — about 1,300 people. In addition, it provides work for several hundred sub-contractors in Switzerland. The present Administrator-Delegate, Mr. P. Anliker, and the Chairman of the Board of Administration, Mr. A. Hopf, figured among the founders of the firm.

Tavano has done pioneer work in the branch of household apparatus, which has brought it a world-wide reputation. In 1940 it launched an electric sewing-machine, made of light metal, much appreciated by housewives; in 1952 it created the first automatic sewing-machine in the world, which revolutionized the market in this particular field. Tavano sewing-machines are now exported to 120 countries.

At the Swiss Horological Chamber.

During the course of the recent General Assembly of the delegates of the Swiss Horological Chamber, the President, presented as a token of gratitude for services rendered to the watchmaking industry and to the Chamber, diplomas to Mr. Sydney de Coulon, General Manager of "Ebauches S.A.", to Mr. Armand Schmid, Honorary President of the "UBAH", and to Mr. Albert Amez-Droz, former Director and now Honorary Director of the Chamber, who has worked for more than thirty-five years in the services of this institution and in that of the watchmaking industry as a whole.

Swiss cigar-making factory builds its own machines.

After ten years of experimenting, technicians on the staff of the Swiss cigar-making factory Villiger have built the first Swiss machine for rolling short cigars. The machine, which has been patented, functions in accordance with the principles of work done by hand. It introduces, however, a considerable improvement, in that it weighs automatically, and in a very exact way up to about a tenth of a gramme, the tobacco inside each cigar. As a result, there are no longer any cigars which are too tightly or too loosely rolled. An engine of one-half h.p. is sufficient to run the machine, which, in its work of rolling the cigars, exceeds the regularity of the machines which have been in use up to the present; the very exact work of this new machine makes it possible to employ less tobacco. In order to demonstrate its solidarity with other manufacturers in this particular industry, the firm of Villiger has decided to sell these machines, at favourable conditions, to independent firms belonging to the medium and small tobacco industry.

A cinema exhibition in Switzerland.

A big exhibition, devoted to the subject of films, opened at the beginning of September, in the Museum of Applied Arts, in Zurich. It is being organised by Swiss film producers, and is intended to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the foundation of their Association.

A new Swiss instant drink.

A new article is to appear very shortly on the Swiss market. This is a dry product which, on having cold or hot water poured on to it, becomes a refreshing, nutritive and stimulating beverage. This new preparation, which is called "Duo" and is composed mainly of a coffee extract and some lactic components, has been produced by the firm of Wander, which wanted to put on the market, in addition to its famous Ovaltine, renowned for over half-a-century, a new type of beverage.

Half a century of Swiss batteries.

Fifty years have already passed since the establishment, at Yverdon, of the firm of Leclanché Ltd., manufactures of dry batteries, the name of which has become famous throughout the world. Beginning very modestly, this concern has continued to develop steadily. Having started with the manufacture of dry batteries, the firm then proceeded to produce condensers, then lead accumulators, and, finally, alkaline accumulators. The last stages of the extension and modernisation of the premises, which were started after the end of the war, have just been brought to an end with the construction and putting into operation of a new building, which, with its range of 32 metres without any intermediary pillars, is the biggest in Switzerland to be built of concrete.

Swiss television sets.

There has been a good deal of talk recently about the Eidophone, a Swiss process launched by the CIBA, S.A. of Basle, for the projection on to a large screen, of televised pictures in colour. Hitherto, television receiver have not been built in Switzerland. Now, however, it has been learned from Ciba that the firm of Gretag, in Zurich is about to undertake the standardised manufacture of the Eidophone projectors. The system has been invented and perfected in Switzerland; it differs from other receivers in that the luminous source is independent of the cathode tube, and can thus be as strong as desired and enable the projection to take place on a screen measuring forty square metres, a result which has not been attained by any other system.

Swiss watch-making industry at Barcelona Fair.

Visitors to the Barcelona Fair were able, during the month of June, to admire an interesting retrospective exhibition of Swiss watchmaking. It is thirty years since Switzerland participated for the first time in the big Spanish trade exhibition, when she also showed a display of watches in her pavilion. In order to commemorate this anniversary, the organisers of the Swiss 1959 display dug up the material which had served for the watchmaking exhibition three decades ago, and used it for the purpose of showing the public a selection of watches of that time, and obtained most successful results in so doing.

Publicity "Oscar" for a Swiss Firm

A Swiss firm has just been awarded the international "Oscar" for publicity for 1959. This is awarded every two years by the International Publicity Congress to that European firm which has furnished the best publicity work, on the international level. The prize, which consists of a golden tulip one foot high, was given this year to the Swiss firm of Nestlé.

A new Swissair record.

The aircraft, "City of Basle", belonging to the Swiss airline company "Swissair", has recently beaten the record for the Geneva — New York route, with a non-stop flight of 6,350

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kilometres carried out in 12 hours 21 minutes. The best previous time achieved in a flight between these two cities, also by Swissair plane, was 12 hours 55 minutes.

Austria at the Lausanne Fair.

The 40th "Comptoir Suisse" (or Lausanne Fair) which will take place this autumn, will have Austria for its guest of honour. The Austrian participation will be organised by the Austrian Institute for Economic Expansion, under the auspices of the Austrian Ambassador to Switzerland.

Swiss locomotives for Rumania.

The Rumanian State Railways have given an order in Switzerland for six Diesel-electric locomotives, of 2,100 h.p., for hauling freight trains. These machines, which are being built by a consortium of Swiss Plants, comprise a Diesel engine of 12 cylinders, six electric motors, i.e., one per axle, and various systems of brakes; moreover, they are equipped with numerous automatic control and safety devices. Rumania has also ordered in Switzerland a similar Diesel-electric equipment for ten locomotives.

Swiss automatic vending machines of Swiss design.

The "Zirobot", which has been shown for the first time in the world at the AIDA Exhibition in Lausanne, is a real automatic "salesman". Contrary to what happens in the case of the usual automatic vending machines, into which it is necessary to introduce money, in the shape of coins belonging to a special category, the Zirobot accepts all kinds of coins. It verifies them, adds them up and gives back the change. This machine has been invented by a Swiss engineer, Mr. Zindel, and it was built in Zurich. Capable of presenting the customer with a hundred, or even more, different articles, at prices ranging from 5 times 5 centimes to six francs (in other coins also) the Zirobot functions very simply, as all that one has to do is to indicate the number of the article chosen, by means of a dial (like those used on telephones) and to introduce the amount of money required. The buyer is told what he has to do, automatically, by means of luminous plates. This automatic machine is very honest, as it not only gives the right change and throws back false coins but it also returns all the money put in, should the sale not take place for some reason or other. As for its advantages to trades people, these are just as great, as the Zirobot can sell goods for twenty-four hours at a stretch, with the minimum of supervision. The work of supplying the machine with goods and the fixing of the prices and of the control are all very simple and ensure a great flexibility in the services rendered.

New ships for the Swiss Mercantile Navy.

The Swiss Mercantile Navy has become the richer by three new ships, which, of course, have been built in foreign shipbuilding yards. They are motor-vessels, the "Lavaux", possessing a loading capacity of 10,800 tons, and the "Célérina" with 12,953 tons — both of which are propelled by Swiss Sulzer-Diesel engines, and chartered by Suisse-Atlantique S.A., of Lausanne — and the "Ariana", which is chartered by Suisse-Outremer S.A., of Geneva, and has a capacity of 13,000 tons.

Swiss Office for the Development of Trade.

The Swiss Office for the Development of Trade, which has two seats, one in Zurich and the other in Lausanne, held its General Assembly on 7th July in Lausanne, in the presence of a great many important personalities, of delegates from the authorities and from the economic organisations of the country, of industrial and business men and of a number of Swiss diplomatic and consular representatives from abroad. Those taking part in the Assembly had the privilege of hearing a talk on The Japan of Today, by Max Troendle, the Swiss ambassador.

Switzerland, too, has its "air cushion" boat.

A new type of vehicle, the "air cushion" boat, was launched recently, on the Lake of Zurich, by a Swiss engineer, Mr. Carl Wieland. This prototype, measuring 26 by 33 feet, is provided with ventilators which draw in the air and then expel it, in a manner which forms a cushion of compressed air under the machine, raising it by about .65 foot above the surface of the water. In view of the fact that this does away with all friction of the hull on the water, this new type of boat can attain a very high speed. The boat was built as a model for a larger vessel intended for sailing on the ocean. We shall probably be hearing more about this new invention shortly.

Swiss Institute of Transport and Communication.

The Swiss Institute of Transport and Communication is not merely a museum which contains everything relating to transport

on the international plane. This Institution, which was inaugurated recently, is also a centre for the study of all questions connected with transport and communication. It is hoped that it will contribute in an active manner to the study of such matters, and provide solutions to both present and future problems. Admirably situated as it is, in Lucerne, close to the Lake, surrounded by luxurious vegetation, the Swiss Institute for Transport will be able to serve as a venue for international technical meetings and conferences.

New motor-buses in Zurich.

The public transport authorities in Zurich have adopted a new type of motor-bus, possessing a big capacity, in the form of an articulated vehicle, 41 feet in length, which has been built by two Swiss firms. As its transport capacity is greater, whilst the operating staff remains the same, this type of vehicle will prove more profitable. The driver's cab is built on a higher level, which makes driving easier in the busy streets of a large city, and thus makes for safety. These motor-buses will be able to accommodate 118 persons against 90.

Swiss Institute of Household Research.

The Swiss Institute for Household Research was established in Zurich in 1948. This is a centre, for information, testing, experimenting and control in the field of domestic science, which is available to housewives. This organisation, which has a staff of fifteen men and women, has moved in to its new quarters, which are admirably adapted to the aims which it pursues. The I.H.R. has for its mission the testing of everything which is used in a home, and then determining the advantages or the disadvantages of the articles thus examined. It also accepts the task of testing and examining articles, at the request and for the account of their manufacturers. Innumerable household articles, of every size and kind, pass through the hands of the men and the women engaged in the work of controlling them. If the result of the test is a satisfactory one, then the manufacturer receives a label attesting the value of the product, which can be attached to it.

Technical aid to the development countries.

Four Swiss citizens have been entrusted with important missions within the framework of the programme of technical aid set up by the United Nations and its special Agencies.

Professor H. Bachmann, of St. Gall, has been charged by U.N.O. with the mission of a Counsellor for all questions relating to foreign trade, attached to the Philippine Government; Mr. A. Molinetto, a teacher in Geneva, has been asked by the International Labour Office to undertake a new series of courses on mechanics, in Brazil, for one year, after having given similar courses in 1956; Mr. H. Grandjean, also of Geneva, has been charged by UNESCO with the task of making a special survey in the domain of education, in Somalia; finally, Mr. Albert Bodmer, an engineer in Berne, has been entrusted by U.N.O. with the mission of a Counsellor for Urban Planning, in Turkey.

More industrial firms, less accidents.

According to its Annual Report for 1958, the Swiss National Fund for Accidents Insurance registered an increase in its membership of 101 firms, so that at the end of last year there were no fewer than 64,342 firms affiliated to it. The sum total of insured wages went up slightly and amounted to 9.4 thousand million francs. For the first time since 1953 the number of accidents showed a decline, as there were only 374,388, i.e., 5,388 fewer than in the previous year.

Centenary of the Basle Commercial Society Ltd.

Founded a hundred years ago, to assure the substance of the members of the Basle Mission, the "Société commerciale de Bâle S.A." (Basle Commercial Society Ltd.) now reflects the success which can be engendered by the energy and courage of intelligent men. The initial aim of this company is not its only original characteristic; to this must be added the launching from a city situated in the very heart of Europe, and without any direct access to the sea, of a company which is now of world importance. In spite of all the difficulties born of the repercussions felt in Africa and India from the European and World Wars, the company managed to develop in a most satisfactory manner, in an increasingly large number of domains ranging from cocoa to motor-cars. (In 1904 it brought the first motor-car to the Gold Coast) it now has branches in Paris, London, New York and Havana.

One of the marvels of a great wedding.

On the occasion of the recent marriage of Prince Albert of Belgium to Princess Paola Ruffo di Calabria, the bridegroom received from the Swiss Government, in the shape of the thinnest watch in the world, manufactured by Messrs. Vacheron and Constantin, in Geneva. The watch is 1.64 millimetres thick.