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COMMERCIAL NEWS

He who hears that watch, hears two sounds.

In the field of alarm-watches, we have got a novelty which contradicts the saying that "He who only hears one bell, only hears one sound". The novelty in question is the "Dufon" alarm wrist watch, which possesses two different sounds, which can be set at will; the one with a loud, crystal clear sound to waken you or to remind you of something in noisy surroundings, and the other, more muted, to remind you of things at home, in the office, when travelling, when engaged in sport, when you have a "date", when you have to catch a train or take your medicine, when it is time to put a dish into the oven or when to take it out, etc. The alarm watch has proved its worth for a good many years now, and this new Swiss invention will bring it a lot more friends.

Switzerland at the head of progress in the field of pump construction.

It is in Switzerland that glandless chemical pumps have been developed for the central heating system. It may be said that all apparatuses of this kind which are manufactured throughout the world are based, in one way or another, on Swiss models or Swiss patents. The most recent creation in this field is a model which has just been manufactured by a firm in Brougg: this is a stainless, glandless pump for chemicals, which can pump acids and other fluid corrosive chemical products; it requires no supervision as it cannot incur any leakage losses, and no servicing as the bearings are lubricated by the pumped medium. These pumps are of great service for the pumping of evaporating liquids, such as ammonia, freon and also radio-active liquids.

A Swiss practical novelty for home planning.

A Swiss firm, which manufactures panels for wainscoting inside walls, obtained a silver medal this Spring, at the International Fair of Inventors, in Brussels. The novelty which it had exhibited was a metal fitting for the rapid fixing of wall panels, without any nails, screws or other apparent means of

fixing. According to this system, the panels covering the walls are held, along the entire length of their sides by a kind of metal cover-profile, which firmly grips a base profile, and presses the edge of the plate fittings. This very ingenious new device will doubtless not only render service to those in the building trade, but also to all those people who like to fix up their homes themselves.

Good potato crop in Switzerland, this year.

According to the estimates of competent circles, the potato crop in Switzerland this year will amount to 155,000 ten-ton trucks, which is a little less than last year. Nevertheless, this crop will amount to 73% of what is considered to be a big harvest. The superficial area in Switzerland devoted to the growing of potatoes amounts to approximately 55,000 hectares, i.e. 136,000 acres.

Medical practitioners in Switzerland.

At the present time, there are 4,755 medical practitioners in Switzerland, i.e. one doctor per 1,081 inhabitants. This proportion is practically the same as in France, where there is one doctor for 1,088 inhabitants. Out of the total number of doctors practising in Switzerland, 938, i.e. 12.3%, are women. 51.9% of these doctors are specialists. This proportion is considerably higher than in most other countries.

The activity of the River Port of Basle.

From January to June, 1959, the River Port of Basle registered traffic amounting to 2,565,000 tons, against 2,227,000 tons for the corresponding period of last year; for the month of June alone, the difference between the two years attained more than 102,000 tons.

Increase of the assembling of motor vehicles in Switzerland.

In 1958, the assembling of motor vehicles in Switzerland attained the new absolutely record figure of 11,872 motor cars, that is to say 3,629 more than in the preceding year.

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Assembly of the Swiss machine and metallurgical industries.

A General Assembly was held recently, at Lausanne, by the Swiss Society of Machine Manufacturers and the Swiss Association of Machine Manufacturers and Industrials belonging to the Metallurgical Branch, which group 550 firms, occupying some 200,000 persons. After twelve years of fruitful activity, Dr. Ernest Speiser, States Councillor, handed over the presidency of the Swiss Society of Machine Manufacturers to Mr. Bühler, Member of Parliament. Dr. Speiser received a very warm tribute.

A new Swiss vehicle proves its worth on mountain tracks.

For more than a year now, a two-wheel tractor with a power take-off shaft trailer has been in service in the Grisons Alps, for the purpose of transporting the material required for building a hut. This machine, built by one of the leading Swiss works manufacturing motor-mowers, has proved its worth under very difficult conditions. Up to the present, it has rendered possible, without any mechanical trouble, the conveyance of more than a hundred and fifty loads of an average weight of 1,325 pounds, along extremely bad roads, the declivity of which amounted sometimes to as much as 45%, and which, formerly, could only be used with the help of mules. This, in itself, proves the excellence of this machine and its adaptation to hilly ground. Several thousand Swiss farmers are now using it, not only for transport purposes, but also in conjunction with auxiliary attachments, such as motor mowers, haying machines, harvesters, ploughs, harrows, cable winches, etc.

Swiss economy and petroleum.

In his Annual Report, submitted to the ordinary Meeting of the LONZA Electrical and Chemical Works, the Chairman, Dr. Alfred Böckli, drew attention to the fact that this company is preparing to launch itself into the domain of chemical products derived from petroleum. As this development will require a considerable amount of capital, it is intended to raise the company's capital and to have recourse to a loan in 1960.

The consolidated debt of the Swiss confederation.

The consolidated debt of the Swiss Confederation amounts, at the present time, to 6,239 million Swiss francs. According to information received from the Swiss Government, it is formed as follows: public loans — 4970.7 million Swiss francs; debts on account — 437.3 million Swiss francs; subscriptions — 831.3 million Swiss francs. The total amount of this debt has declined by nearly 20% during the course of the 1955-1959 legislature.

Treasures of textile arts in Switzerland.

In Saint Gall, it is possible to see the most ancient Swiss embroideries, which have been preserved until now. Some of the embroideries in question date as far back as the beginning of the 14th century, that is to say more than six hundred years ago. They consist of ecclesiastical ornaments of rare beauty and inestimable value. These artistic treasures formed part of the famous Iklé collection, which belongs to the town of St. Gall. They are now being exhibited in a special show-room of the Museum of Industrial Arts in that city, where there could

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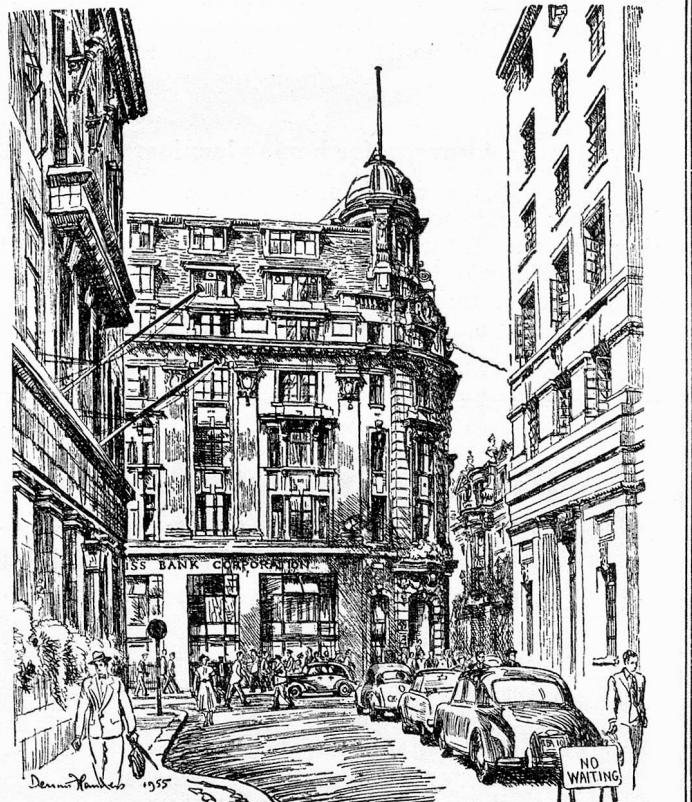
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Development of the telephone in Switzerland.

A million telephone subscribers and a million-and-a-half telephones installed, this is the remarkable figure attained by the Swiss Administration of Telephones this summer! These figures are all the more impressive when one compares them with that of the Swiss population, which at the present time numbers rather more than five million inhabitants. It was in 1880 that the first telephones were put into service, in Switzerland. In 1905 the number of subscribers amounted to 50,000, rising to half-a-million in 1948. Thus, it took 48 years to arrive at possessing 500,000 subscribers, but this figure was doubled in the short space of eleven years — and the progress continues.

With a proportion of one subscriber for every five inhabitants, Switzerland now ranks fourth in the world — coming after the United States, Canada and Sweden — for the density of her telephone network, and occupies the second place in Europe, after Sweden, in the international statistics of telephone calls.

For attractive leisure.

In our era, creative leisure is becoming more and more necessary. Among the various hobbies which appeal to the skill of those who enjoy making things themselves, the art of ceramics is one of the most attractive, although difficult to realise, from the technical aspect. A Swiss manufacturer has succeeded in overcoming this difficulty, thus making pottery work accessible to everyone, by placing on the market a whole series of products which can be handled easily, as, for instance, a special clay which can be decorated already prior to being baked, and various useful articles made out of this clay and ready to be decorated and baked. He has also produced the necessary colours. These are made either for application by means of a brush, or else in the shape of crayons, with which it is possible to draw in colours directly on the articles which have to be baked. Once baked, these articles look exactly like ordinary pottery. The facility with which these "Signa" chalks can be applied and the fact that they are already coloured prior to being baked, render their use very attractive and confer a very high pedagogical value to them, for use by children in their leisure time and for manual work in school. This new technique, which has been patented in all the civilised countries, is already becoming widespread not only in Switzerland, but also in other countries.

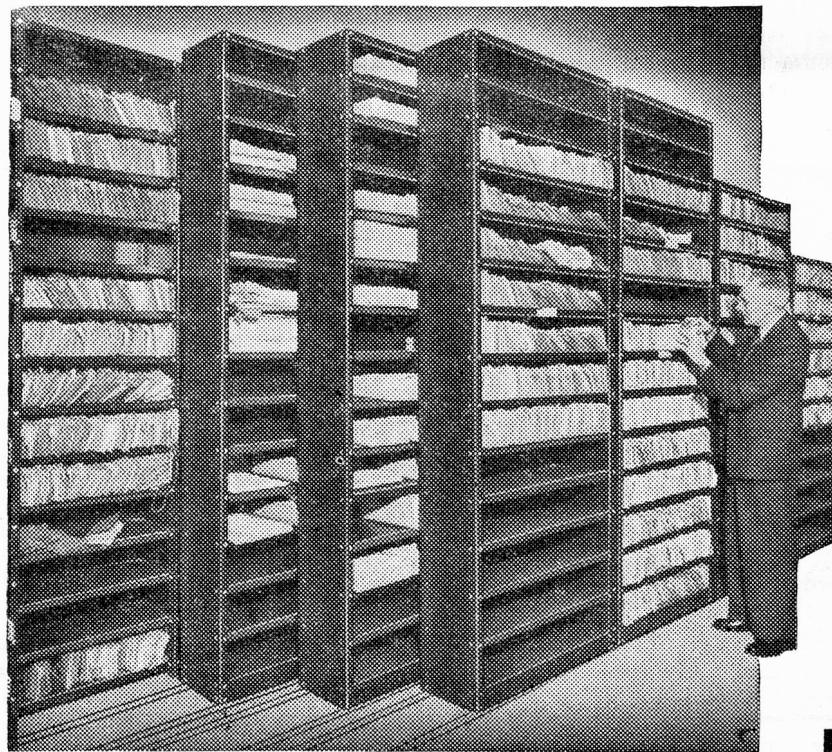


Illustration shows part of Rolstore installation at Northern Assurance Co's Record Office, at Moorgate, London

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A useful article made from waste matter.

One of the serious problems of modern times is the impoverishment of arable soil and its decline in quality. Another problem which faces the urbanization of today is the destruction of household garbage. An important manufacturer of machines, in Basle has linked up these two problems, in order to provide them with a common solution. This solution consists of a new type of plant for the destruction of garbage, which renders it usable to a far greater degree than could be achieved by the systems in use to the present. The transformation of refuse into humus for farming purposes has always presented great difficulties. Now, however, this Swiss manufacturer has made possible an extremely rational utilisation of all those portions of household garbage which are capable of being organically transformed, by making use of a maturation chamber which is kept constantly supplied and in which the refuse, inseminated by means of selected stocks of micro-organisms, is transformed within a few hours into high quality humus. The simultaneous use of a new type of crushing-mill provided with hammers and possessing great efficacy, makes it possible to utilise all kinds of detritus, including rubber, textiles, plastic substances, etc. That part of the crushed refuse which cannot be transformed into humus, is desiccated and then made into briquettes, which do not differ in any way from coal briquettes and can be used for heating purposes. The results obtained from a pilot plant would seem to justify very promising hopes.

A Swiss guarantee mark for woollen cloth.

As everyone knows, wool is sheared from the backs of sheep, and when it is used directly it is called clipped wool. There exists, however, another kind of wool, which has already served and which is made use of a second time, after having been recuperated from old clothes, industrial waste, etc. In order to protect their goods from the competition of articles made out of recuperation wool, which are of inferior quality, the Swiss weaving mills manufacturing cloth, blankets and combed wool tissues have introduced a guarantee mark, which represents a stylized lamb, bearing the Swiss cross. This symbol, which figures on a special label, will guarantee the quality of pure combed wool, or of the percentage of 60, 70, 80 and 90 per cent of wool in a mixed fabric and will contribute to increase

the "good will" in regard to the high quality articles manufactured by the Swiss woollen industry.

Soon: Swiss electric watches.

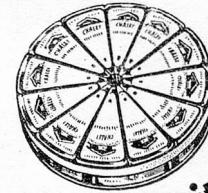
The big Swiss watchmaking firm of "Ebauche S.A.", which possesses sixteen branch establishments, has just announced the forthcoming launching on the market of a Swiss electric watch. This novelty has been ready, from the technical point-of-view, for some time already, but its commercial success depends on various factors, in particular on the technical training of its distributors; that is why the Swiss watchmakers were not in a hurry to enter into a "novelty" war. In order that they might not be outdistanced by foreign competition, they have had to take the necessary measures for shortly placing on the market their new model, which is not "electronic", but is simply worked by electricity.



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