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COMMERCIAL NEWS

An important American order to Swiss industry.

This summer, the Tennessee Valley Authority gave an order to the firm of Brown Boveri & Company, Ltd., of Baden, for a steam turbine generator unit with two axles and two alternators for the very high power of 500,000 kilowatts. These machines are to be put into service in August, 1963. The Tennessee Valley Authority is one of the most important companies in the United States for the production and the distribution of electric energy. We would like to avail ourselves of this opportunity in order to mention that, during the last six months, the Brown Boveri group has received orders for large steam turbines which can generate power to the total amount of more than two million kilowatts.

Novelty for walking enthusiasts.

A big Swiss organisation for the manufacture of watches and of instruments of precision has just brought out a very useful invention for walking enthusiasts; namely, a curvi-meter set in a wristlet watch. This device, which is made in a very harmonious and original modern shape, possesses, on the side which is opposite to the winder, a small caster, similar to that found in the traditional curvimeters; on the dial, next to the figure 3 is a small opening in which one can see figures indicating the number of kilometres walked, on a scale of 1/25,000 and 1/50,000. This new device, which should render inestimable services to tourists, officers, boy scouts, etc., is naturally equipped with a Swiss precision movement and is very elegant in appearance.

Switzerland builds a new all-purpose transport plane.

A Swiss firm manufacturing aircraft, has just presented to the public a new type of all-purpose small transport machine, the "Porter", which is admirably suited to the mountainous terrain of Switzerland and to the manifold uses to which a really rational transport plane can be put, e.g. the conveyance of passengers, of sick or injured persons, of goods and also for topographical surveys in both flat and mountainous country, etc. A machine capable of carrying out such diverse tasks has got to possess a large number of various qualities and, what is more, it must be economical in use. Equipped with an engine of 275 or 340 H.P., the "Porter" has not got an aesthetic appearance; it is angular, which makes it possible for it to be built at a very moderate price, and its shell is massive, thus endowing it with a powerful capacity for transportation, whilst the doors are wide enough to allow for the loading of heavy and cumbersome goods. The wings are vast and powerful, whilst the landing gear, which is also provided with a pair of skis, is adapted to any kind of ground. This aircraft can carry six passengers, two of whom can lie down, or else 940 pounds of freight, over a distance of 800 kilometres, at a cruising speed of 200 kilometres per hour. It can take-off at 220 yards or even 140 with the more powerful engine; its landing speed is 70 kilometres per hour. Moreover, its servicing costs

less than that of a helicopter. The best possible reference for this new machine consists in the fact that the famous glacier pilot, H. Geiger, immediately acquired one.

New comfort for skiers.

Everyone who has done any skiing knows that this sport demands that the feet should be very firmly fixed to the runners. However, the tighter the boots, the more liable they are to hurt the feet which they are protecting; that is the reason why skiers have got into the habit of wearing very thick woollen socks, sometimes even several pairs of them. This precaution, however, no more than the padding of the leg of the boot prevents injury resulting from either pressure or friction. It is because of this that a Swiss firm has just launched a new type of padded ski-socks for skiers and tourists in general, which prevent all chafing and the formation of blisters. The Roland Ski-socks are a kind of inner-boot, made of cotton, with extra layers of plastic foam padding covering the sensitive parts of the foot, wherever the boot is liable to cause discomfort; ankle, instep and heel are thus protected, the socks absorbing all undue pressure and making for foot-comfort. They do not become displaced in the boots, keep the feet warm and do not impede the circulation. As soon as it was launched, this article obtained a great success with skiers and walkers in general and is now not only popular in Switzerland, but also in the United States, Canada, Italy, Germany, Sweden and other countries.

Rationalisation at the Swiss Federal Railways.

This autumn, the Swiss Federal Railways will inaugurate a new way of paying their way-bills. The value and the date will henceforth be machine-printed on the way-bill and its copy. At the same time, the value and other indications will be printed on a control strip. The machine that will be used for stamping these details has been perfected by a Bernese factory, which is the first firm to specialise in this domain.

A new Swiss thermostat for water-heater.

It is a well-known fact that automatic electric water-heaters are switched on during the night, so that they will consume electric power during those hours when it is least required. However, the simultaneous switching on of a large number of these apparatuses has a contrary effect to the one aimed at, as it is liable to create a peak load. In order to remedy this inconvenience, a Swiss firm which manufactures apparatuses and instruments of precision, has developed a new thermostat for electric water-heaters of the accumulation type, which is specially designed to delay the switching-on of the boiler in proportion to the residual temperature of the water. Boilers fitted with thermostats of this kind offer the advantage of spreading the demand and thus regulating the consumption. For a given night load, it is therefore possible to connect a greater number of

boilers, making them take power from the mains at the time when it is most easily available, and at its cheapest.

Contribution of Swiss textile industry to agriculture.

A Swiss firm which manufactures rayon and nylon has just launched a new device for agriculture, which will doubtlessly enjoy a great success. The invention in question consists in the utilisation of very fine viscose fibres for the purpose of protecting gardens and orchards from the depredation of birds. This new article which is called "Agrolam" is made in the form of a strip, composed of more than 10,000 fibres, which are maintained in a bunch along its entire length. When it is to be used, this strip is cut to the required length and then spread out over the entire length. When it is to be used, this strip is cut which are to be protected. In order to spread out this strip, it is necessary to separate the fibres from each other, but as they still adhere at certain places, they form a kind of very fine net or veiling. This device, which is in no way harmful to the birds, nevertheless prevents them from doing any damage to the market or garden produce. It is just as useful for the protection of seeds that have been planted, as it is for vineyards, orchards, etc. One kilo of "Agrolam" is sufficient to cover from 800 to 1,000 square metres (i.e. 0.198 to 0.247 acres) of vines or other crops.

The automation of photographic laboratories.

A firm in Lausanne, which specialises in the manufacture of electronic articles, has just produced an automatic photo-electric exposure meter for photographic enlargements. This apparatus regulates the correct time for the exposure of the paper, by automatically taking into account the differences which exist in the density of the negatives, in the opening of diaphragm, in the intensity of the source of light and of its fluctuations, which are due to variations in tension. The "Rex", which can be adapted to any type of enlarger, does away with the need for test strips, and makes it possible to get good results with short times of exposure; furthermore, it can be used by non-specialists. This apparatus makes it possible to employ five different qualities of photographic paper, as it can be standardised to meet the requirements of all of them. All that the operator has to do is to decide on the size of the enlargement and to choose the paper which corresponds best to the work to be done; all the other operations are performed automatically by the apparatus.

A new university Institute in Zurich.

The legislative authority of the Canton of Zurich has decided to establish a new university Institute for Economic Research and has voted the necessary credits for the foundation and for the running of this institution.

The World Bank finances the installation of Swiss hydraulic turbines in Malaya.

The "Ateliers de Constructions Mécaniques de Vevey S.A." (Mechanical Construction Work of Vevey, Ltd.) have received, for the second time this year, an important order, financed by the World Bank. Thus, after having got an order from the Lebanese Republic,

at the beginning of the year, they have now received from the Central Electricity Board of the Federation of Malaya an order for three Pelton turbines of 35,000 HP each, under a fall of 1855 feet together with their regulators, as also a collector and seven spherical sluices, all of which are intended for the Jor Station of the hydro-electric plant of the Cameron Highlands. This Station is underground and is situated at about one hundred kilometres north of Kuala Lumpur.

A Swiss extra-flat self-winding watch.

The advantage obtained by building self-winding watches unfortunately has to be paid for by an increase in the thickness of the watches. For this reason, the Swiss technicians have not rested on their laurels, but have sought for various means which render the watches as flat as is made possible by the presence inside the case of an oscillating mass. A Swiss factory is now launching a model, in which the heaviness due to the self-winding system has been reduced in a particularly elegant fashion. In this watch, which is characterised by the figure 333, the oscillatory mass which serves to wind up the movement, is not fixed to a central pivot, but revolves freely on a ball bearing set within a circular rail placed outside the movement. This ingenious construction, revolutionary by its very simplicity, makes it possible to reduce the thickness of the watch-case, whilst maintaining the normal dimensions of the movement. The putting together of the mass, which assures the automatic winding of the watch on its circumference and not its centre, offers other technical advantages on which we will not dwell. We would add, however, that the watch 333, provided with a calendar, possesses a water-tight case, is of the highest quality and is remarkably elegant.

Swiss Federal Railways during first half of 1959.

From the 1st January to the 30th June, 1959, the Swiss Federal Railways carried 113 million passengers, i.e. 2.6 million more than during the first half of last year. The transport of goods remained practically unchanged (11.25 as against 11.2 million tons). A decline of 12 million francs occurred, however, in respect of the profits derived from the operation of the railways, this being due mainly to an increase in cost.

Kettner's Restaurant has no music and is not luxurious . . . but the Food and Wine are superb.

