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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Publicity for a Swiss watch.

When making use of the photograph of an explorer with a very hirsute countenance (the whiskers not even being his own) for an advertisement vaunting the merits of their new type of "Antarctic" watch, the Swiss watchmaking factory of Nivada S.A. never dreamed that they would get into trouble with the late Cuban Government, which prohibited this form of publicity on its territory. The reason was that the young New Yorker who had transformed himself into a man of the Polar regions for the good of the cause bore a striking resemblance to the famous rebel lawyer, Fidel Castro. Being fully persuaded that the Swiss firm was militating in the ranks of the man on whose head a price had been set at that time, the Batista Government took the afore-mentioned steps. The results, however, proved fortunate, for the "Antarctic", which was really intended more particularly for the cold countries, enjoyed better sales in Cuba than if it had been the object of a well-organised publicity campaign!

Swiss Federal Railways Locomotives.

Last year, the fleet of powered vehicles belonging to the Swiss Federal Railways (SFR) comprised 638 electric locomotives, 199 steam locomotives and 112 electric rail-cars. At the present time the volume of traffic assured by electric vehicles represents 97.2% of the whole of the traffic; this percentage would be still higher if the penury of these vehicles did not render it necessary to have recourse to steam traction. On an average each locomotive of the Swiss Federal Railways travels over 600 kilometres per day, the palm going to the new AE 6/6 engines on the Gotthard, with 679 kilometres to their credit. The rail-car trains of the Trans-Europ-Express rank second with 621 kilometres per day, or 227,000 kilometres per year.

On a thread.

According to the latest survey of lifts, ski-tows and telfers used for public transport, which has just been established by the Federal Administration of the Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones, there are no fewer than 384 such means of conveyance to be found in Switzerland at the present time. Enumerated in detail, these are: 202 ski-tows, 33 chair-lifts, 16 combined ski-tows and chair-lifts, 125 telfers, as well as 3 ski-funiculars and 5 lifts belonging to a different system.

Swiss commercial aviation is 40 years old.

8th January 1959 was the fortieth anniversary of the birth of Swiss commercial aviation, which occurred

when, for the first time, a flight was carried out — from Zurich to Berne — by a military bi-plane, the Haefeli DH 3.

This was a very modest beginning, it is true; it was merely a postal flight for the purpose of carrying the military correspondence exchanged between the Administration of the Dübendorf aerodrome, near Zurich, and the General-Staff of the Army, in Berne.

Eventually various companies were established, and these led to the formation on 26th March 1931, of the Swissair, an airline the network of which to-day attains 121,147 kilometres, and which has services to thirty-three countries, situated in the five continents.

Swiss chronometers in the service of sport.

The Organisation Committee of the Olympic Games has entrusted to the Swiss manufacturers of the Longines Watches, at St.-Imier, the chronometric measurement of all the competitions on snow and ice. The same firm will also be present this year at the Pan-American Games (which will take place in Chicago), at the World University Championships (which are announced for the summer, in Turin), and at a large number of other sports competitions, both in Switzerland and abroad. The covered, artificial-ice rink, which was recently inaugurated in Geneva, has been endowed with ultra-modern Longines chronometric measuring apparatus, of the same type as that which is already in use at the big ice-rinks in Milan, Bolzano, Boulogne-Billancourt (Paris), Stockholm and Oslo.

Four centuries of lace and embroidery.

The inauguration took place recently, at the Museum of Industrial Arts in St. Gall, of a collection of lace and embroidery of an unprecedented richness. An already well-known collection which was bequeathed to the Museum in 1904 by the collector, Mr. Léopold Iklé, has now been combined with the recently acquired Jakoby collection. The newly formed collection now comprises all the various kinds of lace and embroidery that are known, dating from the beginning of the 16th century to modern times, and coming from Europe as well as from Oriental countries. The St. Gall Museum now offers to lovers of this particular type of handiwork a display which is unique in Europe for its richness and fullness.

World Bank raises a new loan in Switzerland.

At the beginning of the year a Swiss consortium of Banks offered for public subscription, at the price of 100 per cent net, a new 4 per cent loan of 100 million Swiss francs, put on the market by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.



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The loan is to be reimbursed in 1974 — the World Bank, however, reserving to itself the right to proceed with an earlier amortisation, either total or partial, as from 1969. The Federal stamp duty on the bonds as well as the tax on the coupons will be paid by the debtor; moreover, the bonds are not subject to the tax on interest, so that the yield from them will be 4 per cent net. This loan will be quoted on the Exchanges at Basle, Zurich, Geneva, Berne and Lausanne.

The most modern map in the world.

The Federal Topographical Office at Berne publishes, in collaboration with the Tourist Offices of the various Cantons, some really remarkable maps. These masterpieces of map-making, on a scale of 1:25,000, are also masterpieces of printing. They are printed by means of an offset process, in nine colours, and are so exact, and the colouring and shading so good, that it is just as if you were getting a real bird's-eye view of the regions concerned. An interesting innovation is to be found in the very clear indications of itineraries for excursions, on foot or by ski, together with the length of time required for them. These maps, which are the most up-to-date of their kind, show a superficial area of about 163 square miles. Printed on a new Swiss product, Topnyl, which possesses extraordinary resistance to wear and tear, is uncrushable and immune to water, the maps are extremely durable. The first of them, now ready, is in respect of the St. Gall region.

Swiss prefabrication for civil engineering.

A prefabrication plant, the first of its kind in Switzerland, has just been inaugurated at Etoy. Built in record time — at the end of last year — in accordance with the methods which it intends to introduce into the building trade and into civil engineering in general, this plant produces standardised component parts, taking into account, right from the beginning, all the requirements of electrical and sanitary installations, heating, etc., and it also makes works of art. Its capacity of production amounts to 1,000 to 1,200 cubic metres of concrete per month, this amount corresponding to the material required for the building of forty apartments. The construction of industrial buildings, of big apartment blocks and of works of art by means of prefabricated component parts presents great economic advantages, as also social and financial ones. In view of the fact that this new plant is situated in a rural region, between the two urban centres of Lausanne and Geneva, it not only represents

technical progress, but also a valuable contribution to industrial de-centralisation.

Big Swiss radio transmitter for Africa.

On the last day of 1958 the firm of Brown Boveri & Co. Ltd. of Baden (Switzerland) received an order from the Imperial Office for Tele-communications, in Addis-Ababa, for a 100-kilowatt shortwave transmitter, with antennae capable of being oriented and with connection, by means of beamed waves, between the studio and the transmitting station itself. This is the fourth big transmitting set to be built for Africa by this Swiss firm, the previous ones being a shortwave 125-kilowatt transmitter for Radio-Afrique, at Tangier, a 100-kilowatt short- and medium-wave transmitter for the Radio Club of Lourenço Marquez, in the Mozambique, and a 100-kilowatt shortwave transmitter for the ESB Station in Cairo.

"Topnyl", an extra high quality Swiss product.

An important Swiss plant which specialises in finishing work on textiles, Messrs. Raduner & Company, at Horn, recently invented a remarkable new product which will prove most useful in the graphic arts. It is called "Topnyl" and is intended to replace paper for printing purposes, in all cases where it is necessary to have some high quality support which is extremely strong and very light. It is produced by means of a very fine and closely woven nylon fabric, which is very supple, to which a technical treatment gives a certain firmness and takes away the characteristics of a textile fabric, as the threads become more or less welded together, so that Topnyl does no ravel. In view of the fact that Topnyl is practically non-absorbent it is not subject — as is paper — to any modifications in regard to its dimensions, and, in consequence, makes it possible to carry out offset printing in several colours, with great precision, as in the case of maps. A map made out of Topnyl is absolutely impervious to rain or snow, and even to a prolonged immersion in water. This is very important when maps have to be used out in the open and in all kinds of weather. Topnyl can be washed, is practically untearable and resists wear and tear and folding better than the best quality of paper, as it does not tear at the folds. These excellent characteristics possessed by Topnyl have induced the Federal Topographical Service in Berne to choose this material for the printing of the new Swiss maps of 1:25000.

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