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COMMERCIAL NEWS

A plane for the Himalayas.

The Swiss expedition, which is to attempt the ascent of the Draula-Giri, in the massif of the Himalayas, this summer, will be equipped with an aircraft. The machine in question is a Swiss "Porter" aircraft, which can land on glaciers at an altitude of 16,400 feet, carrying six passengers.

Over 6,000 miles for training.

Seventy-four South African dealers in photographic apparatuses arrived recently at the airport of Geneva-Cointrin, after having travelled over more than 10,000 kilometres by plane. They had come to Switzerland in order to attend a trade finishing course at the Sales Training Centre of an important factory which produces cinematographic cameras, in Sainte-Croix.

A new power plant in operation at the Grand Dixence.

In December last, the first generator unit of the Nendaz electric plant of the Grande Dixence, was set going. The second unit began operations a few days later. The production of energy started on the 4th of January. The Fionnay and Nendaz plants, which utilise, by means of two successive waterfalls, the water accumulated in the lake of Dixence, will produce from two to three million kilo watt-hours per day, during the course of the next few months. Although work on the various plants of the Grande Dixence is not yet finished, this company already has at its disposal installations which make it possible for it to contribute in a very effective manner towards supplying Switzerland with electricity.

Shooting, a national sport in Switzerland.

In 1959, Swiss marksmen fired rather more than 42 million rifle cartridges, six million pistol bullets and ten million small calibre cartridges, thus, more than 58 million cartridges in all. A large part of these munitions was furnished gratis or at reduced prices by the public authorities.

The Swiss fleet grows.

At the beginning of 1960, the Swiss Mercantile Marine sailing on the High Seas, numbered 27 ships, of a total capacity of 211,596 tons. The Swiss river fleet, on the Rhine, is composed of 421 vessels, i.e. 12 more than last year, possessing a capacity of 359,161 tons.

The Swiss telephone cable network.

The Swiss network of telephone cables has now attained the very respectable length of 50,000 kilometres. There are 37,000 km. of cables serving subscribers, 11,250 kilometres of interurban and rural low frequency cables, 1,200 km. of coupled symmetrical cables operated on carrier currents and 550 km. of coaxial cables. These arteries enclose bundles of conductors numbering from two to 2,400 pairs, and represent, all together, the impressive length of 7.5 million kilometres, which is about 20 times the distance from the earth to the moon. Whereas the laying of the first 25,000 km. of cables lasted from 1900 to 1948, only 11 years were required for the putting down of the other 25,000 km. of cables.

In spite of the development that has taken place in respect of the subterranean network, that of the aerial lines still possesses a total length of 35,500 km., with 157,500 km. of wires.

A new Swiss milk product.

A new foodstuff, in the shape of a sweetmeat, has just been launched in Switzerland and abroad, by a firm in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, which specialises in the manufacture of lacteal products. The "DRY-LAC" — that is what it is called — is a preparation that has milk for its basis, milk that has been standardised, homogenized, pasteurized, sweetened with sugar, concentrated, dehydrated and enriched with vitamins B1 and B2. It is put on the market in the shape of crunchy tablets, some of them having the natural taste of sugared milk, whilst others are flavoured with malt and cocoa. The strictest



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rules of hygiene are observed during the preparation and conditioning of "DRY-LAC", which is destined to become the practical form of a glass of milk. Rich in nutritive principles, this "milk which is eaten" has already proved very successful and completes in a pleasant manner the scale of milk products.

Boom in the Swiss linoleum industry.

The Swiss Linoleum Industry, which is represented by one sole factory in Giubiasco, is now in full swing. The demand for linoleum as a floor-covering increased by 30 per cent, in 1959, as compared with the preceding year. As a result of this increased demand, the manufacturing premises, which have been enlarged, and were made partly automatic, last year, are now working to full capacity. Certain varieties of Swiss linoleum have a market in the German Federal Republic, in the Scandinavian countries, in France, Belgium and Austria. Since about a year, the Giubiasco works are also producing plastic tiles made of vinyl asbestos (colovinyl). This product, which possesses appreciable advantages for use in rooms subject to dampness, has also proved to be an excellent export article.

Fishing in the Lake of Neuchâtel.

Although the fishing results in the Lake of Neuchâtel during 1959, did not beat the record figure in the preceding year, they came very close to them. No less than 1,900,000 pounds of fish were caught, of which 662,500 pounds consisted of "bondelles", a fish belonging to the type of coregonae. The Lake of Neuchâtel abounds in fish, more than any other lake in the country.

Foreign students in Switzerland.

There were 6,000 foreign students registered in the nine Universities in Switzerland, during the summer term of 1959. The largest number was furnished by Germany, with 1,276 students, after which, in diminishing order, there came North and South America, Asia, Hungary, France, Africa, Greece, Italy, Norway, Holland, Luxembourg, Great Britain, Israel and Turkey. From this it will be seen that the Swiss university world is a real "League of Nations".

A new Swiss light metal.

Sintering is the name given to the process which enables one to obtain pieces of metal by means of the compression at a high temperature of metal powder. Up to the present it had not proved possible to subject aluminium to this process. Now, however, the "Société anonyme pour l'industrie de l'aluminium", at Chippis (Switzerland) has succeeded in inventing a sintering process for aluminium. The S.A.P. (Sintered Aluminium Product) is the name of the new metal obtained through the sintering of extremely fine pure aluminium powder. It is light and of a surprising natural hardness; moreover, it possesses among its other special properties the same strength at room temperature as heat-treated aluminium alloys, preserving this strength property even when heated for long periods up to temperatures of approximately 930° Fahrenheit; at a high temperature, its yield stress is greater than that of all the aluminium alloys; the longer the heating lasts and the higher is its temperature, the greater is the superiority shown by this product. The characteristic properties of the S.A.P. have opened up a vast field of new applications for aluminium. We would add that the S.A.P. has the corrosion resistance of pure aluminium and has

higher thermal and electrical conductivity and lower thermal expansion than aluminium alloys, and that it lends itself to work on a lathe, and can be worked also by means of hot pressure welding and by forging.

An International Congress for the prevention of noise.

A Congress, arranged by the International Organisation against Noise, is to be held in Zurich and in Baden from the 1st to the 3rd March. It will be attended by specialists from Great Britain, Holland, Germany, Austria, France and Switzerland.

An atomic event in Switzerland.

The largest apparatus for the fission of atoms in the world, the protonic synchrotron has just been put into operation at the European Centre for Nuclear Research (CERN) at Meyrin, near Geneva; it generates a power of 25 thousand million electron-volts.

Swiss climbing successes in the Andes.

In 1959, an expedition organised by the Swiss Alpine Club, climbed 19 mountains of 16,400 to 21,300 feet in height, in the Peruvian Alps, seventeen of which were scaled for the first time. Two members of this expedition brought back with them a magnificent collection of photographs, taken with the Swiss "Alpa" camera, which has thus proved its universality and the strength of its construction, by standing so well the differences in temperature, altitude and latitude.

SWISS BANK CORPORATION

The Swiss Bank Corporation announce that after writing off a total amount of Sfrs.9,280,679 including allocation to reserve for new buildings the net profit for 1959 amounts to Sfrs.30,742,810 against Sfrs.28,549,071 for 1958. The total assets amount to Sfrs.4,331,280,852 against Sfrs.4,129,805,268.

At the General Meeting which was held in Basle on the 4th of March 1960, it was proposed to make a contribution of Sfrs.2,000,000 to the Pension Fund and to place Sfrs.10,000,000 to Special Reserves. It was further proposed to pay a dividend of 10% (against 9% last year) and to carry forward Sfrs.3,263,899 (against Sfrs.3,508,229 last year).

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