

Business in Switzerland

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BUSINESS IN SWITZERLAND

A bold project in Lausanne

If the project proposed by the management of the Swiss National Fair is put into effect, in a few years' time Lausanne will have a large tower some 920 feet high rising like a giant needle above the Palace of Beaulieu. This bold plan, which the municipal authorities have already approved, could be carried out in twenty months, so that the tower would be ready in time for the opening of the Swiss National Exhibition in 1964. The first fifteen storeys would contain among other things a concert hall and a number of auditoriums and lecture rooms, which could be used for congresses as well as the School of Higher Commercial Studies and Social and Political Sciences of the University of Lausanne. At a height of 750 feet a bubble-shaped section would hold a restaurant and a balcony offering a magnificent view. The tower would dominate the halls and gardens of the ultra-modern exhibition buildings and congress centre in which the Lausanne National Fair is held each year.

Progress in road lighting

Conflicting demands frequently have to be reconciled in the planning of an efficient road-lighting system, such as, for example, regularity and economy; then again the various advantages possessed by each of the different types of lighting are always offset by a number of drawbacks which have to be eliminated. In order to overcome these difficulties a Swiss firm in Lucerne has created a double light, with two light sources and two reflectors giving a length and width of radiation never achieved before. The great efficiency of the Moos patented lamp-post allows illumination points to be placed further apart, resulting in a saving of material, erection costs and electric current. In addition, during the middle of the night when there is little traffic, it is possible to switch off one lamp on each standard, so that the intensity of lighting can be diminished without affecting the number of points of illumination. Furthermore, the standards can be fitted with two different types of light. The use of a 60-watt sodium-gas lamp in conjunction with a 125-watt mercury lamp is particularly recommended. With this combination, full use is made of the advantages of both types of lamp, and the light is neither too harsh nor too dull.

A Swiss chemical achievement

After many years of intensive research, three Swiss chemists working in the Sandoz laboratories at Basle have

succeeded in achieving the complete synthesis of ergotamine, the alkaloid of ergot of rye. This marks the successful close of the research distinguished, in 1918, by the discovery of the first homogeneous alkaloid of ergot of rye by the Swiss professor, Stoll, and, in 1951, by the discovery of the composition of this alkaloid. The complete synthesis that has now been achieved confirms the correctness of the formula worked out ten years ago in the laboratories of this Basle firm. The future will show whether it is possible to make industrial use of the complete synthesis achieved to-day. It is already obvious, though, that this process will enable new types of compounds derived from the natural alkaloid to be prepared, thus opening up exciting new possibilities in the medico-biological field.

Yet another Swiss contribution to rubbish disposal

Everyone is well aware to-day of the acuteness of the problem of rubbish disposal created by the phenomenal growth of towns. As regards the private householder, the coal furnace formerly used for heating the home made the destruction of all combustible refuse a comparatively simple matter; this possibility has since been lost owing to the increasingly widespread use of oil heating. The "Tibator" incinerator, however, solves this problem: this is a small auxiliary burner, which can easily be fitted on any oil burner so as to enable all combustible refuse to be burnt in the central heating burner or water heater without affecting the working of the main appliance itself, which can moreover be automatically stopped while the refuse is being burnt. This incinerator can also be used even during the months when the main heater is not in use.

Big foreign order placed with a Swiss firm

The building up of an efficient power supply, whether produced by hydraulic or thermal means, is one of the most important requirements of any country in the process of development. The big Swiss firm of Sulzer Brothers, at Winterthur, has just received an order for two 12-cylinder Diesel engines for a power plant in Costa Rica; each of these engines develops 5,420 h.p. at 257 revs./min., and the first has to be installed by the end of October 1961. This order is being financed by the World Bank and was awarded to the Swiss firm in the face of keen international competition.

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