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be said of the musical alarm-watch; in addition to the very small movement, the case contains a tiny musical box mechanism with its needle-studded drum and vibrating comb.

The trace of a smile

The present logical fashion tends to reduce the visible surface of the case to a minimum so as to show the maximum of dial; there have been many attempts to decorate the dial without detracting from the legibility of the time, by chasing, enamels, engravings, etc. An interesting creation, which had the effect of giving life to the dial, might also have been termed a watchmaking curio on its first appearance in 1953; it caused quite a stir in fact. This watch and all its imitators are now quite commonplace. Like a perpetually moving kaleidoscope, the dial seems alive with continually changing figures in the form of rat-tailed vipers, projected from the centre towards the edge; the optical effect is given by two superimposed perforated, coloured disks, revolving at the same speed as the hands. In spite of this device, the time is very clearly indicated by the tips of the hands.

Let us bring our survey of watchmaking curios to a close here, for the measurement of time is a serious matter with little room for fantasy . . . And yet, looking at certain "unusual" watches, one cannot help imagining the trace of a smile on the lips of the creator — as though he had done what he was commissioned to do, but with his tongue in his cheek.

LETTER FROM SWITZERLAND

As was rightly pointed out a short while ago by a leading figure of the Swiss economic world, the idea of aid, like that at present being given to a number of African and Asiatic countries, is a very old one as far as Switzerland is concerned. Even during the last century, many of this country's technicians and merchants settled abroad and often contributed decisively to the discovery of hitherto unknown markets and the economic development of the countries in question. At a somewhat more recent date Switzerland began to grant credits and loans to numerous under-developed countries, thus allowing them to purchase industrial plant, build electric power stations and means of communications, etc., in fact to lay down sound foundations for their growing economies.

While, generally speaking, the whole idea of aid to these countries has changed considerably since then, it is nevertheless possible to say that Switzerland continues to lend her assistance, in accordance with her traditions of independence and neutrality. The form of this collaboration may change to keep pace with the evolution of the countries concerned and the new circumstances; but this adaptation in no way alters the general idea or the policy of the Swiss government, which has no political axe to grind in this instance — which, moreover, is one of the reasons why Switzerland enjoys such confidence among these countries.

In actual practice, Switzerland's aid to under-developed countries takes several forms. Originally it consisted mainly in co-operating in the various multilateral aid programmes organized by the United Nations ("Ordinary programme", "Expanded programme" and "Special fund"), and financed by some eighty countries. This co-operation was accompanied by a more direct contribution in the form of bilateral aid. However, thanks to the existence and creation of individual Swiss organizations, for the most part the work of private enterprise ("Swiss aid to Extra-European countries", "Swiss Foundation for Assistance in Technical Development"), Switzerland makes a direct contribution to certain concrete projects, such as the foundation of vocational training schools, to quote but one example. Generally speaking, the Swiss have already done a considerable amount of work towards helping those peoples interested in building a viable and productive economy for themselves.

It was to further this work that the Federal Chambers recently voted a new credit of S.Fr. 60 million. In addition to her contribution to multilateral aid programmes which will be raised to S.Fr. 8 million annually, Switzerland's bilateral co-operation during the next three years will amount to S.Fr. 12 million. This sum will be used to meet the needs as they develop. But as, in addition to the esteem in which the country is held on the political level, Swiss schools and teachers have always enjoyed an excellent reputation throughout the world, teaching constitutes one of Switzerland's main contributions. The country has already offered scholarships to a number of African and Asiatic students; in order, however, to be able to achieve really positive results in the field of education, she hopes to be able to send these countries more and more teachers of secondary school and higher level, in addition, of course, to technicians and scientists, and this in spite of the fact that Switzerland herself is short of qualified staff in all branches of education.



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