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BUSINESS IN SWITZERLAND

A non-returnable pack for liquids

Plastics have revolutionized packaging techniques. A striking example of this is the non-returnable pack for liquids and pastes produced on the Formseal machine. The whole idea has been very well thought out and is at the same time extremely simple. The package is a shaped container tapering slightly towards the bottom and formed from a reel of thin but rigid thermoplastic film. The container and its flat preprinted lid are sealed together so as to form a double flap which forms a spout when cut. In order to use, one has only to cut open the flap with a pair of scissors and squeeze the container lightly while pouring. As soon as the pressure is released the flow of liquid stops and the flap closes, preventing any dust from entering and contaminating the rest of the contents, which need not be poured out all at the same time. The operations by which the pack is produced, that is to say the making of the container from a reel of thermoplastic film, the filling of the required amount of liquid, and the sealing with a lid, are synchronised, so that production is rapid, economic and hygienic. It is possible to produce three or six packs at the same time — or even more, depending on their diameter. This new pack is ideal for packaging cream, fruit juices, concentrates, sauces, detergents, etc., in quantities up to a maximum of $\frac{1}{2}$ pint.

At the Sydney Trade Fair

Switzerland took part in the first International Trade Fair at Sydney (Australia), which was held from 1st to 12th August this year. Against a huge panoramic backcloth of the Swiss Alps, supplied by the Federal Topographical Department in Berne, were displayed the main products of Switzerland's industries: fine cottons and embroideries of St. Gall, watches and clocks, metallurgy and electrotechnics, precision apparatus, and chemical products, as well as the products of a chocolate factory and a paper mill. The Swiss Comptoir in Lausanne, in which Australia took part as guest of honour last year, was also numbered among the exhibitors, alongside the Swiss National Tourist Office in Zurich, Swissair and a Swiss Transport firm. At the inauguration of the Swiss Pavilion, organised by the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade, Mr. J. Huber, the Swiss Consul-General in Sydney, read a number of messages including one from the new Federal Councillor, Mr. Hans Schaffner, head of the Political Department of the Public Economy.

Death of an inventor

The inventor of the zip-fastener, Mr. Othmar Winterhalter, has just died at the age of 72. This Swiss industrialist was the first to exploit his own invention industrially on machinery of his own construction at the well-known " Ri-Ri " factory he had created for the purpose at Mendrisio. It is therefore to a Swiss inventor that we owe the revolutionary invention of the zip-fastener, which very rapidly spread all over the world and exerted a decisive influence on several branches of industry, such as clothing and Morocco-leather goods, to mentioned but two.

Triumph of the postcard

During the month of July, the post office at the main Lausanne railway station stamped one-and-a-half million postcards posted to destinations in all parts of the world by tourists visiting this town. On a single day during the month of August, the same post office handled 135,000 postcards weighing practically half a ton. These figures give some idea of the number of tourist visiting Switzerland during the summer.

The economic importance of the machinery industry

The machinery industry is occupying an increasingly important position in Switzerland's national economy; it has taken the place, in fact, previously occupied by the textile industry. To-day the machinery industry alone employs some 40 per cent of the total number of workers and office staff coming under the Federal Factory Laws and accounts for one-third of Switzerland's exports. 55 per cent of its output, which exceeds 5 billion Swiss francs in value, is exported, the rest being absorbed by the home market.

Solar pump built in Switzerland

On our globe there are many desert regions where water is not lacking, but it is only to be found in the subsoil and it is very hard work to pump this water in order to be able to use it for drinking purposes, to assuage the thirst of man and beast, or else for the irrigation of fields and gardens. This is, in particular, the case in the numerous technically under-developed regions, which have not got at their disposal the necessary motive power for the pumping of water. A Swiss firm is now engaged in building, for use in these countries, a solar pump which will bring the subsoil water to the surface, as a result of the heat of the sun's rays. The " Somor " pump is composed, primarily, of a large panel which is fixed on to a tripod, which can be oriented, by hand, in the direction of the sun. Within this panel there are winding tubes containing a liquid with a low boiling point, which evaporates easily under the action of the heat of the solar rays; the steam which is produced in this way makes the engine revolve, and this puts into operation a pump which brings the sub-stratum water to the surface. In its turn, the water cools the steam which escapes from the engine and condenses it anew, in the form of a liquid which restarts the circuit. Once it has been started by hand, this pump functions as long as the sun provides it with the necessary heat. It should not be forgotten that this pump is intended primarily for tropical and sub-tropical regions, where motive power is a rare thing, but where the sun's rays shine generously upon the earth. Possessing a very economic action, and being very easy to handle, as it only requires to be turned in the direction of the sun, every two hours, in order that the panel may absorb its rays, the solar pump " Somor " will help to bring the advantages of irrigation, at a low cost, to numerous regions, if these happen to possess a sheet of water lying in the subsoil. The output of the machine depends, naturally, on the depth from which the water has to be pumped.

OUR NEXT ISSUE

Our next issue will be published on Friday, 13th October 1961. We take this opportunity of thanking the following subscribers for their kind and helpful donations over and above their subscriptions: H. De Montille, C. Schorno, F. A. Gluck, Carl Nater, Ernest Eha, Ch. L. Chapuis, Ernest C. Ribi, Federico Bassi and R. De Watteville.