

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1961)

Heft: 1397

Rubrik: Business in Switzerland

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BUSINESS IN SWITZERLAND

The 19th OLMA at St. Gall

From 12th to 22nd October, the 19th Swiss Exhibition of Agriculture and the Dairy Trade, known by the name of OLMA, was held at St. Gall. This year's exhibition featured the economy of the Alpine canton of Glaris, which is both agricultural and industrial. OLMA is the great centre of attraction of Eastern Switzerland for everything connected with cattle raising, the dairy trade, cheese-making and agriculture as a whole.

The Largest Skating Rink in the World

In preparation for the 1964 Winter Olympics at Innsbruck, work has already started in this Austrian resort on a skating rink with a total area of 121,000 square feet, i.e., the largest made so far. It will consist of an outer speed circuit with three 400-metre-long tracks covering a total area of 61,000 square feet, two inner rinks measuring 33,000 square feet in all, a covered stadium with a 19,800-square-foot rink. The Swiss firm Sulzer Bros. Ltd., of Winterthur, was awarded, in spite of very keen international competition, the order for the supply of the complete refrigerating plant and the installation of the tubing. This firm already possesses considerable experience in the construction of skating rinks for winter and summer operation.

Further step in electronic watchmaking

Two large Swiss watchmaking organizations, Ebauches Ltd. and the Watchmaking Federation (Swiss Federation of Associations of Watch Manufacturers), founded an electronic watchmaking centre in Neuchâtel this summer. This centre, in which the Union of Allied Watch Trades and the Swiss Association of Roskopf Watch Manufacturers will also be associated, will therefore be the joint responsibility of the four biggest watchmaking groups in Switzerland; it will help strengthen the position of the Swiss watchmaking industry in the face of international competition.

International School of Advanced Driving

An International School of Advanced Driving promoted by a French engineer, Mr. Robert Souaille, was opened quite recently in the canton of Neuchâtel. It is equipped with a special track for training both professional and amateur motorists, according to the very latest psychological and practical methods, to react and control their vehicles in all circumstances, particularly in the case of skids or sudden incidents. This school is intended above all to improve the standard of professional drivers, such as, for example, ordinary driving-school instructors. But car manufacturers and road builders, as well as traffic police even, could also learn many things from a visit to the new institute.

Practical New Accessory for Telephoning

A Swiss watch manufacturer has just launched the "Derbyphone", a new type of telephone-call timer. This ingenious apparatus is in the form of a narrow rod with

a ball on one end for inserting in the holes of the dial, making it possible to dial numbers without breaking one's nails, an advantage likely to be appreciated by the fair sex. At the same time, a slight pressure of the finger pushes the gilt top over the body of the apparatus. As soon as the connection has been made, one has only to release the pressure of one's finger and the top rises slowly, revealing a coloured scale marked up to six minutes, thus making it possible to time the length of telephone calls. When not in use, the "Derbyphone" is always handy, hanging by the spherical end from one of the holes in the dial. This small contraption makes an ideal gift.

Solar pump built in Switzerland

On our globe there are many deserts 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.

Geneva firm designs slot machine for railway tickets

For several weeks now, an automatic railway-ticket slot machine designed by a Geneva firm has been tried out in a Swiss railway station. In spite of its small size — it measures just over 3ft. 3in. wide by 3ft. 7in. high — this new machine is able to print and issue tickets for 32 destinations, for first and second class, single, return and half fares. It is designed to take coins of 1, 2 and 5 francs and 10, 20 and 50 centimes; it gives the right change, indicates the price to be paid when the passenger presses on the appropriate button, prints and dates the tickets, records and totals the receipts and the number of each sort of ticket sold. This machine, the first of its kind in Switzerland, contains 250 pieces of apparatus in all and nearly a mile of wiring.

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