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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Swiss machines abroad

During the first few months of this year, a big firm in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, which specialises in mechanical constructions, received a number of important orders from abroad. For the equipment of a Portuguese hydro-electric station, it will provide three Francis turbines of 120,000 h.p. each, which will be furnished with a new electronic regulator made by the same firm. Two Francis turbines of 44,300 h.p. each have been ordered for France. Finally, two pivots with revolving segments, for a load of 309 tons each, are to be placed on the alternators of a Portuguese electric station which has already purchased the turbines from this plant.

The first Swiss electric wrist-watch

At the Swiss Industries Fair at Basle, one could see the first electric wrist-watch to be entirely manufactured in Switzerland. This novelty, which has been awaited impatiently, aroused the keenest interest. In this watch, the regulating organ is constituted by a hairspring balance unit, the oscillations of which are controlled by a tiny electromagnetic motor. A very small battery or accumulator, of approximately the same volume, supplies the power to make the watch run for 7-9 months. The devising and execution of all the parts in this watch have required exhaustive research, followed by the most minute testing. In consequence of its accurate running, its pleasing appearance and its moderate price, this first electric wrist-watch made in Switzerland will, without doubt, be the predominant and most reliable article of its kind to be found on the market.

The minting of Swiss and foreign coinage

During the course of last year, the Federal Mint in Berne minted, for the Federal Treasury, 49 million coins to the total value of 22.6 million Swiss francs. Moreover, it minted coins and medals for foreign countries, to the value of 2.4 million Swiss francs.

The thirtieth anniversary of Swissair

It was thirty years ago—on 26th March 1931—that the Swiss Air Navigation Company "Swissair" was founded, through the merging of two existing companies, one at Basle and the other at Zurich. At the start, it possessed a capital amounting to 800,000 Swiss francs, 22 aircraft with a total seating capacity of 88, and a network of 4,302 kilometres, which was flown exclusively in fine weather, and only between March and October. At the present time, Swissair's share-capital amounts to 105 million Swiss francs, its operational network extends over 139,292 kilometres and comprises all the continents except Australia. Although the number of the company's aircraft has only increased by half during these thirty years — there are now 32 machines available — the number of seats has increased to 2,345, i.e. it is now nearly 27 times greater.

Swiss inventor awarded the 1961 "Inventors' Oscar"

At the Inventors' Exhibition in Brussels, the 1961 "Oscar" for the most outstanding invention has been awarded to a Swiss inventor, Mr. Guignard, for his apparatus for tying up plants. This Guignard "tyer-up", which uses a special fibre for binding (which is more advantageous than the usual fibres employed for this purpose), is made in the shape of a pistol; it attaches the plants, branches of trees, vines, etc., automatically and more firmly and more rapidly, to the props, poles or trellises.

In the snow of the Sierras

A company in Zurich, which specialises in the manufacture of machines for clearing away snow, has received an order for a snow-plough from the official network of the Spanish Railways. This order comprises two automatic rail-cars, driven by Diesel engines and equipped with Rolba snow rotaries; one is intended for the normal Spanish railway network and the other for a mountain railway. These two machines, weighing 25 tons and 20 tons, will be built entirely in Switzerland and will be delivered in the summer of 1962.



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