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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Power transformers for north-eastern Switzerland

In order to transmit the considerable amount of electrical energy produced in the Grisons to the industrial centres of consumption in the North-East of Switzerland, and to establish exchanges of such power with the neighbouring countries on a more extensive basis, the "Forces motrices" in the North-East of Switzerland are now building a transmission line which will possess a capacity of 1,200 millivolt amperes. The plant recently ordered—from the Oerlikon Construction Works in Zurich—the transformers which are to connect the 400 kV line with the 220 kV network; there will be four such transformers, of a unitary capacity of 600/3 millivolt amperes each, per pole, which will constitute the largest units ordered in Switzerland up to the present. The system used for the transmission of very great power, at a very high tension on this network, is the first of its kind in Switzerland, and represents one of the most important stages in the development of the electrical energy economy of the country. The two extremities of the line are equipped with auto-transformers, which have been manufactured by the same firm in accordance with the same principles.

A question of shade

A Swiss firm which manufactures paints and varnishes is now offering for export a novelty which has been tested in Switzerland for some years past, with the greatest success. This new invention consists of paints which are concentrated in tubes, and which can be used as universal paints for colouring and shading oil paints and varnishes, synthetic and cellulose varnishes and paints with a chlorinated rubber base.

In view of the fact that these paints, which are in the form of a paste, can be mixed together, it is possible to obtain any desired shade, which is of the greatest utility, especially for makers of automobile bodies and for workshops which engage in industrial painting and have to produce shades in accordance with the samples given them.

Automatic judge of colours

Everyone knows the old saying that one must never argue about tastes and colours. As a matter of fact, it is quite true that an appreciation of colours is something that is quite subjective and depends not only on the eye of the beholder, but also on the lighting. Differences in the appreciation of colour can cause considerable harm in the textile industry and in that which manufactures colouring matter, to cite only two examples. Now, however, a Swiss firm manufactures an apparatus, known as the "Spectromat", which has been conceived by Swiss research workers, for the control, the measuring and the comparison of colours on a strictly scientific and automatic basis. The apparatus is a spectrograph. In fractions of a second, the screen of the incorporated cathode-ray oscillograph shows the relative spectral energy distribution of any given light radiation. The Spectromat, thus, eliminates all the sources of error which are often present in visual estimation of colours, and makes it possible to

evaluate, with absolute impartiality, the similitude of a colour with that of the sample provided, as the shades are only identical if the curves on the cathodic screen are also the same. The Spectromat makes possible the testing of the colours of solid bodies of all dimensions, of liquids or gases, the measuring of colouring substance in a dye solution, the measuring of tolerance in shade difference, the rapid sorting of shades, the supervision of dyeing operations of any kind, and the measuring of degrees of white, clouding, fastness, structures, light sources, etc. It therefore constitutes a most valuable auxiliary in numerous industries, such as those specialising in paints and varnishes, in textiles, in paper, in ceramics, in lighting fixtures, etc., for the control of raw materials, the supervising of the manufacturing processes and the control of the finished goods.

New Swiss automatic can-sealing machine

Packing technique is now in full development and achieves fresh progress with every day, the quality of the packaging being, when all is said and done, one of the essential conditions for the success of the goods, especially in the food branch. A machine factory at La Sarraz is now engaged in putting on the market a new vacuum can-sealing machine, which offers some very big advantages over those machines which have been in use up to the present. The "Sertomatic" makes it possible to carry out, as required, the following operations: ordinary sealing, vacuum sealing and vacuum sealing with the introduction of gas, and this by merely switching from one position to another. The can remains stationary during the sealing operation, thus preventing the spilling of any of its contents, as a result of any jolts. The greatest advantage of this new machine lies, unquestionably, in its highly developed automatic qualities, as a result of which, should a preceding operation not have been effected correctly, the cycle is stopped automatically, which prevents, for example, any cans being put on the market which have been sealed without the air being removed, or before the gas is introduced into the vacuum. These advantages, as well as a great many others, including the handling security for the operator, have made this machine something which represents considerable progress for all those industries which distribute their products in sealed cans.

Decentralisation kills two birds with one stone

The penury of labour, in Switzerland, is causing difficulties in certain industries, while, at the same time, in various regions, such as the Valaisan Alps, for instance, the workers cannot find jobs. As there can be no question of transferring them elsewhere, the Society for Economic and Social Research in the Valais is striving to procure for them possibilities of employment, on the spot. With the support of a group of industrialists from the watch-making district of Solothurn, it has now succeeded in organising a watchmaking workshop in the mountain village of Vissoie, which will provide work for a certain number of the local young people, who will first undergo a training period of several months in Solothurn.