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ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL NEWS FROM OSEC

6th International Trade Exhibition of Hardware, Tools and Household Arts.

The 6th International Trade Exhibition of Hardware, Tools and Household Arts (Interferex 70) will be held in the halls of the Swiss Industries Fair in Basle from September 6th to 8th this year. Over an area of just under 300,000 sq. ft., more than 1,200 firms from 25 countries will be displaying a whole range of products extending from building-site machinery to tools for the do-it-yourself handyman, from china to sports gear, as well as articles for collective kitchens, big stores and hotels. The very large number of exhibitors bears witness to the growing importance of this specialised exhibition and the economic role it plays on the international level.

6th Congress of the European Federation of Financial Analysts.

The 6th Congress of the European Federation of Financial Analysts to be held in Montreux (Switzerland) from October 6th to 9th this year will have as its main theme "Financial analysis and the concentration of firms in Europe". The Swiss association responsible for organising this congress expects some 400 to 500 financial analysts from the associations belonging to the European Federation. It also expects a number of observers from the United States of America as well as from the European countries that have no national association as yet. Leading Swiss figures representing university, banking and industrial circles will also attend this important event.

Thermal panels of a new design.

A short while ago two Swiss inventors devised a new process which will undoubtedly offer serious competition to the traditional means of heating used in building. It consists of heating panels of an entirely new design, for which the inventors were awarded a gold medal at the last Inventors Exhibition in Brussels. For a long time now, attempts have been made to replace radiators and other heating systems depending on the circulation of air with a process acting by radiation. However, the quality of the results obtained by such means is largely dependent on the insulation of the building. The ideal is to obtain a uniform temperature on the surfaces of a room, keeping the ambient air inside a few degrees lower. With this end in view, the inventors made panels which, instead of being dotted with a few scattered sources of heat, radiate heat from all over. Each panel consists of a heat insulation sheet, to which the heating element is attached. Installation is carried out either by gluing onto an existing ceiling or by incorporation in the concrete flooring when pouring. The radiation from the ceiling heats the walls of the room and the floor, giving the room a very even temperature. Furthermore, as the system as a whole has a very low inertia, it works practically from the moment it is switched on, the maximum power per square meter being 170 W. Finally let us point out that under normal conditions of use, this new process is no more expensive than traditional means of heating.

A new system for installing curtain rails.

The installing of most curtain rails often involves waste of time, for it is necessary to bore holes or punch them before use. In addition, the screws normally used do not hold strongly enough in the pressed wood panels that are increasingly used instead of natural wood. Consequently, a Swiss firm at Romanshorn, specialising in the manufacture of metal and plastic articles, has produced a new fixing instrument doing away with all these drawbacks. With this instrument it is sufficient, once the rail is placed in the grooves, to press the lever once in order to introduce two pairs of staples on either side of the rail. These staples hold the rail securely in position. The whole operation is so quick that this new fixing instrument makes possible a saving of as much as 60% in the cost of installation. This novelty also makes it possible to do away completely with the use of special and expensive screws.

Swissair in 1969— Over 3.5 million passengers.

The Swiss national airline company Swissair comes 5th among European companies. Its fleet comprises 40 planes (including one DC-9 freighter), representing a total of 3,780 passenger seats. Its network of lines covers 111,220 miles and serves 75 cities in 54 countries on all continents. In 1969, it recorded a turnover of over S.Fr. 1 billion (US \$232.5 million). Last year Swissair transported 3,571,442 passengers, i.e. 17% more than in 1968. The company carried 87,538 tons of freight (+38%) and 9,427 tons of mail (+9%), representing respectively 159.8 million (+56%) and 17.2 million (+12%) ton-kilometres. Let us add that, wishing to improve the quality of its services on the ground, Swissair has introduced electronic booking (PARS) at both Zurich and Geneva. It has also stepped up its co-operation with the hotel trade by participating in the construction of three hotels in Zurich, and by deciding on the creation of a chain of hotels under the name of "European Hotel Corporation".

Swiss universities in figures.

The total number of students registered in Swiss universities during the winter semester 1967-1968 amounted to some 36,000, including 8,360 foreigners. The number of female students was 7,600. The Swiss Science Council, which publishes these figures, gives other interesting details concerning expenditure in 1967 on Swiss university education. The total expenditure amounted to 456 million francs (US \$106 million) compared with 401 million (US \$93.3 million) in 1966. Out of this total, 344 million (US \$80 million) was used to cover working expenses and 112 million (US \$26 million) for investments. While the in-

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crease in the working expenses of places of higher education remained about the same size as that of the Federal Institute of Technology (12.9%), the FIT's expenditure on equipment costs showed a marked upward trend. In fact, 46% of the total expenditure of the Federal School of Technology was accounted for by equipment costs, whereas this percentage was only 17% for the cantonal universities. Let us note that the total expenditure of higher educational establishments in Switzerland was met as follows in 1967: 8% was financed by the universities' own receipts, 54% was covered by the cantons, 37% by the Confederation and 1% by the communes.

News in brief.

The International Railway Union (IRU) has just placed a big licencing contract with a Swiss firm on behalf of twenty national networks. Under the terms of this contract, which concerns the future *automatic coupling of railway rolling stock* for the whole of Europe, the Swiss firm grants IRU and the contracting networks the right, subject to certain conditions, to use all the working designs for coupling systems, including those of the patented parts.

The French National Railways have adopted Swiss high precision products for equipping their timekeeping systems. The FNR are, in fact, in the process of installing three new large capacity *Isatome timekeeping centres*, each capable of transmitting the right time to more than a thousand clocks over distances of more than 60 miles.

A *scientific and technical co-operation agreement* was recently signed between a committee of the Soviet Ministry for Science and Technology and the Basle company of Ciba Co. Ltd. This agreement extends to all sectors in which Ciba is interested, especially dyestuffs, pharmaceuticals and synthetic products as well as photochemical and agrochemical products. It provides in addition for exchanges of information and meetings between Soviet and Swiss specialists.

The 170 recognised *Swiss advertising consultants* handled over 413 mil-

lion francs' worth (US \$96 million) of advertising in Switzerland in 1969. Of this amount, 222 million francs (US \$51.6 million) went to the press and 39 million (US \$9 million) to the TV; 32 million (US \$7.4 million) was accounted for by direct advertising, 10 million (US \$2.3 million) by advertising out of doors and 23 million (US \$5.3 million) by advertising at the sales point. The press remains the most widely used form of mass media.

Swiss vineyards in 1969 produced 796,401 hectolitres (1 hl=22 Imp. gal. or 26.4 US gal.) of must. The breakdown by region is as follows: French-speaking Switzerland: 657,264 hl; German-speaking Switzerland: 71,395 hl; Italian-speaking Switzerland: 67,742 hl. The main wine-growing cantons were the Valais (327,889 hl), Vaud (213,147 hl), Geneva (86,395 hl), the Ticino (64,632 hl), Schaffhausen (23,165 hl), Neuchâtel (20,521 hl) and Zurich (19,360 hl).

A new corrugated cardboard of Swiss origin.

At the recent International Packaging Exhibition Swisspack in Basle, a Swiss firm presented a new type of triple wave corrugated cardboard to a large public of specialists. This product is made in two qualities and contains a film of 15g/sq.m. polyethylene, making the corrugated cardboard permanently waterproof. The characteristics of this new cardboard have been planned chiefly with a view to export, the lightness of the folding cartons made of this type of corrugated cardboard making it possible to reduce considerably the total weight of the packaging, with a consequent reduction in the cost of air-freight. In addition, in order to make use of the possibility of combining it with wood, the Swiss firm in question is now collaborating with a Swiss crate manufacturer, who has installed the necessary machinery for making these cardboard panels on his own premises.

Index of Prices in Switzerland at the End of May 1970.

| | Wholesale price 1963=100 | relation to Difference in | Retail price End Sept. 1966=100 | Difference in relation to |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| End of May 1970 | 112.3 | | 111.8 | |
| End of April 1970 | (111.9) | +0.4% | (110.7) | +1.0% |
| End of May 1969 | (106.6) | +5.3% | (108.4) | +3.1% |
| Evolution of the prices of . . . | . . . raw materials, semi-manufactured products and consumer goods | | . . . main consumer goods and services included in the family budgets of wage-earners. | |

The Swiss Foreign Trade in May 1970.

| Switzerland's Balance of Trade | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------|---------|-----------------|---|
| Period | Imports | Exports | Adverse balance | Value of exports as a % of the value of imports |
| in million of S.Fr. | | | | |
| 1969 May | 1,831.5 | 1,618.2 | 213.3 | 88.4 |
| 1970 April | 2,538.3 | 1,939.6 | 598.7 | 76.4 |
| 1970 May | 2,154.2 | 1,712.0 | 433.2 | 79.8 |
| 1969 Jan.-May | 8,669.3 | 7,653.8 | 1,015.5 | 88.3 |
| 1970 Jan.-May | 11,167.1 | 8,663.0 | 2,504.1 | 77.6 |
| (1 million S.Fr.=US \$232,558) | | | | |

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**Fixing and connecting without screws:
a Swiss novelty.**

A short while ago, a Swiss manufacturer created a device for fixing and connecting electrical conductors, wires, cables, etc., instantaneously and without screws. This device can also be used as a mechanical connector. A simple pressure of the thumb is sufficient to insert or remove the wire. This method of fixing, based on the lever principle, saved time and in addition has the advantage of doing away with short-circuits. This small apparatus, which won an award at Brussels and is available in different sizes, has many applications: electrotechnics, telephones, airplanes, automobiles, cable industry, etc.

A record of precision in the Swiss fine engineering industry.

The very great success met with by the tree of light symbolising Switzerland's participation in the Universal Exhibition in Osaka should not make us forget the key products displayed inside the pavilion. In order to evoke the technical feats accomplished by the Swiss machine-tool and fine engineering industries, those responsible for the Pavilion chose a tiny toothed wheel, 12 millimetres in diameter and with 3,200 teeth, each of which is not more than one hundredth of a millimetre high. Making a striking contrast with this little marvel of precision, a huge marine engine piston shaft is displayed in the immediate vicinity, illustrating in its turn the wide range covered by the achievements of the Swiss engineering industry.

**A Zurich advertising agency wins
important international award.**

The European Rizzoli Prize is well known in international advertising circles, for several times a year it awards a "gold press" for the best coloured advertisements. The competition is open to all European advertising agencies and offices and this time a big Zurich agency won this award, being the best of some 4,000 entries sent in by twenty or so countries. This agency's success can therefore be considered as concrete proof of the great vitality of advertising in Switzerland.

A Swiss secretary general for IPRA.

At the end of its Congress that has just closed in Tel Aviv, the International Public Relations Association (IPRA) nominated for the first time a Swiss to be in charge of its general secretariat, which is at the same time transferred to Geneva. The new Secretary General, Mr. Jean-Jacques Wyler, has for the last few years been general manager of a big European public relations agency of Genevese and Swiss origin. This move and this appointment are a tribute to the increasingly important part played by Switzerland on the international level in the growth of this flourishing profession.

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**Swiss investments
in the developing countries.**

A survey carried out in 1969 among leading Swiss industrial, commercial and insurance firms showed that Swiss private investments in the developing countries at the end of 1968 totalled the sum of 3,581 million francs (US \$833 million) i.e. 369 million (US \$85.8 million) more than in 1967. Of these 3,581 million (US \$833 million), 2,197 (US \$511) was invested in Latin America, 636 (US \$148) in Europe), 455 (US \$106) in Asia and 293 (US \$68) in Africa.

**Important work by Swiss
catering firm in Sweden.**

The Swiss firm of Kreis Co. Ltd., in St. Gall, has been asked by Food Plan International, an agency specialising in community catering, to organise the distribution of meals at Malmo university hospital. The system devised by Kreis makes it possible to serve the 2,400 patients and 1,500 hospital staff in less than an hour. In view of the success of this operation, Kreis Co. Ltd. has also been asked to organise the distribution of food in the biggest old people's home in Sweden. The Kreis research department is already working on the solution of other problems, including a project for the electronic heating of dishes by microwaves.

**George Wimpey and British
Brown-Boveri join in joint venture to
design and construct automated
warehouses**

George Wimpey and British
Brown-Boveri have entered a joint ven-

ture to carry out the design and construction of automated stores and warehouses and the associated civil and building work.

Wimpey—Brown-Boveri combine the 75 years experience of Brown-Boveri in the mechanical and electrical engineering fields with that of the George Wimpey organisation in carrying out construction and management contracts throughout the world.

This new association offers detailed analysis and recommendation for the design of new projects and the re-design of existing warehouses to automated levels. Engineering of material handling and conveyor systems, together with the automated stages of the warehouse to the client's requirements, is offered as well as the architectural design of the civil and building work with all services, procurement and construction of the complete industrial project.

The warehouse is an integral part of an organisation and a means of covering the differences, for example, between production and sales requirements. It permits purchase in economical quantities at favourable prices and also the holding of stock to cover market fluctuations.

Rising costs of stores personnel, shortage of floor space and inflexible plant production are but a few of the factors which influence the economic analysis in favour of the automated warehouse.

(Brown-Boveri)