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TECHNICAL ITEMS

Swiss Novelty in the Field of Education

In modern teaching practice, the use of questionnaires for the precise and objective testing of students' knowledge is becoming more and more widespread; while the process is very quick for students, who have only to put a check opposite the answers they consider right, it sometimes involves a considerable amount of tedious correction work for the teacher. With a view to simplifying this operation, a Swiss firm in Lausanne has produced a new device for setting and correcting questionnaires. This new apparatus was awarded a silver-gilt medal at the International Inventors Salon in Brussels. Made of aluminium and plastic, it is very light and fits easily into a briefcase. It consists of a special stand designed to hold a pile of tests and a set of perforated plates representing 4 different correction codes. As only the correct answers are visible, the work of correction becomes purely automatic and can be done very quickly without any risk of error. The apparatus also comprises a template for making up questionnaires; the instructions supplied with the instrument enable teachers to make up their own tests, in all subjects and at all levels.

Synoptic Charts in Mosaics

A Swiss firm at Wettingen, specialising in precision electroengineering and the construction of instruments, has produced a new system for making synoptic charts. It is a honeycomb type of construction, made by assembling press-drawn parts, enabling charts of any size to be made. The profiles can be obtained in 4 different sizes; their clever design makes it possible to fit them together very easily to form a stable and self-supporting chassis. It is possible to mount on it, at the spot required, all the control instruments and signalling devices as well as the necessary measuring and recording instruments. This system possesses many advantages: assembly being very simple, erection costs are considerably reduced, and it is sufficient to move the construction elements to enlarge or modify the synoptic chart. In addition, any risk of overheating is practically nil, owing to the high thermal conductivity of aluminium.

Swiss Ingenuity in the Field of Garbage Disposal

It looks more and more as though garbage cans will be replaced by garbage disposal bags, whose collection is much more rational. In Zurich, for example, garbage cans will not be allowed to be placed out on the public highway after March 1972. But it is not always an easy matter to fix up in

a kitchen the paper or plastic bag now used to hold the rubbish; visitors to the recent Pro Aqua-Pro Vita Exhibition in Basle were able to see for themselves the advantages offered by the new stand for garbage disposal bags put on the market by a Swiss metal goods factory at Langnau, Zurich. This appliance is easily mounted and bags of all sizes can be hooked onto it. It is moreover provided with a lid, which automatically covers the square opening as the cupboard door is closed. As a complement to this very useful accessory, the same firm has also started to manufacture a plastic fastener, which makes it possible not only to fasten the rubbish-filled plastic bags quickly and reliably but to carry them easily, by means of a loop, which even enables garbage disposal men to carry several bags at a time.

Great Success for Swiss Cattle Breeders

The Swiss Cattle Breeding Federations Committee and the Artificial Insemination Federation have made breeding history by exporting live sperm of the spotted and brown Simmental stocks to the United States. After satisfying a whole series of extremely strict requirements in the way of production and quarantine, the frozen sperm, stocked in 35 containers, finally left Switzerland for New York. In order to prevent the introduction of foot-and-mouth disease, which has been completely non-existent in the USA since 1929, imports of sperm, even of vaccinated bulls, were prohibited by law until quite recently. That is why it was necessary first of all to breed young non-vaccinated animals which, after a strict selection by American veterinarians, were placed in quarantine. Although the bulls have periodically been submitted to thorough veterinary examinations, the sperm will be tested again in the United States before being placed on the market. It is planned to use it there for crossing with butchery cattle of the Hereford, Aberdeen, Angus and Shorthorn stocks as well as with the milk producing strains.

Important Decision in the Swiss Fur Industry

The fur war, which mainly involved the spotted varieties of wild animals, will not be starting up again in Switzerland this year. Earlier in the year, on 8th May in fact, the Swiss Fur Industry's Association adhered unanimously to a general agreement, signed at the beginning of April after 2 years of negotiations between the International Federation for Trade in Furs (ITF) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as

well as the World Wild-Life Fund (WWF). Under the terms of this agreement, furriers agreed to give up buying and selling the hides of certain species of animals threatened with extinction. As far as Switzerland is concerned, this decision involves a voluntary agreement to give up trading in the furs of animals whose existence is threatened as well as to label all stocks. The scheme is binding on all members of the association, i.e. the vast majority of fur wholesalers and retailers in the country. It is scheduled to come into force on 1st September next.

Two Million Private Cars on Switzerland's Roads by 1980

The number of vehicles in Switzerland having increased by 8.2% during 1970, there are now 1,338,000 private cars in the country. The degree of motorisation varies greatly however from one part of the country to the other; whereas there is one car per 2.9 inhabitants in Geneva, the figure is only one car per 7.5 inhabitants in the canton of Appenzell Inner-Rhodes. Since the end of the war, the number of private cars has increased by over 1,900%; according to recent forecasts, the number will probably be in the neighbourhood of 1.8 million by 1975 and 2 million by 1980. During the last year, imports of cars increased by 13.8% — 227,454 vehicles. Imports from Japan — 15,028 cars in 1970 — grew by 149%; the proportion of automobile imports from EEC countries increased by 1% to reach the figure of 73.4% of the total imports while that from EFTA countries fell from 21.7 to 17.6%.

TV Advertising in Switzerland

During the year 1970, the German-, French- and Italian-speaking networks of the Swiss Television Company broadcast the advertising spots of 434 firms, publicising 684 products. Compared with 1967, this represents an increase of 106 firms and 70 products. On an average, each advertising film was broadcast 10.63 times, each product being presented by 1.9 sequences. With regard to the length of broadcasts, foodstuffs came first with 23.4% of the total time, followed by household articles (14.47%), washing and cleaning products (14.5%), etc. Out of every 100 TV spots broadcast, 46.8 lasted 20 seconds, 46 lasted 30 seconds, 5.8 took 40 seconds and 1.4 a minute. As a result of the increase in the cost of living and the continually growing number of TV licences, a minute's advertising is to be increased quite considerably; as from 1972, a minute's advertising, broadcast to the whole of Switzerland, will cost Fr. 10,700 instead of Fr. 7,900.

(OSEC)