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Swissair won't buy the Concorde

Swissair has been known for a long time to consider the Concorde as a technically good plane but not conforming to its particular requirements. In a recent statement to the A.T.S., company officials have confirmed that Swissair's position had not changed and that the purchase of the Concorde in its present state is definitely not envisaged. They said that Swissair has kept a very close watch on the technical developments of the aircraft and arrived at the conclusion that its economic prospects were limited on the Zurich-New York route, which Concorde could not cover with full passenger and freight loads. The officials said that the range of the aircraft, too small for that route, had been designed to satisfy French and British requirements. The number of passengers for Zurich-New York would have to be reduced by a third. They referred to feasibility studies by B.O.A.C. which showed that to be profitable, Concorde had to make two daily flights with 60 per cent occupation factor and passengers paying 50 per cent more than on Jumbo jets. They emphasised that Swissair is an entirely independent company and can't indulge in any pro-European bias in its choice of new aircraft. This choice was based on entirely commercial considerations.

RACING

Regazzoni—champion of obstruction

The Swiss Clay Regazzoni driving a Ferrari, came second in the German Grand Prix at the Nurburgring in late July. The winner was the Belgian Jackie Ickx. Jackie Stewart, the present World Champion, deserved at least the second place but was consistently prevented from reaching it so by a crafty Regazzoni, who used all the tricks of his trade and the windy circuit of the Nurburgring in preventing the British champion from overtaking him. There followed a vehement off course argument between the two drivers, which the Swiss Press hardly related.

ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL ITEMS

Revolution in the welding of plastics

A screwcutting and precision engineering firm at Le Landeron (Neuchatel, Switzerland) has perfected new welding pliers for plastics, bringing this delicate work within everyone's reach. These pliers, which are extremely simple and quick to use, make it possible to weld end to end perfectly, plastic profiles, belts, joints, etc. This instrument possesses many advantages the belts are guided in bushes (which are available for any profile desired) thus ensuring perfect parallelism, while a knife mounted on the pliers, makes it possible to cut the ends perfectly square. The ends to be welded never come in contact with the heating blade, the heat being transmitted only to the part of the belt protruding out of the bush; in this way it is possible to avoid any hardening of the plastic and, consequently, any molecular deformation. With this new system the belt no longer slides over the pulley, does not become heated and does not stretch; in this way it is also possible to weld a perfect bow.

The sole Agency of the product has been entrusted to Messrs Aiguard Ltd., of 60 Lillie Road, London, S.W.6., and the Sales will be supervised by its Managing Director, Mr. W. W. Landauer (Swiss) which we feel sure will ensure success.

World PR Congress in Switzerland in 1973

The Committee of the Swiss Public Relations Association has agreed to organise the next World Public Relations Congress, from 16th

to 19th April, 1973, in Geneva, home of the International Public Relations Association secretariat. After Belgium, Italy, Canada, Brazil and Israel, Switzerland will therefore be welcoming public relations specialists from some 46 countries. The growing importance of public relations in private enterprises and public life will make this congress an event of international importance.

Independent lighting system

A Swiss firm in Geneva recently put on the market a new independent lighting system, called "Mobel", which won a silver medal at the last Inventors Salon in Brussels. This new system consists of a lighting unit mounted on a trailer weighing 693 lb. in all; the actual lighting equipment comprises a telescopic, tilting mast, adjustable for heights up to 80 ft., and an electricity generating set whose power is adapted to the group of floodlights used. This equipment offers many advantages. It can be put into operation extremely quickly, since it takes only one minute to mount the whole installation. In addition, the floodlight—or set of floodlights—can be pointed in all directions and operated by remote control from the ground. Depending on requirements, loudspeakers or aerials can also be fitted to the masts. This new mobile equipment therefore offers great scope; it is particularly useful to municipal authorities, whether for fire brigades, roadwork, sports events, etc.

Revolution in Supermarkets

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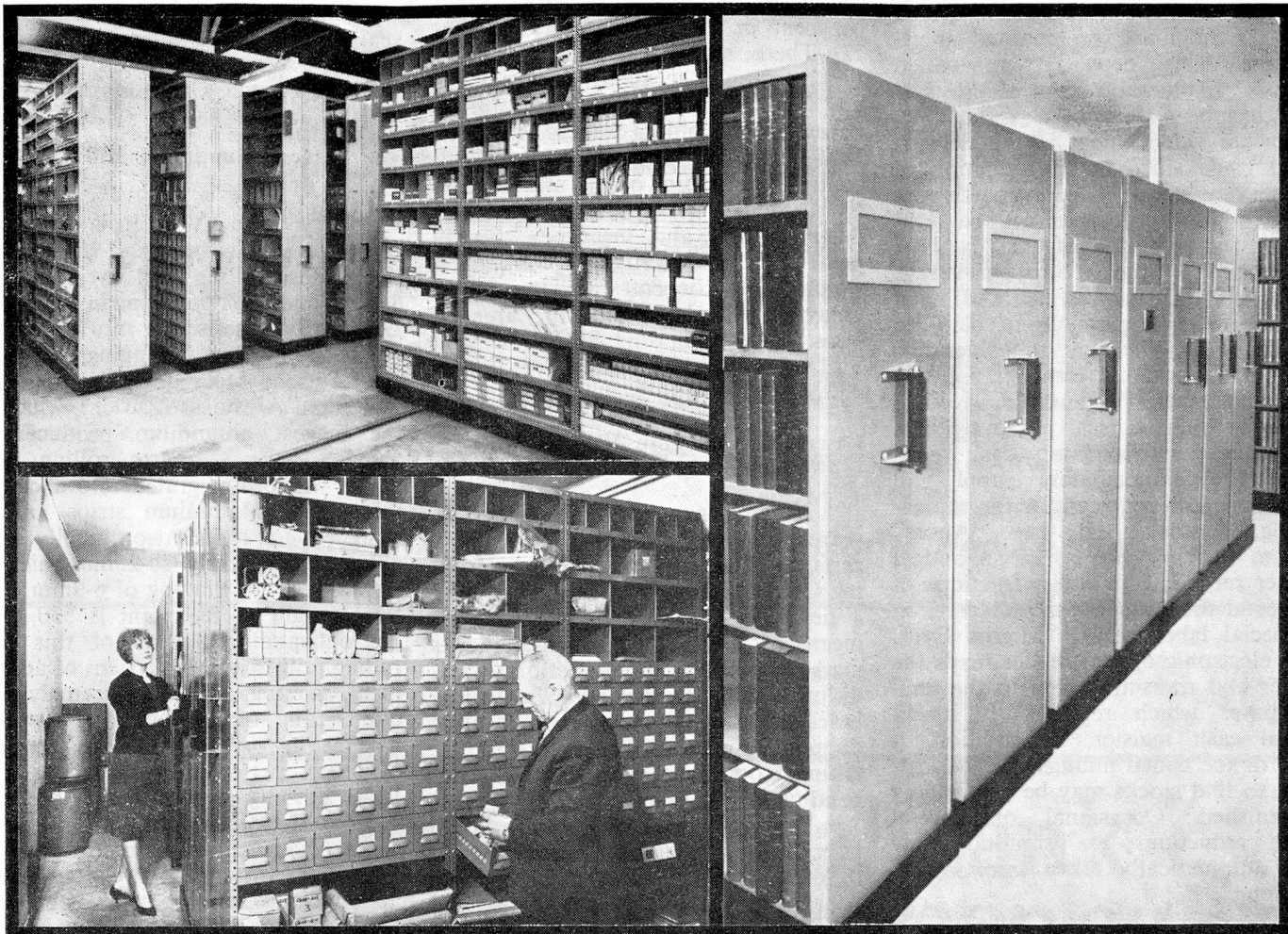
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ich, Switzerland), whose achievements in the field of industrial electronics and the construction of precision engineering appliances are famous all over the world, have designed a system that will revolutionise supermarkets. The latest of the firm's departments, Datatronic, at Hombrechtikon has, in co-operation with the Migros Federation of Co-operative Societies, produced the first system of electronic automatic cash registers requiring no manual intervention. This new system, called "Aposs" (Automatic point of sale system) has been described as the most important achievement in the field of retail trade since the introduction of self-service stores. The new cash registers, whose prototypes will be tried out during a period of two to three months in a Migros Supermarket at Greifensee (Zurich, Switzerland), and should make it possible to step up speed and efficiency considerably, without any risk of error in registration and at the same time avoiding annoying long waits at pay-out points so frequent with ordinary cash registers. They immediately supply all necessary data required for the replenishing of stocks. The new "Aposs" system works by means of an optical reader recording in a few fractions of a second the coded figures marked on a special label, called "Migros Eye". The electronic optical reader reads the prices and transmits them to the final computer which replaces the traditional cash register. In addition, it records the coded numbers of the articles, so that stocks may be continually replenished. Occasional or special price reductions are simultaneously and automatically taken into consideration.

Longines at Munich

The Swiss watch factory Longines (Bienne, Berne), which has been made responsible for the official timing of 12 events at the Munich Olympic Games, recently presented to members of the sports press some of its technical novelties, which are a real masterpiece of inventiveness and precision. For the first time in the history of timing—this will be the Swiss firm's 6th Olympics—use has been made of electronic visual recording and closed circuit television. In case of any technical breakdown or defect, the latter would enable the event to be followed on a small TV screen which would indicate the results to the nearest hundredth of a second. As this monitor can show views in slow motion and can be stopped for as long as one wants, judges and referees will find it of invaluable assistance. Whether in swimming, water-polo, cycling, basketball, judo, wrestling, weight-lifting, boxing, gymnastics, fencing or handball, the Swiss firm, which will share

the timing with a German firm, will provide a service whose perfection will undoubtedly match the whole careful planning of the Munich Games.

Record computer growth

The growth of computers, a good yardstick for measuring the rationalisation in the economy, reached 16.5 per cent in Switzerland during 1971-72. There are 1,817 computers and 1,432 computer terminals in the country. The value of this hardware is estimated at 3 billion francs. The firms IBM, Univac and Honeywell-Bull control 84 per cent of the market, and NCR 12 per cent. The machine industry, banks and insurance use 62 per cent of available computers, which are concentrated in north-eastern Switzerland. But the area of fastest growth in this field is central Switzerland.

Lasers Revolutionise Watchmaking

At the inauguration of its Research Institute at Thun (Berne, Switzerland), the Swiss firm of Pierre Holding Co. Ltd. (Bienne, Berne) presented a new process for drilling jewels by means of lasers. This new system has made it possible to revolutionise traditional methods consisting in drilling holes in jewels by means of ultrafine diamond tipped drills, an operation taking from two to ten minutes, depending on the case.

Today, with the most up-to-date laser drilling equipment, it is possible to drill 10 to 12 jewels per second, probably twenty in the near future, and a team consisting of an operator and two assistants is capable of producing in about eight hours an output equivalent to that of some 120 jewel drillers using ordinary drills.

Today lasers are used for 70% of Switzerland's total output of jewels with holes bored in them. In addition, the adaptation of the laser to the problem of drilling jewels in watchmaking has resulted in a reduction in production costs, as well as an improvement in the quality due to an increase in drilling accuracy and a decrease in waste without adversely affecting the properties of the material thanks to the extraordinary power of convergence of the laser beam.

A New Series Devoted to the Creative Arts

A Swiss publishing firm in Geneva recently launched a new series of books intended to familiarise the public with the creative arts today, the emphasis being placed on their relation to different sectors such as industry or craft-

work. These very interesting and abundantly illustrated books allow a large circle of amateurs, collectors and even professionals, to follow the birth and evolution of a work of art. The first volume of the series, devoted to lithography, acquaints the reader with this comparatively recent craft; in the second, he sees reborn before his eyes the ancient art of tapestry, while in the third he learns all about casting statuary, a process dating back some 7000 years. Other titles will soon be added to this series, published in three versions, French, German and English.

The Biggest Aluminium Mill

Very soon, Von Roll Co. Ltd. (Gerlafingen, Switzerland) will deliver the biggest rolling mill ever built in Switzerland. It is being made for LMG, Leichtmetallgesellschaft mbH at Essen (Germany), a firm belonging jointly to the Deutsche Metallgesellschaft (Frankfurt) and Alusuisse (Zurich), which is the biggest aluminium producer in Europe. It is a quarto rolling mill, which will be integrated into a circuit for casting aluminium strips and is designed to reduce continually cast aluminium sheeting 20-25mm thick to a thickness for winding of 6-9mm. The total weight of the plant is 530 tons. An outstanding feature of this new rolling mill is its new system of adjustment, making possible extremely precise setting of the cylinder position. The setting of the distance between cylinders, perfected by Telequest Co. Ltd., Zurich, uses a magneto-electric run detector which, without any direct contact with the band, records variations in the distance between cylinders, and thickness of the strip, of as little as 1/10th of a micron and makes the necessary corrections with great precision through the use of servo-valves and positioning jacks.

Clients of the Swiss Chemical Industry

In 1971 the fifteen biggest clients of the Swiss chemical industry accounted for 66.4% of this sector's total output, i.e. some 3.2 billion francs' worth. The fifteen comprise West Germany (11.8%), France (10.4%), Germany (11.8%), France (10.4%), Great Britain (6.6%), the United States (5.8%) and Japan (4.5%), followed by (5.8%) and Japan (4.5%), followed by Austria, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, Brazil, Yugoslavia, Australia and Canada, each with less than 4%. Within the space of one year, exports of Swiss chemical products have increased by 10%, amounting last May to 474 million francs, compared with 430 million in May 1971. The biggest increase occurred in the organic chemical products sectors (+17 million) and dyestuffs (+19 million).

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