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BUSINESS NEWS

OPTICAL SIGNALS FOR INDICATING TELEPHONE CALLS: A SWISS NOVELTY

By means of a small apparatus recently developed in Switzerland, it is possible to replace the ringing of the telephone or the doorbell by light signals. This optical signal is particularly useful in all cases where a bell cannot be easily heard owing to the ambient noise or the distance, or where it is not wanted because it is disturbing. "Visotel", a small plastic case the size of the table telephone set under which it is placed, is provided with light signals on all four sides. It has only to be plugged into the 220 volt mains, without any need for a connection between the light signal and the telephone, for it to convert the ringing sound into an optical signal.

NEW ELECTRONIC METAL AND REINFORCEMENT DETECTOR

A Swiss firm has developed an electronic reinforcement detector which makes it possible (without any need for demolition) to locate reinforcements in a finished work or building elements such as pipes, electric cables, shaft covers, etc. Two probes make this handy portable instrument a rapid and reliable means of dealing with even the most difficult locating and measuring problems. The Profometer allows the determination of position, direction and quantity of main and secondary reinforcement rods, the exact measurement of concrete cover up to 12 cm thick even with densely packed reinforcement and to estimate the diameter of a rod. A selective spot probe of high resolution with a closely bundled influence field is used to measure concrete cover up to 6 cm thick with a minimum of error even with rods of unknown diameter or groups of rods. For measurements in the range of 6 to 12 cm, the Profometer is fitted with a special depth probe. With both probes, the thickness of the concrete cover can be read off directly on the indicating instrument.

NEW TEACHING MACHINE OF SWISS DESIGN

After developing an audio-visual teaching machine of an entirely new design for training its own personnel, a Swiss firm decided to place this machine on the market. Thanks to the use of the latest technological developments and in particular a micro-processor, the "Logos", as it is called, shows great versatility and offers many possibilities of use. It has the additional advantage of making it possible to tailor educational programmes to precise needs, perfectly suited to the level and requirements of the individual student; by means of a push button, the student can, for example, regulate his rate of work, stop the programme to consult documents, skip chapters or go back. The insertion keys enable him to feed numerical answers into the machine, while the teacher can ask questions with multiple choice type answers, limit the time allowed for answering, or display on a screen an evaluation of the results and the progress made. The tape recorder has been specially designed so that any given passage can be rapidly found on the tape and even located to the nearest syllable.



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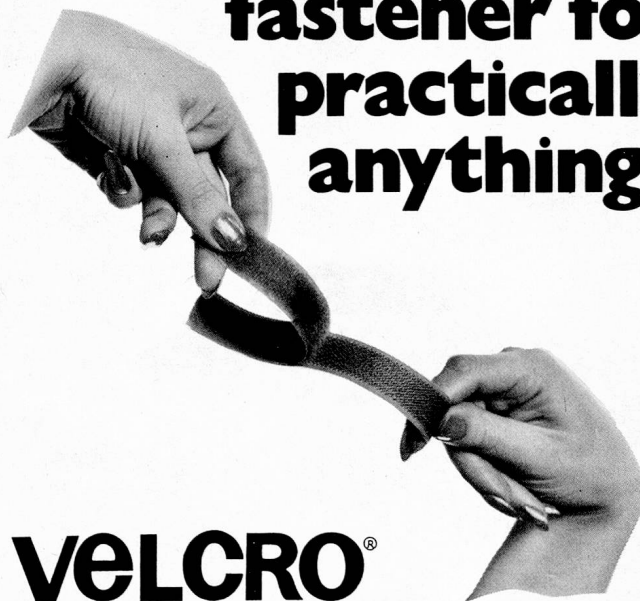
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SUCCESS OF SWISS FIRMS IN SAUDI ARABIA

In spite of keen American and Japanese competition, the Swiss firm Brown, Boveri & Co. won the order for the turnkey delivery of two electric power stations with gas turbines, one at Jeddah and the other in the neighbourhood of Mecca. The firm will supply nine gas turbines in all, representing a value of 220 million francs, with a total power of 652.5 MW.

The Swiss services company Suter + Suter Co. Ltd. has received an order from the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (Saudi National Bank), for the planning of five branches of this bank at Buraidah, Taif, Tabuk, Abha and Gizan. The Swiss firm has worked out a special plan for the occupation of the space, each branch comprising the following sectors: management, administration, special departments such as statistics office, library, bookkeeping with computer, strongroom, entrance lobby, place for prayers, customer counters, technical services; in each case, the size of the branch depending on the size of the town served.

Finally, a Franco-Swiss building

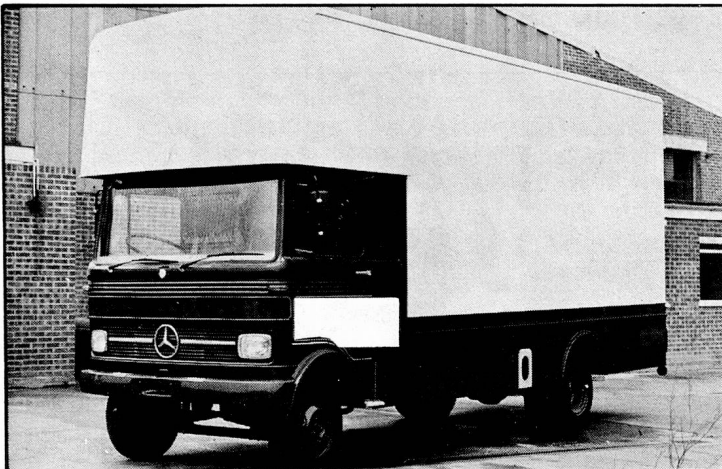
consortium comprising, for Switzerland: Zschokke, Frutiger & Sons Co. Ltd., Hatt-Haller Co. Ltd., Preiswerk Co. Ltd. and Locher & Co. Ltd., has been awarded a contract worth a billion Swiss francs for the construction of the infrastructures at Dharan airport in Saudi Arabia. The Swiss share of the total amounts to one third and the work is scheduled to take three years.

GIANT MACHINE FOR THE UNITED STATES

A Swiss firm, the Maag Gear Works, Zurich, will shortly deliver the largest and highest speed gearcutting machine ever built. It has been ordered by the biggest producer of plant for cement works in the United States, Fuller Company at Allentown (Pennsylvania). With a net weight of 200 tonnes, this machine makes it possible to cut wheels with exterior diameters of up to 12 metres. The largest teeth are almost 13 cm wide. The Swiss manufacturer will also deliver at least six more machines of this type, whose selling price, depending on the equipment, will lie between seven and nine million francs.

NEW AUTOMATIC FETTLING SYSTEM

The new automatic fettling systems presented by a Swiss firm at the last International Foundry Fair in Düsseldorf constitute a new step towards the complete automatization of the finishing of castings. Each "Coronex" installation consists of a centralised electronic control panel, a hydraulic group and from three to six work units. As each unit can be operated independently from the others, it is possible to treat different parts simultaneously. Although each installation has several units each carrying out the work of a fettler, only one operator is needed to load the parts, inspect them and get the units ready for the machining of a new type of part. Before each operation, the variations in size between parts of a same series are automatically measured by means of electronic detectors which make the necessary corrections to the programme set. The machining of the unfinished parts is done by milling and nibbling, which does away with the problems of noise and dust as well as the risk of accident. The installation is also ideally suited to datum faces milling as well as the removal of machining allowances.



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