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BUSINESS NEWS

ARIANE – SWISS PARTICIPATION

Switzerland is one of the ten European countries that played an active part in the development of the carrier rocket Ariane. In effect, a consortium of Swiss firms, going by the name of "Swiss aerospace Consortium", designed, then built the shield destined to protect the satellite carried by the rocket during lift-off as well as during its passage through the layers of the atmosphere. In addition, the leading company in the Swiss consortium Contraves Co. Ltd., supplied the two universal cinetheodolite installations, set up at Kourou in French Guinea, to observe as well as measure the movements of Ariane during its flight. The Compagnie industrielle Radioélectrique for its part delivered the back-up system on the ground; it also installed at Belen and Natal in Brazil the back-up electronics used for following the rocket and placing it on orbit.

MOTOR CONTROL CENTRES FOR VENEZUELA

A Swiss firm recently delivered 1.2 million Swiss francs' worth of equipment to Andino Co. Ltd., the biggest cement works in Venezuela. The shipment comprised motor control centres in the NS 3 range, complying with international standards governing low voltage appliance set-ups assembled in the works. The Vuiteboeuf (Vaud) branch of the company manufactured the strong current MCC (Motor Control Centre) cells which, from a central control panel, command all the operations for the automatic running of the motors for conveyor belts, ovens, hoppers, etc. The main firm at Aarau supplied the high voltage equipment and the distributive part of the computer. The main advantages of this set-up are the speed and facility with which changes of working parts can be made. In addition, the adaptation of the functions to new conditions does not require the rest of the plant to be stopped. The systems are built so as to allow the mounting of all combinations in an economic manner. Motor control centres are also used in other fields, such as for example in energy production, the chemical industry, food-processing factories, the textile and paper industries, and the protection of the environment, as well as in public services such as hospitals and schools.

MORE AND MORE PRIVATE CARS

In spite of the atmosphere of uncertainty caused by difficulties in the way of obtaining fuel, the possibility of a speed limit on the roads, the big increase in the price of petrol and the smaller increase in the price of cars, the figures issued by the Federal Statistics Office indicate that there were 2.154 million private cars on the roads in Switzerland at the end of September 1979, i.e. 100,000 or 4.8 per cent more than the year before. Thus, the renewed demand observed since 1976 became even more marked in 1979. From October 1978 to September 1979, some 290,000 new private cars were put on the roads, i.e. 13.2% more than during the same period of the previous year, thus beating the previous record of 257,000 new licences in the year 1971/72. The biggest supplier of cars to Switzerland is West Germany, which delivered 44% of the private cars licensed in Switzerland, followed by France 20%, Italy 11.1%, Japan 9.1%, Great Britain 7.2%, Sweden 4.4%, the United States 2.8% and other countries 1.2%. 70% of the cars have a cubic capacity of 1151–2250 cm³ (6 to 11.5 taxable HP), about 20% less than 1150 cm³ and 10% more than 2250 cm³. Furthermore, 37% of the cars are equipped with front-wheel drive and 1.2% have four-wheel drive. Only 0.3% run on diesel and 12.6% have automatic transmission.

PELTON TURBINES FOR LATIN AMERICA

After the delivery of five Pelton turbines to the "Instituto Nacional de Electrificación" for the Pueblo Viejo plant in Guatemala, the Swiss and German works of the Escher Wyss Co. Ltd. group last year received further orders from Latin America. The "Compañía Anónima de Administración y Fomento Eléctrico" in Caracas has ordered two 6-nozzled Pelton turbines, as well as their spherical valves of 2,500 mm in diameter, for the San Agaton hydro-electric power station in Venezuela. Each turbine develops a power of 174.5 MW. The six water jets make contact with the runner buckets 450 times a second and have a world-record diameter of 365 mm. The head is 383 m. For the San Carlos hydraulic power station in Colombia, at present under construction, the "Interconexión Eléctrica SA" of Medellín has ordered 4 Pelton turbines with a rating of 174.4 MW each, including the spherical valves. The speed of rotation is 300 revs/minute and the head 585 m.

NEWS IN BRIEF

— The Swiss firm *Hayek Engineering Co. Ltd.* has just received an important order from the Ministry of Industry in the Republic of *Nigeria*. It has been commissioned to supervise the technical and administrative execution of the work during the construction of three rolling mills in the towns of Jos, Oshogbo and Katsina. The capacity of each rolling mill will start at 210,000 tonnes of metal per year and gradually be raised to 630,000 tonnes. Production is due to start in the course of 1982.

— The Swiss Machinery factory *Willy Bachofen Co. Ltd.* in Basle, which produces the *Dynomill* grinding mills used in the manufacture of agrochemicals, pigments, dyestuffs and chemicals, recently purchased the Danish firm of *Diaf A/S in Copenhagen*, specialising in the manufacture of solvents, mixers and equipment for the lacquer and dyestuffs industries.

— *Brown Boveri & Co. and Philips Co. Ltd.* have been co-operating since 1st January 1980 in the Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) sector. A joint branch, in which the two firms each have a 50 per cent share, has its headquarters at Lenzburg in the canton of Aargau (Switzerland). It handles the development, manufacture and sale of LCDs as well as display units.

— *Plascon Co. Ltd.* at Münchenstein, specialising in airconditioning, has purchased the Canadian company, *Nortec Air Conditioning Industries*, Ottawa. (*Plascon AG, Heiligholzstrasse 6, CH-4142 Münchenstein*)

— In 1979, traffic through the *Great St. Bernard tunnel* between Switzerland and Italy, totalled the record figure of 613,338 vehicles, an increase of 10.4 per cent compared with 1978 and 16.4 per cent compared with 1977, topping for the first time the 600,000 mark. As far as the breakdown of the clientele by nationalities is concerned, Switzerland comes first (43 per cent), followed by Italy (22 per cent), then Germany (14.5 per cent), France (9 per cent) and the Benelux (8 per cent).

— With the assistance of *Swissair*, the town of Geneva is going to send two pairs of swans to *Sri Lanka* to replace the loss of those given seven years ago. They will be housed in the *Dehiwela* zoological gardens. According to *Singhalese* mythology, these graceful birds were formerly denizens of this island. Today there are none; nor are there any more lions.