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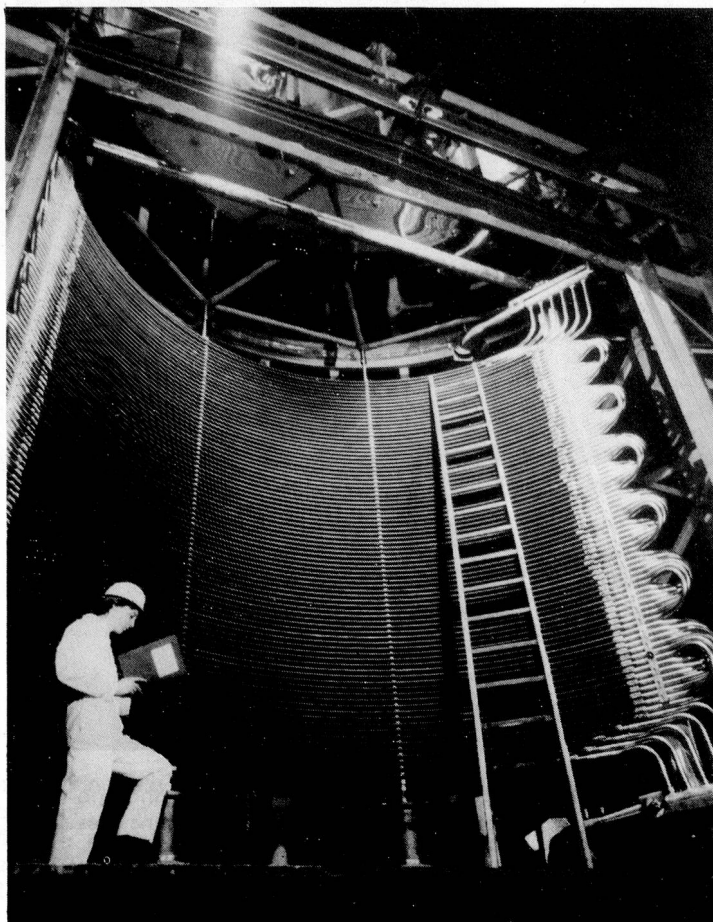
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Power from sunshine

PICTURED here is the heart of a solar energy power plant now being built by Sulzer of Winterthur in Southern Spain. Financial support for the giant project – in which eight other countries are involved – is being provided by the Swiss National Energy Research Fund.

Sulzer have been commissioned to build two of the major components. One is the centrepiece of the installation, the receiver, which collects solar rays reflected by 93 heliostats. It is also the part with the highest temperature – 530° Centigrade.

Sodium contained in the tubes that make up the receiver is heated by the solar rays and then flows to a steam generator. Here water is converted to steam, which in turn passes its energy to a steam engine which drives a generator to produce electricity.



Balance dipping into red

FOR the first time since 1965 the balance of payments in Switzerland may show a current account deficit in 1980, though most observers expect the downward trend to be arrested in 1981.

The OECD forecasts that GDP growth will decelerate in 1981 to not more than 1.25 per cent, with a consequent slight rise in unemployment from its current very low level of 0.2 per cent of the working population.

Prices will continue to be affected by the recent oil-price rises, but continued monetary restraint is likely to contain inflation below 4 per cent.

Despite the absence of oil resources and rising energy costs the Swiss economy will remain one of the strongest in the world.

The authorities are likely to continue to regard controlling

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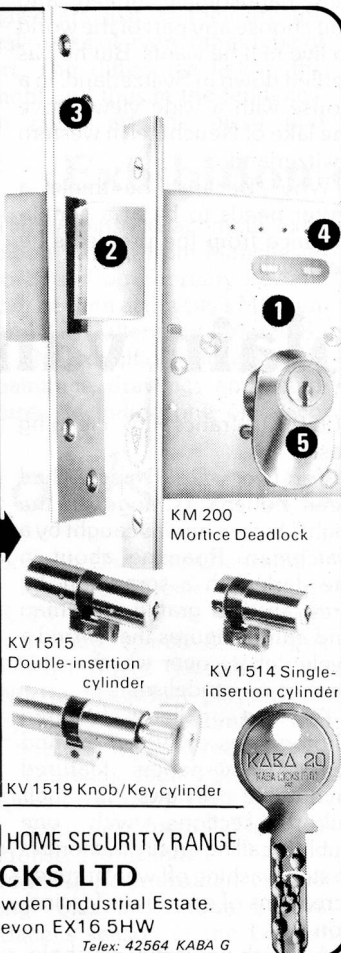
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inflation as the main priority. Although their conservative policies will inevitably mean a further period of slow growth, unemployment seems unlikely to present problems on the scale faced by other Western economies. — **National Westminster Bank economic report.**

Enter the Swiss Eiger

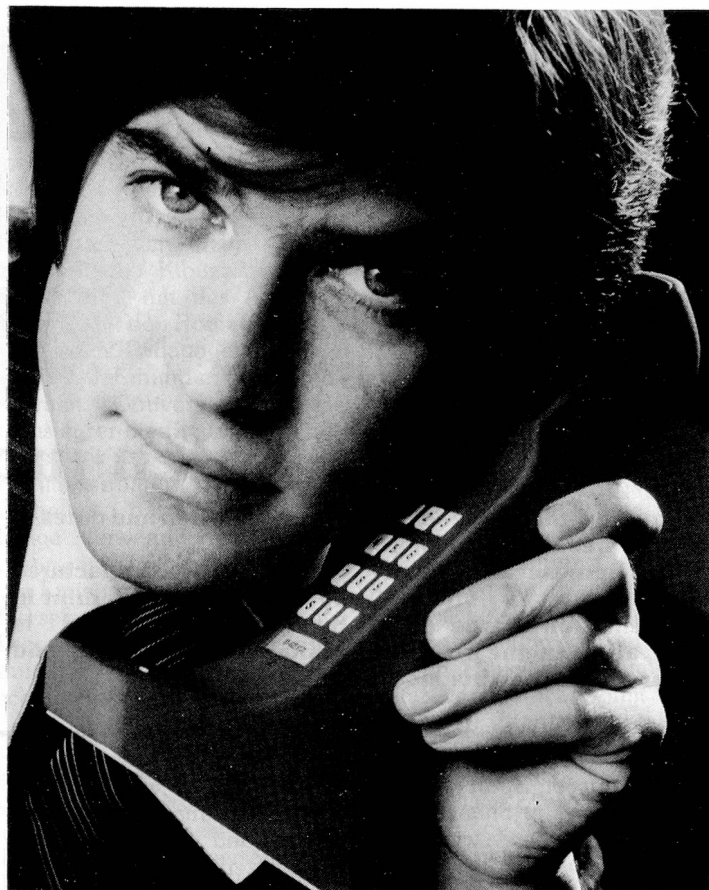
A revolutionary-styled Swiss-made telephone is to be offered to telephone subscribers by British Telecom. It goes on show for the first time this month at the Ideal Home Exhibition at Earls Court Olympia.

Called the Eiger, it is made by Gfeller Telecommunications of Switzerland. It is an upright all-in-one phone, with a memory, and a press-button keypad built-in to the body instead of a dial.

It has a new, textured matt finish, making it pleasant to hold.

Version one, for ordinary exchange lines, has a silence button which cuts off the transmitter — useful for making asides. Colours are red, two-tone brown and stone, suitable for residential and office use.

Version two, for use as an extension from an office switchboard, replaces the silence button with a recall button. This version comes only in dark grey.



Both versions store the last number called and will call it again automatically if the memory button is pressed.

Telephone subscribers will be able to obtain the Eiger for an initial payment of £27 plus the £2 per quarter extra rental.

Customers will be able to take their Swiss telephone with them when they move — Telecom will disconnect and reconnect.

Coming exhibitions

March 1-4	Lausanne	Palais de Beaulieu: SPISO, professional trade show for toys and souvenirs
March 5-15	Geneva	Palais des expositions: 51st international motor show
March 7/8	Neuchâtel	Poststamps exhibition and exchange
March 8-10	Lausanne	Palais de Beaulieu: SERATEX, buying week for ladies, gentlemen and children's wear
March 11-13	Zurich	Züsä: SEMICON EUROPA 81
March 13-22	Zurich	Züsä: PHOTOEXPO '81, international photo and film exhibition
March 19-23	Lausanne	Palais de Beaulieu: 23rd International tourism and holiday fair
March 20-29	Lucerne	Transport Museum: LURABA, 1st international aerophilately and astrophilately exhibition
March 21-29	Basel	Muba: KAM, 22nd art and antiques fair of Switzerland
March 23-April 2	Flims-Waldhaus	16th Interfunk bourse
March 24-28	Basel	Muba: DIDACTA, european educational materials fair
March 26-April 5	Lucerne	VINIFERA, Wine exhibition on ships
March 29	Solothurn	Reithalle: Rams and breeding ewes market

Dr Angus Cumming

THE managing director of the pigments division of Ciba-Geigy Plastics and Additives Company, Dr Angus R. Cumming, died last month.

Born in Glasgow in 1941, he studied chemistry at Glasgow University and went on to get a PhD in chemical technology at the University of Strathclyde. He then left Britain to work for the British Council in Brazil, teaching chemical reactor design. Then in 1968 he joined Geigy in Basle as a plant chemist at Schweizerhalle.

For two years he was involved in the production of plastics additives.

He returned to the UK in 1977 to become manufacturing director of the industrial chemicals division of Ciba-Geigy Plastics and Additives Company in Manchester, and in 1979 was made managing director of the company's pigments division in Paisley, Scotland.

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Telex goes Arabic

MANY leading figures in Arab diplomatic and financial circles attended the presentation by Reuters in Geneva of the first news service to receive the news in Arabic by telex. This has been made possible by a new teleprinter produced by the Swiss firm of Hasler.

This apparatus is equipped with a standard interface which enables it to connect all medium and large capacity memories, such as floppy disks and magnetic tape memories. Subscribers to Reuters new service receive over a period of 17 hours every day the latest news of the Arab world. Over 100 reports drafted by Arab journalists in the Middle East arrive daily in Switzerland and via London.

Omega goes to China

AN Omega centre was recently inaugurated in Shanghai. It consists of an after-sales service department for Omega and Tissot watches, made up entirely of Chinese watch repairers trained by a Swiss specialist. There is also a sales department and a show window.

Omega watches have been sold in China since the end of the 19th century. In addition, the relations established by the Swiss firm's timekeepers with

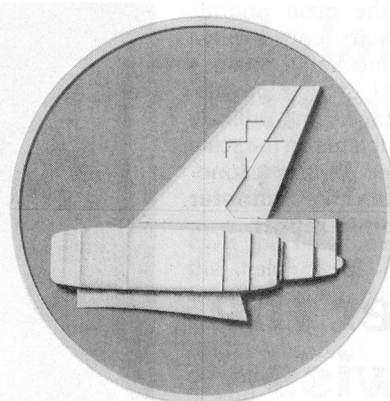
THE golden jubilee of Swissair - which was formed on March 26, 1931 - will be marked by the issue of a special medal. The design by the Bernese artist Kurt Wirth shows a stylised representation of the controls and engine of an airplane on the observe side,

the Ministry of Sport at the national games in Shanghai in 1979 and the swimming championships last year have contributed to the successful development of business relations with the People's Republic of China.

The Longines Watch Company has also inaugurated a watch repair centre in the heart of Shanghai.

In 1979, Switzerland sold about 800,000 watches and movements to China, which is now 15th in the order of exports of the Swiss watch industry.

In the last 12 months tourists in Switzerland spent Sfr. 280 million on purchases of watches and jewels. On average tourists devote about 50 per cent of their holiday budget on expenses other than accommodation, food and transport.



Golden jubilee medal

with inscription and dates of the reverse.

The medal is manufactured by the Valcambi SA mint in Balerna, Ticino, and is available in gold, silver, and bronze.

Next month's Swiss Observer will contain a special supplement about the Swissair jubilee, with a nostalgic look back at what aviation was like in those pioneering days 50 years ago.

Apart from watches and jewels, it is mainly chocolate, tobacco and various souvenirs that Switzerland's foreign visitors buy to take home with them.

New hotel chain planned

NESTLÉ Limited, the multinational food producer, and Swissair have agreed to establish jointly an international first class hotel chain based in Switzerland. An operating company named Swissair-Nestlé Hotel Limited has been set up with headquarters in Kloten near Zurich airport. The initial capital amounts to 1.5 million Swiss francs, with each partner contributing half.

In the first 10 years the chain is intended to comprise 10 to 15 hotels of which not more than four will be in Switzerland.

With this promising project Swissair and Nestlé are extending abroad the old-established Swiss hotel tradition. Swissair-Nestlé Hotel Limited will benefit from the international expertise of both parent companies.

Initially the newly-founded company will operate three hotels in Switzerland, the International in Zurich, the President in Geneva and the Bellevue-Palace in Berne. Arrangements for a hotel in New York are in the final stages.

This co-operation agreement neither affects Swissair's engagement in the Penta hotel group nor the hotels belonging to the Nestlé group in the United States.

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