

Swiss Spotlight

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SWISS SPOTLIGHT.

By PIERRE BÉGUIN.

Swiss industry is now at a turning-point in its existence — the atom. Everything possible must be done to enable our country to occupy an important position in the atomic industry. In order that this may be achieved, it is necessary that scientific research be made the object of very close collaboration on the part of the universities, among which this task must be distributed in a rational manner. Industry cannot, by itself, assume all the cost of technical experiments; it needs, and will continue to need, subsidies from the State. On the other hand, there is no question of our country being obliged to make up for the considerable delay which it has shown in the domain of pure research. What is essential is that Swiss industry should direct its efforts above all towards the perfecting of the processes for the *application* of nuclear science. We have already started along the way of the atomic turning-point — an experimental atomic reactor has been functioning for about two years at Wuerenlingen, in the canton of Aargau; moreover, a company in French-speaking Switzerland, the "Energie nucléaire S.A.", is planning to build another reactor near Lucens, in the canton of Vaud.

It is all the more important for Switzerland to succeed in taking the atomic turning, because our economy "missed the bus", so to speak, in regard to electronics. It has been realised recently that Switzerland either did not try properly or was not able to take her proper place in the European and World electronic industry. Yet, as a result of her technical traditions, she was well prepared for the manufacture of sound radio and television sets, radar equipment, appliances for regulating and timing, and panels for telecontrol, not to mention calculating machines. It is true that Swiss industry manufactures all these, but electronic goods are not at the head of our exports. Other countries — Holland, for example — have occupied this place successfully. It is not a matter of bemoaning the opportunity missed by our economy. What must be done, rather, is to apply to the future, to the atomic future, that spirit of initiative which has made it possible for Switzerland to conquer an appreciable position for herself, up to recent years, in other fields of industry.

By consulting the Swiss export statistics for the first few years of the present century, we find that, at that time, our country possessed three specialities, namely embroidery, watches and silk fabrics. To-day, the four most important groups of our exports on the World Market are constituted by machinery, watches, and chemical and pharmaceutical products and instruments and appliances. From this it will be seen that, whilst watchmaking has retained its importance, embroidery and silks have been ousted by more recent industries. This change leads us to the conclusion that, among other things, the men at the head of our national economy have, during the course of the last fifty years, proved capable of foreseeing and even of anticipating the evolution which took place, in order to preserve a place for Switzerland on the World Markets. In those branches of trade where the variations of fashion or the appearance of strong foreign competition threatened to compromise the acquired positions, efforts were made immediately to

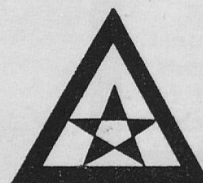
invent or to find replacements for the items concerned. That is why — except for some short periods of economic crisis — Swiss labour has never been deprived of work. Put differently, the heads of Swiss business undertakings have proved capable of following the turn of economic and technical evolution. Let us hope that the same thing will occur, very rapidly, also, in the domain of atomic industry and engineering.

SWISSAIR ORDERS BRITISH-BUILT CONVAIR 880 FLIGHT SIMULATOR.

Swissair has ordered an electronic flight simulator from Redifon Limited, of Crawley, Sussex, to be used to train crews for its Convair 880 jet liners. The flight simulator will be delivered in May 1960. It will be used to train pilots and flight engineers of both Swissair and SAS (Scandinavian Airlines System). Swissair has on order five Convair 880s, two of which will be leased to SAS. The Scandinavian company has already ordered from Redifon a Caravelle jet simulator; Swissair crews will also train on it, since SAS will lease four Caravelle jet liners to Swissair from the middle of next year.

It is planned to use the Convair 880 simulator for about 3,000 hours per year, reducing training flights on the aircraft to a minimum and thereby producing higher revenue-earning utilisation. Expenditure on crew training is also greatly reduced as an hour of simulator operation costs 15 to 20 times less than an hour's training flight with a Convair 880.

A new visual simulation device called "Visulator" will be supplied to Swissair together with the DC-8 flight simulator due for delivery later this year. Made by Curtiss-Wright in the United States, it produces visual simulation with the aid of airport models and a television camera which is coupled to the simulator and can be "flown" over the model. The picture so obtained is projected on a large screen in front of the simulator cockpit. This provides the pilot with a realistic image of what he would see in actual flight and allows him to check visually, as well as by instruments, his take-off and let-down exercises. The device will also be used in conjunction with the Convair 880 simulator.



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