

Commercial news

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COMMERCIAL NEWS

The happy fate of a Swiss watch.

The famous Gina Lollobrigida, who has been called "The most beautiful of all beauties" ("La Belle des Belles") from the title of one of her films, has just added another jewel to her beauty, a Swiss watch, the Eterna-Matic "Golden Heart" which she wears on her wrist, with all the grace inherent to her.

Insensible to the charms which cause the hearts of so many admirers to beat at a rapid rate, the Eterna possessed by the great Italian star continues to go with the precision and the astounding regularity proper to all Swiss watches.

Apparatus for regulating small electric motors.

A rheostat with a foot-pedal, for regulating the speed of small electric motors (sewing machines, winding machines, dentists' drills, etc.) has just been perfected by the Swiss firm of P.A. Kunz, of Bôle/Neuchâtel, which possesses great experience in such matters. This rheostat is made entirely of insulating substances, and it has successfully passed the tests of the "Swiss Association of Electricians and those of the "Commission internationale de réglementation en vue de l'approbation de l'équipement électrique" (the International Commission for regulating and approving electrical equipment). An original idea for the regulating body ensures an easy and sure adjustment of the speed to the optimum conditions of functioning of the apparatus under control.

The smallest ball-bearing in the world.

A firm in Bienne — one of the watchmaking capitals in Switzerland — which specialises in the production of ball-bearings, manufactures the smallest ball-bearings in the world, by means of machinery which the firm has, for the greater part, itself designed. The external diameter of such ball-bearings is only 0.0433 inch, so that it is possible to produce one million of them with 88.25 pounds of steel.

The balls would float on water, and one could put 65,000 of them into a thimble.

An anniversary at the home of the musical box.

The firm Thorens S.A., of Sainte-Croix, is celebrating its 75th anniversary. It was in 1883 that Hermann Thorens, then 27 years of age, founded this business. That was a flourishing period for the "cartels", as the big musical-boxes used to be called. Very soon the young manufacturer had made a name for himself, and his firm continued to prosper in Sainte-Croix, as well as, later on, near Lausanne.

From the time of the firm's foundation up to the present day, Messrs. Thorens S.A. have sold, throughout the entire world, some five million cigarette lighters, fifty million musical movements, and between two and three million gramophones. Their production to-day extends also to mechanical razors and mouth-organs. This firm, however, has gained special renown in regard to its "speaking machines", from the ancient phonograph to the record-changer and to the hi-fi reading-table.

A Japanese trade mission visits Switzerland.

A Japanese commercial mission recently came to Switzerland to study questions relating to trade between the two countries, and to enter into negotiations with Swiss economic circles. The delegates, among whom were to be found eminent representatives of the textile, the glass-making and the foodstuff industries, were received by Mr. Holenstein, the President of the Swiss Confederation.

AIDA 1959 in Switzerland.

The 1959 AIDA Exhibition, which will be held in Lausanne this year, will group together 350 exhibitors, 150 of them being foreigners. The Exhibition is devoted to trade and industry in the domain of food-stuffs, and it will also be the seat of the 4th International Congress of the Distributors of Food Products. There will be from 2,500 to 3,000 participants in this Congress, who will represent thirty countries belonging to five continents.

Among other interesting exhibits at AIDA 1959, will be the manner in which foodstuffs can be preserved by means of atomic radiations, and there will also be a silo for sugar, the most modern in the world, the functioning of which one will be able to see.

A Swiss gift to UNESCO.

The Swiss Confederation has donated a Committee Room to UNESCO, which was presented to the Director-General of this Organisation by the Swiss Ambassador in Paris, in the presence of a great many important personalities and of representatives of the Press. The hall, the installation of decoration of which has been undertaken by Switzerland, as also the foyer which precedes it, has provided an opportunity for two young Swiss decorators to carry out some work for a great international cause. This Committee Room is to be found on the first floor of the Unesco Palace, next to the entrance to the room used by the Executive Council.



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Slight fall in the cost of living in Switzerland.

At the end of October the Swiss Index of Prices for consumer goods stood at 182.8 (100 in August 1939), thus showing a decline of 0.1 per cent as compared with the end of September, but an increase of 1.3 per cent in comparison with the end of October 1957. This development is due principally to a decrease in the price of clothing for men and women. In so far as wholesale prices are concerned, the Index stood at 214.5 points at the end of October, as against 214.9 at the end of the previous month, thus registering a decline of 0.2 per cent.

Swiss life assurance companies.

According to the Activities Reports of fifteen Swiss Life Insurance Companies, life insurance policies in 1957 attained the total sum of 2,358 million Swiss francs. Payments made to beneficiaries amounted to 352 million, that is to say, to more than one million Swiss francs per working day.

Swiss universal clocks.

A universal clock is a clock which shows what time it is at that very moment in any part of the world, either on one or on several dials. These clocks are particularly suitable for airports, railway stations, ports, travel agencies, etc. A clock of this kind — made by a Swiss firm — was to be found in the Swiss Pavilion at the World's Fair in Brussels, whilst another is operating at the Kloten-Zurich airport. The Genevise Association of Watchmakers and Jewellers

recently presented one of these clocks to the Canton of Geneva. It is now to be found on the premises of the terminal at the airport of Geneva-Cointrin. Built by the firm of Favag, of Neuchâtel, it is in the shape of a vast decorative planisphere on which there are ten dials which show simultaneously the time in each of ten big cities in various parts of the world.

Consumption of beer in Switzerland.

During the business year 1957/58 the Swiss breweries produced 3.15 million hectolitres of beer, as against 2.96 million hectolitres during the corresponding period for the preceding business year. In 1911 the consumption of beer amounted to 81.16 litres per year per head of the population, this figure going down to 63 litres in 1957/58. At the present time, it has been observed that the sale of bottled beer is increasing to the detriment of beer drawn from the tap. Taxation on beer during the past year brought in 33 million Swiss francs to the Swiss Confederation. Thus, since 1927, when a tax was first imposed on beer in Switzerland, this beverage has procured 588 million Swiss francs for the Federal Treasury.

Death of a great Swiss chemist.

The death occurred recently, near Zurich, of a Swiss chemist to whom the chemical industry of the United States owes a great deal. He was Dr. Louis Veillon, who was born in Switzerland in 1875, and who studied chemistry and graduated at the Federal Polytechnical School, at Zurich. He was called to the

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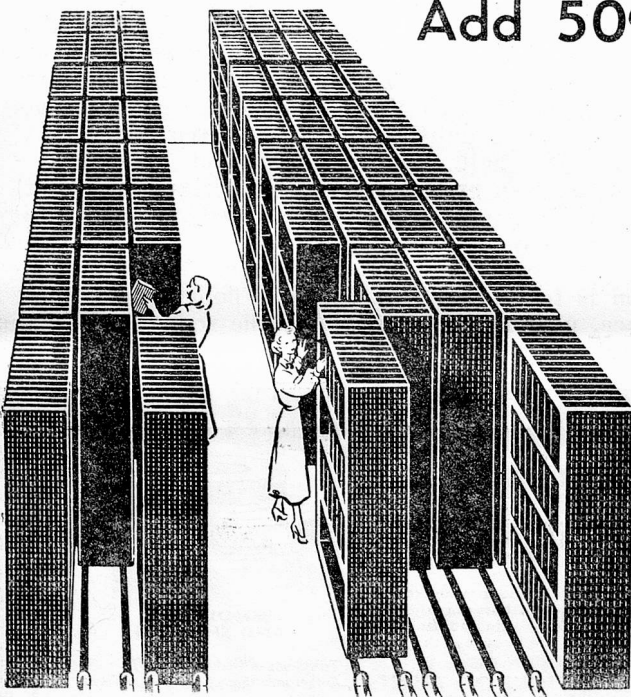
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United States at the beginning of the century to manage a plant, which only existed on paper, and it was he who, owing to his professional capacities and his perseverance, became one of the principal artisans of the development of the firm of Monsanto, of which he was the first member.

Founding of the Swiss Association for Atomic Energy.

The Swiss Association for Atomic Energy has just been founded in Berne. It was the Swiss Society of Engineers and Architects and the General Fiduciary Society, of Berne, who first launched the idea of a private association grouping together all those spheres which are interested in the utilisation of nuclear energy. The aim in view is to unite the efforts of all those who occupy themselves with this question in all its aspects — scientific, technical, medical, economic, legal and moral. In accordance with its Statutes, this Association will encourage the pacific utilisation of atomic energy in Switzerland and will co-ordinate all the efforts made in this domain. The budget of the new organisation will amount to 120,000 Swiss francs per year. The Committee, consisting of twenty-five members, is composed of professors, heads of big industrial undertakings, directors of economic associations and representatives of the electrical industry.

Doctors in Switzerland.

There are 4,775 doctors practising in Switzerland. In the Canton of Appenzell, Rhodes extérieures, there are only five doctors, namely one per 2,680 inhabitants; these are the lowest figures. At the other end of Switzerland, the Canton of Geneva can boast the highest ratio for doctors to population namely, one doctor per 656 inhabitants.

During the winter term of 1957/58, there were more than 3,000 medical students attending courses in the Swiss Universities, 60 per cent of them being of Swiss nationality.

Africa places a fresh order with Swiss industry.

Proceeding with their scheme for the electrification of their railway network, the South African Railways have given an order to the Oerlikon Works, in Switzerland, for the delivery of twelve rectifier substations, to the value of more than nine million Swiss francs. They are to be set up along a 300-kilometre section of the main line running between

Johannesburg and Cape Town. They will function automatically, but can also be worked by remote control. This is the second order of this kind to be given by this customer to the Swiss supplier.

Double anniversary in the Swiss footwear industry.

The Swiss firm of footwear manufacturers, Messrs. Hug & Co., Ltd., recently celebrated the 80th anniversary of its foundation and the 25th anniversary of the setting up of one of its factories in the Argovian village of Dulliken.

Savings in Switzerland.

In 1957 the number of Savings Books in Switzerland increased by a further 117,000. Thus, at the end of 1957 the number of Savings Books in that country amounted to 5,900,000 i.e. 800,000 more than the number of inhabitants of Switzerland. These Savings Books do not belong to what are usually known as "capitalists", but to people in the lower income brackets, as can be seen from the fact that 88 per cent of the deposits do not exceed the sum of 5,000 Swiss francs, whilst the average value of such deposits amounts to 953 Swiss francs per Savings Book.

A building machinery fair at Basle.

From 7th to 15th February 1959 the premises of the Swiss Industries Fair, at Basle, will be occupied by the Third Fair of Machinery Used by Contractors for Public Works, an exhibition which has been organised by the Swiss Society of Manufacturers and Dealers in Machinery for Contractors. There will be thirty-nine exhibitors and their stands will occupy a superficial area of 430,000 square feet.

A new research laboratory in Lausanne.

With the help of the Swiss National Fund for Scientific Research, the Institute of Physics, attached to the University of Lausanne, was able recently to establish a research laboratory for very low temperatures. This new Centre for physical study is engaged, inter alia, with exploring the phenomenon of super-conductivity.

Swiss alternators for the U.S.A.

The "Tennessee Valley Authority", which is the most important State concern for electrical energy, for artificial irrigation and for the economic development of the South, in the United States, has just given an order to a big Swiss firm for the delivery of three

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vertical alternators of 60,000 kilo-volt-amperes and 13,800 volts each. These machines, which revolve at a speed of 105 revolutions per minute, represent a sum of U.S.A. \$2,639,000 and are to be installed at the end of 1961 in the electric station of Muscle Shoals, in Alabama.

Important Swiss firm inaugurates its new equipment.

The firm of Messrs. Schindler & Co. Ltd., which specialises in the manufacture of lifts and of electric motors, has just inaugurated, at Ebikon, near Lucerne, a new ultra-modern works (workshops, store-houses, auxiliary services and offices) which cover a total superficial area of 860,000 square feet. These new premises, which include a canteen capable of serving the entire staff, will be occupied by 2,000 personnel. The Schindler Group, which already possesses five establishments in Switzerland, has found itself obliged, as a result of the increasing demand for lifts throughout the world, to develop, as from 1950, its branch establishments in Lyons, Berlin, Düsseldorf and Milan, to which must be added those in Johannesburg, Lima, Mexico, Rio de Janeiro, Brussels, Lisbon, Paris and Mulhouse. This firm employs, in Europe and in the Overseas countries, a total of some 7,500 persons, and its manufacturing programme extends also to escalators.

Yet another Swiss documentary film honoured.

The firm of Paillard S.A., of Yverdon and Ste-Croix, which is famous all over the world for its cameras and projectors, has just achieved a new success with a documentary film entitled "A Message from Hermes". The film, which is devoted to the manufacture of the firm's celebrated typewriters, has been awarded an Oscar at a recent European technical and industrial Film Festival which was held at Rouen. The originality of this 25-minute colour film resides in the fact that it not only stresses the technical aspect, but also and more particularly the environment in which the worker lives and does his job. In view of the fact that it is the worker who plays the leading part in production, it was only fair that this role should also be given to him in the film.

A new record of the Swiss post.

Of all the countries in the world, Switzerland has the most intense traffic in postal parcels. In 1957 nearly 85 million parcels were carried by the inland mail service, which means that 17 parcels per inhabitant were sent, whereas in the Federal German Republic only five parcels per inhabitant were despatched. In 1955 an average of 15.5 parcels per inhabitant were being delivered in Switzerland; 7.1 in the United States, 4.4 in Great Britain and in Germany, 2.8 in Sweden, 1.7 in Australia, 0.6 in France, 0.5 in Italy, and 0.1 in India and in Turkey. If one adds to this figure the parcels going and coming from abroad, as well as the transit parcels, one finds that the Swiss Postal Service has ensured the transport, during 1957, of some 90 million parcels, that is to say four millions more than in 1956.

A novelty in the Swiss wool textile industry.

At Schauenberg, on the Via Mala — a site made famous by John Knittel's novel of the same name — a

manufacturer of woollen blankets has just succeeded in producing an article entirely new in this particular branch. What he has done — by an ingenious modification applied to the Jacquard looms for the production of patterned blankets — is to achieve the production of blankets on which the same pattern is not repeated the whole time, as is generally the case with blankets of this kind, but on which there is to be found only one design which extends over the entire surface of the blanket and differs in all its parts. It was one of the classes in the School of Applied Art, in Zurich, which created the modern designs used for the purpose of drawing the best possible advantage from the new decorative possibilities offered by the "Imolia-Swiss" blankets. We would add that this new article, which has already been admired at exhibitions, is carried out in wool with the warp in nylon; thus, it is not only very original in the effect it produces, but it is also very light, as well as soft in texture.

PERSONAL.

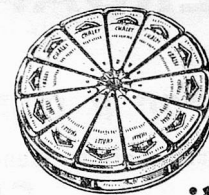
On going to Press we hear of the passing away, on Thursday, January 8th, of Mr. H. Oswald, of "The Crozier", 38, Corkran Road, Surbiton, Surrey, Managing Director of Messrs. Brown, Boveri (British) Ltd. An Obituary will appear in our next issue.



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