

Versatile new mechanical handling device for small firms

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NEW SWISS APPLICATION OF TELEVISION

A Geneva firm specialising in electricity and radio recently won a gold medal at the International Inventor's Salon in Brussels for an appliance for checking pipes and submarine work by closed-circuit television. The Resa device consists of a transistorised waterproof camera, making it possible — by means of a built-in lighting system — to inspect pipes and also to work at depths of down to 650 feet in open water or in wells. The waterproof camera, only 13 cm. in diameter, is connected by cable to a command post comprising a television screen and the various controls. The whole set-up, running on 12-volt batteries, possesses sufficient autonomy for working a whole day without recharging and can be carried in the luggage boot of a car. The annular lighting and the wide angle lens of the pipe checking equipment give a very clear view of the walls of the pipes to be inspected; the version for submarine work, on the other hand, is equipped with a float and a stabilising fin with two handles, simplifying the use of the camera during diving.

[O.S.E.C.]

A SWISS SPECIALITY: ELECTROLYSIS UNDER PRESSURE

Electrolysis under pressure for the production of hydrogen and oxygen by electric process was developed some twenty years ago by a chemical firm, Lonza Ltd. of Basle for whom Giovanola Frères S.A., of Monthey first built the prototypes then, a few years later, industrial models called "electrolytors" to distinguish them from electrolyzers operating under normal atmospheric pressure. With this manufacturing process, high purity hydrogen and oxygen can be stored directly under pressure using much smaller apparatuses than is needed with normal pressure electrolyzers of similar capacity, a most attractive feature from an economic point of view. Since 1956, the Monthey works have already built 33 electrolytors for 21 industrial concerns in Switzerland, Germany, France, Denmark, Great Britain, Sweden, Norway, the U.S.S.R., Czechoslovakia, the United States, Venezuela and Peru. This represents a total production of 16,500 m³ of hydrogen per hour under normal atmospheric pressure at full load and electric power installations totalling 75,000 kW. The manufacture of electrolytors, suspended in 1966 and 1967 in view of the economic situation, will start up again during this year.

[O.S.E.C.]

THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL GRAIN UNLOADERS

Specialised since 1890 in grain handling installations, Bühler Brothers Ltd. engineering works, at Uzwil, have been awarded a contract to build two ship unloaders in Port Cartier, Canada, which will be the world's most powerful. This must be a very high capacity installation in view of the need for the very rapid transshipment of vast quantities of grain during those months when the St. Lawrence is free of ice. The mechanical unloading installation includes 2 travelling unloaders, each equipped with two paired chain unloading conveyors, each with a capacity of 650 tons per hour, i.e. 1,300 tons an hour per unloader. (During tests, peak capacity loads of 1,540 tons an hour per unloader were reached.) The two unloaders can thus attain a total hourly unloading capacity of 2,600 tons.

[O.S.E.C.]

VERSATILE NEW MECHANICAL HANDLING DEVICE FOR SMALL FIRMS

A Swiss specialist in metallic constructions won a silver medal at the last International Salon of Inventors in Brussels for his "Diab'Carr" convertible all-purpose mechanical handling device patented in several countries. It consists of a barrow for loading and unloading sacks, crates, barrels, etc., which by means of the ingenious addition of a metal frame fitted with a wheel, can be converted in a few seconds into a trolley with a guaranteed loading capacity of half a ton. Costing a great deal less than the two devices it replaces, the extremely sturdy "Diab'Carr", which is easy to handle and is fitted with solid tyres on wheels running on roller bearings, represents the ideal mechanical handling accessory for warehouses, workshops, stores and depots in which the movement of goods is insufficient to justify the purchase of expensive automatic machines. It will be extremely popular therefore with all medium and small firms, all over the world, but more particularly in the developing countries.

[O.S.E.C.]

AN IMPROVED CAR BRAKE LIGHT

A well-known Swiss watch factory has patented a new brake light for motor cars, possessing certain essential advantages over current models. At present, in fact, the extinction of a car's brake lights does not always mean that the vehicle has begun to pick up speed again once braking is over, which may mislead the drivers behind. With the new device, on the other hand, any big deceleration of the car or strong pressure on the brake pedal switches on a safety circuit, which replaces the fixed brake lights with flickering lights as soon as the pressure on the brake pedal has stopped and until the accelerator has been pressed down again. Thus, the vehicles that follow are warned very clearly that the car in front of them is still slowing down, even when it is no longer actually braking, which can help prevent accidents. It is interesting to note that this new device was awarded a silver-gilt medal at the recent International Salon of Inventors in Brussels.

[O.S.E.C.]

THE METAL STRUCTURE INDUSTRY IN SWITZERLAND

The metal structure industry includes all activities formerly known as the wrought iron industry. Though this occupation is still included in the branch, it is today mainly concerned with the manufacture of metal building structures of every description both in iron and steel and in other metals. Today, the Swiss metal structure industry comprises over 1,000 small and middle-size firms; its total annual turnover is about one thousand million Swiss francs and total annual investments amount to nearly two hundred million Swiss francs. Salaries paid to the industry's 25,000 wage earners total about 220 million Swiss francs. These figures reveal this industry's importance in Swiss economic life.

[O.S.E.C.]