

# Inventions Galore

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nuclear bombs. The risk of Switzerland starting a war would not be made larger by her being in possession of such weapons. There were two more considerations advanced in favour of a national nuclear deterrent. The first was that nuclear warfare now belonged to the realm of actual possibilities, it was just a form of warfare which should be coolly acknowledged, which was not more condemnable than the others but

only naturally prolonged, with some accentuation, the age-old developments of warfare. Given this it was necessary to accept atomic warfare as a *real* threat and take the corresponding measures. Secondly, by increasing her nuclear potential Switzerland was increasing her power of disuasion and thus filling a dangerously-empty military vacuum in the heart of Europe. Tactical nuclear weapons would moreover strengthen the position of our forces in combat.

## INVENTIONS GALORE

### NEW PROCESS FOR THE PURIFICATION OF EXHAUST FUMES

Will the appeal launched by "S.O.S. Nature" on the occasion of the European Year for the Protection of Nature be heard? The problem of atmospheric pollution, to which the exhaust fumes from automobiles contribute a good 25%, is becoming more and more acute. A Swiss firm provides a solution to the problem of exhaust fumes: after many years of research, it has just produced a device for direct post-combustion, making possible the radical purification of automobile exhaust fumes. Experience has shown in fact that only direct combustion is independent of the quality of fuels and of the state of wear of internal combustion engines and their accessories. This instrument makes it possible for every vehicle, whether new or old, whether petrol or diesel driven, easily to satisfy the very strict regulations of the famous California Text. In particular it ensures the complete combustion of the carbon monoxide at lower speeds, when the CO content may be as high as 14%, making the exhaust fumes particularly harmful. Fitted on the exhaust pipe, between the engine and the silencer, it also helps to cut down noise. The system consists of a mixer and an air-suction device, in which pre-heated fresh air mixed with the exhaust gases produces a new inflammable mixture, and a combustion chamber, with two heating elements connected to the car battery. This device, whose life in the laboratory exceeds 125,000 miles, is no more expensive than the repeated replacement of exhaust pipes after every 25,000. It can be fitted on any vehicle and has no adverse effect on engine power.

### A SWISS NOVELTY IN THE SERVICE OF THE HOUSEWIFE

A Swiss firm has just launched on the market a new table gas-burner that is both practical and elegant. This apparatus, sold either separately or in a set including heater and pan, can be adapted to fit any heater. It has the advantage of ensuring a perfectly even flame and, consequently, even source of heat. Furthermore, it is completely odourless and very easy to look after. Small in size (diameter: 8 cm, height:

7 cm, roughly 3.15 and 2.75 in. respectively), this mini-burner is easy to carry and can also render countless services not only at home ("fondues", "flambés", bachelor meals) but also when travelling, camping, etc. On an identical principle, the same firm has designed a standard-size gas candle, which will be useful for replacing the traditional wax candle in dish-warmers, tea-kettles, lanterns, etc.

### A SWISS INVENTION TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF KEYS AND DISCOURAGE BURGLARS

At the last Inventors' Salon in Brussels, a Geneva firm presented a new type of numerical lock in the form of a door handle. The safety device, designed for numbers from 1 to 7 figures, allows some 10 million different combinations. Although very simple to operate, this lock offers every required guarantee of safety. Even in the dark, it is easy for the person who knows the combination to operate the lock by feeling the setting notches. But it is impossible for a thief, no matter how clever, to discover the right combination, either by touch or by ear. In any case, it is easy to lock quickly with a touch of the hand from either the inside or outside, making it impossible for a third party to manipulate the lock.

### A NEW SYSTEM FOR CHECKING STARTS IN ATHLETICS

A new system for checking starts in athletics has been devised by the Swiss firm of Longines Co. Ltd. at St. Imier (canton of Berne). It was used for the first time in March 1970 for the European Indoor Athletics Championships in Vienna, where it gave complete satisfaction. This new device consists of a contact maker, placed just behind the starting block, on a small plate independent of the latter; it operates the lighting of a lamp fixed on the same plate and the lighting of another lamp corresponding to the lane and located on the system's general switchboard. Each lane is provided with a contact maker. If an athlete starts too early, the starting pistol is automatically blocked and a lamp lights up on the starting block and on the control desk; this makes it possible to identify the athlete who started too soon and who is called back by an acoustic signal. The device can also be connected direct to the timing instruments. In this case the athlete



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sets the chronometer going himself, the moment he leaves his starting block, thus making it possible to time each runner individually on each of the eight lanes. The small plate carrying the contact maker and the lamp can be fitted on any kind of track without damaging the latter. In addition, it should be

mentioned that the Organising Committee of the Olympic Games in Munich have made Longines responsible for the official timing of the following sports: swimming, waterpolo, cycling, basketball, handball, gymnastics, weight-lifting, wrestling, boxing, judo and fencing.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### INVESTMENTS IN SWITZERLAND: U.S. \$4.8 BILLION

In 1969 gross raw investments in Switzerland totalled the sum of S.Fr. 20.8 billion (U.S. \$4.8 billion). In constant francs, they increased by 6.3% compared with 4.0% the previous year. In spite of this increase, the rates of growth for the boom years 1960 and 1961, i.e. 24.2 and 20.0% were far from being reached. Similarly, the increase in real gross investments in 1969 was definitely less than that recorded in 1964 (+8.9%). As had been the case during the previous years, it was equipment investments, mainly used on rationalisation projects, that recorded the highest real growth, with 7.9%. Unlike the trend that had been noted at the time of the rapid growth in the economy in the early 60's, the net savings of the national economy sufficed on their own, last year, to finance investments completely.

### SELECTION OF THE BEST SWISS POSTERS

Formerly a country of almanachs, picture drawers and excellent sign painters, Switzerland shows proof today of a gratifying vitality in the field of posters. Each year, under the auspices of the Federal Department of the Interior, a jury meets to select the country's best advertising posters. The number of works submitted this year exceeded six hundred. The main criteria governing the final selection of the 30 best posters for 1969 were artistic qualities, good printing and advertising impact. The prize-winning works bear witness once again to the very high level achieved by the graphic arts in Switzerland.

### FINAL REPORT ON THE 54TH SWISS INDUSTRIES FAIR IN BASLE

The outstanding feature of the 54th Swiss Industries Fair in Basle, which ended on Tuesday, 21st April, 1970, was the strong increase in foreign visitors. These visitors, whose numbers can be given as about 120,000, came from 113 countries and all parts of the world. The main objects of their visit were the export-conscious groups, namely, watches, machine tools, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering and textiles.

The total number of entrances registered is also impressive; with about 1,130,000 it exceeds last year's total by 80,000 and is even more than the high-

est number ever registered, which was 1,105,000 in the Jubilee year. The heavy stream of visitors which was already noticeable at the very beginning, continued for the whole duration of the fair and was particularly obvious during the second week-end.

Trade was extremely brisk, both in the halls for investment products and those for consumer goods; from enquiries made among the exhibitors in the most varied specialised groups, it is apparent that generally good to very good business was done. Furthermore, successful post-fair business can be expected.

The groups which appeared with subject shows and special displays, among them the large concerns of the chemical industry in Basle and the pavilions devoted to the textile sector, expressed themselves as more than satisfied. The construction fair, which was newly organised last year, has markedly strengthened its attraction for the visitor.

The watch fair which has once again been extended within the sphere of the "Centre commercial", took place this year for the 40th time. It achieved renewed success thanks to the sensational developments in time-keeping precision, as well as the appealing beauty of the models exhibited.

The 55th Swiss Industries Fair will take place from 17th to 27th April, 1971.

The next international trade fairs in Basle will be the 10th Didacta, European Education Materials Fair from 28th May to 1st June, 1970 and "Art", the 1st International Art Fair from 12th to 16th June, 1970.

### THE "VOICE OF SWITZERLAND" CHANGES TONE

The Swiss Short-Wave Broadcasting Service, whose purpose since it started in 1935 has been to tighten the links of Swiss living abroad with their home-country and to make Switzerland known all over the world, has just introduced big changes in the planning of its programmes. Aware of the growing importance of news in the world today, the Swiss Short-Wave Service has decided to place the emphasis on this sector. From now on, listeners on all continents can listen to daily news bulletins (both Swiss and foreign items) in 8 languages: English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Arabic and Esperanto. These bulletins, whose contents differ depending on the regions

towards which they are broadcast, are followed by commentaries of a political, economic and cultural nature. At the week-end, the Swiss Short-Wave Service broadcasts lighter programmes; in addition to brief news flashes and the weekly summary of the main events of the week, more entertaining programmes are put on the air: Swiss popular music, classical music, home news from Switzerland, etc. It is interesting to note that according to a poll carried out by the International Short-Wave Club in London, Swiss programmes are 4th most popular. At present the Swiss Short-Wave Service is negotiating with a number of American university radio stations wishing to relay some of its programmes, and with South American radio stations interested in rebroadcasting cultural and musical programmes. Let us mention that it is possible to obtain from Swiss institutions abroad a time-table indicating the language, time and wave-length of broadcasts.

### THE RISE AND FALL OF ONE BERNARD CORNFELD

*The troubled investment trust I.O.S. is well known in Great Britain, where it is not infrequent to meet one of its enterprising salesmen, who once made a healthy living peddling "Dover Plans". I.O.S. is even better known in Switzerland, and especially Geneva, where its headquarters lie and where the golden life of its founder and former chairman, Bernard Cornfeld, has always been the talk of the town.*

Bernard Cornfeld, the 42-year-old mutual fund czar, rode the crest of a wave, the same big comber that investors all over the world hitched a ride on during the prosperous 1960's. Only Mr. Cornfeld did it on a grander scale than almost anyone else. He built Investors Overseas Services into one of the world's largest financial service organisations with control of some \$2.5 billion in funds.

Today this huge business empire is in trouble and financial experts here and abroad are fearful that a crisis of public confidence in the entire mutual fund industry may develop if it topples. A salvage mission has been undertaken and Mr. Cornfeld has been forced from the chairman's seat.

The supersalesman who grew up in Brooklyn during the Depression made Europe his stomping ground and Geneva his headquarters. He bought a luxurious lakeside chateau there, dubbed it Bella Vista and used it for directors' meetings and parties that were the talk of the jet set.

He had private planes and yachts, owned a pet ocelot and a gold-plated toilet, bought old masters and the finest vintage wines and was frequently seen with beautiful women. He appeared on the covers of some of Europe's leading