

A century of success in knitting machine construction

Autor(en): [s.n.]

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - (1967)

Heft 1529

PDF erstellt am: **21.09.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-695453>

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at the court of Duke Augustus of Weimar, whose sons he tutored, raised Soret to the circle of those Swiss pedagogues at the courts of European princes, the most famous of whom was César-Frédéric de La Harpe, who as the former tutor of Czar Alexander was able to exert a beneficial influence during the Congress of Vienna.

Natural sciences

Medicine, too, owes a great deal in the way of progress to Swiss physicians abroad. Among these was Théodore Tronchin, who introduced vaccination at the European royal courts, where previously smallpox had taken an appalling toll of life. Alexandre Yersin, from Aubonne, was the first to discover the plague bacillus — he had spent many years combating disease in Indo-China. In point of magnitude, his discovery is on a par with that of the tubercle bacillus by Koch.

One of the greatest Swiss natural scientists working abroad was Louis Agassiz. He was for many years a Harvard professor and attained particular distinction as founder of the museum in Cambridge, Mass.

Towards the end of his life he even voyaged round the two Americas; starting on the Atlantic coast he passed through the Magellan Straits, all along Chile, and ended his travels in California. He was equipped with the most up-to-date instruments known at the time. For him the oceans were laboratories. His dragues descended into abysses twice as deep as Montblanc is high.

But Agassiz, like the typical Swiss he was, never forgot his homeland and his native village on the Lake of Morat. It was there, in the garden of the rectory where he was born, that he had converted a pool into a fishpond so that he could study aquatic life. "Actually", wrote the celebrated Harvard professor, "I dreamt about all these things back in Switzerland. But I came a long, long way from my homeland before my dreams came true". When Agassiz was buried in Cambridge, Mass., his last wish was fulfilled: as a tombstone they gave him a polished stone brought all the way from the Lauteraar Glacier.

On the summits of Peruvian mountains Jean-Jacques de Tschudi collected the material for his works on Peruvian fauna, publications greatly admired even by Humboldt. De Tschudi's major work, however, was on Peruvian antiquity and based on the finds made in the same region. Jean-Jacques de Tschudi was one of a widespread group of selfless scientists who dedicated their lives to the exploration of the countries in which they had settled and who had studied to prepare themselves for the task either as philologists, ethnologists, or natural scientists.

The archaeologists Edouard Naville and Gustave Jéquier carried out excavations in Egypt, Paul Schazmann sen. at Pergamon in Asia Minor and on the Greek island of Kos, Bandelier on the shore of Lake Titica in Bolivia and brought submerged necropoles to light, whereas Max von Berchem deciphered the Arabic inscriptions on mediaeval monuments.

Innumerable members of the Swiss colonies abroad, on their own initiative and aided by understanding Swiss diplomats, have created valuable fields of activity for themselves and come to prominence in the process. Each of them gave his best in their respective fields: in agriculture, in trade, in the hotel industry, in art . . . Whether they wore eighteenth century wigs, or turbans, or the back-to-front cloth caps of the automobile pioneers, they remind every Swiss that he has a job to do in life. Some find it at home, others on the far side of the world.

("Swissair Gazette", December 1966.)

"GESTERN, HEUTE UND AUCH MORGEN"

In 1964, the "Basler Nachrichten" published a book containing important views, comments and statements from articles by their Editor-in-Chief, National Councillor Peter Duerrenmatt. It was issued to mark his 60th birthday. The publishers now address the Swiss abroad and friends of Switzerland with this most interesting publication. It is divided into sixteen chapters, each containing quotations by Mr. Duerrenmatt from his leading articles. The subjects cover "Die Schweiz und Europa", "Wehrbereitschaft und geistige Selbstbehauptung", "Demokratie im Umbruch", "Meinungspresse" und "Sprachverhinderung". The problem East-West, women's suffrage, neutrality, defence policy, atomic problems and federal finances are all covered, and each chapter is headed by a paragraph which sets the points for direction and mood of the subject under discussion. Example: "Das Bestreben nach vermehrtem Föderalismus bei der Gestaltung der Bundesfinanzen, das Begehren nach einem unreglementierten, vertrauensereifüllten Ton zwischen Steuerzahler und Verwaltung, das sind Forderungen, die nicht oft genug wiederholt werden können".

Mr. Duerrenmatt does not have the answers for every problem, but his high principles as a politician and his gift of expressing his constructive views in clear and precise language make the reader think deeply and usefully on many questions of vital importance for Switzerland.

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A CENTURY OF SUCCESS IN KNITTING MACHINE CONSTRUCTION

It is a century now since the foundation at Couvet, on the banks of the Areuse, in the canton of Neuchâtel, of the Dubied knotting machine factory where a young Swiss engineer of the same name planned to manufacture hand-knitting machines, according to the patents purchased from an American inventor. Right from the start, the firm met with success, under the management first of all of its founder and then of his son, who extended the manufacturing programme by going in for screw-cutting too. In 1895, thanks to electricity, the factory produced its first motor-driven knitting machine, all of whose movements were automatic. In 1920 the offices were transferred to the town of Neuchâtel. During the second world war, as lathes were no longer available from abroad, the firm began to manufacture them itself; its 3,000 r.p.m. hydraulic lathe was the focal point of the 1942 Basle Fair. Today, in all countries where there is a knitting industry, Swiss Dubied knitting machines are to be found. The Dubied group at present comprises five factories, three of which are in Switzerland, one producing knitting machines and general machines, a second lathes and sharpening machines and the third needles for knitting. The other two factories are in Italy — where the firm has a branch — and manufacture hand-knitting machines and simple automatic machines. Sales are carried out by independent agencies in big towns all over the world. At present the firm of Edouard Dubied & Co. Ltd. employs some 2,700 men and women, nearly 2,100 of whom work in Switzerland. It exports 87% of the output of its Swiss factories.

[O.S.E.C.]