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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Record results expected for Swiss Federal Railways

In view of the operational results for last November, certain conclusions may be drawn already regarding the accounts of the Swiss Federal Railways for the twelve months of 1960. For the first time, receipts have attained the figure of a thousand million Swiss francs, whereas they were budgeted at 944.1 millions. Thus, there is a considerable improvement, especially as the expenditure has proved very little higher than the estimated figure. At the end of November 1960, the surplus in the receipts of the Swiss Federal Railways had attained the sum of 274.2 million Swiss francs.

Switzerland and the fifth AIDA Congress 1962

Swiss circles belonging to the foodstuffs branch intend to set up a pavilion at the AIDA Exhibition, which is due to take place in New York, in 1962, in conjunction with the 5th AIDA Congress, organised by the International Association for the Distribution of Food Products. It will be recalled that the last Exhibition and Congress were held in Lausanne in 1959, where they enjoyed a great success. Moreover, according to the latest information the financial results were also extremely satisfactory.

An ingenious new Swiss pocket-oiler

Traditional oil-cans generally leak, do not allow for dosage of the oil required, and are so bulky and disagreeable to carry that one rarely has them on hand when needed. To remedy these inconveniences, a Swiss company has developed an oiler called the "Lubristyl" which is shaped like a fountain pen. Its use is simple and clean: the point is placed on the spot to be oiled and moderate pressure applied. The hollow needle retracts to open the oil container valve, thus letting exactly the required amount of oil flow out. Any excess oil can be sucked back through the needle by releasing the pressure abruptly. The oiler can be filled simply by removing the head of the oil container. When not in use, a cap protects the point and this handy little gadget can be carried in pocket or hand-bag without the slightest risk of spots or smudges. The "Lubristyl" is not only ideal for countless industrial applications but also has its place in every household.

Accuracy in terms of millionths of a millimetre

Some time ago, the 11th General Conference on Weights and Measures, which comprises delegates from 32 Governments, adopted a new definition of the metre, as it considered that the existing international prototype no longer defined with sufficient precision the unit of length. This important decision has led to the installation, at the International Office of Weights and Measures of Sèvres (France), of a photo-electric interferential comparator, an apparatus possessing the greatest precision, developed and manufactured by the "Société genevoise d'instruments de physique" (Genevese Company for the manufacture of physical instruments). This apparatus required nearly four years of research and experiment, which represents more than 80,000 hours of work for a large team of specialists. This comparator, the construction of which honours Swiss industry, is a piece of apparatus which is unique, at present, in the whole world; it renders possible the measurement of the distance between square lines with a precision of a few millionths of a millimetre.

The Swiss merchant fleet

A year ago, the Swiss fleet sailing on the high seas numbered 27 vessels, with a gross tonnage of 138,684 metric tons and a net tonnage of 77,890 metric tons. These figures are the highest recorded since the appearance of the Swiss flag on the seas, in 1941. As for the Swiss fleet sailing on the Rhine, this numbers 421 vessels, with a freight of 360,000 metric tons.

Increase in number of telephones in Switzerland

During the course of last year, the Swiss Telephone Administration registered nearly 65,000 new subscribers, which brings the total number of subscribers to 1,090,000, whilst the number of telephones in use amounts to 1,658,000. At the same time, the number of listeners to tele-broadcasts, that is to say to radio programmes re-transmitted by telephone, numbered more than 335,000.

Geneva Motor Show to be even bigger this year

Applications for stands at the International Motor Show in Geneva (Salon international de l'automobile) continuing to increase, the management of this insti-

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tution has decided to extend the superficial area, in view of the forthcoming exhibition. Two additional exhibition halls are to be built. The first, measuring 3,600 square yards, will be an extension of the existing Salon and will house part of the exhibits belonging to the category of utilitarian vehicles and the whole of the category of machines used in business undertakings and for the manipulation of goods. The second building, which will also possess a superficial area of 3,600 square yards, will be situated on the plain of Plainpalais and will constitute a veritable Salon for the exhibition of articles for camping, sports goods, etc. It should be noted that the next Motor Show, which will be the 31st of its kind to be held in Geneva, is to take place from 16th to 26th March.

Modernisation in Swiss wool textile industry

An important Swiss firm, manufacturing woollen fabrics, the headquarters of which are situated at Liestal (Basle), recently inaugurated a new factory in the region of Berne, which is the most modern and the most rationally equipped plant to be found in Switzerland, or elsewhere. The most remarkable characteristic of this new establishment is the manufacturing room, which, although it measures 230 feet by 230 feet, has a ceiling which is only supported in the middle by one sole column, within which is to be found a lift for goods. It is hardly necessary to add that all the

premises on which the work of manufacture takes place are air-conditioned. The firm, which was founded nearly seventy years ago, manufactures woollens and worsteds for men's and women's wear, blankets, etc. It has participated in the great development which has taken place in the Swiss textile wool industry during the course of the last few decades, which has raised it to the level of the best world production.

Useful contribution to service to customers

In the domain of the retail trade, the art of decorative packaging and wrapping is part of the service to the clients, when it is a matter relating to articles that have been bought for the purpose of being offered as gifts. A Swiss ribbon manufacturing firm has invented a special ribbon, the "SUSfix", which makes it possible for beautiful bows to be tied for gift wrappings, in the twinkling of an eye, without requiring any particular skill on the part of saleswomen or others. This article is on sale in the form of a very elegant silk ribbon, to the underside of which is attached a rayon cord, which is loosely stitched, at intervals, to the ribbon. All that one has to do is to cut off the required length and, while holding one of the ends of the cord with one hand, just push the ribbon along the cord towards the middle until it forms a number of loops; the same thing is done from the other end, when a most decorative bow is achieved.

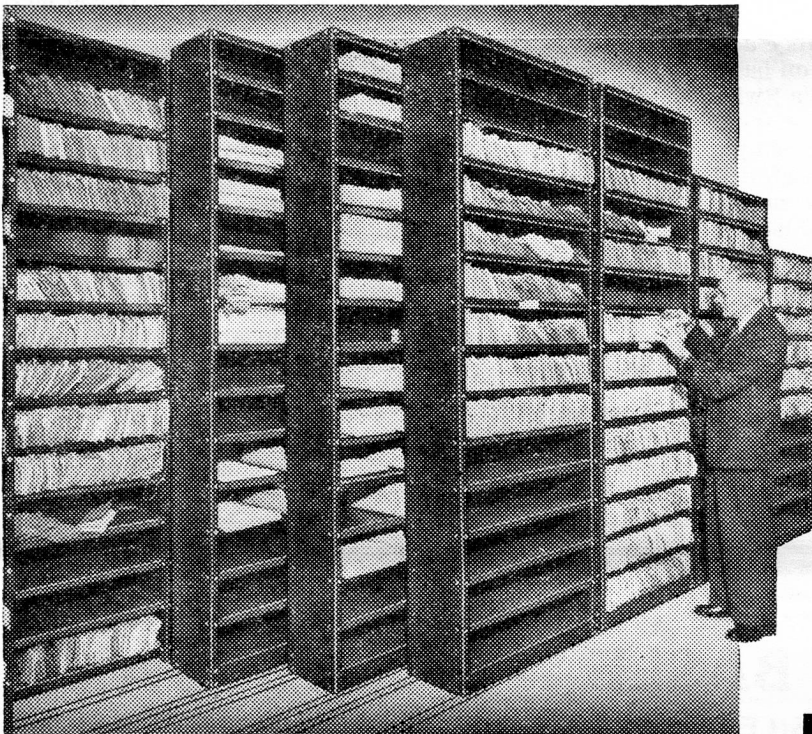


Illustration shows part of Rolstore installation at Northern Assurance Co's Record Office, at Moorgate, London

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A gastronomic altitude record

Recently, three restaurant keepers, an Englishman, a Frenchman and a Swiss, enjoyed eating a real "fondue", excellent and successful from every aspect, while sitting on a glacier, at an altitude of 9,140 feet. This gastronomic exploit, which constitutes a record, would appear to be hardly believable, when one thinks of the fact that the "fondue", this Swiss cheese speciality, is a dish which requires most careful preparation, and has got to be eaten whilst it is simmering over the flame of a spirit-lamp. Well, this remarkable achievement has proved successful, thanks to the creation of a new product by the Swiss Cheese Industry, namely of a ready-made, genuine Fondue, which has been launched by the firm of Gerber Thoune, the inventors of a formula for the manufacture of process cheese. This Fondue, which has been prepared with the traditional two kinds of cheese, i.e. Gruyère and Emmenthal, with Swiss white wine and with Kirsch, is packed in aluminium boxes, containing two normal portions, and all that has to be done is to cook it for five minutes, when it is ready to be eaten. This speciality, which has received an enthusiastic welcome within the country itself, where the connoisseurs are very hard to please, is already being exported to various foreign markets.

Automatic typing soon?

A machine which types automatically, under dictation — that is what the phonetograph must be. The inventor of this apparatus, Mr. J. Dreyfus-Graf, has been pursuing his researches for several years, within the framework of the Institute of physics, attached to the University of Geneva. It was by means of an extremely careful analysis of the phenomenon of sound that the inventor succeeded in first identifying, and then codifying, the sounds which form the French language. When this had been done it was necessary to communicate this code to the typewriting machine, i.e. to imagine a system of control which would put the keyboard into operation, in response to specific impulses, in such a way that only those keys that were required would be affected. This result has been attained in the third prototype which was recently presented to the Press; certain defects which cause errors have still got to be eliminated, but it is hoped that it will shortly prove possible for the inventor to put an apparatus on the market which will be capable of meeting all demands. Of course, the phonetograph is not capable of solving orthographical problems, and it is in a phonetic script that it records the messages dictated to it.

A wonderful gift for Swiss Transport House

The Swiss Transport House, in Lucerne, which is a museum of all things connected with transport, as well as being a centre for study and for conferences, has just received a marvellous present. This is the Swiss flag which was carried by the bathyscaphe "Trieste" on the occasion of its record submersion of 36,100 feet under the sea, which was performed in January of last year, by Jacques Piccard, son of the famous Auguste Piccard, with an officer in the United States Navy.

SWISSAIR'S FIRST HALF-YEAR OF JET OPERATIONS

Swissair has achieved satisfactory results with its jets in the first six months of their operation. During this period the company's four Caravelles and three DC-8s carried a total of 188,653 sector passengers.

The first Caravelle was introduced on the London-Zurich route on 21st May. Regular services within Europe and to the Middle East have been operated by three Caravelles since July and by four since August. By 21st November they had carried a total of 115,927 sector passengers, flown 2,143,011 kilometres, and served 19 cities.

The first DC-8 was introduced on the Swissair routes to New York on 30th May. It was followed by a second aircraft in July and a third at the end of September. Up to 30th November these three jets carried all together 72,726 sector passengers and flew 2,749,321 kilometres. In October, the first month to see Swissair's entire Caravelle and DC-8 fleet in regular service, each Caravelle averaged 7 hours 3 minutes flying per day; each DC-8 flew on average 6 hours 20 minutes per day.

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