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SWISS RACK-RAILWAY ENGINES IN THE UNITED STATES

One of the United States' two rack-railway lines, the Manitou and Pike's Peak Railway, recently ordered two electric diesel self-propelled vehicles from Switzerland in order to raise its transport capacity. The 9-mile-long line, built in 1892, connects the resort of Manitou (Colorado), at an altitude of 6,560 feet, to the top of Pike's Peak, 14,100 feet above sea level. The self-propelled vehicles and their mechanical equipment, including the diesel engines, were built by the Swiss Locomotive and Machine Works at Winterthur, while all the electrical parts were supplied by Brown Boveri & Co. of Baden (Switzerland). Each self-propelled car is equipped with two 8-cylinder diesel boxer engines connected directly to generators supplying power to the electrical traction engines mounted in series and acting directly on the rack. [O.S.E.C.]

THE CENTRALIZED REMOTE CONTROL OF ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES

One of the main problems facing power plants is that they are required to supply huge quantities of power at certain moments of the day while at other times the demand drops considerably. It is therefore necessary to provide them with equipment enabling them to cope with very high but short peak periods. So as to even out consumption as far as possible, a system of centralized remote control has been adopted for appliances with heavy consumption, such as water-heaters, run on power produced during periods when demand is less heavy. In New Zealand, for example, the Dunedin City Corporation is equipping 25,000 water-heaters on its network with individual remote-control apparatus made in Switzerland, some 10,000 of which are already in operation. The distribution network covers an area of over 470 square miles with a population of about 100,000 inhabitants. [O.S.E.C.]

PACKAGING AND MECHANICAL HANDLING IN SWITZERLAND

In this day of rationalization and productivity, marketing and competition, packaging plays an important part in the distribution of consumer goods. No longer is a package designed simply to act as a container for goods; it is designed also to safeguard them from outside influences, to preserve them, to simplify transport and stocking, and, in addition, to a very large extent to promote sales. In Switzerland, where the graphic arts have acquired a well-deserved fame, the art and industry of packaging have developed enormously during the last few years; at the same time Switzerland has produced a great many mechanical handling and transport devices capable of satisfying all present-day requirements. To gain an idea of the rapid growth in this field, it is sufficient to leaf through the "Swiss Packaging and Mechanical Handling Catalogue". In almost 500 pages, this work (the 18th edition already) gives a survey of Swiss production in this field. In particular it describes the new creations in paper and cardboard, plastics and glass, allied materials for packaging and printing, as well as a number of general problems, and contains countless short reports devoted to new types of packaging and the manufacturing programmes of specialized firms. It also includes a review of the work of foreign packaging industries and a number of indexes, which make it easy to consult. [O.S.E.C.]

WORLD'S FASTEST AIRLINER FOR LONDON

The fastest airliner in the world — the Convair 990A Coronado — will be a frequent visitor to London Airport this year. Swissair is to start using the 98-seater Coronado regularly from late July on services between London and Switzerland.

Two of Swissair's fleet of five Coronados have so far been modified to Convair 990A standard. The new version has a maximum cruising speed of 625 m.p.h. and is expected to remain the world's fastest passenger aircraft until the supersonic Concord starts operating.

Like the Caravelle, which it will be replacing on some of the London services, the Coronado has a reputation for quietness. Its four General Electric engines, each providing 16,150 lb. thrust, are advanced aft-fan types and make much less noise than ordinary jet engines.

Sixteen months ago Swissair was the first airline to introduce the Convair 990, and the aircraft has been used on services to the Far East, the Middle East, Africa and South America. The appearance of the new version at London Airport will depend on the operational availability of individual Coronados.

Swissair has been carrying out the modifications at its workshops in Zurich, and work on the rest of the Coronado fleet will be resumed after the summer season. The airline has found the Convair 990A Coronado to be one of the most economical aircraft in the world, as well as the fastest.

The most noticeable new feature is the streamlined extension at the rear of the engine pods. Other changes are Krueger flaps along the full length of the leading edge of the wings and an entirely new wing root. The two aircraft already modified bear the registrations HB-ICB and HB-ICE.



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