

OSEC News

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is not different from the ordinary account and — as will be shown — when for legal reasons the banking secrecy ceases it does so for a numbered account in exactly the same manner as for an ordinary account.

“It is the practice of responsible banks to refuse clients whose personal or business background appears dubious; similarly, banks do not hesitate to break off business relations with those who no longer meet the required standards. This applies just as much to the owners of name accounts as to those of numbered accounts. It has to be admitted that in Switzerland as elsewhere, there are a few banks which do not always live up to the highest standard. They are, however, marginal cases only and will occur in any country irrespective of whether or not banking secrecy is secured by law. What remains unquestionable, however, is that the ethical standards of reputable Swiss bankers can in every respect stand up to international comparison.

“What has hurt our image in recent past were irresponsible practices of some smaller Swiss banks controlled by foreigners. They abused our very liberal banking law for business practices which are against the ethics of Swiss banking. This is the reason why Parliament is right now putting the final touch on a Federal Decree regarding foreign-controlled banks in Switzerland. These banks will be forced to live up to the standard of domestic Swiss banks.”

(To be continued.)

SWISS ROLLING STOCK INDUSTRY

A New Achievement

In Switzerland, there are a great many small narrow-gauge railways on steep inclines, where cutting down deadweight becomes of vital importance in any attempt to modernise them. For the small line from Aigle to Champéry, for example, the Vevey Engineering Works have built ultra-light carriages, of an entirely new conception, in which the weight has been reduced as far as possible, both in the bodywork and in the bogies, with modern means based on aeronautical techniques. These coaches weigh only 7,450 kg. gross weight and can carry a load of 9,000 kg., i.e. 130 passengers, 52 of them seated. The reduction in weight, however, has not been achieved at the expense of strength or endurance, by reducing the thickness of the aluminium sheets for example. The second point of interest about the new coaches is their bogie with primary pneumatic suspension, auto-variable depending on the load. In fact, for a carriage whose weight empty is lower than half its weight when fully loaded, it was necessary to adapt a constant height suspension. In this particular instance, the suspension is equipped with adjustable air cushions, the pneumatic bellows being fitted directly on the axle-boxes.

Compared with other systems, this leads to a considerable decrease in the non-suspended weight and other advantages too. The compressed air needed for the pneumatic suspension is supplied by the braking system; in addition, the valves of the suspension system make it possible to adapt braking according to load. Combining extreme lightness with high suspension comfort, the new railway coaches produced by the Vevey Works are bound to meet with great success and be adopted by other lines.

(O.S.E.C.)

THE NUCLEAR POWER STATION AT LUCENS TO CLOSE DOWN

During the last meeting of the Communal Council of Lucens, the *Syndic* Guignard made a few sensational revelations on the fate of the nuclear power station of Lucens (Switzerland's first) whose activities had been halted since the accident that occurred to its reactor a few months ago. The *syndic* said that the municipality had been informed by the director of the power station of the situation.

Given the declarations of the latter, it can now be concluded with certainty that the power station of Lucens will no longer produce atomic energy and will need a new designation. A federal commission has been charged with the study of other possible uses for the premises. The possibility of transforming the disused power station in a dumping and processing centre for radioactive waste coming from hospitals and industry has already been suggested.

(A.T.S.)

SWISS SILOS AND JAPAN

The port of Kaohsiung being at present in the third stage of completion, Buhler Bros. Ltd., Engineering Works at Uzwil, have received an order for the delivery and assembly of the complete mechanical and electrical plant for a 40,000 ton wheat silo and two pneumatic ship-unloading plants with a capacity of 220 tons per hour each. This plant will be the largest and most modern in Formosa.

For the Japanese port of Kobe, the firm Zenkoren has ordered two mechanical ship-unloading cranes from Buhler with a capacity of 500 t/hr each. This type of plant reduces lay-days to a minimum and represents the most economic unloading solution from the point of view of power required, maintenance and duration of service.

(O.S.E.C.)

IGEHO

Catering Trade Exhibition

The Swiss Restaurant Proprietors' Association has now joined the patronage committee of the IGEHO international trade exhibition, the object of which is to deal with everything connected with the hotel, restaurant and

catering trade and which will take place for the third time in the period from 13th to 19th November 1969. All important organisations such as the Swiss Hotel Proprietors' Association, the Swiss Restaurant Proprietors' Association, the Swiss Catering Association, the Work Group of the unions of temperance restaurants, the Association of Swiss Hospitals and, for the new sector dealing with indoor and outdoor baths and swimming pools, the Swiss Association for Health Techniques, are thus supporting this great trade exhibition. The organisations mentioned represent something like 38,000 hotels and restaurants all of which are interested in this trade exhibition. In addition, as was the case with the special events carried out in the years 1965 and 1967, experts from the whole of Europe and from Overseas are expected to attend.

OSEC NEWS

Swiss epoxy resins used on moon flight

The materials used for making the heat shield on Apollo space-craft included in particular the epoxy resins made by the Swiss firm of Ciba. It is difficult to imagine what more exacting conditions these products could be expected to stand up to with regard to quality and safety. On re-entry into the earth's atmosphere, the heat shield on the Apollo spacecraft was subjected to a temperature of about 2300°C. The carbonisation that occurred was greatest on the leading edge, where it reached a depth of 10 to 13 mm.

Ski-run maintenance: first prize to a Swiss vehicle

An international competition for caterpillar-track vehicles used for the maintenance of ski-runs was recently held in Savoy (France). A Swiss vehicle, the "Ratrac-SW", made in Zurich, won easily in the face of keen Italian, French, German, Austrian, Swedish, American and Canadian competition.

Creation of Motor-Columbus Consultant Engineers Co. Ltd.

Motor-Columbus Consultant Engineers Co. Ltd. was recently founded by the board of directors of Motor-Columbus Electrical Concerns Co. Ltd. at Baden. This is a new firm, legally quite independent of Motor-Columbus and comprising all the technical departments. The activities of this new firm extend to all types of engineering in the most varied fields of technology, in particular planning, working out of schemes, supervision of work, as well as the running of projects of all kinds and the legal and financial advice relating thereto. The new company has a staff of 400.

*(Swiss Office for the
Development of Trade.)*