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News from Switzerland

An Improvement in Exports of the Swiss Watch-making Industry

Exports of Swiss watches during the first three quarters of this year went up in value to almost 910,000,000 Swiss francs (U.S.A. 21,212,000 dollars). They have thus increased by nearly 10 per cent. in comparison with the figures for the same period in 1956. The fact that the increase in the value of the exported articles was greater than that of the number of watches sent abroad, shows that the average price of the watches has risen. We would add that the share of the watch-making industry in Switzerland's total exports amounted to 18.5 per cent. for the first nine months of this year.

Suez Canal Company in Switzerland

The Egyptian Administration of the Suez Canal has decided to open a permanent office in Switzerland, at Zurich. This office will deal with such matters as business relations with navigation companies, the preparation of work on the canal, purchasing contracts and public relations, in general.

The 50,000th Motor-car Assembled in Switzerland

This recently left the important assembly plant which was established in Bienne twenty-one years ago. During the celebrations which took place in honour of this event the general manager of the plant spoke about the considerable development which had occurred during the twenty-one years of its existence. Since 1939 the workshops have doubled, whilst the number of people employed is now three times as great as it was in that year. As to the plant's capacity of production, it has increased seven-fold as a result of the putting up of new premises.

A Swiss Telepheric on the Banks of the Caspian Sea

The Ministry of Roads of Iran has just acquired a Swiss apparatus for the transportation of timber in the steep and mountainous regions bordering on the Caspian Sea. The machine in question is a skyline-crane, which can be easily set up at any place desired, and which makes it possible to convey, rapidly and surely, across gorges, rivers and steep ridges, the trees that have been cut down, and this over considerable distances. This machine makes it possible to engage in the rational utilisation of forests, in which no other means of transport would be practicable. Two technicians, from the firm of Swiss manufacturers, are now in Iran, for the purpose of being present at the trials and in order to show the staff of the Iranian service how to work the machine. We might add that such skyline-cranes,

of similar origin, are already in service in a great many countries, including North America and Africa.

New Swiss Apparatus for the Prevention of Industrial Accidents

An inventor in Zurich has just built a new security device, called "Hostraphone," which is intended for the prevention of serious accidents in plants and in industrial undertakings. The device in question consists of an electronic system which can stop the machine to which it is fitted, and is set going by an impelling force produced by a microphone. A scream is sufficient to set the device going. This should prove most useful in such critical cases where a worker is not able to get at the control device, in order to stop the machine, as is so often the case in industrial accident. The "Hostraphone" will also prove useful in releasing alarm signals in banks and in post offices, should an employee who is being held up be unable to press the alarm button.

A Reduction in the Price of Flour and Bread in Switzerland

At a time when the price of most articles has got a tendency to go up, more and more, it is very satisfactory to be able to announce a decrease in the price of an essential food. Taking into account the evolution of prices for foreign wheat, the Federal Department of Public Economy has reduced the price of white and semi-white flour. This measure makes it possible for the price of a one-kilo loaf of semi-white bread to be reduced by two centimes (U.S.A. 0.0046 dollars).

A Swiss Watch Proves its Worth

The world Press kept the public well informed regarding the voyage across the Atlantic by the replica of the famous ship "Mayflower", which in 1620 carried the Pilgrim Fathers from Plymouth to America, where they formed the first English settlement. On the other hand far less was heard about an extremely interesting experiment which was made on this occasion and which confirmed, once more, the high quality achieved by Swiss industry in the production of articles of precision. An automatic watch was fixed to the rudder of "The Mayflower II." In spite of the fact that there was a rough sea during most of the crossing, the watch never stopped during the fifty-one days of the voyage, and never ceased from showing the exact time. Moreover, not the least humidity could be found inside the watch. It may be of interest to know that this same watch had already proved its worth a year ago, when a Swiss expedition climbed Everest and Lhotse. There also the results obtained were a great credit to Swiss watchmaking.

The Swiss Wool Textile Organisation Celebrates its 75th Anniversary

The Swiss Wool Textile Organisation, having been founded in 1882, it has just celebrated the 75th anniversary of its establishment. The wool textile industry in Switzerland is represented by some ninety firms, which employ 10,000 workers and employees. Most of these firms are affiliated with the Organisation: they represent all the different stages of manufacture, principally spinning, weaving, the manufacture of carpets and of felt. This interesting branch of industry, which is engaged in a lively competitive struggle on the Swiss market with foreign firms, has, nevertheless, succeeded in gaining a firm footing abroad, as a result of the high quality of its products, mostly spun threads and woven goods, and in penetrating in countries which for a long time past have been renowned for their production of woollen goods.

The increasing importance of the Zurich Airport

The inter-continental airport of Kloten-Zurich now figures among the ten most important airports of Europe. In regard to passenger traffic, it has improved its position since last year by passing from the eighth to the sixth place, and, even when one does not take the transit passenger into account, it still occupies the seventh place. In regard to freight, Kloten has now surpassed the aerodrome at Hamburg, and ranks as eighth on the list.

A Swiss Industry Building a Power Plant for Australia

The Australian Minister for National Development has announced the decision taken by his Government to entrust the "Ateliers des Charmilles, S.A." in Geneva, with the job of constructing the turbines intended for the third plant of the project for the hydro-electric exploitation of the Snowy Mountains. The Genevese firm will build four powerful, vertical Francis turbines, of 110,000 h.p. each, which function under a maximum fall of 310 yards. The turbines, together with their speed regulators, will be entirely constructed in Geneva. The equipment will comprise, in addition, four spherical sluices, which are two yards in diameter. This order is a success which honours Swiss industry, as well as the firm concerned, the technique of which has prevailed, in spite of very strong competition on the part of five other countries, namely, Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy and Canada.

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