

News from Switzerland

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Forthcoming Events

HAMILTON SWISS CLUB

Social Evening: Saturday, 14th September, in the Pine Lodge.

WELLINGTON SWISS CLUB

"Jassen"—First Tuesday of every month in the "Matterhorn" at 8 p.m.

News from Switzerland

SWISS AIR RESCUE IN 1967

Last year the Swiss Air Rescue transported 384 people by air, 81 of whom owe their lives to this rapid means of transport. From its reorganisation in 1960 up till the middle of this year, the Swiss Air Rescue Service has made 2000 rescue flights, mainly in mountainous regions. SARS has a single alarm centre for the whole of Switzerland, manned free of charge by the personnel of the Swiss Radio Company at the control tower of Kloten-Zurich airport. (osec)

INVESTMENTS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Swiss private investments in developing countries today amount to over three thousand million Swiss francs. This sum represents about a sixth of total Swiss direct investments abroad. The annual increase of Swiss investments in developing countries ranges between 200 and 300 million Swiss francs. In absolute figures, Switzerland ranks fifth among industrialised countries in this respect. (osec)

SWISS IMPORTS OF AUTOMOBILES

In 1967 Switzerland imported 5% more automobiles than in the previous record year 1964, i.e. a total of 165,800 cars and utility vans. Compared with the previous year, purchases increased by 8% in number of units and by 6.7% in value, to total the sum of S.Fr. 1004.3 million.

The rise was mainly due to the increase in medium-powered cars. In order of importance, Switzerland's main supplier countries were Germany (68,000 cars), France (28,430), Italy (22,680) and Great Britain. (osec)

SWISS MEDALLIST YESTERDAY AND TODAY

If one particular firm can be said to have spread the fame of the small town of Le Locle far beyond the borders of Switzerland, that firm is Huguenin Medailleurs S.A. who celebrate their 100th anniversary this year. The firm's founders, who had specialised in watch case decoration (niello process) soon saw the future metal stamping offered and began turning out commemorative medals.

Notwithstanding two world wars and resulting crises, the firm never stopped making medals. Honorific decorations, collectors' coins and insignia of every description were progressively added to the manufacturing programme. The Swiss Confederation awarding no military or civil decorations, medals soon became a highly appreciated export. In fact, ever since George Huguenin returned from Serbia in 1910 with an order for one and one half million military medals, few major events have occurred without an original and artistically superior Huguenin design.

What better proof that in the age of computers and nucleonics, the combination of superb craftsmanship, tradition and artistic creativity can survive? Of course, this unique production makes use of the most modern blanking and stamping processes such as ultrasonics and electro-erosion. (osec)

METAL STRUCTURE INDUSTRY IN SWITZERLAND

The metal structure industry includes all activities formerly known as the wrought iron industry. Though this occupation is still included in the branch, it is today mainly concerned with the manufacture of metal building structures of every description both in iron and steel and in other metals.

Today, the Swiss metal structure industry comprises over 1000 small and middle-size firms; its total annual turnover is about one thousand million Swiss francs and total annual investments amount to nearly two hundred million Swiss francs. Salaries paid to the industry's 25.000 wage earners total about 220 million Swiss francs. These figures reveal this industry's importance in Swiss economic life (osec)

A SCHOOL OF ADVERTISING IN FRENCH-SPEAKING SWITZERLAND

The Swiss Advertising Association and the French-Swiss Advertising Association, in co-operation with other professional organisations in Switzerland, have founded a Swiss School of Advertising and Information (CSEPI), which will be located in Bienne and is planned to be opened in the spring of 1969. The purpose of this new school will be to simplify the recruiting of efficient advertising personnel by offering new possibilities of vocational training and refresher courses. It will organise annual courses lasting 35 weeks, covering in particular advertising law, marketing and the various forms of publicity. (osec)

EXPORTS OF PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS: SWITZERLAND FOURTH

According to the figures published by SITC (Standard International Trade Classification), the figures for world exports of pharmaceutical products were as follows, in 1965, expressed in millions of pounds sterling (figures for 1964 in brackets): United States 91.3 (103.9), West Germany 80.5 (68.1), Great Britain 66.8 (59.1), Switzerland 65.1 (57.9), France 49.3 (42), the Netherlands 25 (22.1), Italy 21.7 (18.7), Denmark 12.2 (11.1), Belgium 10.7 (8.7).

In spite of the recent tendency to effect mergers in this field, there is very keen competition in pharmaceutical products on the world market and the firm that takes first place for the whole world, the Swiss firm of Hoffmann-La Roche, meets only 3 to 4% of the world demand. Three other big Swiss firms, Ciba, Geigy and Sandoz, are among the eleven next biggest firms. (osec)

IMPROVED BRAKE LIGHT FOR AUTOMOBILES

A well-known Swiss watch factory has patented a new brake light for automobiles, possessing certain essential advantages over current models. At present, in fact, the extinction of a car's brake lights does not always mean that the vehicle has begun to pick up speed again once braking is over, which may mislead the drivers that follow.

With the new device, on the other hand, any big deceleration of the car or strong pressure on the brake pedal switches on a safety circuit, which replaces the fixed brake lights with flickering lights as soon as the pressure on the brake pedal has stopped and until the accelerator has been pressed down again. Thus, the vehicles that follow are warned very clearly that the car in front of them is still slowing down, even when it is no longer actually braking, which can help prevent accidents. It is interesting to note that this new device was awarded a silver-gilt medal at the recent International Salon of Inventors in Brussels. (osec)

REMARKABLE LONGEVITY OF A SWISS INDUSTRY

The Ruetschi bell foundry at Aarau recently celebrated, a trifle late, the 6th centenary of its foundation. It was in October 1367 in fact that the founder, Walter Reber, who started the original foundry from which the present firm has developed, cast the St. Barbara bell for the cathedral of Fribourg, in whose steeple it still hangs today. The festivities commemorating the start of the firm's 7th century of existence were marked by the casting of several bells, for churches in different parts of Switzerland. (osec)

NEW GENEVA-COINTRIN AIR TERMINAL

In 1920, the Federal Air Department authorised the construction of Geneva-Cointrin airport. Last year, over 1,600,000 passengers and 25 airline companies used this intercontinental airport. The airport buildings, built in 1948, had become too small and a new airport terminal has just been built, planned to handle 4 million passengers. A unique innovation for Europe consists in the construction, in the centre of the parking area, of three satellite pavilions round which four big aircraft can park. These pavilions are connected to the terminal by tunnels equipped with moving pavements.

The new building, including the satellite pavilions and tunnels, cost almost S.Fr.77 million and the equipment 1.5 million. The volume of the buildings is 8,650,000 cu. ft., they measure 804 ft. long and 285 ft. deep, and the dimensions of the departure hall are 377 x 56 ft. (osec)

AN UNSUSPECTED SWISS CONTRIBUTION TO THE MEXICO OLYMPICS

It is interesting to know, as pointed out by the Zurich newspaper "Die TAT", that at this summer's Olympic Games in Mexico over 120 of the boats used for the rowing races are built by a Swiss shipping yard. It is in fact on the shores of the lake of Zurich, in a shipping yard inherited from his father, that Alfred Staempfli builds boats that are famous all over the world and that have won about 200 medals in the course of the years. (osec)

INTERESTING OPTICAL NOVELTY FOR ARC WELDING

A Swiss optical firm at Prilly (Lausanne) has perfected a protective glass of a new kind for use in arc welding. Based on the observation of the fact that the near total opacity of ordinary protective glass obliges welders to raise their protective goggles or helmet when striking the arc, so that they are severely dazzled the moment the spark flies, causing ophthalmic disorders, the makers of this new article have produced an inactinic glass of double density, that is to say offering a less opaque protective area, for striking the arc, while the actual welding is watched through the more opaque zone, offering complete protection.

This novelty, already patented in several countries, is recommended in Switzerland by the Swiss National Accident Insurance Company. These bi-filtering glasses are made in several sizes and in a complete range of absorption to answer all welding requirements. The invention was awarded a silver medal at the last International Inventors' Salon in Brussels. (osec)