

Business in Switzerland

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BUSINESS IN SWITZERLAND

Marine Diesel Engine Manufacture in Switzerland

In 1912 Sulzer Ltd. (Switzerland) equipped the cargo ship "Monte Penedo" with two two-stroke diesel engines. This was the first time that a big ocean-going vessel had been fitted with engines of this type; these 4-cylinder engines, each developing 850 h.p. at 160 r.p.m., were installed in the stern, which was also an innovation for the time. The "Monte Penedo", which was later re-christened the "Sabara", kept these engines for 30 years of uninterrupted service.

For fifty years Sulzer Ltd. have specialized in marine diesel engines, which they have continually improved and brought up to date. Quite recently this firm received an order for an engine of this type rated at 9,600 h.p., at 119 r.p.m., for a cargo ship to be built in Argentina. This vessel, with a net displacement of 8,250 tons, will have a speed of 17 knots. (OSEC).

New Multi-Purpose Recording Tachometer

A Swiss firm has just produced a new recording tachometer, very modern in conception, which represents in fact the very latest in apparatus of this kind. The result of considerable technical experience in this field, the sturdy and extremely precise Zenith recording tachometer is particularly useful for lorries, taxis and utility vans, for it records not only the speed, but also the actual hours of service of the vehicle, as well as signs of irrational driving such as sudden accelerations and braking, exceeding of speed limits (warning light), etc. In case of accident, it gives irrefutable proof of the speed at the moment of collision. It can also record the driving times of three different drivers using the same vehicle in turn.

Very shortly, this appliance will be fitted with an indicator showing the number of revolutions of the motor so as to determine the optimum moment for oil changes, a daily totalizer and a system of recording the number of revolutions while idling. In addition, a special switch is provided for the automatic control of the vehicle's central lubricating system.

Zurich-Kloten Airport Buildings to be Enlarged

Only nine years after its construction, Zurich-Kloten airport is already too small. This is not surprising if one considers the really amazing growth of air traffic, especially since jet planes were first put into operation. Whereas in 1951 the number of passengers passing through Zurich airport annually was in the neighbourhood of 500,000, the figure is now three times as great. Consequently, plans have been made for a big expansion. Roughly speaking, the size of the airport, including the terraces and restaurants, will be trebled. At the same time all premises and the departments they house will be brought up to date and improved. The approach roads will be completely modified by the construction of a motorway between the city and its airport. In addition, like Geneva-Cointrin, but at a later stage, it is planned to connect the airport to the rail network directly by rail. This project, work on which is to start in 1963, is expected to be completed by 1967 and to cost 47 million Swiss francs. (OSEC)

Automatic Regulation of Oil-Fired Central Heating

The ideal oil heating system possesses not only a boiler thermostat and a room temperature thermostat but also a special gauge fitted outside the building. This gauge is connected to the central adjustment panel and transmits to it indications concerning any changes in the outside temperature. In fact, it is important for the heating to be adapted to any change in the atmospheric conditions right away without waiting for this variation to affect the inside temperature of the house. Up till now such a system was too complicated and too expensive for small heating plants. But thanks to the new appliances put on the market by a Swiss firm, which are both easy to mount and inexpensive, this gauge is now within the reach of owners of even quite small buildings, and will enable them to reduce their fuel bills considerably.

The whole apparatus consists of an electronic regulator, an exterior gauge and a boiler thermostat. The regulating switches, which make it possible to set the temperature desired with considerable precision, can be fitted separately, in one of the rooms of the apartment. Furthermore, if the system is connected up to a clock movement, it is possible to arrange for it to switch automatically from a normal temperature to a lower one during the night, and vice-versa. This type of regulator, called "FW24", is suitable for either the simple type of heating system worked by successive switching on and off of the oil-burner, or that regulated by a motor-driven mixing valve. (OSEC)

HOW TO PROGRESS YET MARK TIME

By HAROLD WINCOTT

I spent last week away from most if not all of it all, looking at the Swiss economy in general and the Swiss watch industry in particular. On the Swiss economy in general, there is not a great deal novel to report. Switzerland, in common with most of Europe, has been suffering from the problems of too much prosperity, overfull employment, a tendency for incomes to outstrip production, a widening gap in her visible trade, some loss of reserves, rising prices, and so on.

What is unusual — but very typical of the way they run things in Switzerland — is the manner in which the authorities are trying to cope with the situation. The whole effort is being based on voluntary action. The banks have been asked to restrict credit. Industry has agreed not to take on more labour — either Swiss or foreign (the proportion of foreign workers in Switzerland is very high — 700,000 out of a total population of 5 million) and to limit its investments. Working hours will not be further reduced. Government at all levels is to try to contain its spending.

It remains to be seen how all this will work out: the Swiss T.U.C. is not too enthusiastic about the programme. But at least this may be said — the remedial measures have obviously been framed in a way which will do the least possible damage to outside trade: they may indeed help other countries by encouraging Swiss investment abroad. And given the high level of discipline and co-