

A model depot for suchard suisse chocolate

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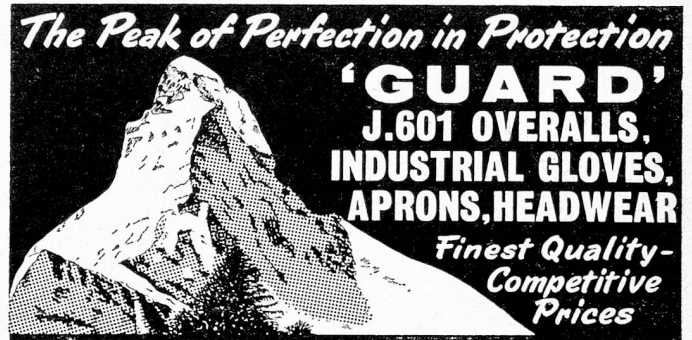
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Poncione di Vespero.

A MODEL DEPOT FOR SUCHARD SWISS CHOCOLATE

Continuing its vast programme of modernisation and rationalisation, the Suchard chocolate factory at Neuchâtel recently opened a new model depot, the first of its kind in Europe, designed to store the finished products it needs to be able to meet the heavy demand at peak periods. These premises, measuring 130 ft. long by 100 ft. wide and 40 ft. high, contain 5,000 trays resting on steel shelves, each capable of holding about one ton of finished products. The interior of the premises, which no one may enter, is fully air-conditioned at 12°C and 40% relative humidity, guaranteeing the ideal preservation of the delicate products stored there. Handling, which is entirely automatic, is carried out by two stacking machines which introduce the trays loaded with finished products on one side and deliver the products for despatch or to the forwarding department on the other. An entry or exit operation takes two minutes, which with two stacking machines is equivalent to sixty trays an hour. Putting the trays into position and their removal are controlled by a single operator, from a control cabin situated outside. From the moment a tray is deposited at the entrance to the store till it reaches the forwarding department, it undergoes twenty-four different movements, all controlled by perforated cards and all different for each of the 5,000 racks. This represents 120,000 possibilities selected, synchronised and controlled by the electronic brain. An inventory is taken periodically by a camera, moving automatically along the aisles photographing each of the 5,000 racks. This work can be carried out at night and takes about 5 hours. The manufacture and installation of the whole automatic handling set-up have been carried out by a specialised Swiss firm in Aarau which was awarded the order in the face of keen competition from two foreign firms. Hardly a week goes by without this truly model plant being visited by some foreign expert sent to see how it works. A similar plant built according to the same plans is already in operation at the Suchard factory at Loerrach (Germany), while another is at present being completed at the Suchard factory in Paris. [O.S.E.C.]



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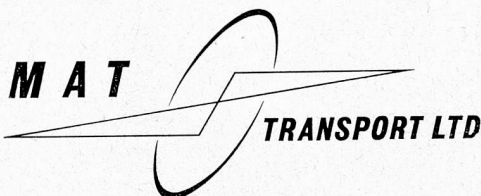
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