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The Swiss have now made a wristlet chronograph which will tell its owner where he is, how fast he is travelling, the time of day, the date, the name of the day of the week and the phase of the moon.

\* \* \*

The Swiss Federal Railways announced that the number of special trains was to be restricted and steam trains substituted for electric locomotives whenever possible because of the shortage of hydro-electric power.

\* \* \*

An edible mushroom with a top measure over 18 inches across, has been found near Neuchâtel.

\* \* \*

In 1948, the Swiss Federal Railways converted an old restaurant car into a "brake instruction car" which is being used for the training of locomotive men, especially at minor sheds where the permanent installation of training equipment would be too costly. The car is divided into two large compartments, one used as a lecture room and the other containing the model brake installations (Drols-hammer brake), including the brake blocks, manometers, dusts, and valves.

Compressed-air tanks are provided to imitate brake operations for trains with 50, 100, and 150 axles, respectively. As the valves are operated, the trainees can observe the reaction of the various parts of the equipment, including, the Stopex and Tustop devices for regulating the braking efficiency. The effect of emergency braking can also be studied.

Another special vehicle of a new design used by the Federal Railways, is an inspection car for overhead contact lines which checks periodically the correct position of the overhead wire, both vertically and horizontally. It can run at a maximum speed of 92 m.p.h. and can be placed either in front or behind the locomotive. The car, including the elevated observation cabin, is constructed of electrically welded steel plates and profiles.

Both the vertical and horizontal movements of a pantograph mounted on the car are recorded on a continuous diagram which reveals at a glance any undue deviations from the normal position. There are also optical instruments for the observation of the overhead line. The car is equipped with a recording instrument which registers oscillations of the vehicle due to irregularities in the permanent way.

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### AUTHOR'S TRIBUTE TO SWISS HOTELIERS.

In "Cairo to Riyadh Diary" (Williams and Norgate, Ltd., 10s. 6d. illus.) Mr. George Bilainkin, the British diplomatic correspondent and well known friend of Switzerland, describes his visit in 1947 to Saudi Arabia, where he was guest of King Ibn Saud; to Palestine, where he met President C. Weizmann, General Sir Alan Cunningham (last British High Commissioner), Generals MacMillan and Gale, the Officers Commanding, also, Egypt, where he was received by the Premier for 2½ hours, and by the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem.

Mr. Bilainkin's latest provocative book says, in part about his return to Shepherds Hotel, Cairo, "There were smiles from the two best known hotel porters in the world, the brothers Meyer, who have served unlimited statesmen and persons of international distinction, crowned heads, royal princes, generals, admirals. The Meyers wear immaculate, but not ostentatious clothes and are a further credit for manners to Switzerland. Hans, at 65 he looks 45, began work in Switzerland in 1900, and joined Shepherds in November, 1906, as assistant hallporter. Since 1914 he has been chief, with Ernst, aged 53, as his assistant for 27 years. The Swiss Francesco Ferrari has been head waiter in the grill room since 1914 and Paula Weibel, housekeeper, since 1910. I wonder how many notable hotels can claim a similar record?"

The book is due out in mid-December. Mr. Bilainkin's "Tito" was out in November.

### OUR NEXT ISSUE.

Our next issue will be published on Friday, December 16th, 1949 (one issue only, owing to Xmas Holidays).

We take the opportunity of thanking the following subscribers for their kind and helpful donations over and above their subscriptions: F. Zimmermann, H. Muller, G. A. Schwarz, A. Gubeli, L. W. Krucker, W. G. Walter, E. Meyer, A. Muller, E. Goodbehere, G. Winzeler, A. Diethelm, W. Wagner, A. A. Bodenehr, C. J. Bernheim, J. H. Buchi, R. J. Helfenstein, G. Milli, A. Brauen, W. Fischer, J. Joerin, F. G. Sommer, Mrs. E. G. Collier.