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TECHNICAL ITEMS

New commutator device

The jury of the last Brussels Inventors Salon awarded a gold medal to a Geneva firm specialising in precision engineering, for its "Rotoring". This consists of a rotating commutator which utilises the nutational motion of a ring subjected to a revolving magnetic field. The device offers numerous advantages: it operates without friction and with minimal driving torque; high commutation speeds are attained with low power input. It can thus be fitted in miniature D.C., synchronous or stepping motors, since its rotor is mounted straight on the output shaft. Motor speed may exceed 10,000 rpm, which means that the commutation pulses amount to milliseconds. On account of the negligible inertia of the ring moreover, the rotor inertia is minimal. Consequently, the commutation can follow very sudden starting and stopping of the motor. Possible applications for this device are legion. In particular it may be employed in communications engineering for commutating weak current signals, in control techniques for synchronising remote-controlled operations or for distributing sequential signals.

New non-polluting plastic film

Jacques Schindler & Co. (Zurich), one of the biggest Swiss firms in the paper and plastic film conversion industry, together with Dénervaud Co. Ltd. (Fribourg-Switzerland) recently signed an agreement to co-operate in the marketing of a new multi-layer plastic film. "Decrylen SR", as the new packaging material is called, offers many advantages: whether transparent or coloured, it gives off no toxic or corrosive gas; in addition, it is perfectly impervious to steam as well as aromas and gases. It complies in every respect

with the food laws. Thanks to its remarkable sealing qualities and its ability to be shaped under vacuum, this new plastic film is particularly suitable for the packaging of foodstuffs liable to turn rancid as well as for products exposed to tropical conditions.

A revolution in non-skid tyres

The safety offered by tyres is of supreme importance, particularly on snow and ice, especially now that the speed and power of cars is continually increasing. The only progress achieved in the field of adherence on ice was the introduction of spiked tyres; but even so, the problem is not completely solved—far from it: the grip of spiked tyres on dry roads leaves room for improvement and in addition spikes cause serious damage to road surfaces. A Swiss inventor from Fribourg recently invented a revolutionary system consisting of a long elastic band which can either be made an integral part of the tyre, or be quite separate and detachable, enabling it to be fixed very easily on a summer tyre. This band consists of a strong, supple material in which a multitude of fine, short and rigid steel wires are incorporated, laid pointing radially from the centre towards the outside. The wires, which do not necessarily have to be evenly distributed over the whole surface of the tyre, can therefore be arranged in designs to suit different requirements.

A jumbo Swiss machine sold in the USA

The MAAG Gear-Wheel Company Ltd. (Zurich, Switzerland) has just shipped to Pittsburgh the largest machine tool ever manufactured in Switzerland, a MAAG SH-600/753 E jumbo gear-cutting machine. Purchased by one

of the biggest steel-rolling mills in the United States, this machine weighs over 115 metric tons and is capable of cutting gears up to 7.35 meters (289 inches) in diameter, with a tooth width up to 1.28 metres (50in.). But it is also capable of cutting small pinions of only 450mm (17.7in.) in diameter. The machine is driven and controlled by 14 electric motors. MAAG Co. Ltd., a leading gear-wheel manufacturer, exports all over the world; so far it has produced or has on order a total number of 15 machines of the same type for manufacturers of gears for rolling mills, the cement industry, mining, etc.

Big investments in the Swiss textile industry

The textile industry is one of the branches of the Swiss economy with the highest rate of growth of capital. The modern, high-speed machinery with which it is equipped, necessitates tremendous investment expenditures. The investment per work point averages some Fr. 2,500 a year. For a new work point, the figure works out between Fr. 250,000 and 400,000, depending on the sector, and in certain cases it may amount to as much as 500,000 or even 1 million Swiss francs.

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