The Festschriften in Switzerland cover many fields since the beginning of the 20th century: banks,1 alimentary sector,2 machine industry and utilities (gas, electricity, railways). This paper focuses on the machine industry and utilities. Whether these two sectors present some differences, they possess also some important similarities. They are active in the strategic field of national infrastructure and therefore accord a large place to the presentation of the technical object. As they take advantages of the national preference, they need to convince the public and the institutions that they merit this privilege. To do this, the firms dispose of large sources with their annual and technical bulletins.

But these Festschriften contain more than a technical object. Biographies of the founders and the principal managers and engineers are presented as well as economical and social statistics, step of development replaced in their context and social facilities accorded by the firm to their employees and workers.

We can detect a German model of Festschriften which spreads firstly to the German part of Switzerland. As far as I am informed, I would argued that this model is closely linked to the German historical school which apply its empirical approach to the industrial firms. The companies are considered as a key factor to understand better the process of economic and social development. So German universities produce studies and thesis on the development of firms and sector of activities. These works often preceded the edition of a Festschrift by a company. Further more, we can also take in account the advanced position of the Germany in social matter and this under the influences of the socialists and the impulsion given by Bismarck during the 1880's. These facts are recovered by important firms which need to communicate at internal and external levels. They are proud of their production as to play a role in the economic and social development of their country.

1 All the principals banks of the country have edited a Festschrift. In the case of Union Bank of Switzerland, a thesis has prepared the field: Ernest Wetter, Die Bank in Wintherthur (1862-1912), University of Zurich, Wintherthur, 1914; for the Festschrift, see Union Bank of Switzerland (ed.), Union de banques suisses (1862-1912), Zurich, 1962; Hans Bauer, Société de Banque Suisse (1872-1972), Bâle, 1972; Alexander Roesle, Die Entwicklung der Schweizerischen Kreditanstalt in Zürich, Zürich, 1905; Adolf Joehr, Schweizerische Kreditanstalt (1856-1956), Zurich, 1956; Basler Handelsbank (ed.), Festschrift zum 50 Jährigen Jubilaum (1862-1912), Bâle, 1912. See also Comptoir d'escompte de Genève (1855-1920), Genève, 1920.

2 The case of Nestlé is original. The author who is very interested in history has written two Festschriften for the Swiss multinational: Jean Heer, Reflets du monde (1866-1966), Présence de Nestlé, Lausanne, 1966; Jean Heer, Nestlé. Cent vingt-cinq ans de 1866 à 1991, Bern, 1991. Each chapter of these books is separated in two parts. One analysed the principals development of the political and economic context. The other is dedicated to the history of the firm.
1. THE SWISS MACHINE INDUSTRY

The case of Swiss machine industry is characterised by three principal waves of appearance. The first Festschriften appear during the 1910's and 1920's. Then many are edited during the Second World War, but the most advanced stories of firms are available during the 1950's and 1960's. In generally, the most developed Festschriften contain five kinds of similarities. (1) If we can see a large part attributed to the genesis of the firm, as it is the case of all Swiss Festschriften, the machine industry gives a big importance to their industrial products which are nicely illustrated by pen-and-ink sketches, pictures and photographs. This practice is relatively easy, because these firms generally produce annual and technical bulletins which present their products. (2) The Swiss machine industry is also according importance to the social activities purposed by the firm. (3) This kind of Festschriften produce pieces of accounting: turn over, economic results, balance-sheet and so on. These data are very useful to the economic historians not only to determinate the economic results, but also to have a better understanding of the principal steps of the firm. (4) A large place is accorded to the positions acquired in international markets. This is the result of firms settlement in a country like Switzerland with a limited internal market. (5) Since the 1950's and 1960's, the firms also accord a large importance to the presentation of their centres of research and development (R+D).

The German model

We do not have to be amazed whether neither the Swiss german part of Switzerland is pioneer in matter of industrial Festschriften, nor whether a German model was used for anniversary books. The Swiss German industry, particularly the north-east of the country, enters rapidly in the process of industrialisation since the 1800's, while the machine industry in the French speaking part of Switzerland emerges not before the mid 1870's. In the north-east of the country, the process is drawn by the mechanisation of the textile industry. From this context emerges a mechanical industry. The existence of a German model for the Swiss Festschriften in mechanical companies is easy to understand even if it is not only a question of identical German culture. In the beginning of the 1900's, Swiss industry located in the German speaking part of Switzerland and German industries are linked together. As we will see in the case of Sulzer brothers and Co, Swiss firms need the German market and install subsidiaries companies. In the field of electromechanical industry, Swiss and German companies co-operate. The co-operation between Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon and Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft (AEG) emerged to the spectacular transport of electrical energy at the Francfort-on-the-Main electrical exhibition in 1891. In a second step, the German electromechanical industries of Berlin -Siemens and AEG- use the Swiss financial places of Zurich and Basel to facility the penetration in the European markets.

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5 This field is well covered by professional historians, Peter Hertner has initiated these studies, see: "Les sociétés financières suisses et le développement de l'industrie électrique jusqu'à la Première Guerre mondiale" in Fabienne Cardot (ed.), Un siècle d'électricité dans le monde (1880-1980), Paris, 1987, p. 341-355. Luciano
In the field of *Festschriften*, we can clearly detect a German model by taking the example of Conrad Matschoss, professor in a German university. Conrad Matschoss benefits from an interesting experience by writing the first 25 years of the powerful electromechanical group Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft located in Berlin. The book is edited in 1909. During his career, this author will write many *Festschriften* of industrial companies.

Conrad Matschoss produces in 1910 the first *Festschrift* concerning a Swiss machine industry. It is dedicated to the history of Sulzer brothers and Co. We have to note that the book is published in Berlin and that it serves the interests of internal communication, because it is written on the first page that this book is not available in commerce (*nicht in Handel*). Sulzer is one of the oldest mechanical Swiss firms founded in the 1830's. The Swiss head office is located in the industrial town of Winterthur, close to Zurich, and the German subsidiary company is based in Ludwigshafen. The author gives a style in *Festschriften* that will be used again quite by nearly all the *Festschriften* dedicated to Swiss mechanical companies.

He accords a big importance to the genesis of the firm and insists on their principal leaders: some managers issued from the Sulzer's family and the principal innovator: the British engineer Charles Brown (1827-1905) immigrated in Switzerland. He is the father of the cofounder of Brown, Boveri and Co: Charles Eugen Lancelot Brown. Then, Conrad Matschoss analyses the principal technical activities of Sulzer brothers and Co in steam powered machines and central heating. There is a place to occupy in manufacturing steam powered machines, because these used in the Swiss market have to economise coal that must be imported from other countries. In another part, the book deals with employees and workers. Conrad Matschoss presents the social activities purposed by Sulzer brothers and Co. The Swiss firm insists on hygiene. It is possible to bathe and take showers in the firm. There is a house for workers and employees that contains a dining hall for 359 people. A library exists which contains 1 100 books and 41 newspapers and reviews that could be borrowed. Sulzer brothers and Co participates also to the edification in houses destined for the employees and workers of the firm. We can consider this *Festschrift* as a model which will be used by other Swiss industrial companies, most particularly in the Swiss German part of Switzerland.

**The precocity of Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon**

Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon is one of the first Swiss firms to have published in 1926 an important Festschrift (183 pages). We can explain this precocity firstly by the fact the Swiss firm keeps an eye on the activities of AEG since their co-operation in the 1890's and secondly by arguing that a thesis dedicated to the economic development and published in 1920 prepares the field. The thesis is

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*Ibidem*, p. 86-89.

Fr. Schonenberger, *Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon (1876-1926)*, Zürich, 1926.
written by a member of a family who belongs to the managers of the firm: Adolf Wegmann.\textsuperscript{12} We enter now in the era of the internal writers. The anniversary book of Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon is edited in German in 1926 for its first fifty years. The firm, based in the industrial town of Oerlikon close to Zurich, is born during the 1870s. It starts to be active in electromechanical industry during the next decade under the impulsion given by Charles Brown who moves to Oerlikon with his two sons: Charles Eugen and Sydney. This firm plays an eminent role during the emerging of electrical networks. As quoted before, it obtains a big international success in 1891 during the transport of electrical energy on 177 km at the exhibition of Francfort-on-the-Main.\textsuperscript{13} This result is due to a successful process of co-operation engaged with the giant German Allgemeine-Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft (AEG). After this success, the firm encounters some difficulties largely due to the transfer in 1891 of the pioneer Charles Brown to his own factory Brown, Boveri and Co. Finally, the firm based in Oerlikon finds a solution in connecting closely with the federal state which has to decide the system of traction that will be used by the Federal State Railways. The Swiss of the colonels, those who manage the Oerlikon firm and those who were placed in the special railway commission, encountered themselves.\textsuperscript{14} We have to remember that this strategic decision takes place during the First World War.

Following the style opened by the German professor Matschoss, the book begins with the principal steps of the firm in insisting on the founders and on the principal engineers and managers.\textsuperscript{15} Before treating technical matters, it is question of the social advantages offered by the firm to its employees and workers.\textsuperscript{16} As we are in the years following the First World War, this part begins to describe the role played by the firm during the War to accompany inflation. It is also question of familial gardens used to produce vegetables, holidays camps, diseases, accident and retirement funds. All the second part of the book, a hundred pages, is dedicated to the technical production manufactured by the firm.\textsuperscript{17} In all the parts, the author is very precise. Like the professional historians, he uses sources that are presented in footnotes. In comparison with the German model of Sulzer brother and Co, the novelty figures in using photographs.

**During and after the Second World War**

Without any doubts, the Second World War plays a big role in the evolution of the Swiss *Festschriften* dedicated to the machine industry. After the invasion of France by German troops, Switzerland represents an isolated country encompassed by the Axe. Facing the threat, the moral courage of the Swiss society gets down and then the communication of the firms enters in a new phase of raising the spirit in a collective process. Not only *Festschriften*, but also newspapers of firms, emerge in order to motivate the workers in their jobs. So, the founders of the firms and the principal managers are the father to whom respect must be shown, most particularly to the founders who did not benefit from all what is available during the time when the anniversary book is written.\textsuperscript{18} The *Festschriften* produced after the Second World War are based on a new motivation. The

\textsuperscript{12} Adolf Wegmann, *Die Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung der Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon (1863-1917)*, Zürich, 1920.
\textsuperscript{13} See note 4.
\textsuperscript{14} The commission chose the alternative monophased current purposed by Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon. Brown, Boveri and Co, which appears at this time as a cosmopolite firm in comparison with the "Swiss" Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon, submits the direct current for the traction. The chairman Walter Boveri is furious. See Serge Paquier, *Histoire de l'électricité en Suisse. La dynamique*, op. cit., vol.2, p. 882-884.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibidem, p. 53-78.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibidem, p. 83-184.
\textsuperscript{18} Especially in the case of the *Festschrift* edited by the Société genevoise d'instruments de physique.
necessity is to install a new dialogue between the direction, the employees and the workers. If everybody knows each other in the firm, like in a village as mentioned in the *Festschrift* edited in 1966 by Brown, Boveri and Co, this is not any more the case in firms which count on more than ten thousand of staff. Then a new dialogue should begin.

**The entry of the French speaking part of Switzerland**

The industrial firms located in the French speaking part of Switzerland, principally Geneva, start to be active in internal newspaper and *Festschriften*. We have quoted that the "Romandie" enters late in the process of industrial revolution, not before the mid 1870's. In fact the process is quite different in Geneva than in the German part of the country. Under the patronage of the Genevan scientific elites, many experiences attempted from the end of the eighteenth century. When many of them failed, the case of the Société genevoise d'instruments de physique born in 1856 gives some hope even though the first two decades were difficult. The firm finds stability only when it was possible in 1875 to manufacture a industrial product: machines to produce cold. This firm feels the necessity to edit a *Festschrift* during the Second World War. Never mind the passed years, they choose to celebrate its first 80 years of activities. The style is very different compared to the Swiss German *Festschriften*. While we find pieces of accounting and descriptions of industrial products and scientific apparatus, the general tone is easier in order to be understood by all the employees and workers. It is an objective of the direction as it is precise in the introduction: "this publication is given to all the personal of the firm in order that each could understand what is due to the departed who facilitated his work." The frame is close to a fairy tale. We have the genesis, the first times, the middle ages and the present time. The formula is repeated ten years after (the first 90 years and the first 100 years). There is nothing concerning the social activities offered to the personal.

Whether we can consider that Brown, Boveri and Co is the first firm to have published an internal review dedicated to its staff, we must note that an industrial firm of Geneva, The Ateliers de Sécheron, imitates the Swiss German firm in 1944, by publishing *Vie et Travail aux Ateliers de Sécheron*. This is an initial step which leads to the publication of a first *Festschrift* in 1948. This exercise was difficult, because as is the case with the Société d'instruments de physique, the first two decades are very difficult. In general, we argue that the Genevan industrial companies have to pay the price for being late in the process of industrialisation. The direction of the Ateliers de Sécheron decides to evaporate the years of difficulties even when this choice was not compulsory. We have quoted that the Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon does not impose a black-out on the decade of crisis from 1901 to 1910. In contrary, the Swiss German firm decides to accord a entire chapter to this phase.

With the case of the Ateliers de Sécheron, it is possible to be aware how big the gap can be between reality and the presentation made in a *Festschrift*. This exercise is possible thanks to the archives of the firm deposed in the *Archives de la Ville de Genève*.

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21 In fact, the first step of the firm is taken in 1856 and not in 1862 as it is indicated in the *Festschrift*.
22 Société genevoise d'instruments de physique (ed.), *Au cours de 80 années...(1862-1942)*. Société genevoise d'instruments de physique, Geneva, 1942.
24 First published in March 1944.
This case of studies shows also that a year of anniversary is not compulsory to publish a book on the history of a firm even if this book is produced by the company. The book concerning the Ateliers of Sécheron is written in order to insist "on the period of development slow but methodical between 1920 and 1948". The period before 1920 is problematic. In the facts, the Genevan firm is facing big troubles between his foundation in 1891 until the arrival of a entirely new management in 1920.

However, the basis during the 1880's years is very solid, the precursor of the Ateliers of Sécheron -the Compagnie de l'industrie électrique- is issued from the merger between two companies. One is active downstream in the exploitation of electrical networks, the Société d'appareillage électrique, which possess the patent of Edison for Switzerland. The other one, the Compagnie Cuénod, Sautter & Cie, is active upstream in manufacturing a large range of electromechanical products: generators, central station, distribution of light and power, traction and so on. The firm penetrates large part of markets in Switzerland, France and Italy.

But since the fusion in 1891, the commercial strategy as the technical choices is clearly not adapted to the delicate context of the rapidly growing electrical sector. In consequence, the society encountered big difficulties during two decades. Under the direction of the owner of the firm (John d'Everstag) who is one of the Genevan figures of the radical party, the commercial strategy is based on the fact that the barriers to entry are particularly important in the field of establishing electrical networks. It consists of building a network with a original product and so the markets sustained by the development of the sector is in the hands of the manufacturer. Thus, the Genevan firm must integrate as soon as possible big markets like these of Paris, Barcelona and Milan. But to get this markets, the Genevan firm has to accept very low conditions which were not sufficient to generate a benefit. From the technical point of view, John d'Everstag is basing on the shoulder of the technician René Thury who was successful during the 1880's in so many fields and markets. But the context in the 1890's years is quite different. The alternative current has won the battle of the systems well analysed by the historian Thomas Hughes in his Network of Power, but the Genevan technician estimates that while the alternative current system is adapted to the middle distances, his system based upon direct will win the battle on long distance transport of energy. In this condition, the firm of Geneva will obtain a position of monopoly. Instead of golden age, these are infernal years. The alternative current generators invented by René Thury and installed in many powered central station in the beginning of the 1890's do not work and the Genevan firm has to pay for it. Nearly every two years, the firm consumes new capital. The company continues to exist only because its benefits from the support of the Banque de Genève conceived by the radical circle.

In these circumstances, how can the author of the book present these dramatic years. The necessity to frame the activities of the firm with a great figure push the author of the Festschrift to magnify the role of the technician René Thury and this by knowing that the situation was dramatic. A simple reading of the annual reports that are available shows the troubles. All the products conceived

29 Société anonyme des Ateliers de Sécheron, op. cit, see: origines et premières réalisations (sur 15 pages).
by Thury are considered as the result of a genius: special generators for electrochemical uses, large ranged motors for industry and tramways, transport of energy with direct current, even the alternative generators which did not work. The author prefers also to present the success of the two precursors of the 1880's years. But the necessity to frame with a big figure in science and in technique was stronger than the reality.

The Ateliers de constructions mécaniques de Vevey SA which can not afford a book find a solution in writing several articles in its technical and annual bulletin (Bulletin technique Vevey) of 1963/1964. This firm located in the little town of Vevey on the shores of Lake Leman, manufactures hydraulic wheels and turbines. The general director writes "The centenary of the first turbine delivered by our firm." The objective is to connect the present with the past as it is specified in the last paragraph:

"Thus the centenary celebrated this year is not a simple historical evocation as a brilliant, but the affirmation of the vocation of Vevey (the firm), consecrated by the present and guaranteed for the future, in matter of heavy material in general and of hydraulic turbines in particular."[31]

This contribution does not escape the hagiographic style. Thus the founder Benjamin Roy is considered as a "extraordinary human". The morals is present. The author that could see a letter sent by Benjamin Roy to his family underlines this young man as linked to his country and very religious. He worked during his spare time in the evening and on Sundays. Another article is dedicated to the international position of the firm. The director in charge of the export writes "The export of hydraulic Vevey turbines". In his contribution, he feels the necessity to justify the place taken by an economic problem in a technical review.[33]

The important production of the Swiss German firms
The Swiss German part of Switzerland is also active during and after the Second World War. Brown, Boveri and Co produces two Festschriften, one little book for its five decades from 1891 to 1941 and another one more important in 1966, for its 75 years (290 pages).[34] Brown, Boveri and Co is without hesitation the "jewel of the crown" in the field of electromechanical industry. This firm benefits from the combination of existing firms and new firms specially founded to exploit the new line of products. In the existing firm (Mashinenfabrik Oerlikon), the pioneer Charles Eugen Brown could not only learn the life of a industrial firm and but also feel all the potential of the new products before creating his own firm adapted to the prospection of the new infrastructure. Like Nestlé, the firm belongs to the family of the multinationals born before the First World War. Since 1919, Brown, Boveri and Co controls five subsidiaries firms of electromechanical products in France, Germany, Austria, Norway and Italy.[35]

30 Bulletin technique Vevey, 23 (1963/64), centenaire de la première turbine.
31 Ibidem, p. 6
32 Ibidem, p. 4.
33 Ibidem, p. 6.
34 Peter Rinderknecht (texts edited by) Brown, Boveri -75 ans, Zürich, 1966.
35 For the constitution and the development of these subsidiaries, see Paquier, Histoire de l’électricité, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 699-722.
A first *Festschrift* is written during the 1910's by a *Prokurist* (Fritz Funk) but it is not published. These pages were used to present an internal ceremony, certainly for the first two decades in 1911. It contains very precise commercial information about the first years of rapid expansion. The principal events are related year by year and an annual accounting is presented. The first book published by the firm takes place during the War in 1941. It is a little book, but the frame is close to the German and Swiss German *Festschriften*. It contains a first part dedicated to the cofounders Walter Boveri and Charles Eugen Lancelot Brown, a second part which presents the industrial products, and a third part which consists of presenting the social services proposed by the firm to their employees and workers.

For writing his second book, the firm takes partly the model of the first *Festschrift* in developing each subject. A larger part is accorded to the founders, Charles Eugen Brown and Walter Boveri. It is comprehensible, because the beginning of the firm is closely related to successful clustering innovations. As we have noted before, the cofounder Charles Eugen Brown is an important actor in the transport of electricity over long distances presented to the international exhibition of Francfort-on-the-Main in 1891. Two other important innovations followed: the steam turbine and the combination of high pressured and low pressured hydroelectrical plants. These innovations give to the firm located in Baden, close to Zurich, a big potential to penetrate the markets with substantial profit. The second part is dedicated to the edification of the group and the third one deals with the human factor. At the end, the administration board and the council of direction is presented. All the parts are largely documented with multiple illustrations.

Escher, Wyss and Co based in a industrial located in Zurich, has no difficulties to relate the beginning of the firm with the beginning of the industrial revolution. Its anniversary book, published in 1955 -150 years-, contains many pages dedicated to the genesis of the firm. We can learn that the firm issued from the process of mechanisation of textile industry. The birth of its manufactured sector is the result of the necessity of operations in maintenance linked to the mechanised spinning plants. The firm begins to produce hydraulic wheels, then turbines before to diversify its activity. The anniversary book insists on the fact that it is the unique firm to produce water and steam turbines. A very large part of the book is dedicated to the industrial products manufactured by the firm. A part concerns the hydraulic installations and the other one deals with the thermical products. An importance is given to the centre of research and development activities. The last part is connected to social activities.

2. THE UTILITIES: ELECTRICITY, RAILWAYS AND GAS INDUSTRY

As exploiting public infrastructure on a monopoly position, the utilities have the duty to inform the institutions and more generally the society. So the utilities produce articles and books on their activities and the history occupies a big place to construct trajectory in long waves. It must be shown with the construction of the networks and their satisfactory running than they merit their monopoly. In

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38 *Ibidem*, p. 29-44.
42 *Ibidem*, p. 30-34.
43 *Ibidem*, p. 38-156.
these circumstances, the Festschriften accord a large importance to the edification of the networks which were sometimes realised with some difficulties, particularly for the high pressure hydroelectrical plants installed in the Alps. The heroic style underlines magnificently the domination of the nature by the human technique. They also demonstrate how they manage to respond to the demand by using statistical data.

As is the case for the machine industry, the history of utilities benefit also rapidly from data that are accumulated in technical reviews, particularly these which are published by the two engineer's schools in Lausanne and Zürich: respectively the Bulletin technique de la Suisse romande and the Schweizerische Bauzeitung. Data are also accumulated in the organ(s) that represents them at the national level (Société suisse de l'industrie du gaz et des eaux, Bulletin mensuel; Bulletin de l'Union des centrales suisses d'électricité et de l'Association suisse des électriciens). As is the case with machine industry, the Second World War plays an important role. In the following years, we enter in the era of huge synthesis in the field of electricity, railways and gas industry. We must notice that in the last two decades, the authors of the Festschriften are external. Professional historian enters in the field of networks industry under the influence of the American school leads by Thomas Hughes, the British school dominated by Robert Millward and the French school by François Caron.45

Electricity
In addition to the representation of the hydroelectric network as the dominance of human technique on a natural resource, another factor is playing a important role to push the utilities to valorise rapidly their trajectory in technical review and Festschriften. By using a natural resource which is abundant in Switzerland instead of importing coal from other countries, the development of the hydroelectrical sector contributes largely to reinforce the independence of the country. On this base, we must not be amazed whether the first histories appears quickly in technical review and Festschriften whether they are so numerous.46 Since the beginning of the development of the electrical sector in the 1880's and the 1890's appears this kind of history which do not escape to a hagiographic style which is only compensated by the objective description of the power plants and their networks.

We can once again measure the importance of the Second World War in the production of Festschriften. The two biggest regional networks -Nordostschweizerische Kraftwerke and Energie de l'Ouest-Suisse- publish their first 25 years during the war, respectively in 1940 and in 1944,47 but especially the electrical sector needs to make a the end of the war a balance-sheet with what was made since the beginning. The pretext is the fifty years of the Union des centrales suisses d'électricité which reassembles the electrical utilities since 1895. A special issue of its Bulletin accords a long section to the history of electricity.48 Each category of utilities, -municipal, cantonal and private-, relates his trajectory. It must be precise that in Switzerland, the cake of the exploitation of the abundant hydraulic resources in position of monopoly is divided in "bon Suisses" between four


46 The list is to long to be presented in this paper. The principal electric utilities has edite at least two or three Festschriften until now.

47 E. Erny, 25 Jahre Nordostschweizerische Kraftwerke AG Baden (1914-1939), Zürich, 1940; EOS 1919-1944, Lausanne, 1944.

48 Bulletin organe de l'Association suisse des électriciens et de l'Union des centrales suisses d'électricité, no 17a (septembre 1945).
The urban communes which control the most important market have been rewarded for their first investment in the 1890's. As we will see it below, the towns acquired during the 1880's and the 1890's the gas networks in private hands and it was impossible for a municipal firm to face the concurrence of powerful private companies which flourished at this time. In the Genevan case, the edification of two pioneer low pressure stations on the Rhône during the 1880's and the 1890's draws to books. This material was used by the municipality to write Festschriften. Municipal firms do not produce only its history in technical reviews, but also Festschriften that are dedicated to the exploitation of gas, water and electricity.

From their side, the cantons dispose to the right of according the hydraulic concessions needed to build power plant. In this position, they can decide to enter in the field of the production of electricity. This is the case for the cantons of Fribourg, Vaud, Berne and Neuchâtel in the west side of the country and nine cantons in the north-east which decided in 1908 to acquire the regional network build by the subsidiary companies of Brown, Boveri & Co (Motor for the application of electricity) specialised in the edification and the exploitation of electrical networks. Quite all the cantonal companies produce Festschriften. As we have quoted, the private sector plays also an important role in the production of electricity, particularly in regional networks. The Motor produces a Festschrift which notably insists on the pionnier running combination of a high pressure power plant located in the Alps with a low pressure power plant installed on the Rhine. The Swiss federal railways received the right to requisition the hydraulic resources that they need for the introduction of electric traction.

In 1946, Walter Wyssling, professor of electricity at the Swiss federal polytechnic school of Zurich, publishes a huge book of 600 hundred pages on the first five decades of the sector: Die Entwicklung der schweizerische Elektrizitätswerke und ihrer Bestandteile in den ersten 50 Jahren. If the book contains many statistical informations about technical and economical aspects, the author presents also the institutional context. The book analyses the two principal laws which play an important role in the development of the sector: the law on distribution of electricity from 1902 and the law on the use of hydraulic resources from 1916. The professor Wyssling has used data which he has accumulated and analysed during his long career as president of multiple organs that represent the electrical sector at the national level.

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52 See for exemple: René Besson, Histoire d'une entreprise au terme d'un demi-siècle d'activité. La Compagnie vaudoise des forces motrices des lacs de Joux et de l'Orbe (1904-1954), Lausanne, 1954; Ernest Moll, Les Forces motrices bernoises. A l'occasion du cinquantenaire de leur fondation (1898-1948), Bern, 1948; Electricité neuchâteloise SA fondée le 5 juin, 25 années d'activité, sans date, sans lieu.


54 Walter Wyssling, Die Entwicklung der schweizerische Elektrizitätswerke und ihrer Bestandteile in deren ersten 50 Jahren, Zürich, 1946;

With all this production added to the production of two historians, we can think that every field is covered. In fact, the big question of the exportation of electrical current is quickly treated. Nothing is told about the delicate question of the Swiss electricity exported to the Nazis regime. This problem has been analysed recently by a special commission of historians.56

**The Swiss federal railways**

The Swiss federal railways publish their history in five huge volumes. These are the famous *Chemins fer fédéraux après un siècle* edited between the 1950's and 1960's. In fact, only the first volume is dedicated to the history, the others deal with technical matter. The first volume analyses the choice of the 1852 in favour of the private solution sustained by the cantons.57 The federal council and the majority of the special commission was in favour of the public option which consists to elaborate and exploit federal railways as it was the case in Belgium. But the Swiss cantons, which have leave the tolls and the post in favour of the Federal State recently set up in 1848, do not want tot desert the railways. This *Festschrift* justifies the creation of the Federal Railways following the popular vote in 1898 by demonstrating that the exploitation by private companies drawn to chaos. The book insists also on the pionnier work in the field of electric traction during the Interwar period.58 As it is confirmed by studies written by professional historians, the Swiss federal railways were very rapid. Before the Second World War, more than ninety percent of the network run with electricity, meanwhile the second position was hold by the Norvège with 14 percent.59 But we must quote that nothing is said about major problems, like the circumstances which accord the technical solution to the Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon and the role played by the Swiss railways during the Second World War with the transit traffic in favour of the Nazis. This question was also analysed by a special commission of historians.60

**The case of gas industry: lobbying activities**

A special mention must be accorded to the gas sector because this field has already made the object of an historiographical analysis.61 The first sectors involved in utilities are the gas and water industries. It is an old tradition for these utilities to write their stories. We can find again an German influence based on the precocity of the existence of a national gas association. The Swiss gas firms are then in a first step member of the German gas association. Like their German counterparts, the Swiss directors of gas companies can relate the trajectory of their firm during the annual meeting. Since

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1873 on the German model, the Swiss gas industry possesses its own national association. The data accumulated during the annual meeting will be used for lobbying activities. The gas industry in Switzerland needs this kind of pressure. The problem is not caused by the emergence of the electrical networks since the 1880's. While the gas industry has to quit progressively the lighting, it finds a solution in penetrating the market of water and food's heating. In Switzerland, the new *Services industriels* which are municipal firms created during the 1880's and 1890's deal in parallel with gas, industry and water. These utilities invest in the gas sector in order to follow the promises that were made when the municipalities decided to buy the private companies. But the First World War and particularly the crisis of 1917 changes the deal. The gas sector which is based on the distillery of coal that must be imported encounters big problems. The crisis is prolonged until the beginning of the 1920's and the preference is given to the hydroelectric sector which works with a resource that is largely available in the country. The hydroelectrical sector is looking to new markets like the heating of food and water occupied by the gas industry. Placed in this difficult context, the Swiss gas industry reacts in establishing the trajectory of the sector in the long waves. The Swiss society of gas and water industries publish a book for its first five decades. Then a director writes articles in the official organ of gas industry (*Bulletin mensuel*). These are the famous "Notices for the history of gas industry."

Another important article is written by a economist in the Swiss statistical review: "Die schweizerische Gasindustrie und ihre volkswirtschaftliche Bedeutung". In 1939 other big contributions shows the importance of the gas industry. Two of them are written by two personalities of the gas industry in the gas review, and a thesis is also dedicated to the gas industry. Each of these contributions contain a large historical part. With all this material, it is now possible to integrate the history in order to present a Swiss gas industry well implanted in the Swiss economy and industry by using classical frame: the beginning, contemporaries problems and future.

During the Second World War, the gas industry faces again the problem with the importation of coal. The difficulties are greater than in the First World War, because since the invasion of France by the German troops, Switzerland is surrounded by one belligerent which can impose rough conditions. The federal railways are using electric traction but the demand for coal is as important as in the First World War. Switzerland is exporting electric current to Germany in order to receive coal from Germany. But Germany does not respect the contracts and does not deliver the coal. In these conditions, we should not to be surprised that the Swiss gas industry is developing lobbying activities. In 1943, the Swiss association of gas industry organises a manifestation in the federal capital in order to be close to the high federal spheres, most particularly to the Economic Federal Department. The beginning of the gas in Bern, in 1943, constitutes an opportunity to celebrate the first centenary of the Swiss gas industry. This kind of strategy used to have a good visibility is also applied by municipal firms of the greatest towns: Bern and Geneva celebrate their first centenary in publishing a Festschrift respectively in 1943 and 1944. Then, the story of gas enters into the field of professional historian.

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As we can notice in this paper, the *Festschriften* represent a huge material, especially since the Second World War, which help the professional historians in their analysis. But this material must be used with a critical point of view and must be completed, when it is possible with archivs and public sources. The historian must keep one's distances, most particularly in matter of capacity of the firms
to innovate, because the authors of the *Festschriften* use a hagiographic style in presenting the innovators. The terms of "heroes", "genius" and "extraordinary person" are often used to qualify the innovators or the founders, and we know, thanks to the researches of professional historians like François Caron, that the innovation is not an individual matter but a collective process.\(^\text{62}\)

In opposition with the banks, we could think that the Swiss machine industry and the utilities do not have secrets. We have quoted that analysis made recently by professional historians during period of troubles, especially during the Second World War, present another reality and we can add that the three electrical manufacturers of the country have certainly concluded agreements in the home market. It is clear that this kind of subject is not treated in *Festschriften*.

Switzerland possess two cultures: French and German. Whether we could have detected a first German model in Switzerland, further analysis should be done in order to better understand the basis of the first *Festschriften* edited in French speaking part of the country. The first analysis, especially in Geneva, detect an important place accorded to the paternalism. But once removed stain from their model, it should be possible to identify Swiss characteristics. With what we have presented in this paper, we can consider on one hand that the numerous *Festschriften* dedicated to the hydroelectrical sector become a Swiss speciality with the essential theme of the conquest of a natural resource by the technique and in another hand that the integration of *Festschriften* in lobbying activities, as it is clearly the case in gas industry. Finally the huge official and sectorial versions published after the Second World War constitute another Swiss originality.