

transmitter amplifier. In fact, that's what RTC's sister company, Télécommunications Radioélectriques et Téléphoniques is doing for the uhf radio it's building for the Anglo-French Jaguar trainer/attack jet. □

## Italy

### Point-of-sale system checks out in Turin

Europe's first complete electronic point-of-sale data-processing system has been installed in a new department store in Turin owned by La

Rinascente, one of Italy's leading retailing groups.

The system includes 60 stand-alone intelligent terminals with magnetic-tag readers, a duplex minicomputer processor, and two dedicated back-office terminals for accounting and installment-plan and credit-card processing. It is somewhat more sophisticated, according to Litton, than similar systems that it has installed recently in two American department stores.

**Purposeful.** The system was designed and manufactured, mostly in Europe, by Litton's cash-register subsidiary, Sweda. It is not only aimed at eliminating cashier errors, but also at improving customer ser-

vice and providing management with up-to-the-minute information on the inventory situation and sales performance of individual departments and the store as a whole.

La Rinascente executives say that early operating experience indicates the system has virtually eliminated the problem of "lost" transactions. Aldo De Thierry, the group's information systems and EDP director, says that in standard sales-control operations small punch-card-type labels attached to the merchandise are collected and processed to indicate sales volume and stock turnover. But, because of missing or ripped tags, plus clerical errors, up to 10% of all sales transactions are lost and cannot be retraced.

**Found.** With the new system nearly 100% of sales are recorded. De Thierry says that in the first 10 days of operations there were only 450 erroneous entries out of a total of about 130,000 transactions. He emphasizes that these 450 were not lost but merely wrong; many of them were caused by unfamiliarity with the processor. What's more, all 450 were identified and re-entered later into the store's records.

The Datapen reads at speeds from 5 to 50 inches per second at signal frequencies from 400 to 4,000 bits per second. It can read from either end of the label, upside down, from curved surfaces, and even through transparent surfaces. If information must be entered manually—a marked-down special sale price, for instance—a special key erases the magnetic information and new data can be punched in by hand. □



**At work.** Shoppers at Turin's new department store get their bill fast as data on merchandise tags (left) is read magnetically into electronic cash-register terminal (right).