

# Swiss watchmaking

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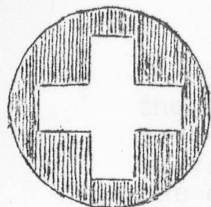
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The most sincere thanks are due to our fellow member, Mr. Julius Maurer, Jeweller of Whangarei, who presented the Society with a fine library consisting of 100 books. We are certain Mr. Maurer's generosity will find great appreciation among all our members. The collection of books includes works by Heimburg, Werner, Hartwig, Marlitt, Bernhard, and many others, all in German.

We also wish to thank Mr. F.X. Hermann of Waipu for the loan of various books. Amongst these are 12 volumes of Schiller, the History of Switzerland, and others.

Members wishing to borrow books, please communicate with the Secretary, who will be pleased to give all the information desired regarding the library.

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## SWISS WATCHMAKING.

While watch manufacture is becoming increasingly simplified and mechanised, exports have regained a great portion of their former importance. This is apparent from the statistics for July, indicating that the total exports made during the first six months of the year reached 56,2 million francs, against 49,2 during the first half of 1935. The increase does not call for any comment.

It concerns principally nickel wrist watches of which our manufacturers have exported 500,000 more than during 1935. The new and often ingenious shapes of these little watches have met with the clientele's approval. A world suffering from "money sickness" is hereby enabled to indulge in a luxury which is at the same time inexpensive and of good taste. In the principal watchmaking reviews and the advertisements of the best manufacturers, it is a pleasure to see the variety of models: elongated rectangles, or hexagonal shapes without exaggeration, even round models, like the watches of our grandmothers, and often mounted with exquisite simplicity. The gift of invention and good taste are by no means decreasing in this industry where all things assume a character of sobriety. One has but to think of certain models which were so over-laden as to be almost comic, of the 1910 period! In order to estimate the increasing vogue for plain metal wrist watches, it will suffice to note that a third of the total exports concern this speciality, which has only existed for twenty-five to thirty years.

There are two other comforting signs : the increase in the exports of "complicated" wrist watches, by which is meant chronographs which have fortunately been made popular by various Jura manufacturers. This export branch alone has exceeded 12,000 to 24,000 from one year to another. An interesting increase is also noticeable in the exports of motor watches, one of the most prosperous sections of our watch industry, and on which lives as important a region as the Valée de Joux. Even exports of cases of plain metal watches show a considerable increase.

Another - or rather two other - creations of our manufactures, clocks and alarm-clocks, have met with a certain amount of success, in spite of heavy competition. When several factories first undertook their manufacture, doubt as to their success was permissible. Today, however, though not occupying a place comparable to that of watches, these two articles hold an honourable rank in export statistics. The position has improved since last year; this is due to the superior quality of the articles and to the confidence they inspire, which originates from the confidence which the entire world has in Swiss watches. Although more expensive than those of their competitors, these Articles constitute a useful auxiliary to the choice watch trade.

Thus without great events, and throughout all the discussions and efforts accompanying the adaptation to new conditions, Swiss watchmaking holds its own, and since two or three years has regained a clientele which it had temporarily lost owing to the continuous impoverishment of the world. Foreign watchmakers - recently those of Finland - are again visiting our factories and ties are being remade.

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THE SWISS CHEMICAL INDUSTRY.

During the last few years, the Swiss chemical industry has been able to resist effectively the adverse conditions prevailing in Swiss economy. This was due to a great extent, to its inherent scientific, technical and mercantile elasticity. A faculty of rapid adaptation has enabled this industry to keep pace with the requisites of modern industrial development. The losses which occurred during the post-war period and especially during the world economic crisis, were amply compensated for, as concerns this industrial branch particularly, by the opening of new fields of activity.

The most important groups in the chemical field are the following: tar-dyes and the pharmaceutical industry, the perfume industry, the electro-chemical and electro-metallurgical industry, to which may be added the production of aluminium; the large scale manufacture of chemical products of all kinds such as acids, soda, ammonia, fertilizers, etc.

The chemical industry includes further the manufacture of explosive, artificial silk, celluloid, artificial fabrics, dyes, varnishes, washing and cleaning materials, linoleum and other allied products.

The great significance of this branch of Swiss commercial activity is apparent if one considers that the chemical industry, according to the Swiss Statistical Year-Book, including aluminium manufacture, possesses 439 limited companies, with a total capital of 274 million francs, while the textile industry counts 308 companies with a capital of 227 million francs, and the watchmaking industry 399 companies with 105 million francs.

In addition to the large companies connected with this industry, there are a great number of average sized and small concerns which turn out considerable quantities of products for use in finishing industries and which reach even the smallest consumers.

The participation of the chemical industry in the Swiss export trade assumed very considerable proportions. Better