

Swiss textiles abroad

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Swiss textiles abroad

In specialized stores all over the world, Swiss textiles are run as a quite distinctive line. Many executives are taking advantage of their present popularity and are centering their own advertising on Swiss textile products. Here are two documents we received from abroad. One illustration shows a window display in *Santiago (Chili)*, which together with a full-page colour enlargement reproduced in our journal (No. 3/1944) presents a recent arrival of exclusive Swiss silks — neck-ties, squares, scarves, etc. Another photograph has been sent us from Brazil. A store in the centre of *Sao-Paulo* had the good idea of organizing a « Swiss Week » and exhibited an incredibly varied selection of Swiss embroideries from the best manufacturers. The attractive doll in Bernese costume seems to be inviting customers to enter her garden wreathed in billowy, vaporous clouds of white embroidered fabrics.

NEWS FROM THE TRADE

IN SWITZERLAND, there are no gigantic factories employing 20,000, 50,000 workers or more, such as are found in certain big countries. A tendency towards expansion is of course noted among Swiss firms, but the increase of staff varies from one branch to another and is still extremely moderate. The average number of operatives employed per factory has risen from 40 to only 45 during the period 1895 to 1944. This is of course only an average figure, and many firms have a far larger payroll. Switzerland's largest firm — machine manufacturers — had a staff of 13,151 in September 1944 as recorded in the industrial census taken at that time. At the same date, the leading silk and rayon manufacturers had a payroll of 3037; comparative figures for other textile trades were as follows: 1348 for the cotton industry; 3505 in the apparel and finishing trades; 962 in the wool industry; 482 in the linen industry and 178 or more in the embroidery crafts.

Fifty years ago, the textile trades were Switzerland's major industry, employing 50 % of the country's industrial workers. The proportion fell to 24 % in 1944. It must be remembered, however, that the machine engineering industry has now become this country's leading industry and has developed far more than other branches as a result of war conditions. In mid-September 1944, 14,468 operatives were employed in the silk and rayon industry, 19,978 in cotton, 9,104 in wool, 2,086 in linen,

1,745 in embroideries, 5,183 in various other textile trades and 50,495 (as compared with less than 1200 in 1895) in the apparel trades. These figures have increased since 1944 as a result of the demobilization of the Swiss army and present economic conditions.

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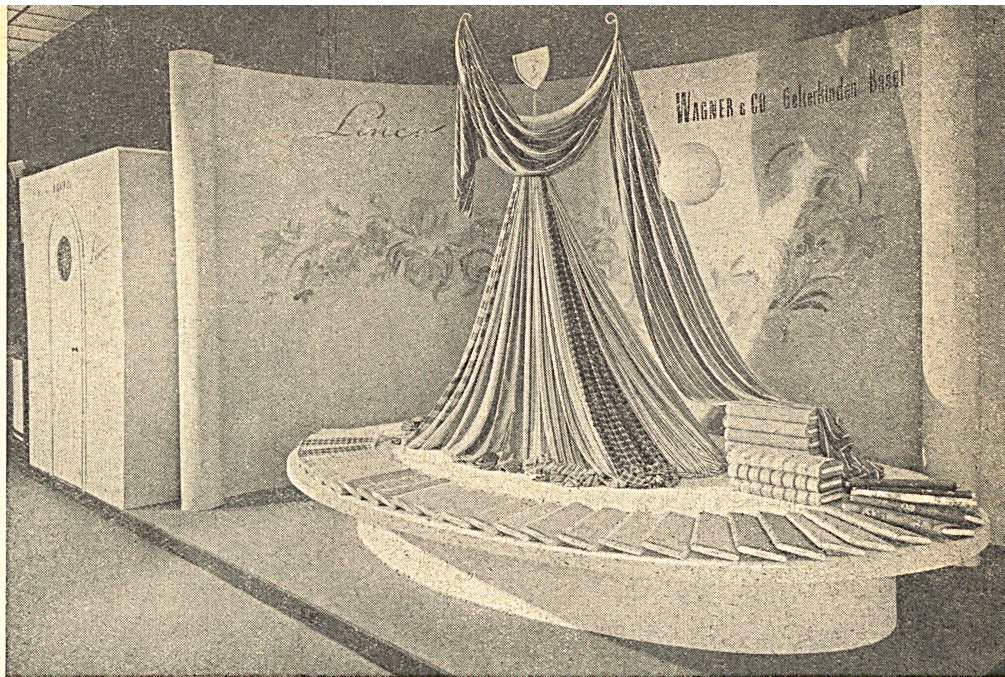
The following table is a summary of Swiss foreign trade returns showing the *exports of the textile and apparel industries for the first nine months of 1946*.

Branches	Value of exports per 3-month periods			Export index	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Jan. to Sept. 1945	1946 (1938=100)
	in million Sw. frs.				
Cotton fabrics	6.0	6.0	9.9	4.3	14.6
Embroideries	16.6	18.1	22.7	46.3	78.0
Schappe	0.4	0.5	0.6	1.8	13.1
Artificial silk yarns	7.2	7.2	8.8	26.4	58.4
Silk fabrics	57.9	61.6	68.9	111.9	278.9
Silk ribbons	3.1	3.8	4.1	61.0	114.9
Woolen fabrics.....	0.5	1.5	1.4	1.5	96.9
Haberdashery and knitted goods	4.0	6.1	8.0	57.0	233.9
Straw braids for hats.....	10.7	5.1	6.0	124.2	133.6
Footwear					
per 1000 pairs	102.7	139.9	151.6	15.5	41.7
per million Sw.fr.s.	4.0	4.8	5.2		

* * *

Business has been good for Swiss silk and rayon weavers during the last two years, but these wise manufacturers have not allowed themselves to be led

Our illustration reproduces a photograph of the exhibition stand of Messrs. *Wagner & Cie. of Basle* (formerly of *Gelterkinden*) at the 1946 Swiss Industries Basle Fair. This firm is reputed for its cotton, rayon and staple fibre fabrics, plain, printed and colour-woven. A speciality product is *Linco* rayon, light, boiling and perspiration fast, an ideal fabric for lingerie, shirts and blouses.



into extending or enlarging their firms. They have on the other hand taken every opportunity to rationalize and perfect production. This farsighted policy will certainly make it easier for the industry to tide over any depression which may occur at some future date.

* * *

The British Technical Commission, which recently visited Swiss textile machine factories in order to obtain information concerning the progress achieved in this field, has recognized the high merit of Swiss looms, especially for rayon weaving. The perfection of these machines has won the recognition of all foreign experts and enables the Swiss textile industry to maintain a very high standard of quality.

* * *

In the news has been the woman Labour M. P. who refused an invitation to a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace because she would not obey the demands of etiquette and wear a hat. This was front-page news for the British press; protests and rectifications were received from milliners and,

finally, the *Daily Express* wrote the last paragraph to the story by qualifying this M. P.'s behaviour as «an insensate and very unfeminine gesture». The story goes to prove that, even in the country where the rights of the individual are most respected, it is useless and dangerous to flout conventions which are not just fidgety annoyances, but really the expression of innate courtesy and good manners, without which social life would be unbearable. We are pleased to see that there is still concern for good deportment in matters of dress and it is for this reason that we have mentioned this episode here.

* * *

Thanks to the initiative of a firm of St. Gall embroidery manufacturers, the St. Gall Save the Children Section of the Swiss Red Cross has succeeded in sending to the women of the *Island of Walcheren* (Netherlands) supplies of the embroideries and laces with which they trim their head-dresses, unobtainable since the war. It was Dutch children on holiday in Switzerland who first drew the attention of St. Gall textile manufacturers to their need, and help was thus brought to the women of Walcheren who treasure their national traditions very highly.

Exporters Association of the Swiss Clothing Industry, Zurich

In our last number we announced that the present issue of «Swiss Textiles» would contain a large supplement dealing exclusively with the «Exporters Association of the Swiss Clothing Industry, Zurich». The editor much regrets that, owing to certain technical difficulties beyond his control, he has been obliged to change his plan; consequently, this special supplement will be published in the next issue of «Swiss Textiles» (1/1947). We shall then also be able to devote an article to the IXth Export Week organized by the «Syndicate» and now due to open in Zurich.