

Madame - Monsieur

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Madame — Monsieur

(Importance of the clothing industry in the Swiss economy)

At the Swiss Industries Fair in Basle this spring, the *Exporters Association of the Swiss Clothing Industry* presented, under the arresting title of «MADAME — MONSIEUR», the second collective exhibition of the products of its member firms. Taking into consideration the fact that certain branches of the clothing industry have fewer opportunities than others of making themselves known to the general public, the organisers reserved the greater part of their exhibition for the specialities that are not very often seen at fashion parades, such as lingerie and men's underwear, knitted and jersey underwear, stockings, socks, swimsuits, etc.; the more usual articles such as men's and women's outerwear, women's hats and footwear were of course on display too.

Although space unfortunately does not permit us to describe the event in any detail, we should nevertheless like to quote some figures showing the important part played by the Swiss clothing industry. The importance of this branch in the national economy is due above all to the great number of concerns, situated all over Switzerland, of which it is composed, to the great number of its workers — mostly women — and to the high professional efficiency of these workers. Switzerland probably exports a higher proportion of its output of clothing than any other country in the world.

The Swiss clothing industry numbers some 1400 manufacturing concerns employing 55,000 workers (not counting those who do piece-work in the home). This figure is equal to the number of workers and office staff employed in the watchmaking industry and represents a tenth of the total number of workers employed by Swiss industry as a whole. Taking into consideration women workers alone, it can be seen that the clothing industry provides employment for a quarter of all the women employed in Swiss industry. The number of people in Switzerland who earn their living in the textile, clothing and footwear industries is at present 123,000, which is more than a fifth of the total number of industrial workers. With regard to exports of clothing, there was a rise from 39 million Swiss francs in 1948 to 83 million in 1954, whereas those of the footwear industry rose from 21 to 34 million Swiss francs over the same period.

