

The succes of "Helenca"

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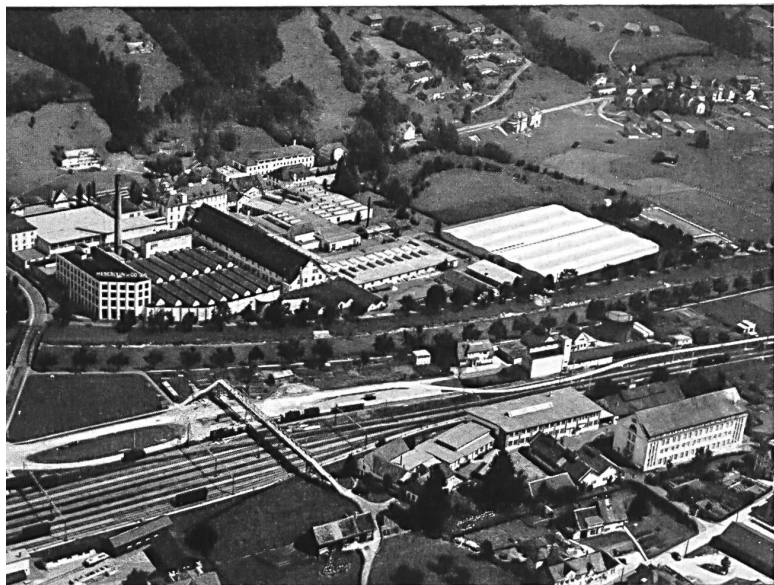
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The success of „HELANCA“



View of the Heberlein & Co. Ltd. premises at Wattwil ; towards the right, the new „Helanca“ manufacturing hall.

Even before the war, Heberlein & Co. of Wattwil had begun to look for a means of giving a permanent crinkle to rayon filaments in order to make „stretch“ yarns of them. The yarn thus produced and marketed under the name of „Helanca“ met with a certain success during the war, replacing wool — quite scarce at the time — in the manufacture of layettes and children's wear. Once the war was over, wool once more became easily obtainable, thus putting an end to the career of the first type of „Helanca“. But synthetic fibres had made their appearance, and the firm of Heberlein worked unceasingly to apply its invention to continuous nylon filaments. Its efforts were crowned with success with the creation of the fibre known today as „Helanca“, which represents a great improvement over the earlier type, thanks to the greater stability of nylon filaments as compared with viscose. Knitwear and hosiery were the first to benefit from the remarkable properties of the new filament, and especially socks and stockings. It is no exaggeration to say that „Helanca“ brought about a veritable revolution in this field.

„Helanca“ filament is produced by first of all giving a strong twist to a synthetic filament under heat and then retwisting it after the first twist has been set by cooling. Whereas production was carried out at first in three distinct operations, it takes place today on a single machine which produces the finished yarn in a single operation. Furthermore, whereas on the retwisting machines used originally the speed was 8000 to 12 000 twists a minute, the new machine operates at a speed of 100 000 to 200 000 twists a minute. This innovation perfected by Heberlein has resulted in a considerable development of production.

Let us add that „Helanca“ is available in various types suitable for different uses : the manufacture of

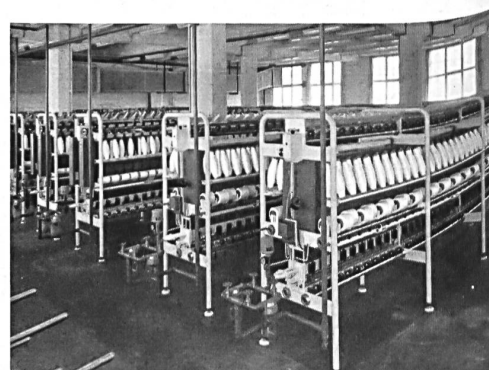
socks, stockings, fabrics or elasticised fabrics, pullovers, etc.

The first licences for the manufacture of „Helanca“ yarns were granted in 1952. At the beginning of 1955, there were 28 licence holders in Europe while today there are 47. Apart from Switzerland, the European producer countries are France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Italy and Spain. In South America, there are 15 licenced firms in Brazil, 5 in Argentina and 1 in Chile, while the New York branch of the Wattwil firm controls 20 licences in the United States. Finally, in Australia the patent is worked by one producer.

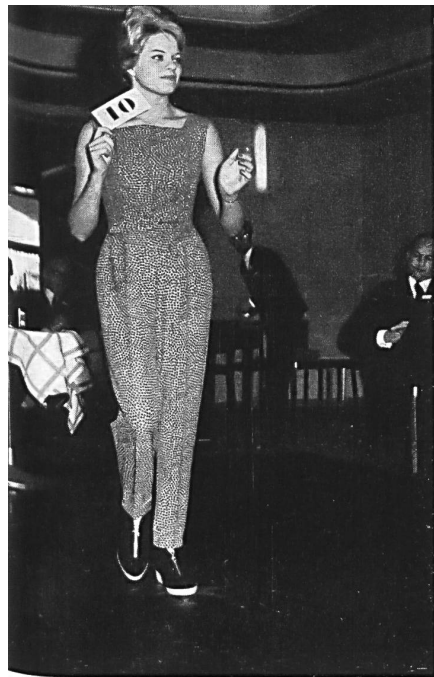
In the field of men's socks, the introduction of „Helanca“ has practically done away with the tiresome chore of darning. It was this success in particular that enabled the new fibre to gain a footing in a large number of markets, where it rapidly made a name for itself, to such an extent in fact that there is a tendency to use this trade mark to name any product of a similar kind, whereas in fact not all crinkly synthetic fibres are „Helanca“ by any means. In order to safeguard the reputation of its name, the firm of Heberlein was forced to take measures to check the quality not only of the semi-finished product, that is to say the filament, but also of the finished articles. Several years ago Heberlein instituted a special technical service, enabling it to send a technician to visit each of its licencees at least once a quarter. This service was subsequently extended so that now the patent owner is in a position not only to advise his licencees concerning the manufacture of the yarns, but to place specialists at the disposal of all „Helanca“ users, that is to say weavers and knitwear manufacturers, in order to help them make the best use of the filament. The actual check, which was originally carried out on



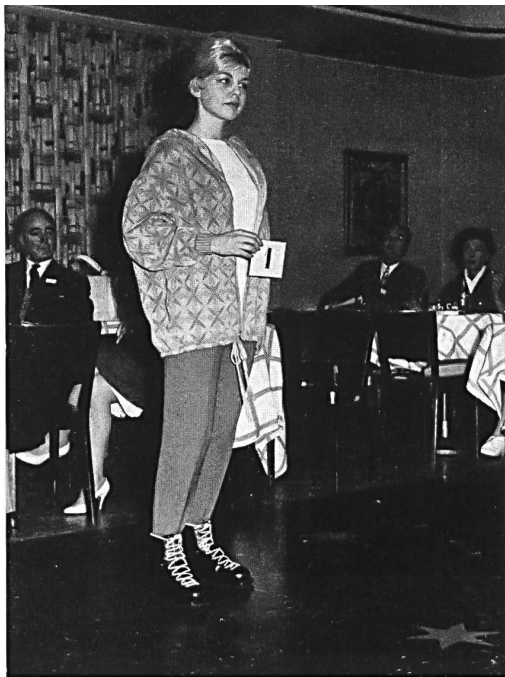
Testing the quality of „Helanca“ yarns.



Special twisting frames for the manufacture of „Helanca“.



„Helanca” and wool after-ski outfit (Respolco S. A., Zurich).



„Helanca” anorak (O. Eugster & Co., Trogen); „Helanca” and wool ski-trousers (Canzani & Co., Zurich).

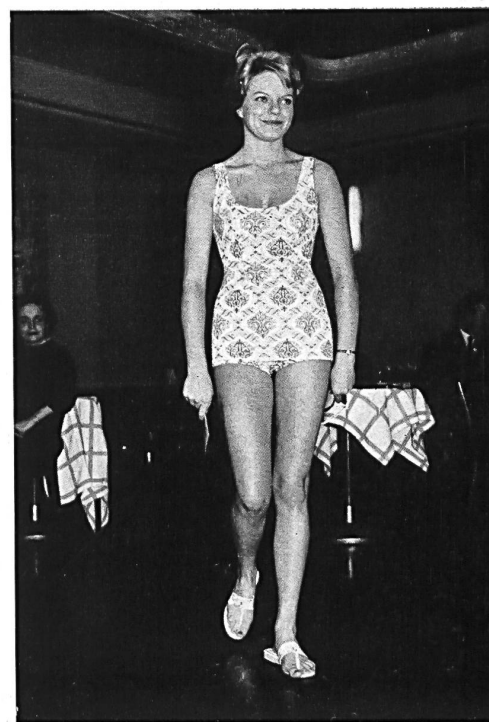


Printed „Helanca” jersey two-piece outfit (Duo, Aspor Ltd., Porrentruy).

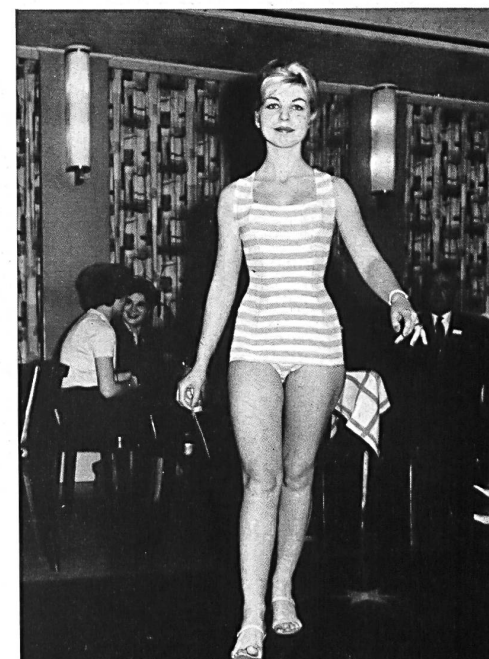
the filament alone, is at present being extended to later stages in manufacture. Thus in Switzerland, for example, the right to use the name „Helanca” for elasticised fabrics for ski-trousers is subject to compliance with certain standards of quality; the manufacture of stockings and socks will also shortly be subject to similar conditions and these checks will gradually be extended to all countries. Only in this way will the patent owner be able to ensure the maintenance of the high quality of „Helanca” and prevent the debasement of the trade mark which is no longer simply a name but a guarantee of quality. Only thus will the sums invested in advertising be justified. For Heberlein, which is interested in the world-wide expansion of its invention, publishes or has published by the „Helanca” subsidiaries in different countries a wealth of advertising matter and special news releases as well as a number of very fine periodicals such as „France, Helanca’ Information”, etc.

Recently Messrs Heberlein & Co. invited members of the textile press to visit their production plant at Wattwil¹, a visit that was followed by a press conference together with a fashion parade. One of the main aims of this event was to show the wide range of articles it is possible to make with „Helanca” yarns, for example not only the traditional stockings and socks, but men’s and women’s underwear, swimsuits, ski trousers and ski outfits, ski-tights, printed „Helanca” knitwear tights for TV lounging, pullovers, gloves, caps, etc. Let us also mention that „Helanca” fabrics and knitted materials have gained admittance to Parisian haute couture. This shows that „Helanca” did not win its position in the textile industry by supplanting another textile fibre; with its entirely new characteristics, it has made possible the production of original articles, thus opening up new possibilities to knitwear and weaving, which is not the least of its merits.

¹ All the „Helanca” manufactured in Switzerland is produced from „Nylsuisse” nylon made by the Société de la Viscose Suisse A. G., at Emmenbrücke.



Printed „Helanca” swimsuit in knitted fabric (Pius Wieler Sons, Kreuzlingen).



„Helanca” swimsuit in knitted fabric (Lahco Ltd., Baden).