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SWITZERLAND AS AN INDUSTRIAL AND EXPORTING COUNTRY (Continued)

Textile Industry: This branch at present employs about 72,000 persons in all, and forms an essential component part of Swiss industry; Swiss textiles are renowned everywhere; the spinning and weaving of COTTON was introduced into Switzerland in the 17th century and the families which developed the business have continued in it from generation to generation. Fine cotton textiles are a high-class Swiss specialty. The WOOL INDUSTRY is also a very old one (worsted, twist, weaving, knitting, hosiery, haberdashery, cloth, carpets, various domestic goods), and here too the development has been considerable. The industry depends essentially on supplies of raw materials from abroad. One of the oldest industries is the manufacture of LINEN, which was introduced into Switzerland in the 16th century. It is noted for its output of very high quality goods.

The SILK SECTION plays an important part in the Swiss textile industry. It has been established in Switzerland for many centuries and covers all the stages of production from the rearing of the silk-worm and the manufacture of artificial silk to the production of the most finished textile goods. Apart from silk textiles proper there must be mentioned gauze for bolting, a Swiss specialty, the production of which is valued at Frs. 8 to 10 millions per annum. There are also very complete auxiliary services at the disposal of the Swiss weaving industry (dyeing, dressing, printing). The silk ribbon industry, which has its headquarters in Basle, has suffered from the vagaries of fashion but has maintained its reputation and continues to play an important part in the international markets. The Schappe industry, which also has its headquarters in Basle, is turning successfully to the manufacture of special yarns required for novelties.

The SWISS ARTIFICIAL SILK OR RAYON INDUSTRY (three producing companies and four factories in all working in association) use the viscose process exclusively and manufactures the whole range of products possible in this branch. The Swiss textile industry consumes three to four million kilos of artificial silk a year. The Swiss artificial silk factories, however, only account for half of this owing to the effects of foreign competition; they have to export about two-thirds of their output.

Another typical branch of the Swiss textile industry is EMBROIDERY. This was once the most important of the Swiss export industries and is now, after having passed through a severe crisis, again achieving a conspicuous position in the world markets.

Some hundred firms are at present engaged in the SWISS KNITTING AND HOSIERY TRADE, employing about 9,000 persons apart from some 2,000 home workers. In the last few years exports have greatly increased, thanks to the quality of the goods, both of the more simple type and luxury articles. This industry produces the finished article in its own jersey wools and knitting wools; the knitting industry is producing some real masterpieces of workmanship. The hosiery trade has greatly developed in the last ten years, owing chiefly to the introduction of the new circular knitting machine for ladder-proof hose. The plaiting industry for hat making has now expanded until it is one of the principal export industries; about 95% of its output goes abroad.

Metallurgy, machinery, the electrical industry, instruments and apparatus, means of transport. The METALLURGICAL INDUSTRY, which is the oldest branch of the Swiss engineering industry, is to-day the most important auxiliary to the latter. Like all Swiss industries which work for export it owes its good position in the markets to the high quality and variety of its products. In recent years it has been giving employment to about 20,000 persons and the annual value of its output has been more than 100 million francs. It finds the best market at home but exports certain specialties. The most active sections are the iron industry (rolling mills and wire-mills),

The SWISS MACHINERY INDUSTRY, which dates back to the beginning of the 19th century and which was in its early stages an industry complementary to the textile industry, experienced a considerable advance following the discovery of electricity. To-day it employs more than 100,000 people and the annual value of its exports is about Frs. 300 million, while its sales in the home market are estimated at about Frs. 200 million. Thanks to the finish and quality of its products and to its unceasing efforts to adapt itself to the requirements of its customers, the Swiss machinery industry has been able to compete successfully with foreign manufacturers. Among the principal groups of the machinery industry, the manufacturers of textile machinery have often been able to carry off the prize, both at home and abroad, in spite of the crisis in the textile industry. In the sphere of prime-movers Switzerland holds a foremost place among manufacturers of Diesel engines of all sizes, the construction of steam turbines and hydraulic machinery. The machinery industry for metal working has further enlarged its export.

(To be continued)

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