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REVIEW OF THE TEXTILES IN THE 38th SWISS INDUSTRIES FAIR.

(Basel, 8-18th May, 1954.)

The Swiss Industries Fair in Basel, as everyone knows, is essentially a selection of new ideas, and the textile group, which this year is exhibiting complete on the first floor of the new building, is more than any other group ready to accept new ideas. Thus it is natural that we hope to see the latest creations introduced there and the new fashions launched. The interest and the curiosity of the public — professional and private — are to be expected, for we are concerned here with a world which belongs to our daily existence — the world of clothes and decoration. It is however almost impossible to describe the greater part of the new textiles, for their novelty lies in their colours, their designs, the effects of the weave, and above all in the newest mixtures of different fibres.

Silk, of ancient lineage, confirms its prestige in this competition of elegance, in which rayon, nylon (a newcomer becoming yearly more important), cotton (which due to recently discovered technical processes is becoming more and more interesting) and all sorts of other materials all take part.

In the "Creation" hall which has been a part of the textile exhibition for many years now is to be seen the major part of those new ideas which enhance the reputation of Swiss materials in the international fashion centres — particularly in Paris. We must not neglect to mention here the woollen materials whose international standard in quality and taste is confirmed year after year. A new extra-heavy material for ski clothes and for general sports-clothes is to be introduced at the Fair this spring — a material which in spite of its toughness retains its elegant and supple quality. We would also draw your special attention to the new hall where under the name of "Madame — Monsieur" you will see a collection of ready-to-wear clothes, lingerie, underwear, and different kinds of accessories exhibited by the participating firms. Their wares which are in excellent taste are divided into groups, all variations on the themes of "travel" "week-end" "youth" and "evening". We predict for this new

exhibition which certainly fills a gap, the success it deserves by its high standard.

In gentlemen's clothing chemiserie occupies a unique place because of the chances of innovation which fashion offers — chance which it will not fail to take. In this department is to be seen amongst other varieties, ties made of "dacron", the synthetic fibre which does not soil easily, is as simple to wash as a handkerchief, dries quickly and does not need ironing, as well as a new kind of tie specially designed for wearing with uniforms. In shirts the success of changeable collars continues. There are several different makes, each having its advantages and all being constantly improved. Patterned holiday shirts also continue to be in fashion: an original blouse shirt has no buttons, the neck opening is covered by a single piece front. The rise in importance of nylon, orlon and dacron continues in men's clothing — either alone or mixed with wool or other fibres. It is worth noting however that cotton retains its privileged place in gabardines, poplins and other shirt materials. Thanks to the favourable rate of exchange the quality of cotton materials found in medium priced shirts has notably improved.

If the ever popular shirt blouse and the more formal blouses seem likely not to undergo important changes, still we may note the appearance of a beach dress complete with bolero which has been designed according to a completely new idea — that of a bodice so cut and made up that the wearing of a brassiere underneath is not necessary.

In underclothing the lingerie is finely decorated with lace or embroidery — sometimes even in colours. Beside this more classical type of lingerie we should like to draw your attention to articles made in crepe nylon — elastic, strong, soft, easy to wash and quick to dry. You will find it made up into nightdresses, vests, petticoats, pants and briefs for ladies, gentlemen and children. Crepe nylon is also found together with the Swiss synthetic fibre "grilon" in bathing costumes, pullovers and socks. A new event in this field is the arrival of printed grilon/wool socks.

In the realm of hosiery there are always interesting novelties together with the numerous knitted articles for ladies, gentlemen and children such as pullovers, cardigans etc. etc. We are thinking



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particularly of the lengths of jersey for dresses, underwear etc. They are sold in transparent packing, thus simplifying the problem of stocking, purchase and sale for the retailer. Materials for sweaters to be made up by the customer herself are also sold in this form, already in transparent packages together with the necessary accessories, similar to the assortments of knitting wools sufficient for knitting a pair of socks, which have already been exhibited. Each package has a detailed list of instructions.

Knitting wools are always in great demand — not only to be used for knitting but also for making home made carpets. Instruments which make the process of knotting easier, are also being exhibited at the Fair. We have thus arrived at the furnishings chapter and we must mention in passing a new style of heavy looped pile carpet in modern designs and colourings which is being introduced by a Swiss firm already well established in the manufacture of the usual range of carpets — Tournay, Axminster and Orient etc. Another firm is offering carpets in any desired shape, in a single piece 11 metres wide and up to 150 sq. metres. The novelty is found in this field in the designs, the shades and the quality. Swiss manufacturers of furnishing materials have produced cottons, linens, rayons, wools etc. which are plain, printed jacquard in classical and modern styles — enough to satisfy every taste. We should like however to emphasize that in the modern articles the designs and colours are all carefully chosen and are in the best of taste. It is unfortunately impossible for us to mention here — even cursorily — all the textiles for household use from the trousseau to the bedding which will be exhibited at the Basel Fair; we should like you to take note of the printed tablecloths, tablecloths with a plastic covering (vinyl basis) and perhaps to the soft warm blankets with a Jacquard design in modern style, whose elegance allows them to be used as divan covers.

Our review has certainly not been complete, but it would be simply inadequate if we did not spend some words on that particularly Swiss product — handkerchiefs and scarves. Whether woven in colours or printed, the minute handkerchiefs — appear for the delight of our eyes in constantly new designs, in exquisite taste, charmingly imaginative, artistically executed and technically irreproachable. The same can be said for the scarves or head squares.

There are many other articles which should be reviewed here — elastic materials, the various medical and hygienic textiles, the stockings for varicose veins, waterproof protectors for clothes and underwear; but our task was after all only to offer a rapid survey without entering into technical details. Nothing can replace a visit to the Industries Fair and our efforts will not have been in vain if we have enabled the reader to decide to visit the 38th Swiss Industries Fair.

Robert Chessex.

ASSEMBLY OF PRESIDENTS OF THE SWISS SOCIETIES.

The Presidents' Assembly held a meeting at the Swiss Legation on the 4th March, under the chairmanship of Mr. F. Streit. Among the items discussed was the wish expressed in the Colony to amalgamate some of the Swiss functions held during the winter, and the possibility of amalgamating the 3 main functions, the Swiss Sports, the Fête Suisse and the 1st August Celebration.

The "Tir Fédéral" (Eidg. Schützenfest) will be held in Lausanne from the 8th to the 25th July, and a special date for the Swiss abroad has been fixed for the 15th July. On this occasion a presentation will be made on behalf of the Swiss Colony in London, which will be taken to Lausanne by the "Chanson de Lausanne" who will visit us on the occasion of the Fête Suisse next April. Gifts towards this presentation Fête Suisse (President: Mr. A. Renou, 64, St. George Street, Hanover Square, W.1.)

Dr. E. Bernath, Counsellor of Legation, Swiss Legation, informed the Assembly that the French Hospital is in urgent need of funds, and their appeal commands the unanimous support of the Swiss Colony, in view of the great help which the Hospital has rendered for many years to the Swiss in London. Particulars in this connection will be published in the Swiss Observer.

The Assembly mourned the loss of our Vice-Chairman, Mr. Peter De Maria, late President of the Unione Ticinese, who passed away in December last.

W.F.

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