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EMBROIDERY EXPORTS ARE UP

The Swiss embroidery industry, which exports throughout the world more than nine-tenths of its production, recorded quite favourable results on the whole in 1977. Embroidery exports in fact totalled 197.7 million francs in value, which represents an increase of 2.3% compared to the previous year; Europe remains by far the largest market (67.8% of the whole), followed by Asia (17.1%), exports to which were able to be stepped

up by 9.8% thanks to increased sales to the petrol producing countries and to Singapore. Exports to Africa having decreased (-33.7%) in 1977 and those to destinations in North and South America having increased (+27.4%), these two continents recorded equal amounts last year to 13 million francs each, which represents 6.6% of this branch's total exports.

WATERPROOF GARMENT FOR UNDERWATER USE

After several years of research, a specialised Swiss firm has succeeded in producing special wet-suits for underwater use which, thanks to a number of improvements, are increasingly in demand among professionals.

These neoprene garments — a material filled with air bubbles — allow the wearer to stay under water for several hours without feeling the cold and provide effective protection against all external pollution. Several waterproof cuffs and bands at the wrist, neck and around the face improve the efficiency of these garments, while a big zip fastener makes them simple to put on and take off.

A new system for the expulsion and admission of air helps balance internal and external pressure and makes it possible for the wearer to surface or dive at will just like a submarine. The resistance and quality of these garments make them indispensable.

NEW SWISS FACTORY ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ATLANTIC

A big Swiss chemical works, Lonza Co. Ltd., has perfected — after niacine and niacinamide. This process is to be put to use in a new factory to be built at Bayport in Texas.

For the last 20 years this Swiss firm has been one of its new works in the United States, it will be the only firm in the world to have two large-scale niacine and niacinamide production plants.

These two products, also known under the name of nicotinic acid and nicotinamide, are used mainly in animal foodstuffs, but also for enriching flour and in the pharmaceutical industry.

Tourist Trade Balances

According to estimates of the Federal Office of Statistics, Switzerland's receipts in 1977 from holiday and business trips, from study visits and one day stop-overs by foreign visitors topped the six billion mark for the first time. Compared with 1976, these figures totalling 6,070 million francs show an increase of 570 million francs or 10.5%. This increase is due in the first place to a further advance in the number of "bed-nights" of foreign visitors (+6%), now amounting to 32.9 million, and also to an extraordinary growth in daily and transit traffic (some 17% more). The expenditure of Swiss citizens on their stays abroad increased by 290 million francs or 9.5% over the figure for 1976 to total 3,330 million francs. Switzerland's favourable tourist trade balance thus amounted to some 2,740 million francs; compared to 1976, it increased therefore by 280 million or 11.5%.

Printing on uneven objects

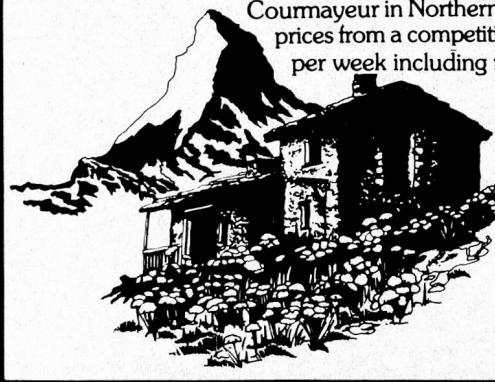
A Swiss firm has produced a new printing process, called Nefprint, which consists of a combination of tampon and screen printing and opens up new possibilities for the automatic printing and decoration of objects of any shape, such as ball-point pens, brush handles, toys, plastic forks and spoons, bottles, caps, technical parts, etc. A soft tampon absorbs the ink and prints the subject without any distortion on the surface of the selected object. A choice of 14 screen-printing inks makes it possible to obtain neat and lasting designs in as many as 76 different shades including fluorescent ones, gold and silver.

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SWISS CHEMICAL EXPORTS IN 1977

In 1977, the Swiss chemical industry exported nearly 8.5 billion francs' worth of products. The EEC remained the main market with 3.5 billion, i.e. 41.7% of total Swiss chemical exports, those to EFTA countries amounting to 705 million (8.3%). West Germany, with 1.1 billion francs in 1977, kept her place as the Swiss chemical products industry's most important client, followed by France with 892 million. Exports were divided up as follows among other

important groups of countries: Africa 6%, North and South America 14.6%, Asia 14.5%, OPEC countries 6.1%, Eastern bloc countries 8.9%. Chemical exports to OPEC countries increased by 9.2% to 519 million, which is considerably less than the increase in Swiss exports as a whole for the same year to these countries (+26.3%). The biggest increase is recorded by Africa (506 million, +18.2%). The chemical industry accounted for 20.1% of Switzerland's overall exports in 1977.

PLASTICS ARE DOING WELL

Swiss production of plastics (raw materials) in 1977 amounted to 105,000 tonnes, i.e. 3% more than in 1976; imports increased by 15.7% to 391,000 t and exports by 14% to 124,000 t. The apparent consumption (production + imports - exports) rose by 12.4% to 372,500 t. This corresponds to a consumption of 58.9 kg per head of the population, that is to say one of the highest in the world. The number of employees in this branch, i.e. 19,000, has not varied since 1976. In spite of the growth indicated by these figures, firms in the plastics industry experienced a falling off in their profit margins in 1977.

DATE CHANGE!

In view of the concentration of exhibitions covering the field of electronics and electrical engineering in September 1979, the exhibitors' advisory committee has decided to postpone the date of the INELTEC 79, International Exhibition for Industrial Electronics and Electrical Engineering held biannually in Basle, which was originally fixed for the beginning of September, to the period from 9th to 13th October, 1979.

On the other hand, the INELTEC 81 is planned to take place from 8th to 12th September, 1981.

This notification only received by *Swiss Observer* on 21st August, 1978, too late for issue dated September, 1978, which is printed in August.

Editor

News in brief

• According to recent estimates, consumer credit in Switzerland amounts to 2.3 billion Swiss francs, i.e. to 350 francs per head of the population, which is considerably below the European average.

• The film "Die dritte Haut", produced by the Swiss firm Condor-Film AG, was awarded a *first prize* at the German/Austrian/ Swiss Budget Film Festival in June 1978.

• An incinerating plant built by the Swiss firm of *Widmer & Ernst Co. Ltd.* at Ingolstadt in West Germany, which will handle 70,000 tonnes of refuse a year, has just been put into operation two months ahead of schedule.

• The Swiss watch factory Omega won a *gold medal* at the Brno Fair (Czechoslovakia) for its ladies' *analog quartz watch* whose quartz calibre is the smallest in the world.

• In view of the unpredictable course of external factors, especially in the currency sector, it is extremely difficult to forecast future results. There is no sign of general economic recovery. As matters stand at present, we must therefore reckon with a lower level of sales and profits in 1978 than last year.



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