

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss textiles [English edition]  
**Herausgeber:** Swiss office for the development of trade  
**Band:** - (1949)  
**Heft:** 4

**Artikel:** News from the trade  
**Autor:** Cx.  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-799319>

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# NEWS FROM THE TRADE

## THE SWISS WOOL TEXTILE INDUSTRY

The spinning and the weaving of wool are two of the oldest Swiss industries. From 1748, the date of the foundation of the first cloth-mill, the Swiss wool textile industry developed rapidly, passing from a cottage industry to the great concerns of to-day, from spinning and weaving by hand to the most modern mechanical processes. This industry which manufactured heavy half-wool fabrics almost exclusively up to the 1914-1918 war, has made rapid progress and, thanks to the considerable improvement in spinning frames and looms, now produces very fine worsted fabrics which have acquired world-wide fame.

The Swiss wool textile industry to-day consists of 17 worsted spinning-mills, 4 carded wool spinning-mills, 8 woollen twist and fancy twist mills, 11 worsted weaving-mills, 27 cloth and blanket factories, giving a total of 330,000 spindles and 2,700 looms; it gives employment to nearly 10,000 people in all. At the end of hostilities its production reached the figure of 8 million metres and, in 1947, it reached the maximum figure of 9 1/2 million, representing a value of more than 130 million francs.

Swiss worsteds can be compared with the best foreign fabrics. To support this statement, we would remind our readers of the International Exhibition in London, organized by the International Wool Secretariat, which took place in September last. Those taking part in this exhibition included Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France,

Great Britain, Holland, India, Italy, Norway, Sweden, the United States of America and Switzerland. The most beautiful fabrics were on display there and Swiss worsteds were considered to be among the best by the British press itself. Below we quote an extract from the "Wool Record", one of the leading journals of the British and international wool textile industry:

"The two foreign countries which impressed me most personally were Switzerland and Italy, the former because of the high quality of its wool textiles, the second because of the fashion consciousness of many of its cloths. I think if I were picking out one or two individual cloths which I liked best among the foreign productions I would award the palm to a French fabric, but I thought that the general average was higher among the Swiss fabrics.

Swiss wool textiles have this in common with the British that they spell quality with a capital Q. Switzerland seems particularly strong on the worsted side, at any rate judging by the current exhibits. I much admired their fine worsted suitings, both in men's and in women's weights and also in tropical weights; with particular stress on their gabardines. The Swiss exhibit also included some beautiful wool crepes, a very attractive diagonal worsted cord, and some lovely coating velours and duvetines. Another cloth worth mentioning and worth seeing is a men's heavy overcoating, a reversible cloth with a check back."

## A CENTURY OF INDUSTRY AT AMRISWIL

Many Swiss industrial concerns owe their origin to strange circumstances which still have a certain charm of romance and adventures for us. A century ago Europe was swept by a wave of democratic enthusiasm and the reaction which fell upon the partisans of the new ideas drove great numbers of refugees out of Germany and into Switzerland. Together with famous men like Richard Wagner, there were others less well known perhaps but just as sincerely moved by the liberal ideal. Among them was a simple hosier who came to settle in Amriswil where he founded a knitting and hosiery establishment which developed into a great success. At the present day, *Jos. Salmann & Co. Ltd. of Amriswil*, whose trade mark

"ISA" is well known to readers of "Swiss Textiles", is a firm which most eloquently bears witness to the memory of its founder and those after him who succeeded in developing the concern and gaining for it its present reputation. Unfortunately, lack of space prevents us from enlarging further on this interesting chapter of industrial history — a fine example, at the same time, of courage and perseverance — which is outlined for us in the attractive commemorative brochure published this year by the above firm to celebrate its centenary; we did not wish however, to miss the opportunity of bringing it to the attention of our readers.

Cx.

## SWISS BUYERS ASSOCIATION

Among all those engaged in foreign trade, buyers on commission play an important role. Established in the production market itself, they seek out the goods that their foreign principals wish to buy, submit offers, pass on orders and supervise their execution, and finally check the goods and their shipment. The most important

houses of this kind have recently founded an association in Zurich intended, in the first place, to draw the attention of Swiss firms to the possibilities of export offered by the buyers, and secondly, to facilitate the task of foreign clients seeking to contact Swiss suppliers.

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