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Further import possibilities for you?

It is no use troubling oneself about importing where barriers to trade still exist to paralyse business. However there is no point in lamenting over the difficulties facing trade to-day ; it is far better to seek out ways and means of overcoming these obstacles. *We would like to do our share towards this end, and to help foreign importers in a practical way by informing them of all the possibilities that exist of obtaining Swiss textile products.* In many cases these possibilities are not very well known, arising as they do out new arrangements with which traders are not yet familiar.

The most desirable step of course is the general suppression of all import quotas and restrictions, but this unfortunately still seems to belong to the realm of Utopia. However a certain tendency towards the liberalization of trade may be detected not only in the bilateral agreements concluded by Switzerland with various countries, but also in the steps taken by certain other countries belonging to the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation as a result of recommendations expressed by this organisation, either by independent arrangements or by means of bilateral agreements.

Below, we are going to examine briefly what are, at the moment, some of the new possibilities of importing textiles and clothing of Swiss manufacture, hoping thus to put those interested in the way of further business. The Swiss Office for the Development of Trade (Riponne 3, Lausanne) is always ready to help foreign importers, who may also obtain information at any of the Swiss legations or consulates in their own country or district.

Canada

The Canadian government had at one time placed Switzerland on the list of the so-called « scheduled countries » whose imports were liable to quantitative restrictions, while the imports of the « non-scheduled countries » enjoyed the benefits of a general import permit. In addition, a certain number of goods were denied entry into Canada altogether.

Now the Canadian government has recently decided :

1. to consider Switzerland as a « non-scheduled country » as from April 1st, 1950 ;
2. to include on the list of goods subject to import quotas, as from April 1st, 1950, various products which since November 17th, 1947 had not been allowed to enter Canada, no matter what their country of origin ;
3. to include other products of the same category on the list of goods whose importation is subject to quantitative restrictions as from July 1st, 1950.

As far as goods subject to import quotas are concerned, the Canadian government on April 16th, 1948 removed the restrictions introduced on November 17th, 1947 in the case of goods coming from non-scheduled countries. For these goods therefore there exists a general import licence.

Switzerland, which is now included in the list of non-scheduled countries, will automatically benefit by the advantages resulting from this general import licence. Imports of Swiss textiles in particular will profit under the new regulations, irrespective of those articles still on the prohibited list but which may be transferred, either on April 1st or July 1st, 1950, to the list of goods subject to import quotas.

Iceland

Business between Iceland and Switzerland is carried out on a basis of reciprocity under the control of the Trade Department. Since Iceland is able to offer only a limited range of goods, business remains difficult. It is however theoretically possible for business to be conducted by Icelandic importers (and therefore Swiss exporters) who can succeed in finding opportunities for introducing goods from Iceland into Switzerland by way of compensation.

France and Algeria

Following on the recommendation of O. E. E. C., the French government in its trade with Switzerland has removed the quotas on a certain number of articles, quite a large proportion of which are important textile products. In addition, for a certain number of textile products still subject to quantitative restrictions, certain increases have been granted in the quotas for imports either to Metropolitan France or to the territories oversea.

Belgium Luxembourg Union (and Belgian Congo)

Import quotas have practically been abolished for all textile products.

Italy

Business between Italy and Switzerland is carried out on a private basis under a system of reciprocity. A relaxation has recently been introduced for certain goods which may now be imported into Italy without authorisation from the Italian Ministries concerned.

Western Germany

Exchanges between Switzerland and the western zones of Germany were partially freed in September 1949.

Austria

Unfortunately possibilities of introducing Swiss products into this country remain limited. Nevertheless the new lists of goods now allowed to be imported into Austria contain a certain number of the most important textile products.