

# Economic news

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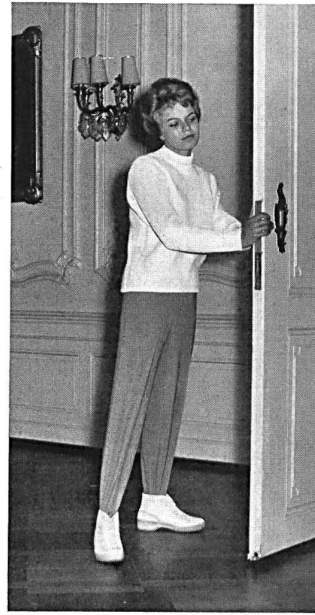
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## Economic News

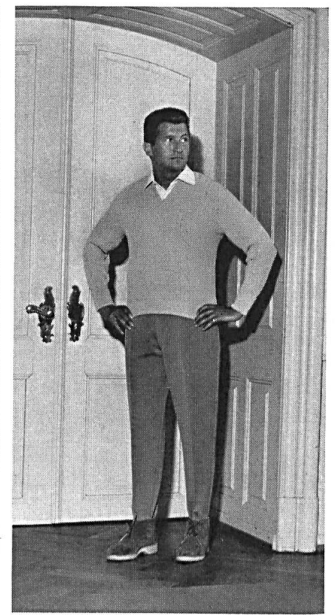
### «Helanca», a fibre of today

Today, «Helanca» (a nylon stretch filament), the fibre invented by *Heberlein & Co. Ltd.* at Wattwil (Switzerland), is famous throughout the world; it would therefore be quite unnecessary to introduce it to our readers. But Helanca is a modern fibre, very much of our day, because it is easily adapted and admirably suited — in one form or another — to countless uses, in particular, but not exclusively, in the field of fashion. Consequently each year the firm of Heberlein presents the latest developments of «Helanca» to members of the trade at a small display. Recently therefore we were shown some interesting new uses of this fibre in the field of winter sports clothing. Trousers for ski-ing, after-ski and sports wear in general tend more and more to be made of fabrics with a wool weft and a «Helanca» warp. This gives great elasticity in the length and enables elegant «fuseaux» ski trousers to be made which, while always remaining taut and impeccable in appearance, allow complete freedom of movement to the legs and in no way hamper bending, without however having any tendency to look baggy at the knees. The synthetic fibre in no way detracts from the qualities of the wool to which in fact it adds its own special advantages. These fabrics moreover completely satisfy all technical requirements and the demands of fashion; it is even possible to weave untarnishable metal threads into them giving some very attractive effects.

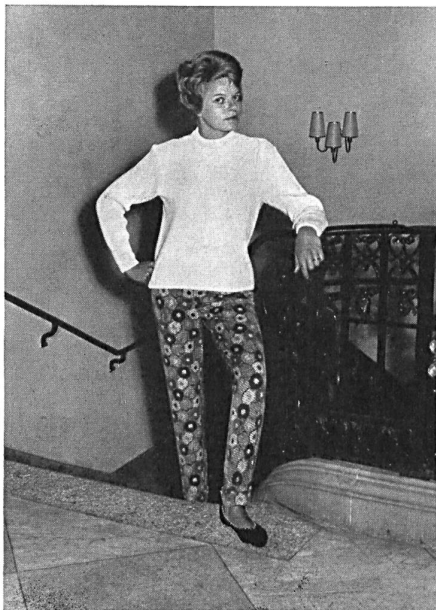
A new type of «Helanca», the SW yarn, is less elastic than that at present on the market but on the other hand has much more bulk. It has been made specially with a view to the hosiery and knitwear industry and enables, alone or combined with wool, very attractive and practical sports pullovers to be made possessing all the advantages of the already familiar «Helanca» articles. These are all novelties that will be on the market this autumn.



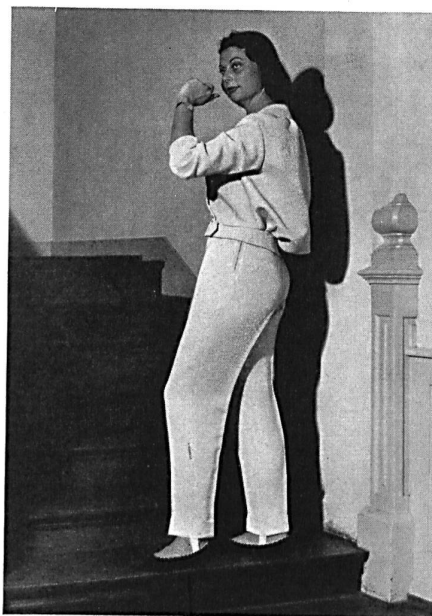
Striped ski trousers in «Helanca» and wool; «Helanca» pullover.



Plain trousers in «Helanca» and wool; pullover in «Helanca» SW yarn.



Printed après-ski trousers in «Helanca» and wool; «Helanca» pullover.



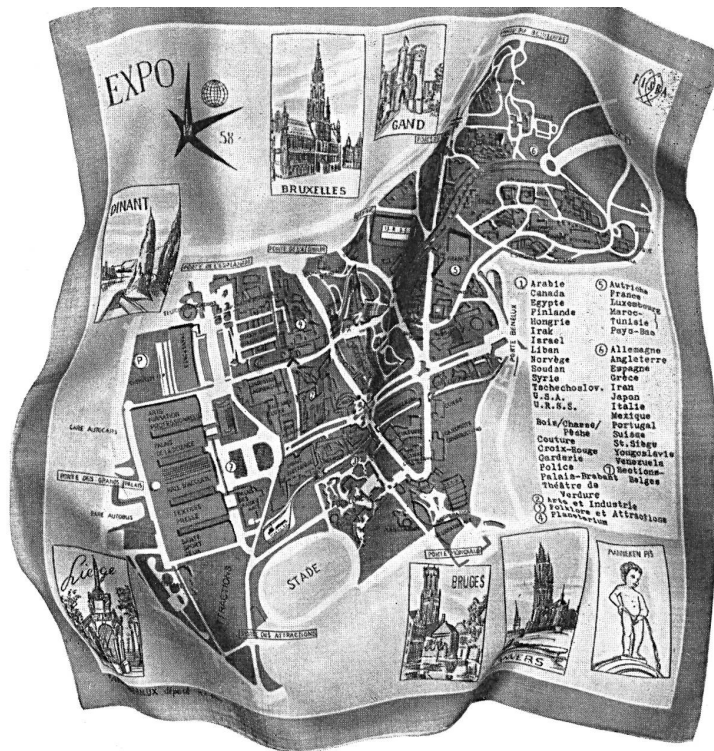
Two-piece après-ski in lamé, rayon and «Helanca».



Two-piece ski outfit for women and one-piece ski outfit for men in «Helanca» and wool.

## Souvenir of the Brussels Exhibition

Although souvenirs only too often invite criticism, this is certainly not the case of the pocket handkerchiefs and small hankies produced by the Saint-Gall industry. What could be daintier, in fact, than these small squares of light batiste, printed with humorous or artistic subjects, which can really be said to combine utility with decorativeness. Women at the Brussels Universal and International Exhibition in search of an attractive souvenir to take home will be sure to be tempted by the lovely handkerchief opposite, which is made in fine cotton batiste and shows, in addition to the Exhibition emblem, a plan of the general layout, with typical Brussels scenes all round the border. The quality of the fabric and the hand-rolled hem are excellent foils to the finely printed design. This « FISBA » handkerchief, made by the firm of *Christian Fischbacher Co., Saint-Gall*, is on sale in Brussels; it makes an attractive souvenir that many women will insist on taking away with them in memory of their visit to the Brussels Universal Exhibition. This Saint-Gall speciality does credit to the industry that made it.



## Neither too much, nor too little !

The firm of *Christian Fischbacher Co., Saint-Gall*, recently revived the occasional publication of its « FISBA bulletin » which had been temporarily dropped some years ago. However this time this small periodical is no longer intended only for Swiss clientele but will be sent abroad to facilitate and maintain the sales of the specialities made by the firm. This small booklet, which is beautifully presented, as is only to be expected in a

branch devoted entirely to elegance and fashion, is intended to serve as a link between the Saint-Gall firm and its customers, whether wholesale dealers or retailers. The first of the revived numbers says neither too much, not too little, just enough in fact to capture the reader's attention for a few minutes while giving him some interesting advice and suggestions, just enough to rouse his curiosity and interest without risk of boring him.

## Two Centuries of Parisian Elegance at Montreux

The French Association of Costume Art, which has set itself the task of creating in Paris a centre of study and information as well as a Museum of French Costume, is presenting at Montreux a unique collection of clothing all worn by dummies, gracefully arranged in period settings, at an exhibition entitled « Paris, two centuries of elegance » which will remain open until the beginning of next September.

From the flowing dresses of the Regency period to the New Look of 1947, from Doucet to Christian Dior, this magnificent absolutely authentic collection which is the

most important of its kind ever to be shown in Switzerland and the biggest seen in Europe during the last ten years, retraces, from the 18th century to the present day, the whole evolution and history of feminine elegance, which is so intimately bound up with the social life so cleverly depicted in each of the groups presented.

The exhibition, held under the auspices of the Montreux Tourist Office, is the work of a famous authority on costume, Mr. François Boucher, Member of the French Association of Costume Art and Honorary Custodian of the Carnavalet Museum.



Jeanne Lanvin,  
Chanel, Vionnet,  
Patou  
(1925-1945)

Sous Louis XV



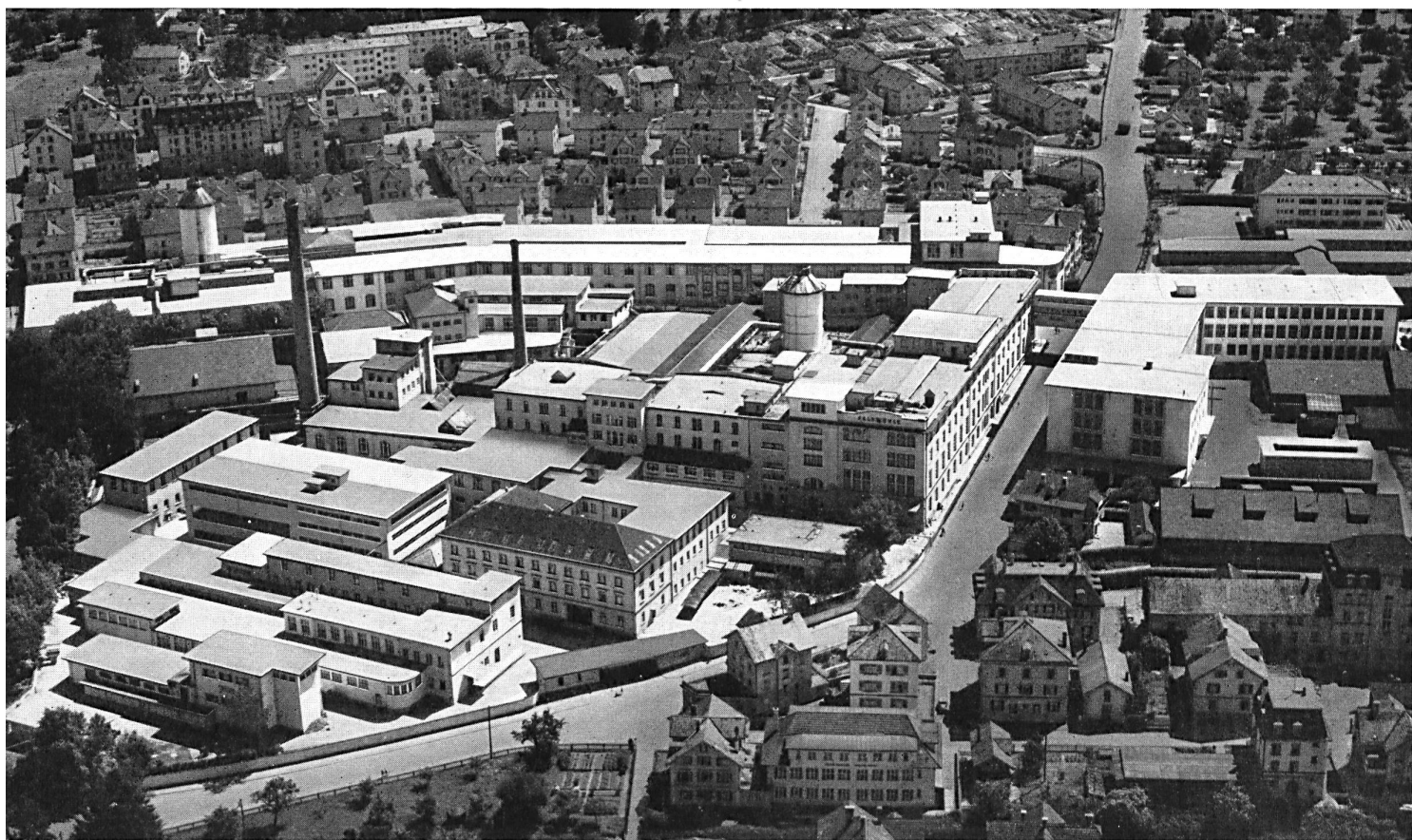


## Establishment and development of an artificial and synthetic textile mill

According to old documents the site of the present mill at Rorschach, on the shores of Lake Constance, was occupied by a flour mill known as *Feldmühle* (a word meaning « mill in the fields »), as long ago as the beginning of the 15th century. In 1884, this concern was taken over by an embroidery factory, which in time became the biggest of its kind in Eastern Switzerland and played an important part in the economic life of Rorschach and the surrounding countryside. As a result of the slump in the embroidery industry, this concern was forced to close down in 1920, which was naturally a considerable blow to its staff and the town of Rorschach. However, the spirit of enterprise of the owners of *Feldmühle* was still very much alive, for shortly afterwards the board of

In the field of textile fibres, *Feldmühle* produces synthetic yarns, which it puts on the market under the name of *Bodanyl*. The first plant for the manufacture of this new article was installed in 1955.

Today the daily output of *Feldmühle* is in the neighbourhood of 22,000 lb. of rayon, tyre fabrics and artificial straw and 8,800 lb. of Cellux. The quantity of synthetic yarns produced is at present about 1,500 lb. per day; it is however shortly to be stepped up to the figure of 4,400 lb. The mill at Rorschach therefore supplies considerable quantities of the materials required by the Swiss textile industry. The factory provides employment for about 1,500 persons, not counting several hundreds of women working in their own homes and, indirectly,



directors took the courageous decision to start up a viscose rayon factory in the huge unoccupied premises. This new activity, which was completely different from the manufacture of embroidery, required considerable expenditure on new plant and necessitated big investments. The daily output amounted at first to between 5,500 and 6,600 lb. of rayon, and the number of workers employed was about 1,000. In 1933, the firm set up a new department for the manufacture of transparent viscose sheets, under the trade name *Cellux*.

*Feldmühle* also manufactures artificial straw for the Aargau millinery braid industry and *Spungo* sponges for industrial and household uses.

numerous craftsmen, tradesmen and other firms that benefit by the big expenditure required for the expansion and upkeep of the factory and its installations.

The Swiss artificial and synthetic fibres industry is very closely bound up with the national economy. Apart from cellulose, caprolactam and coal, which have to be imported, all the other raw materials and products required are produced at home.

By keeping constantly abreast of the requirements of our day, by enlarging its producing plant and adapting it to the latest technical developments, *Feldmühle* constitutes an important factor in the economic life of Eastern Switzerland.



## The Centenary of the Schubiger Silk Mills at Uznach

This firm was founded in 1858 by Emil Schubiger, a doctor's son who subsequently became a member of the government of the canton of St. Gall. A gifted painter and sculptor, Emil Schubiger did not follow his natural inclination — which he allowed himself to indulge in only when he retired — but, under the influence of his mother, took up silk weaving. The silk industry, which was mainly situated at that time in the canton of Zurich, also thrived in the part of the valley of the Linth belonging to St. Gall. The humming of the bobbin machines and the clicking of the hand-loom were to be heard in many districts, particularly the mountain villages. The cottage weavers would go off to Zurich to fetch the warp yarns from the contractors, taking with them the finished articles in exchange for which they received their wages. This industrial development interested the young doctor's son and encouraged him to try his luck as a manufacturer. Possessing a rich store of technical knowledge that he had acquired himself — there was no vocational training school in Switzerland at the time — he started up a factory at Uznach; his brother Maurice, who was a doctor, joined him in his venture and for many years rendered invaluable service by dealing with the book-keeping side of the business. Each week this enterprising industrialist, Emil Schubiger, went off to Zurich, the centre of the silk industry, to look for orders, buy raw materials and keep in touch with the leading figures in the trade. The number of hand-loom weavers employed by his firm — especially in the village of Amden, the real weaving centre of the district — increased continually and soon amounted to almost a thousand. The firm set up work-distribution centres in the valley of the Rhine and in central Switzerland; the concern developed rapidly and its products, especially light fabrics of the taffeta type, such as *louisines*, *gros des Indes*, etc., spread the name of the firm to numerous foreign countries.

About 1870, when « Honegger » mechanical looms made by the Rüti Machine Works began to be installed in the canton of Zurich, the firm of Schubiger also took up mechanical weaving, which gradually replaced hand-weaving, the change-over being complete by the year 1921. With the mechanisation of production, the manufacturing programme expanded to include new articles, among which particular mention must be made of marceline for hat linings. This fabric soon won a worldwide reputation for its manufacturer, as is convincingly shown

by the following story. One day the firm received a letter from America addressed with the three words « Monsieur Marceline, Switzerland ». In spite of this elliptical address, the letter was delivered to the firm of Schubiger whose marceline was in great demand all over the world, as was also its grenadine for mourning.

About the same time, 1870, the firm built a factory at Uznach and in 1880 bought from Jenny & Co. of Ziegelbrücke a building used for cotton weaving at Steinenbrücke-Kaltbrunn. The continually growing demand for its products obliged the firm to expand considerably; its new premises were all built with saw-tooth roofs, a completely new type of construction at the time; in 1905 it was once more forced to expand. Quite early on, the concern had recognised the growing importance of the piece-dyed articles of Lyons such as *crêpe de Chine*, *georgette*, etc. The first consignments of these articles were very popular and orders began to flow in in increasing quantities. The great progress and rapid expansion of the firm were only made possible by continually bringing the machines up to date and adapting them to the needs of the day.

In 1904, the firm was converted into a limited partnership under the sons of Emil and Maurice Schubiger. In 1920 it became a joint-stock company, which it has remained to the present day. Although the number of shareholders has increased greatly with time, the firm has nevertheless kept its original character of a family concern. It is proud of having come through many years of crisis, during which the silk industry, which is particularly sensitive to fluctuations in the situation, was badly hit, especially in the thirties of this century; by carrying on in this way, it has contributed actively to the economic and social prosperity of the whole district.

After the troubled war years and immediate post-war years (1939-1947) when, as a result of the shortage of raw materials, rayon and staple fibre were almost the only materials available, the firm of Schubiger concentrated more and more upon the manufacture of high value specialities in dress and tie fabrics, a branch in which pure silk has gradually regained the place of honour it deserves. This continual adaptation to the conditions of the market, made possible by its wide range of modern machines, always fully capable of satisfying the most exacting technical requirements, enables the firm, on the threshold of the second century of its existence, to face the future with well-founded confidence.

## Textiles and Traffic

Pedestrians and cyclists are certainly the least protected of all road-users against the dangers of traffic accidents. These dangers are greatest at night on poorly lit suburban streets and country roads, where the traffic is actually at its fastest.

Various methods have been suggested for increasing the safety of pedestrians and cyclists in traffic at night, but up till now none has ever been widely adopted. However a Zurich firm making fabrics for sports- and rainwear, *Raytex Co. Ltd.*, decided to study the problem and this spring presented a simple, elegant and efficient solution to the press and traffic authorities of the canton and town of Zurich. Their answer to the problem takes the form of a luminescent pigment printed on fabrics to make them visible at night by the smallest ray of light. As for reasons

of price and weight it is not possible to treat whole garments in this way, the problem has been solved by creating sports coats of fabric, leather or plastic, decorated with luminescent strips, piping or yokes; belts, gaiters, gloves and cuffs are also treated in this way. A number of garments and accessories have thus been made, which are not only attractive in appearance and very smart but likely to render great service to all those obliged to be out at night: tourists, cyclists, motorcyclists, policemen, postmen, delivery boys, etc.

As the luminescent pigment can be printed onto the fabric in silver, gold and other colours, it has been possible to produce attractive novelty waterproof fabrics for raincoats and betweenseason coats. It should not however be imagined that this process is only suitable for use with

strictly utilitarian clothes, which the smart woman would hesitate to wear except at night and then only very reluctantly... on the contrary. We have seen «Pluvaflex» fabrics (this is the name of this new product) in various very becoming shades, with original and attractive designs, which are in no way inferior to the smartest, more normal fabrics. Clothes made of these fabrics may there-

fore be worn perfectly well by day as well as by night, in all seasons and in all weathers, particularly as the luminescent finish is proof against bad weather, washing and chemical cleaning.

The fashionable raincoats made in Pluvaflex by different Swiss manufacturers cannot fail to ensure the success of this fabric, which combines both utilitarian and good looks.

### «Why cotton?»

On the occasion of the «First National Cotton Week» (see p. 110), the Office for the Promotion of the Swiss Cotton and Embroidery Industry, St. Gall, published in separate French and German editions a very interesting booklet entitled «Why cotton?», intended above all for the sales personnel of retail concerns. In an easy conversational style, it explains the main characteristics that

make cotton the high quality commercial textile it is. This useful booklet also includes instructions on washing, explanations concerning «Wash and wear» and, at the end, a small glossary of the principal terms that a salesman or saleswoman might be expected to have to explain to customers.

## SWISS OFFICE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE ZURICH AND LAUSANNE

# What we can do for you!

### Aims and Organization

The S. O. D. T. acts as a central enquiry, documentation and propaganda office and its general aim is to help, in every possible way, all foreign firms desirous of contacting and entertaining business relations with Swiss manufacturers.

Founded on July 8th 1927, the S. O. D. T. is an association subsidized by the Swiss Federal Government and also by Swiss Cantons and cities. Its membership list includes many trade groups, over 1,700 Swiss industrial and exporter firms covering all branches of national activity.

### What the S. O. D. T. can do for you

All information requested by foreign buyers is, in principle, supplied **free of charge**, except in special cases requiring costly or complicated research.

The S. O. D. T.

- 1 Communicates addresses of Swiss manufacturers and trading firms.
- 2 Indicates any Swiss manufacturers of a specified commodity.
- 3 Acts as intermediary between foreign agents desirous of representing Swiss firms abroad and the principals in this country. Those wishing to act in this capacity are requested to fill in a form; if the replies are satisfactory, the address of the agent is registered and his address given to any Swiss firm seeking such an agent.
- 4 Publishes and sells a «**Directory of Swiss Manufacturers and Producers**». This Directory, which is edited with extreme care, is published approximately every three years and lists the addresses of over 7000 Swiss manufacturers and more than 7000 commodities which can be obtained in Switzerland. There are English, French and German editions of the «Directory», each sold at Sw. frs. 24.— postage paid.
- 5 Organizes the Swiss Sections at Trade Fairs and Exhibitions. Information on this subject gladly given on enquiry. Gives information of a general nature on Swiss national economy and industries.
- 6 Publishes brochures such as «Switzerland, Land of Peace and Liberty», «Switzerland and her industries», etc.
- 7 Gives information concerning Switzerland's trade relations with other countries. Publishes all types of printed matter and special editions on questions of this kind.
- 8 Publishes regularly the following S. O. D. T. Trade Journals
  - a) «**Swiss Industry and Trade**»  
Two-year subscription: Sw. frs. 10.—
  - b) «**Swiss Technics**»  
(Published in collaboration with the Swiss Association of Machinery Manufacturers, Zurich)  
Two-year subscription: Sw. frs. 15.—
  - c) «**Textiles Suisses**»  
Yearly subscription: Sw. frs. 24.—
 Each of these journals is edited in several languages.
- 9 Studies all problems concerning the relations of Swiss industry with foreign markets. Examines requests and communications received from foreign correspondents.
- 10 Conducts detailed market surveys of the home market (Gallup system) in collaboration with specialized institutions.
- 11 Produces and distributes documentary films about Switzerland.

### How the S. O. D. T. is represented abroad

The S. O. D. T. maintains very close contact with Swiss Embassies, Legations, Consulates and Chambers of Commerce throughout the world. S. O. D. T. Agencies are also established in several important trade centres.

## SWISS OFFICE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE

### ZURICH

Dreikönigstrasse 8  
Tel. 25 77 40

### LAUSANNE

Rue Bellefontaine 18  
Tel. 22 33 33

1 2 3 4 5

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