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The Part Played by Textiles in Switzerland's Foreign Trade during 1962

Although the steady increase in Swiss imports and exports slowed up slightly with each succeeding quarter last year, the totals nevertheless show a considerable advance over the figures for 1961, the increase in imports however being the greater of the two. The adverse balance therefore reached the all-time high of 3.4 billion Swiss francs (US \$ 788 million), thus lowering the trade coefficient (i.e. the percentage of imports covered by exports) to 73.8 %. The table below summarizes Switzerland's foreign trade during the last five years.

Evolution of Switzerland's balance of trade

Year	Imports	Exports	Deficit	Trade coefficient
	<i>(in millions of Swiss francs)</i>			
1958 . . .	7,335.2	6,648.8	686.4	90.6 %
1959 . . .	8,267.9	7,273.8	994.1	88.0 %
1960 . . .	9,648.1	8,130.7	1,517.4	84.3 %
1961 . . .	11,644.4	8,822.1	2,822.3	75.8 %
1962 . . .	12,985.5	9,579.9	3,405.6	73.8 %

(S. Fr. 1 million = US\$ 232,000)

Textile articles and clothing play an important part in the Swiss economy, since in both exports and imports their total value exceeded the billion franc mark in 1962, as moreover in 1961. The value of exports in these branches last year represented 11.5 % of Switzerland's total exports (12 % in 1961) while the figure for imports amounted to 8.95 % (9.42 % in 1961). Below we give the values for the main categories during the last two years, all figures being quoted in millions of Swiss francs.

	Imports		Exports	
	1962	(1961)	1962	(1961)
Cotton	211.2	(233.2)	205.6	(233.6)
Wool	211.1	(216.0)	97.9	(94.6)
Silk	63.2	(60.8)	74.8	(75.3)
Linen and ramie	17.0	(14.7)	4.5	(3.8)
Continuous filament artificial textiles	84.1	(66.1)	216.0	(187.0)
Short staple artificial textiles	103.3	(79.5)	96.1	(71.5)

Carpets, ribbons, lace, embroidery (including millinery braid)	99.7	(88.5)	149.1	(140.9)
Hosiery and knitwear	124.1	(112.9)	69.4	(63.0)
Clothing	145.2	(131.0)	99.2	(98.0)
Other ready-to-wear articles in woven fabrics (blankets, household linen, etc.)	19.7	(17.1)	11.1	(9.8)
Footwear	71.3	(66.6)	62.7	(61.2)
Millinery	12.7	(11.0)	19.1	(19.0)
Totals	1162.6	(1097.4)	1105.6	(1057.7)

As can be seen, exports almost balance imports and the trade coefficient in 1962 was as high as 95.1 % (96.3 % in 1961).

The main item of imports as well as exports is cotton, which Switzerland imports to a large extent raw (1962 = 129 million) and re-exports in the form of yarns and high quality figured, printed and variously treated fabrics. In 1962, however, exports of continuous filament synthetic and artificial textiles, 70 % of them in yarn form, exceeded those of cotton. Among the main imports, let us also mention tops and raw wool (1962 = 96.07 million). With regard to raw textile materials, Switzerland imports a considerable quantity of raw silk (1962 = 27.6 million), later exported in the form of dyed, yarn dyed and printed silk fabrics. In the field of chemical textiles, Switzerland exports mainly continuous filament synthetic and artificial yarns (viscose), short staple synthetic fibres and fabrics made from them; as for imports of this category of goods, first place is taken by continuous filament synthetic yarns and fabrics. Mention must also be made of the big exports of embroideries (cotton embroideries, 84.25 million; embroidered handkerchiefs, 26 million) and millinery braid (26.2 million). In the field of clothing, exports have increased very little while imports have advanced about 10 %; the same is true of hosiery and knitwear, for both imports and exports. Finally, let us mention that for footwear too, exports increased by only 2.5 % from 1961 to 1962, while imports increased by 7 % during the same period.

As the above figures show, Switzerland is not only a big supplier of top-quality textiles and clothing but at the same time an interesting market for both raw materials and finished products.