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MESSAGE

It is a pleasure for me to be able to recall here very briefly, in this jubilee number of « Textiles Suisses », the friendly spirit of co-operation that has prevailed for the last decades in the relations between the Swiss textile industry and Parisian Haute Couture.

So often, in such prefatory remarks, one comes across hackneyed references to « undying friendship and deep understanding » so that one feels a little embarrassed at having to resort to such well-worn clichés oneself.

And yet... what other choice has one? Even if they have been used to excess, these words do after all mean precisely what they say — and what one wishes to say — and if used deliberately and appropriately they recover the full lustre of their true meaning in the sincerity of the sentiments expressed.

Governed by a natural current of exchanges extending from the highest intellectual matters to commercial transactions of recognized mutual interest, Franco-Swiss co-operation is a constant feature of the history of the two nations.

Is there not too a secret affinity between the capital of fashion dedicated to perfect workmanship and the land of precision work appreciated the world over?

Was it not, moreover, Parisian Couture that France selected to go to Zurich in 1954, immediately after the war, to express her gratitude to Switzerland for the generous gifts sent to French schoolchildren throughout the four years of the occupation?

It was natural therefore for Paris to go, and continue to go, to Switzerland to complete the palette of her seasonal choice of high novelty textiles, sometimes discovering there what no one else was able to offer; we are thinking more especially of the wonderful creations of St. Gall.

Thus Swiss textiles, by their quality and originality, their technical perfection, which is second to none, and their excellent taste, contribute and will continue to contribute to the glory of Parisian couture.

I should like to conclude by paraphrasing the famous Commander of the Swiss Guard — quoted, if I am not mistaken, by the well-known writer of memoirs the Duc de Saint-Simon — to conjure up the rather more pleasing picture of the miles of fabrics, frills and furbelows despatched to Paris to be given their ultimate form and which could very easily be used to deck the road from the Champs-Élysées right into the heart of the Confederation.*

Jean Manusardi

Président Délégué de la Chambre syndicale de la couture parisienne

* The story goes that Louis XIV's minister, Louvois, said one day to his royal master, in the presence of the Commander of the Swiss Guard, that with the money the king was paying out to the Swiss, they could easily pave the road all the way from Paris to Basle with silver crowns, to which the doughty soldier retorted that with all the blood the Swiss had shed in the service of the king of France, they could fill a canal from Basle to Paris. (Editor's note.)