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Switzerland's Foreign Trade and Textiles in 1963

In Switzerland, 1963 was noteworthy for the continuation of the rising trend of the figures for foreign trade, with regard to both exports and imports. In both, the totals broke all previous records. Without wishing to attach too much importance to this fact, let us just mention however that the comparative increase was a little smaller for imports than for exports so that the coefficient of exchange, that is to say the percentage of the value of imports covered by exports, rose a little, after having dropped to an all-time low in 1962. Below we give the totals for Switzerland's foreign trade during the last five years:

Evolution of the Swiss Trade Balance

Year	Imports	Exports	Adverse balance	Coefficient of exchange
	<i>in millions of Swiss francs</i>			
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 %
1963	13,989.4	10,441.7	3,547.7	74.6 %

(S. Fr. 1 million = \$ 233,000)

Exports

From the following table, indicating the totals for various Swiss textile and clothing exports in 1962 and 1963, it will be seen that exports increased for almost all items, except five on which the decrease was on the whole very small. To quote a few figures, the increase in exports of hosiery and knitwear amounted to over 12 % and woollen yarns to over 11.5 %, while woollen fabrics, in spite of very keen foreign competition, were able to improve their position by over 11 %, as likewise footwear; exports of embroideries, which continue to be very fashionable, increased by almost 10 million Swiss francs (\$ 2,330,000.—) representing a rise of 8.5 % from one year to the next.

Swiss Exports of Textiles and Clothing

	<i>in millions of Swiss francs</i>	
	1962	1963
Schappe	11.8	9.6
Continuous and non-continuous chemical fibres	220.2	239.9
Fabrics of silk and chemical fibres	143.5	141.6
Ribbons of silk and other fibres	13.9	13.8
Woollen yarns	37.8	44.8
Woollen fabrics	44.2	49.7
Cotton yarns	49.3	50.5
Cotton fabrics	149.9	143.3
Embroideries	134.7	144.6

Knitted articles (including elastic art. in rubber)	64.8	75.9
Clothing and accessories in fabrics (incl. scarves and handkerchiefs)	99.2	101.7
Felt hoods for hats, hats and other head-wear	19.1	18.9
Straw braid for millinery	36.0	37.8
Footwear	61.7	70.1
in 1,000's of pairs in leather	(1,566.4)	(1,800.4)
others	(559.3)	(569.4)
Totals	3,211.8	3,511.0

Imports

Many imports in this sector were also quite high but not always for the same items. The highest imports include articles such as clothing and accessories in fabric, knitted goods, footwear, etc., all of which offer keen competition to Swiss production.

With regard to the footwear, we wish to point out a fact characteristic of Swiss production as a whole. While Swiss exports in 1963 totalled 2.37 million pairs valued at S. Fr. 70 million, imports into Switzerland amounted to 6.4 million pairs, for a total value of S. Fr. 73 million. The average price of a pair of home produced shoes is therefore 2.6 times as high as that of a pair of foreign shoes. This difference in price is accounted for by the fact that Switzerland produces and exports shoes mainly of a high standard of quality and goes in less for the low-priced mass-produced article. As we said, this observation is valid for many other articles in the same sector of production.

Textile raw materials, which Switzerland does not produce herself, with the exception of rayon (the latter, moreover, made with cellulose of foreign origin), account for a large part of Swiss textile imports. In descending order of importance these materials are cotton (S. Fr. 16,067,161), whose main suppliers are—also in descending order—Peru, the United States, the United Arab Republic, Mexico and Turkey; raw wool (S. Fr. 1,869,014), mainly from Australia, South Africa and Great Britain; washed raw wool (S. Fr. 1,296,951) from the Benelux countries, Western Germany, South Africa and Australia; worsted wool (S. Fr. 8,779,420) imported above all from France, Uruguay and Japan and, finally, raw silk (S. Fr. 1,497,831) from South Korea, Japan and China.

As can be seen from the few figures given above, Switzerland is not only a comparatively big supplier of finished textile products—popular on foreign markets for their very fashionable appeal, the excellence of their finish and the quality of the materials used—but also an excellent client for a great many European and overseas countries.