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Autor: [s.n.]
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In Switzerland, clothing manufacture is among the most recently established branches of industry; it was only just after the first world war that certain branches began to develop steadily. With the exception of one—fine knitwear—all these industries originally worked only to meet the demands of the home market. But gradually a number of enterprising manufacturers also began to sell their products abroad. In this way a new export industry came to be formed, which played a very important role after the second world war as a result of the general need to replenish stocks, and which today can boast very good export results.

The Swiss clothing industry is composed of many branches; with the emphasis on fashion gradually spreading to all fields of clothing, new specialities have been introduced. All these activities are grouped in a number of trade associations; those that export have in addition created a special group, the Exporters Association of the Swiss Clothing Industry, to handle all export problems. The growth of these industries contributed to the formation of a number of centres. Thus, for example, the knitting and jersey industries grew up in the cantons of Thurgau and Aargau; these two branches subsequently spread to other parts of Switzerland. The women's



ready-to-wear industry is concentrated in Zurich, the old silk city, and in St. Gall, the centre of the cotton and embroidery industries. In Eastern Switzerland various specialities have developed alongside the hosiery and knitwear industry. In all industrialized parts of Switzerland, i.e. also in western Switzerland and the Ticino, there are big concerns representing various branches of clothing.

In spite of growing foreign competition and increasingly heavy customs discrimination, the Swiss clothing industries have succeeded each year in increasing their sales abroad. As in all Swiss export industries, the principle of quality is the main concern of the clothing branch. The products of an industry so closely bound up with fashion must be outstanding not only for the superior quality of the materials used, but also for the high level of its style and workmanship. Today, the foreigner buys mainly special articles and typically Swiss products. Switzerland's tradition of quality is but one of the factors contributing to the success of this industry. The «fashion» factor, which varies continually, is of constant interest to Swiss clothing industries, in which large sums of money are set aside each year for the thorough instruction of those responsible for creation and the young recruits, who receive an excellent vocational training. In addition, exporters maintain very close personal contacts with their customers and in the course of frequent trips abroad get to know the tastes prevailing in foreign countries. In this way, they can adapt their products to meet the special likes and dislikes of the various markets.

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THE CLOTHING INDUSTRIES

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