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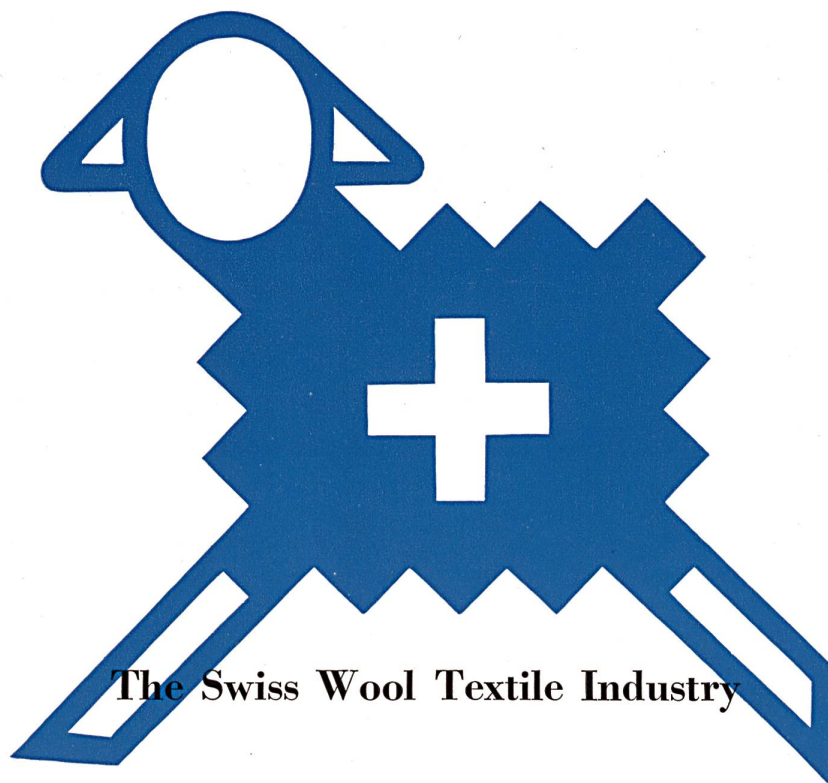
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# 25<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL WOOL CONFERENCE

The 25th International Wool Conference was held in Zurich from June 11th to 15th. It was attended by representatives from the 18 member countries of the International Wool Textile Organisation : Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Uruguay, as well as by delegates from Mexico, which was admitted to the IWTO during the congress. We thought it fitting therefore to devote a few pages of this number not only to the conference itself and the exhibition organised in Zurich on this occasion, but also to the Swiss wool textile industry as a whole.

The editors.



The Swiss wool textile industry provides a livelihood for more than 10,000 workers and office staff in some 90 different concerns, about twenty of which are engaged in spinning and forty or so in weaving. Among the remainder, there are a number of carpet factories as well as several felt and felt cloth mills. The manufacturing programme of all these concerns covers every imaginable product, including :

worsted and woollen yarns, down to the finest counts, for weaving and knitting ;  
hand-knitting wools, for retail sale ;  
worsted and woollen fabrics for all uses, from the heaviest coatings to the lightest tropical suitings ;  
scarves and squares, etc., dyed and printed fabrics ;  
fabrics for furnishings and interior decorating ;  
blankets and travelling rugs ;  
carpets and rugs in wool and other animal hairs ;  
fabrics for slippers and industrial fabrics of all kinds ;  
felts and wool felt materials ;  
other articles in felt for all purposes.

Swiss exports of woollen and worsted articles reached a new high in 1955. Exports during the last few years were as follows :

	<i>metric tons</i>	<i>millions of S. fr.</i>
1953	2,486	67.2
1954	2,361	63.4
1955	2,570	69.1

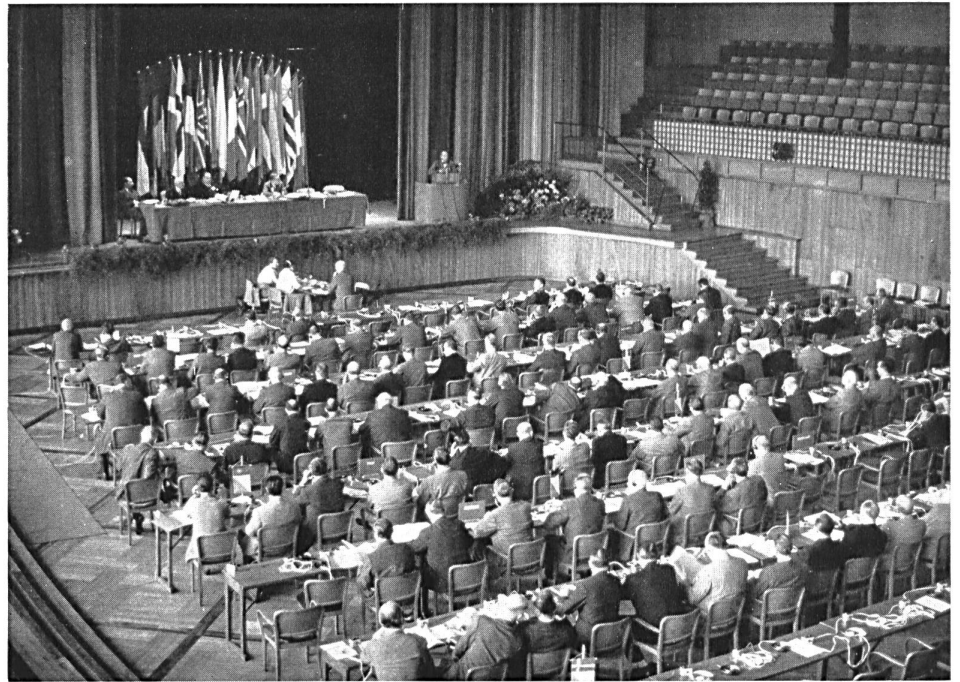
Switzerland's best clients were the German Federal Republic, Italy, Sweden, Austria, the United States, France, the Netherlands and Denmark.

The Swiss wool textile industry has no huge factories. The manufacture of its high quality products can therefore be carried out with all the necessary care and attention to detail. It is moreover mainly owing to the high standard of their products that the Swiss wool textile industries have been able to increase their exports to such an extent during the last few years. Swiss woollen and worsted articles have made an excellent name for themselves throughout the world, and each factory prides itself on maintaining and spreading still further this fine reputation.

*E. Nef*

# The International Wool Textile Association and its 25th Conference

1. A glimpse of the plenary session.
2. (l.) Mr. Maurice Dubrulle (France), honorary president and founder of the IWTO. — (r.) Mr. D. G. Price (Bradford), general secretary of the IWTO.
3. Mr. A. Peltzer (Belgium), the previous president of the IWTO with Mrs. Stüssi.



1

The International Wool Textile Association, legally constituted and endowed with statutes in 1929, has developed from a group of associations in the wool textile industry, which had set themselves the task of establishing certain rules for settling any conflicts that

might arise in the international field concerning transactions in wool and wool textiles. The tasks of this organisation, whose head office is at Bradford (England), soon exceeded these limits. At present IWTA has 19 members.

After the last war, in 1947, IWTA revived its custom of annual conferences. Switzerland, which became a member of this Association in 1947, had the honour this year, for the first time, of being host to the 25th International Wool Conference, which took place in Zurich from June 11th to 15th. It was the Swiss Association of the Wool Textile Industry therefore that was responsible for organising this conference.

We cannot enter here into the details of the meetings, which were held in the huge premises of the Congress Hall. Let us merely mention that Switzerland's leading chemical firms and textile machinery manufacturers had been invited to the conference, which made it possible to devote more time to the discussion of scientific and technical problems. Various sub-committees met during the first three days of the Congress and examined a great number of problems such as wool conditioning, weaving, statistics, statutes and regulations, etc. The last two days were taken up by the plenary sessions to which representatives of Swiss textile associations had been invited and, for the first time at a conference of this kind, members of the press. The official languages at the congress were English, French and German and everyone was able to follow the discussions in his own language, thanks to the simultaneous translation of the speeches.

The first plenary session was opened by a speech in English by a Swiss Minister, Hans Schaffner, Head of the Trade Division at the Department of Public Economy in Berne. After having pointed out the importance of congresses with regard to improving international understanding between experts in the same branch, the speaker,





Mr. A. R. Baines  
(Bradford),  
the new president of  
the IWTO.



Mr. L. F. Hartley,  
president of the IWS.

dealing with the problem of the liberalisation of trade, spoke of those countries which, while wishing to export as much as possible on a free basis, are determined to keep their own market for themselves by levying prohibitive customs duties or taking other measures with similar effects. The six countries of the European Coal and Steel Pool have established a common market with a view to the abolition of all customs duties, a sort of customs union in fact with a single external tariff applying to non-members. But this limiting of the number of countries involved — in a scheme which anyway would take too long to achieve — could only result in the serious economic division of western Europe. Mr. Schaffner would prefer a gradual reduction of all customs duties, within the much wider framework of O.E.E.C. According to this institution's proposals, a beginning should be made by bringing all duties exceeding 20 % down to this level. The same process could be repeated in a later operation to reduce the maximum figure still further. This would be a first step towards the establishment of a vast European zone consisting of a freer and at the same time more homogeneous market while giving a new impetus to the efforts being made with a view to consolidating the economic situation in Europe. In support of his arguments, the speaker called attention to the difference existing between

the Swiss customs tariffs on woollen articles and those of other countries, a few examples of which follow: wool yarns: Switzerland 1.5 % — Great Britain 17.5 %; wool fabrics: Switzerland 6 % — Austria 25 %, France 26 %; woollen underwear: Switzerland 5 % — Benelux 21.5 %, France 22.5 %; ready-to-wear clothing: Switzerland 6.7 % — Germany 20 %, Benelux 24 %, France 26 %.

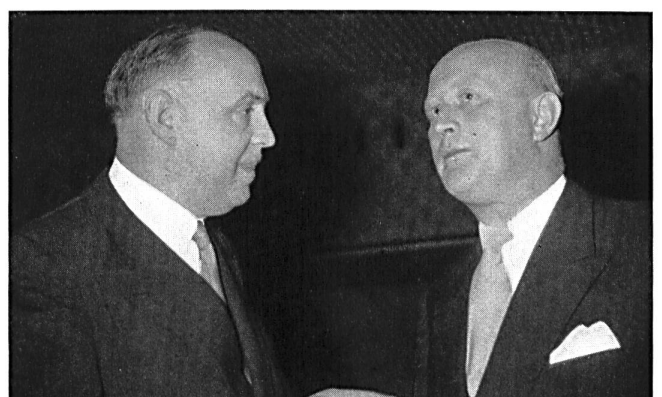
Space does not permit us to give here the results of the discussions in the plenary sessions, very competently presided over by Mr. H. Stüssi, President of the Swiss Association of the Wool Textile Industry. The election of Mr. A. R. Baines (Great Britain) as President of IWTA was greeted with applause during an administrative interlude, wittily introduced by last year's dynamic president, Mr. A. Peltzer (Belgium), in the course of the brilliant banquet — followed by a ball — which marked the close of the congress.

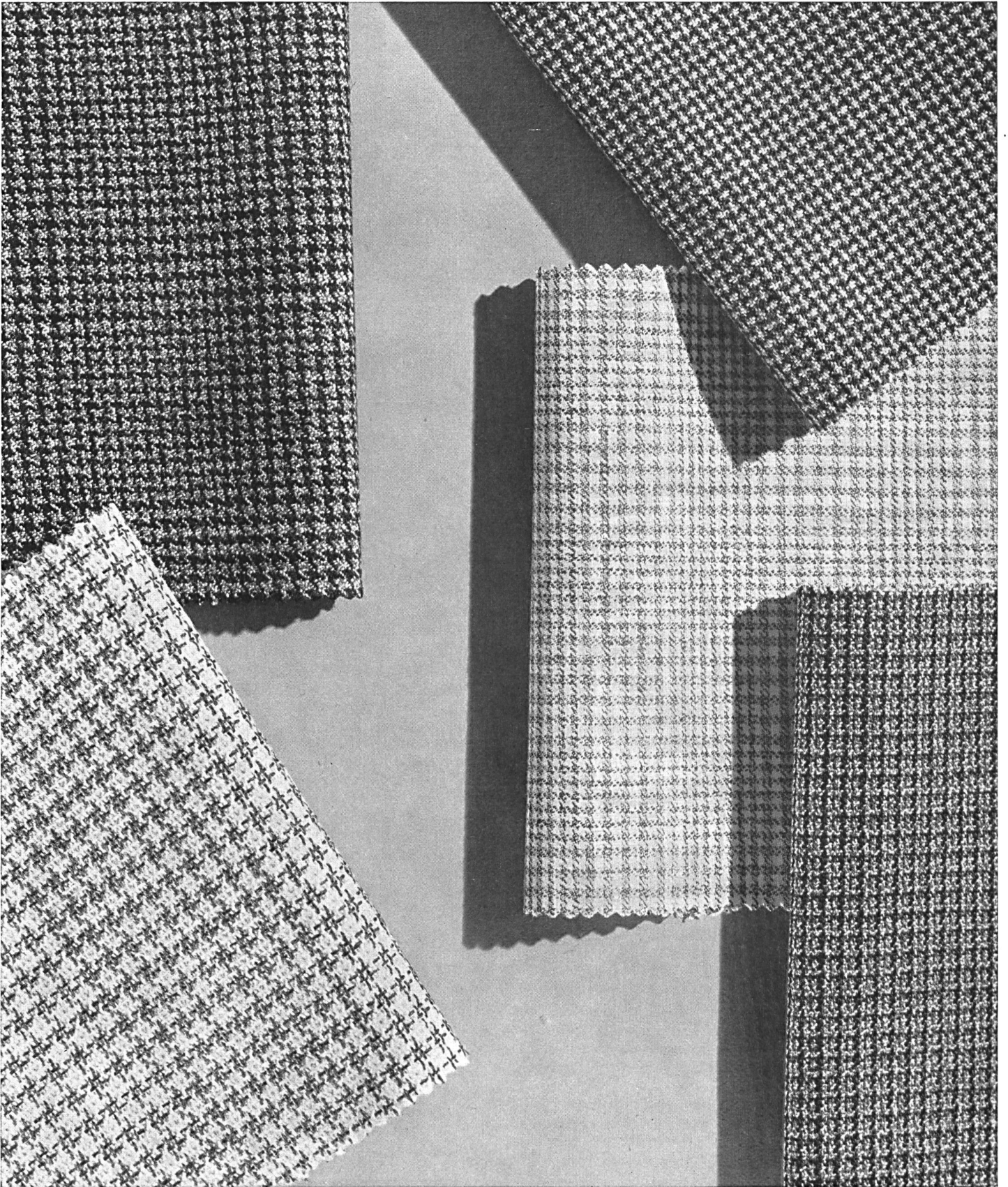
Finally let us add that everything was done to ensure a pleasant stay in Zurich for foreign delegates and their wives: excursions, visits to firms, a reception by the Council of State and the Municipality of Zurich, etc. The organisation, which was admirable from every point of view, was the work of the Swiss Association of the Wool Textile Industry, whose secretary, Mr. E. Nef, deserves special commendation. R. C.

(l.) Mr. H. Stüssi, president of the Swiss Wool Textile Association. —  
(r.) Mr. E. Nef, secretary of the same Association.



(l.) Mr. E. A. Hüni, head of the Zurich office of the IWS, chatting  
with a delegate.





**Tissage Bleiche S. A., Zofingue**

Photo Wyden

Tissus peignés retors Cheviotte et Prince de Galles pour costumes de dames et de messieurs.

Twisted Cheviot and Prince of Wales worsteds for ladies' and men's suits.

Tejidos de lana peinada y torcida, Cheviot y Príncipe de Gales, para trajes de señora y de caballero.

Cheviot und Prince de Galles gezwirnte Kammgarnartikel für Damen und Herren-kostüme.

**Tissage de Laine  
Rüti S. A., Rüti (Gl)**

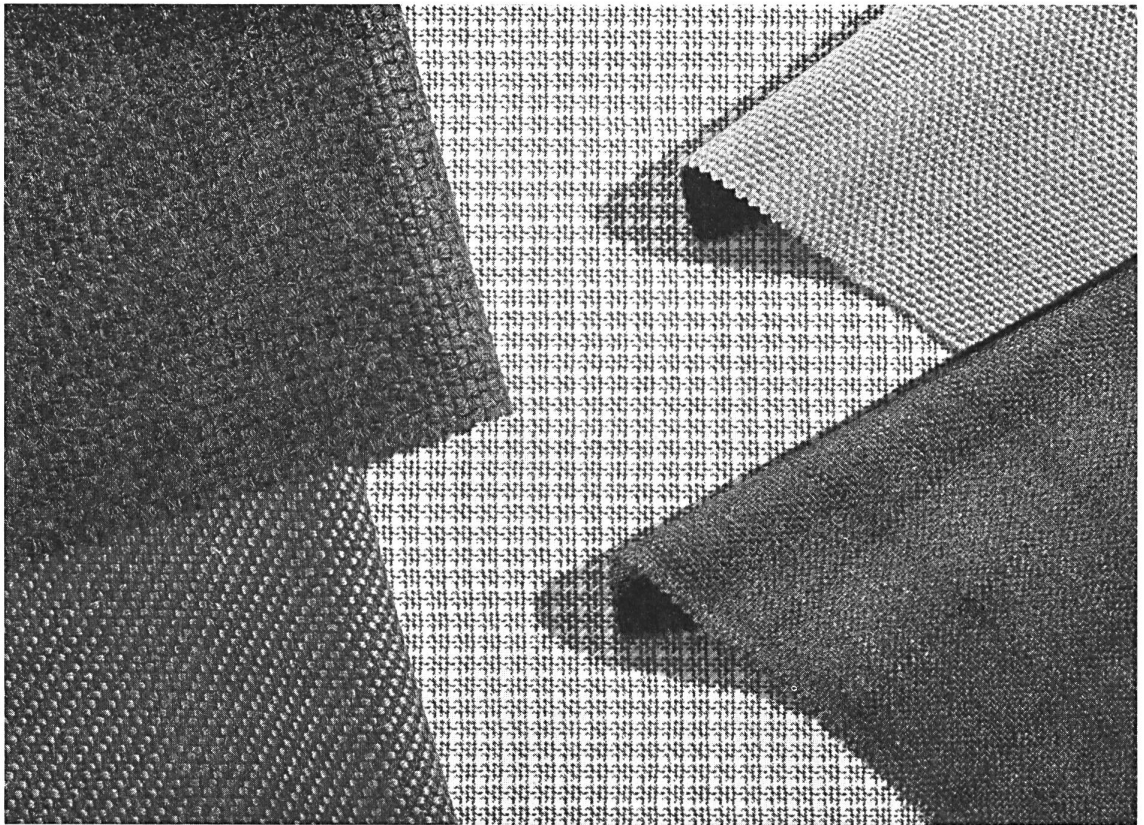
Tissus peignés nouveauté pour l'hiver et le printemps et tissu costume teint en pièces en toutes nuances mode.

Novelty worsteds for winter and spring and piece-dyed suiting in all fashionable shades.

Tejidos peinados novedad para invierno y primavera y tejido para trajes teñido en piezas, de todos los colores de moda.

Nouveauté Kammgarnartikel für den Winter und das nächste Frühjahr und stückgefärbte Ware in allen modischen Farben.

Photo Wyden



## *Wool down through the centuries*

On the occasion of the 25th congress of the International Wool Textile Organisation, the Zurich branch of the International Wool Secretariat (IWS) in agreement with IWTO organised an exhibition under the above title showing the public examples of the use of wool as a textile material over a period of more than fifty centuries. This interesting exhibition, which was open to the public from June 11th to 16th, at the Congress Hall in Zurich, was enriched by loans from several museums, private collections, industrial concerns, etc. The organisation and presentation had been entrusted to an expert in this field, Mr. Johannes Itten, Head of the Textile Vocational Training School in Zurich and former Custodian of the Museum of Applied Arts in the same town.

It is impossible to sum up here the immense interest afforded the visitor by even a cursory examination of the many exhibits. Nevertheless special mention must be made of the very instructive section devoted to prehistoric fabrics, on loan from the Neumunster Industrial Museum (Schleswig-Holstein). The peat bogs of Schleswig-



Woman's costume of the iron age at the beginning of the christian era (reconstructed wool fabric). Neumünster Industrial Museum. (Photo IWS).



1

Holstein have recently been the scene of a number of important finds of comparatively well preserved fabrics of the Bronze Age (3,500 B.C.) as well as the Iron Age and up to the beginning of the Christian era. The fragments of woollen fabrics and garments found have enabled experts to reconstruct the costume of the ancient Germans. At Zurich it was possible to see not only the remains of the original fabrics but also the reconstructed costumes and looms. In Europe, the men of the Bronze Age wove on weighted vertical looms, reproductions of which are to be found on Greek vases of the 5th century B.C. At the beginning of our era, weaving was already far

enough advanced to make possible quite complicated weaves, and the costumes dug up correspond perfectly with those worn by the Teuton prisoners shown on Roman bas reliefs.

Egypt (where the oldest known woollen fabric was found) has given us Coptic fabrics, some fragments of which, dating back to the period between 200 B.C. and 700 A.D., were on display at the exhibition. Mention should also be made of a fine collection of Inca fabrics extending over the period from 200 B.C. to 1,500 A.D.

Switzerland unfortunately has preserved no ancient woollen fabric, and the oldest example in our possession,

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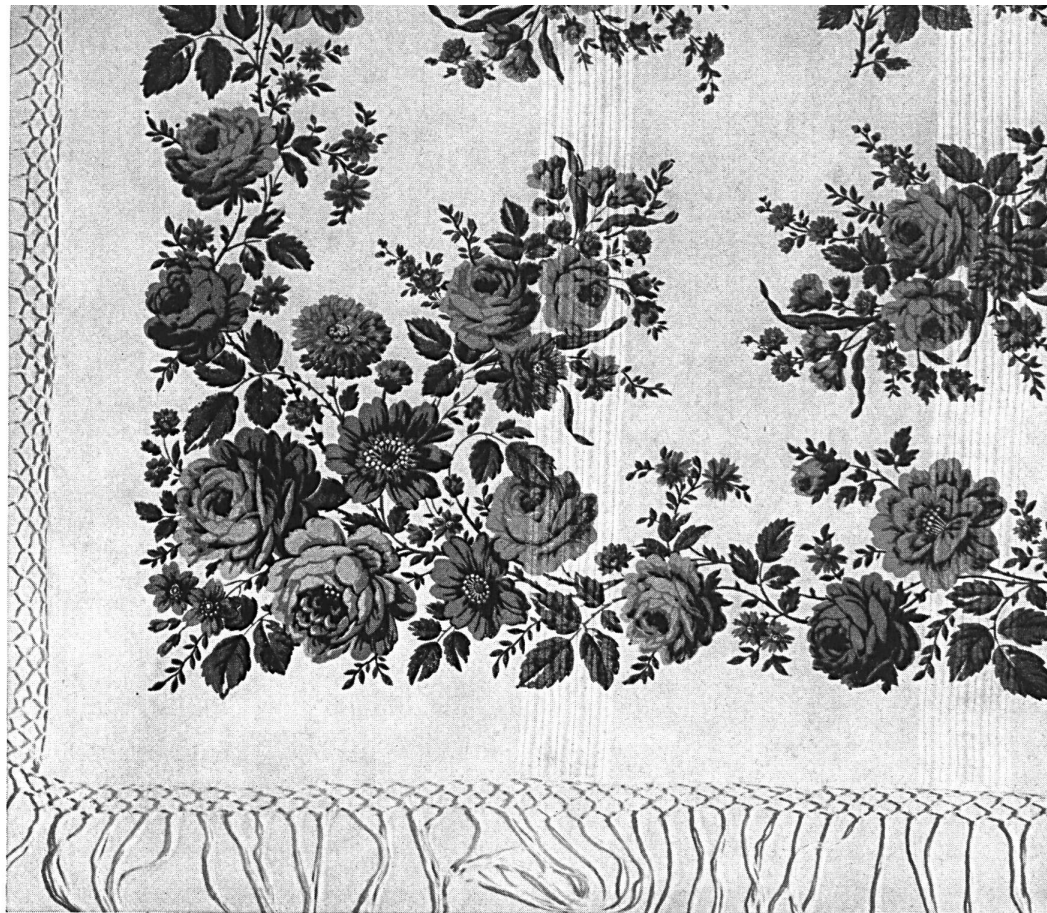


1. Swiss wool tapestry of the middle of the 15th century. Very fine and valuable piece. Swiss national Museum (photo IWS).
2. Coptic woollen embroidery on linen ground, 5th century A. D. Natural history and ethnographic Museum, Basle (photo IWS).

1. Coloured print on wool fabric, 1900.  
Property of Mr. F. Blumer,  
Schwanden (photo IWS).

2. Delegates of the IWTO visiting the  
exhibition.

Photos Comet



1

which was on display at the exhibition, is a fragment of the coat of a Knight of St. Jean, dating back to the 12th century and found at the castle of Bubikon. Among the interesting exhibits let us also mention Swiss tapestries of the Middle Ages, carpets and tapestries of various countries of Europe, Africa and Asia as well as numerous articles of Swiss clothing of the last century, including military and postal uniforms.

The natural counterpart to these items from the past was the section devoted to modern fabrics, which showed the high technical and artistic level to which Swiss wool textile production has risen. These fabrics were chosen from the 1956/57 winter collections, and kindly loaned by members of the Swiss Wool Textile Association and the Swiss Association of Hosiery and Knitwear Manufacturers.

To commemorate the exhibition, the International Wool Secretariat published, under the title «Wolle durch die Jahrhunderte» (Wool down through the centuries), a very well presented booklet in German (from which some of the illustrations opposite were taken), describing in an interesting and in no way pedantic manner the various aspects of the vast subject covered by the exhibition. Short accounts of wool as used in the clothing of primitive man and the early days of sheep raising are followed by brief chapters on wool in the Near East and Europe up to the time of the introduction of merino sheep into Australia by Captain John MacArthur (1797), on wool and sheep in the Bible, in legend, in popular belief, literature and art and on sheep and wool in the history of civilisation. Finally, a chronological table gives the main dates in the history of wool from the beginning of sheep



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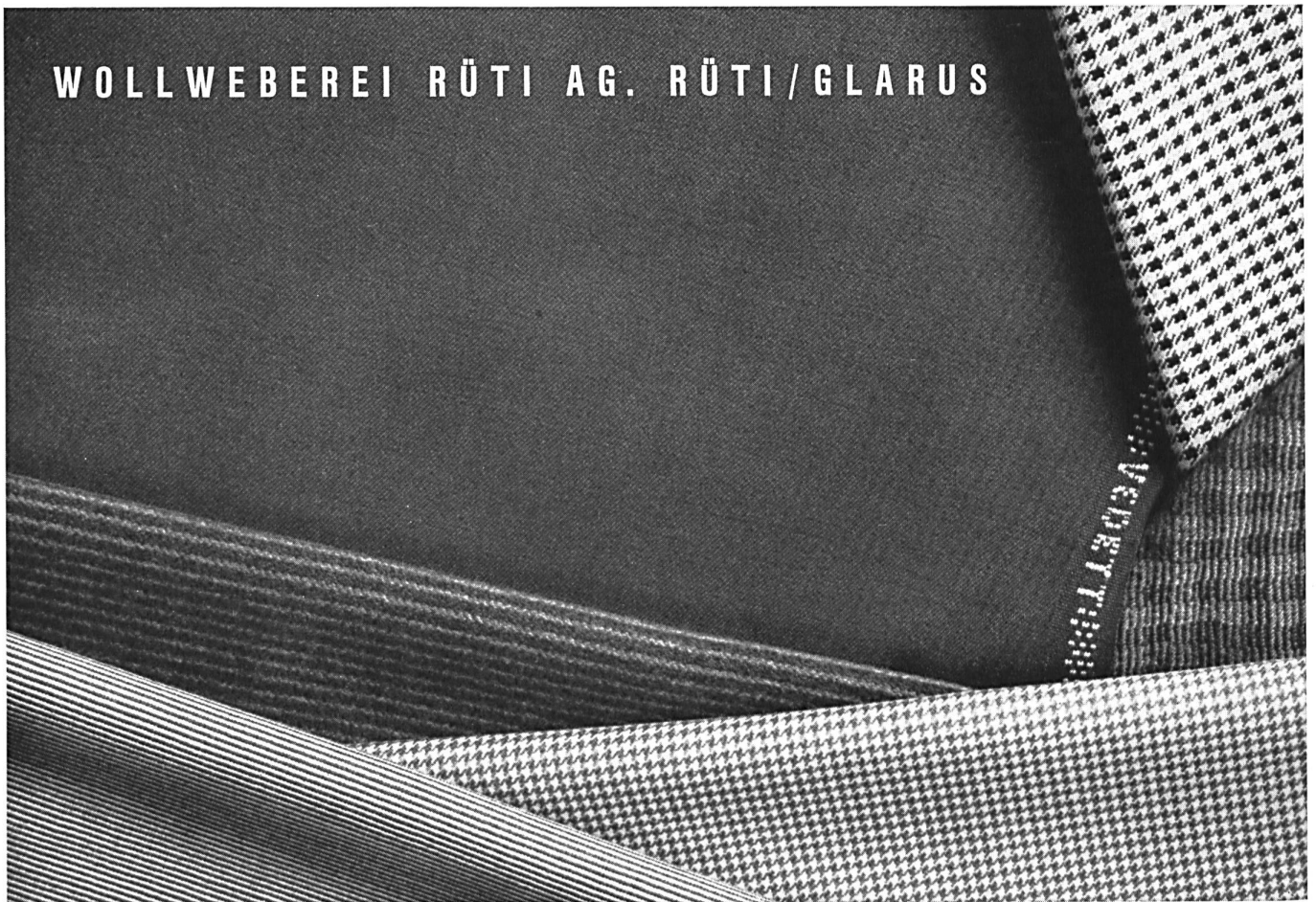


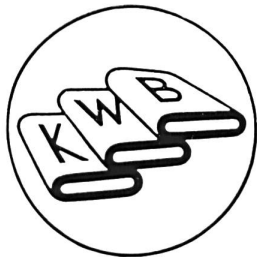
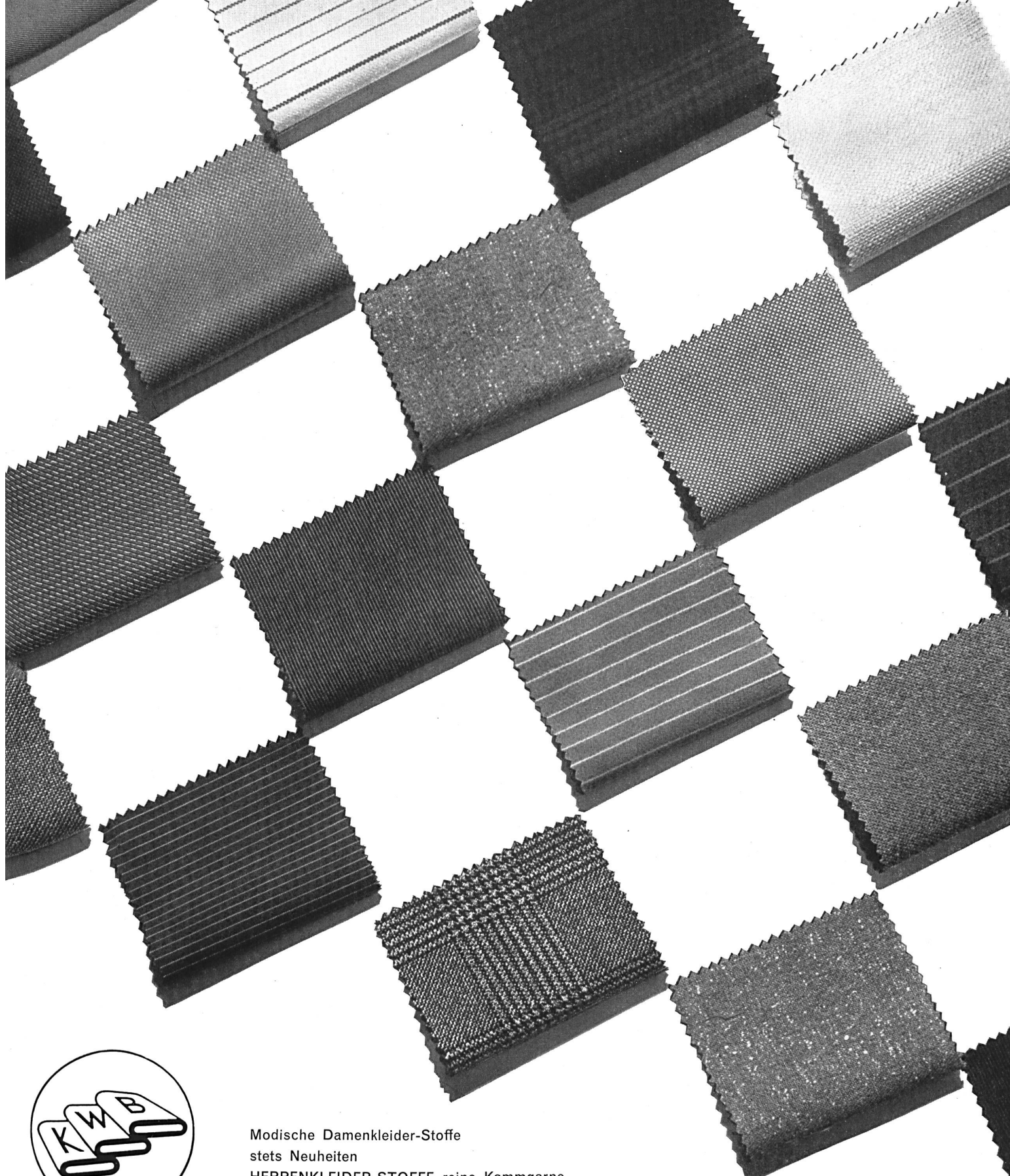
A prehistoric loom.

raising (10,000 B.C.) to the first auction sale of wool on the London market (1804). It is not, as we have already pointed out, a scientific treatise but rather an interesting and well-illustrated memento of which its publishers, the International Wool Secretariat, may well be proud.

A stand showing contemporary wool fabrics.

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