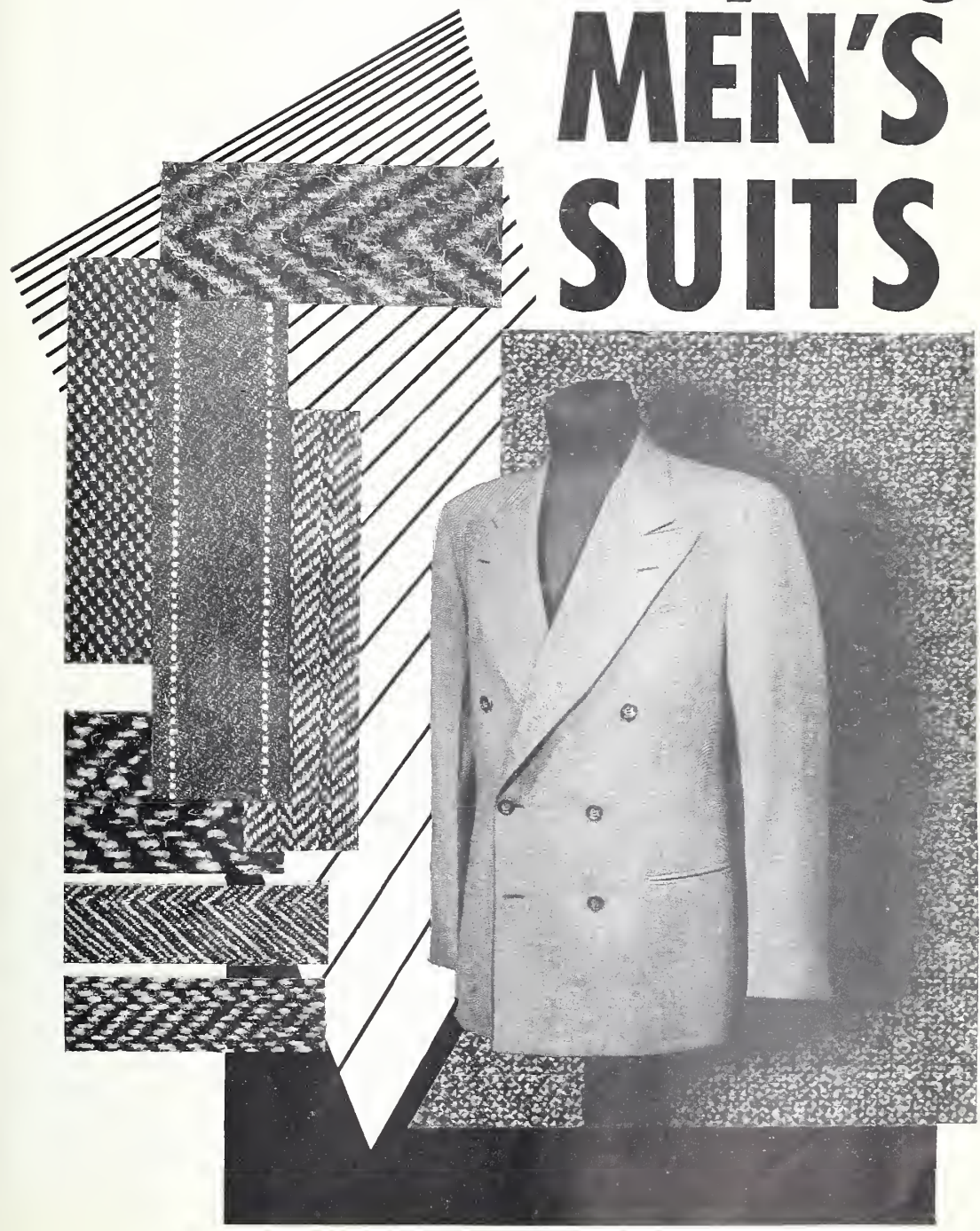


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54M

Buying MEN'S SUITS



Buying Men's Suits

by Clarice L. Scott
Clothing specialist

In a man's suit, construction is complicated; much that affects wearing quality, appearance, and fit is hidden. Certain qualities show up only with wear and cleaning. And the labels now used in men's suits give little information.

How then can the buyers of some 26,000,000 men's suits sold in this country each year for well over a billion dollars be sure of getting their money's worth? How can they choose suits wisely from the wide range in quality and price offered on the market?

Until manufacturers adopt a system of labeling that gives facts, some things will have to be taken on faith in buying suits. On the other hand, much can be learned to help judge whether a suit has the qualities wanted and is a good value for the price—what kind of cloth is best for different kinds of wear . . . how suits of different grades are made and how materials and workmanship affect values . . . what points to check when looking at suits and what questions to ask about the qualities that can't be seen . . . how to judge fit, so important to the service and satisfaction a man gets from a suit.

This publication takes up all these points. It is intended to help the man going out to buy a suit and extension workers, teachers, and other leaders who are trying to give consumers the principles of good buymanship.

Appreciation is expressed to Ruth A. Chalmers, editorial assistance; Katharine J. Burdette, lay-out and art work; Marcel Foubert and James A. Beales, photography.

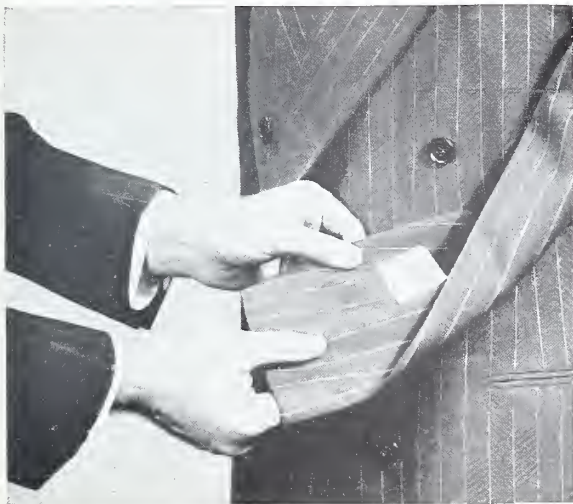
Know the outer cloth

• One of the first things to think about in buying a suit is the outer cloth—how it looks and feels. An expert, whose fingers through long experience have become sensitive to quality, can judge cloth with more or less accuracy by feel and appearance. But for the average person feel and over-all appearance may be deceiving. Modern manufacturing can and does make cloth that feels and looks better than it is. Also, the practice of skillfully pressing and displaying finished suits can make poor materials look much better than they are.

However, anyone who is interested can learn facts about cloth that will serve as a guide in buying. In judging values, it helps to know something about the types of suitings commonly used—the characteristics of the different cloths and what kind of wear each is best suited for . . . which stand up best with hard use and dry cleaning . . . which wrinkle least . . . which hold press . . . are least likely to become shiny.

Fiber-content labels

On suitings that contain wool, fiber-content labels are required by a Federal law—the Wool Products Labeling Act of 1939. These tags must be on each piece of the snit. If they are missing, ask the salesman about them.



Coat, vest, and trousers of wool suit carry fiber-content label. Here coat label is on sleeve.



Though the information you get from these labels is not a complete guide to cloth quality, it does tell you three things: (1) Wool fiber content—the kind of wool and how much the suiting contains, (2) the percentage, if any, of fibers other than wool, (3) the name of the manufacturer or persons selling the suit—or the registered number of the manufacturer together with the name of the retailer or reseller.

The information on the label applies only to the outer cloth—not to the lining and hidden materials inside the coat unless they are specifically mentioned.



Sometimes fiber-content label is on underside of coat collar. Occasionally it hangs from a button.

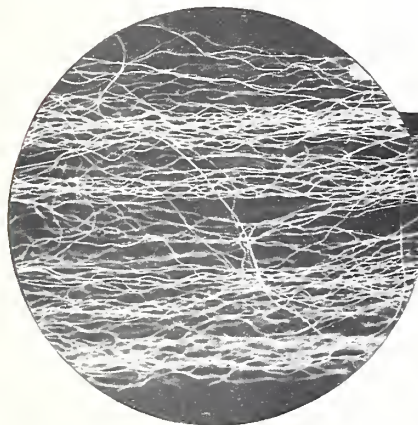
Kinds of wool

The terms used on the label to describe the kind of wool in the outer cloth are "wool," "reprocessed wool," and "re-used wool."

The term "wool" means that all the fibers are animal—in suitings they are likely to be fleece wool from sheep or mohair from goats. The fibers may be new or reclaimed from spun or knitted products that have never been worn or used. "Virgin wool" applies only to new wool. It is not always better than reclaimed; quality depends on the fibers—their fineness, length, strength, crimp, elasticity, and luster.

"Reprocessed wool" is made from scraps and cuttings of wool fabrics that have never been worn or used. The pieces are torn up and made into new materials. Reprocessing is bound to break and shorten fibers somewhat so the cloth is not as good as that made from the original wool. However, suitings from reprocessed wool can be satisfactory for ordinary wear.

"Re-used wool" is made from worn or used wool fabrics—the kind that old-clothes and rag dealers collect. These materials are cleaned, sorted, and torn apart. The fibers are short and weak and usually have to be blended with other fibers in making new cloth.



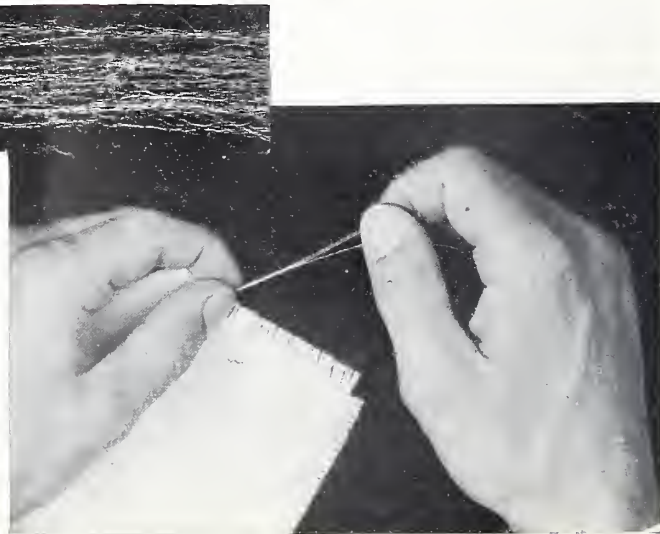
For worsteds the finest and longest wool fibers are used. Fibers are laid parallel and combed, then twisted into a strand or "ply." Yarns made from two or more ply, tightly twisted, are smooth and strong.



Worsteds and woolens

Finished suitings, and the yarns from which they are made, fall into two classes—worsted and woolen. Examples of worsted suitings are serge, gabardine, sharkskin, and unfinished worsteds. Typical of woolen suitings are tweed, homespun, and twist. Some materials, such as covert, cheviot, and flannel, may be either woolen or worsted—which shows that you can't always depend on the name of the cloth to tell which it is.

Worsteds.—Worsted yarns are made from the finest and longest wool fibers, combed parallel, and twisted into strands or "ply." Two or more strands are then twisted together, making yarn that is even, strong, and firm. To see what worsted yarns are like, pull one from a sample of serge or similar suiting and untwist it. Pull the yarn, then one of the plies and notice how strong



they are. Both lengthwise and crosswise yarns have the same number of ply if the fabric's construction is balanced for good wear.

Worsted suitings are generally close-woven, hard-finished, smooth, and supple. Crumple a piece in your hand; it will feel alive and springy, and will not hold wrinkles. Worsteds wear well but those without nap, such as serge and gabardine, become shiny. Some of the newer worsteds called "unfinished" or "semifinished" have a light surface nap which lessens shine.

Woolens.—Woolen yarns are made of coarser fibers than worsted. Fibers are both short and long, and crisscrossed in the yarn—not combed and laid parallel. Most woolen yarns are one-ply, and are loosely twisted. These one-ply cloths are not as serviceable as worsteds but lend themselves to napping and to the casual styling that many men like. Other woolen yarns are two-ply and tightly twisted. These make harder wearing but somewhat stiff suitings—good for men who are hard on their clothes.

Generally woolen suitings have a soft finish and are less firmly woven than worsteds so they neither keep their shape nor press as well. On the other hand, they do not wrinkle readily. Woolens can be cheapened more easily with harsh, inferior fibers than can worsteds, so be careful when buying to look at the cloth closely, feel it, and read the fiber-content label.

Plain and twill weaves

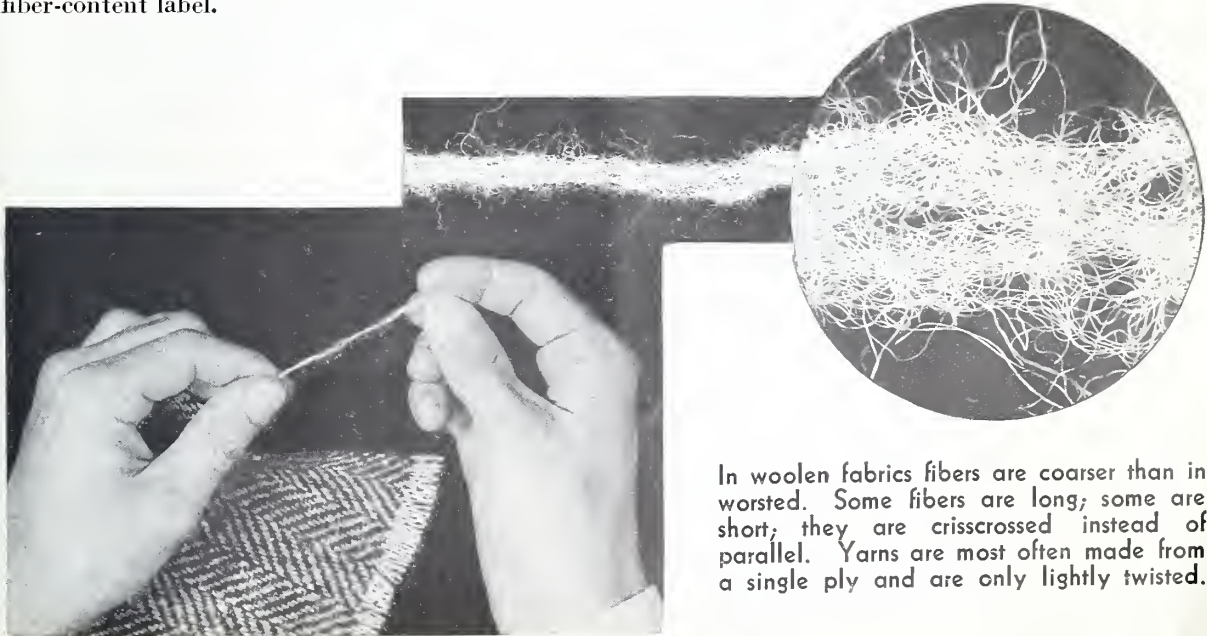
Weaves most used in men's suitings, whether worsteds or woolens, are plain and twill. Plain weave is the simplest of all the weaves . . . lengthwise and crosswise yarns pass alternately over and under each other. You can see this by looking closely at the fabric.

A twill weave appears to have diagonal lines across the fabric. The term "45-degree twill" means that the lines make a 45-degree angle with the crosswise yarns. In cloth with a "steep twill" weave the angle is greater than 45 degrees. Serge is a typical 45-degree twill; gabardine a steep twill.

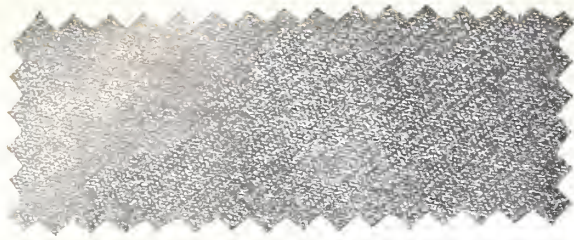
With like yarns a firmer, stronger cloth can be made in twill than in plain weave.

On the next two pages are pictures and brief descriptions of some of the woolen and worsted suitings commonly used in men's suits.

Name alone is not a reliable guide to quality. The names used for high-quality suitings are used also for suitings cheapened with lower grade wools or other fibers to lessen cost. These may look like the better qualities while new but the wise buyer will consider how they will hold up with wear.

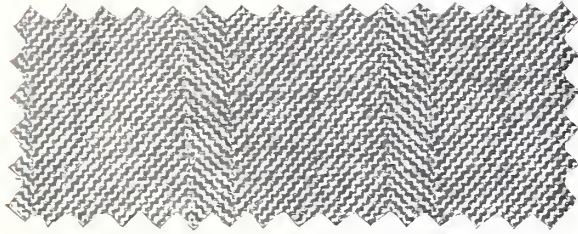


In woolen fabrics fibers are coarser than in worsted. Some fibers are long; some are short; they are crisscrossed instead of parallel. Yarns are most often made from a single ply and are only lightly twisted.



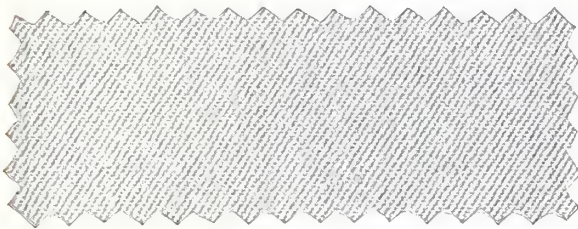
Serge

Serge is a hard-finished, unnaped worsted with close 45-degree twill weave. It is hard wearing, holds a crease, but gets shiny. Unfinished or semi-finished serges are generally more desirable since their nap prevents shine.



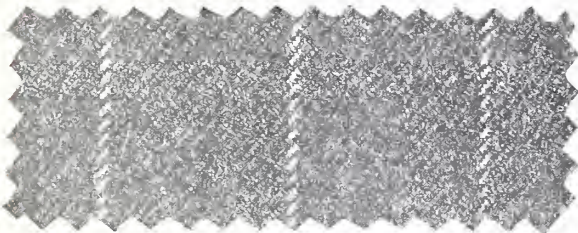
Sharkskin

A worsted twill suiting softer than serge, sharkskin is neat looking, sturdy, and practical for office workers. Light and dark yarns are alternated lengthwise and crosswise. Sharkskin comes plain, striped, or patterned.



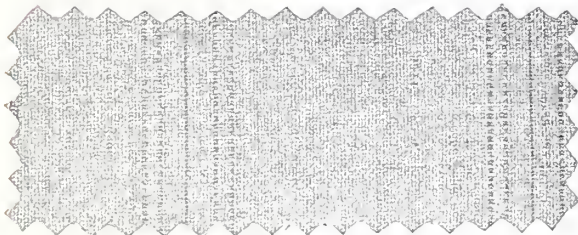
Gabardine

Gabardine is a hard, smooth-finished worsted, usually finer than serge. The weave is very steep twill. The fabric is hard wearing, holds a crease, but gets shiny with wear and cleaning. Colors are solid.



Unfinished worsted

Unfinished worsted is a soft, smooth, closely woven suiting, most often twill weave, but sometimes plain. The name is misleading, for unfinished worsteds actually have a lightly napped finish which helps prevent shine.



Tropical worsted

Tropicals are lightweight, plain-woven, unnaped worsteds—porous, smooth, and resistant to soil. Designed for summer, they are gaining favor for all-year wear. Good tropicals are hard wearing and resistant to wrinkling.

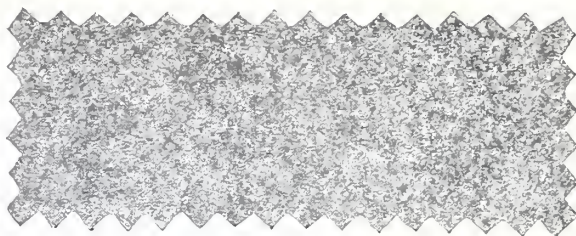


Covert

Covert may be either worsted or woolen, but in suitings woolen covert is most used. The weave is steep twill similar to gabardine but is much coarser looking and is covered with soft, smooth nap.

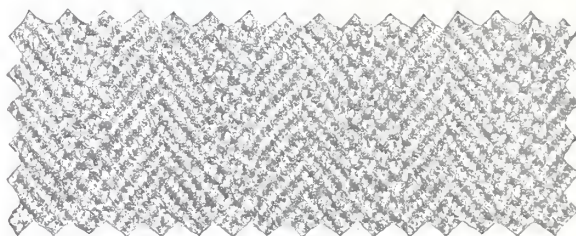
Flannel

Flannel may be woolen or worsted, or a combination of woolen and worsted yarns. Woolen flannel has a thick surface nap that almost hides the weave. Worsted flannel is finer and not so thick and heavily napped as woolen.



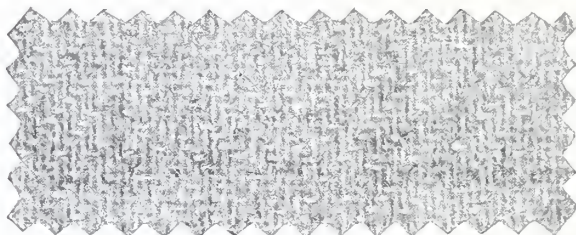
Cheviot

Worsted cheviot is soft, semifinished, twill variation, with more nap than semifinished serge. It is substantial, hard wearing, does not get shiny. Woolen cheviots are harsher and coarser than the worsted.



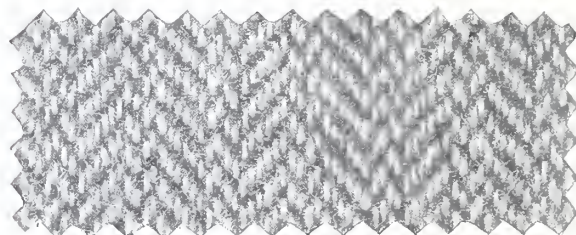
Tweed

Tweed is rough, bulky, woolen twill made of coarse, wiry, long fibers. Lengthwise yarns are white; crosswise, colored. Best qualities are made of high-grade, new wool with tightly twisted yarns, making excellent wearing cloth.



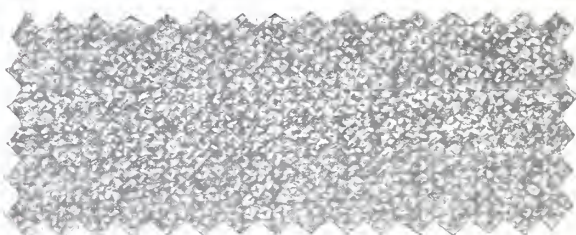
Shetland

True shetland looks much like high-grade tweed but is a softer, lighter weight and looser woven woolen. It wears well, but because of the loose weave it has lots of give and cannot be expected to keep its shape or press.



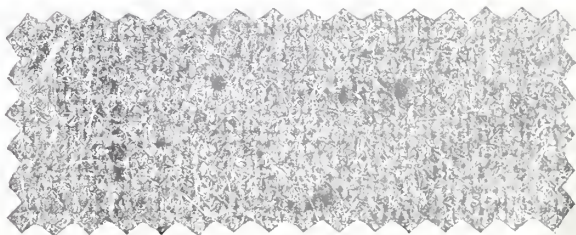
Twists

Twists are plain-woven woolen suitings made of tightly twisted yarns. Twists feel and look stiff compared with fine worsteds. They are rugged materials, wear well—excellent for men who are hard on their clothes.



Homespun

Homespun is a plain-woven, heavy woolen suiting made of irregular and very coarse bumpy yarns. Homespuns do not hold a crease but neither do they wrinkle. Best qualities give excellent wear.



Shrinkage and colorfastness

For good service in a suit you'll need material that neither shrinks nor loses color. If the fabric is not thoroughly shrunk, a suit may lose its fit and shape the first time it is cleaned or gets wet. If the fabric is not colorfast, its appearance may soon be spoiled by fading. In either event you may have to discard the suit before getting full value.

There is no way to judge shrinkage and colorfastness for yourself. Labels carrying facts, provided by the manufacturers of the cloth, would solve the problem, but you do not find such labels on suits at the present time. The best you can do is to ask the salesman or the manager of the department for information.

If you have trouble getting facts, it may be of some help in making a choice between the best and a "bargain" to know that manufacturers of high-grade suits shrink, test, and inspect all of their materials before making them up. This means considerable expense and of course adds to the selling price of the suit.

In contrast, manufacturers who make their suits to sell at a low price do not shrink and test materials. They use fabrics as they come. One lot may be shrunk, another may not, depending on the cloth manufacturer. That may explain why one suit you bought kept its size, shape, and color, but the next suit from the same manufacturer did not.



Label on suiting gives weight of fabric in ounces to the running yard. Weight is a guide to warmth.

Suit your own needs

In making your choice of suitings keep in mind the kind of wear you'll give the suit. An office worker who places high value on comfort and appearance may get the service he wants from a fine, soft worsted. But the man who is out in all kinds of weather, in and out of cars, had better get a twist, homespun, or other rugged cloth.

Color

If you want maximum service with reasonable upkeep, consider color. Mixtures are more practical than plain colors. They don't show spots, shine, or mends as readily. Of course dark colors are generally more practical and have lower upkeep costs than light shades.

Weight

The weight of a suiting is your best guide to warmth. Ask about it when buying a ready-made suit. When ordering from a sample, notice weight shown on its label. If a suiting is described as 12-ounce material, 1 running yard of the goods, usually 56 inches wide, weighs 12 ounces. That is average weight and gives average warmth. For a cool suit, get material that is 10-ounce or under. For an extra-warm suit pick 14- to 16-ounce cloth.

Summer suitings

For summer comfort select a lightweight un-napped material so woven that it lets in air to evaporate perspiration. For trim appearance in humid weather and for inexpensive upkeep choose a smooth suiting that doesn't collect soil or wrinkle easily. Mohair has all the qualities needed in a hot-weather suiting and is widely used. There are other summer suitings of cotton, lightweight worsted, rayon, and mixtures of these fibers. Unless treated for crease resistance, cottons and rayons wrinkle badly, but both are comparatively inexpensive and are washable.

Examine linings and pockets

Linings

Rayon twill linings are most commonly used in men's suit coats. Good-quality rayon linings stand rub and wear better than soft silk materials—and are less expensive.

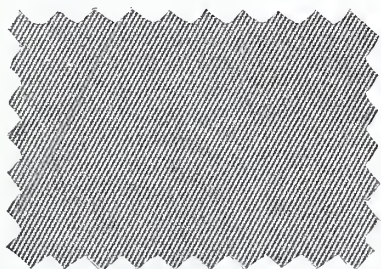
Like wools, rayons vary in quality. As a rule fine, firm twill weaves wear better than plain weaves, which are usually more loosely woven

and coarser looking. You can judge weight and wearing qualities to some extent by the close weave and firm feel of the lining.

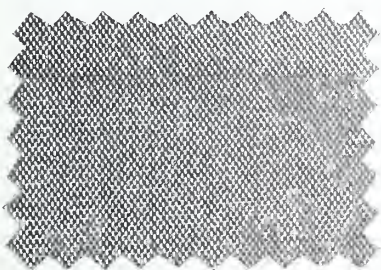
Ask about shrinkage and colorfastness in a coat lining. If not thoroughly shrunk, the lining may draw up with cleaning and spoil the shape and fit of your suit. If the color is not fast to cleaning and perspiration, the lining may be damaged and your shirts stained.

Examine lining in coat. Firm twill-weave rayon gives better service than plain weaves or coarse, loosely woven twill.

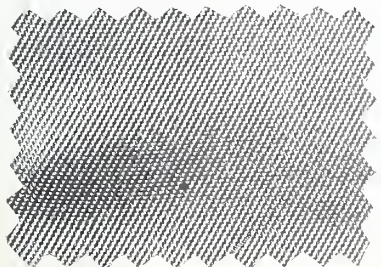
Firm, long-wearing rayon twill.



Rayon in a plain weave.



Coarse rayon twill, loosely woven.



Pockets

Don't overlook the pocketing in a suit just because it is out of sight. Pull the pockets inside out to see how good they are.

In coats.—Silesia is the name of the familiar twilled cotton used in coat pockets of good-quality suits. It is soft, lightweight, closely woven—made to take the rub and pull most men give their pockets. In low-quality suits, a sleazy plain-woven cotton, crisp and slick with sizing, is used. Crush it in your hand and notice

the starchy feel. The sizing comes out with cleaning and use, leaving pockets limp and flimsy so they soon wear out.

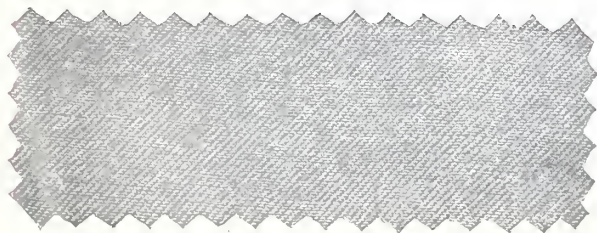
In trousers.—Best material for both pockets and facings in trousers is closely woven cotton twill—all cotton and no sizing, thicker and more leathery feeling than the silesia used in coats. It may be white, cream-colored, or grey. Lower grade trousers have coarsely woven pocketing filled with starch to make it look better. It feels crisp and wrinkles readily. All of the sizing comes out in cleaning.



In good-quality suits, coat pockets are usually of silesia—a firm, closely woven cotton fabric.



Best material for trousers' pockets and facings is firm cotton twill—soft and leathery feeling.



Ask about hidden materials

Coat front

Materials within a coat, called "coat fronts" in the trade, are actually the very foundation of a coat. Though you don't see the materials you need to find out about them to know how the appearance of the suit will hold up. Quality of inner materials varies greatly from the top to the lowest grade suits.

For the main part of coat fronts, manufacturers of high-grade suits use high-grade hair canvas made of goat hair spun with wool. Through the shoulders and sometimes in lapels, haircloth—even more resistant to creasing—is used for extra resilience. To keep sharp hair ends from working out, haircloth through the shoulders is covered with thin felt or outing flannel. Haircloth and hair canvas, coupled with skilled workmanship, are invaluable for making and keeping the rolled lapels and wrinkle-free coat fronts particular men want.

Further down the quality scale, cheaper hair canvas is used in coat fronts. To fake the crease-resistant quality, the canvas is filled with glue-like sizing which has an unpleasant odor, especially when damp. This kind of canvas makes a front that feels crisp while the suit is new, but with use and cleaning the sizing comes out and the coat droops.

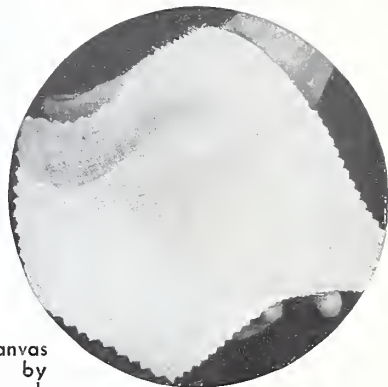
Lowest grades of suits have fronts made of all-cotton material or ordinary burlap. These merely give a little body to a coat front.

An informative tag is needed to tell what kind and quality coat front is in a suit, but you can learn with practice to judge fairly accurately whether the materials are good. Grasp the coat front of a suit you know is high-grade and pull your closed hand down over it. It will feel lightweight and soft, not stiff. The front will spring back into shape without a wrinkle when you let go.

While you still remember the feel of this high-grade suit, examine one known to be low-grade. The front will feel thick, bulky, and crisp. When you let go you can feel the wrinkles left in the inside material. When you get the feel of these two extremes, practice judging in-between qualities.



Poor-quality interlining like this holds wrinkles, quickly loses its stiffness.



High-grade hair canvas is not wrinkled by crumpling in the hand, keeps its body.



Pull hand down coat front. If made of high-grade hair canvas it feels springy . . . won't wrinkle.

Collar interlinings

In good suits, interlinings of collars are made of firm linen that does not lose body. To cut production costs, cotton goods sized and dyed to look like linen is used in the lower grades. Cotton interlinings soften with wear and cleaning, so the collar won't set up to the neck. When you buy a suit, roll a corner of the collar up and forward. If the interlining is linen, the corner will flip back into place; if sized cotton, it will turn back slowly.



To test interlining, bend corner of collar. In high-grade suit, it flips back in place.



Coat lapel will snap back after being folded if inner materials and construction are right.

Tape

A small but important item is the tape at lapel edges and armholes. Good-quality tape—thin, strong, narrow, and properly shrunk—helps preserve the neat look, prevents stretching or puckering. Linen tape is best.

To find out whether a suit has been taped, stretch the under part of the armholes and edges of the lapels. There is no give if tape has been used. But feeling will not tell you whether or not tape has been shrunk. Here again you need the help of informative labels.

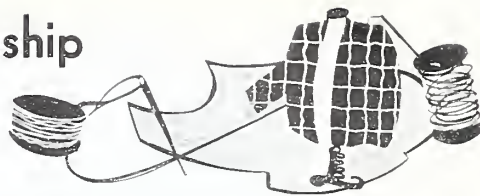
Shoulder padding

In a high-grade suit, shoulder padding is fine, soft cotton. In a low-grade suit, coarse lumpy cotton or paper padding is used. You can feel the difference. The best padding is soft, lightweight, free from lumpiness; cheap padding feels thick, heavy, uneven. You will notice a difference if you try on the coat. Pads in a good suit fit smoothly and do not exaggerate the shoulders. In a low-grade suit shoulders feel stiff and look abnormally wide.



In a good suit, shoulder padding is fine lightweight cotton that feels soft and flexible.

Learn marks of good workmanship



• Workmanship—the way a suit is cut and sewed—is as important to its real worth as the materials. Knowledge of manufacturing processes and how they affect quality is a help in judging values.

A man unaware of differences in the way high-grade and low-grade suits are made might think he was driving a bargain in picking up “the same” suit at a much lower price at one store than another. Real bargains are rare. The same suiting is often bought by manufacturers who use different grades of inside materials and workmanship. What you don’t see is that these are much better in the higher priced suit.

A few retailers keep a dummy on hand to show customers how their suits are made. These dummies are provided by some manufacturers who take pride in the values they give and want them to be seen. To encourage more of this kind of service you might ask, when you buy a suit, if a dummy is available. Lack of interest on the part of the customer often keeps a retailer from showing the dummy even if he has one.

Differences in the way suits of three grades are made are shown on pages 16 to 21.

Most costly workmanship is in a custom-made suit—one made to individual measurements. The extra charge for this service may be money well spent if you can’t be properly fitted in ready-mades. However, unless you have some individual and especially difficult fitting problem, you may get more value for your money in a high-grade ready-made suit. Factories making such suits employ many craftsmen, each highly specialized in certain operations. This speeds production so that you may get more professional work at less cost than the small tailor shop can give in a custom-made suit.

In summer suits, construction is much simpler and the workmanship is not so detailed as in high-grade all-year suits. Linings and paddings are reduced to the minimum for coolness.

Cutting

Before a custom-tailored suit is cut, a pattern must be made to the individual measurements of

the customer. This work requires a skilled pattern maker whose time is costly and must be reckoned in the final price of the suit. Then, of course, each suit is cut singly.

For ready-made suits patterns are made, not for an individual but in a variety of sizes and “attitudes,” a trade term for build or shape. Several suits may be cut at once since cloth-spreading machines have been so perfected that goods can be laid smoothly in layers as deep as an inch. Professional cutters, with electrical equipment, can cut such “lays” with as much if not greater accuracy than a tailor with hand shears can cut a single thickness.

Not all ready-mades are so carefully cut, however. Manufacturers of lower grade suits often lay cloth as deep as 12 inches or more. Their cutters, less skilled and compelled to work against time, frequently twist the cloth so that results are inaccurate. Look at low-grade suits—particularly those that are striped or plaid—and you will often see that the grain or yarn of the cloth is pulled out of line. When this happens, not only the appearance of a suit, but also its fit, is ruined.

High-grade suits are full cut, with no piecings or defective cloth. This means higher production costs, as more cloth is required for each suit. In low-grade suits materials are not inspected. Small flaws are ignored, others mended or made to fall in seams. Sizes are skimped and piecings used, most often in the crotch, to make the goods go as far as possible.

Another outstanding difference between high- and low-grade suits is in matching stripes and plaids. In the best suits the cloth is cut so that the pattern matches precisely. In low-grade suits patterns are matched in only one direction, and not always with exactness.

Precise pattern matching adds nothing to the wear life of a suit, but is important to its appearance. If you are one of the many who must concentrate on service value at lowest cost, you better buy mixtures that have no pattern to be



Piecing makes crotch stiff and bulky.

matched. However, if you buy a plaid or a striped suit, examine it carefully at these points for perfect matching: Center back seam of coat, side seams, armholes; where the edge of collar rolls over and meets coat in back; front closing; pocket openings; collar notch.

Sewing and shaping

Hand and machine operations.—The term “hand tailored” applied to a suit doesn’t mean that every stitch is hand sewed. For practical reasons all seams are machine-stitched. To carry a “hand tailored” label, a coat must be made with at least 21 specified hand operations. In many very fine suits hand operations number more than 21, and many suits with fewer than 21 are serviceable and good buys. In fact some hand work is not as long wearing as machine sewing, and unless done by an expert, may not look as well. Hand operations skillfully done add to appearance and to the softness that makes a comfortable suit. The silk thread used in high-grade suits also adds to softness because of its elasticity.

Shaping suit coats.—After every important sewing operation in a factory that makes high-grade clothes, experts skillfully shrink and shape the coat with hand steam irons. In this way shaping can’t come out—it is sewed in by operations that follow and is there for the life of the



Pattern matched precisely at back seam.

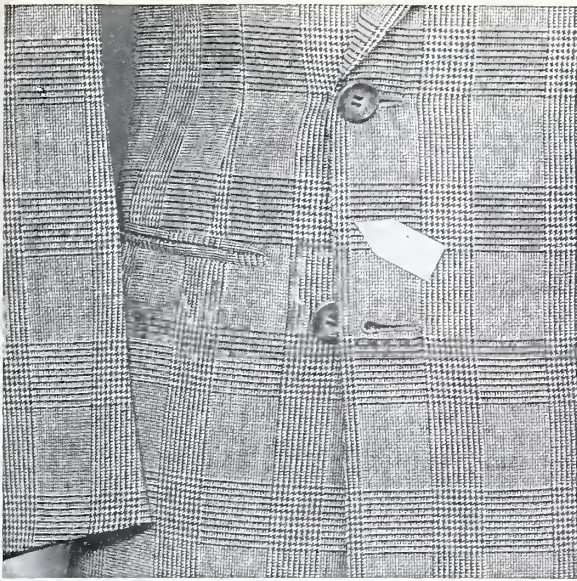
suit. By the time such a suit is finished it seems to need little additional pressing, but even so it receives a very careful inspection and a final press.

In contrast to this careful handling, manufacturers of popular lines of suits rush production. There is some flat table pressing but no shaping. When this grade of suit is completed, it is put on form presses that actually stamp the shape into suits so that to many customers they look as good as the high-grade suits. However, this last-minute shaping comes out with wear and cleaning.

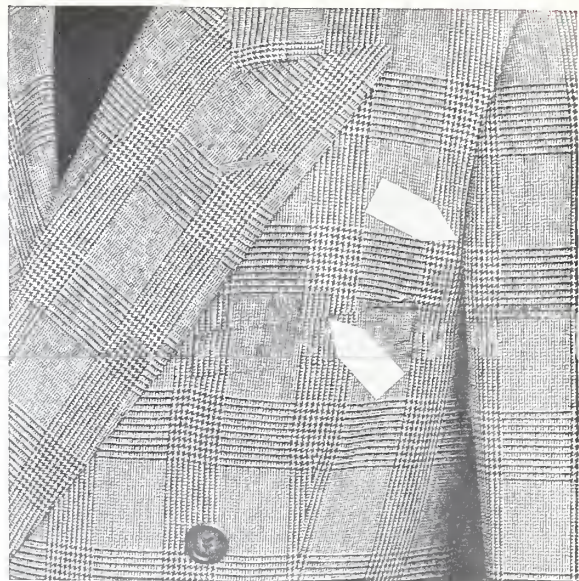
Coat linings.—The way the lining has been put in the coat is a point to notice. In best quality suits the lining is smoothly fitted and finely stitched by hand with matching silk thread. The lower edge of the coat is bound—“piped,” the trade calls it—and fastened over the lining. A small pleat for give is left along the lower edge of the lining.

In medium-grade suits invisible machine stitching is used to sew in the lining. Hand work, coarser and less skillfully done than in the better suits, will be found in the armholes and shoulder seams. In fact, the way armholes are stitched is a pretty good indicator of the quality of hand work throughout a suit.

Linings in poor-quality suits are not smoothly fitted. The machine stitching is coarse and usually does not match the lining in color. No



Coat front cut so pattern matches at opening.



Careful pattern matching at pocket and armhole.

allowances are made for give, as every little bit of goods counts in making clothes to sell at the lowest possible price.

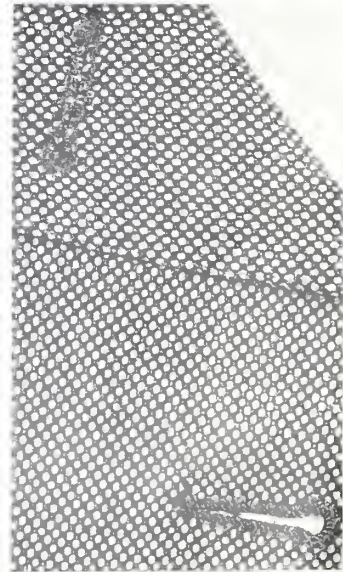
Buttonholes and buttons

Look for neat, strong buttonholes. Best in appearance and most flexible are those hand-worked with silk twist, but high-grade machine buttonholing is better than poor hand work. Examine both sides of buttonholes. In high-

grade suits they are worked with close, even stitches, with a strong bar opposite the eyelet end. Without the bar, buttonholes tear with use.

Best buttons, and the standard for judging all others, are tip horn. You can tell them by their transparency, dark veining, and natural soft polish. They are expensive, so ivory buttons are more commonly used. These wear and look very well. Least expensive, but at present uncertain as to service, are synthetics—which may be improved as research goes on.

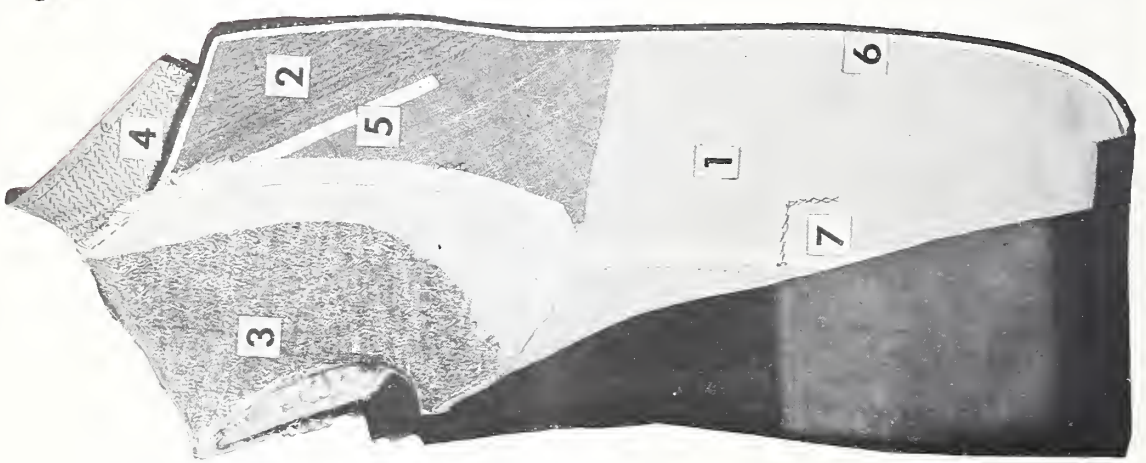
Hand-worked buttonholes are softer and more flexible than machine-made. In top-grade suits they are closely worked on both sides as shown in the left-hand illustration. Such buttonholes look and wear better than those at the right, which are hand-worked on only one side. Good machine-made buttonholes are more durable than poor hand-worked ones.



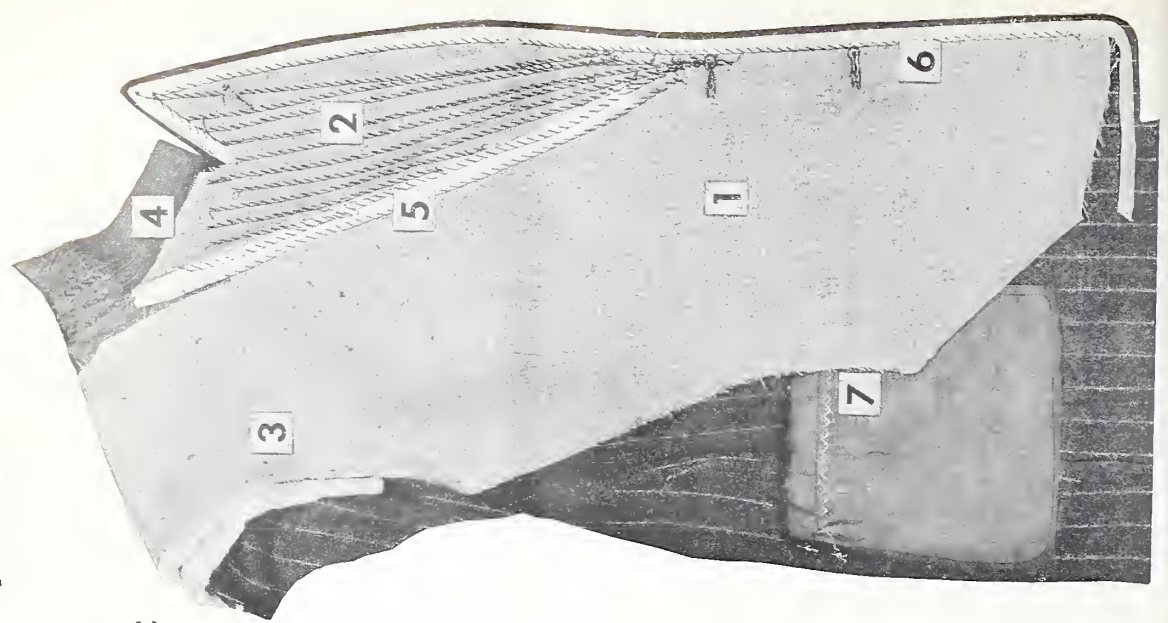
Suits of Three Grades Compared

COAT FRONTS

HIGH-GRADE



MEDIUM-GRADE



1. INTERFACINGS

High-grade hair canvas or linen—very resistant to creasing. Prevents wrinkled coat fronts.

Burlap or heavily sized cotton, quick to crease and wrinkle.

2. LAPELS

Shaped over the hand as stitched, lapels roll back neatly and will not fall forward.

Closely stitched by machine, firm but not hand-shaped. Lapels likely to fall forward.

Little stitching, no shaping. Lapels will become limp.

3. SHOULDERS

Haircloth under flannellette or thin felt, shaped with hand padding stitches for chest roundness. Lightweight soft cotton pads, securely tacked.

Haircloth plus felt stitched by machine without shaping, lets chest of coat break somewhat. Cotton pads, securely tacked but rather heavy and stiff.

Paper felt, tacked by machine to coat front, gives no shape to chest. Lumpy, badly shaped paper pads, insecurely tacked.

4. COLLAR INTER-LINING

High-grade linen, shaped with close hand stitches to undercollar, makes collar turn over smoothly and set close to neck.

Good-quality cotton stitched less closely by machine. No shaping. Corners and edge of collar may turn up.

Heavily sized cotton fastened with few machine stitches to undercollar. Collar will neither turn over smoothly nor set right.

5. BRIDLE-STAY

Hand-stitched along both edges for smoothness. Holds in slight fullness that helps give shape to chest of coat.

Machine instead of hand stitching along both edges. Fullness eased in but not so evenly as in high-grade suit.

Center stitching lets edges curl. No fullness eased in for shaping chest of coat.

6. TAPING

Narrow, thin, pre-shrunk linen tape, hand-stitched along both edges inside edge seam. Thin, soft edge will not pucker or stretch. Armholes taped to hold shape.

Cotton tape stitched in with edge seam and machine-stitched along inner edge. Makes thicker, harder edge on coat. Armholes taped.

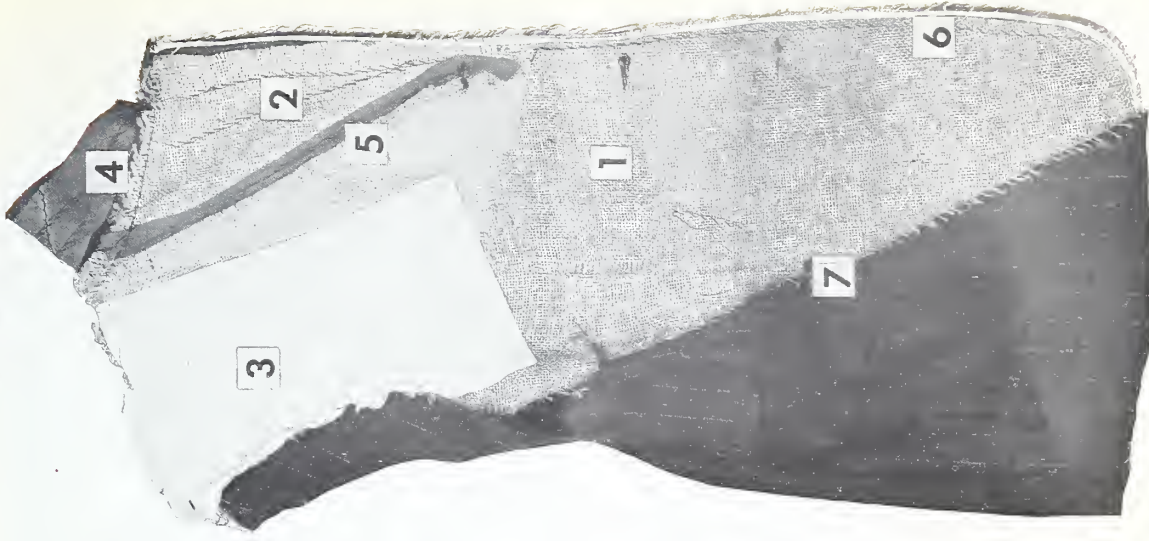
Sleazy cotton tape, stitched in with seam, rolls and forms hard, thick edge. Armholes not taped.

7. POCKETS

Ample size, neatly sewed, made of soft, firm, durable silésia. Hand-tacked securely to coat front to protect coat against pull.

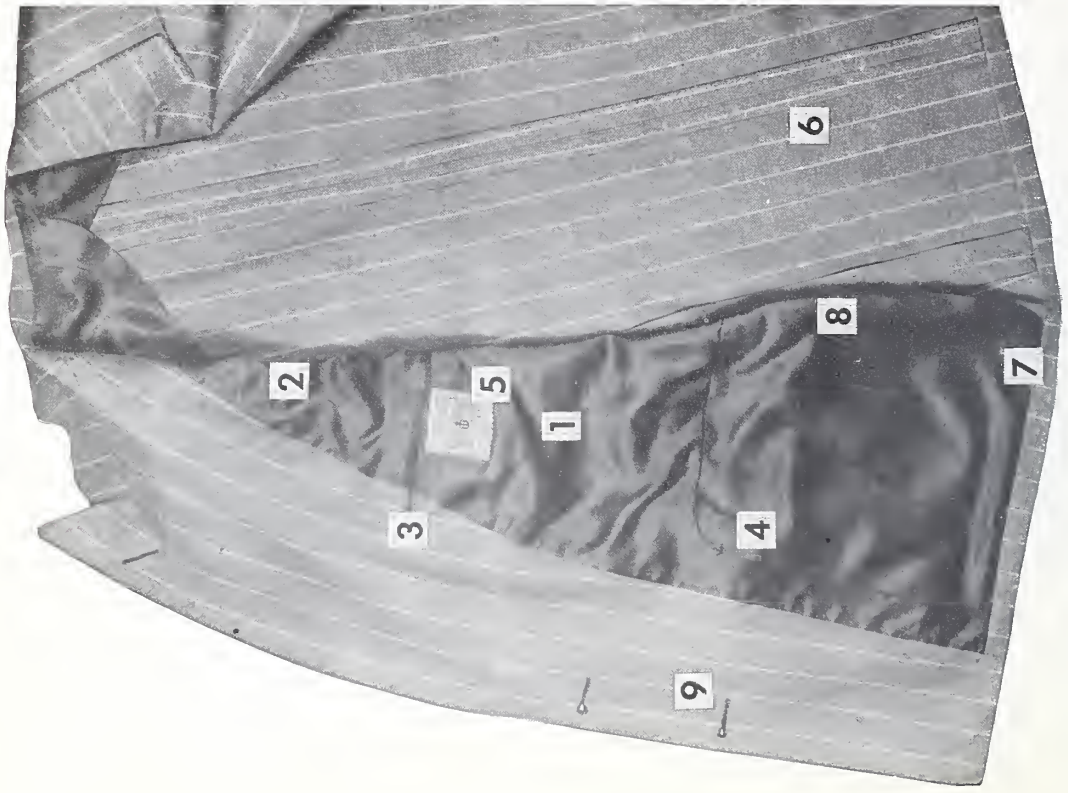
Smaller pockets, not so well-stitched or of such firm material. Tacked to front with machine stitches which are less secure and permanent.

Small, badly sewed. Made of sleazy cotton. Not tacked to front.

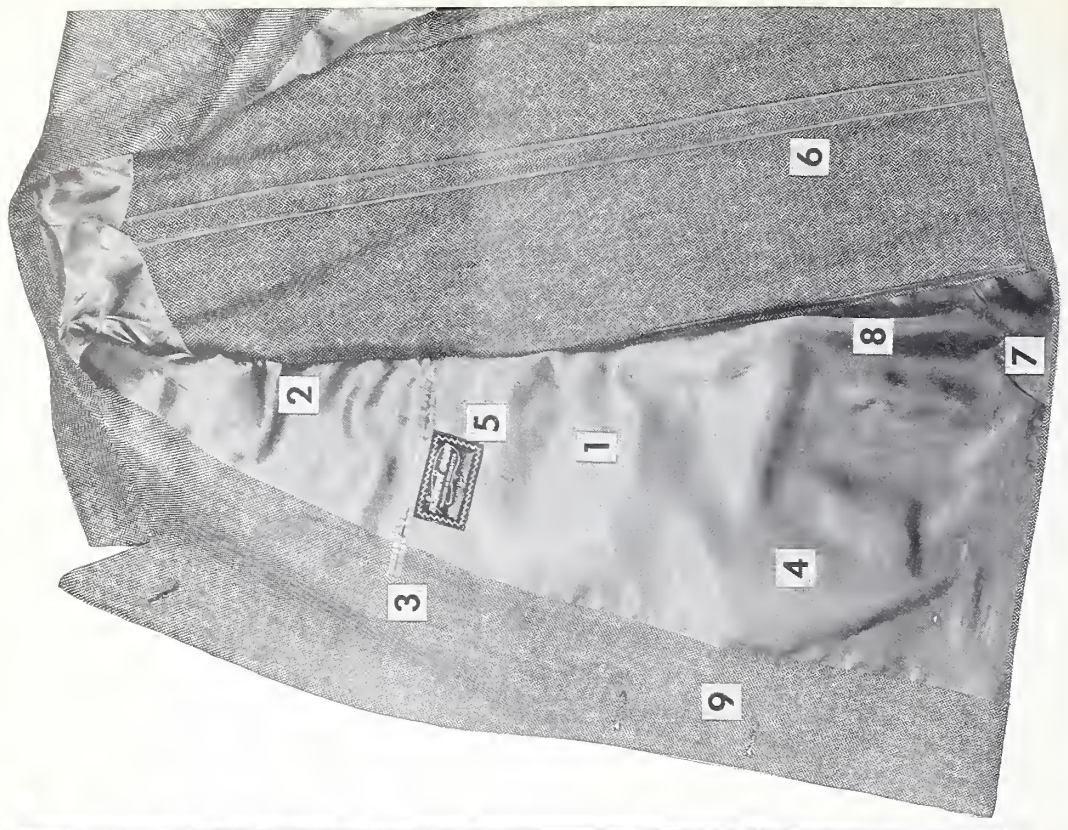


INSIDE THE COAT

HIGH-GRADE



MEDIUM-GRADE



HIGH-GRADE**MEDIUM-GRADE****LOW-GRADE****1. BODY LINING**

Firm twill-weave rayon—smoothly fitted, neatly pressed.

Coarser quality rayon—smoothly fitted, neatly pressed.

Poor-grade rayon—badly fitted and pressed.

2. SLEEVE LINING

Fine-quality rayon. Fine hand stitches around armholes.

Good-quality rayon. Not so finely stitched around armholes.

Coarse rayon or cotton sateen—badly stitched with big stitches and coarse thread.

3. LETTER POCKET

Precisely made, smooth and flat.

Less precisely, but well made.

Uneven, badly sewed.

4. SIDE POCKET

Bellows pocket in lining. Its fold gives extra room to prevent bulge of outside pocket.

No bellows pocket.

No bellows pocket.

5. LABEL

Manufacturer identifies himself by label.

Manufacturer identifies himself by label.

No manufacturer's label.

6. SEAMS

Edges of seams turned under and invisibly stitched. Ample allowance for let-outs.

Seams bound with rayon bias fold that matches the lining. Less allowance for letting out than in the high-grade suit.

Seams bound with unmatched rayon or cotton bias fold. Little or no allowance for letting out.

7. HEM

Turned up and hemmed invisibly over coat lining. No danger that lining will sag below coat.

Lining finished over hem with small fold for give. May sag below coat.

Lining finished close to lower edge of coat. Often sags and shows below coat.

8. SIDES

Lining invisibly sewed to coat front instead of to seams, providing for exact fit at sides and permitting very smooth press.

Lining attached to side seams. Less precise fit at sides—more difficult to press neatly.

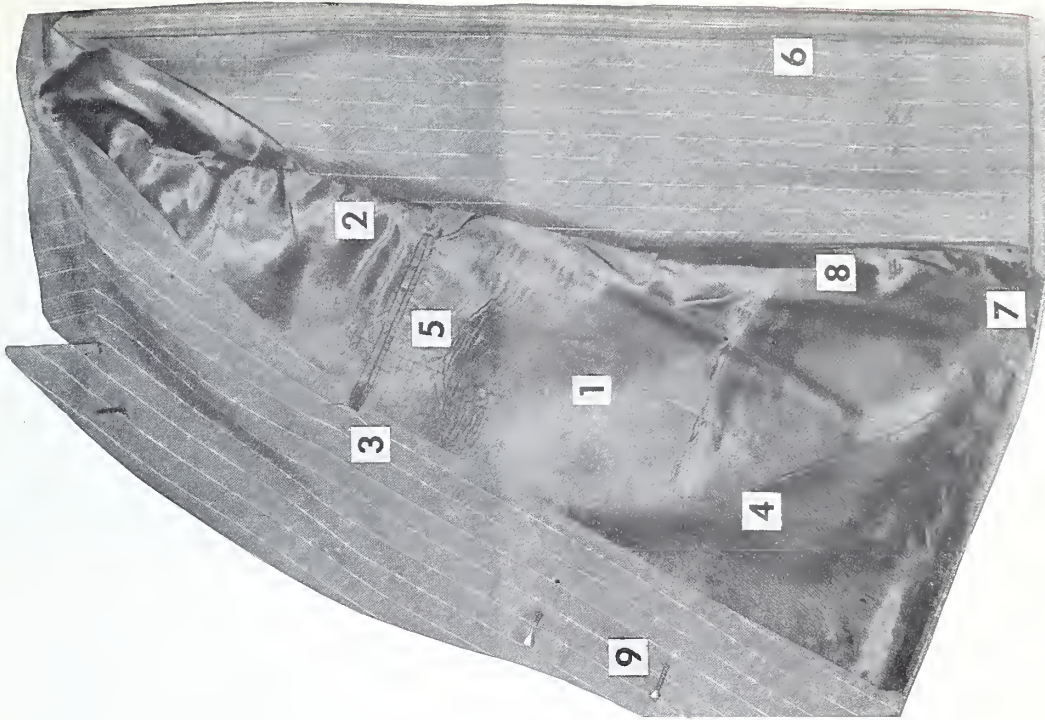
Lining fastened to side seams.

9. BUTTON-HOLES

Worked by hand on inside as on the outside.

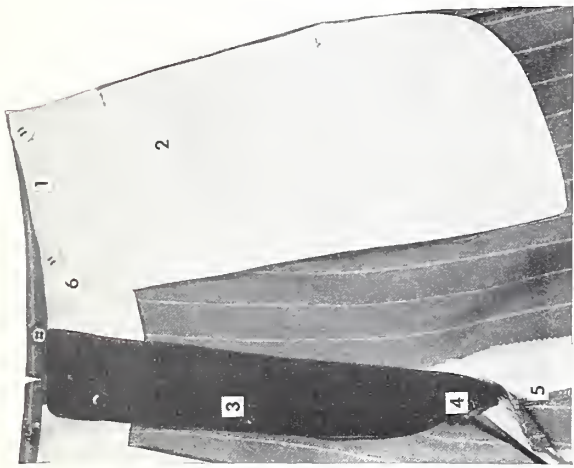
Hand-worked but only on the outside. Less durable than double-worked holes on best suit.

Machine-worked—durable but stiff and harder than hand-worked holes to use.

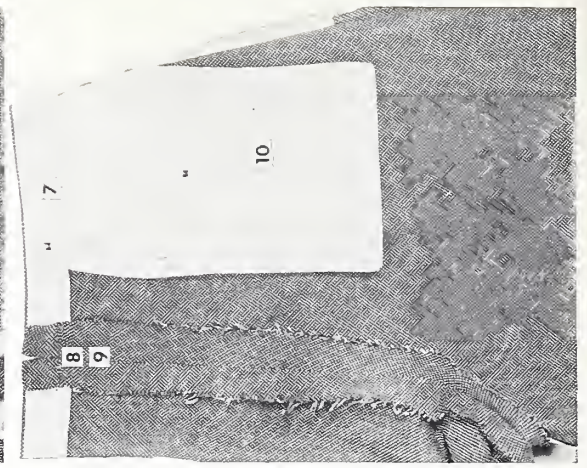
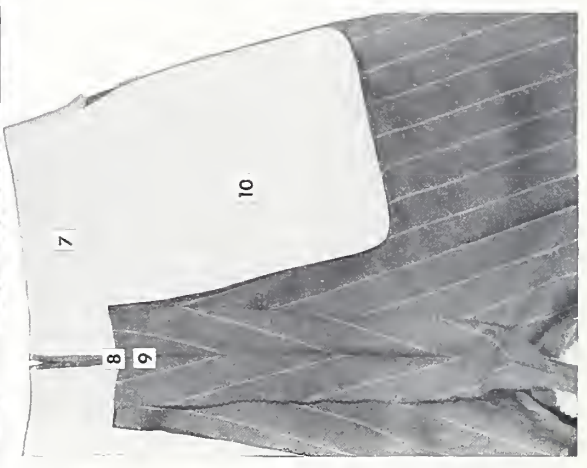
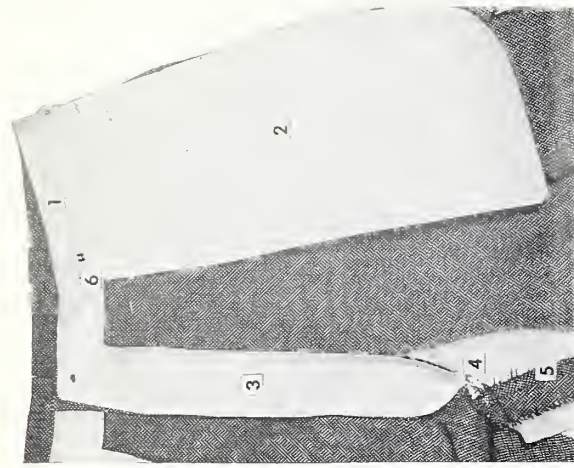
LOW-GRADE

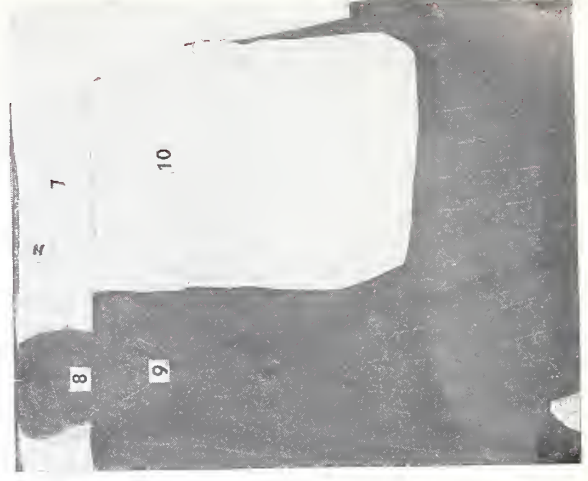
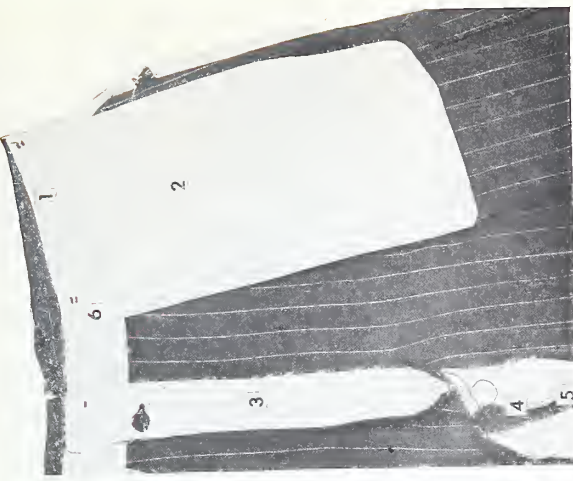
TROUSERS

HIGH-
GRADE



MEDIUM-
GRADE





LOW-GRADE

LOW-GRADE

Sarched, harsh material.

Badly cut and stitched. Often stitched only once—easily ripped.

Facing straight cut. Not neatly finished, not strong. Button closing. Buttonholes badly worked and weak.

Crotch pieced. Skippy reinforcements of thin cotton.

Little or no allowance for letting out.

Paper buttons, soon destroyed in cleaning. Unevenly set.

Machine-hemmed.

Seam stitched after top edge was faced—not flat or comfortable.

Coarse, single stitching that soon will break. Allowance for letting out is small.

Sleazy, heavily sized cotton. Not durable.

MEDIUM-GRADE

Not so soft as in better suit.

Not so well cut or finished, but twice-stitched. Less room in lower part.

Facing and reinforcement similar to that in high-grade suit, but straight cut. Zipper closing.

Crotch pieced. Reinforcements folded over piecings, making bulk.

Small allowance for letting out.

Of good quality, evenly set.

Machine-hemmed—wears well. Not as soft as hand-hemmed.

Hand stitching holds seam flat against facing at waistline.

Single but close stitching. Reasonable outlet allowance.

Less firmly woven, less durable.

HIGH-GRADE

Firm but soft and comfortable.

Shaped with ample size at bottom, little bulk at waist. Evenly cut, twice-stitched. Smooth, easy to clean inside.

Facing, bias cut for good fit, extended to make a smooth, strong seam reinforcement for crotch. Zipper closing.

No piecings. Crotch reinforced with pocketing material.

Ample allowance for letting out.

Of good quality, evenly set.

Hand-hemmed for softness along top edge.

Facing neatly finished by hand over back-rise seam.

Double-stitched for strength. Generous allowance for letting out.

Firmly woven, but soft, leathery cotton twill.

1. WAIST-BAND INTERLINING

2. POCKETS

3. FLY

4. CROTCH

5. INSEAMS

6. BUTTONS FOR SUSPENDERS

7. WAIST FACING

8. CENTER BACK

9. BACK RISE

10. POCKETING

Be exacting about fit

● A suit must fit perfectly to wear and look its best. When you go to buy, take time to notice all details. Try on the whole suit—coat, trousers, and vest. Look at the front, sides, and back. Put on and take off the coat yourself, without the help of the salesman—there's a difference. With the coat buttoned, watch as you raise and bend your arms, stoop, and move about. Sit down and see how the suit looks and feels. Walk with your natural stride to see if the trousers are cut for walking comfort. Some pull back against the legs because of improper cut. Obviously, such ill-fitting trousers won't wear so long or look so well as those that fit comfortably and are made to go with your stride.

Men hard to fit can usually solve their prob-

lems, without the expense of custom work, at shops carrying lines of clothes made for both regular and irregular figures. From years of study of men's proportions, manufacturers of high-grade ready-made suits have developed suits for a wide range of sizes and figures. This makes it possible for all men except those with unusual problems to be properly fitted, with only minor alterations, if any.

Some retailers sell stock sizes ordered to the individual's chest, waist, and inseam measurements. A suit bought by this plan provides for certain figure irregularities and is less expensive than a custom job cut to many individual measurements. It is also more satisfactory to buy this way than to get a suit that needs many alterations. Alteration workers are not always skilled in making or remaking a suit. A suit that requires major alterations cannot be made over to fit.

CHECK LIST ON FIT

THE COAT

- Collar sets up smooth and close to the back and sides of neck. Made so one-fourth to one-half inch of the shirt collar shows.
- Firm unbroken shoulder line from neck to shoulder point.
- Lapels and neck line hold close to the chest at all times.
- Straight line with no wrinkles from shoulder to lower edge of the coat—back and front.
- Easy, smooth fit through the body of the coat—not noticeably disturbed as you move about. No strain as coat is buttoned.
- Coat long enough to cover the seat of the trousers.
- Armholes comfortably large, but not so deep that the coat lifts noticeably as you reach.

- Sleeves tapered, comfortably wide, but never full enough to cause unsightly wrinkles. May be long enough to cover shirt cuffs or allow one-fourth to one-half inch of cuffs to show, as preferred.

THE TROUSERS

- Hang straight, with creases straight up and down front and back. Creases follow straight of goods.
- Comfortable seat fullness, without bagginess.
- No wrinkles that draw through the crotch below the seat or against the front of the legs as you stand or walk.
- Lower edges of legs finished so they either have one slight break at the instep, or so the cuff edges barely touch the shoes. A deep break makes trousers look too large. If the trouser legs are too long, they rub against the shoes, wear out quickly and have to be repaired.



Ask for tags with facts



Facts are much needed to help men buy suits wisely and well. Examining a suit and asking questions is never an entirely reliable guide to value.

Exactly what facts are essential is a question to be worked out carefully with the cooperation of clothing manufacturers, retailers, consumers, and perhaps also with the dry cleaners, who are blamed for many suit failures. Research studies are needed on such points as the qualities most desirable in materials, for example, the best constructions for hair canvas and pocketing fabrics. The consumer needs to learn what the facts about materials and workmanship mean in terms of the service he can expect from a suit.

Since so much of the ground work is still to be laid, an ideal fact tag cannot be drawn up at the present time. As a start, a tag might give facts about hidden materials that affect suit value, such as those in the coat front. Facts about workmanship, colorfastness, and shrinkage would also be especially helpful. For a complete informative label, facts such as the following would need to be considered:

Outer cloth.—Brand name or name of manufacturer. Kind of cloth and fiber content. Weight of fabric, freedom from flaws, type of wear for which the material is recommended.

Lining.—Kind of material. If rayon, the type. Number of threads to the inch, weight of the fabric, breaking strength, crocking, resistance to rubbing or abrasion.

Coat front.—Kind of inner material—whether high-grade hair canvas or a substitute. If hair canvas, percentage of hair and wool.

Collar interlining.—Whether high-grade linen or a cotton substitute.

Tape.—Whether linen or cotton; whether or not it has been thoroughly shrunk.

Pocketing.—Quality of cotton, number of yarns per inch, weight of fabric, breaking strength, resistance to rubbing or abrasion.

Workmanship.—Grade of suit—the grade number used in the industry to denote that certain operations were performed in making the suit.

Findings.—Whether sewing thread is silk or cotton; kind of buttons.

Colorfastness of outer cloth, lining, and thread.

Shrinkage of all materials in suit.

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