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HOME NEWS

The accord arrived at between Germany and Switzerland, with reference to the liabilities of German life assurance companies in our country, has been declared null and void by the Reparations Commission, on the ground that, while Germany was unable to fulfil her obligations under the Treaty of Versailles, she could not undertake fresh financial commitments towards another foreign State.

The Federal Council has, for the present, given a negative answer to the application made by a London business firm (see S.O., 10th Feb., 1923) for flying the Swiss flag on the high seas. It is stated that this principle has not yet been provided for by legislation; the matter is referred to the Political Department for closer study.

With reference to the Savoy Zones, the French Government has replied to the Swiss note, stating that it cannot recognise the reasons for which the Federal Council refuses to ratify the convention. According to the French contention, the confirmation of this convention should not have been subjected to a referendum, and the unfavourable result of the latter in no way invalidates its application. Needless to say, the Swiss press has been unanimous in expressing surprise at this strange attitude.

As the outcome of official steps, undertaken by the Federal Council, it has been arranged that Swiss buyers should apply to the French authorities for export licences in order to obtain delivery of orders, placed with German manufacturers situated in the occupied Rhine districts.

The States Council of Neuchâtel proposes to close forty classes in various elementary schools. The canton and the 18 parishes affected will thereby economise more than Frs. 180,000. The continually decreasing birthrate in this canton has also been a deciding factor for this measure.

The Liberal party of the canton Ticino is arranging for an initiative which aims at dividing the canton into four judiciary districts—there are eight at present—thus securing a considerable saving in the administration of the law.

A special amortisation tax, to come into force on 1st January, 1924, is to be imposed in St. Gall for the purpose of steadying the State finances and gradually wiping out the accumulated deficits.

Having severed their connection with the party, the three Communist representatives (W. Kopp, K. Wyss and W. Wirth) have resigned their membership of the Zurich Grosse Rat.

The budget for 1923 of Basel-Stadt anticipates a deficit of over nine million francs.

Prof. Albert Einstein has sent from Zurich a letter to the secretariat of the League of Nations, resigning his membership of one of the sub-commissions. In the letter the learned professor states that in his opinion the League of Nations possesses neither the strength nor the good will to accomplish its high task, and that as a convinced pacifist he did not feel inclined to have any further relations with the League.

Owing to a pointsman's error, a goods train ran into a factory siding near Willisau, the locomotive falling over the embankment. The following passenger coach was thrown on the engine, but the twenty passengers were able to escape through the windows; two are grievously injured, whilst the guard, Zulliger, was killed instantly.

An incident on the Rhine bridge in Worms forms the subject of an official enquiry. A Frau A. Stark, from Tanne (Wädenswil) declares that she was stopped by French soldiers, to whom she was forced to surrender the whole of her ready money. On subsequently reporting the matter to the local military authorities, no notice was taken of her complaint.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

More about the Spahlinger Treatment.

During the last few weeks we have tried to keep our readers informed of the increasing interest which is being taken in the United Kingdom of the fight against Tuberculosis, waged by our compatriot, Mr. Henri Spahlinger. We feel sure that many of our lay readers would like to hear more about this treatment of a disease which is reputed to kill 1,000 persons per week in Great Britain alone, and we, therefore, quote the following from a splendid article by Leonard Williams in the March *Empire Review*:—

"Ordinary bacilli, say, those of tetanus or diphtheria, have no subtleties. If you cultivate them outside the body, you can gather their toxins from the medium on which they are cultivated. Their toxins may, in fact, be said to consist of their excreta. With the bacillus of tubercle this is not so. If you cultivate him outside the body, he lives a peaceful, impeccable, pastoral life, and steadily refuses to produce his toxins. Now, in all microbial diseases, it is not the microbes themselves which matter; it is their toxins. If, therefore, the disease tubercle was to be studied in the laboratory, it was essential that these pastoral bacilli should be made to yield up their poisons. Spahlinger had the scientific insight and imagination to devise a plan which proved successful. He argued that, as the cuttlefish did not give up its ink until it was pursued—a defensive measure of which there are several other examples in Nature—it was possible that the tubercle bacilli would decline to give up their toxins until they were attacked. When they get into the human body, they are immediately attacked, and as immediately produce their toxins. The event proved this theory to be correct. Spahlinger induces the bacilli to yield up their toxins by attacking them. This he does by various physical and chemical methods. It takes a long time, but it succeeds.

Having now obtained these coveted toxins, Spahlinger set to work to differentiate between them. This was a very difficult and laborious undertaking. How difficult and laborious, may be gauged by the fact that he ultimately succeeded in isolating over twenty distinct and separate kinds; another example of the insight and imagination which constitutes genius. Spahlinger was not content to think. He followed John Hunter's advice—he tried. And, fortunately for everyone, he found.

In order to prepare his serum, he takes each of these twenty odd toxins separately and injects it by graduated doses into a horse. Each horse receives one kind of toxin only. To prepare a serum, it therefore requires twenty odd horses. When an individual horse receives his dose of toxin, he immediately begins to form an anti-body, or antidote, in order to neutralise it. As the dosing with the toxin proceeds, the horse produces an increasing amount of anti-body, so that at the end of a certain period the horse's blood is full of this anti-body. The horse is full of foresight. He not only manufactures enough antidote to neutralise the poison; he manufactures more than enough. He likes a good balance at his physiological bank, and sees to it that he has it. The twenty odd horses, having now manufactured their respective anti-bodies against the twenty odd different kinds of toxin, they are all bled painlessly, 'secundum artem.' The resulting partial sera are all brought together, and Spahlinger's 'complete serum' (Serum Global) is the result. This is then put up into ampoules, and is issued, with the necessary instructions for use.

Now, if this complete or 'global' serum, full of the antibodies, manufactured by the various horses, is injected into the body of a human being suffering from tuberculosis, the horses' anti-bodies will immediately set to work to neutralise the toxins with which the bacilli are killing the human being. It is only a question of time and reinforcements. The mixed infections are treated on precisely similar lines. The streptococci, pneumococci, and others, are relatively simple organisms, and are less difficult to 'anti-body' when their chief ally, the tubercle bacillus, has been denuded of his sting.

In this connection Spahlinger stumbled upon a fact which is of considerable interest. It is that the type of horse which is the best anti-body manufacturer is a well-bred horse of dark colour, of the Irish hunter type. Greys and chestnuts are less useful. Cart-horses are comparatively useless.

So much, then, for the principles on which the serum is made. This product of hard thinking and brilliant scientific application is suitable to cases which are being overwhelmed by the disease; cases where fever, emaciation, night-sweats and other salient symptoms proclaim that the natural defences have broken down, and the enemy toxins are marching to victory. The horses' anti-bodies gradually neutralise the toxins, and the patient's condition at once improves. With perseverance and attention to the ordinary canons of hygienic life, victory is practically assured. This happens in the vast majority of cases, and has now happened so often that enlightened scepticism is silent."

We make no apologies for returning to the above. It seems to us that the promise of success in such a case—a promise, moreover, which eminent authorities declare to be justified—merits especial attention. Here is a compatriot of ours, not bent on devising means by which to wage war on fellow human beings, but to fight enemies of the human family. To our mind an incomparably greater hero than any of the warriors whom our misguided school teachers taught us to revere! If prayers are of help, we feel confident that Mr. H. Spahlinger will succeed.

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Matterhorn Riddle—July 14th, 1865.

Canon Purcell, of Fowey, Cornwall, has the following letter in the *Daily Express*:—

"Sir,—I was staying at the Monte Rosa Hotel, Zermatt, when the above-named tragedy took place, and met Mr. Edward Whymper, with the two Peter Taugwalders (father and son), as they entered the village the next morning. I wrote this brief note to you in answer to the question proposed in the heading, 'Matterhorn Riddle. Was the rope cut or did it break?'

Mr. Whymper allowed me to see the rope as it was brought into the hotel, and I was most surely convinced that it broke; that there was no indication of it having been cut. Evidently Mr. Whymper was of this opinion. In his book, 'Scrambles Amongst the Alps' (page 394), he writes: 'In regard to this infamous charge, I say that he could not do it at the moment of the slip, and that the end of the rope in my possession shows that he did not do so beforehand.'—H. N. Parcell."

Ruhr Effects felt in Switzerland.

The Zurich correspondent of the *Mining Journal* (March 10th) says:—

"Although the supplies of coal for Switzerland have suffered but little, the absence of German coal, being made up for by increased imports from other countries, the machine manufacturing industry of the country is in a bad way owing to the lack of German half-manufactured iron and steel. About 6,000 tons of these goods are lying ready for transport in the Ruhr district, among them being large quantities of material for the water-power stations now being erected in Switzerland. As a consequence of the prevalent disorganisation in the Ruhr district and the contradictory orders given by France and Germany, all efforts to obtain the goods ordered have hitherto been unsuccessful, to the great discontent of the Swiss machinery industry. The Czecho-Slovak iron trade hopes to profit by this state of affairs, and is doing its best to get orders from Switzerland."

In other quarters it is estimated that up to March 20th Switzerland suffered some 10 million Swiss francs damage, arising out of this wonderful French enterprise of getting Reparations. Some people still wonder why the majority of Swiss business people are not over-keen on France just now. To those who really try to get an impartial view of this matter, we would recommend a study of the letters which appeared in the *Observer* from the pens of MM. Seignobos, of Paris, E. Cammaerts, of Belgium, and C. H. Herford, of Manchester University.

On Old Jibe.

Really, we should have thought that Mr. Arthur Waugh would be the last person to stumble so naively, as he certainly has done, by repeating, in an article in the *Daily Telegraph* (March 13th), where he criticises Father Ronald Knox's book, "Memories of the Future," the old libel that "Switzerland had proved that the surest way to 'preserve peace was to become a nation of hotel-keepers and to live upon travellers of alien 'nationality.'" Mr. Waugh will, perhaps, or rather perforce, allow us to quote the beginning of his article, because nothing could express our feelings towards his feeble and antiquated jest better:—

"Ridicule," said Shaftesbury, 'is the test of truth,' and it is through the distorting glass of satire that we are most quickly made aware of our own absurdities. But satire is no easy weapon; if it is to become the instrument of common-sense, it must be wielded with the dexterity of the rapier. Humour is the essence