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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The Commission appointed by the National Council to study the question of the Federal subsidy for combating the ravages of tuberculosis have met at Leysin under the presidency of National Councillor M. Ming (Obwalden).

Federal Councillor Chuard and Dr. Henri Carrière, chief of the Federal Department for Public Hygiene, also attended the meetings.

After Dr. Morin, president of the Société Climatérique de Leysin, had read his paper before the Commission, the latter paid a visit of inspection to Dr. Rollier's sanatoria.

The Commission unanimously decided to recommend the Federal Council to increase the proposed Federal subsidy from half a million to one million francs.

\* \* \*

The total receipts of the Federal Railways for the month of December, 1921, amounted to 35,168,000 francs, while expenditure reached 27,007,000 francs, thus providing a surplus of 8,161,000 francs, while in the same month of 1920 expenditure was 526,186 francs above the receipts.

From January 1 to December 31, 1921 the gross receipts reached 352,211,596 francs, and the working expenditure for the same period amounted to 332,774,836 francs, leaving a surplus of 19,436,759 francs, which for the year 1920, however, reached a far bigger figure with 49,042,417 francs, a clear indication of the far-reaching consequences of the economic and industrial slump experienced during the past year.

\* \* \*

The trials on the newly electrified sector Bellinzona—Chiasso of the Federal Railways having proved completely satisfactory, electric traction will supersede steam locomotives at the end of this month or early in February.

\* \* \*

From 1912 to 1914 and from 1919 to 1921 the total number of emigrants who have left Switzerland was 35,390. 15,931 left the country in the years just preceding the war, and 19,459 after the cessation of European hostilities. The year 1920 shows the largest exodus with 9,276 persons.

\* \* \*

The community of St. Imier, a centre of the watch industry, has up to the present paid out 862,035 francs in unemployment benefits, towards which sum 622,000 francs have been contributed by the Confederation.

The unemployed of this district still number nearly 1,500, but the Longines factory reports a slight improvement in the receipt of orders, so that several hundred employees can resume work during three days of the week.

\* \* \*

The Swiss association "Pour le bien du Soldat," which has raised nearly five million francs since the year of its inception in 1916, and disbursed 4,703,068 francs in support of necessitous soldiers' families, is discontinuing its activity at the end of February. The remaining funds, together with the documents and files, will be transferred to the headquarters' office of the Federal Military Department at Berne, which will continue the association's benevolent work.

\* \* \*

Through a misunderstanding, which entailed very annoying consequences, premature news of the death of Pope Benedict XV was telegraphed from Rome to Berne nearly 24 hours before his Holiness had departed this life.

The standard on the Federal Palace at Berne was lowered to half-mast on Saturday morning, the 21st inst., and the official telegram of condolence from the Swiss Government reached Rome well in advance of the event.

The President of the Confederation, M. Haab, and the chief of the Federal Political Department, M. Motta, who were on their way to Montreux to represent the Swiss Federal Council at a farewell function arranged in honour of ex-Federal Councillor Comtesse, who after 47 years of faithful public service is retiring to well-earned rest, were also unnecessarily called back to Berne owing to the premature telegraphic information of the Pope's demise.

\* \* \*

Another disastrous calamity has been caused by an avalanche descending in the Upper Engadine, involving the loss of two lives and resulting in serious injury to a third member of a ski-ing party.

Three English officers, Major Leslie Howard Keep, D.S.O., M.C., of West Wickham, Kent, Major Nathan, of London, and Major Napier, had left Celerina on Friday, the 20th inst., for a day's ski-ing with the local guide Ulrich Grass. As the party did not return in the evening of the same day, apprehension was felt as to their safety, and a party of searchers set out to trace them. Early on Saturday morning it became apparent to the search party that the English officers and their guide had crossed the Muraigl valley and ascended the north side of the Piz Muraigl-Languard, and that an avalanche must have swept the party into the glacier's crevasse just beneath. Information was at once sent to Pontresina and immediate further aid summoned, in which guides from Pontresina, members of the Alpine Club and the Bernina Ski Club participated.

After hours of strenuous rescue work the victims were reached in the crevasse, and it was found that Major Keep and the guide were dead, Major Nathan seriously injured, while Major Napier, who was staying at Pontresina with