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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

his wife, escaped practically unharmed and was able to proceed to his hotel on his ski unaided, after having been brought out of the crevasse.

The three British officers were all experienced skiers. Major Keep especially was an enthusiastic and able mountaineer, who, after his distinguished service in the war, spent much of his time in the Swiss mountains during both the summer and winter seasons.

The guide also had a reputation for being cautious and efficient, but treacherous avalanches will demand their toll of those who have the misfortune to come within their deadly reach.

\* \* \*

The Geneva correspondent of *The Times* writes:—

Peter Baumann, the doyen of Swiss Alpine guides, died at Grindelwald, his native village, on December 17.

He was born in 1833, and from 1861 up to 1903 "Old Peter" guided hundreds of tourists, most of whom were British. In 1861 he helped Jacki in his survey work for the Dufour map, and made with him the second ascent of the Eiger. Next year he made the first crossing of the Jungfrauoch and of the Fiescherjoch. In 1869, with Phillips, he was witness of the accident which befell Elliott and tried in vain to find his corpse. In 1873 he succeeded in ascending the Schreckhorn by the Lauteraarsattel, and later he ascended the central peak of La Meige.

Baumann was very proud of having been the guide of famous climbers, such as Leslie Stephen, Moore, Tyndall, and the Pendlebury brothers.

\* \* \*

From February 1st the retail prices in Switzerland for milk, cheese and butter will be reduced as follows:—Milk, 5 centimes per litre; cheese, 80 centimes per kilo; butter, 1 franc per kilo. Milk will be more abundant and cheaper, as the Nestlé Company has cancelled its contracts with some 80 dairies from which they received their milk for condensing.

COMFORTABLE HOME, in English family, offered to one or two gentlemen; moderate terms.—Apply, 50, Aberdeen Road, Highbury, N.5, or 'phone North 91.

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### STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

BONDS.	Jan. 16th	Jan. 23rd
Swiss Confederation 3% 1903 ... ..	67.25%	66.63%
Swiss Confederation 9th Mob. Loan 5% ... ..	99.75%	100.02%
Federal Railways A—K 3½% ... ..	69.85%	70.02%
Canton Basle-Stadt 5½% 1921 ... ..	97.65%	98.63%
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892... ..	62.25%	63.17%
Zurich (Stadt) 4% 1909 ... ..	98.75%	99.12%
SHARES.		
Crédit Suisse ... ..	560 frs.	560 frs.
Union de Banques Suisses... ..	510 frs.	512 frs.
Swiss Bank Corporation ... ..	552 frs.	553 frs.
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz ... ..	1087 frs.	1125 frs.
C. F. Bally S.A. ... ..	720 frs.	705 frs.
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon... ..	425 frs.	405 frs.
Enterprises Sulzer ... ..	450 frs.	462 frs.
S.A. Brown Boveri (new) ... ..	203 frs.	204 frs.
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Co. ... ..	213 frs.	198 frs.
Chocolats Suisses Peter-Cailler-Kohler... ..	135 frs.	138 frs.
Compagnie de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman ... ..	*410 frs.	*341 frs.

\* Ex carte and ex coupon 28.

### NOTES & GLEANINGS.

Some of the dailies, notably *The Times*, publish now regular lists giving the names of the visitors staying at the principal Swiss winter resorts. Britain and America seem to supply by far the largest proportion, and at St. Moritz their number constitutes a record, being well over a thousand. Several championships and cups—both Swiss and international—will be competed for during the coming month, and the conditions for all these events seem to be ideal.

\* \* \*

The *Morning Post* (Jan. 16th), in a long article, draws some comparisons between winter holidays in Switzerland and the Austrian Tyrol. A stay in the latter country presents, on account of the exchange fluctuations, some of the elements of a lottery, but the cost of living has been advancing by leaps and bounds. Hotels are inclined to be run on the cheap, the fare is monotonous, and, the writer says, visitors must not look for the Swiss standard of comfort. Little sport is offered, and the construction of rinks and their upkeep is practically unknown; even natural ice surfaces are never swept free from snow for skaters.

\* \* \*

The re-appearance of gold in Switzerland is being commented upon in the English press with no little envy. "Alas!" the *Evening News* (Jan. 19th) laments, "that the days when sovereigns will again jingle in John Citizen's pocket seem as far off as ever." The *Daily News* (Jan. 17) has the following:—

"A curious phenomenon has arisen in Switzerland since Christmas. The post office and the railway booking offices and other public institutions are quite anxious to put gold into circulation—and the public are very loth to accept it. They have got used to notes, and are afraid that in a bad light they may mistake the gold piece for a nickel piece of 20 centimes. So instead of taking the gold and hoarding it, as the experts foretold, the public fight shy of it.

During the past three weeks the legal value of gold coinage in Switzerland has been higher than the world market value of the metal, and by paying in gold bankers must have made a profit of 1½ per cent.

Switzerland is a member of the Latin monetary union, and, though entitled to mint her own gold, has never done so, for which reason the gold cover of the National Bank consists chiefly of French, Italian, English, and other gold coins. Hence the flood of gold of all kinds, and at the end of December many Swiss firms made their payments in gold. But people do not want it, and, curiously enough, by virtue of a decree of Aug. 3, 1914 the Swiss National Bank refuses to give bank-notes in exchange."