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Let us hope that none of those who are going to accomplish their novitiate this year will forget the warning in this line. Europe will be looking at them. Let them determine to give no opportunity to Europe to say that they are a parcel of cads or barbarians whose money may be acceptable, but whose presence is odious. Indeed, let them compel the people of Switzerland and of Italy to say, "These men and women seem to appreciate and love the beauties of our country even better than we do ourselves."

The last sentence might be taken to heart by a good many other nationals who, as a rule, are more odious by their presence than English tourists.

#### Swiss Public Debt Redemption.

*The Times* (23rd May):—

The Swiss Federal Government has recently approved the proposals made by the Chief of the Finance Department, Federal Councillor Musy—now President of the Swiss Confederation—with the object of preparing for the progressive redemption of the Swiss public debt—a total of nearly 1,500,000,000 frs. (£60,000,000)—as from 1927, when the first instalment for the redemption of the debt will be included in the Federal Budget.

M. Musy has set up a redemption plan which is burdening the taxpayer as little as possible, and which has still to be sanctioned by Parliament. The Finance Department proposes to devote to that debt redemption, in the first place, the 33,000,000 or 36,000,000 frs. (£1,400,000 or £1,440,000) which are to remain on the annual yield of the Extraordinary War Tax which is to be levied during another period of ten years; in the second place, the sum which will be saved every year on the interest of the debt in consequence of the progressive redemption of the latter. This plan seems to be sound, and if it works out well and no unforeseen circumstances occur, these 1,500,000,000 francs may be fully redeemed by the end of 1964.

The redemption of the Public Debt is likely to have important bearings on Swiss politics, finances and economics, as it will contribute to improving the financial market, especially in regard to the capital needed for the development of agriculture, trade and industry; it will also have a good influence on money rates, as it will give back to the Swiss market the funds it has lent the Government during the past years.

#### Another Jubilee.

*Catholic Herald* (28th May):—

Dr. George Schmid, Auxiliary Bishop of Chur, Switzerland, in August will observe the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. Bishop Schmid has maintained the most cordial relations with American bishops and priests and with the convents established in that country as offshoots of the communities in his diocese.

After his ordination in August, 1875, the future Bishop was sent to England. There, as professor, his students included the present Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Bourne. For many years he taught in Maria Hilf College in his native land, an institution from which many priests went to America. He was elevated to the See of Chur in 1908. During the war he laboured tirelessly to alleviate the sufferings of its victims. Despite his 74 years, he is surprisingly active.

Bishop Schmid is deeply interested in Church music, and has himself composed a number of selections. He is known far beyond the confines of his diocese and his native land as an outstanding figure among European bishops.

#### Coal and Electrical Power: Experience on Swiss Railways.

*South Wales Journal of Commerce* (26th May):

The past year was a favourable one for the Swiss Federal Railways, and the monthly Bulletin just issued by the Swiss Bank Corporation refers to the efforts which are everywhere being made to electrify railway lines. The average cost of electricity per locomotive-kilometre worked out at frs. 1.14 in 1924, as compared with 1.28 in 1923, while the price of coal was only 86½ centimes per kilometre in 1924, against 97 centimes in the previous year. At first sight it might appear that electric traction is more expensive than coal, but the Federal Railways point out that the principal line worked by electricity is over the St. Gotthard, where steam traffic was always more expensive than the average, owing to the very steep gradients. Electric locomotives are further pulling heavier and longer trains, and reckoned upon a basis of cost per thousand tons moved, the expense for coal per kilometre in 1924 was 4.20 frs., as compared with 3.87 frs. for electric power. It should be added that electricity permits of greater speed, which is an important factor from the point of view of international transit traffic, and that the expense of maintaining tunnels is less, while the price of current will gradually be reduced as the progressive electrification of the system permits a better utilisation of the power generated by the various stations.

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Alarmist articles anent the fast disappearing fuel appear from time to time in the press. Electrical power obtained from water-power is likely to last for some time. Even then we are probably only at the beginning of opening up resources. The coal age, the electric age will most likely seem as strange to future civilisations as do to us the stone age, etc. Once we learn to tame the tides, enough horse-power to satisfy most of our needs for power and heat will be found. Another age may even produce a real lightning-tamer. It is computed that one flash of lightning would give enough electricity to provide London for some time. There are some 30—50,000 flashes of lightning on each day of the year, taking the whole surface of the earth, so that once this source is tamed, humanity ought to have a fairly easy time. And that will not be all or the last source of energy. There remains atomic energy. Enough power is supposed to be contained in the tip of one's little finger to produce an enormous amount of power. Well, well, the danger is that these discoveries may be made much too soon, as happened with powder and poison gas, i.e., these discoveries ought to come only when our civilisation or another one have advanced far enough to utilise such discoveries properly. Otherwise, strange and ghastly things may well happen one day.

#### To Parents.

Dr. C. W. Saleby writes in the *Daily News* (27th May):—

Many readers request more information about the new discoveries in the prevention of disease by the use of iodine. Let it be explicitly repeated that the patient suffering from goitre must consult a doctor. That is none of my business nor of any honest man who, however highly qualified, does not see the case; for there are many types of enlargement of the thyroid gland, all called goitre, and precise diagnosis must always precede successful treatment.

Our concern is with the capital discovery, the latest great achievement of medical science, that mankind must go back to iodine, and restore that element to its dietary, in order to prevent certain widespread diseases of mind and body. The discovery has been made in the United States and Switzerland. It is now officially applied, on a vast scale in those countries, and also in Ontario and in New Zealand. We have great need to apply it in this country, but official action is still delayed except in the case of two or three progressive and enlightened medical officers of health, such as the late Dr. Sidney Barwise, of Derbyshire, Dr. James Wheatley, of Shropshire, and Dr. F. W. Alexander, of Poplar. But the campaign carried on here and elsewhere has aroused many manufacturers to action, as we shall see.

The theory, and the fact, is that our modern dietary tends to be short of iodine, which is to be regarded as not a drug, but a necessary food, being the raw material required by the thyroid gland in the neck, for the specific manufacture by which it serves body and mind in a host of ways. Iodine occurs in fresh green vegetables in traces. It also occurs in some specimens of wheat, but not in white flour. Dr. F. W. Alexander has had some analyses made, and is making some more for me, which revealed iodine in bran and wheat germ and wholemeal, but white flour is as destitute of it as of vitamins. In any case, iodine is a soluble element, and though the seas of remote ages left much of it on the land when they retreated it tends to be washed away by rain and streams. Even complete wheat cannot supply us with iodine if, as is often the case, the soil on which it is grown is already depleted of this precious element.

When minute traces of iodine are restored to the diet of children, large numbers of existing goitres disappear, and practically no new ones appear, even in parts of Switzerland, for instance, where every school child had goitre. The worst consequence of goitre is the birth, to a considerable proportion of goitrous mothers, of idiotic, deformed and altogether pitiful children, called cretins. There are scores of thousands of cretins in Switzerland now, but it is gloriously reported from cantons where the

iodine-prevention has been in use for long enough that no more cretins are now being born.

In later life, many cases of goitre develop cancer in the enlarged gland. A new and exhaustive study, from the Galton Eugenics Laboratory at University College, suggests that goitre is connected with cancer elsewhere, and that the incidence of cancer in adults may be diminished by the use of iodine.

At Ilkeston, in Derbyshire—the county notorious for "Derbyshire neck"—the public water supply is being iodised (as at Rochester, in the United States). Swiss children now all receive a tiny weekly official supply of iodine, in a special form, "iodostarine" (made by Hoffmann-Laroche, 7, Idol-lane, E.C.3), but they are wholesale and will not supply you or me directly. Iodised salt is very widely used in many countries. In Switzerland the Government wisely arrange that this salt shall be no dearer than ordinary salt. In this country the iodised salts that have been brought to my attention are, for the most part, much dearer than ordinary salt, and I cannot but think that the price might in some instances be reduced. Daily I receive letters from readers who have inquired and cannot be supplied by unenterprising retailers. Pray note, therefore, that among those I have seen, "Iodosal," made by Francis Newbery, Charterhouse-square, E.C., in my judgment, contains enough iodine for our requirements without the intake of an excessive quantity of salt. Chemists and grocers, who have never heard of iodised salt at this date, should emigrate to Spain or the Appalachian Mountains. They really have no place in a progressive country.

So now my readers know where to apply for the necessary dose of "Iodosal."

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