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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The unjustified delay in the ratification of the "Free Zones compromise" concluded with France on October 30th, 1924, is beginning to occupy certain political circles in the latter country. The well-known Paris daily *Journal des Débats*, after referring to the growing irritation caused in Switzerland, thus concludes a significant article:—

Il est clair qu'il faut en finir. Nous avons signé, il y a deux ans et demi, un compromis d'arbitrage et nous ne saurons plus longtemps faire trainer les choses en longueur. La plus élémentaire correction internationale nous y oblige. Que dirions-nous si on agissait à notre égard avec une pareille désinvolture? Le Parlement ne semble pas se rendre compte du tort grave que font à la France des méthodes aussi désordonnées. Il appartient au gouvernement d'intervenir auprès du Sénat pour lui demander de ratifier dans les délais les plus courts la convention du 30 octobre 1924. Le rappel de cette date ne suffit-il pas à montrer la nécessité d'une prompte conclusion? Dans cette affaire, c'est le bon renom de la France qui est en jeu. Il ne faut pas qu'on puisse plus longtemps mettre en doute la bonne foi de nos dirigeants.

During the debate in the Zurich Grosser Rat on the 1927 Budget a lively discussion developed on the causes and responsibilities for the general strike of 1918. The Socialist members vigorously opposed any allocations for military purposes, especially in view of the propaganda recently launched by officers' societies against the claims of Robert Grimm to the Presidency of the National Council.

The gross profits of the Swiss Federal Railways for the year ending December 31st, 1926 amount to about 121 million francs, i.e. over eight million francs less than in the preceding period. As the service for interest, amortisation, renewals, etc., requires an annual sum of 132.7 million francs there is a net deficit of about 11 million francs. The number of passengers carried has considerably increased (by about 40,000) but goods traffic has suffered a further diminution.

The town of Basle shows for the last year a considerable increase in its population; the latter is stated to amount to 147,366.

To the end of last year 51,194 wireless licences had been issued in Switzerland; Zurich headed the list with 27,800.

Mr. Giuseppe Rossi, a former member of the Grand Council of the Ticino, who died recently at Croglio, left the whole of his fortune, amounting to several million francs, to a fund for the erection of a hospital at Croglio.

The former Clerk of the Registry Office in Zurzach, who, though dismissed from office, continued with his son to contract marriages, has been sentenced to four weeks' imprisonment and a fine of Frs. 200. As far as official statements go only one such marriage has taken place.

Dr. Joseph August Kurer died, at the age of 54, on his return journey from San Remo, where he had hoped to recuperate his failing health. A lawyer by profession—he practised for some considerable time in St. Gall—and at the time of his death Central Secretary of the Swiss Hotel Association, he was in 1927 elected National Councillor; he also belonged to the Grosser Rat in Solothurn, where he represented the interests of the Catholic People's Party.

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## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### The Spahlinger Treatment.

No satisfactory explanation has so far come forward from Mr. Spahlinger to move the doubts—and even aspersions—which have been expressed by distinguished medical men and others in this country as to the genuineness and efficacy of the treatment. One by one the few cases, previously advanced as establishing the success of his treatment, are collapsing under the ordeal of critical examination. A fortnight ago I printed the history of the cure of Mr. Havelock Wilson's son, together with a grateful acknowledgment by his father; the *Daily Express* (Jan. 14th) has the following critical notice which seems to put the value of this particular evidence in jeopardy:—

Mr. Havelock Wilson expresses statements the nature of which surely call for comment.

He says of his son, doubtless referring to the month of June, 1925: "When the breakdown occurred I immediately had him medically examined by at least three doctors, and they expressed the opinion that there was danger of tuberculosis developing."

He goes on to tell us that, having made enquiries as to the Spahlinger treatment in Geneva and elsewhere, he received reports of so encouraging a nature that in October, 1925 he sent his son to Geneva with the view to having him treated.

And at this point comes an astonishing statement, or possibly an astonishing omission.

Mr. Havelock Wilson's son was examined in Geneva by Dr. Stephani and M. Spahlinger, the former pronouncing the case to be one of tuberculosis "well advanced."

Unless Mr. Havelock Wilson's son was acutely ill between June and October, 1925 (any statement to this effect is omitted) it seems a veritable feat even for the tubercle bacillus to have wrought such havoc as to have evinced such divergence of medical diagnosis between the months of June and October.

It would also be interesting to know why Mr. Havelock Wilson was apparently so satisfied with the examination of one Swiss doctor, when he already had the opinions of at least three English ones and, no doubt, the X-ray report of an independent radiologist (details of which are likewise omitted).

The reference to the increase of weight is of little importance unless accompanied by a statement as to the mode of his son's life before and during the treatment.

Further, one cannot regard very seriously the evidence of the doctor who pronounced Mr. Havelock Wilson, junior as an "A.1." life, when the two "eminent doctors" (who "could not be described as Spahlinger men") were able three months ago to find signs of "slight lung trouble."

In view of the apparent discrepancy in these facts, I should like to remind Mr. Havelock Wilson that, at the moment, the course of his son's illness does not afford any proof either of the efficacy of the Swiss examination, or of the efficacy of the treatment, and also that the standard of cure in tuberculosis is, unfortunately, its permanency.

If Mr. Havelock Wilson has written the letter with a view to encouraging still more patients to go to Geneva, one hopes that they will, at least, await the scientifically controlled test of the Spahlinger treatment which the medical profession of Great Britain has been demanding in vain for some years.

In the meantime some new methods of raising money have come to light. In Glasgow an "Anti-Tuberculosis Consumption Fund" has been started by a local cinema musician at the suggestion of "a friend who has been a close associate of Mr. Spahlinger." This roundabout finance seems strange considering the substantial offers of monetary assistance still open if certain preliminary conditions are fulfilled. Singular also is the following contribution from Dr. Graham Little, M.P., published in the *Daily Express* (Jan. 13th):—

A letter which lies before me, written within the last three months, from Chemin de Champel, Geneva, and signed by E. S. Harston, in response to an application by an English patient for treatment by M. Spahlinger, in which the writer says he is replying on behalf of M. Spahlinger—presumably, therefore, with his full authority and sanction—contains the following statement:—

"As you are no doubt aware, until recently all his patients were treated free, with the result that M. Spahlinger has expended a large fortune on his work. Owing to grave

## ANNIVERSARIES OF SWISS EVENTS.

January 31st, 1798.—The Great Council assembled at Aarau agrees to the abolition of the aristocracy, recognising the rights of man and the sovereignty of the people. Trees of Liberty are planted, revolutionary France playing a very inglorious part against the old Confederation. Great promises are made, and revolutionary movements stimulated. The French bayonet reigns supreme in Switzerland, which had, at that time, no military commander of importance. With the exception of Bern, military arsenals were empty, and the accoutrements and arms out-of-date.

February 1st, 1871.—The army of General Bourbaki (83,000 men) completely cut off by the Germans in the Franche-Comté, crosses the Swiss frontier at Verrières, laying down its arms; the French soldiers were speedily distributed throughout the various cantons and hospitably entertained until peace was signed.

February 2nd, 1895.—Hans Herzog, Confederate General, died in Aarau.

February 3rd, 1000.—Founding of the Cathedral in Lausanne.

February 4th, 1778.—August de Candolle, celebrated Botanist, died at Geneva.

Geneva, during the last 150 years, has produced quite a number of great Botanists, amongst whom may be classed several Clergy. Geneva has also two of the finest Botanical Collections in the world, i.e. the collection of De Candolle and the Collection Boissier. The present representative of this science is Prof. Chodat, and one of his most meritorious assistants the late conservator of the Collection Boissier, M. Beauverd, Hon. Dr. of the University. In one of his works on Botany he discusses the Edelweiss, of which there are thirty-two varieties.

February 5th, 1818.—General Aloys von Reding died.

Well known are the battles of Wollerau, Rothenthurm and Morgarten.

financial difficulties, his English friends and patients have suggested that all new patients should make a donation of £500 to the Institute in order to help carry on the work, and this has been done by the majority of patients now undergoing treatment.

If you feel that you can assist in this way, will you let me know, and I will see if it is possible to arrange for treatment."

On the face of it there is nothing remarkable that Mr. Spahlinger should insist on a payment of £500 for his protracted consumption cure when other sufferers in this country have to forfeit a hundred guineas for an everyday abdominal operation which demands the surgeon's personal attention for a couple of hours at the most. I know of the existence of several similar letters received in this country within the last few weeks. The writer, Mr. E. S. Harston, is a New Zealand major, whose avowed cure is, by coincidence, related by him in the same issue of the *Daily Express* as follows:—

I have read with great surprise the statements in your columns from Dr. Thomas Nelson. I ask you to be good enough to publish this letter, which gives the experience of a patient who has not only been successfully treated himself, but who has seen many other cases who have had the good fortune to receive similar benefits.

In my own case I was for two years in sanatorium, and there had tuberculin as well as other treatments. I spent practically the whole time in bed with constant cough, frequently stained sputum and numerous bacilli. I was discharged weak and hopeless, with the assurance that everything possible had been done for me, and spent another year in bed in my own home, where I had two severe haemorrhages.

I then had a course of Spahlinger serum, with results that were so definitely good that I went to Geneva.

The cessation of treatment owing to the voyage and the difficulties of the journey caused a relapse. My condition on arrival was far from good.

For two and a half years no bacilli have been found in my sputum. I lead a leisureed, normal life, my cough has gone, a chronic fistula has healed, and so also, my medical advisers assure me, have my lungs.

Which is presumably written by request to pour oil on the troubled waters, but all the same there

seems to be something totally wrong in the publicity department of the Spahlinger Institute; a statement appeared in the Press to the effect that Mr. Bron, President of the Geneva Council, had supervised experiments to provide immunity for cattle against tuberculosis. A disclaimer has now been inserted in the *Journal de Genève* of January 18th, and I reproduce the version given in the *Daily Express* (Jan. 19th):—

"We are authorised to declare that our State Council has never occupied itself with this matter."

It has never controlled these experiments, and, further, the Department of Hygiene, which alone is competent to control such matters, totally ignores these experiments.

We have already stated, in connection with M. Spahlinger's remedies against human tuberculosis, on March 5th, 1921, that the public must be prudent, because M. Spahlinger's experiments have never been submitted to competent medical societies to be controlled and tested."

In terminating this week's reflections I wish to discourage a premature judgment and point out that, as a general rule, the medical profession—the same as any association combining and protecting particular trade interests—has always been jealous and suspicious of the claims of an outsider, especially if he happens to be destitute of the conventional qualifications. I need only remind my readers of the recent inglorious events in this country in reference to manipulative surgery.

#### Motor Cars in Switzerland.

The following report from the *Times* (Jan. 14th) illustrates the large increase in the number of foreign motor tourists:—

During the last ten years the Swiss Federal and Cantonal authorities have spent several millions of francs on the reconstruction, development and maintenance of the main roads, with the result that Swiss roads are now among the best on the Continent. This fact, as well as the attractive scenery of the country, accounts for the great increase in the number of foreign motorists who visit Switzerland or pass through the country on their way to Austria and Italy. During the first nine months of 1926 foreign motor cars entering the country included 17,539 with tryptiques, 4,339 with free permits, and 22,253 with temporary admission cards, a total of 44,131 vehicles, or over 8,000 more cars than in 1925.

The number of roads closed to motor traffic is gradually decreasing and motoring is being encouraged even in the most conservative Cantons. The Canton Grisons—which was for many years completely closed to motor-cars—has now opened certain main roads and all the Alpine passes leading from Switzerland to Austria, Italy and France can now be used by motor-cars. The drawback is that most of the high passes are snowed up from the middle of October to the beginning of June and cannot during that period be crossed by motors; as regards the Gothard and Simplon, the Swiss Federal Railways have now arranged for the cheap transport of cars from one side to the other.

An interesting scheme, in that respect, has just been submitted to the Conseil d'Arrondissement of Gex, a small French town at the foot of the Jura, near Geneva. The shortest route from Paris to Geneva is over the Faucille Pass (4,341ft.), which is snowed up from the beginning of December until April, and during that period motorists are compelled to make a long circuit over bad roads. A French engineer now proposes to bore a road tunnel, 1½ miles long, under the Faucille to provide a permanent route for car traffic between Paris and Geneva. But what can be done at La Faucille is probably impossible elsewhere. In the Alps, for instance, it would be necessary to bore tunnels over 12 miles in length. This is the most serious difficulty which must be overcome in the establishment of the special motor-road from Hamburg to Milan, over the St. Gothard Pass. This question will be discussed next February at Basel. It may be considered desirable in the future to bore road tunnels under the Alps alongside the existing railway tunnels, but the cost of such work would be very heavy.

#### Buss- und Betttag.

There are many expressions which are bewildering when one translates them into a foreign language: "Eidgen. Dank, Buss- und Betttag" is one of them. I should simply call it the "federal day of penitence and prayer" but a correspondent in the *Observer* (Jan. 16th) is certainly entitled to a booby prize; this is what he says:—

A Swiss calendar reaches me annually with an interesting double row of saints, Prot and Kath., opposite the dates. On a feast or fast day the saints disappear; for instance, the third Wednesday in November is always labelled Buss and Betttag. Smith Minor may possibly be able to correct my translation, but I make this out to be Penitence and Bed-day, presumably a day on which you stop in bed and repent, or alternatively go to business as usual and go to bed

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and repent after dinner. Am I right, Sir? If not, will you kindly get Smith Minor to tell me all about it?

I should like to see the calendar with its double row of Catholic and Protestant saints opposite the date proclaiming boldly the *3rd Wednesday in November* to be the national thanksgiving day which for generations has always been celebrated on the third Sunday in September.

#### Un Peu de Théâtre.

Vous avez peut-être entendu parler de Monsieur Pitoeff, qui, autrefois, avait fixé son activité à Genève, et qui pressé par les hommes et les événements, émigra ensuite à Paris, s'installa au Théâtre des Arts, et devint immédiatement une notoriété théâtrale de la capitale. Les années passèrent, Pitoeff réussit splendidement, mais il n'en oublia pas pour cela ses amis de la première heure, ses amis suisses. Et chaque année il revient parmi nous avec ses nouveautés ou les pièces qui lui sont personnellement chères. Et c'est là un fait qui est tout à l'honneur de notre pays. Pitoeff sait qu'il existe en Suisse bien plus qu'en France des gens qui aiment le théâtre plus pour ce qu'il suggère que pour ce qu'il montre plus pour ce qu'il laisse de pensées, que pour l'éteinacement des mots. Il connaît l'élite intellectuelle qui autrefois se groupa autour de lui, et pour ces auditeurs, les vrais, il apporte toujours une pièce profonde et lourde de pensées, ouvrant un champ illimité à l'esprit vagabond, qui se perd alors dans les sinuosités les plus secrètes du "mind" humain. Tout au plus ne ferons nous qu'un reproche à Pitoeff. Il a oublié que cette élite, dont je parle, ne se recrute pas précisément parmi les riches de ce monde, et que ses fervents de la première heure étaient, soit des étudiants, soit des étudiés, à la condition plutôt modeste et dont le portemonnaie ne regorge pas "d'espèces sonnantes"! L'on peut dire franchement que le prix des places en Suisse est exorbitant, et qu'en varié entre 18 et 5.50 francs il ne permet plus à tout le monde d'aller applaudir le grand acteur!

Donc Genève, Lausanne, Neuchâtel, Berne, Zurich et Bâle sont en train de fêter l'ami d'antan, Pitoeff leur apporte en retour un programme électique à souhait. C'est d'abord une reprise de sa sublime création d'Hamlet. Les critiques français, allemands et suisses, sont maintenant unanimes à reconnaître en Pitoeff le plus vivant, le plus remarquable Hamlet de notre époque. Ici les défauts même de ce Russe nostalgique et génial lui servent de qualités il n'incarne plus Hamlet, il est Hamlet et c'est tout dire. De plus, avec les années, l'interprétation s'est améliorée; Pitoeff et ses acteurs ont gagné une sûreté incomparable, un ensemble qui atteint reconnaissable le franchement, la perfection, et il faut avoir vu une de nos salles de spectacle, trépidante de satisfaction, frénétique d'admiration, rappelant sans fin son grand favori, après 6 heures de recueillement, pour comprendre à quel point le public était transporté et émerveillé. Nous cûmes aussi Mademoiselle Bourrat d'Anet; nous cûmes aussi Cocteau sous tous les aspects, mais nous cûmes surtout Jules Romains avec son "Jean le Maupraine."

Romains vous est connu, c'est l'immortel auteur de "Knock" qui fut traduit en anglais et joué à Londres. Mais Romains n'a pas que cette facette satirique à son talent. Dans son Jean le Maupraine il tente de porter à la scène, la révolte de l'homme contre tout ce que la Société Moderne, l'Etat contemporain comporte d'arbitraire, d'injuste et de stupide. En 9 tableaux, neuf esquisses saisissantes et dépoëillées, Romains campe un homme en révolte. Maupraine lutte pour être lui-même, lutte pour être vrai, lutte pour être libre. Mais c'est en vain, il doit se soumettre et accepter l'hypocrisie et le conventionnel comme partie de lui-même; cependant que l'auteur dans un dernier tableau émouvant met son protagoniste en présence d'un homme d'Eglise. Et, sublime habilité—suprême vérité, devrais-je dire—les conceptions de la vie de ces deux hommes, par ailleurs si opposés, concordent. Tout deux reconnaissent la faillite complète de la conception actuelle de la Société, tout deux—parce qu'ils sont des penseurs, parce qu'ils tentent de comprendre l'éénigme de la vie—élèvent soudain le sujet sur le plan le plus haut: c'est tout le problème de la Connaissance qui se posent, c'est toute l'orientation de la Pensée depuis les temps les plus reculés, qui les inquiète, tout deux

perçoivent sans cependant oser le dire de vive voix, que les humains et leurs successives civilisations ont fait fausse route et que le problème de la "consciousness" ne sera pas résolu dans cette direction. Alors le simple laïque lance cet appel dernier; la Vérité, la Liberté sont elles en Dieu? A quoi l'évêque, sincère et courageux répond: Peut-être, mais pas en celui que je connais!

Ainsi Jules Romains livrant enfin le fond de sa pensée, exprime le doute total, sur nos conventions, sur nos philosophies sur nos religions; il fait table rase de toutes ces créations de notre cerveau humain et mortel, mais laisse une dernière espérance pour que la Lumière—qui sera Révélation et Vérité—vienne d'en Haut.

J'apprends que la pièce n'eut pas de succès auprès du public parisien, cela ne m'étonne pas; tout ce que je puis vous assurer, c'est qu'elle est en train de remuer profondément chez nous tous ceux qui pensent, qui cherchent et qui espèrent.

LA SPECTATEUR.

#### QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

	BONDS.	Jan. 18	Jan. 25
Confederation 3½ 1903	81.50	81.75	
5½ 1917, VIII Mob. Ln.	101.75	101.80	
Federal Railways 3½ A-K	84.70	84.40	
1924 IV Elect. Ln.	102.25	101.50	
SHARES.	Nom.	Jan. 18	Jan. 25
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Credit Suisse	500	832	846
Union de Banques Suisses	500	690	700
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2597	2585
Fabrique Chimique ci-devant Sandoz	1000	4070	4055
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	1000	2695	2750
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