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HOME NEWS

The total of the personnel employed by the Confederation at the end of 1926 shows a diminution of 744 as compared with the figure to the end of 1925. The civil servants number 30,594, whilst the Swiss Federal Railways employ 34,662.

In the elections during the week-end for members of the Grand (Cantonal) Council of the Ticino the Liberals considerably increased their representation and are now again the strongest party in the canton; their gains are at the expense of the Agrarians. The constitution of the new Council (65) will probably be as follows: Liberals 29 (against 24 in the 1923 elections), Conservatives 24 (24), Socialists 8 (8) and Agrarians 5 (9).

The Aargau Grosser Rat has adopted a resolution which will place religious instruction in the cantonal schools under the immediate care of the respective Church authorities, two hours per week being allotted and no expense being incurred by the State.

The Zurich Stadtrat has voted Frs. 40,000 as a contribution towards the expenses of the international aviation meeting which is to take place at Dübendorf from August 13th to 21st, under the auspices of the Swiss Aero Club. The annual subsidy in favour of the educational department of the local section of the Schweiz. Kaufm. Verein has been increased from Frs. 90,000 to Frs. 120,000.

At a numerously attended meeting of farmers in Bülle to discuss the causes of the present agricultural crisis, a petition was sent to the Federal Council demanding the abolition of export duties on cheese and milk, reduction of railway freights on cheese, restrictions in the import of cattle and publication of the accounts of the Swiss cheese-union, which enjoys a monopoly as far as the export trade is concerned.

The creation of a chair for journalism at some of the Swiss universities was one of the subjects discussed at the meeting in Engelberg of the Swiss Press Association.

It is stated that the number of Italians residing in Switzerland exceeds 150,000. (The number for Great Britain is computed at 30,000).

Damage to the amount of about Frs. 150,000 has been caused by a fire which broke out last Monday in the parquet floor factory of Etienne Gschwind S.A. in Oberwil (Basel-Land).

A fire partly destroyed the old Infirmary at Rüti (Zurich); the building was evacuated in good time.

The Légion d'Honneur ribbon has been received by the editor of the *Feuille d'avis de Vevey* in recognition of his services in the cause of French wounded soldiers interned in Switzerland during the war.

A well-known firm of Basle forwarding agents (Jacky Mäder & Co.) has been mulcted in heavy fines by the Italian Government through having unwittingly shipped at Geneva a large consignment of morphia, cocaine and other drugs declared by their German clients as aluminium-ware.

An amount of Frs. 100,000 has been bequeathed to the Federal Polytechnic for research work in the textile branch by the late Winterthur engineer, Benno Rieter, who died in July, 1925.

Two military aviators lost their lives through their machine crashing on the lake of St. Moritz, which was frozen. Their names are Lieut. Emil Albrecht, aged 30, of Winterthur, engineer of the Haldegg brewery of that town, and Lieut. Eduard Buchli, aged 32, of Ennetbaden, employed in the works of Messrs. Brown-Boveri.

BACK NUMBERS OF THE "S.O."

Subscribers ordering back numbers are requested to remit the usual 3d. per copy, provided that those required do not date back more than twelve months; for earlier issues, some of which are out of print, an extra charge is made.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

On Samuse in the Alps is the title of a pen picture describing the daily life in one of the fashionable mountain resorts, written by Magdalen King-Hall and published in the *Evening Standard* (Feb. 8th):

I am one of those deplorable people who are incapable of being hilarious to order.

When the Entertainment Committee in this gay Winter Sports Resort thoughtfully provides me with a paper cap, coloured streamers, bags of confetti and pellets, with permission to throw the same at my hotel-mates, I am presently overcome with a feeling of deep gloom.

The champagne also provided by the management (at a price!) only succeeds in engendering in me a sensation of vague resignation.

The truth is that, unlike most Britons, I detest being organised. To me, a tête-à-tête supper is so much more entertaining than an hotel banquet!

At the same time I cannot help appreciating the efforts of the management here to "make things go."

It is a mistake to imagine that everyone comes to Switzerland for the express purpose of gambolling in the snow. Some of us are enthusiasts, it is true, and ski and luge with such energy that we are all yawns by the evening;

Others of us admit frankly that we are "out here for the dancing." We rise at 10.30, potter about the rink in jazz sweaters, drink chocolate, gossip, flirt, write letters, and consequently are as fresh as daisies when the dance band strikes up. The Entertainment Committee steps in here.

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This body is as mysterious as the Council of Ten. No one knows who its members are, but the evidences of their brisk presence are everywhere. Luge and bob races, concerts, dances, bridge tournaments, all come under their jurisdiction.

I suspect them of longing to organise our love affairs!

"Mr. Brown, will you kindly flirt with Miss Thomas this evening?"

"Captain Daring, please note the misletoe, and the lady sitting under it."

"Miss Symkins, would you mind leaving your young friend and being more generally flirtatious?"

Their aim seems to be to throw everyone literally and metaphorically into one another's arms! Many and ingenious are the devices they employ to further their ends. At one dance they will hand round gigantic paper flowers. A piquant contrast is afforded by the sight of a young man charlestoning with a large white lily held saint-like in his hand.

Rattles are distributed among the guests. Our brighter youths preserve them carefully till the dance is over, then form themselves into a "cad's party" (whatever that may be!) and race whooping down the passages, shattering the slumbers of the elderly and just.

In reality there is a frantic scramble. Affectionate couples cling together. Three young men clutch at the beauty of the hotel.

ANNIVERSARIES OF SWISS EVENTS.

February 21st, 1476.—Grandson taken by Charles the Bold; terrible slaughter of the Confederates by Burgundian soldiery.

February 24th, 1503.—The forest cantons demand from France the surrender of Bellinzona in accordance with the terms of an agreement. Just as little (said the men of Uri) as we would abandon our own fatherland, our wives and our children, so little also, and even far less willingly, would we abandon Bellinzona." Many of the other cantons disagreed, but dare not side with France.

February 25th, 1621.—Pompeius Planta murdered at his castle Kietberg in the Domleschg by Jürg Jenatsch and his associates. Jürg Jenatsch, a former pastor at a village in the Valtelline, had not long ago escaped being murdered by the Catholics. He held Planta responsible for all the trouble. The plot was prepared at Grisch, in the Prättigau, and Planta was slain on the morning of the 25th. The son of Planta, some years later, avenged the murder of his father on Jenatsch.

February 26th, 1826.—The poet Viktor von Scheffel born. Although no son of Helvetia, he, like Friedrich von Schiller, endeared himself to the Swiss people by his complete absorption of the Swiss spirit. His two principal works, "Ekkehard" and the "Trompeter von Säckingen" are too little read nowadays. Last year university students held a memorial service at the Wildkirchli, in the Hohen Kasten region, mentioned several times in "Ekkehard."

One evening the Committee, in a flight of imagination, organised a Book Dance.

When all else fails the Entertainment Committee collect shoes from the feminine dancers and pile them in a basket. The men fall on them. Anxious youths race round the room, slippers in hand, hoping for the best, fearing the worst! Alas for the young man who carefully selects an elegant shoe only to be confronted with a stout and red-faced Cinderella!

One evening was undoubtedly a *tour de force* on the part of the Council of Ten. We blossomed out into Spaniards, negroes, cavaliers, columbines, cooks and houris.

All were uproariously gay, save for a party of Germans who, with gloomy patriotism, refused to partake of roast beef and ordered pheasant instead!

The Entertainment Committee watched its merry flock with benign approval.

A riotous party held carnival on the ice till six in the morning—

And oh! how bad-tempered everyone was next morning!

Another evening we were regaled with a cinema show. It was an earnest Swiss mount-

On another occasion a flag is held across the room. The men are herded on one side, the girls on the other. According to schedule we gently select our partners by their finger tips. Taineering film designed to instruct the mind.

Unfortunately we received it with a running fire of facetious remarks, to the bewilderment of a party of French people present.

On the dull days of snow, the feminine inhabitants of the hotel devote themselves frankly to an orgy of gossip. The young men, ill-humoured, as young men are apt to become when they are getting too little exercise and too much attention, retire to the billiard-room and smoke and create a din.

We possess an amateur jazz band. It is the smart thing among the *jeunesse dorée* to attend its practices after tea.

Brooding over us are the mountains, with their sinistre green glaciers, their bleak heights and precipices, the mystery of their regions of everlasting snow.

We are like tiny frivolous butterflies suspended in a glass cage at the very gates of Heaven.

A thunderous roar! An avalanche foams into a fearful white torrent into the valley below.

The band breaks into "Could I? I certainly could," and we hurry out of the frosty silver air into the cosy stuffiness of the hotel.

The Physiology of Alpine Climates.

The effects, good and bad, of a prolonged stay in high altitudes are dealt with in the following review of papers published by the Director of the

Swiss Research Institute at Davos. The review is taken from the *British Medical Journal* (Feb. 5th):—

A few years ago Professor A. Loewy was appointed director of the new Swiss Research Institute at Davos for the study of physiology and of tuberculosis at high altitudes. He has just published a review of the recent researches concerning the physiology of the climates at such altitudes. He records therein the results of the researches of his colleagues and himself during the short period they have been at Davos, in addition to results of researches from other parts of the world, such as are given in the reports of the Everest expeditions and of the expedition to Cerro de Pasco in the Andes undertaken by Professor J. Barcroft and his colleagues; reference is made also to the work of Professor J. S. Haldane and his co-workers. The review deals not only with the effects of increased radiation from the sun at high altitudes, to electrical changes in the air, and to changes in atmospheric cooling power, attention being directed to the work of Professor Dorno at Davos and Dr. Leonard Hill in England. The physiological and pathological changes observed, centre round those produced in the heart, the blood, the respiratory system, the liver, and in the skin. It is difficult to draw definite conclusions from many of the researches, because different subjects present quite different reactions. At present no published explanation of the processes underlying the effects of high altitude, nor of those concerned in acclimatization, can be accepted without considerable reserve. The important researches of Dr. Argyll Campbell, which are now appearing in the *Journal of Physiology*, are clearing up many controversial points. These researches show that oxygen want is the one essential cause of the symptoms of altitude sickness, and that acclimatization depends on the faculty of the body to keep up the supply of oxygen to the tissues, mainly by alterations in respiration and in the blood. He finds no evidence in favour of Dr. Haldane's theory of oxygen being secreted inwards by the pulmonary alveoli. Dr. Loewy is in favour of the theory that certain protein bodies are the substances responsible for the changes observed, and he points out that injections of protein substances produce chemical, physiological and pathological effects resembling closely those observed at high altitudes. The review contains much of interest and importance to clinicians and pathologists as well as to physiologists and hygienists, who are more directly concerned.

The Swiss Motor Industry.

The following from the Engineering Supplement of the *Times* (Feb. 5th) illustrates the disastrous turn experienced by what, at the start, seemed about to develop into a prosperous national industry:

An International Automobile and Cycle Exhibition will be held at Geneva from March 4th to 17th, 1927. The organising committee has received a far greater number of entries than last year, and it is expected that this exhibition will be an even greater success than in 1926.

Switzerland is still a good market for motor-cars and motor-cycles, and this fact should not be overlooked by British makers. On November 30th, 1926, there were 72,214 motor-vehicles in Switzerland, as against 59,232 in 1925 and 34,500 in 1923. The 72,214 motor-vehicles registered in 1926 included 38,049 ordinary motor-cars, 7,870 motor-lorries, and 26,239 motor-cycles; there was last year one motor-vehicle for 53 inhabitants. Experts are of opinion that Switzerland can easily absorb another 25,000 motor-vehicles apart from those imported for replacing old machines.

Switzerland took a keen interest in the motor trade as soon as it began to develop, and at one time possessed about a dozen factories turn-out motor-cars, motor-lorries and motor-cycles. In 1913 the Swiss makers exported cars to a value of £560,000, while imports only totalled £380,000. But Swiss industrialists found it increasingly difficult to compete with other countries. In 1925, out of 27,700 cars only 7 per cent. were Swiss, while about 50 per cent. of the 9,200 motor-lorries were Swiss manufactured; during the same year, Swiss motor-car exports reached £240,000 in value—a decrease of 60 per cent. on pre-war figures—and imports £2,760,000. In 1926 exports decreased further, their value being £174,905, while imports rose in value to £3,212,860. While British motor-cycles are great favourites with the Swiss, British motor-cars are not very well known, except the Rolls-Royce, Sunbeam, Wolseley and Morris-Oxford, and more could be sold if British manufacturers made a greater effort to advertise their products.

Swiss Mercenaries.

The death of Mrs. Amalia von Wyttensbach prompts the *Birmingham Mail* (Feb. 3rd) to the following recital on Swiss mercenaries. I believe a member of this family was, until a few years ago, a well-known business man in London; failing health forced him to return to Switzerland:—

The death in Berne, in her 90th year, of

Mme. Amelie von Wyttensbach, widow of the last Swiss General in foreign service, snaps an interesting link in European history. Her husband, who died in 1896 at the age of 86, served first in the French and then in the Royal Neapolitan Army. When in 1860 Garibaldi undertook his campaign he commanded a Neapolitan Brigade. The Swiss regiments had then already been disbanded.

The Swiss Mercenaries played a notable rôle in many campaigns. The "Schweizer" were first mentioned in 1373, when the Venetians enlisted 3,000 in a campaign against Milan. Since then they fought on every battlefield of Europe, mainly in French service. From 1447 to 1787 about 613,000 Swiss soldiers served France and contributed to commissioned ranks one marshal, 42 generals, 61 field-marshals and 80 brigadiers.

There is one Swiss family still existing, members of which contributed officers to the armies of France, Austria, Spain, Sardinia, Naples, Holland, Saxony, Bavaria, Genoa and Venice. Near Freiburg there is still living Major Alfred de Reynold, who served in the Neapolitan Army, and though 95, still rides his horse.

An Obituary.

Nature (Feb. 5th) recalls the bicentenary of a Swiss scientist who earned laurels of fame in the country of his adoption:—

On Feb. 8th occurs the bicentenary of the birth of Jean André De Luc, F.R.S., the Swiss physicist and geologist who for more than forty years was reader to Queen Charlotte, consort of George III. Born in Geneva in 1727, he was well educated and took up a business career. Having a taste for study, however, he worked at meteorology and geology and made excursions among the Alps. In 1773 he came to England and it was apparently the publication of his "Recherches sur l'Atmosphère," published the previous year, which gained him admittance to scientific circles. He afterwards made tours on the Continent, but England was his permanent home and he died at Windsor in 1817. In physics De Luc is credited, among other things, with noting that when a mixture of ice and water is melted the temperature remains constant until all the ice is melted. It was for his writings on geology he was principally known, and though these, to-day, are only consulted by the curious who, as Geikie said, have "leisure and inclination to dig among the cemeteries of geological literature," De Luc's devotion to science was lifelong and sincere. His "Lettres Physiques" of 1778 contains one of the earliest examples of the use of the word 'geology' in its modern sense. He is frequently mentioned in the memoirs of the time, such as Madame D'Arblay's; it is to him Watt speaks his mind about the water controversy, while Queen Charlotte refers to him as the "good old De Luc."

A Big Removal.

One does not often hear of a Swiss manufacturer emigrating lock, stock and barrel to another Continent, but this is what the *British Australian and New Zealander* (Feb. 3rd) reports:—

Mr. C. Handschin, a Swiss manufacturer of women's underclothes, recently arrived in Melbourne, with 27 Swiss operators, to establish a branch of his business. The firm has bought a factory in Bendigo, and the business will be known as the Hanno (Australia) Knitting Mills. In the past the firm has done large business with Australia in women's underwear, but the tariff imposed last September has made the sale of Swiss goods difficult.

FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

The preliminary annual results of the principal Swiss commercial banks are now available and make a good showing. The last of these banks to declare its profits, but the first in point of interest for most readers in this country, is the Swiss Bank Corporation, which has just announced a net profit, including carry-forward from 1925, amounting to Frs. 13,292,072, as compared with a corresponding figure of Frs. 12,422,212 for last year. The dividend will be maintained at 8% and an allocation of Frs. 500,000 will be made to the Pension Fund, while two millions will be placed to the Reserve Fund. The amount left to be carried forward to the new year is Frs. 701,047.

A similar increase of profits was announced by the Credit Suisse, which shows a net profit of Frs. 10,319,421, as compared with Frs. 9,448,397 last year. The regular dividend of 8% which has become one of the steadiest features in the Swiss financial calendar, will again be paid on the capital of Frs. 100,000,000. Frs. 1,000,000 goes to Reserve Fund and Frs. 1,113,682 is carried forward.

The Union de Banques Suisses achieved a net profit of Frs. 6,890,717, against Frs. 6,145,016, and will repeat the dividend of 7 per cent. on the share capital of Frs. 70,000,000. Frs. 1,000,000 will be allotted to reserves and the carry-forward will amount to Frs. 890,717, as against Frs. 663,016 last year.

The Banque Coopérative increases its net profit from Frs. 435,585 in 1925 to Frs. 502,501, and is again paying a dividend of 5½% on its shares. The outstanding amount of Coopérators' capital invested at the end of 1926 was Frs. 7,123,000.

Leu & Co., with a net profit of Frs. 3,275,929, against Frs. 2,749,481 a year previously, are now for the first time since their reorganisation in a position to pay a dividend on their ordinary shares and are distributing 5% after meeting the full 8% on their preference shares.

QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

	BONDS.	Feb. 8	Feb. 15
	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.
Confederation 3% 1903	83.00	83.00	83.00
5% 1917, VIII. Mob. Ln.	101.75	101.50	101.50
Federal Railways 3½% A—K	83.82	83.80	83.80
" 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	101.50	101.50	101.50
SHARES.	Nom.	Feb. 8	Feb. 15
	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	822	814
Crédit Suisse	500	850	852
Union de Banques Suisses	500	712	712
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2622	2647
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	4330	4362
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	1000	2860	2885
S.A. Brown Boveri	350	561	564
C. F. Bally	1000	1275	1250
Nestle & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	730	725
Entreprises Sulzer S.A.	1000	1067	1057
Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	500	570	570
Linoleum A.G. Giubiasco	100	98	101
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon	500	695	730

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