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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The present negotiations for a new Franco-Swiss commercial treaty have terminated in an agreement which is to come into force on February 25th.

Three officials from the Federal Post, Customs and Finance Department are to proceed to the Hedjaz in order to reorganise, on the invitation of the latter government, the three respective services.

The accounts for the last twelve months of the Basle municipal tramways close with a profit of 1.9 million francs; 36.4 million passengers were carried.

In a bye-election for two judges in the Aarau district, fought with considerable animation, the two candidates (Dr. Lindegger and Counc. Lässer) jointly supported by the Socialist and Peasants' Party scored a notable victory over the Liberal nominees.

The traffic returns for 1927 of the Swiss Federal Railways show a gross surplus of 144 million francs, which, after the statutory allotments to the different accounts for interest, depreciation, war losses, etc., should leave a net profit of about 6 million francs against a loss of 9.6 million francs in 1926.

Under the will of the recently deceased Ed. Sandoz-David, a former director of the Basle Chemical Works bearing his name, one million francs is left to philanthropic institutions of the canton Vaud; Frs. 500,000 is to be devoted to the foundation of a home for incurables.

Aviation Captain Max Cartier crashed to death near the military arsenal at Thoune whilst trying out new biplanes. He was born at Olten in 1896, and was one of the most experienced and promising of our military aviators.

Whilst clearing away snow and restoring a road in the "Kratzergraben," near Frutigen, three local men were surprised by an avalanche and completely buried; their names are Hans Wyssen, Christian Wyssen and Hans Steiner.

According to official statistics just published for the year 1926, the number of fatal accidents in Switzerland total 1,962. Falls from heights claim 372 victims, motor accidents 289, trams 21, railways 47, fires 107 and electric current 34.

Through a fire which broke out in the workshops of J. Kunz, coachbuilder in Wauwil, near Sursee, 25 private cars besides a few lorries and autobuses were totally destroyed. The damage is said to exceed Frs. 150,000.

About 20,000 books became a prey of the fire which broke out in the Librarie Payot at Geneva; the damage is estimated at about Frs. 180,000.

## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

**Der kommende Auslandschweizertag**—Im Frühjahr findet anlässlich der Schweizer Mustermesse in Basel der Auslandschweizertag statt. Wir haben vor 1½ Jahren, als derselbe in Lausanne abgehalten wurde, denselben einer Kritik unterzogen, die notwendig war, denn Kritik ist das Salz der Demokratie, der Organisation und der Bewegung. Wir haben damals nach Taten verlangt—nach positiver Arbeit. Im Verlaufe des letzten Jahres schien es nun, dass man dem Organisationsgedanken eine bestimmte Richtung und feste Form zu geben beabsichtige. In unserem Blatt wurden verschiedene wegweisende und interessante Abhandlungen darüber veröffentlicht. Aber es bewies sich wieder einmal die alte Wahrheit, dass man wohl von Patriotismus spricht und schreibt—die Tat aber missen lässt. Nun ist aber jede Bewegung paradox, die ihre Tätigkeit nur auf Worte abstellt: im entscheidenden Moment versagt sie. Das ist heute der Fall: es fehlt der Zusammenhang der Landsleute in den einzelnen Kolonien, die Fühlung-

nahme zwischen den einzelnen Kolonien und Vereinen—daher der schlechte Kontakt mit dem Vaterland selbst. Unter solchen Umständen von einer Auslandschweizertagung zu sprechen, ist nicht richtig. Einige Vereine werden Delegierte senden, einheitliche, praktische Postulate werden fehlen, man wird begeistert zum Wohle des Vaterlandes sein Hoch erklingen lassen und das Gläschen leeren und—auseinandergehen, sich fragend: was ist erreicht worden?

Die Schuld an diesen Umständen tragen nicht die Veranstalter der Tagung. Wir wissen genau, welche grosse und vielseitige Arbeit gerade z. B. das Auslandschweizersekretariat leistet. Schuld sind wir Auslandschweizer selbst, denn es fehlt am richtigen, tiefen Erfassen der Bewegung als solche. Eine Bewegung darf nie Selbstzweck sein; sie bleibt immer nur Mittel zum Zwecke. Unsere Bestrebungen können nur darauf gerichtet sein, der Schweiz in jeder Hinsicht nützlich zu sein, Rechtsgleichheit mit denen Daheim zu geniessen, vollkommenen Schutz seitens dem Mutterlande zu erhalten, politisch, wirtschaftlich und kulturell zusammenzuarbeiten mit den Brüdern und Schwestern in der Heimat. Solange aber der Zusammenschluss in den einzelnen Ländern nicht erfolgt ist, kann uns die Heimat nie ernst nehmen. Nur eine starke, einige, geschlossene Organisation wird Ziele erreichen. 400,000 Schweizer leben im Auslande; eine Macht, wenn sie sich richtig organisieren: ein Faktor, mit dem man in der Schweiz rechnen würde. Durch das Medium des Auslandschweizersekretariates haben wir Auslandschweizer schon sehr viel gewonnen. Aber viele Forderungen müssen liegen bleiben—es fehlt unserem Freiburger Sekretariat die notwendige Rückendeckung und die Unabhängigkeit nach oben. So lange das Auslandschweizersekretariat auf die Bundessubvention angewiesen ist und solange wir Auslandschweizer nicht selbst das Sekretariat erhalten—solange wird das Auslandschweizersekretariat nur beschränkte Arbeit leisten können. Das sind Tatsachen, die nachdenklich stimmen, weil aus ihnen eine gewisse Laxheit des Auslandschweizerturns spricht. Laxheit aber schadet immer.

Nach dieser Schlage zu schliessen können wir dem kommenden Auslandschweizertag nicht jene Wichtigkeit zuerkennen, die ihm bei richtiger Organisation gebühren würde. Es fehlt zwischen ihm und den einzelnen Kolonien und Landsleuten im Ausland der bestimmte Kontakt. Dieser muss endlich geschaffen werden: Zusammenschluss aller Landsleute zu Vereinen, aller Vereine zu Landsverbänden, aller Verbände zu einer Organisation mit eigenem Sekretariat, das von ihr erhalten wird, damit es frei und unabhängig ist. Will man eine solche Organisation nicht schaffen, wird unsere Bewegung in sich zusammenfallen, weil ihr der erhaltende Moment fehlt.

Schon vor Jahren haben wir den Ruf nach Zentralisation laut werden lassen. Es ist Aufgabe der Presse, auch heute wieder an alle Landsleute und Vereine zu appellieren, der Organisationsfrage erhöhte Beachtung zu schenken und sie einer positiven Lösung zuzuführen, welche befruchtend auf das Schweizertum in Heimat und Fremde wirkt. Lassen wir endlich einmal ab von Gemüchlichkeit und Interessenslosigkeit. Es geht bei der Organisationsfrage um etwas Grosses und Hohes—es geht um das Ganze. Darum mit Mut und Fleiss an die Arbeit. *Schweizer Heimat.*

**Die unterbliebene Ehrung Sprechers.**—Die Schweiz. Offiziersgesellschaft hat in einem an Nationalratspräsidenten Minger gerichteten Schreiben ihr Bedauern ausgedrückt über die unterlassene Ehrung des verstorbenen Generalstabschefs von Sprecher. Herr Minger beantwortete dies Schreiben mit einem Brief, der in der neuesten Nummer der "Allgemeinen Schweiz. Militärzeitung" abgedruckt ist und dem wir folgendes entnehmen:

"Geleitet vom Gefühle des Dankes und der Hochachtung hatte ich den Entschluss gefasst, Donnerstag, den 8. Dezember, Herrn von Sprecher im Rate zu ehren. Dabei erachtete ich es als ein Gebot des Takts und des Anstandes, meinem Kollegen auf dem Präsidentenstuhl des Ständerates von meiner Absicht Kenntnis zu geben. Der Präsident der Fraktion des Herrn Savoy, Herr Nationalratsvizepräsident Walther, den ich ins Vertrauen zog, hatte die Freundlichkeit, mit dem Ständeratspräsidenten Rücksprache zu nehmen. Herr Savoy konnte sich zu einem Nachruf nicht entschliessen und wies darauf hin, dass es nicht Übung sei, Personen, die vom Bundesrat und nicht von der Bundesversammlung gewählt wurden, in den eidgen. Räten zu ehren. Gleichzeitig erhielt ich Meldung, dass bei einem Teil der westschweizerischen Parlamentarier eine Ehrung von Sprechers auf starke Opposition stosse.

"Jetzt kam für mich der kritische Moment. Ich musste mich entscheiden, nicht als Mensch und Offizier, sondern als Ratspräsident. Ich sah eine Spannung zwischen Deutsch und Welsch voraus. Wie sich diese Spannung entwickelt hätte, nachdem in der darauffolgenden Woche noch die Ordensfrage zur Diskussion kam, lässt sich heute nicht beurteilen; jedenfalls kam sie mir damals vor wie eine schwarze Wolke über dem eidg. Parlament. Die ablehnende Begründung des Herrn Savoy veranlasste mich, Vergleiche mit der bisherigen Praxis anzustellen. Dabei musste ich feststellen, dass tatsächlich auch bei andern hervorragenden Eidgenossen, die ihr Bestes für das Landeswohl einsetzten, keine Ehrung bei den eidgen. Räten stattfand. Ich erinnere an die Namen der militärischen Führer: Audéoud, Isler, Schiessle, Will, Bor-nand, der politischen Führer: alt Bundesräte Lachenal, Ruffy, Comtesse, alt Nat. Rat Hirter, alt Ständerat Usteri, Minister von Planta, an andere hervorragende Männer: Prof. Kocher, Carl Spitteler. Dass ich vor dieser wichtigen Entscheidung auch noch den Rat erfahrener Kollegen einholte, ist wohl selbstverständlich.

"Nachdem ist alle diese Momente und Ratschläge in Erwägung gezogen hatte, kam ich zu meinem grossen Bedauern, aber in guten Treuen, zu der Ueberzeugung, dass ich in diesem Falle nicht meinem Herzen, sondern meiner Pflicht als Ratspräsident zu gehorchen habe, und diese Pflicht erblickte ich damals darin, auf einen Nachruf zu verzichten. Ich habe in dieser ganzen Angelegenheit ein reines Gewissen und übernehme jede Verantwortung für meine Handlungsweise. Ich fühle mich verpflichtet, Ihnen in aller Offenheit den ganzen Hergang zu schildern.

Zum Schlusse habe ich noch zu bemerken, dass in der letzten Dezenbersession zwischen den massgebenden amtlichen Personen vereinbart wurde, anlässlich der Beratung des Geschäftsberichtes des Bundesrates dem hochverdienten Generalstabschef den Dank des Landes und der Räte auszusprechen."

"Nachschlagungen haben ergeben, dass seinerzeit die Herren General Dufour und alt-Bundesrat Stämpfli in den eidgenössischen Räten ebenfalls nicht geehrt wurden."

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

Ernest Ansermet.

A well-known critic writing in the *New Statesman* (Jan. 14th) gives evidence of a very fertile imagination for, according to his affirmation, a chamois descended upon him during Mr. Ansermet's concert. It is true the writer prefaces his long diatribe by the remark that to the intelligent music-lover nothing should be more entertaining and amusing than diversity of critical opinion and that he himself "loves to baffle and mislead." Like all such writers he delights in hyperbole, but general statements such as that "a French Swiss naturally tends to become exaggeratedly French just as a German Swiss becomes exaggeratedly German" betray an extremely prejudiced judgment. Such queer notions about Swiss are unfortunately only too common in this country although one might expect education, newspaper articles and the personal contact obtained by the armies of English tourists in Switzerland would combine in correcting erroneous conceptions. A mixed—though honest—compliment was paid to us last week when a highly-placed English personality wound up an excellent speech by saying that "whatever their nationality was before" the present-day Swiss have shown and proved that it is possible for different races to live together in perfect harmony. And a subsequent Press notice reporting that gathering contains the unmatched statement that "addresses were given in the languages of the three Swiss cantons. We now quote part of the article referred to:—

"I do not expect that I shall be easily understood when I say that at the Royal Philharmonic Society's concert last week, conducted by M. Ernest Ansermet—born at Vevey in 1883, for some time Professor of Mathematics at Lausanne University, then founder and conductor of the Orchestre de la Suisse romande—I saw a chamois in the Queen's Hall. Undoubtedly it must have been a hallucination, but the interesting point is, what suggested such a strange image? Was it altogether unaccountable? Nothing is unaccountable if one has the ability to make the necessary joints and connections, and so I shall try to explain this chamois.

Monsieur Ansermet is a conductor who has made a reputation in this country through his association with the Diaghilev ballet. This association has necessarily meant that he was in sympathy with modern music. This sympathy, I should say, is natural and unaffected, because M.

Ansermet strikes me as a highly sophisticated man, whose general appearance is that of a Catulle Mendès with a dash of Alfred de Musset, the whole enlivened with a touch of the Paris of Jean Cocteau and Stravinsky. The resultant figure is that of a cosmopolitan who is more French than the French. A French Swiss naturally tends to become exaggeratedly French, just as a German Swiss tends to become exaggeratedly German, and when, in addition to being Franco-Swiss he is a cosmopolitan, then we have a chance of seeing a man who seems in himself to be the very personification of Paris.

Since the *Mercure de France* stated that one quartet by Mozart was worth all Beethoven's symphonies, Mozart has been the rage throughout England. I shall try to illustrate how the French misunderstand Mozart and how M. Ansermet distorts Schubert. If one were going to hear a French pianist play Mozart one would expect to find those reputed 'French' qualities of restraint and intelligence; but when that famous Parisian pianist, Mr. Ricardo Vines, came to London a year or two ago one was shocked to discover that M. Vines—the idol of the Paris salons—played Mozart like a musical box, without the slightest expression. He did not play with "restraint," because "restraint" implies something restrained, some passion or vital force held in subjection and controlled; and M. Vines controlled nothing but the mechanism of his fingers. He did not play with "intelligence," because intelligence presupposes the directing or guiding with a purpose of some passion or vital force, and when there is nothing to guide or direct there can be no intelligence guiding.

And searching my memory I find that the two greatest Mozart players I have ever heard are Busoni and Arthur Schnabel, both pianists of prodigious vitality. Busoni did play Mozart with restraint and intelligence. The purity and intensity of his playing came from the passionate but controlled imagination of that fine artist, and the greatness of Schnabel's Mozart playing has the same root. But the Parisian conception of Mozart as a rococo decorator with the exquisite sensibility and refined faultless taste of a Place Vendôme upholsterer—one of those ladies or gentlemen who will advise an American millionaire how to decorate and furnish a house to which the Duc d'Orleans might be invited—is perfectly ridiculous. All Mozart's best music glows with passion and vitality and, like all passionate vitality, in its own day when its novelty shocked it was thought extreme and vulgar. But the Parisians—and I wish to distinguish carefully between the France of Voltaire, Racine, Baudelaire, Berlioz and dilettante Paris of to-day—either play Mozart in the trivial musical-box style or they smear away the passionate hardness of his melodic line with the syrup of a sham sensibility. This very peculiar Parisian "sensibility" is unmistakable; it has the same quality as hair-dressers' oil of obliterating contours and giving a surface brilliance, but it can only please de-vitalised minds.

And now comes M. Ansermet and gives us a performance of Schubert's "Unfinished Symphony" which was ultra-Parisian. Schubert had many remarkable qualities, but if he has one outstanding characteristic it is that of pure spontaneity. There never was a composer who was such a natural gushing fountain of melody. His music needs to be played or sung with that crystal purity of expression which can come only when the simple rapture of the heart is allied with the mastery of the great artist. It is impossible to play the tricks with Schubert that one can play, for example, with Wagner; but under M. Ansermet even the instruments of the orchestra seemed to take slightly different tones to their natural ones. One knows the peculiar character which the harmonium gives to music; well, M. Ansermet seemed to throw a film of self-consciousness over the natural, fresh and sparkling colours of Schubert's orchestral palette. And he interfered with those direct springing rhythms, which are so characteristic of Schubert, by such horrible sentimental rallentandos that if justice were done to him he should never be allowed to conduct Schubert again. It was in the middle of one of these rallentandos that I caught sight of the chamois. It was no real chamois but the chamois of a coloured picture postcard. It stood at the edge of a blue lake by the side of a large hotel at the foot of a glacier. Across the top of the postcard was printed "Winter in Switzerland." Now the chamois is not at the beck and call of even the most adroit of hotel-keepers; it is a shy beast, and the visitor to Switzerland expecting to meet the chamois is as likely to be disappointed as the music-lover who expects to find the true Schubert at the hands of such a cultivated Swiss Parisian musician as Monsieur Ansermet.

#### The Old Swiss Aristocracy.

After the above it is quite refreshing to gather from the *Glasgow Herald* (Jan. 14th) that we can boast of some very ancient Swiss families:—

Does any reader know who St. Rumbold was? I do not, and I venture to believe many

other writers are equally ignorant. Yet one of the most charming weddings of the past week took place at St. Rumbold's, Shaftesbury, when Miss Elizabeth Marion Williams married Baron F. A. de Watteville, of Berne, Switzerland. I console myself for my ignorance about the Saint by thinking how many people know as little concerning the old aristocracy of Switzerland, and there I score. Already a hundred years ago my grandparents were intimate with many of them, and my grandfather—a Scotsman, of course—rented a château belonging to one of the old Bernese families on the lovely Lake of Thun.

There were several quaint, turretted old country seats on its shores, where noble Swiss families had lived for centuries. You ask "How came this in a Republic?" The Republic of Switzerland, as we know it, my friends, is a creation of the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Neuchâtel, Lausanne, Vevey, Geneva, and above all, Berne, have their old nobility, as many an ancient dwelling, surmounted by a coat-of-arms, testifies; and mighty proud are those patrician families. It was in semi-royal state that my grandparents saw a de Watteville presiding at the Swiss Diet.

One of the most charming fêtes at which they were present at Berne included representatives of all the Swiss cantons, and the caps then worn by some of the ladies were near akin to the bewitching little close-fitting caps of Miss Williams and her bridesmaids. The bridegroom may have told her of various quaint customs preceding the weddings of "kent folk" in Switzerland. Some are not observed so closely as in the days of my grandparents, but not all have fallen into disuse.

#### A Swiss Motor Coach.

No Swiss cars are offered in this country and we hear little about our own motor industry. *Motor Transport* (Jan. 16th) publishes the following description of a "Saurer" and of the long trip undertaken by it:—

"The private motor coach, as a rival to the ordinary touring car, is a class of vehicle which M. Dominique Lamberjack is seeking to develop. One of the most experienced motorists on the Continent, as well as a successful agent, M. Lamberjack about a year ago purchased a Saurer 2-ton chassis, this being a model with a four-cylinder ball-bearing engine of 90 x 150 mm. bore and stroke, and carried out some modifications, including the removal of the governor and the engine brake, the fitting of a new type of mechanical brake, and a lighter throttle control. A 12-seated Weymann saloon body was built on the chassis and special provision was made for carrying baggage.

After a successful trip of about three thousand miles round France, twelve persons being carried all the time, the Saurer started on one of the most extensive tours ever made by a coach. The itinerary included France, Switzerland, Italy, and the object of the journey was to prove that a party of twelve, which in reality included three families, could travel as fast, more commodiously, and at very much less cost than the same persons making use of three cars.

The journey, which was over a distance of 1,800 miles, started from Paris. Travelling through Dijon, Dole, and Besançon, the party crossed into Switzerland. A considerable mileage was covered in Switzerland, and the Grisons canton, which until recently has been closed to all motor traffic, was passed through. Going into Italy, the lake district was toured, a run was made over the private motor roads from Como to Milan. Turin was visited, and the return to Paris was made through the D'Aost valley, the Petit St. Bernard pass, Chambéry, the Col du Chat, Belley, and Dijon.

An opportunity was given the writer of following this tour, sometimes as a passenger on the coach, and sometimes on a high-grade private car. The idea that a coach is necessarily slow was soon dispelled, for the Saurer had a speed of 60 m.p.h., and in the journey across France it very frequently averaged 45 m.p.h. over long distances. Even with a fast touring car it was often necessary to drive hard in order to keep pace with the coach.

The idea is so prevalent that a big vehicle is necessarily slow that rather special methods had to be adopted to secure a right of way. After a single blast on the horn small car owners and motor cyclists invariably glanced round, then accelerated and held to the crown of the road, fully convinced that the coach could not overtake them. Although possessing higher speed, it was difficult under these conditions to get by. The coach was therefore fitted with two very powerful electric horns, having different tones. These were not used until the last moment, and the driver of the car ahead, believing that he had two fast cars just behind him, would invariably pull over and would be left in the rear before he had completely recovered from his astonishment.

With the exception of this reluctance on the part of other drivers to accord a right of way, no

difficulty was experienced on the main roads of France and Italy. On some of the Alpine passes M. Lamberjack proved that, despite his four tons weight he could run down hill as fast as any modern private car equipped with four wheel brakes. There were several friendly matches between the coach and a private car, not always to the advantage of the latter vehicle.

One of the best features of the Saurer was the wonderful degree of comfort afforded. With giant pneumatic tyres and deeply upholstered individual seats for the twelve passengers, there was undoubtedly greater comfort than in the most luxurious private car. At 50 m.p.h. the coach was most remarkably steady, the body was absolutely free from rattles or drumming of any kind, and so comfortable was the springing that the passengers had much less impression of speed than when travelling on a normal private car.

The only difficulties attending the trip were encountered in the Grisons canton, where stringent speed regulations exist. On several occasions during the journey the passage of the coach was telephoned to some station ahead, and on our arrival there an official came out to notify the driver that he had considerably exceeded the low local speed limit and must not repeat the offence.

Undoubtedly the Swiss railroads are opposed to motor coaches, and although the roads in the Grisons canton are now open to mechanical vehicles, a regulation has been passed forbidding more than eight persons being carried in any one vehicle. This, of course, entirely rules out the operation of all motor-coaches in that district as a profitable proposition.

At one point officials refused to allow the Saurer to proceed with twelve persons. The party argued that they were touring privately, that their vehicle was not a public coach, and that it was registered in France as a private car. All this was unavailing, and after much time had been lost four persons were obliged to leave the coach and to travel by train to the Italian frontier station at Chiavenna.

#### QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

| BONDS.                             |     | Jan. 16 | Jan. 24 |         |
|------------------------------------|-----|---------|---------|---------|
|                                    |     | Fr.     | Fr.     |         |
| Confederation 3% 1903              | ... | 82.50   | 83.25   |         |
| 5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln              | ... | 101.15  | 102.32  |         |
| Federal Railways 3½% A-K           | ... | 86.62   | 86.65   |         |
| " 1924 IV Elect. Ln.               | ... | 102.25  | 102.25  |         |
| SHARES.                            |     | Nom     | Jan. 16 | Jan. 24 |
|                                    |     | Fr.     | Fr.     | Fr.     |
| Swiss Bank Corporation             | ... | 500     | 809     | 829     |
| Crédit Suisse                      | ... | 500     | 900     | 900     |
| Union de Banques Suisses           | ... | 500     | 725     | 737     |
| Société pour l'Industrie Chimique  | ... | 1000    | 2866    | 2942    |
| Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz   | ... | 1000    | 4925    | 4975    |
| Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe          | ... | 1000    | 3210    | 3275    |
| S.A. Brown Boveri                  | ... | 350     | 539     | 611     |
| C. F. Bally                        | ... | 1000    | 1390    | 1412    |
| Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co. | ... | 200     | 933     | 980     |
| Entreprises Suizer S.A.            | ... | 1000    | 1215    | 1227    |
| Comp. de Navig. sur le Lac Léman   | ... | 500     | 555     | 550     |
| Linolenn A.G. Giubiasco            | ... | 100     | 220     | 245     |
| Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon           | ... | 500     | 748     | 749     |

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During the journey through Switzerland the Saurer climbed the Julier Pass at 7,550ft., the most difficult climb of the entire trip. There was never any difficulty in negotiating the bends, and the engine at all times was equal to its task; the steepest gradients were also descended with a good margin of safety. Returning to France, the Petit St. Bernard was crossed at 7,300ft.

For the entire journey, petrol consumption worked out at the rate of 13 m.p.g., giving a cost per head very much lower than that of a light two-seated car. Two punctures marked the journey. One occurred at the front and occasioned no difficulty, but when a rear tyre had to be changed it was found not only difficult to get the jack under the axle, by reason of the body overhang, but practically impossible to raise the vehicle single-handed. Outside assistance was sought. The coach carried two spare wheels."

#### Measuring a Glacier's Speed.

From the *Evening Telegraph and Post, Dundee* (Jan. 10th):—

"Modern science has made many changes in methods of investigating the wonders of the earth. To-day it is possible to record the speed of glaciers in ways undreamed of when glaciology first began, just a century ago.

By an aeroplane flight of about an hour's duration, a scientist can reconnoitre a glacial area that would take a week to cover on foot. And by wonderful instruments he can measure glacial depths and record glacial movements.

The new era in the measurement of glacial depths began in 1926, when the principle of "echo-sounding," which has yielded such remarkable results in marine hydrography, was applied by two investigators in different regions of the Swiss Alps.

On the Hintereisferner, under the direction of H. Mothes, numerous charges of explosives were set off and the echoes sent back from the bed of the glacier were recorded by means of seismographs.

Dr. Mercanton, who conducted experiments on the Lower Grindelwald and neighbouring glaciers in the Swiss Alps, used a geophone to detect the echoes of similar detonations. In both cases a number of plausible measurements were secured.

Dr. Mercanton was less successful in attempting to apply the Langevin system of sounding by so-called "ultra-sounds," in which the acoustic signals consist of very rapid vibrations (about 40,000 per second), but experiments with this process are likely to be continued.

In the near future acoustic methods may furnish detailed information regarding the depths of glaciers in all parts of the world, including the Greenland and Antarctic ice caps.

Under the auspices of the International Glacier Commission and similar national organisations in various countries measurements of the advance and retreat of glaciers have been made regularly for some years.

In Switzerland, reports on fluctuations of this character are published annually for 100 glaciers. Though the movements of the glacier front amount to only a few inches a day, they are measured by means of the "cryocinometer," the dial of which is actuated by a wire attached to the ice of the glacier.

It is a hundred years ago last summer since the scientific investigation of glaciers began. Professor Hugi, a Swiss, built a shelter on an overhanging ledge of granite on the rocky strip of debris in the middle of the Unteraar glacier in the Bernese Alps.

He spent several nights in the hut, and visited it during succeeding summers.

The hut, he found, crept slowly downwards with the general movement of the ice beneath it. In 1830 it had travelled several hundred feet, and by 1836, 2200 feet.

In 1839 Louis Agassiz came accidentally upon the hut while exploring the same glacier, and found it 4400 feet from its original location.

In 1840 Agassiz and his companions built a similar shelter nearby. The slow drift of the glacier destroyed the hut, but at various times relics of it were found.

Five years ago a thorough survey of the region was made by Dr. P. L. Mercanton and several pieces of the original rock were identified and under one of them was discovered some of the straw which served Agassiz and his companions as bedding.

The total distance travelled by the shelter up to that time was found to be a little less than three miles."

#### Tippling.

An interesting correspondence on this subject is published in the *Times* (Jan. 12th). We are told what becomes of the 10% or 15% added to our hotel bills in Switzerland. It has always struck us that the percentage system—which was invented in Germany—simply appropriates as a fixed charge what was originally meant to be a voluntary recognition for personal service. The hotel proprietors are thereby saved the necessity of paying the whole of their staff a decent living wage.

"As one who has spent only too many years in hotels in various countries of Europe, I desire to contribute a few facts to the tippling controversy. Most of your previous correspondents have seemed to me to fail to distinguish between the traveller who stays one or two nights and the person who stays weeks or months. For the former class I am convinced that the percentage charge for "service" is the greatest boon which has been conferred upon travellers since the coming of the electric light. The fact that one can leave the hotel without having to find either the servants whom it is customary to tip, or the necessary change, while feeling that everyone is satisfied, robs travelling of one at least, and that the greatest, of its minor annoyances. Servants whom I have consulted have told me that they prefer the system, because they are sure of getting their tips without having to hang about for them, and no longer suffer either from the non-tipper or from not being on the spot at the exact moment when they are wanted.

The "passing" traveller has little opportunity of getting to know the servants by sight, and still less of making personal friends with them. He sees the hall porter, who is barely conscious of his existence, and the head waiter, who knows nothing about the wine. He may or may not set eyes on the chambermaid. But he knows that they, and still others whom he may not see, expect to be tipped and he is perfectly willing to tip them. By the percentage system he can tip them for their routine services without trouble to himself. In the last 18 hotels in which I have stopped in France the percentage system was in force in all but one, and I left that with the knowledge that I had over-tipped all round.

In Switzerland, where the art of hotel-keeping is well understood, there exists a tariff, drawn up by the servants' trade union, which lays down the proportion of the percentage tips which each servant is to receive from the management. The figures are interesting, and I have never seen them published. The 10 per cent. added to the bill is divided among three departments—the floor, the restaurant and the hall—in the proportions of 37 per cent., 30 per cent., and 33 per cent. respectively. Of the 37 per cent., the chambermaid gets 15 per cent. (out of which she tips the under-chambermaid), the breakfast waiter 11 per cent., and the boots 11 per cent. Of the 30 per cent. allotted to the restaurant, the head waiter gets the lot and out of it is expected to tip the table waiter, if any. Of the 33 per cent. taken by the hall, the day and night porters (and this is noteworthy) each gets the same amount—namely, 8 per cent.—the lift boy 4 per cent., the three boys who hang about the hall, whether by day or night, each 3 per cent., the telephone girl 3 per cent., and the man who meets the trains 1 per cent. The elaborate calculations (easy enough with a decimal coinage) which this distribution involves falls upon the 'Bureau,' and the results are entered in a book, which is open to the servants' inspection. I have never heard any complaint—except from the 'Bureau.' But the union is strong, good servants are scarce, and, after all, the consumer pays.

I have stayed for months, and even for years, in the same hotel under this system. But (and this brings me to the "sojourning" class of traveller) my feeling is that it should be abandoned after a fortnight, or as soon as one has made personal friends with the staff. Even among good servants some are better than others, and it is right that special zeal should be rewarded. The individual tipping need cost no more; one merely adjusts the proportions oneself.

English hotel-keepers, as a whole, have been slow to adopt the percentage system. They prefer individual "good-will" tipping, not only because it saves them trouble, but because "it encourages servants to give satisfaction." They also cherish what appears to me the complete fallacy of thinking that a traveller's tips should be in proportion to his means, instead of in proportion to services rendered. I have stayed in an hotel where millionaires gave the head waiter £5 the first time they saw him; the waiting in that hotel was the worst that I have ever known. On the other hand, I recall no case in which the percentage system has seemed to me to impair the efficiency of the staff."

John Knittel.

From the *Daily Mail* (Jan. 10th):—

"Sidi-bou-Said, the ideal Arab village on the hill behind Carthage, may one day become a tiny Riviera in North Africa, writes a correspondent, who tells me he had tea there with Mr.

Robert Hichens and his fellow-author, Mr. John Knittel, in the Arab villa lent them by Baron d'Erlanger.

They write in simple rooms off a tiled court. For exercise Mr. Hichens is walking, playing tennis, and searching for a pony to ride.

Mr. Knittel is the Swiss born in India who writes in English—his "Into the Abyss," just out, is a rather Zolaesque study of the Swiss peasant—has had a play done in London, won the Swiss golf championship, played in the British one at Hoylake last year, and keeps a flock of sheep on the verge of the desert. He is tri-lingual, did his own translation into German of his new book—it has been welcomed in Switzerland—and has ambitions one day to dig for antiquities on the shores of the Red Sea."

Mr. Knittel is fond of taking his friends by surprise. The other evening he dropped in at the City Swiss Club and we had a very enjoyable game of bridge. He was partnered with the vice-President, who is a wonderful exponent of the "book" whilst the novelist is naturally unconventional; however, they both accepted their doom with rare stoicism. We should like to return the visit and would willingly look after his flock of sheep whilst being dummy!

#### UNION HELVETIA CLUB.\*

The task of the Club Committee has always been a difficult one owing to the fact that the Club is over capitalised, as when it was built the cost by far exceeded the original estimate and large amounts had to be invested by Lucerne, in addition to the share subscription, in the hope that the Club would eventually become a paying concern.

Unfortunately this hope did not materialise at the beginning. In the opening years the Club's balance sheets showed losses which grew until they reached the sum of £2,500. Then, as the Territorial Administration was unable to carry on, they asked Lucerne to take charge of the Club.

In order to remedy the critical state of affairs the G.D. appointed the Club Committee and their own steward in the person of Mr. R. Hasler. They further introduced the 6d. contribution for Society Members and took up Club Members. For a short time this improved the position somewhat, but after a while agitation was raised against the 6d. contribution and also against the Steward, with the result that the 6d. contribution was abolished and the Steward, losing interest in the Club business, caused the undertaking further losses. Eventually he resigned and Mr. Jacques Hasler was appointed in his place by special request of the Territorial Administration supported by the London Branch.

This did not improve matters but rather made them go from bad to worse. It must not, however, be imagined that the Club Committee remained inactive during these adverse periods. It worked its hardest to keep the Club on its feet and managed to do so by affiliating with other Swiss Associations by introducing new Functions with original displays and 'stunts.' Many of these 'stunts' and other productions meant weeks of hard work as they were specially written and produced for the Club.

Although the efforts of the Club Committee helped to make the Club popular in the Swiss Colony and other quarters in London, they were not sufficient to counterbalance the failings of the two above mentioned stewards.

Eventually the 6d. contribution was re-introduced and with the appointment of Mr. Wyss as Steward of the Club business greatly improved and continued to do so through the war period, with the result that the Committee was able to wipe out the £2,500 loss on the balance sheet and also pay back the £400 loan from the Sick Fund to the Territorial Administration. In addition to these payments, and those of interest on capital and shares, substantial amounts were remitted to Lucerne to reduce the Club debt, the total amount so paid being £4,445, and if we add the loss of 2,500, and the £400 Sick Fund loan, plus 350 Debenture Shares bought back in 1925, we get a total amount paid of £7,695, besides the above mentioned interest on capital and shares.

This result has only been achieved by hard work on the part of Mr. and Mrs. Wyss, with the collaboration of the Club Committee. Even if we admit that the war period, which was a prosperous one for undertakings such as ours, helped us it did not make our task much easier, as with the many restrictions we had to face, such as young Swiss being unable to come to England, etc., it was no simple matter to keep things going.

In any case, our good luck during the war turned to our disadvantage when the Society Members heard that we were paying off our debt to Lucerne, and they agitated for the abolition of the 6d. contribution. This they succeeded in bringing about despite the energetic protests of the Club Committee, who knew that the Club would need the 6d. contribution more than ever after the war when trade was bound to decline. But in spite of this, and although Mr. Fred Isler clearly explained the financial position of the Club at a Monthly Meet-

\*Re-printed by kind permission from the "Union Helvetia Revue" of Jan. 19th, 1928.

#### CITY SWISS CLUB.

#### CINDERELLA DANCE

at NEW PRINCE'S RESTAURANT, PICCADILLY, on  
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18th, at 6.30.

Tickets, Gents 12/6, Ladies 10/6 (incl. Supper), may be  
obtained from Members of the Committee.