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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

Signor Mussolini has made an interesting statement in the Italian Senate on Italo-Swiss relations which, in view of the reported unsatisfactory treatment of Swiss residents in Italy, has been received with great satisfaction by the Swiss Press. The following is the French text of this statement:

"Nos rapports avec la Suisse sont vraiment cordiaux, profondément amicaux. Moi-même, j'ai préconisé le traité perpétuel d'amitié qui a été signé le 20 septembre 1924 quoique sa durée ait été fixée à dix ans. (Il s'agit du "traité de conciliation et de règlement judiciaire" conclu entre la Suisse et l'Italie).

Les directives de la politique italienne sont permanentes. L'activité de quelques milieux irresponsables pouvant troubler ces directives a été étouffée immédiatement et n'a du reste obtenu aucune influence. L'Italie a un intérêt fondamental à l'existence d'une Suisse libre, indépendante et neutre et pour ce qui concerne le canton du Tessin, de langue, de race et de coutumes italiennes, l'intérêt fondamental de l'Italie est qu'il reste un élément intégrant et intégral de la Confédération helvétique. Que les quelques rares individus qui, d'un côté ou de l'autre du Gothard n'ont pas encore perdu l'habitude de donner corps à des ombres prennent acte de cette claire, solennelle et définitive déclaration.

On the strength of one of the clauses of the peace treaty following the Greco-Turkish War in 1897 and investing the Swiss President with the right to nominate a third arbiter when called upon by the two parties, States Councilor Alex. Moriaud, president of the Conseil d'Etat in Geneva, has been appointed to fill this important office.

An interpellation in the Zurich municipal council by a Communist member asks for an explanation as to why a recent Fascist procession in the town has been allowed by the police authorities while an anti-Fascist demonstration was banned; it also suggests the dismissal of the two police officials responsible for this decision and the disarmament of the police force. In support of this demand the Communists arranged another demonstration last week when the speakers denounced Fascism and generally attacked the policy of their former allies, the local Socialist Party.

The Communists are endeavouring to enlist the support of the Socialists and trade unions in a movement to prevail upon the Federal Council to rescind the expulsion order directed against Enrico Vismacher, an Italian subject, for 15 years resident in Switzerland. He had, in a speech delivered on May 1st during a Labour demonstration, uttered abusive references to the address of the Italian Prime Minister.

The concession to extend temporarily the 48 hours' week to 52 hours, granted by the Federal authorities to some large engineering establishments, notably Sulzer Bros. and the Lokomotive Fabrik of Winterthur, is being vigorously opposed by the trade unions concerned.

Though a prosecution was originally not intended, the three railwaymen said to be responsible for the accident on October 24th, 1926, at Castione, when two lady passengers lost their lives, are to appear before the district court at Bellinzona; they are the stationmaster at Castione and the guard and engine-driver of the train in question.

A number of innkeepers in Winterthur have been sentenced to short terms of imprisonment and fines ranging from Frs. 30 to Frs. 2,000 for having adulterated their wines with an excessive quantity of water.

A well-known Zurich lawyer, Dr. Max Stahel, residing at Zollikon, has committed suicide on being placed under arrest in connection with charges arising out of the recent Kessler affair. He was legal adviser to Bühl, one of the accomplices of the wily bank cashier of the Swiss National Bank, and had admittedly received certain moneys "on deposit." Though he maintained that these

amounts had been repaid to Bühl, the evidence in support of this statement was subsequently found to be fictitious.

While on the way to inspect the "Egon von Steiger" hut in the Jungfrau region one of three alpinists, August Gysi from Berne, who had just taken a photograph, lost his footing, the rope by which he was held by his two companions snapped, and he was carried away by and buried in an avalanche started by the sudden drop. His body was recovered a few days later by a search party.

Col. J. G. Nef, head of the firearms factory bearing his name, has died in Herisau (Appenzell) at the age of 79.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

Topics pertaining to the tourist industry take up practically the whole of the space devoted to Switzerland in the English Press during the period under review. A very instructive article showing how phenomenal has been the development of the "holiday-business" during the present generation is contained in the *Pictorial Weekly* (May 26th) from which we reproduce the following :

### Holidays Again.

"Holiday-making is now the biggest business in Great Britain.

There are other countries where the business of entertaining the holiday-maker has long been recognised as the leading one. In Switzerland, for instance, the income from pleasure-seekers is far larger than that realised from Swiss exports of merchandise and farm products. In France the annual income from the tourist is reckoned at three-fifths of that produced by the exports of domestic products. During the holiday season of 1927 tourists—chiefly English and American—were spending a million pounds daily in France—enough to more than wipe out the adverse exchange of which the French Government complains so sorely.

France receives 220,000 American tourists yearly, and very nearly 800,000 from Great Britain and Ireland. Thirty years ago the number of British subjects who visited France yearly was under 100,000.

In those days the only people from this country who toured in France were members of the upper or upper middle classes. They went only to the best hotels, and they paid through the nose. Of course, large numbers of business men visited France on business, but in this article we are talking purely of pleasure-seekers. Nowadays everyone goes to France. The visitors are of all ages and every class: professional men, clerks, tradesmen, artisans, even labourers. You may meet potters from the Three Towns, mill-hands from Oldham, publicans from East London, walking through the streets of Paris.

A friend of the writer, strolling into a Paris restaurant for a meal, found himself next to a burly Yorkshireman, who was sitting down to a large omelet, and got into conversation with him. The man proved to be a coalminer who, three days earlier, had been working in a seam more than a thousand feet below ground in his own country.

When the writer was a small boy, nearly half a century ago, ordinary middle-class people with incomes of £300 to £600 left home only once a year to spend a fortnight at a seaside resort. They went to the same place year after year, usually selecting the one that was nearest because the journey was cheaper. The so-called "lower classes," in which were included all labourers and artisans, had no regular holidays at all. The more prosperous might take a day trip to a resort, but as a rule they never left home for a night from one year's end to another. It was not until the 'nineties of the last century that the seaside resorts began to wake up to the possibilities of revenue from holiday-makers, and this century had dawned before the summer holiday began to become a habit with all classes.

Twenty-five years ago—that is, in 1903—the *Daily Mail* took the trouble to collect figures from the town clerks of a large number of different seaside resorts showing the numbers of visitors that they received yearly. Margate, Ramsgate and Yarmouth stood at the head of the list with 200,000 each, Lowestoft had 150,000, Douglas, Llandudno, Redcar, Folkestone and Scarborough could each boast of something over 100,000, and there were five other resorts with between 50,000 and 100,000.

Big figures, yet child's play compared with those of 1927. Last year Southsea, with a resi-

dent population of 30,000, catered for 170,000 visitors in three months; Scarborough had more than 330,000 in the same period; Blackpool was visited by something like half a million people; and London, greatest resort as it is greatest city, entertained more than a million overseas visitors, to say nothing of all the millions from her own country.

After the War the tremendous increase in fares cut down passenger traffic. But the recovery was rapid, and by 1922 the number of passengers travelling on British standard gauge railways during the principal holiday month—August—was just 100 millions. By 1925 it had risen to 119 millions. These figures do not include the eighteen millions travelling by London tube railways, and are the more remarkable because the railways, as we all know, have lost an immense number of passengers to the roads, and at present the number of people who go by road is rapidly rivalling those who travel by train.

According to the latest figures—those of September 30th, 1927—there are in Great Britain 686,232 private motor cars. The average number of people using a car is three, so that we know that more than two millions of people habitually travel in their own cars.

Very many of these take three yearly holidays by car, and we can safely say that five million individual holidays are taken in this way during the year of an average duration of one week. The estimate is a very low one, for a large number of car owners go away almost every fine weekend during the summer months.

But even if we put the number of days' holiday taken by car at only thirty-five millions, we can see what an enormous sum must be spent. What with hotel expenses, garage, petrol and the like, it is hardly likely that these tourists spend less than a pound a day apiece; and here is an item of thirty-five million pounds which hardly existed twenty years ago. Even so late as 1911, there were only 47,000 private cars in the country.

But this is only the beginning of things so far as road holidays are concerned, for the numbers carried by the poor man's car—the motor coach—vastly exceed those conveyed by private cars. The number of passengers carried by motor bus and motor coach during the three days of last Whitsun Bank Holiday was more than thirty millions—that is, at least ten millions a day—and during the month of August motor-coaches, apart from buses, carried about 800,000 passengers daily.

This means that in fares alone the motor coach proprietor took at least six millions, or during the whole of the holiday season fully fifteen millions of pounds. The capital invested in motor coaches is very large. It is difficult to get exact figures, but thirty millions would be a conservative estimate.

The amount of money spent on holidays by the population of Great Britain during the month of August, 1903, was estimated at twenty-five millions. Last year a financial authority of standing put the August expenditure at 150 millions. In 1903 only four millions of people were on holiday during that month, but last year the number was put at ten millions; one in four of the whole population.

Most of this enormous sum of money found its way into the seaside towns and the inland beauty spots, and one does not wonder that these places vie with one another in spending huge sums to attract visitors. When you hear that a comparatively small resort such as Porthcawl is spending £200,000 on a twelve-mile promenade, you begin to realise what money there is in a pleasure resort.

The fact is that holiday-making has become not merely the largest but very much the most important business in the country, and one in which workers of every sort take an active financial interest. If 150 millions are spent in August, it will be impossible to place the total expenditure for the year at less than 250 millions. After all, this only works out at a little over £6 a head for the population. About one in forty of our people may be said to live on holidays."

### Swiss Federal Railways.

*Modern Transport* (May 26th) deals with the present position and outlook of our railway system but sounds a somewhat too optimistic note as to the effect of road competition.

"No railway undertaking of a similar character in the world has made so much progress in electrification as the Swiss Federal Railways. This year, for instance, with the conversion of an