

**Zeitschrift:** The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

**Herausgeber:** Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

**Band:** - (1964)

**Heft:** 1462

  

**Artikel:** A Great Swiss Publisher under Czars Alexander III and Nicholas II of Russia

**Autor:** [s.n.]

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-695802>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 17.01.2026

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

## SWISS INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

At the end of 1960, the investments of big Swiss firms in their foreign subsidiaries totalled approximately thirteen billion Swiss francs. Calculated per head of the population, these investments amounted therefore to Fr.2,050.— for Switzerland, and Fr.790.— for Great Britain (excluding the oil industry), Fr.760.— for the U.S.A., Fr.360.— for Canada, Fr.100.— for Western Germany, Fr.80.— for Denmark and Fr.20.— for Japan.

The setting up of Swiss industries abroad is accounted for mainly by the fact that the home market is too small to offer Swiss industry adequate scope. Furthermore, this system makes it possible to avoid the difficulties standing in the way of exports — customs barriers, import restrictions and transport costs. Finally, it enables raw materials to be obtained locally in sufficient quantities and at competitive prices, as well as avoiding the difficulties inherent in the manpower shortage prevailing in Switzerland.

While the work of Swiss firms in different parts of the world is a necessity for the Swiss economy, it also benefits the foreign countries concerned, not only by creating opportunities for work but also by training local labour, providing various services, and enriching the market.

Swiss industrial activity is not limited to the industrialized countries. At the end of 1962, the investments of big Swiss firms in countries in the process of development amounted to approximately two billion Swiss francs, representing a figure per capita equivalent to that recorded by the United States. [O.S.E.C.]

## SWISS REPRESENTATION OF FOREIGN INTERESTS

With the latest mandates of the Swiss Confederation to represent the interests of Chile, Brazil and Ecuador in Cuba, the total number of representations has reached thirteen. The oldest dates back to 10th May 1946 and concerns the Rumanian Archives in Spain. Since February 1950, Switzerland represents the interests of the Philippines in Bulgaria and since February 1958 those of Iran in Israel. In Havana, Switzerland acts on behalf of seven countries: U.S.A., Argentina, Guatemala, Honduras plus the three latest countries mentioned above. In October 1961, the Confederation was asked to represent Togo in Nigeria, and since August last year, Switzerland acts for Portugal in Senegal and for Great Britain in Guatemala. [A.T.S.]

## PRO JUVENTUTE STAMP SALE RECORD

A sale of stamps and postcards in aid of various schemes to benefit young people takes place every year. The stamps with their surcharge for charity are well-known to all philatelists. Last winter, the sale reached a new record, and for the first time the four-million-franc mark has been surpassed. This includes the sale of greetings cards and donations.

The average sum spent on stamps and cards (not on counting the actual postage value) went up to 62.7 cts. per inhabitant. The highest average was reached in the Canton of Baselland with 92.1 cts. per person, the lowest was registered in the Valais with 28.4 cts. Grisons came second with 87.2 cts.

The Pro Juventute Foundation spent 4½ million francs in the year ending 31st March, distributed to mothers and babies, school children, school leavers, sick and invalid children and on leisure time activities. [A.T.S.]

## A GREAT SWISS PUBLISHER UNDER CZARS ALEXANDER III AND NICHOLAS II OF RUSSIA

The activities of the Swiss living abroad would fill a large book. They have left their mark in every continent: here a road or bridge builder, there a scholar, a doctor, an industrialist or colonist. Everywhere they have brought the qualities of their race and native country. Such a book would make inspiring reading and pay a splendid tribute to their work and enterprising spirit.

Alfred Devrient, scion of a family of educationalists, is a case in point. It was his father, Théodore Devrient, who founded the "La Villa" Institute which later won a world-wide reputation under his relative Max Auckenthaler, a doctor of philosophy. It was at Lausanne that Alfred Devrient was born in 1842. After teaching for some years, this young book-lover went as a trainee to Hachette in Paris. In 1867 he moved to St. Petersburg as the representative of the great Paris firm. In this way he secured a footing in Russia, where at that time eyes were turned towards the West and more particularly towards Paris. Alfred Devrient formed a number of connections in intellectual and social circles and acquired an admirable fluency in Russian. To be brief, he married the daughter of the banker Junker and in 1872 founded the publishing house of Devrient. Success came quickly. He conceived the brilliant idea of bringing out the *Encyclopædia of Rural Economy and Allied Sciences*. This book met a real need of the times. Millions of peasants had just been emancipated and restored to the land. The small farm came into its own and the great estates were split up. It was a real revolution! But such a rural revolution needed a guide, and for this purpose Alfred Devrient's *Agricultural Encyclopædia* was of inestimable value. It proved so valuable in fact that the Ministry of Agriculture rewarded the Swiss publisher by conferring upon him a gold medal for "exceptional services".

Open-minded and eclectic in his interests, Alfred Devrient followed up his encyclopædia with literature for young people. He started a *Collection of books for children*. Each book was attractively presented in a fine make-up and binding. Beneath their illustrated covers were to be found the best stories of Russian folklore. As the title of his collection, Devrient had chosen "Babushka Tatiana", which means "Grandma Tatiana". Notable features of this children's collection were the fine printing and the illustrations and illuminations which were done by the best artists living in the Russia of Alexander III and Nicholas II.

The encyclopædia of agriculture and the children's books were enough in themselves to earn the Devrient publishing house a fame that extended to the farthest frontiers of the great Russian empire. To these the Swiss publisher added publications dealing with natural history, zoology and mineralogy. Finally he published in twenty-two volumes a *Popular Russian Geography*, which met with a great success. Unhappily this ambitious publishing programme covering more than 1,200 volumes was interrupted by the Bolshevik revolution.

Devrient was forced to flee with his family and leave everything behind. Apart from his publishing career, he had been president of the Swiss Welfare Society and a member of the council of the Swiss Reformed Church in Russia. Truly, he was a great personality with new and

generous ideas. He died at Pont-Farbel, near Gland, at the home of his son-in-law in 1920. To the farthest corners of Russia he had cast the good seed of culture and education in its widest sense.

[S.N.T.O.]

### **"MANAGERS DISEASE" AND A HOLIDAY IN THE ENGADINE**

The Swiss clergyman, Albert Bitzios, whose pen-name was Jeremias Gotthelf, described in his exciting book "The Black Spider", the unconsciousness of man towards an actually devilish scourge, the black spider, which suddenly attacked people and carried them off.

Nowadays there is another scourge, Managers Disease, which tears people away from Life in their best years. Managers Disease — an insidious conception, unpredictable; almost, it would seem, unavoidable; provoked by the rush with which we are whipped through time; provoked by the excessive demands we are required to fulfil, by the wearing of our physical, mental and spiritual strength, by the stimulants to which we resort in order to conquer our constant tiredness, namely by use of the "civilisation" poisons nicotine, caffeine and alcohol; and then by the imagined lack of time for necessary recuperation. He who finds his way to a health resort is a lucky person. That which is a direct inducement for a cure — a stay in a health resort — is at the same time a cure for Managers Disease, which is a consuming illness.

Now what can the visitor do in order to overcome Managers Disease? Actually there is nothing for him to do — or, to put it correctly, he should do nothing. Above all, everything that makes his life an unnatural one should be left undone. He should leave his car in the garage and not tear all over the place from force of habit. He should abide by his plans, in accordance with his doctor's orders, just as conscientiously as he regards them at home. He should inwardly relax, not think about his job, his cares and problems, but devote himself to glorious idleness, to doing sweet nothing, to enjoying his holiday; whereby it does no harm to hear the morning songs of the birds and take a walk, in order to achieve a favourable spiritual attitude towards successful recuperation.

It is well known how we lack oxygen where we live in the haze of our cities, and how particularly bad the air conditions are in cars because of excessive carbon dioxide. But oxygen is so very important to our lives — which is why we have to provide ourselves with as much oxygen as possible: "Fill up with oxygen"! What is of especial aid to those with Managers Disease is contact with nature; this can be obtained by roaming through woods and across meadows, giving oneself time to rest awhile to enjoy the quiet and to hear the whispering voice of nature. And then it has to be borne in mind what a blessing good sleep is. And how would it be to consider carefully whether the kind of life that causes Managers Disease must really be led, if it is really right. It would be worthwhile to think this over.

It is not surprising, and there is no reason to be suspicious when it is asserted that holidays are indicated in cases of consuming and debilitating illnesses. "Follow the laws of nature and your welfare is established".

(St. Moritz Courier.)

### **AN AMUSING BOOKLET**

*The Editor of the "Swiss Observer" received the following letter by "ck" thirty years ago, and it is reprinted from the issue of 10th June 1933.*

"I have received a little book entitled "Twenty Polyglot Rhymes" by E. A. Hopkins which is an attempt at versification in four languages. The result is curious, and considering the enormous difficulty there is in making the lines not only rhyme but also scan, I think the author is to be congratulated on his efforts.

"It is bad enough when one tries to write poetry in one language, but when four are mixed up together the difficulties are almost insurmountable, because the genius of each language is different and the rhythm is not the same.

"However, the result is distinctly amusing, and I think I cannot do better than quote two examples.

#### **MODERN EVE.**

Dear "Mother Eve" was fond of fruit,  
Der Apfel schmeckte ihr recht gut,  
Mais elle, sans hésiter, donna  
A suo sposo la metà.

Our modern Eve "moves with the tide",  
Liebt Bubikopf und kurzes Kleid,  
Les bas à jour, les belles bottines,  
Gioielli anche, senza fin'!

\* \* \*

But "Man" remains, please don't ignore,  
"Der alte Adam", nach wie vor!  
Ce pauvre doit gagner sa vie,  
Anch' io debbo far' così!

#### **THE GERMAN LANGUAGE.**

When learning German, you must first  
Erraten vieles, was du hörst,  
Car bien des mots sont si bizarres  
Che non ci lasciano spiegar!

A Meat Safe (for your meat or grouse)  
Bekanntlich schliesst die Fliegen aus!  
Puisque les mouches n'y peuvent entrer,  
Si bagnano nel tuo caffè!

But tell me (mind, I'm not a crank):  
Warum heisst dies ein "Fliegenschrank"?  
C'est un des mots si nécessaires  
Per un tedesco di saper'!

One thing I love: The German Grammar,  
Denn sie vertreibt den "Katzenjammer"!  
Ce mot, en allemand, veut dire  
Che troppo birra fa soffrir'!"