

# Notes and gleanings

Objektyp: **Group**

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

Band (Jahr): - **(1929)**

Heft 378

PDF erstellt am: **21.09.2024**

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## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

## International Railway Traffic.

The Continental Assistant to the Commercial Manager of the Southern Railway, Mr. F. A. Brant, O.B.E., read a paper on January 10th before the Railway Students' Association. His statements were extremely interesting and instructive and show that at least in one field of European economics the Great Powers work in perfect harmony for the purpose of promoting and facilitating personal contact between the different nations. They also bear out the considerable benefit Switzerland is deriving from the existing state of affairs in international railway traffic. The following abstract from the address is taken from *Modern Transport* (Jan. 12th):—

"After the war the Allied Powers decided that for political and economic reasons it was necessary to establish direct relations with the Near East through their own territories, instead of leaving the door open for the re-establishment of the pre-war Balkanzug which ran from Berlin. The Governments summoned a conference in Paris of their representatives, together with those of the railways concerned, at which the principle was agreed upon that a daily train-de-luxe—the Simplon-Orient Express—was to run from Paris, with a connection from Calais and another from Brussels, to Constantinople, which since the accession of Ghazi Kemal Pasha has been re-named Stamboul. In the atmosphere of the Peace Conference of 1919, a clause was inserted in the Convention that this train was to have something very near to a monopoly of the traffic between England, France and Belgium and the Near East, and nothing was to be done which would in any way detract from its success. It was obvious, of course, that the more geographically direct route via Central Europe would in the course of time come into its own again, and we have to-day, not only the Simplon-Orient Express, but also the Orient Express from Paris via Germany and Bucharest, and the Ostend-Vienna Express, both of which do the run quicker and at less cost. The Governments having decided to run the Simplon-Orient Express, it was left to the railways to work out the details of operation.

First of all, the question of the provision of rolling stock had to be settled. This was done by making a contract with the Wagon-Lits Company to furnish the whole of the stock, consisting of sleeping and dining cars and baggage vans. It requires approximately eighty vehicles, including spares, to run the train, each set of vehicles doing about two journeys a month to Stamboul and back. The remuneration of the company is derived from supplementary fares charged on a basis of four gold centimes first class or three gold centimes second class, per kilometre. The staff provided by the Wagons-Lits Company for each set includes a *Chef-de-Train*, one conductor for each car, and the usual dining-car staff. The running times of the trains are arranged at annual conferences at which the delegates of the 11 countries concerned take part. The number of the different railway administrations concerned is 18, and the president of the conference is the general manager of the P.L.M. Railway of France. When the through train to Stamboul first started in 1920 it occupied 94½ hours in the run from Paris to Stamboul. Each year has witnessed an acceleration, and from May 15th this year the time will be reduced to 64½ hours. As may be supposed, the speed of the train is highest in France, and, in a general way, diminishes until its destination. The average speeds, including stops at the various stages of the journey, are as follows:—France 42.3 m.p.h., Switzerland 41.4 m.p.h., Italy 30.8 m.p.h., Jugoslavia 30.4 m.p.h., Bulgaria 25.4 m.p.h., and Turkey 28.4 m.p.h.

The weight of the train up to the end of 1928 averaged 455 tons, but beginning this year the train is being improved by the provision of all-steel stock, each vehicle weighing 61 tons and the entire train 521 tons. The train will accommodate ninety-six passengers, and from now onward it has been decided to carry both first and second class passengers. In spite of the high charges the train is well patronised. It keeps good time, and the journey is not fatiguing to the ordinary traveller, while the scenery is varied and interesting. It is hoped that in the near future the connections will be extended beyond Stamboul and Aleppo to Baghdad where there are important British interests, and some day a new route to India may be developed via the Persian Gulf. On the other hand, the Simplon-Orient will eventually become a through train to Cairo, via Stamboul, Aleppo and Tripoli, for plans are being prepared by the Turkish Government, under the energetic guidance of the Minister of Railways, Behidj-Bey, for a train ferry across the Bosphorus from Stamboul to Haidar Pasha so as to avoid the twenty minutes' crossing by steamer.

The countries of Europe, with their innumerable points of rail-contact with their neigh-

bours, must necessarily have some machinery for bringing about suitable connections and through services to meet the needs of international travellers. This is accomplished by the European Time-Table and Through Carriage Conference which meets every year in October. The time-tables operate for twelve months from May 15th, and it is in October that changes are worked out and agreed upon, the conference being held each year in a different country; in 1907 it took place in London, and since then it has been held in Brussels, Naples, Nice, Vienna and Prague, and this year it will be in Warsaw. The conference has a plenary session, at which important questions, such as the 24-hour system for time-tables, are settled, but the detailed work is carried out in the sectional discussions. The agenda usually contains from 300 to 400 subjects, and any railway can propose a subject, that particular administration being responsible for editing the respective minutes and handing them in to the secretariat. The executive administration is in the hands of the Swiss Federal Railways. The whole of the work is carried out on the basis of the 24-hour system; the working time-tables are all drawn up in the form of graphs, and it is astonishing how quickly an altered train or a new one can be traced through by this method. The make-up of international trains and the arrangement of the carriage workings are somewhat complicated by the necessity for securing balanced mileage for each administration. Fortunately, however, the stock is built to a common scale and is capable of passing from one frontier to another, except in Spain and Russia. This question of technical unity is, of course, one of supreme importance on the Continent. It is obvious that no possibility of through services could exist unless there were uniformity as to loading gauge, brakes, couplings and the like. As far back as 1882 a conference was convened by the Swiss Government to elaborate a convention to regulate these questions, and all rolling stock is built within the limits laid down in that convention, further conferences being held in 1886 and 1907 to bring the rules up to date.

All through bookings are included in what are called tariffs, which are drawn up at conferences attended by representatives of the administrations concerned. Generally speaking, the tariffs are arranged according to countries. Thus there are Anglo-French, Anglo-Belgian Anglo-Italian and Anglo-German tariffs; and sometimes they are established for a series of countries when the number of bookings is not too numerous, as, for instance, the Anglo-Oriental; then again, the Simplon-Orient Express has a tariff all to itself. The railways abroad have special tariff offices under the supervision of the chiefs of their commercial department, and one railway is chosen to act as the executive administration. On it devolves the work of convening the meetings and printing the tariffs. Recently the conditions of transport have been codified in a model tariff which all the railways have adopted, and where State Railways are involved the State has ratified these conditions so that they become law. The tariff then contains a recapitulation of the conditions, modified if necessary to meet any particular needs; then follows a list of the bookings and the throughout fares. There is also a set of tables showing the division of the fares and, finally, there are service instructions as to the make-up of the coupons and for the registration of baggage. Before the war it was an easy matter, with stabilised currencies, to make up throughout fares, but since 1919 it has been almost impossible to arrive at anything like rational methods of rate-fixing; generally speaking, it has been the practice for each country to show its own proportions in its national currency, and to adopt a conventional rate of exchange, varied from month to month, in fixing the fares. During the last year or two, with the stabilisation of a number of currencies, it has been possible to adopt a more equitable basis. Accounts are made up monthly, and each issuing railway notifies all the others concerned what each has to receive; after a balance has been struck remittances are made either direct or, more generally, through the medium of a central clearing office, which has recently been established in Brussels. In order that railways should not have to wait unduly for their money payments on account are frequently made up to 80 per cent. of the amount of the corresponding month of the previous year.

In addition to the through tickets issued by the railways there are two other kinds of bookings, first in importance being the system of agents' coupons. These are either printed by the railways and supplied to the agents against cash payment at a small discount, or against monthly settlement, the agent being guaranteed by an insurance company, or sometimes the agent is permitted to print the coupons himself and submit them to the railway to have them checked and die-stamped. In that case he pays cash for their face value. This system is a convenience to the agent as fewer tickets need be stocked; and, moreover, it is a useful form of advertisement. On the other hand, these coupon tickets

are rather a nuisance to the railway staffs, particularly to ticket collectors and baggage registration clerks. Their use also renders it impossible to establish accurate statistics of traffic to any particular destination. In the second place, there is a system of combined tickets. Before the war this was called the *Rundreise* system; at present it embraces all European countries except Germany and Austria, these countries being unable to join the Combined Ticket Union (with headquarters in Brussels), as they had already given a monopoly of the coupon business for a number of years to the Central European Tourist Office in Berlin.

In the domain of railway business there are three other important organisations. Firstly, there is the International Railway Congress, whose object is the study of improvements in the construction and working of railways, and which meets every five years. Then there is the International Union of Railways, or *Union Internationale des Chemins de Fer*, which was formed to secure agreements relating to freedom of transit in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. Its members comprise all European countries, including Soviet Russia, and also China and Japan, the aim being to embrace all railways having direct communication by rail or by railway-owned or railway-controlled steamship lines. This union has its headquarters in Paris, and the General Assembly meets every five years; its work, however, is carried out in detail by a committee of management which meets annually in November. The subjects dealt with are divided into five sections:—Passenger traffic, goods traffic, accounts and exchange, rolling stock and technical and general. Each section has a sub-committee of about six to ten members, who submit their reports to the committee of management. The conclusions can then be made obligatory or they can remain optional. It is difficult with a comparatively young organisation such as this to form any conclusions as to its usefulness so far as Great Britain is concerned, but on the Continent it constitutes a valuable and necessary piece of machinery for the consolidation of diverging and sometimes conflicting interests and, above all, as far as possible it puts into practice the spirit of the clauses of the Peace Treaties. Finally, reference may be made to the Committee for International Transport, with headquarters in Berne, whose origin dates from 1878, when a conference was held in Berne to establish some sort of uniformity in railway law covering the carriage of goods. From it there emerged, after a period of twelve years, the famous Berne Convention for the carriage of goods in international traffic. This Convention was revised last year, and a passenger tariff convention was entered into. The committee meets once a year, and is unique in the sense that it makes all conclusions obligatory on its members. Unfortunately, Great Britain has been unable to become a member on account of the great divergence in the Common Law of England and the statutory laws of Continental countries."

## QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES

	BONDS.		SHARES.	
	Jan. 7	Jan. 15	Nom.	Fr.
Confederation 3% 1905	83.00	83.00	500	863
" 5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln.	102.20	102.12	500	1000
Federal Railways 3½% A—K	88.50	87.75	500	755
" " 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	102.50	102.25	1000	3486
			1000	4665
			1000	4470
			350	600
			1000	1530
			200	335
			1000	1275
			500	525
			100	342
			500	805

## MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS

Not exceeding 3 lines.—Per insertion, 2/6; three insertions 5/—  
Postage extra on replies addressed *c/o Swiss Observer*

RESTAURANT, West End, for disposal. Basement back and front; Ground Floor ditto; First Floor ditto; Second and Third Floors, Flat, 8 rooms. Lease, 15½ years. Further particulars from Box 406. "Swiss Observer," 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2.

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**The Conquest of the Matterhorn.**

This tragic feat is now to be exploited by the film industry; while we all admire the wonderful achievements of the film studio we cannot help feeling that this can only be a ludicrous representation of the great epic. The necessary spectacular elements were without a doubt absent in the first successful ascent, but the modern picture producer hesitates at nothing and could no doubt stage the scene of the temptation of man much better than it was enacted in Paradise. The following is reproduced from *Discovery* (January):—

"The story of the first climbing of the Matterhorn has now been recorded in a cinema film shortly to be released in Switzerland. In the Zermatt Museum can be seen a small portion of rope which recalls the tragedy of this first conquest by Edward Whymper. The great British Alpinist's name holds deep significance in the Swiss Mountains, where his memory is kept ever green by the splendid guides who have now reconstructed the story for the film.

Until 1865 the majestic Matterhorn had defied all climbers. But in that year, urged on by the knowledge that a well organised attempt was to be made by the Italian Government, Whymper attacked the climb, without special preparation, and succeeded. The victory was hailed as an event of international interest. Whymper had set himself the task of mastering the mountain as his life's objective. On his first attempt he had a bad fall, and was only saved from death by the chance intervention of a big boulder which held him from falling over the edge of a terrible ravine. Later, when back in London and recovered from the mishap, he learned that under the guidance of an expert Alpinist an expedition was preparing to attack Matterhorn from the Italian side. Whymper left immediately for Zermatt.

Under the leadership of Jean Antoine Carrel several Alpinists started from the Val Tournanche, on the Italian side, hoping to gain the laurels for the first ascent of the great peak. A day later Whymper, in all haste, set out with three English tourists, and three Swiss guides named Gross and the Taugwalders, senior and junior. After a tremendous climb with many a bad moment, Whymper and his party were successful. The Italians were beaten and retired to Breuil.

But success was not achieved without loss. The mountain claimed its toll. Owing to the breaking of the rope the three English tourists and the guide Gross were hurled into an immeasurable abyss to their death. The shock completely unmanned the two Taugwalders. Whymper wildly endeavoured to move them and start the descent, but they were numbed with terror. At last he had to drive them down with his ice-axe. It was a terrifying experience, but eventually, held fast by the rope round the indomitable Whymper, they succeeded in reaching safety. The dramatic character of the story is well brought out in the new photographs."

**Davos and the Treatment of Consumption.**

It is generally believed that the treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis at Davos is based on contributive local climatic conditions, but surgery enters into practice in most of the cases. Several successful cures have recently been described in detail in *The British Medical Journal*, and the following case is picked out from a few referred to on January 10th:—

"A man, aged 33, was admitted in October, 1927, suffering from very extensive disease in the left lung. The patient obviously had long-standing disease, and had been in bed already for nearly a year before admission here. He was very ill, thin, with a considerable amount of sputum and cough, and thoroughly toxicæmic. X-ray examination showed the left lung to be practically opaque, although signs of cavitation could just be detected in the upper lobe. The temperature range was very consistent, always about 100 to 101 deg. F. each evening. Artificial pneumothorax had been attempted in England, but had failed owing to the presence of strong adhesions. It was attempted again here by me, with the same result. The condition of the right lung, although the apex was slightly affected, was very good. As the patient was obviously going downhill, a consultation was called with a view to the advisability of surgical intervention. A plastic operation was decided upon, and on November 4th an extrapleural thoracoplasty was performed in one sitting, under local anaesthesia, parts of every rib being removed.

The patient stood this very severe operation remarkably well, and six weeks after was able to get up and lead a quiet, ordinary life, for the first time for over a year. His condition after four months (March, 1928) was extremely good; he had gained two kilos in weight, and the sputum had almost ceased, what there was being tubercle negative. The temperature range was never higher than 99.2 deg. F. (rectal) at night, and all symptoms of activity had disappeared. The patient returned to England, for urgent reasons, during the summer, and followed his profession (solicitor) in London without any ill

effects at all. He returned to Davos in November, 1928, for the winter. His condition is now excellent; he weighs 86 kilograms, as against 73 a year ago. He has steadily improved since the operation."

**A Shortage of Waiters.**

This short notice is taken from the *Yorkshire Post* (Jan. 10th). It seems strange that prejudice and red tape should be allowed to interfere with the development and expansion of an industry hitherto neglected in this country.

"The complaint made by a Belfast hotel manager that there is a scarcity of waiters of the right type is hardly calculated to help the "Come to Britain" Movement which the new National Travel Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is being formed to encourage. But the complaint is true, and not only of Belfast and Northern Ireland, but of Britain generally. The causes of the shortage are partly national prejudice against waiting as a profession and partly the refusal of the Home Office to allow foreigners to accept salaried posts in this country, which has cut off the once plentiful supply of Italian, Swiss and French waiters.

The London County Council, it is true, has a small school for the training of British cooks and waiters, and in co-operation with the Hotels and Restaurants Association is considering a scheme to enlarge it. Facilities for exchange also exist by which young English and foreign waiters can acquire the languages which every *maitre d'hôtel* must have at his command. Better waiters in English hotels, waiters as efficient in fact as they are abroad, would certainly do something to attract foreign visitors, as the National Travel Association must be well aware. The Association, incidentally, should have held a meeting to-day (Jan. 10th) to discuss its constitution and appoint a director, but with several members abroad and one or two ill this meeting has been postponed until early next month."

**The Klingnau Generating Station.**

The exploitation of the latent water power in Switzerland offers in the first instance lucrative employment to the legal profession, for the prerogatives of the cantonal and local authorities are a matter of uncertainty and speculation and seem to be interpreted according to circumstances. An existing dispute is referred to in the *Electrical Review* (Jan. 4th) as follows:—

"The erection of the new hydro-electric station at Klingnau, in Argovie, has been the subject of much controversy, not only between the Swiss and the Confederation, but also between the Swiss themselves. The Canton of Argovie had taken up negotiations with a Westphalian electric company, whereby it was agreed that the latter should aid in the setting-up of the power station at the junction of the Aar and the Rhine. At first it was stipulated that the Germans should pay half the expenses of installing the plant, and that in return the Forces Motrices of the Rhine and Westphalia should use all the current. But before the protests of other Argovians the authorities were forced to modify their plans, all the more because permission to export Swiss energy must be obtained from the Federal Council, and the Argovian State Council shrewdly suspected that the Government would refuse a permit under the form first conceived. A new arrangement was therefore proposed to the German company. The F.M.R.W. was only to supply 40 per cent. of the cash necessary to set up the works at Klingnau. Argovie would find 50 per cent., and a Swiss bank would furnish 10 per cent. Even this, however, did not altogether please, as it appeared that the bank in question was also lending the German company the capital necessary for its participation in the work, and that, once the latter was in full blast, the Westphalians were to have all the electric energy of Klingnau, for a period of forty years, at cost price! At this point the Federal Council intervened, recommending the Canton to try and find a more national solution of the problem. Meanwhile the Government had been approaching some of the big electric concerns in Switzerland to see if they could not collaborate and undertake the construction and operation of the Klingnau works. But even this arrangement raises difficulties because of the guarantees already given by the Argovian authorities to the Westphalian company. A second scheme has been brought forward whereby the latter would be allowed to join the united collaboration of certain Swiss concerns, but at a much reduced share in both construction and use of current."

**PETITE REVUE DE L'ACTUALITÉ SUISSE**

On est au Palais Fédéral fort annuyé de la menace que les communistes font actuellement planer. Ils prétendent organiser dans un avenir rapproché une grande manifestation antifasciste dans le Tessin.

Vous savez combien l'affaire Rossi, après d'autres de moindre importance, a rendu difficiles les rapports entre Berne et Rome. Ces derniers, malgré les apparences, le sont d'autant plus que l'é-

change des notes diplomatiques, qui suivirent l'élévation du trop célèbre député, est resté franchement à notre avantage, M. Motta ayant maintenu et victorieusement confirmé toutes ses déclarations.

La presse italienne, qui ne s'était tue qu'à contre-cœur et qui continuait à "manger du suisse" chaque fois qu'elle le pouvait, a sauté sur cette nouvelle source de querelles et l'exploite avec une joie hargneuse. Elle ne cherche pas à savoir si le gouvernement fédéral interdira, comme c'est certain, semblable manifestation. Elle parle au contraire comme si cette dernière avait présentement lieu. Et ses paroles agressives dépassant toute mesure de courtoisie, s'en vont jusqu'à mettre en cause le siège de la Société des Nations.

"Le Giornale d'Italia" croyant obtenir de cette façon tout ce qu'il voudra de notre petit pays, va jusqu'à dire que la Suisse est indigne de la grande institution internationale, que l'atmosphère qu'on y respire n'est point celle qui doit entourer d'aussi importantes conférences et laisse sous-entendre que si le siège de la Société des Nations n'est pas transféré en quelque autre lieu, l'Italie se verrait obligée de se retirer de ce Cénacle des Nations.

Que voilà un habile chantage! Je sais bien que le "Giornale d'Italia" parle pour son propre compte et que sa mauvaise humeur lui est personnelle. Mais n'oublions pas cependant qu'en Italie, la presse est soumise à de draconiques dispositions et que rien de ce qu'elle écrit n'échappe au gouvernement. Alors! que nous veut-on?

Le parti socialiste suisse mène chez nous une violente et méthodique campagne contre la Légion Etrangère. Il y eut durant l'année écoulée des cas regrettables et scandaleux. On n'a pas oublié l'aventure de ces deux jeunes bâlois, qui, malgré des interventions supérieures, ne purent que déplorer la tragique escapade à laquelle ils s'étaient livrés à la suite d'un trop rapide emportement.

Aujourd'hui, le Département de l'Instruction Publique du canton de Berne adresse à toutes ses écoles une circulaire qui stigmatise et attire l'attention des élèves comme des professeurs sur les terribles dangers d'un "enrôlement." Le Conseil fédéral lui-même aurait entrepris par l'intermédiaire de notre ministre à Paris d'attirer l'attention du gouvernement français sur certains faits regrettables dont la presse suisse a longuement parlé.

De son côté, le parti socialiste est décidé à intervenir auprès du parti socialiste français et à l'engager à une violente campagne contre la Légion Etrangère. Et pour renforcer leur démarche, les députés de ces partis interpellent successivement devant les grands Conseil des différents cantons.

Il faut que je vous dise deux mots des Fêtes du Rhône qui seront célébrées cet été avec un faste inaccoutumé à Genève. Vous savez qu'il existe une Union des Rhodaniens qui groupe les communes, les cantons et les Etats traversés par le grand fleuve depuis sa source jusqu'à son embouchure. Genève a revendiqué par l'organe de son Conseil d'Etat dès 1927 à Lyon l'organisation de ce troisième Congrès du Rhône.

Ce Corps auguste, dont la majorité est radicale, a accordé la présidence du comité d'organisation à un de ses membres malheureux, qui avait mordu la poussière aux récentes élections. Ce dernier reprenant l'antique adage latin "Panem et circenses" s'imagina qu'en offrant de grandioses spectacles de cirque à la populations genevoise, il reconquerrait auprès d'elle son prestige et parviendrait de ce fait à se rasseoir sur le siège qu'il regrette tant.

Malheureusement pour lui, il n'a pas joué assez franc jeu. Il s'en est tenu à une suite de petits comités, travaillant pour la plupart en huit-clos, et ses adversaires politiques n'ont pas manqué de lui porter un coup direct en prétendant qu'il tenait la population genevoise à l'écart de ses projets alors que son budget était tout près d'atteindre le demi-million. D'aucuns s'en vont même dire que les Fêtes du Rhône sont gravement compromises, presque à l'eau! et, malgré tout, elles ont lieu pour notre plus grand joie, le tremplin électoral que l'on avait dressé pour leur présidence paraît, lui, être parti... à la dérive!

Erik.

**EIDGENÖSSISCHE GLOSSEN.**

*Erschütternde Tage und unerschütterte Männer.*

Wenn wir uns mit dem Kino im Adtsweggen abgeben, so geschieht es nicht im produktiven Sinne. Statt schöpferisch zu sein, begnügen wir uns mit der Zensur. Und diese Zensur ist nicht etwa gegen das Gefährlichste in gewissen Filmen, gegen das Uebermass von Seichtheit, Lüge und Sentimentalität gerichtet (wie dankbar wäre man für eine derart eingestellte Zensur), sondern gegen jene hundert Meter, von denen man eine Schädigung unseres politischen Sinnes, ja vielleicht des inneren Gleichgewichtes unseres Staates befürchtet. Besonders wenn der Bolschewismus in Frage kommt. Das Problem tritt noch schärfer hervor, wenn es gerade das bolschewistische Russland ist, das die in künstlerischer Hinsicht besten Filme macht.

In Zürich ist der russische Film "Zehn Tage, die die Welt erschüttern" seinerzeit verboten worden. Nun hat man ihn von neuem geprüft und das Ergebnis heisst: Zulassung. Er wird also demnächst in einem Kino zur Aufführung gelangen (ohne Kürzungen, sagt die eine Zeitungsmeldung, mit 700 Metern Kürzung, sagt eine andere.) Darum