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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

For the six months to June last the Federal Post Office registers a loss of 2.1 million francs, as against 7 million francs during the same period of last year; the telegraph and telephone service records a deficit of Frs. 176,831 (Frs. 503,089 in 1922). The Federal Railways show a surplus of 4.4 millions for the month of June, bringing up the total for the first half of this year to 39.3 million francs.

The Federal Tribunal confirmed the judgments of the local courts, according to which some members of the Old Catholic party were condemned to pay damages for having published, in 1921, a defamatory electioneering address against State Councillor Dr. Dietschi, the Stadtmann of Olten.

Statistics compiled by the *Berner Schulblatt* show that the amounts devoted to public education in the different cantons varies tremendously, some cantons spending six to seven times more than others. Calculated per head of population, Basel-Stadt shows 43.40 francs, Geneva 37.20, Zurich 35.20, whilst the quota of the inner-cantons Schwyz and Uri is as low as 6.40 and 6.10 respectively.

An eagle, the second within a fortnight, has been shot down in the canton of Glarus, where these birds are said to be causing considerable damage to game. Only nine weeks old, the wings of the eagle measured 180 centimetres from tip to tip.

Monsignor Jos. Stammeler, Bishop of Basle and Lugano, celebrated on the 19th inst. the 60th anniversary of his having taken holy orders.

Henri Moser, of Schaffhausen, a well-known traveller and collector, died at Vevey at the age of 79. Born in Petrograd, he as a young man joined the Russian army, and during the latter's expeditions and pillages in Asia developed a keen sense as a connoisseur of art and rarities; this passion guided him through the whole of life. In 1914 he presented to the Berne Museum an ethnographic collection of Eastern *objets d'art*, containing about five thousand pieces and said to be worth ten million francs.

## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

**La population de la Suisse en 1921.** — Le dernier fascicule des publications du Bureau fédéral de statistique donne des détails intéressants sur le mouvement de la population en Suisse pendant l'année 1921. Nous en extrayons quelques chiffres.

Le nombre des mariages avait atteint en 1920 un véritable record, avec le chiffre de 34,075. En 1921 il a subi une baisse sensible et n'est plus que de 32,624. C'est sans doute une conséquence de la crise économique. La diminution est particulièrement forte dans les cantons de Neuchâtel (—16.1%), Glaris (—15.1%) et St-Gall (—12.3%), cantons qui ont été fortement atteints en 1921 par la dépression de l'industrie.

Les divorces, qui s'étaient beaucoup multipliés après la fin de la guerre, ont diminué eux aussi. Ils sont cependant encore 799, contre 2241 en 1920.

Malgré le nombre élevé des mariages en 1920, le chiffre des naissances n'est pas en proportions. Il a en effet légèrement baissé et n'est, en 1921, que de 83,173, contre 83,623 l'année précédente. C'est là un phénomène nouveau. Précédemment le nombre des naissances augmentait régulièrement avec celui des mariages.

La légère diminution des naissances est plus que compensée par la forte réduction des décès. Ils ne sont plus que 49,518 contre 55,992 en 1920. Chose curieuse, ils ont beaucoup plus diminué chez les hommes (—13.1%) que chez les femmes (—10%). La réduction se fait sentir à la campagne et dans la population suisse beaucoup plus que dans les villes et dans la population étrangère. On meurt moins à la campagne que dans les villes.

Les étrangers, qui présentèrent un excédent de naissances de 8938 en 1913, n'ont plus qu'un excédent de 1189 en 1921. Par suite des naturalisations (9088 cas en 1921) la population étrangère a diminué de 2%.

En 1921 la population totale de la Suisse se montait à 3,884,200 habitants (moyenne de l'année). (*Journal de Genève.*)

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**Deux Suisses font le tour du monde à bicyclette.** — Deux Suisses, M. et Mme. Leuret, en route pour faire, dans la mesure du possible, le tour du monde à bicyclette, sont arrivés sains et saufs à Nantes. Ils en sont repartis, se dirigeant vers Brest, d'où ils gagneront Cherbourg, où ils s'embarqueront pour les Etats-Unis.

Partis le 12 octobre 1921 de Suisse, M. et Mme. Leuret ont déjà parcouru l'Autriche, la Tchécoslovaquie, la Hongrie, la Roumanie, la Turquie, l'Anatolie, la Syrie, la Palestine, l'Egypte, la Tunisie, l'Algérie, le Maroc et la Provence, soit plus de 20,000 km. Hormis les traversées maritimes impossibles à éviter, ils utilisent seulement la marche et la bicyclette.

Les deux "globe-trotter" concourent, avec les groupes Hartmann (Suisse) et Van Deuvel (Belgique), pour le prix de 200,000 francs institué par le stade Helvétique, de Genève. Le classement se fera suivant le temps employé à parcourir l'itinéraire qui n'est pas le même pour les trois groupes. Le raid est contrôlé officiellement à toutes les étapes.

Le voyage de M. et Mme. Leuret va se continuer par la visite des Etats-Unis, du Japon, de la Sibirie, de la Russie et de la Pologne. Il doit être terminé le 12 octobre 1926 au plus tard.

Ajoutons, que les intrépides voyageurs n'ont d'autres ressources que la vente de cartes postales. (*La Sentinelle.*)

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**Une bonne tuile.** — La gagnante du lot de 25,000 francs de la loterie pour les églises valaisannes est Mlle. Ida Bessero, de Sion, âgée de 19 ans et demi, employée de bureau, à Sion.

Mlle. Bessero a remporté à Lausanne, en 1921, le premier diplôme de sténographie Aimé-Paris par 150 mots à la minute, au concours organisé par le Comité central suisse de l'Union sténographique Aimé-Paris. Elle obtint peu après le premier prix de dactylographie à Vevey.

(*Le Travail Genève.*)

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

### Young Swiss—England.

My readers will be pleased to learn that this question is receiving the serious attention of our Minister, Mr. Paravicini, who, although not able at the moment to move diplomatically, owing to the attitude of the British Home Office, is, I learn, taking the welcome step of convening a meeting of the Swiss Economic Commission in London with a view of having the whole matter thoroughly discussed by the representative body of Swiss Commerce and Industry in London. We take it that this body will, after debate, pass a resolution embodying its findings and *desiderata*, and it will then perhaps be possible to place the matter before our authorities at Berne, with a view of discussing the problem with our British friends.

As I have explained before, the matter is extraordinarily important for the future of Swiss Commerce, because, if young Swiss are prevented from absorbing British ways of business and the wide British commercial outlook, this want of experience must make itself severely felt in years to come. Besides, the exclusion of young Swiss from Great Britain must drive most of them towards Teutonic or other quarters, none of them to the advantage of Anglo-Swiss Relations.

Thanks to the move now contemplated by our Minister, who can always be relied upon to do everything he can in furtherance of Swiss interests, the matter seems now to be coming to a head. But do not run away with the idea that further discussion and agitation, whenever opportunity presents itself, is now unnecessary!


I might point to the fact that the British Minister at Berne writes a long letter to the *Anglo-Swiss Commercial Gazette* in support of British Firms established in Switzerland engaging British ex-Officers! As one of my readers, who kindly sends me the paper, remarks: "If the British Minister in Berne 'agitates,' I do not see why the Swiss Societies in London should not also agitate!" (Hear, hear!)

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### Bundespräsident Scheurer and Near East Peace.

*Evening News* (24th July):— Historic scenes marked the signing of the Treaty, which was announced by crashing peals of bells from the churches, while the flags of the contracting nations fluttered in the breeze.

The ceremony took place at the University. When the delegates met, the president of the



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Conference. Herr Scheurer, who is President of Switzerland, delivered an impressive address, in which he said:—

"From the bottom of our hearts we hope that the people's participating in the conclusion of peace will find in the future confirmation of this lesson! Conflict of arms inflicts the worst suffering on mankind. Conflict of ideas reveals the light."

"History teaches what a debt of gratitude we owe to the people of the Near East for the immense part they have played in the development of civilisation."

"To-day, after long years of heroic struggle, they lay down their arms."

"We hope that as soon as they have staunchened their wounds and returned to their pacific activity, we shall be able to enjoy anew all the benefits which in the past they have so liberally conferred on humanity."

Bravo, Mr. President! May the peoples concerned and all others take to heart your lofty, noble, statesmanlike words!

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### The Spahlinger Treatment.

*Manchester Guardian* (19th July):—

The paper mentioned, as well as many others, gives prominence to the proposal of the Lancashire Insurance Committee, which, if adopted, as there is good reason to believe it will be, would give a great help to Mr. Spahlinger's efforts to rid the world of one of the worst perils now rampant:

The decision of the Lancashire Insurance Committee to take a lead in saving the Spahlinger research into the treatment of tuberculosis from ceasing for lack of funds by a contribution of £100,000 is a notable step. The public health bodies in this country have so far done almost nothing to aid in a work which, though highly complex, expensive and slow, yet affords a reasonable hope of a cure—it is too soon yet to speak more positively—for many victims of the most dreadful scourge of mankind. The British Red Cross has given £30,000. The Ministry of Health, on the other hand, preserves a benevolently watchful attitude, but will take no financial risk. Yet it is apparently proved beyond cavil that in 80 per cent. of the four hundred cases on which it has been tried the Spahlinger serum has had notably good results. Its possibilities are not as yet by any means proved. There is not enough of it available to prove them, and its discoverer, who could, it is said, sell his formula at once for a large sum, is anxious to make good his claims by much more extensive and successful treatment of tuberculous cases before he releases for general use the synthesis of some twenty-two different serums with which he is experimenting. There is an element of risk in backing such a project, but it is as nothing compared with the chance of a permanent and vast benefit to mankind. If this grant is permitted by the Ministry of Health, and we do not doubt that on the representations of the strong Lancashire deputation now in London it will be, an institution will be established at Eastbourne for the Spahlinger treatment of Lancashire patients, and M. Spahlinger will be secure for a year at least to continue and to extend his work. It is fortunate that the Lancashire Committee should have sufficient funds in hand to take a lead in this matter, and that they should have the imagination to do so.

Mr. Spahlinger, by the way, is in London and visited Sir Alfred Mond at the House of Commons, according to the *Manchester Evening News*, which states that last year the number of deaths attributable to Tuberculosis was 42,777 for England and Wales alone!

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### Swiss Engineering Skill.

*Hampstead Advertiser* (12th July):—

Holiday-makers in the mountainous parts of Switzerland who feel disposed to infuse a little serious

and exceedingly interesting knowledge into their vacation will find much instruction and food for thought in the wonderful way in which the natural power of rushing mountain water supplies two essential present-day services.

A remarkable instance of the use of this natural power is to be seen at Kiblis, near Klosters. There the tremendous volume of snow water which rushes down from the mountains is trapped and conducted through two specially constructed cast-iron conduits, falling some 1,200 feet into a new and beautifully-built power station, where its force is capable of working several dynamos of 10,000 horse-power each. A current of no less than 50,000 volts is available for transmission, and power is supplied both for working the mountain railway and for electric light. Travelling along the handsome roof of the station is a powerful electric crane capable of lifting at any spot pieces of machinery to the weight of 40 tons. At the end of the station is a room from which, by means of pressing buttons, everything may be controlled.

Those who secure permission to visit this magnificent plant will marvel at the engineering skill of our Swiss friends, and when they learn how cheap electric light is, envy the natural conditions which make it so.

Reading the above, and remembering the London Storm of a fortnight ago, reminded me of a visit I paid in the long ago to the Electricity Works at Sihlbrugg. A fierce thunderstorm raged, and I was rather uneasy when little blue flames appeared not only on all sorts of objects, but were drawn from my nose and my hair by an engineer by simply poking a finger at me. I was then assured that it was quite safe, but I well remember the relief I felt when we got out again after the storm and the pride which rose in my bosom because I had refrained from showing my anxiety too much. "Kyburg" was very young then!

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#### Winter Sport in Summer.

*The Times* (17th July):—

Over four hundred persons witnessed to-day the Jungfrauoch ski races, the great event of the Bernese Oberland summer season. It was a fine sight to see the skilful skiers—sixty in all, including ten ladies—gliding amid sparkling clouds of snow down this gorgeous site overshadowed by the huge, ice-clad masses of the Eiger and the Jungfrau.

The long-distance race was held yesterday from the Jungfrauoch to a place near the Concordia hut and back—an eight-mile course. This race was won by M. Graf, of Wengen. To-day the ladies' race was won by Mlle. Trudi Abplanalp, of Grindelwald.

The Slalom and ladies' races and the jumping were held amid showers of rain and snow and squalls of cold wind, while avalanches roared on the flanks of the Jungfrau and thunder on the Oberaletsch. Rain interfered with the jumps, some of which were, however, splendid.

The slalom race was won by M. Brunner, of Grindelwald; Dr. Baader, a German compatriot, was second. Rain and heavy snow interfered with the jumping, but Dr. Baader jumped 34 metres and won the first prize. The Jungfrau prize for the best average results in all competitions was won by M. Schenk, of Grindelwald.

This is the sort of news we like to read during a heat wave! Most of my readers probably know the Sledge on the Eiger Glacier, and most of us have probably spent a franc or two for the privilege of having a run on a sledge in the summer! Unseasonable things, whether it be fruit or sport or whatnot, seem to have a great attraction for most of us. Why?

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#### A Swiss Beauty Spot Endangered.

*The Times* (14th July):—

Strong protests are being made in the Swiss Press against the projected construction of a high road connecting Lugano and Forlèzza, at the eastern end of the Lake of Lugano, and passing through the village of Gandria.

Two schemes have been brought forward; the Gandria scheme, providing for a road along the shore, involves the expenditure of £21,200, and the other scheme, providing for a road at 300ft. above the level of the Lake of Lugano, is estimated to cost nearly £60,000.

Gandria is certainly one of the beauty spots of the Lake of Lugano; so far there is only a mule path leading from Castagnola to Gandria, beyond which there are only difficult paths in the mountains, mainly used by smugglers. The village is most picturesque, with its houses built the one above the other on the steep mountain side, the walls of the lower ones bathing in the green waters of the lake; its vaults, its suspended gardens and vineyards, its narrow passages and staircases. The construction of a road through Gandria would spoil this village, which appeals so much to painters; it would be necessary to pull down many houses in order to open a passage for the road and to blow to pieces the famous Rocco di Gandria, a huge rock which rises from the lake and above which the mule path now passes.

I have heard, however, that the danger to this famous Beauty Spot may be avoided by tunnelling through the rock. It would indeed be strange if the authorities willfully allowed a world-famous beauty spot to be destroyed, if there is any possible way out of the difficulty. Swiss engineering skill is, of course, quite well able to find such a way and I should think that any extra expense involved in such an alternative scheme would be well spent.

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#### Of Interest to our Engineers.

*Morning Post* (17th July):—

An unofficial conference of secretaries of Standardising organisations in different countries has recently been held in Zurich, Switzerland. The conference was presided over by M. Zollinger, the secretary of the Swiss Committee, the vice-chairman being Mr. le Maistre, the secretary of the British Engineering Standards Association. A discussion took place in regard to organisation and methods of working, the practical application of standards, the extent to which international collaboration is taking place at the present time, and the possibilities of making it more effective.

Those of us who know something about the British Engineering Standards Association and who have, at times, to wrestle with the Standards and translate them into others, will wish every success to endeavours to simplify the standards and find a workable and practical way of using them.

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From an article in the *Daily Herald* (7th July), by the way, I can recommend this paper to those of my friends who are able to read political articles which are opposed to their own pet views! Very often I find in the *Daily Herald* extremely well-written articles and, of course, a lot of news which can be found in no other papers, but which is vital if one wants to form an independent judgment. I quote the following:—

The Swiss are the only people who have guarded themselves against this danger. They elect rulers who appear to be chosen because they are capable and talk little. Everywhere else the takers are vastly over-estimated, and the more solid gift of character takes usually second place.

The article is entitled "The Curse of Talk," and deals faithfully with those politicians who have learnt and are able to discuss any subject fluently and without knowing anything about it and also without saying anything in the end! All the same, it is strange that most of those who sin in this respect in the Swiss Parliament are precisely the friends of the *Daily Herald*! Conditions, of course, are different. But the D.H. is certainly right in calling such performances a Curse and a real Danger to Democracy.

#### FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

The last two monthly bulletins issued by the Swiss Bank Corporation set out the present financial situation of the Confederation.

The accounts for 1922 show an expenditure of Frs. 505,271,645 and a revenue of Frs. 425,863,980, leaving a deficit of Frs. 79,407,666, which is by about 48 millions smaller than that of the preceding year. The net deficit works out at Frs. 52½ million, as compared with Frs. 218 million in 1921.

The revenue in 1922 reached a figure never previously touched and compares with only 187 millions in the last pre-war year. As before the war, the principal sources of income are the customs, which are responsible for over 38 per cent. of the total.

Before the war the various Federal Services used to show regular surpluses, but have since 1914 worked at a loss. The largest of these is the Post Office, on which the deficit was Frs. 4,706,000, as compared with nearly Frs. 19 million in 1921. One of the most progressive branches of this department is the Postal Cheque Service, which was started in 1906. At the end of 1922 there were 47,710 accounts, as compared with less than 16,000 before the war. The total turnover in 1922 comes to nearly Frs. 17 milliards.

The Telegraph and Telephone services, taken together, show a surplus of Frs. 932,000, the loss on the former section being more than balanced by the telephone surplus. The capital invested in these services amounted, at the end of 1922, to Frs. 213 million, while in 1913 it was Frs. 44½ million. The renewal fund reached a total of Frs. 94 million, as against Frs. 86½ million in 1921, and plant and installations figured in the balance sheet at Frs. 278 million, as against Frs. 252 million in 1921.

Summarising the general impressions drawn from the facts enumerated in this section of the Bulletin, the writer states that Switzerland's national organisation has become more and more complicated. The various duties which the State has taken gradually upon itself have greatly added to the difficulties of management. Including the Federal Railways, the State has to deal with an army of nearly 68,000 officials and employees. The work of the Federal Council is in many cases analogous to that of the Board of a large Company, the activities of which touch most branches of commerce and industry, but which does not work to achieve profits. It is not surprising if the direction of this complex organisation presents great difficulties and if, in spite of praiseworthy efforts to restore the financial balance, the effect of these efforts is slow to come.

The financial problem of the Federal Government is two-fold: the re-establishment of an equilibrium between expenses and receipts, and the gradual repayment of the debt accumulated during the war and after. The chief of the Finance Department expects to attain the former object within the next two or three years. With a view to this the Swiss people, in 1917, voted the Stamp Duty, in 1921 the Coupon Tax, and have authorised large increases in the Customs Tariff. This is not sufficient. If expenditure is not ruthlessly cut down it is to be feared that the people will not receive with favour any proposal of new taxes. — As for the redemption of the debt, a special tax has already been voted and is being collected, and the weight of the debt may also be reduced through conversions at opportune moments. On the other hand, it would be a mistake to impose on the

present generation the whole of the charge of debt redemption.

All things considered, the Bulletin concludes, we are not amongst those who have been hit the hardest. Our population has not been decimated. It is true, our wealth, public and private, has been greatly diminished through international monetary and financial troubles, but our real assets, factories, means of transport, are intact and our national credit has remained and, subject to the policy we adopt, should continue to remain one of the best in the world.

#### STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

BONDS.		July 18	July 24
Swiss Confederation 3% 1903	...	76.50%	73.00%
Swiss Confed. 9th Mob. Loan 5%	...	101.00%	100.85%
Federal Railways A—K 3½%	...	78.75%	78.75%
Canton Basle-Stadt 5½% 1921	...	102.50%	102.37%
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892...	...	69.50%	69.75%
SHARES.		Nom.	July 18 July 24
		Frs.	Frs.
Swiss Bank Corporation	...	500	645 642
Crédit Suisse	...	500	675 676
Union de Banques Suisses	...	500	527 523
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	...	1000	3200 3212
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	...	1000	2100 2184
C. F. Bally S.A.	...	1000	1040 1042
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon	...	500	680 670
Entreprises Sulzer	...	1000	630 668
S.A. Brown Boveri (new)	...	500	330 323
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	...	200	177 174
Choc. Suisses Peter-Cailler-Kohler	...	100	110 111
Comp. de Navig' n'ur le Lac Léman	...	500	492 485

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