

THE RUSSIFICATION OF FINLAND.

Translated for Public Opinion of June 5, from which we reprint.

The Russification of Finland is progressing with disastrous effects, according to the St. Petersburg correspondent of the Independence Belge. So far it has been next to impossible to secure accurate information concerning the troubles which occurred at Helsingfors and Viborg, on account of the close scrutiny of the censorship. In fact the Russian papers, among them the *Novoe Vremya*, the *Novosti*, and the *Gazette of St. Petersburg*, state editorially, "that the government of St. Petersburg has not only been kept in absolute ignorance of the real state of affairs, but has actually been deceived" by the reports of Gen. Bobrikoff, asserting the "Finnish people had accepted the new military law with entire satisfaction." "It is through such mendacious reports," says the *Novosti*, "that the Russian authorities have been deceived concerning the true situation of the country which they govern against the wishes and against the interest of the people."

The *Gazette of Finland*, semi-official organ of the government, is the only available source of information from which the correspondent of the Independence Belge in St. Petersburg could gather an account of the last revolutionary outbreak in Finland, and, as might be expected, this account is "highly colored for the benefit of the Russian authorities, while the true state of affairs is shown in a more dramatic light in private letters sent from Helsingfors to St. Petersburg." The government being under the impression that the application of the new military law, which provides for the oath of allegiance to Russia, would hasten the Russification of Poland, ordered the recruiting to proceed. At Helsingfors 857 men were called for, and 57 only answered; riots occurred, and the Cossacks were compelled to charge the populace, which threatened to burn the barracks. Without the intervention of Mr. Mourén, the Lutheran pastor who addressed the rioters, the loss of life would have proved very large, as the First regiment of Finnish sharpshooters was ready to fire, when he interfered and begged the officers to allow him to speak. This incident started the revolutionary movement, which spread all over the duchy with lightning rapidity. Martial law is expected at any moment. The Russian government then issued an "imperial re-

script," notifying the Finns that "disobedience to the military law would be a convincing proof of the insufficiency of the administrative system inaugurated last century to guarantee the peaceful conduct of public affairs and submission to the authorities."

The Finns consider this "rescript" as a practical proclamation of martial law, inasmuch as many "communes" (districts) have refused to obey the existing law. The governors have imposed very heavy fines on those "communes." Hammerford paid 35,000 marks, Helsingfors 30,000, and six other cities from 15,000 to 20,000 marks. These fines greatly exasperated the people. In some places the boards of medical examiners refused to assist in a system of recruiting which they consider unlawful. As usual, the Cossacks were on hand to handle the refractory recruits. At Viborg 150 young men were called by the military authorities; 32 only came. At Nikarleby a single man presented himself; he was crippled. Besides, not a single recruit would take the oath. The measures of repression were in keeping with Russian methods. At Helsingfors the Cossacks rode into the Protestant church, chasing everybody. They broke also into private houses, flogging the inhabitants, sparing neither women nor children. Convalescents were whipped in the hospitals, and a school teacher who attempted to protect a young girl was beaten to insensibility by an officer. The opposition to the military law is universal. According to the "official" reports published in the *Gazette of Finland*, those who took part in the riots almost exclusively belong to the best classes of society. So far the opposition has been so successful that the period of enlistment has been extended to the end of June.

Commenting editorially upon these events, the Independence Belge says: "The Finns will not be brought to terms by the Cossacks; any kind of brutal action will do nothing but exasperate this prudent and wise nation, which would never have rebelled openly, but which protests against the illegal acts already committed with a dignity and self-respect worthy of the greatest praise. The government at St. Petersburg could formerly rely on the loyalty of the Finn; through its stupidity it has made of them a rebellious people, the resistance of which will prove unconquerable. What reliance can Russia place on the Finnish recruits, incorporated by force? It is good policy to supply internal enemies with weapons, while organizing

an army against the outsiders?" In the opinion of the same paper, if the government at St. Petersburg persists in its "unfortunate policy" in the grand duchy of Finland, the only result will be to give a large impulse to Finnish emigration. At the present time 1,000 Finns leave their country each week, and if this state of affairs keeps up, Finland will be deserted in a very short time.

THE LABOR PROBLEM A RELIGIOUS ONE.

The Rev. Herbert S. Bigelow, pastor of the Vine Street Congregational Church, in Cincinnati, and Democratic candidate for Secretary of State of Ohio, in the Cincinnati Post of September 1.

The greatest religious problem of the age is the labor problem, and through a new conception of what religion means I believe the labor problem will be solved. Strikes will not solve the problem. Even to-day the strike is employed, not so much because strikers have faith in it, as because they do not see any better means of enforcing their demands. When men have learned what can be done with the ballot they will turn to it as the sure road, and the only road to emancipation.

There is no real cause for quarrel between labor and capital, and there never was any. There certainly is, though, a bitter conflict at hand; the conflict has already begun. But look beneath the surface and you will see that this conflict is not between labor on the one hand and capital on the other, but between labor and capital both on the one hand and monopoly on the other.

By monopoly we mean a special privilege secured by unjust legislation, the practical effect of which is to give some men an unfair advantage over others. Take, for instance, the late Rogers law. Having secured the exclusive privilege of the use of the streets of Cincinnati for a certain purpose, the Consolidated Street Railway company believed it would be able to demand a five-cent fare of its passengers for the next 50 years, and it capitalized that prospect, and has declared dividends on a capital stock of \$20,000,000, where the actual capital invested is probably not one-fifth of that amount.

The monopoly which enables the street railroad company to demand a five-cent fare for service which it could well afford for three cents is based on a special privilege; that