

on account of their inability to cope with the present difficult situation. Upon perusing the memorial we clearly understand that these high officials have been exerting themselves in rendering services to the Government. But, having received profound grace from Us, they ought not to have made such a request. We hereby command that they be not allowed to be relieved of their duties as Grand Councillors.

We have perused the Tzucheng Yuan's memorial impeaching the Grand Councillors for being unaware of their responsibilities and consequently unable to render satisfactory services. We wish it to be understood that the supreme power of appointing, remunerating and dismissing officials is in the hands of the Government and is so stated in the Institutes of the former dynasty. Thus, it is clear that the question as to whether or not the Grand Councillors should assume responsibility and whether a responsible Cabinet should be formed is to be decided by the Government and not to be interfered with by the President of the Tzucheng Yuan and others. We hereby order that the memorial need not be considered.

The position seems unassailable. The Council of Ministers is a part of the autocracy, aids to the Emperor as an autocrat, not a responsible Ministry, which of course will come with a Constitutional Parliament. From their point of view the leaders of the Assembly found themselves in an ambiguous position, and threats of immediate adjournment were made. Curiously enough, also, some of the Provincial Assemblies sent telegraphic inquiries as to these matters, offering also to adjourn likewise, as a protest. Fortunately, this was not done, though it may be that the irregular attendance of which the papers complain was in part due to a feeling that the Assembly had no real power, for good or evil. While one can quite understand their wish, in the midst of a chaos of antiquated and inefficient institutions, to proceed with the work of supplanting them with better ones, it is probably true that an experimental and advisory Assembly may be needed before an actual Parliament can profitably be established.

It is, however, to be noted that the Peking papers intimate that the edict for the early establishment of a responsible Cabinet is believed to be due to the controversy above suggested, and that a further session of the Assembly is to be held in the spring.

#### Freedom of the Press.

Probably the fact is that nothing more could be expected from this Assembly than it has done—though it has, of course, met the usual fate. Some newspapers have severely criticised it from a progressive standpoint, and one published a cartoon representing the members as a set of dogs led by the collar. This latter was prohibited from publication for a short term. While with our ideas of legal freedom to say what one pleases, even if one chooses to say blackguard and foolish things, this seems harsh, it is mild enough compared with what would probably have happened ten or twenty years ago. On the other hand, a dignitary of high rank presented to the throne a memorial charging the Assembly with disrespect for old customs—a close parallel to the charge against Socrates. In this case no one but the memorialist seems to have taken his complaint very seriously. It is interesting to note, in connection with the above, that one of the papers here, the National Daily News, condemns the Free-

dom of the Press Act, passed by the Assembly, stating that it is copied verbatim from the Japanese Act; "and it is notorious," says the News, "that in Japan freedom of the Press does not exist."

In connection with this, also, is of interest the recent prosecution of certain Socialists (or Anarchists) in Japan.\* Correspondence from Tokyo in a Peking paper states that the Government has found evidence which justifies relentless prosecution of those "believed to entertain dangerous views." Upon objection by an Englishman whose letter is quoted, the same correspondent states that the prisoners are not prosecuted "merely because they professed extreme socialistic views," but for "having conspired to commit a crime falling under the category of Article 73 of the Criminal Code." He does not, however, state what that Article covers. It is interesting to note the opinion of at least part of the progressive Chinese. The China Critic comments: "No wonder other nations are pointing the finger of scorn at Japanese law." And the Peking Daily News refers, quoting the last sentence from the Critic, to the trial of "a small crowd of Socialists who did nothing more than is openly done by these people in every capital in Europe without any official notice being taken of their actions."

But, on the other hand, the native papers claim that though papers in America and Europe are in such respects more free, they are in effect enslaved by subsidies of the rich. One of them charges that the London Times is subsidized by the Japanese Government—as a result of which a copy of an antiquated edition of an Encyclopaedia sold by the Times is to be seen in every station and hotel, besides many other places, along the South Manchurian Railway, and therefore it is impossible to get into the Times anything that is not strictly pro-Japanese.

W. M. E.

\*See The Public, volume xiii, pages 1155, 1181, 1211; this volume, page 84.

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## NEWS NARRATIVE

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To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article, on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before; continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

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Week ending Tuesday, March 28, 1911.

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#### Mexican Government Shaken.

President Diaz's (p. 276) cabinet resigned on the 24th in a body. The President immediately began the formation of a new cabinet, re-appointing one old member, José Yves Limantour, minister of finance (p. 276). Francisco Leon de la Barra, ambassador to the United States (p. 276), was appointed minister of foreign relations, and immediately upon notification left Washington by

rail for the City of Mexico. Manuel de Zacamaca e Inclan has been appointed to succeed Mr. de la Barra at Washington.

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The Washington representative of the revolutionary provisional government, Dr. Vazquez Gomez (p. 203), has announced in the matter of the suspension by the Mexican Federal Government of the Constitutional personal guarantees (p. 250), that—

All persons in any way connected with the promulgation or enforcement of the recent suspension of constitutional guarantees by the Mexican government will be held personally responsible as homicides by the insurgent government.

All political officers or employes, civil or military, and their inferiors who apply or execute that act in the taking of the life of any individual, native or foreigner, will be held personally responsible and will be punished as principals or accomplices in homicide; and when they shall be apprehended by the authorities or forces of the insurgents they will be consigned to judicial authority competent to judge and punish them in conformity with the laws respecting the crime of homicide.

When the revolution shall have triumphed and the constitution is again in force, the authors of this act of General Diaz will be brought to justice in conformity with these same laws. All public officers who have been concerned in the formation and approval of this suspension will be held responsible for all acts done under it.

The revolutionary junta at El Paso announces from the provisional President, Francisco I. Madero (pp. 204, 277), that—

No depreations are being committed by the insurrectos on property in Mexico owned by Americans. No food or other supplies are taken from resident Americans unless a receipt is given, and it is the intention of the provisional government to reimburse any losses sustained by Americans as soon as the anti-constitutional authorities are overthrown.

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#### Progressive Legislation in California.

Upon adjourning on the 27th, the California legislature had passed bills enlarging the powers of the railroad commission, authorizing physical valuation of railroads, prohibiting employment of women for more than eight hours a day; and enacting the Oregon primary law, the Australian ballot abolishing party emblems, and an anti-betting law. The following Constitutional amendments will be submitted at a special election in October: "For the Initiative and Referendum, for the Recall of elective officers, including the judiciary, and for woman suffrage."

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#### Direct Legislation in Nebraska.

In the Nebraska legislature on the 17th a Direct Legislation amendment (p. 39) was adopted,

after long and stubborn opposition. Two amendments, one in each House, were introduced at the opening of the session, the Senate measure by Senator Skiles and the House measure by Representative Hatfield. They were identical, and had been prepared by a committee of the Direct Legislation League in 1909. With slight amendments each bill passed in its own House. The Senate bill was then loaded in the lower House with amendments which the Senate rejected, and over these amendments a conference committee sat and reported. The Senate adopted the report of the conference committee unanimously; the lower House adopted it by 71 to 17. The opposition votes in the lower House were cast by strong advocates of Direct Legislation, who believed that if the conference committee's report were rejected, a better measure would be adopted.

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As adopted the Nebraska measure— reserves to the people the power to Initiate laws, and amendments to the Constitution, and to enact or reject them at the polls; also to approve or reject on Referendum at the polls any act, item, section, or part of any act passed by the legislature.

Ten per cent of the legal voters of the State, so distributed as to include five per cent of the legal voters in each of two-fifths of the counties of the State, may Initiate, the petition to contain the full text of the measure proposed. But Constitutional amendments require a petition of 15 per cent of the legal voters of the State distributed in the same manner.

The Referendum may be ordered by a petition of ten per cent of the legal voters of the State, distributed as required for Initiative petitions.

All such measures shall become the law or a part of the Constitution when approved by a majority of the votes cast thereon, provided that the votes cast in favor of the Initiative measure or part of the Constitution constitute 35 per cent of the total vote cast at the election. All propositions must be submitted in a nonpartisan manner and without any indication or suggestion on the ballot that they have been approved or endorsed by any political party or organization.

Only the title of measures shall be printed on the ballots.

The amendment goes to the people of Nebraska for final adoption at the election of 1912.

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#### Direct Legislation in Illinois.

The issue between the direct legislation amendment ordered by popular vote (pp. 265, 275), and the revenue amendment thrust in its way by the Commercial Association and the Civic Federation of Chicago (pp. 265, 275), remains undecided. Only one amendment can be submitted to the people at the same election.

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One of the methods of sidetracking the direct