

## NEWS NARRATIVE

Week ending Thursday, June 22.

### Norway and Sweden.

Unusual interest centered upon the meeting on the 20th of the Swedish Riksdag, or parliament, owing to the expectations of its action regarding the secession of Norway (p. 166), and large crowds gathered in front of the parliament buildings. No business was done, however, although references to the secession were made in some of the speeches. But on the 21st, the first day of the session to be devoted to business, the ministry introduced a bill asking for authority to enter into negotiations with Norway for a conditional settlement of the questions involved in separation. This session was opened by the King in person. Speaking from the throne he said, regarding the ministerial bill:

I have acted in accordance with my conscience and always in conformity with the constitution and with the desire to work conscientiously for the true welfare of the two peoples. The bill presented to the Riksdag does not aim at replying to injustice by acts of coercion. The union is not worth the sacrifices which acts of coercion would entail. A union into which Norway would be forced in such a manner would be of little value to Sweden.

The Premier explained that it was not to Sweden's interest to resort to coercive measures, and recommended, as the bill proposed, the entering into negotiations for a convention by which guaranties should be obtained conducive to the mutual welfare of the two countries. In any case, he declared, negotiations were indispensable to definitely clear up the situation. He suggested that delegates be appointed to this end, as it was only after such a conditional settlement and after the Riksdag had fully considered the matter that Sweden would be in a position to decide as to her definite approval of the dissolution and agree to annulling the act of union. After several members had expressed concurrence in these views the King spoke again:

It is truly painful to me to contribute to the dissolution of a union in which I thought I saw the independence, security and happiness of the united

kingdoms. If, however, I am ready to act thus it is in order to avoid a still worse evil and in the conviction that the union without mutual accord would bring no real advantage to Sweden.

Meanwhile, the Norwegian Storting had on the 19th adopted a conciliatory address to King Oscar, the Riksdag, and the Swedish people in reply to King Oscar's letter of the 13th. In this address—

the Storting suggests to Sweden's constitutional authorities that they enter upon the negotiations requisite for a final settlement on the dissolution of the union with the recognition of Norway's new status and her rights as a sovereign state. The Storting is itself prepared to meet every fair and reasonable wish that may be put forward to safeguard the kingdom's independence and integrity. Constitutionally, the two peoples will henceforward be separate, but at the same time the Storting is fully convinced that this will lead to the development of a good and trustful relationship for the defense of their mutual interests. If the future settlement can be attained without bitterness and prejudice the Storting is convinced that what has happened will prove for the lasting welfare of the northern peoples.

### Russian Internal Affairs.

The address of the Zemstvo congress of Russia (p. 166) was presented to the Czar on the 19th by Prince Troubetskoi, as chairman of the deputation appointed by the congress. The demands of the address are summarized as follows in the news dispatches:

(1) That representation shall not be according to classes.

(2) That nobody shall be excluded on account of race or religion, since those excluded would be discontented and would defeat the first object of the assembly—namely: the pacification of the country.

(3) That the assembly shall not be a patchwork addition to the present bureaucratic institutions, but an entirely new corporation with a distinct character and powers.

(4) That the press shall be allowed complete freedom, that meetings shall not be molested, personal freedom shall be guaranteed, as otherwise the assembly will not truly and adequately represent the sentiments of the country.

Replying to the deputation, the Czar is reported to have pledged "his imperial word that Russia should have a national assembly," although he did not say when.

His language on this point, as reported by the dispatches, was:

My will is sovereign, and it is my unalterable will that the admission of elected representatives to the works of state shall be regularly accomplished. I watch daily and devote myself to this work. You may announce that to all your friends in country and town.

### The Russian-Japanese War.

Rumors of skirmishes in Manchuria (p. 167) continue. On the 18th it was reported from Tokio that the Japanese field marshal, Oyama, had begun a general advance, in the progress of which he had occupied Liaoyangwopeng, the headquarters of the Russian army. The Russian war office on the 19th denied the reports of a general advance by the Japanese; but on the 21st dispatches from Tokio by way of London asserted that the Japanese were then "continuing their victorious advance," and added: "The Russians have been completely outflanked on both wings, and news of Japanese victories may be expected shortly.

### Venezuela and the United States.

An incident of the complications in which the asphalt trust has involved Venezuela and the United States, was the dismissal on the 20th of Herbert W. Bowen, American minister to Venezuela, from the diplomatic service of the United States.

Mr. Bowen had succeeded Francis B. Loomis as minister to Venezuela and Mr. Loomis had become assistant secretary of state under Secretary Hay. Soon after this change Mr. Bowen reported to Secretary Hay that rumors affecting the integrity of Mr. Loomis were freely circulating in Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, and that to his own knowledge these rumors had been transmitted by the foreign diplomatic representatives at Caracas to their respective governments. Secretary Hay submitted this message to President Roosevelt and then officially rebuked Mr. Bowen for allowing his predecessor to be traduced when the honor of the service was involved.

Meanwhile an investigation had been conducted at Washington which satisfied the authorities of Mr. Loomis's innocence. But the rumors in Caracas became more