

NEWS NARRATIVE

The figures in brackets at the ends of paragraphs refer to volumes and pages of *The Public* for earlier information on the same subject.

Week ending Tuesday, January 30, 1912.

Final Result of German Elections.

At the second elections in Germany on the 25th, the political complexion of the new Reichstag, to meet on the 7th of February, was disclosed. There were 33 seats yet to fill, of which the Socialists won 11 out of the 22 which they had the right (through being either first or second at the first elections) to contest. This increases the Socialist strength from 53 in the Reichstag just dissolved, to 110 in the one about to convene; and it gives them 29 more seats than they have ever had before. It also makes the Socialist party the strongest individual party in the Reichstag.



The balance of power in the next Reichstag is reported to be held by the National Liberal party, of which Ernest Bassermann is the leader. This party can, by co-operating with either the reactionaries or the progressives, create a Parliamentary majority; and it is surmised that they may come to an understanding with the Socialists and other progressives, thereby divesting the conservative element of all control. This, however, is doubtful. The National Liberal slogan is said to be: "The *foe* stands on the Left, the *opponent* in the Right."



The final results of the elections show the following partisan distribution of seats:

Socialists	110
Centrists	97
Conservatives	71
National Liberals	47
Radicals	42
Racial parties	33
Independent	1
	401

Dr. Karl Liebknecht, son of the great Socialist leader who died a few years ago, was elected as a Socialist by an overwhelming majority at Potsdam, hitherto a strong Conservative constituency. "His chief constituent," say the dispatches, "is the Emperor," who, while the campaign was on, threatened to ruin the business interests of Potsdam if it elected Liebknecht. Dr. Liebknecht had recently served a sentence of 18 months' imprisonment for having made an anti-military propaganda. In the Emperor's own district in Berlin

the Socialist was defeated by a majority of only 7 in a total vote of 12,000. The result is as a whole distinctly a Socialist triumph and is so regarded on all hands. [See current volume, page 82.]



Some understanding of the party groupings may be got from a description of tendencies published by Edward Bernstein, the German Socialist, in the *London Nation* of December 30, 1911. There is a tendency, Mr. Bernstein writes, to division into three large camps, viz.:

1. The Conservative Camp, embracing the two Conservative parties, the Catholic Centre party, the Agriculturists, and small kindred groups.

2. The Liberal Camp, composed of National Liberals and the Radical Populists.

3. The Democratic Camp, consisting of the Social Democrats and the Democratic Radicals, of which Herr Rudolph Breitscheid is the best-known leader.

Besides these combinations, there are some small national groups, such as Poles, Alsations, Guelfs, Danes, and so on, forming together a force of twenty-five to thirty members.

Of these "camps," as Mr. Bernstein calls them, the Agriculturists and other small groups are probably included in the Conservative group in the above table; but no line can be drawn in the table between the Radical Populists, whom Mr. Bernstein puts in the Liberal "camp," and the Radical Democrats whom he puts in the Democratic "camp" with the Socialists.



The Fretrade Fight in Congress.

The metal tariff bill was taken up in the lower house of Congress on the 26th, Representative Palmer presenting and explaining the bill in behalf of the Democratic members of the ways and means committee, with Bartlett of Georgia and Underwood of Alabama supporting him, and Dalzell of Pennsylvania, Crumpacker of Indiana and Austin of Texas in opposition. The measure reduces the tariff on steel, iron ore and other metals and their products by an average of 35 per cent. It passed the House on the 29th by a vote of 210 to 109. Of the Progressive Republicans 20 voted for the bill with the Democrats and 14 against it. Three Democrats voted against it: Martin, Rucker and Taylor of Colorado. [See vol. xiv, pp. 394, 530.]



Progressive Republicans in Illinois.

Two sessions of the Progressive Republican conference of Illinois were held in Springfield on the 27th, with Charles E. Merriam and E. P. Lovejoy as temporary and permanent chairman respectively. Medill McCormick was chairman of the resolutions committee and Walter S. Rogers of the committee on organization. The resolutions,

which named no candidates, but condemned the Taft administration and denounced Cannon, Deeneen and Lorimer, included in their declaration of principles these clauses:

The American people will not tolerate the control of their markets by a few individuals dominating the trusts, nor will they consent that prices for steel, oil, woolens, or any other products shall be so fixed as to earn dividends on billions of watered stock. Such monopoly, stock watering, and arbitrary price fixing, we denounce as robbery of the many for the benefit of the few.

We favor the enactment of such legislation as may be necessary to secure Presidential preference primaries.

We favor the direct election of United States Senators.

We favor the extension of popular control over the agents and acts of government by means of the Initiative, Referendum and Recall. Practical experience has demonstrated that these measures constitute a wise and necessary supplement to but not a substitute for representative government. They will prevent the barter and sale of political authority by corrupt servants and make impossible the jackpot.

The taxing system of Illinois is antiquated and outgrown and imperatively demands revision in order that the burden of taxation may be equitably distributed.

We favor the appointment of an industrial commission to investigate the labor conditions in Illinois with special reference to unemployment, minimum wage for women and children, industrial diseases, and with a view of formulating legislative policies for the prevention of and insurance against losses now falling too heavily upon the individual worker.

We favor the enactment of adequate legislation for the supervision and regulation of all public utility corporations within the State.

We favor a short ballot. A long list of elective officers confuses the voter, complicates issues, and increases the power of the political boss, both in primaries and elections.

We favor a nonpartisan judiciary, a thorough corrupt practices act, conservation of the natural resources of the State, honest enforcement of the civil service laws.

We favor the abolition of minority representation in the State legislature."

[See current volume, page 34.]

A Questionable Bargain.

Serious question has been raised by the City Club of Chicago regarding the wisdom and good faith of the proposed contract of the City with the Illinois Central Railroad regarding lake front land. In a pamphlet and through speeches before the harbor committee of the City Council on the 24th, this Club asserted that the railroad company would get 162 acres of submerged lands worth \$21,000,000 at an average valuation of only \$3 a square foot, and in addition 20,000 square feet of streets and alleys worth \$200,000,

while the city would get only 10½ acres of land, worth \$3,500,000, and riparian "claims" which even if they should be found to be legal are worth only \$430,000. Following is the City Club's tabulation of the estimates:

What Illinois Central Gets.

One hundred and sixty-two acres.....	\$21,000,000
Twenty thousand square feet street and alley vacated	200,000
Total	\$21,200,000

What the Public Gets.

Thirteenth street pier.....	\$ 1,500,000
Depot site and eighty-five foot strip, 39,000 square feet	2,000,000
Nine-tenth riparian rights.....	430,000
Total	\$ 3,930,000

Balance in favor Illinois Central.....\$17,270,000

[See vol. xiv, p. 1268.]



Detroit's Traction Question.

At a referendum election in Detroit on the 23d, Mayor Thompson's measure for securing municipal ownership of the traction service on pre-determined terms at the option of the city, and meanwhile reducing fares under a franchise to the old companies expiring in 1924, was defeated by a decisive vote. The question submitted was as follows:

Do you favor adopting ordinance which makes provisions of Detroit railway ordinance cover the entire city, ends all franchises Dec. 4, 1924, fixes fare at eight tickets for 25 cents from 5 a. m. to 8 p. m., 5 cents (single fare), or six tickets for 25 cents at any time, with transfers (on both day and night tickets), secures certain extensions in 1912 and annually thereafter 5 per cent of track mileage in city streets, and gives the city right to purchase said system?

For adoption, the vote required was 60 per cent; but the measure not only fell short of the vote necessary for adoption, but was defeated by a clear majority, the vote being 22,259 for the ordinance and 30,648 against. [See vol. xii, p. 1120; vol. xiii, pp. 208, 805; vol. xiv, p. 1102.]



Mayor Thompson's measure had been framed in consultation with and under the advice of the late Mayor Johnson of Cleveland until the latter's death, and thereafter of Mayor Johnson's coadjutor, A. B. du Pont, with a view to putting the city in position to take over the property and municipalize it. The adverse vote was secured not because of popular objection to municipalizing, but in consequence of a campaign of municipalizers against any further public utility franchises on any terms.



Since the election, an ordinance has been in-