

institution, but at a social function—a dinner to the delegates attending the imperial conference.

Nevertheless, the new institutions are related in fact to one of the oldest parts of the formal machinery of British government. The members of the new war cabinet and the new imperial cabinet are all members of the king's privy council; and these new bodies will thus have the same basis as the old cabinet as an informal committee of the council.

From this outline, it should be recognized that the broad question of the effect of the war on the British machinery of public administration is one that well deserves close study and investigation. Many of the changes may prove but temporary, and after the war a return to older methods and practices may be anticipated. Even these are worthy of attention as important events in one of the most stupendous crises in history. But some of the new arrangements, and among them probably the most fundamental, are likely to leave a permanent impress on the British government, and to form a landmark in the development of its constitution and of political and administrative organization throughout the world.

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The Internal Political Situation in Germany. The reaction of the war upon the internal politics of Germany bids fair to be as fundamental and far-reaching as in any country engaged in the struggle, save Russia. The government of Germany was indeed stabilized by the outbreak of the war. The opposition of the Social Democrats, which had been especially active in the immediately antecedent period, was at once quieted, and for the first time in the history of their party they joined in an affirmative vote of the budget. Conservatives, Liberals, Radicals and Clericals also all forgot, not only their differences with one other, but also their differences with the government, and joined heartily in support of the policies of von Bethmann-Hollweg's administration. The war, as it progressed, necessitated a few measures of administrative reorganization, such as the appointment of a food controller, but essentially the government remained unchanged in personnel and character down until the resignation of the chancellor on July 14 of this year. This event was the result of a political crisis of the first magnitude whose full effects are impossible to forecast, but which in all likelihood will mark a radical turning-point in the political history of the German Empire.

Opposition to the government was slow to develop and only reached

a formidable character in the period following the Russian revolution and the entry of the United States into the war. These events crystallized public opinion in two directions: first, in the willingness to accept a moderate and negotiated peace,—a “peace without annexations or indemnities;” and, second, in the determination to establish an effective control over the government by the introduction of necessary constitutional reforms. These two popular demands were intimately connected. It was the thoroughly intransigent attitude of the government, controlled as it was by the military leaders supported by all the Pan-Germanist forces in the state, that led to the widespread popular demand for constitutional reform. The Reichstag eventually came to reflect this public sentiment.

The adoption of constitutional reforms which would secure a relationship of responsible subordination on the part of the government to the people's representatives had long been agitated in Germany by the Social Democratic and Radical parties. The most important of these is the abolition of the three-class electoral system in Prussia and the adoption of the principle of universal and equal suffrage for the election of members to the Prussian Landtag. This would immediately result in endowing the Prussian government with a responsible character; and it, in turn, would appoint Prussian members to the Imperial Bundesrath who would recognize their responsibility to the people's representatives. The German Bundesrath is the center of German governmental authority, and the Prussian delegation to this body, controlled as it is by the kaiser, is in a sense the citadel of autocratic power. The basis of the kaiser's complete control over the Prussian delegates is the three-class electoral system in Prussia which gives preponderant power in the Prussian Landtag to the Junker and Conservative elements. The reform of the Prussian electoral system would thus have a most vital effect in democratizing the government of the Empire. In addition to this, a redistribution of seats for the Reichstag was demanded. The arrangement of constituencies has remained unchanged since the founding of the Empire, and the marked trend of population toward the cities has resulted in what might be described as a negative gerrymander to the serious disadvantage of the Socialist and Radical parties whose strength is chiefly found in the urban centers. These two reforms would inevitably result in the establishment in some degree of ministerial responsibility. The direct demand for the recognition of the principle of ministerial responsibility has accompanied the agitation for other reforms.

As early as March 14, evidently influenced by the revolution in Russia, the Chancellor promised democratic reforms to the Prussian Landtag. Although this promise was modified by his statement to the Reichstag a fortnight later that he was convinced that reforms in the Prussian electoral franchise should not be undertaken while millions of men were in the trenches, this latter body proceeded, on March 30, to establish a committee of twenty-eight members to consider constitutional reforms. The vote of 277 to 33 on this question is indicative of the widespread feeling of dissatisfaction with the existing political system. The debate in the Reichstag on the next day after the adoption of the resolution became so stormy that the government felt it necessary to prorogue it to April 24. Discussion of the subject of constitutional reform nevertheless continued unabated in the press, and on April 7, the kaiser himself admitted its necessity in a formal instruction to the chancellor to "assist in obtaining the fulfillment of the demands of the hour . . . and shape our political life in order to make room for the free and joyful coöperation of all the members of our people." He is even quoted as saying that "there is no more room in Prussia for elections by the classes," and that "the reform of the Prussian Diet and the liberation of our entire political life are dear to my heart." It was made clear, however, that these reforms were not to be actually inaugurated until after the war. During the short session of the Reichstag from April 24 to May 17, the committee on constitutional reforms discussed proposals for a redistribution of seats and the establishment of a larger measure of control over the government, but no definite action was taken. The movement for the reform of the Prussian electoral system received new impetus on June 30 by the formal pronouncement of a number of leading Conservatives (the party hitherto most unalterably opposed to any change) in favor of an equal franchise with a direct and secret ballot.

The political crisis which led to the fall of von Bethmann-Hollweg was occasioned by an important speech delivered July 6 before the Reichstag main committee by Matthias Erzberger, the leader of the Center (Clerical) party, in which he announced the adherence of his party to the principles of "peace without annexations" and democratic constitutional reform. There was thus constituted a democratic *bloc*, consisting of the Social Democrats, the various Radical groups and the Center, possessing a decisive majority in the Reichstag. A week of the most serious political disquiet ensued, with one

wild rumor following another. Secret conferences were held between the kaiser, the crown prince, the crown council of Prussia, the imperial ministers and the military leaders. On July 11, an imperial rescript was issued promising a reform in the Prussian electoral system, so that the next elections would be held on the basis of equal suffrage. Three days later the resignations of Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg, the chancellor; Dr. Zimmerman, the secretary for foreign affairs; and General von Stein, the Prussian minister of war were announced. Dr. Georg Michaelis, who had been Prussian food controller and under secretary of finance, was appointed to the chancellorship.

The influence of the crown prince is supposed to have been decisive in securing the dismissal of von Bethmann-Hollweg, whose tenure of office for eight years had been marked by the most complete confidence of the kaiser. But, though the crown prince may have influenced the decision, the political situation demanded either the sacrifice of the chancellor or a complete and thoroughgoing reversal of policy which would mean a reduction of the influence of the military leaders. The change in the chancellorship must be viewed as an endeavor to stem the tide of popular discontent by making a scape-goat of the chancellor without any intention of altering his policy, which had indeed for some time been determined by the military leaders. Michaelis had little reputation or experience on assuming the highest office in the imperial government. He had indeed served in several subordinate positions and is described as an efficient, middle-class bureaucrat. His bourgeois origin was doubtless relied upon to win him the favor of the people, but his political sentiments and attachments appear to be even more conservative than those of his predecessor and his dependence upon the military leaders even more complete.

The new chancellor's first address to the Reichstag was awaited with much interest. In it he dwelt upon the successes of the submarine campaign, and proclaimed the impregnability of the position which the Empire occupied. He said that Germany would not continue the war for conquests but would welcome an honorable peace, one which would leave Germany's territory inviolable. He promised the appointment to the leading executive positions of men "who possess the confidence of the great parties in the popular representative body," but this must be understood as in no wise to narrow "the constitutional right of the imperial administration to conduct our policy." The speech as a whole was a sufficiently evasive utterance to avoid committing the government on any definite point. The democratic *bloc* on the same day

voted a resolution, by 214 to 116, expressing the desire of the German people for a peace without forced annexations and with mutual understanding and lasting reconciliations with other nations, but avowing a determination to fight as one man against the Entente's threats of conquest. On the following day the Reichstag adjourned to September 26.

Michaelis is now generally considered as a mere *ad interim* appointee. At first there was some question as to whether he might not take a liberal tack, but it has become already clear that he is little more than a puppet in the hands of the military leaders. It would seem, however, that the issue of responsible government has been squarely set by the Reichstag. A dissolution and an appeal to the country have been suggested as a possible move on the part of the government. But it is scarcely conceivable that such a coup would be successful except on the basis of decisive victories in the field. The German people are heartily tired of the war. They are beginning to realize the impossibility of a real German victory. They want peace, and are likely to return representatives pledged to the policy of a moderate, negotiated peace, which is apparently now attainable only through the complete reorganization of the government on the principle of ministerial responsibility.

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