

BRETON NEWS



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BRITTANY'S ECONOMY IN 1958.

An official account of Brittany's economic development during 1958 is now available -- with a year's delay. Details are published in the February issue of "l'Avenir".

There is little on the positive side: 2,500 acres of waste land reclaimed for afforestation and pastures; 15 new trawlers in use in Morbihan; a few industrial enterprises previously seated in Paris "decentralised" to Brittany, giving 700 new jobs and means of living to 2,500 people.

On the negative side: no prospect of realisation for the plan to reclaim the Vilaine marshes; slowing-down and lagging in rural electrification; redundancy in some factories and closing of others; 20% of the demands for technical education refused due to the lack of school accommodation.

BRETON ON THE WIRELESS: During the fifties $\frac{1}{2}$ hour of Breton was broadcast every Sunday noon from the low power relay station of Kimerc'h, but was audible only in parts of the Breton speaking area. An association was formed to obtain a better service. To their requests, the Director of Radio-TV answered, with a very nice letter, that a broadcast on high power could not be granted because of the precedent it may create for other "regions". It would not be in harmony either with the general mission of the French Radio-Services. So many listeners would be deprived of their favourite programs.

However, Bretons reflected that the Arabs of Algeria were getting a much better deal. Was it because they spoke a stronger language? Further demands have yielded a little improvement. From now on, Rennes-Thourie will re-broadcast the Kimerc'h Sunday program on the 445m band twice a month from 17 to 1730 Greenwich time. This should be heard in 17 départements instead of $1\frac{1}{2}$ as before. Some may wonder why Rennes could not broadcast something original instead of Kimerc'h rehashes. It would give those who receive Kimerc'h 3 hrs /month instead of 2. The snag is perhaps, that the artists have to work more or less for the pleasure of it. And a good program must be well prepared... No time without money.

STUDENTS ON STRIKE BECAUSE OF UNFAIR DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOLARSHIPS.

University scholarships in France are granted in such a way that the total sum per university is proportional to the number of students. The mean social level of the students is not taken into account. Brittany together with the French SW is mentioned on an OEEC map as an under-developed area. A higher proportion of the students than elsewhere come, in Brittany, from popular classes. The President of the Students' Association of Rennes states in the *Dépêche de Constantine* (23-1-60) that, whereas in the whole of the French higher educational field, 5% of the students are workers' and farmers' children, in the Rennes Academy the corresponding figure is at least 15%.

13,000 students were on strike in Rennes, when the revolt occurred in Algiers in January, in an attempt to obtain the extra 900,000 New Francs needed to give a fair deal to their university.

GOODYEAR not allowed in LORIENT. The firm Goodyear having prospected the French territory for the installation of a factory favoured LORIENT because of the easy delivery of the raw material that its harbour would provide. The French government refused permission for this location, insisting that newcoming American firms set up in the North. Goodyear then chose Amiens. (*l'Avenir*, Feb.)

BRITTANY and DENMARK. Mr. Chombard de Lauwe, Professor of Agriculture in Paris demonstrates in his book "Brittany and Denmark" that these two countries could and should have the same prosperity if France had followed a less erratic policy in agricultural matters.

THE BRETON FARMERS' CAMPAIGN is taking place on a professional, non-political basis, in conjunction with similar actions throughout France. It is interesting from a Breton point of view that the campaign has been most vigorous in Brittany. And the participation of the Loire-Atlantique Federation in inter-breton meetings and manifestations has given the lie to the French officials who, backed by some influential circles in Nantes, have recently cut off that area from Brittany. The vigour of their protests against maladministration brings joy to the Bretons who had hitherto met with indifference among the majority towards their country's decline. This awakening should contribute to safeguard a human potential without which it would be useless to try to preserve the elements of an original cultural life.

OPEN LETTER TO DE GAULLE. In an open letter to President De Gaulle, many thousands and copies of which were distributed in numerous towns on the eve of Debre's January visit to Rennes, the government was urgently requested to give attention not only to the economic, but also to the social and cultural aspects of the Breton problem. The pamphlet, signed by the Breton Revolutionary Movement, pointed to the demonstrations that took place in both rural and urban districts during the previous 6 months in the context of the exodus from Brittany and of the oppression of the country's cultural characteristics. It called for an end to the war in Algeria because of its blood cost to Brittany.

PROTECTION OF MINORITIES IN THE ALGERIA OF THE FUTURE. Commenting on the information given in Les Dernières Nouvelles (Feb. 3.1960) that De Gaulle would reckon with the possibility of an Algerian State associated with France and guaranteeing their rights to its various ethnical components by means of internal federation, La Voix d'Alsace-Lorraine (15-2) writes, in German:

This plan of De Gaulle coincides exactly with the claims of the Alsacians, Bretons and Basques who want, not only a Federal Algeria, but also a federally constituted French State, in which these minorities could find a guarantee for their ethnical and linguistic individuality. It is clever of De Gaulle to think of the day when the French will form a minority in Algeria and will need a guarantee for their rights. France would be in a very strong position relative to the Algerians if in the metropole instead of pursuing an excessive policy of assimilation she had granted a statute to her own minorities.

What by right will belong to the French and Kabyles in the future Algeria, A GUARANTEE FOR THEIR ETHNICAL INDIVIDUALITY, that belongs now by right to the Alsacians, Lorrains, Bretons and Basques.

The Minister for Welsh Affairs announced recently that the British Government will in future allow 3,000 instead of £1,000 a year for the publication of Welsh books. Short as this may be of the need, the Welsh will be envied by their Breton cousins. The only "public" subsidy which the Breton language enjoys is the proceeds of a collection organised, with the authorities' kind permission, by cultural associations on a specific day each year all over Brittany. The success of this "Flag day" confirms the will, clearly expressed by the Breton majority, to have our language publicly recognised and taught. But it is no substitute in a country where all local budgets depend on allocations from the Centralised Government. Bretons pay their share of taxes but not a farthing comes back for their language. So it happens that a scholarly work like R. Hemon's Historical Dictionary of the Breton Language risks never being completely published as publication costs may well be beyond private means.

UP BIDAULT! The argument in favour of Algeria's integration with France is rather frequently illustrated by a comparison between that country and Brittany. The last instance is given by Bidault declaring to Der Spiegel: "Algeria is just as much a French province as Brittany". (Read in 'Het Pennoen' Feb. 60).

Bretons wholeheartedly agree. Though not so logically minded as the French, their hopes are rising with the approach of Liberation for Algeria.

"It looks, writes 'Herria', a basque weekly, "as if the French rulers became aware of rural problems only when the Breton farmers manifested. Their numbers and homogeneity, the superiority of their leading body could hardly be equalled in other areas. They alone broke the hostile silence of the big press and effectively challenged the Prime Minister to action. Their federations are credited with having set up a warning system whereby they all could be mobilised and concentrated overnight.

CITROEN IN RENNES. The Citroen Co. is building a branch factory for various assembly chains just outside RENNES. When the installation is completed it will cover 5/8 sq. mile and produce 1,000 vehicles a day. It will be the most extensive factory in Europe according to the Dépêche de Constantine. Accommodation for staff and families (40,000 people) will be provided near the factory. It is hoped that most of the workers, if not all, will be Bretons.