

# BRETON NEWS



A Bulletin issued by  
The Breton Information Bureau

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DECEPTIVE PROMISES. We have already mentioned, in our April issue, the promises made by Debré, the French Prime Minister to the Bretons in Rennes on March 1st. One of them was that premiums would be given for investments and equipment.

In fact a decree was issued on April 15th, declaring 4 out of the 5 Breton "départements" a critical zone. In such a zone, any old or new enterprise giving additional employment to at least 20 workers is entitled to a premium for equipment. Yet before getting it months of procedure are allowed to intervene. Other areas of the French territory have been recognised as "special zones of conversion" in which industries may benefit without undue delays from official subsidies (up to 15-20% of the costs) to readapt their installations and equipment. The official report on which the decree is based admits that in the years ahead the strongest surplus of active manpower in the whole of French territory is likely to arise in these 4 Breton areas.

The Breton General ("County") Councils have substantially subscribed to the capital which a society for the economic expansion of Brittany is raising. In the "Côtes-du-Nord" area in particular a vigorous effort towards acquiring new industries has been made recently. But they have gone as far as possible within the limits fixed by the law.

At the last session of the C-d-N. General Council, M. Pleven regretted that in view of the will to progress which characterizes Brittany to-day, the French government was not more willing to help our region to keep its youth at home by adopting effective measures to stop underemployment. "In this respect, he stated, the April decree does not fulfil the promises made. It is a fraud." (Ref. Breiz, May 1960.

## ARTICKOKES FOR THE TAKING

The area around Kastell-Pel in Northern Brittany lives largely from the growing of artichokes and cauliflowers. A boom in 1958 induced the farmers to extend the surface under these vegetables, and this year a total of about 30 square miles was devoted to them by 5000 growers. Most of the production usually finds its way to the consumers through the Paris corporation markets.

In May and June, considerable amounts of artichokes remained unsold at the Kastell-Pol auctions, in spite of catastrophically low prices. To save the market, the producers decided to fix a minimum price of ca 3 pence a head and to dump whatever could not be sold. It is estimated that half the crop (according to Ouest-France, 13-6, 40,000 tons) were thus destroyed. A compensation fund set up by the growers helped to apportion the losses more evenly among them. The public authorities agreed to contribute to this pool and to transport artichokes free of cost towards centres of consumption. In a communique to France Agence Presse, artichokes were offered for the taking (provided they would not be "traded") to anybody willing to come and fetch them. This waste is a sad reflection on a State which proposes to help the world's underfed.

## HAVE BRETONS TO GAIN BY REMAINING FRENCH?

Echoing the "Scots Independent", the excellent "revue d'études" AR VRO indicates the number of books published in 1959 for 100,000 inhabitants in various European countries. Norway, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Austria top the list with figures varying from 59 to 87, whereas France and Italy come at the bottom with 27.

In the "Welsh Nation", June 1960, Leopold Kohr, Visiting Professor from the University of Puerto Rico, U.C. Swansea, refutes the theory that any form of political contraction into narrower confines would have an impoverishing effect. His argument is based on economic facts which we should like to summarize in a later issue. He explains how a small state like Switzerland can offer its citizens the highest personal living standards of Europe.

## PARTITION OF BRITTANY

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The French territory will now be divided into 21 regions, representing "viable economic units". The reorganisation purports also to simplify administration. Within each region, the various administrative functions may have their siage in different centres. Thus there will not be any regional capitals!

As we expected, Brittany will be partitioned by this measure. Its industrial sector, the Nantes and St-Nazaire area, will be joined with French departements to the East and South, with which it has economically much less connection than with the rest of Southern Brittany. 'L'Avenir', the organ of Movement for the Organisation of Brittany has published a clear and concise memorandum on this subject. At the time when all Bretons are striving to obtain the industrialisation of their country, the closest connection is needed with the Nantes area, which has belonged to Brittany since the 9th century.

Prime Minister Debré said in Bordeaux on June 12th that he did not believe in "political regionalism". This will confirm many Bretons in their belief in political nationalism. The Bretons will fight for Nantes.

### FOR A BRETON ASSEMBLY IN RENNES.

A Breton Farmers' leader had warned last winter that despair in rural districts would soon have reached a point when the men would sack the administrative buildings and march on Paris. Another stated that the solidarity between all categories of Bretons was now strong enough "for us, in case of a general strike, to fall back on our own means and hold out for a long time".

Commenting on these statements a correspondent of L'Avenir, N. Urvoas, calls on all Bretons, threatened as they are in their vital common interests, to march in good order not on Paris, but on Rennes, their own capital, to hold there a general assembly and lay down the foundations of a charter for Brittany.

FUEN CONGRESS. The 10th Congress of the Federal Union of European Nationalities took place in Zuoz, Switzerland, on June 4-6. Delegates were present from most subject nations and Minorities in West and Central Europe, some of which have a juridical status like the Danish Germans and the Slovenes while others remain without international recognition like the Welsh and the Bretons. The Congress was very well organised thanks to the work of the FUEN Secretary, Mr. Povl Skadegard. The Breton delegation presented 3 draft resolutions. A Breton member also presented 3 resolutions on behalf of the Welsh National Party, PLAID CYMRU.

### THE CORNWALL FESTIVAL IN KEMPER (21-24/7/1960)

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This festival, described in leaflets as "the greatest festival of folklore in Europe" will give visitors to Brittany an idea of the country's popular culture. There will be Breton songs, dances, sung dances, music and dresses representing all the various districts of Brittany, and displayed by thousands of members of the "Celtic Circles".

Will it give a fully authentic expression of our culture? As far as the features mentioned are concerned, we readily believe it will. But where is the Breton language's part? A drama originally written in Breton will be presented in a French translation. Breton is spoken in all the countryside around and even in the suburbs of the town. Why not have staged the play (also) in its original language? Everywhere in Brittany and among the Breton colonies around Paris+ customs and traditions are expressing themselves with renewed vigour in "pardons" and festivals. Such a vitality holds the promise of fundamental changes in Brittany. Many, however, who are struggling to maintain Brittany's essential characters are concerned at the Cinderella part reserved for the Breton language at these, often magnificent festivals.

A Breton school by correspondence has been functioning for the last 30 years under the direction of Miss M. GOURLAOUEN, rue de la Corderie, Douarnenez, Finistere. Her school, "SKOL OBER", uses the most modern methods, teaches the standard form of Breton, is free of charges other than postage.

### FRENCH LINGUISTIC IMPERIALISM.

Among the reports presented to the FUEN Congress in Switzerland, we have read with great interest the text prepared by the delegates for the German-speaking minority of Eupen-St Vith in Belgium: it describes a method of linguistic oppression which resembles the one applied in Elsass-Lothringen (and in Brittany) like two drops of water. It is to the credit of the Fuen-Congress to have drawn the attention of the Flemings and the Wallons to the silent wrong committed against these German speakers, by the State.

The Committee for the Defense and Coordination of Breton Interest recently had an active role in organising Breton participation in international fairs (London, Saarbruck). The Committ. aims at opening new markets for the Breton products by direct contact with foreign importers.

POLICE VEXATIONS. Following the action taken against the editor of the Breton periodical LABOUR, Mr. H. Lemee who runs a duplicating firm in Rennes and thus helps publishing a number of reneotyped Breton magazines was also called before the Judge of Instruction in Rennes. Other Bretons have on various occasions during the past two or three years been subjected to prolonged police interrogations. (Ref. Ar Vro, June 1960).

\* For instance, at Poissy on the 29th May.