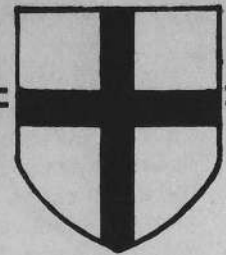


BRETON NEWS



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FRENCH MINISTER OPPOSED TO BRETON PLAN .

The French minister for Agriculture, Mr. Pisani, spent four days in Rennes at the beginning of February informing himself of the progress made by the "Western" farmers since the September disturbances. He met representatives not only of Brittany, but also of seven neighbouring "departments". During the negotiations which followed the railway barricades in Western Brittany last Autumn, the Committee for the Study and Coordination of Breton Interests, CELIB, appeared to be recognised by the French government as an important partner, but this time no CELIB delegates were invited to meet Pisani, not even the president of the semi-official and consultative CELIB Commission for Economic Expansion. This is felt as an attempt to divide the Bretons, and some farmers' leaders protested.

CELIB had criticised the French government for breaking the Brussels talks: from the Breton point of view it would have been better to accept Heath's proposals. Brittany exported 60,000 tons of products to Britain during 1961, as against 14,000 tons to West Germany. It is feared that England may retaliate by taking measures against the Breton vegetable imports, and diverting tourism towards other areas. The possibility of importing British coal at 80 francs/ton instead of French coal at 130 f/t - as at present can be ruled out for a long time. The energy problem remains unsolved in Brittany.

There were already indications that the French government had no intention to adopt a "Law-Programme" for the underdeveloped regions as promised last October.

Towards the end of his visit, Pisani was asked if the government was preparing such a plan for Brittany. He replied that it would be madness, as other regions would want the same treatment. The Bretons had embarked on the wrong course, he added cynically.

Bretons who think of Brittany as a region, as part of France, are disarmed by this argument about the juridicalequality of all Frenchmen and French regions). Only by thinking nationally can they press their claims regardless, because no nation is prepared to allow its ruin for the sake of another nation.

Gaullism and Breton Interests It is hard to know what prompted the Bretons to return a Gaullist majority at the November elections. It may have been chiefly disgust with party politics and the desire for peace.

Some who think first of Brittany's interests hope that De Gaulle might be inclined and would have the authority to permit a measure of devolution to Brittany.

So far there is nothing to warrant this optimism. De Gaulle has a majority of yes-men among the Breton deputies, and need not feel any urgency with the Breton problem.

There had been hopes that a new metallurgic complex, similar to the Dunquerque one, would be set up near Brest or St. Nazaire. But it is now almost official that it will be built near Marseille (Pays Breton, Febr. '63), because Southern areas were the most estranged from the Gaullist regime: they have to be placated.

The only group to advise abstention at the elections in Brittany were the nationalists who signed BREIZH ATAV. Were they not realists?

French papers with a wide circulation (l'Aurore, La Croix) have admitted the serious implications for the Breton economy of De Gaulle's rejection of Britain's application to join EEC. They don't deny that "the Bretons" have (again) to make sacrifices to the Raison d'Etat. Of that, in the French Press of Brittany, not a word. But the same press gloats over the installation in Brittany of important air and naval bases for the French army (Ouest-France 11-2).

• CELIB is going ahead with the creation of a Breton-British Study-Group in an effort to tackle Cross-Channel trade problems left unsolved by the French government.

• Students belonging to the MOB demonstrated when Pisani spoke in the Rennes University. They distributed leaflets calling for the adoption of the Breton Plan.

FRENCH BUDGET 1963 : NO SIGN OF BRETON PLAN. In LA VIE BRETONNE Jan. '63.

Professor Philipponneau analyses the new French budget and finds in its introduction and figures no indications that the adoption of the Breton Plan is considered.

The bill for this Plan which has the more or less unanimous support of the Bretons contains detailed estimates of the minimum credits needed to redress the situation in the various sectors of life in our country. Comparing the figures which can be deduced from the French Budget with these estimates, it appears that it will take 9-12 years to carry out the measures considered as urgent in the 4-year Plan. In the field of education for instance, the share of credits allocated to 4 Breton departements is lower than would be warranted by their proportion of young people of school-going age. And yet, this area was supposed to get top priority of investments in this field.

A simple corrective to the figures will not do: for the realisation of the Breton emergency plan, they should have to be doubled.

Where is the money to come from?

Phlippomeau considers that it would have been spared on military expenditures. These were expected to be cut after the end of the Algerian war. But credits for military equipment have on the contrary been increased by 7.2%: it is the highest budget since 1939, although it is the first time that France is not at war. They are needed for France's nuclear armaments.

Only a reversal of the French defense policy could free the credits necessary for the underdeveloped areas. As this is unlikely, it is very doubtful that Brittany will have "her" plan adopted.

STATE SECURITY AND TRADE UNIONS. A special court has been instituted to deal with acts deemed contrary to the security of the French state. It will be used to deal with the OAS.

But in Brittany especially it is felt that it could have a much wider application. It could be used to repress demonstrations such as have occurred in our country during the past two years.

A clause specifying that obstacles to road traffic would be punishable under the act was amended to apply only to cases when the offenders would be armed, but the text remains sufficiently vague to allow the repression of trade union protests. This is all the more significant that the workers' unions remain the only real opposition to the Gaullist regime.

Under the new act arrested people could be kept incommunicado for 10 days without trial. This is contrary to the European Convention for Human Rights. But this convention, although signed, was not ratified by France: therefore no recourse to it is possible.

The Bretons see in European institutions the possibility to acquire more freedom. The new act puts an obstacle in the way to European unity. It is doubly harmful to Brittany. (Via Bretonne, January '63).

Demonstrators sentenced. When demonstrations took place in April 1962 against the French agricultural policy in Brittany, French flags were pulled down from the Kintin town hall by an electrician, a student and a farmer. Since then, one of them had been using a flag as a floor mat in his bedroom. The three men were sentenced to pay a fine of 250 francs each.

Douarnenez fishermen had strewn the streets of Kemper with sardines last Summer in protest against the low prices resulting from Moroccan imports. Seven of them were sentenced to 8 days jail "with postponement" (they were bound to peace) and were fined 200 francs each. All the fishermen of the West and South coast of Brittany expressed their solidarity with them, and said they would repeat the demonstrations if need be. (Ouest-France)

When Bretons are determined... We reported in one of our recent issues that Dr. Etienne is providing primary school education for his children at home in Breton. When the French authorities heard of it, they sent an inspector to investigate, and payments of children's allowances were suspended. The authorities were obliged to recognise that the teaching was carried out according to all the school regulations, except that it was in the mother tongue and not in French. The parents acted as interpreters between the inspector and the children. Their standard of education was found to be faultless. Dr. Etienne finally won the case.

Association of Breton-Speaking Families in Rennes. Parents who are bringing up their children in Breton in Rennes met on January 19th to tackle the problems resulting from the fact that the language used commonly around them is French. They decided that the children should know well the relative positions of the two languages, but should be brought up to regard Breton as the language of their family and as the national language of Brittany. Their motto was that, "before trying to win others to our ideas, we must make constant and daily use of the Breton language, as otherwise our struggle would be based on deceit."