

## A Family of Foreign Ministers



**HARALD SCAVENIUS**

He is Foreign Minister in the new Neergaard Cabinet; former Danish Minister to Russia.

THE new Danish Foreign Minister is a Scavenius, Harald Scavenius, formerly Denmark's Minister to Russia. His predecessor was also a Scavenius, Otto Christian Scavenius, who took over the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Friis Cabinet which held office provisionally for about a month after the dismissal of the Zahle Cabinet. And the Foreign Minister in the Zahle Cabinet was likewise a Scavenius, Erik Scavenius, youngest of the three Scavenii, but longest in office.

From this it would seem that Denmark finds it hard to get along without a Scavenius as Foreign Minister. Radicals may win, Nonpartisans take over the administration, Moderates get into power, but—no matter which political party holds office—a Scavenius seems always sure of the Foreign Ministry.

All of the three Scavenii are in the forties and all of them have at different times represented Denmark at foreign courts, Harald Scavenius at Petrograd, Otto Christian Scavenius at Stockholm and Erik Scavenius at Vienna. Harald Scavenius and Erik Scavenius are first cousins, while Otto Christian Scavenius is a second cousin of theirs.

They are all descendants from Jacob Broennum Scavenius who, born in 1749 at the Skaw, the northernmost point of Denmark, as a graduate of the classical



**O. C. SCAVENIUS**

Foreign Minister in the provisional Friis Cabinet, which only held office during the month of April, 1920; former Danish Minister to Sweden.



**ERIK SCAVENIUS**

Foreign Minister in the Zahle Cabinet during the war and up to March 29, 1920; former Danish Minister to Austria-Hungary.

school of Aalborg received the Latinized name of Scavenius, the man from the Skaw. He went to the East Indies in 1776 when he was 27 years old, and 15 years later he returned to Denmark with two barrels of gold. In American money that would, today, be about a million dollars, but 130 years ago it was considerably more.

Jacob Broennum Scavenius was a wise man. He invested his money in land, bought several large estates and proved himself an able administrator of his property. His two sons, Peter Broennum Scavenius and Jacob Scavenius, were ennobled by the King of Denmark in 1843, and a son of the former Jacob Scavenius was for a number of years Minister of Church and Education.

It is Jacob Scavenius' son, Harald Scavenius, who is now Denmark's Foreign Minister. He formerly represented his country at Petrograd and was the last member of the diplomatic corps to leave

Russia. By his courage and energy he succeeded in saving the lives of many foreigners during the worst phases of the Red Revolution and his wife was no less active in relief work among the many destitutes that flocked to Petrograd.

Harald Scavenius stayed in Russia long after all other foreign representatives had left and it was not fear of the Bolsheviks but near-starvation that at last forced him to leave.

## Stop Five Minutes or Go to Jail

IN THESE agitating and topsy-turvy days when everybody seems to be in an impatient and impolite mood to go somewhere or return from somewhere—always in a terrific hurry—it is almost beyond human belief to find that there was a time some years back when a state legislature passed a law compelling every passenger train on every railroad in that state to stop not less than five minutes at every station—no matter how large or how small the town might be.

This actually occurred in Texas in the year 1866.

It seems that in those comfortable days of the good old bygone years, folks in Texas had an abundance of time and seriously objected to being obliged to hurry unless a horse or cattle rustler happened to be operating in their section.

For instance, when a man was about to embark on a journey somewhere, he liked to have plenty of time to pack his valise, kiss the dear ladies goodby, saddle a pony and lope to the depot after the train hove in sight.

If it happened to be a lady who was going visiting she felt that life was far more worth-while if she could finish doing her hair, lace up her shoes and wave good-by to all the neighbors after the train had puffed into the station.

On the other hand, home-bound passengers found this five minute law mighty convenient, because it gave them ample time to finish an exciting and possibly remunerative game of poker, adjust their duds, and make leisurely adieus to their traveling companions.

Such annoying expressions as "step lively," "hurry up there," or "shake a leg, old top" were unknown terms in the vocabularies of the railway deck hands of that period.

So in earnest were the Texans in regard to this five minute stopping at stations that a jail sentence of

30 days or a fine of \$50 to \$100 was provided for conductors and engineers who disobeyed it.

When this strange law happens to be mentioned in the presence of some old-timer in Texas, he will chuckle reminiscently and tell how the law came into existence as the result of an interrupted poker game.

It appears that several members of the state senate and lower house were in the midst of a warm game and some one was soon going to rake in a few thousand dollars, when the conductor stuck his head in the door and called out the home town of one of the players. The lawmakers begged and beseeched that conductor to hold the train a few minutes until the deciding hand could be played. Nothing doing! That conductor was in a hurry, and pulled the bell cord right on the second.

Those legislators were just as independent as the conductor. They hustled back to the state capitol and in record-breaking time passed the following law, which remained on the statute books for many years: "From and after the establishment of any wayside station or stations, by any railroad company in this state, it shall be the duty of the conductor or any other person in charge of any train of passenger cars upon such railroad to stop his train at each and every such station not less than five minutes; and any such conductor or other person in charge of such passenger train who shall, upon any occasion, pass any such station without stopping his train as aforesaid, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and, on conviction thereof, shall, for each and every offense, be punished by a fine of not less than \$50, and not more than \$100, or by imprisonment in the county jail for a term not exceeding 30 days, and may be proceeded against for such offense by information or indictment in any county through which the road passes."

## The Peasant the Soul of Poland

THE secret of the permanence of Poland, practically since the second century, is found in the Polish peasant. He, and none other, is the soul of Poland. It is a curious error of popular history to date its epochs from leaders. A leader is only the control switch on the human machinery. The switch can be replaced, but the machinery is a costly and elaborate thing. In every nation the peasants, that conglomerate of humans generally referred to anonymously as "the masses," are the secret of that nation's stability. One Cromwell doesn't make a nation; it is the nation that makes a Cromwell.

So with Poland. It is the Polish peasant's passionate patriotism that survived Russian persecution and German penetration and Austro-Hungarian ambition. Whether the struggle against him took the form of intrigue or open violence, plots or tyranny, his sense of nationalism was indestructible.

Through all these generations of alien governance, by inimitable patience and remarkable endurance, the Polish peasant retained his national costume, his national speech, and an unbroken national tradition.

It is a recurring fact that under oppression the preservation of national customs takes on a devotion approaching to sanctity. This story is repeated in every land; how passionately the Armenians clung to their traditions, for example, and the Magyars and the Belgians in the zones occupied by the German armies and, vice versa, the Germans today in the territories occupied by the Allies. It is the same the world over. A national costume becomes the symbol of patriotism, and, so scrupulously was it preserved by the Poles, that in color, cut and texture the garments of the Polish peasant today are the same as they were in the Middle Ages. Only different localities have different fashions.

Mrs. Cecil Chesterton, widow of the brother of Gilbert K. Chesterton, once made a painstaking study of Polish costumes and remarked that "the peasants regard their costume with a pride which takes no cognizance of any class distinction."

The peasants, in fact, form 90 per cent of the population, and the majority are landowners in a small way. Every Slav loves the soil. He is a hard worker and a born agriculturist. The peasant's table has homemade bread, wheat and rye, new-laid eggs, great hams, fresh butter and home-brewed vodka, with a plentiful supply of veal and mutton. Rye bread is his basic food.

As a general rule he has a mild contempt for the town dweller, and wants little from the cities; he will sell only a certain portion of his surplus produce, preferring to store his grain against a possible poor harvest. He is practically self-supporting, even to his clothes, except for top boots and overcoat. His amusements usually are the village fiddler and cellist, with the mazurka and similar dances for the younger folks.

In Lowicz the women like a skirt of gorgeous orange-colored cloth with violet stripes; the waist or bodice, usually lavishly embroidered, is of silk, blue or wine-colored; in cold weather a bright scarf is draped over the head, covered by a cloak, which also serves as an apron or overskirt.

The men, too, prefer the bright colors, the favorite in that region being purple and orange-striped breeches, short tunics and soft felt hat.

A wedding brings out the decorative instinct of the Polish peasant to the full. The man wears flowers in his hat and, in certain districts, has a white lawn skirt with full sleeves, like a bishop. The mountaineer must wear an embroidered vest and a hat lavishly trimmed with little bright beads and a small feather set at a jaunty angle.

The Polish peasant girl has one unavoidable task: she must weave her own wedding dress; otherwise the community denounces her as unfit to make a good wife. Also she knits her own stockings and embroiders her best bright cloth boots. Any gathering of Polish peasants for a festive occasion is a brilliant color scheme.

Hospitality belongs to the peasants of every land; in Poland the guest is welcomed with particular charm. The children of the family receive him at the gate, and scatter flowers on the path from the road to the door; there the hostess, in bright gala costume, greets him, holding a loaf of bread on a finely carved wooden platter.

On the top of the loaf is a small saltcellar, the whole being presented to the guest, accompanied by a blessing. The girls of the family make a curtsy, and the men kiss the guest's hand, if a woman; then the guest is supposed to reply to the welcome in a short speech.

The Poles are born rhetoricians, even the peasants possessing the instinct for eloquent speech. Also they are fine metal workers and wood carvers.

The patriarchal system, common to many of the older portions of Europe, still persists in Poland. The eldest son brings home his wife to his father's house, the purpose being, however, to maintain the necessary labor supply, the men and women of the household, father, mother, son, daughter, and son and daughter-in-law, all forming a sort of co-operative organization for mutual returns; on the same principle the profit is divided—apportioned out for household expenditure, for stock, for tools, and so forth.

In the heroic thrill of great names, it is well to remember that the heart of a people is just such a family; it is so to a peculiar degree in Poland; but in a general way it is so everywhere. And when we get the habit of thinking of the peoples of the world in terms of these families instead of their great leaders, we will come nearer to the era of neighborly understanding and further from the possibilities of war.