Stripping of Churches Imperils Trotzky's Rule

Leader Slowly Draws Troops Toward Moscow to Insure Supremacy and Uphold Soviet When Lenine Dies

REVAL, July 1.

COMMUNIST circles, it appears, are beginning to be very uneasy, not only about economic conditions in Russia and the failure to gain the support of foreign labor organizations, but also about the stability of the Soviet regime. This uneasiness has reached such a state that Trotzky and his friends are taking measures to move the troops toward the capital slowly but systematically, so that he shall have the means at hand to secure his supremacy when Lenine dies and to control Moscow, the center of the Soviet system.

Besides the dissatisfaction provoked by the widespread economic ruin, the Soviet government is alarmed at the increasing desertion from the ranks of the Communist party. Even those trade unions which were originally stanch supporters of the Bolshevik government have radically changed during the last two years; for instance, the metal workers' union, 50 per cent of whose members were Communists, now have barely 3 per cent. Not only do the workers leave the party, but they go back in immense numbers to the villages, where their existence, both material and political, is less harassed than in the towns.

Within the party a strong opposition has begun to act more and more daringly. In the Central Soviet the influential labor member, Shliapnikoff, and the veteran revolutionary, Mlle. Kalontai, have openly denounced the corruption of their leaders and demanded from Trotzky an accounting for 30,000,000,000 gold rubles which he has spent in an unknown way. Similar accusations were brought against Zinovieff, the president of the Third Internationale.

Side by side with these definite charges is the admission of Lenine (October, 1921) that the greatest enemy of the Soviet government is its corruption.

Stripping of Churches Has Aroused a Storm

More serious still is the deep stir of hostility aroused among the people by the government's sequestration of the precious objects of the churches and monasteries.

Any one who has been living in Russia during the last few years must have been struck by the fact that not only the peasants and workers but also the middle and intellectual classes have sought a refuge in religion from the utter misery of their existence. Churches have been full to overflowing and a great religious revival has been remarked, even by those least inclined to admit it.

When Archbishop Tikhon and the high clergy were disputing the right of the government to confiscate church property only well informed persons were aware of the fact, as no free press exists, but when in each famous monastery and shrine a commissar appeared with soldiers, to take away the precious objects, the people and the priests spontaneously resisted; for nobody has the slightest faith in the government's assurance that the confiscated riches would be used for the famine. When thus the spoliation of the church was brought home to the people the news of Tikhon's arrest and the execution of several priests spread like wildfire through the country and deeply stirred the population, which had borne so much in silence and submission.

Even in Communist circles the question has aroused heated discussion, and in the Petrograd Soviet the Russian Communist opposes the measures demanded by the other members.

Religion Occupies Big Place in Life of People

Non-Russians can hardly realize the place which religion occupies in the life of the people. It is the dream of a peasant to make a pilgrimage to a famous monastery, as, for instance, that of Kiev, the mother of Russian towns and churches; to the Moscow Troitski monastery, the Tverian Virgin, etc., which all attract hundreds of thousands of visitors. These people do not shrink from hundreds, often thousands, of miles of journey on foot and consider themselves happy for the rest of their lives if they have succeeded in bowing and praying before a miraculous shrine. These pilgrims are so much venerated that they are lodged and fed in all villages through which they pass on their long tramp.

It must not be forgotten that the liberation of Russia from the Mongol oppression of the seventeenth century was inspired and guided by the church or by popular leaders who started their crusade against the enemy from the Troitski Lavra, in Moscow, and from the Nijni Cathedral.

The uneasiness felt by many Russian Communists at the anti-church policy is more than justified by the history and knowledge of the nation. This feeling is marked among many Jews, who know that the number and fanaticism of their co-religionist commissars have aroused deep resentment among the Russian ignorant masses, who in pogroms will vent some of their wrath against a regime of which the poor Jews were as much victims as the Russian peasants and workers. In Latvia many Jews have arrived to put themselves in safety before the storm breaks.

It would not be surprising if once again in Russian history a popular uprising should be born and cradled in the church and thence break forth, but it is doubtful if such distinguished generals as Brusiloff, who organized the new Russian army, will be able to control the passionate outburst of these soldiers when they make common cause with the peasants and workers so long and so brutally maltreated and humiliated.

British Vicar Defends the Red And Green Flags in His Church

Pastor Carries On War With Parishioners for Several Years Over Banners Which Are Torn From the Wall

By Harold E. Scarborough

LONDON, July 12.

SINCE 1916 the little town of Thaxted, Essex, forty-one miles from London, has claimed more than its proportionate share of space in the London newspapers. There are dozens of seaside resorts which would have paid large salaries to any publicity agents who could have secured them similar notoriety; but, as is often the case in such matters, the people of Thaxted would have given a lot to be allowed to sink into their former oblivion.

It was the Rev. Conrad Noel, vicar of Thaxted Church, who put the town on the map back in 1916 by placing on the floor, in a corner of his church, two flags: the Sinn Fein banner and a bright red streamer bearing the inscription, "The Brotherhood of Nations." While the war was on his parishioners merely thought the display bad form, and contented themselves with saying so. But when, in 1920, Ireland began to let the world see that, so far as it was concerned, the war was by no means over, the Thaxted burgesses began to remark openly that those flags had better be removed before something happened.

The Rev. Conrad Noel, however, was quite willing to fight for his principles, and let that be known. It therefore happened that definite action was delayed for another year—until May, 1921, when a body of men entered the church, tore up the two flags, and substituted a Union Jack.

The next day the Union Jack had been removed, and the old emblems (or replicas of them) were again in place, this time hanging high up on the walls, so that they could not be reached without ladders. This did not deter the parishioners, who brought ladders forthwith and proceeded again to tear down the two flags. But Mr. Noel kept replacing them as fast as they were destroyed.

This sort of thing became more or less a habit during the next two months, culminating in a near approach to a free fight on the last attack in June, 1921. On this occasion one of the invaders, having ripped the red flag loose from its fastenings, stuffed it in his pocket. The vicar made a dive for the pocket, but got the wrong one and pulled out a Union Jack, with which it had been intended to replace the real ensign. This time police protection was invoked for the church, and, although the red flag was publicly burned in the town of Thaxted, the sixth of its kind remained high up on the church wall.

Complaints Made to Bishop of Chelmsford

Then the offended people of Thaxted had recourse to subtler methods. They complained to the Bishop of Chelmsford, who in turn requested the vicar, for the sake of peace and quiet, to do away with his flags. The vicar still was obdurate. Then the matter was placed before an ecclesiastical court and came to trial a day or two ago.

It was only then that Mr. Noel would explain his point of view. Asked whether the red flag were intended as a Bolshevist emblem, he replied:

"Certainly not. The text on the flag means 'The Commonwealth of Nations.' The green flag is what I believe to be the flag of the majority of the Irish nation. During the war I exhibited the flags of the Allied nations in the church, too."

"Have you got the Union Jack in your church now?" he was asked.

"No."

"Do you refuse to have it in your church?"

"Decidedly."

"Would it not have been better," the judge of the ecclesiastical court asked, "to have removed the flags when they were a focus of disturbance? You would have got on better if you had," he added.

"I do not want to get on," the Rev. Mr. Noel retorted. "I want to preach the full gospel of Jesus Christ whether I get on or not."

And then the court gave its decision that the flags were to be removed. Probably this decision will be obeyed; the Church of England still is powerful and can enforce its edicts in such matters. But the case has aroused all England, and there are people who believe that never again will Thaxted be able to sink back into its somnolence after its venture into internationalism.

"Red Justice" Turns Socialist Leader Into Enemy of Soviet Government

Emile Vandervelde Returns to Belgium Enraged at Treatment in Russia

By Stephane Lauzanne
Editor in Chief of "Le Matin"

PARIS, July 22.

NO MAN will ever come back from Bolshevist Russia more indignant and disgusted than did Emile Vandervelde, the Belgian Socialist leader. Vandervelde, is a pure radical and a convinced internationalist; but neither his raicalism nor his internationalism have obliterated his common sense, and he has just raised a loud cry of protestation which will re-echo throughout the whole world.

Vandervelde had not gone to Russia to play politics or to engage in commerce or to obtain oil concessions. He had gone there as a counsellor for the defense of some Socialists brought before the revolutionary court. Before leaving Brussels he had obtained a promise from the Soviets that the customary guaranties of justice would be respected and that his freedom as a lawyer would be safeguarded. However, he had hardly arrived in Moscow when he was almost placed under arrest; he was guarded at sight and he was forbidden to leave the house which had been asigned to him. But listen to his own account of his odyssey as told by himself, as I heard him tell it a few days ago in Brussels:

"The court before whom I was to plead," said he, "is none other than the famous revolutionary tribunal. It sits in the sumptuous palace of the marshals of the nobility. Nothing has been moved except a bust of Lenine, which replaces the bust of the former Czar Nicholas II.

"No jury. The tribunal is composed of magistrates in plain clothes, one of them even wears a workman's overall. They take their seats unceremoniously and start smoking their cigarettes right away.

Police Have Applause Ready For Magistrates

"The pretorium is small. The hall is very large. It is brimful with an immense crowd; 1500 people at least; two or three foreign journalists; the official journalists—one knows very well that Sovietic Russia knows no others—the small, touching group of the wives of the accused (those, at least, who are not in prison themselves); and finally, forming a crushing majority, are the members of the Communist party, and also policemen, agents of the Tcheka, who, executing their trade conscientiously, will applaud at the right moments both the president and the public prosecutor.

"Facing me is the dreadful Krylenko, who acts as public prosecutor. Near me are the three accused, all revolutionary Socialists, who had been deported to Siberia under Czarism and who have passed ever so many years in prison under the old régime. They are accused of having conspired against the Soviets and in particular, against Lenine.

"The debates commenced. A first incident occurs, as the tribunal claims to prevent a Russian lawyer, who is sitting beside me, the lawyer Lieber, from presenting the defense of the accused with me. It appears that this Lieber, who is a Socialist, pledged himself toward the Tcheka, in writing, never to play politics: now, to plead for Socialists against the government of the Soviets means playing politics. The lawyer Lieber is obliged to withdraw.

"A second incident takes place reguarding the list of witnesses who are to bear witness in favor of the accused. Krylenko is opposed to allowing some of the witnesses to be heard by the tribunal. I discuss the matter, but I hear a Communist lawyer interrupting me with this extraordinary phrase: "It is not necessary to hear the witnesses of the defense. The witnesses of the prosecution are enough for establishing the truth."

"Yet another occurrence. At a given moment during the debate the president of the tribunal retires and to my astonishment I see the General Procurator, Krylenko, take his place. Thus the public accused suddenly transforms himself into a judge. I protest and declare that in no European country is it given to see justice rendered in such a manner. But Krylenko replies that, although an accuser, he will be able to examine the facts objectively and that, besides, whether it pleases me or not, the trial will proceed and that the accused will be judged all the same.

"These mere facts given an idea of the way in which the revolutionary tribunal operates. Not for one moment had I the impression of being before a court of justice and that I stood a chance of making truth prevail. Neither did the unfortunate accused ones have any illusion for a single moment as to the fate awaiting them. They knew very well that they were condemned before having been heard. The justice of the Czar, with whom they had to deal, might pardon, but the justice of Lenine never pardons."

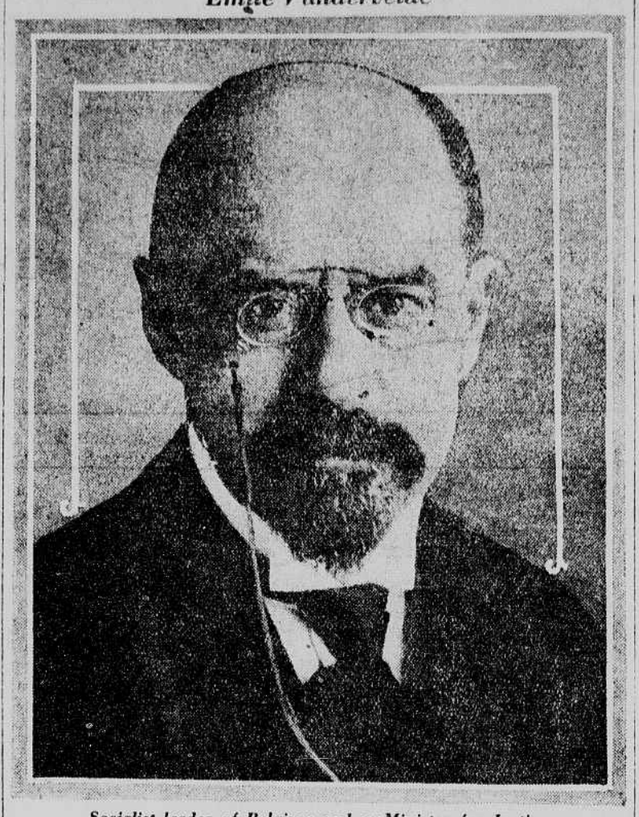
And, in fact, the accused were condemned and shot at the same time as five priests who had refused to deliver the sacramental cups of their churches to be sold in order to feed the starved people of the Volga.

That same day Vandervelde was taken to the station under custody and requested to return as quickly as possible to Belgium.

Emile Vandervelde relates all this calmly but with a concentrated indignation. What, to him, seemed the most abominable of all was the rage of the women, which was more terrible than that of the men. The wife of the president of the revolutionary tribunal was sitting behind him, and it was she who conducted the proceedings. Women were the principal accusers, and they inculpated the accused viciously. There also were women in the big hall, and it is they who applauded the prosecution most ardently.

There are some poets who have qualified women as being "angels of gentleness." It is certainly not the case in Bolshevist Russia.

Emile Vandervelde



Socialist leader of Belgium and ex-Minister for Justice

Arrested Despite Pledges of Safety, He Finds Trial Turned Into Farce

Echoes From Abroad

The Handkerchief a Luxury

Following some noteworthy examples, they have introduced in Budapest a luxury tax, and the Minister of Finances, always in want of money, has inspected all salable articles. He wanted to discover in the list new goods upon which to lay a new tax of 10 or 12 per cent. The handerchiefs had so far escaped his eye, and so they also incur the pitiless luxury tax. It is seen what unexpected articles may become luxuries when the public treasury is afflicted with consumption.

"But what are the poor to do who cannot afford the luxury tax?" asks the "Neue Wiener Tageblatt." "To be sure, it is true that the handkerchief was not invented before the age of chivalry and was long regarded as superfluous in the country. So let the inhabitants of the larger cities pay for their bad habits! All they can ask is to be allowed a rebate on the tax in case of a long-continued cold in the head."

* * *

A Pole Who Knew Napoleon

People who knew Napoleon by sight are to-day generally considered extinct. Recently, however, according to "L'Intransigeant," a certain Mecislas Krasinsi, a landholder in Volhynia, has been discovered who was born in the year 1790.

Krasinski's old age became apparent when, on his visit to Warsaw, he was robbed of his purse containing 2,000 marks. The papers submitted on this occasion to the court by the robbed man go to show—provided they are genuine—that Krasinski during the years 1809 to 1813 served in the French army, and in 1828 in the Polish army and took part in both revolutions of 1831 and 1863. For sixteen years he was banished to Siberia, and from 1900 to 1901 he served in the Russian army against China, and in 1904 to 1905 in Manchuria.

* * *

Not-So-Easy Americans

Have the Americans conquered Europe or has Europe conquered them? This is a question of social and political economy which "Le Petit Parisien" raises without venturing to settle it, contenting itself with presenting the facts in the case.

"The man who arrives from New York, Chicago or Frisco," it says, "is considered as a juicy fruit to be mercilessly squeezed. The American understands that there are very costly pleasures, and objects that he is charged 10 francs for a cup of tea and a few dollars for a smile. But he pays gladly; he probably vaunts himself on having been a 'lamb,' provided that he is not an exception, and that the Frenchman, the Italian, German or Englishman have to pay the same price. But all this is already an old story.

"The Americans in Germany no longer defend themselves individually against extortion; they fight en bloc, and their newspapers published on the Continent take care of their interests. Here is a striking example which should give cause for reflection to those most inclined to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs:

"The Germans had counted greatly on the Oberammergau Passion Play, but it was overdone. Thousands of American wrote Oberammergau off their program.

"The hotel keepers increased their rates, the merchants scratched the figures of previous years, the government of the Reich no longer resisted the temptation, and lo! it raised the rates of the tax of foreign residents by 45 per cent. Thus, hotels which had been charging 600 to 800 marks a day for rooms increased the figures to 840 to 1,120 marks. Would the informed Americans fall into the trap? It was likely. But their press, their good press, was watching; a small campaign was organized. The Americans read their papers, listened to their advice and the result was soon produced. Bavaria was boycotted; Munich, Oberammergau, remained empty. While the Passion Play was in full action a third of the hotels were unoccupied."

* * *

Funeral Taxation

Among the new taxes with which England is burdened there is one on funerals.

This is, however, merely the revival of a tax that existed as early as in 1695. At that time every burial involved a fee to the state of $2.

In 1750 this law was modified and the tax was based on the profession of the deceased.

To bury a workingman $1 had to be paid. The tariff exacted $5 for a "gentleman" or his wife, $25 for a doctor of law, $150 for a duke and $250 for a bishop.

* * *

Love or Liberation?

Mustapha Kemal, dictator of Angora, is madly in love with Miss Akila, niece of the late Kiamil Pasha, who was Abdul Hamid's last Grand Vizier. As to Miss Akila, she does not conceal the tender sympathy inspired in her by the Turkish patriot, but hesitates to pledge her faith.

"I am afraid," she confided, "that Mustapha Kemal is not favorable to the emancipation of Turkish women. Now, I would not have a husband who is hostile to our liberation. As long as I do not know his intentions in this regard I shall refuse to become his wife."

* * *

A Japanese "Blurb"

Among other arts of the West advertising has also been adopted by Japan. A true Japanese, once he has grasped an idea, exploits it thoroughly. He is not satisfied with half-measures, and in his zeal sometimes overshoots his mark. Thus a bookseller in Tokio announces in the newspapers: "The advantages of my bookstore: (1) Prices lower than anywhere else in the world. (2) Books as elegant as a prima donna. (3) Printing as clear as crystal. (4) Paper as durable as elephant's skin. (5) Customers are served as courteously as the passengers of rival steamship companies. (6) Selection as rich as in the state library. (7) Books delivered to customers with the rapidity of a cannon ball. (8) Parcels packed with a care such as only a mother takes with her first-born. (9) Young gentlemen who frequently honor me with their visits freed from all defects of their mode of life and morals and turned into solid men. Other advantages are so numerous that language is not sufficient to enumerate them all."

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Costly Russian Papers

The "Izvestia," the most widely circulated Moscow daily, prints from 170,000 to 200,000 copies. Next come the "Pravda," with 70,000 copies; the "Economical Life," with 27,000, and "Journal of the Co-operatives," with 17,000. The "Izvestia" ("Tidings") pays for its paper 3,900,000 rubles the pud (40 pounds), 800,000 rubles for the setting of 1,000 letters, 100,000,000 rubles for the making-up of each page, 5,000,000 rubles for the printing of 1,000 copies. The cost price of a number of the "Izvestia" of four pages (one of which is for advertisements) comes to 18,000 rubles; (of a six-page number (two of which contain advertisements), to 27,000 rubles; of an eight-page number (four of which contain advertisements), to 36,000 rubles. For a line of advertising 500,000 rubles are paid and a copy is sold in Moscow for 15,000 rubles.

And the "Izvestia" of April 6, No. 78, from which we gather this information, is distressed at the rise in price of all things and declares that in order to come off well the price of a copy will soon have to be raised to 100,000 rubles in Moscow.

* * *

A Hungarian Passion Play

Incited by the success of Oberammergau, the remote Hungarian village of Mikofalva has arranged Magyar passion plays. The first performance, on June 12, proved a great success, but the continuation of the plays depends upon the public interest.

The part of Christ is played by a twenty-year-old peasant, Gabo Koracz, grown up without any training, while Judas is personified by the richest peasant of the neighboring village Nagy. During the first performance the public, entirely made up of simple peasants of the neighborhood, were moved to tears.

* * *

The Ghosts of the Trianon

This is the story of what happened to M. Pierre de Nolhac, who was recently elected to the goodly company of the Immortals of the French Academy; to two estimable English women of years of discretion, and to various other quite responsible persons. The new Academician himself has related it within the stately precincts of the Jacquemart-Andre Museum, when he was speaking with eloquent reminiscence of the famous Trianon Palace of Versailles—that enchanted domain where he spent twenty-five years of his life, and which suggested to him his dearest works.

The drama began in 1905, on a stormy autumn evening, in the midst of the gardens of the Little Trianon. Calm and unsuspecting, their little guide-books in their hands, two English women followed methodically the walks of the gardens. All at once they halted as if petrified. Twenty steps before them there had arisen, surrounded by a vague halo, a group of specters in the moonlight.

They recognized Marie Antoinette, the Princess de Lamballe and the Comte d'Artois. An officer approached the Queen and seemed to announce to her some terrifying news. Then, suddenly, all disappeared, and nothing more disturbed the peace of the park save the plashing of the fountains and the frightened exclamations of the two English women.

But it did not take them long to recover; barely emerged from their fright, they co-ordinated their impressions and began an investigation. Soon they became certain that they had seen the repetition of a scene of the Revolution—the Days of October, no doubt—and they were converted to a belief in spirits. Returned to their country, they published a book, delivered many lectures, and made a hundred and thirty thousand converts. It was the finest record ever made by two women spiritualists.

M. Pierre de Nolhac, when consulted, discussed the matter calmly. The scene had happened on a stormy day, near nightfall, and was of a nature to unnerve even English women. . . .

Nothing more was heard about it, however, and no one would have fathomed the mystery had not the former custodian of Versailles been elected to the Academy.

For on the very evening of M. Nolhac's election M. Jacques Théry, who tells the story, saw, in the midst of a host of reporters and photographers, a cinema operator, who asked the Academician's favor for a minute:

"Don't get out of the field, M. de Nolhac! Apropos, do you recognize me?"

"In fact—it seems to me"——

"Remember? It occurred about fifteen years ago. You authorized me to turn on at the Trianon a film of the life of Marie Antoinette."

"I must rob the English ladies and the 137,000 converts of their illusion, though, now that they have the faith, this story, when read by them, will merely make them shrug their shoulders in pity," says M. Théry.

* * *

Prince's Serpent

The Prince of Wales, returning from his journey around the world, brought in his baggage divers and sometimes terrible things.

The most awkward of the gifts offered to him was, without doubt, a magnificent serpent ten meters long. This serpent, to which the heat had restored some vigor, did not find the lodging given him in the Zoological Garden of London quite to his taste and refused to enter it. It took sixteen persons to compel him to move in.

Test Awaits Einstein Theory In Total Eclipse of the Sun

Christmas Island To Be Center of Interest for Many Scientists When Unusual Event Takes Place in September

BERLIN, July 22 (By The Associated Press).—Christmas Island, a little patch of land in the Indian Ocean which is distinguished chiefly by its pretty name, will be a busy place for a few minutes next September 20, and from this activity may come many startling announcements of a scientific nature.

Astronomers have calculated that Christmas Island will be one of the few spots on this earth over which the sun will be totally eclipsed September 20 for a full six minutes by the clock. Science, which computes its time by such vast periods as "light years," is preparing, however, to make quite a fuss over this insignificant six minutes.

A German scientific expedition, headed by Dr. Erwin Freundlich-Finley, of Potsdam University, is now on the way to Christmas Island with a large number of delicate instruments by which it hopes to make a thorough test of the Einstein theory of relativity. If Jupiter Pluvius withholds his rain clouds they expect to succeed, but if the sky is overcast their long journey will have been in vain.

Expedition Is Supported By German Capitalists

Accompanying Dr. Freundlich-Finley are Dr. Joseph Hopmann, of Bonn University; Professor August Kopff, of Heidelberg, and Dr. F. Vente, of the University of Batavia. The expedition has been arranged by the International Astronomical Society, supported by Dutch and German capitalists. A German steamship company has agreed to furnish the transportation free of charge, and wealthy German and Dutch citizens will bear all other expenses. Professor Einstein himself may decide later to join the party.

The equipment to be used in the tests consists of two of the most modern photographic telescopes, one of which is 8.60 meters long and the other 8.50 meters. Both are capable of taking detailed photographs at extremely long focal distances. The plates used will be 50 centimeters square, and the time of exposure will range from 10 to 90 seconds. Eight or ten photographs will be taken during the brief six minutes.

The test of the Einstein theory of light curvature decided upon by this expedition is possible only when the sun is completely eclipsed. Thus its practicability is sharply defined.

Several American, Australian and English expeditions also are headed for Christmas Island, where they plan to make various tests and astronomical observations in connection with the six-minute eclipse.

President Ebert of Germany is facing a bad end, which is due to occur within the present year, according to his horoscope, which has just been announced by an astrologer whose name—Eberrine—is strikingly like that of the nation's Chief Executive. This same prophet claims to have read a message from the stars last June foretelling the murder of Foreign Minister Rathenau.

Eberrine, in making the horoscope public, says that it bears a remarkable similarity to the astrological conditions that prevailed over the former German Empire at the exact hour when William I was proclaimed Emperor of Germany at 12:15 o'clock on the afternoon of January 18, 1871.

Had the birth of President Ebert occurred in the morning or toward evening, the astrologer declares, his horoscope would have been quite different, and he would not have become head of the German Republic, but as he was born exactly at noon on February 4, 1871, he comes under a star which holds an unhappy ending.

Eberrine quotes the "astrological aphorism" as his authority in this prediction, which, he says, is based on the tenth quarter appearing in the Wasserman constellation, thereby bringing dishonor and finally downfall if Saturn stands inauspiciously, as it did when Ebert was born. The astrologer warns the President that he should be exceptionally cautious during the coming months in all his undertakings and decrees.

Rich Must Pay Doctor Bills Of Poor, Under British Ruling

London So Interprets Decision Against Wealthy Patient Who Protested Fee as Excessive; Practitioner's Social Status Factor in His Charges

By Warre B. Wells

LONDON, July 11.

IS A doctor entitled to scale his professional fees according to his estimate of his patients' wealth? If he combines with general practice pursuit of a special branch of medicine, is he entitled to "make the rich pay for the poor"?

Medical custom in England answers these questions in the affirmative. That custom now may be regarded as recognized by case law, in view of an important reserved judgment just delivered here by Mr. Justice MacCardie. Actions by doctors to recover their professional fees are rare enough to attract a good deal of public attention. Due to its circumstances, the case in question was one of considerable importance to the medical profession and the public generally.

The action was brought by Dr. Anghel Gaster, a Rumanian doctor practicing in London, against Leopold Hirsch, to recover approximately $600 for fees for medical attendance on the defendant and members of his family. The defense was that, under a verbal agreement between the plaintiff and the defendant, a special rate of remuneration was agreed upon which did not amount to the sum claimed. Alternatively the defense pleaded that the fees charged by the plaintiff were not reasonable.

Defendant Admits Skill, But Calls Fees Excessive

The defendant, as the judge pointed out in his decision, admitted that the plaintiff did the work charged for. He did not dispute the doctor's skill and care. The only question at issue was whether the doctor's charges were excessive. The defendant fought the case as one of principle. He was admittedly a rich man. His defense represented a protest by wealth against the theory that a rich man should pay unusual fees. The plaintiff's contention was, in substance, that a doctor's fee may, and should, vary with the financial status of the patient. The rich, it was urged on this side, should properly pay more than the normal fees, due to the fact that poorer folk pay less and the very poor not infrequently nothing at all.

There is no rule of the profession which prescribes a standard of medical fees. There is nothng in the medical profession equivalent to the scale of fees existing among architects, solicitors or other professional men. Medical fees vary greatly, depending on locality, the status of the patient, the professional position and popularity of the medical man and the general circumstances of the case. The General Medical Council has established no rule on the matter, nor has it indicated any requirement whatever as to the duty of a practitioner with regard to remuneration. If the fees are not agreed, then the sole requirement of the law is that the charge shall be reasonable.

Mr. Justice McCardie's judgment upon the question "On what does reasonableness depend"? is generally regarded here as eminently fair between the parties to this particular case and of great practical value to the medical profession and the public. The doctor in this case started in a small way in a London suburb. Then he removed to what the judge described as "an area of exaggerated opulence," and his fees went up. Later he moved into Harley Street, the street consecrated to consulting physicians and surgeons, but at the same time he continued his suburban practice, charging fees which varied greatly with the status of the patient. The judge conceded that he fully observed the by-laws of the Royal College of Physicians, to which he belonged, and that he "generously fulfilled the beneficent and widely exercised privilege of a doctor in charging low fees to poor patients."

The question, "On what does reasonableness depend," must to a large extent be determined, the judge laid down in his judgment, by considering the mounts which by general custom are paid in normal circumstances. In its substance, said the judge, the question is sociological. "The status of the medical man and his relation to society as a whole is one of deep importance," the court held. "If his social status is to be high, his fees must not be unduly low. On the other hand, the scale of fees demanded may outrun the financial resources of the general public and lead to well-based protest."

In this case it happened that the defendant was, in fact, rich. Among the factors which must be taken into account the judge reckoned "the vast amount of work which is done by the medical profession, not only without reward, but also with generous self-sacrifice." He also took into account the high cost of living imposed on a doctor who practices in a fashionable district, and the long and costly education of a medical man. But how is the patient's financial standing to be properly estimated? On this point the judge's ruling was important.

"It seems," he said, "to be the practice to presume a man's obligation for fees not so much by his actual monetary resources as by the social position that he adopts. His house rent can be estimated. His bankbook is rarely seen. He who employs the apparatus of wealth may be fixed with the presumption of wealth. Perhaps this method is not on the whole an unjust one."

In the upshot the judge slightly reduced the amount claimed, ruling that in one or two items only it was excessive. But in substance his judgment amounts to a qualified legal recognition of the medical custom of "making the rich pay for the poor."

Latin Lettering Approved For Berlin Street Signs

BERLIN, June 18 (By Mail).—Street sign posts throughout the city of Berlin will henceforth be done uniformly in Latin lettering, under a recent official decision. The action was taken despite representations of a number of artist deputations, which held that the German letters were more decipherable and characteristic.

The Latin lettering had already been adopted in a number of districts, and the question of uniformity had long been controversial between proponents of the two scripts.