

POLITICAL ECONOMY

HUNGARY

23 MILLIONS FOR ROAD BUILDING IN HUNGARIAN TRANSYLVANIA

The Rumanian régime has unmistakably put its stamp on the 800 kilometres of roads in the recently reannexed regions of Transylvania. Vehicles have to struggle along on roads full of holes and ruts, shaky bridges and destroyed viaducts. It is hardly fair to call these roads at all. With respect to the road-system the Rumanianizing policy of the conquerors seems to have followed in absolutely the same lines as in every respect in Transylvania's public life. The problems of transport apparently played a minor part in comparison with the other great aims of this Rumanianizing policy. Let us just select one example: the main road between Debrecen—Ermihályfalva—Nagykároly—Szatmárnémeti crossing the old Trianon frontier was turned into a "parish" road; in other words, 80 kilometres of this road were put of action for a number of years, whereby the connection between Transylvania and the old mother country was cut off in this direction altogether.

Nor is the condition of the roads "kept in order" by the Rumanians much better. Most of the State and County roads too were "kept in order" by the parishes, which means that, in practice, they were not kept in order at all.

The Hungarian Government has now worked out a far-reaching and comprehensive scheme for the solution of the road problem in Transylvania. The roads will — almost without exception — be placed under the care of the Government authorities entrusted with the maintenance of roads in the whole country. This applies first of all to the roads already in use. Those roads which the Rumanian régime left to the care of the parishes will now be placed under the control of experts. As regards the roads not yet developed sufficiently, the State proposes to take over a minimum length, because even the roads now being used represent enormous responsibilities and additional expense to the State.

The first object of the new Government scheme is to raise these so called "developed roads" to the same level as the roads in Trianon Hungary. The Hungarian authorities have already done great and serious work even in the comparatively short time since the re-annexation. The Ministry of Commerce knew

what lamentable condition the Rumanian roads were in, so that simultaneously with the troops of occupation a whole host of road engineers, experts and a fully equipped technical staff arrived in Transylvania to start work at once. Even in the first hours, so to say, of the occupation the branches of the State Department of Roads started their work of repair. The Government has already appropriated 21 million pengő for road building in the reannexed regions, while an additional sum of 2 millions has been allotted for the repair of parish roads. This sum will — among other things — serve for the completion of the main road Budapest—Nagyvárad—Kolozsvár, the latter section of which was left uncompleted by the Rumanians. Out of this, a stretch of about 8—9 kilometres is to be built by a private firm. The same scheme will comprise the repair of the extremely bad road between Beszterce—Szeretfalva—Szászrégen which is to take the place of the lost railway line; the road is to be completed by June, 1941. — At present freight-goods are being loaded on lorries to be conveyed from Szeretfalva to Szászrégen, where they are unloaded, and via the "Szekler Circular Railway". By the latter date most of the main arteries of communication of Transylvania are expected to be in good order. But a long number of years will have to elapse before the whole road-system can be completely repaired. This, of course, is not solely a State problem. The counties will have to undertake the repair of a stretch of 5500 kilometres of the road-system, though even the repair of these parish roads can only be carried out with the help of the State, because the Transylvanian counties are too poor now to undertake such responsibilities.

The quarries from which the material for road building is being taken, are in a hopeless state, as the Rumanians dismounted and carried off the machinery of all quarries, whether they belonged to the State or to private individuals. Until the quarries can be re-equipped, the work of road building has to be continued with hand-picked stones.

RUMANIA

PROBLEMS OF RUMANIA'S OIL PRODUCTION

Rumania has recently introduced all sorts of measures to prevent foreign companies from the full exploitation of Rumanian oil; in fact she proposes to eliminate foreign exploitation altogether. In the first place, she has decided that the production price of petrol must not be changed during the present war. The production price is still the same as it was: 2 Lei, but the inland taxes on it are 5—600% higher, and the export duties are higher still. Thus the producer must inevitably plunge to his ruin in view of the constant advance of wages. For some time

SLOVAKIA

HUNGARY TO PURCHASE SLOVAKIA'S SURPLUS
OF RAW HIDES

According to official statistics, *Slovakia* imports 5.240.000 q. of hides and 812.000 kilograms of sole leather. It is interesting to note, however, that *Slovakia* herself exports a part of her own production of hide to *Hungary*. *Slovakia's* shoe and boot industry is now in a critical state and cannot give sufficient work to its labourers to exploit its full capacity. It is therefore necessary to export the surplus of hides from *Slovakia*; this refers primarily to calf skin. *Slovakia's* exports of hides at present find their way exclusively to *Hungary*, but she is also intending to export some of her surplus to *Turkey* and *Bulgaria*.

YUGOSLAVIA

BUDGET PROBLEMS OF BANATE OF CROATIA

Commenting on the budget of the Banate of Croatia for the next year, the Croat press demands a reform of the present financial system in the Banate. Among other things these comments point out that the Banate has received those branches of State revenue which wield the smallest profit or no profit at all. While the general budget of the Yugoslav State showed a surplus of 800 million dinars (16%) in the first five months of this year, the budget of the Banate shows a deficit of 200 millions (25%) in the same period. The items of revenue were the following: direct taxes, 215 millions (instead of 312 mil.,) super tax of the Banate 22 mil. (instead of 34.5 mil.,) turn-over tax, 61 mil. (instead of 95 mil.,) the previous year's arrears 1.5 mil. (instead of 36.5 millions). The only branch where the actual revenue exceeded the budget estimate was dues, where 172.5 millions were paid in instead of 145.5 mil. as had been expected. On the whole, out of the 714.5 million dinars estimated in the budget for the first half of this year, only 518 millions were actually paid in. At the same time the State taxes paid in by the population of the Banate amounted to a total of 289 million dinars, out of which sum 162 millions represented direct taxes, 120 millions turn-over taxes, and 4 millions dues. This state of affairs, the press goes on to say, cannot go on. The Banate must receive all the direct and turn-over taxes paid in by the population of the Banate; at present, a considerable proportion of the latter taxes, such as the turn-over tax on electric current, cement etc., are now being paid into the State Treasury. (*Jugoslavenski Lloy*, Oct. 22nd).

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