

SOUTHERN HUNGARY, NOW IN PROCESS OF RE-CONSTRUCTION, LINKS UP WITH THE MOTHER-COUNTRY

BY

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A year ago the districts of Southern Hungary which had for twenty years been detached from the mother-country, were restored. During the twenty years of foreign rule these districts retrograded so enormously both in economic and in cultural respects — the twenty years of rule by a foreign race so fully succeeded in balkanizing them, — that the Hungarian Government has to use the utmost efforts to raise them once again in every respect to a European level. The efforts being made for that purpose have already yielded fruit; and today these districts of Southern Hungary are already just as completely a constituent part of Hungary — just as able to fulfil all European requirements — as any other section of the country.

In our Review we have from time to time published reports dealing with the work done in the liberated districts of Southern Hungary by the creative genius of the Hungarians. Our present report treats of the work done during the past two months.

In the first place, *as a consequence of given circumstances Southern Hungary is an agrarian living-space; and as a result the greatest importance attaches to those measures which have been carried into effect for the development of agriculture or for the furtherance of agricultural industry.* The courses in agriculture organized in every town and every village are being held regularly; the students are trained to be complete farmers and are made familiar with the inevitable requirements of modern farming. The Government is endeavouring gradually to eliminate the consequences of the inequitable character of the Serbian land

reform measures; so far already a very large number of destitute families with many children have been allotted land. *In the month of February, in the vicinity of Szabadka, 11,500 cadastral yokes of land were distributed among 3,000 families with many children.* The most important measures have been taken in recent months in connection with the development of agricultural industry. In all the larger villages the work has been begun of building cold storage plants and preserve factories; such progress having indeed been made that there is every prospect that in the immediate future the output of the Southern Hungary preserve factories will not only prove sufficient to enable us to completely secure the needs of the home market, but will leave a considerable surplus also for export purposes. Great importance must be attached to the meat and lard preserving plants of the "Hangya" Co-operative Society at Szabadka, which have been modernized and extended. At these establishments 600 pigs are killed a week and their meat and fat preserved; and in addition a large number of horned cattle are also dealt with there.

The Government is devoting particular care to the encouragement of the cultivation of industrial plants. At Ujvidék the hemp mills — which have been incorporated in its sphere of interests by the most social textile undertaking in Hungary, the Kispest Textile Manufacturing Co. Ltd. — are being modernized and enlarged. In County Bács-Bodrog premiums amounting to 250,000 pengő have been distributed among sericulturists, this measure having so effectually furthered sericulture there that very shortly that district will be the most important area in Hungary for the cultivation of silk-worms. *In the field of industry the National Association of Hungarian Manufacturers has organized a branch in Southern Hungary and thereby incorporated the industry of those districts in that of the mother-country.*

A very important role is played in economic life and culture by roads, bridges and railways. In recent months County Bács-Bodrog alone expended 6,200,000 pengő, partly for the repair of neglected roads already in existence, partly for the building of new roads. Last year, at Ujvidék, dur-

ing the operations in the Balkans, the Serbians blew up two bridges (one a railway bridge) connecting the two shores of the Danube. The first of these bridges to be rebuilt was the railway bridge; we have every reason to hope that the work of re-construction will be completed before the end of the present year.

In cultural respects special mention is due to the "Kalot" courses for the training of the younger generations of agrarians to become in the future leaders of the public life of their villages. A sum of 200.000 pengő has been appropriated for the purpose of distributing grants of material assistance among pupils showing proficiency, the object of this measure being to further raise the general standard of culture in the country. In the month of January an ordinance of special interest was issued providing that the Serbian language — as being that of one of the important minorities of Southern Hungary — should be taught as an ordinary (obligatory) subject in the secondary schools of that region. In the days of Serbian rule the largest ethnical group was that of the Magyars; yet even in Magyar schools Magyar pupils had the greatest difficulty in obtaining the opportunity to learn their own mother-tongue. *A circumstance deserving special mention in the field of social policy is that everywhere in Southern Hungary the introduction of the system of paid holidays has been made obligatory. The system of marriage loans has also been extended to this part of the country: under this system poor young persons desiring to contract a marriage receive from the State a loan which is repayable over a period of ten years in trifling instalments. At Ujvidék 270 children have been granted relief in the form of gifts of winter clothing. At Szabadka the Red Cross Society is engaged in the benevolent work of allaying the sufferings inflicted by the war.*