

# WHERE YOU ARE COMPELLED TO VOTE OR GO TO JAIL

## An Interview With the Minister From Czecho-Slovakia, Who Tells How It Works and Discusses the Question of Whether Compulsory Exercise of the Franchise Will Sweep the World

BY WILLIAM ATHERTON DU PUY.  
AS a great, fundamental thing has been done in the first of those republics in central Europe to establish a competently functioning government, by writing into its constitution a requirement for compulsory voting?

Does this idea of compulsory exercise of the franchise mark an epoch in the development of self-government? Will it sweep the world? Will Americans, for instance, soon be faced with the necessity of voting or going to jail?

These are questions that are brought to the fore when one goes to talk with Dr. Bedrick Stepanek, minister from Czecho-Slovakia, recently arrived at Washington.

We are provincial in the United States and hardly know what to expect when we go visiting around the representative nations other than those of western Europe with which we are familiar. So, when I presented myself at the Czecho-Slovak legation I felt that I was visiting a foreign land. To be sure it was housed in a large American residence just off the socially correct district in Washington. The furnishings were American. There was an air about it of being but a temporary abode, for the legation is soon to be moved into other quarters.

The first foreign touch was given by the boy who opened the door. He was a Czecho, a typical one. Almost the first impression one gets of a Czecho is his rectangularity. He has a broad face, a face that is almost square. There is no aquiline to it. It is quite flat. There is a great deal of width and prominence of the jaw. The bodies of this race are square and stocky, giving the appearance of strength and endurance. They are larger than the peoples of southern Europe. As to hair, they are quite blonde, but there is a darkness of the skin; an absence of ruddiness that shows through in the peoples of western Europe.

The boy who let me in had stiff, light hair. He spoke English with little accent, but occasionally transposed a word as when he said: "His excellency will be immediately down." A square secretary came through with stiff, light hair and mustache. Then the minister entered.

His face was as square but his body more slender and graceful. Though but 26 years of age, he was a staid, bald. He wore a box of cigarettes in one hand and a constitution of Czecho-Slovakia in the other. I had previously been told that he was one of the few Czechos who had been thoroughly trained in diplomacy under the old regime. He had gone to the diplomatic schools of Austria-Hungary and had been in the service before the war. He speaks 11 languages.

"Czecho-Slovakia," said the minister, "has done one or two new things in the establishment of its government. It is a republic modeled chiefly on the United States and



France. I think it is probably true that it has more of America in its constitution than of France. The one point in which it departed fundamentally from the American method is in making it possible to overthrow the government as it is done in France. We believed that the French responsiveness of government to public will was better than the American form.

"The novelty in our form is, of course, the compulsory vote. I believe that when our elections were held in May it was the first time in history that any people had so cast their ballot. A whole people, male and female, went to the polls. Everybody voted. The new idea worked. We had done a new thing under the sun."

"Other of the formative nations of eastern Europe are following our example. I am informed that Yugoslavia will unquestionably write compulsory voting into its constitution. Austria is doing likewise. Much interest is being shown in the experiment from many sources, among which is the United States. I am asked constantly over here of the results of compulsory voting."

To the American, this man out of the east thus opened an interesting prospect. Through the decades a tendency has been growing to disregard the exercise of the franchise on

election day. It has not always been the ignorant who have shown most tendency to keep away from the polls. There have been many well-educated and prosperous individuals who have refrained from voting. There has always been a very large class that has assumed the attitude of being so superior that it would not deign to mix in the political scramble. Not more than a third of the people vote as a usual thing. Enfranchised women vote in even smaller numbers. Compulsory voting over here would mean quite an upsetting of old conditions.

"I think," the minister was saying, "that we have gone far toward laying down the principle that the vote is not a privilege to the citizen of which he may avail himself or not as he sees fit, but a duty to his government which he is obliged to perform. I am inclined to believe that this is a very important principle of government to establish."

"Just how is the principle of compulsory voting worked out?" I inquired.

"The penalty for failure to vote is a fine of from 25 to 5000 crowns or from one day to one month in prison. Men and women over 21 vote unconditionally, mentally or morally disqualified. Persons over 70 years are excused from casting their ballots.



"Twice a year a 'standing list of voters' is officially compiled and posted. Any citizen can make charges against the eligibility of any individual to vote. That individual will then be given a hearing and the case settled by proper authority, and his name either retained or removed from the list. The list is checked as the individuals vote on election day and delinquents are prosecuted."

"I had a personal experience with this system on the day of the first election. I was working very hard in the foreign office and hurriedly visited a voting place at the luncheon hour. There were so many people in line that I decided to go away and come back later. I returned at 4 o'clock and found the polls closed. Voters had ceased to appear shortly after noon and the officials had regarded the whole vote as having been cast and had gone home. I was required to appear and explain my failure to vote."

"In Czecho-Slovakia and, in fact, in most European countries, the elections are held on Sunday. The theory is that the vote can be cast with less inconvenience on Sunday than on a working day."

"There is yet another election principle applied by my government that partakes of the nature of a novelty: The victorious party does not get all the posts. If we had two parties in Czecho-Slovakia as you have two principal parties in the United States, and if one of those parties carried every election district, it would not get all the representation. If the victorious party cast 60 per cent of the votes it would get 60 per cent of the representation. The defeated party, casting 40 per cent of the vote, would



get 40 per cent of the offices. A little party casting 5 per cent of the votes which, in the United States, might never elect a candidate, would, under our system, get 5 per cent of the offices. Thus is every party represented in our parliament in proportion to the number of votes it casts. A defeated minority is not without representation. This may be another idea in self-government worthy of consideration."

"Show me how it works," I suggested.

"We have many parties in Czecho-Slovakia," said the minister. "Parties are easily formed. The officially confirmed signatures of 100 citizens whose names appear on the voting list and a willingness to pay its proportionate share of the printing cost is all that is necessary. Thus is a new ticket born."

"This printing cost is quite an item. If there are 15 tickets in the field every one is officially printed and a copy of each is sent to every person on the voting list. Thus is every voter given a chance to study the ballots."

"When election day comes the ballots are taken secretly. Each voter is provided with the full set of ballots. In secret he selects one and puts it in an envelope. It is received by the judges and the unused ballots are deposited elsewhere to be destroyed."

"But here is where the system differs from that in America."

"One must vote the unsolicited ticket of one of the parties. Thus he votes for a party and not for individuals. When the vote is counted it is the different parties that have received the given number of votes. There may be ten parties in a given district that is entitled to ten

members in the chamber of deputies. For instance. One party may get 30 per cent of the vote. It will get three members. One may get 40 per cent of the vote. It will get four deputies. One may get 10 per cent of the vote. It will get one deputy, and so on.

"The deputies elected will be those at the top of the lists on the tickets of the respective parties. Those further down on the lists remain as alternates, and in case of death or disability of deputies higher up they get the places. Thus is the necessity for special elections obviated."

"In a given district a given party might get more than enough votes to entitle it to two members but not enough for it to get three. It would appear that the left-over votes would be wasted. This is not the case. These surplus votes are combined with other surplus votes from other districts and are given their proportional representation. Every fragment from every community in the mind gets party representation. It is a different representation from that to be found in the congress of the United States, where minority parties, millions strong, may have no representation. Thus does it develop that Czecho-Slovakia has established two new principles with relation to the use of the ballot by its citizens."

The minister speaks his English very precisely and correctly. Only occasionally does he pause for a word, say it in French and then finally get it in English. He explained that he had read English for many years, but until a few years ago had been without experience in speaking it. Since the government at Prague has been set up there have been many Englishmen and many Americans in that city on one mission and another and Dr. Stepanek has had a good deal of conversational practice. His accent, however, that there are certain differences of pronunciation between Englishmen and Americans, even among Americans, that are rather puzzling to one who knows the printed rather than the spoken word.

"Naturally, we were a bit anxious when our first election day under the new constitution came around," said the minister. "The polls opened at 8 in the morning and people began to present themselves immediately. All worked smoothly. It being Sunday, there was no interference with work. By noon the vote was virtually all in, although the polls were not supposed to close until 5 o'clock. The detail of proportioning the representation among the parties was worked out in the course of a few weeks. Those who had failed to vote were confronted with the law. The situation was cleared up from every standpoint and there was no discouraging result. The first great compulsory election had been successfully held. The new experiment seemed to be a success. We are pleased with results."

## FULL MOON By Maxwell Struthers Burt

(Continued From Page 5.)  
Not even know she was dying. I had done the best I could for her. I thought to move her would be sure death. At that time the nearest doctor was 10 miles away—  
Stuart licked his lips. "And, of course—" he said.  
Prendegast nodded his head gravely. "Exactly," he agreed. "There was that story of Garnett, my partner, as well. They knew I was jealous of him and three months before, as you know, we had a quarrel. He gathered that I knew and he didn't, and he had been drowned. So you see—I! Well, they took my wife away from me, and she died, but she would not tell the story; and they took my children away. They claimed that I fled and skied straight north through the bitter cold like a madman. At all events, I didn't come back here for five years. By that time they had forgotten. They do, in this part of the world. He shrugged his shoulders as if infinitely weary. "Even if I had had excuses," he said, "what would have been the use? But I think it is only fair to you to have beforehand what you have gotten into." His eyes became eloquent again.  
"Tomorrow," he said, "you will have here and no harm will be done."

"Does your daughter know all this, too?" asked Stuart.  
"Only the fact of her lineage. I had to tell her that. One must face reality."  
Stuart stood up and stretched to the limit of his lean height. "Would you excuse me for a moment?" he said.  
He went through the house and into the dining room beyond. The girl was putting the finishing touches to the table. He walked up behind her and seized her arms and twisted her about and looked down into her startled eyes. "Your father has been talking to me until an hour later that he was trying to frighten me away. I love you—would you mind very much marrying me at once?"  
She gave a choking sob and he pressed her head down to his shoulder and stroked it, as you would the head of a hurt child. For a moment she lay in his arms utterly content, then she tried to struggle loose. "Don't!" she said, brokenly. "Go away! It's no use! Even if you don't care who I am, I can't go with you." She raised a stricken face. "Please!" she begged. "It was all right until you came. You'll forgive me?"  
Stuart was overcome with the same hopelessness that had overtaken him that afternoon on the road. How could he tell this girl what her father really was—more than her father she knew? How explain to her that he was a madman—possibly a murderer? His moment of indecision was answered in a totally unexpected manner. Two hands, lean and sinewy, encircling him, gently removed his arms from the girl's waist and turned him about. He looked into the blazing eyes of Prendegast.

came to a place like this to have my plans upset by such as you? Listen! God branded me when I was born, though no fault of mine, and he gave me, to make my hell even worse, I suppose, sensitive nerves and a mind beyond the ordinary. Then I was turned loose on a world that would not have me. So I came here and made a world of my own—he gestured widely—"a world of my own, do you understand! It's mine! I walk here with my head up. Those I do not like cannot come in; those who refuse to abide by my rules, leave. For years I lived in loneliness, surrounded only by the creatures you have seen, and whom I have trained to my will, until at last there comes a human being who is willing to be the same. Do you think I will give her up? Margaret—?" He turned to the girl and held out his arms.  
She hesitated and then came to him. "I cannot help it—Understand! O please—Understand!"  
Prendegast released her and stepped threateningly toward Stuart. "Get out of here!" he said, pointing a long finger. "Get your horses and go! You'll find your revolver in the hall—"  
He smiled, baring his teeth. "Unless you have cartridges in your pack, you're disarmed. There are none in your gun or belt. I took them out."  
Stuart tried bewildered argument. "But look here! I'm not a beggar, I'm—"  
Then a full realization of what he had just heard swept over him and he, too, grew cold with anger. "I will get my horses," he said, "and I will camp just outside your place. Tomorrow I will come back and discuss this thing reasonably, meanwhile I have an old pack-mare that came originally from Nevada. If I turn her loose she'll go back there straight as an arrow and take the other horses with her. In six hours Nevada will be here. So I'd try nothing out of the ordinary. Mr. Prendegast, I'm not Garnett and this is considerably later than 20 years ago. I think your kingdom will have to be administered rationally."

Prendegast sitting up on the divan, the moonlight glistening on the barrel of a revolver.  
Stuart jumped to one side, ducked and leaped. Prendegast shot twice, and the next moment Stuart was on top of him. In the silence the house awoke to sound. The arid smell of black powder was in Stuart's nostrils. He had time to be thankful that this at least was not an automatic that Prendegast was using. On the porch outside the magic awoke to furious anxiety. "Yes! Yes!" he shrieked. "Get to hell out of here!"  
Somewhere, ridiculously far out in the moonlight it seemed to Stuart, he saw the hand holding the revolver to the wrist of which, with his own left hand, he was clinging. If he could only keep it away from him! If he only could! Could he? He had imagined himself stronger than most men, but this writhing figure beneath him had a steel-like strength such as he had never before encountered.  
Prendegast drew the hand came down. Stuart pushing against it, slowly, until the black muzzle of the revolver wavered against Stuart's shoulder. Beyond that the hand could not come, for it had reached a segment of the arc more favorable to Stuart's pressure. Stuart, out of a corner of one eye, watched the black muzzle. He tried to draw his shoulder down. The black muzzle spat fire. A numbing pain ran along his arm. He lifted himself to his feet with a gigantic effort and shook the other man loose. This was no longer an equal fight; he would have to get out of it. He tore the sleeve of his right arm loose from Prendegast's grasp and fled down the hall and through the back door. As he went, Prendegast fired twice and cried out: "Get him you damn Jane! Get him! What use are you?"  
The open space behind the house seemed to Stuart impossibly wide and bare; bad shot as Prendegast had already proven himself to be, he could not fail to hit even a running mark under such conditions. Half way to the trees, and to the right, was the barn; if he, Stuart, could make this, he could come out through the rear of the building and so reach in safety the forest beyond. He flung himself upon the stout timber door. It was locked by a heavy bolt on the outside. Stuart shot the bolt back, opened the door and slammed it behind him. A bullet from Prendegast's revolver ripped the wood above him. In the warm darkness, heavy with the scent of horses and old hay, Stuart barred the door and ran across the yard toward the barn. He did not realize, until he did so, how covered his sleeve and hand were with blood. He felt suddenly very faint; and then he uttered an exclamation and strode over to a pile of sacks in one corner. Lying upon it, he took off his boots and stepped, gagged with a silk handkerchief and her feet and hands tied, was the girl. The match went out. Stuart, with an oath, took out his knife and cut the rope and undid the handkerchief. "Can you stand up?" he asked.  
"Yes, I think so," she answered faintly.

"We'll have to get out of here," he continued. "I've already lost all my advantage." He chuckled hysterically. "I was a damn fool," he said. "I've no cartridges, and somehow I couldn't realize until too late just how dangerous your father is. Where is the back door?"  
Her voice reached him small and terrified. "There is no back door, she answered. "The walls are of solid log."  
Stuart was silent for a moment. "Very well then," he said at length; "I've been a fool again. We're trapped. Come here and we'll see what we can do."  
She followed him back to the door. Through a crack he looked out upon the moonlit open space and the house beyond. "Look!" he whispered and drew her nearer. Before the ranch-house door, Prendegast, a whip in his hand, was punishing Jane. "That's for not helping him with me," said Stuart. The girl gasped and drew back. Stuart looked again. The whip rose and fell with furious regularity. When Prendegast was done, he flung down the whip and disappeared into the house, returning a moment later with a rifle. Jane lay where he had left her.  
Prendegast strode up to the barn door. He was evidently quite sure by now that Stuart was unarmed. He spoke quietly. "I will commence shooting," he said, "through the crack above the seventh log and then I will work down. Sooner or later I'll get you. There's no left, nor any beam for you to hang to. I've plenty of ammunition." In the moonlight his great height, his long pointed beard, made him an allegorical figure of the wilderness.  
Stuart drew the girl to him. "You'd better kiss me," he said. "I don't know but—" He thrust her aside. "Look out!" he screamed through the crack in the door. "Look out!" He had seen the black shadow of a flying body, and the next moment Jane struck Prendegast between the shoulders.

## TOKIO DECLARED EXPOSED TO HOSTILE AIR ATTACKS

TOKIO, Feb. 12.—If Japan should find herself at war with any nation, Tokio will be exposed to the danger of attack by hostile aircraft from above. This belief is common with most of the people who have the least interest in the talk of war with any nation, particularly with the United States since the jingoists on both sides of the Pacific raised the customary war-talk in connection with the anti-Japanese agitation in California. It is well that in any event the worst should be expected and prepared for, in the spirit with which Lieutenant-General Kojiro Satoh dwells at length in the mid-month number of "Japan and the Japanese" for November on the subject.

It highly tragic, but the number thus killed and wounded is only one-twenty-fifth of the British killed and wounded in Gallipoli and about one-fifth of the Japanese casualties in the attack on Port Arthur. The loss on the western front, it is absurdly insignificant. This plainly tells that aerial attacks by the enemy can never effect such a vital blow as to decide the outcome of the war.

Even if war were declared between Japan and the United States, there is nothing to be feared on the part of Japan from military point of view, he asserts, provided "moral" mobilization of the people is carried out in good order. In such a case, however, he continues, the art and knowledge concerning aircraft in Japan being far behind others, it must be admitted, however regrettable, that there is the possibility of Tokio being attacked by enemy airplanes. Granted that Tokio cannot escape a fate similar to that of London during the war, the extent of material as well as moral damage the enemy would be able to inflict on the people is worthy of careful consideration. Then he goes on to say:

"The improvement in airplanes since the European war has been really surprising, the airplane follows exactly the same conditions in its improvement as those of a warship. If one airplane is especially fitted up for attacking purposes, it is naturally weak on the defensive side, or if it has particular devices for speed, it consequently lacks carrying capacity. To build an airplane which will fulfill all these requirements is impossible, and the progress in airplane manufacture may be regarded as having reached the highest point with the record of last year.

"The record of airships is held by R-34 of Great Britain which, according to the book, has a speed of 70 miles an hour and can remain in the air for 211 hours at a stretch, which means 14,770 miles. The figures seem somewhat exaggerated, but if the figures are correct an airship of this size may attack Tokio and destroy a base at the Philippines or Guam Island, but even from Hawaii or San Francisco. A practical test made over a great distance was the trans-Atlantic flight by R-34 last year for a distance of 3520 miles, making it in 108 hours going out and 75 hours returning.

"In order to promote national interest in aerial defence work in airplanes generally, the tragic effects of bombing a town from an airplane up to now have been a little intensified. When London was suddenly attacked by the Zeppelins for the first time, the confusion caused was beyond description, but this was entirely due to the absence on the part of England of aerial defence. Thereafter, throughout the war, England was bombed by German airships or airplanes 103 times and suffered 4336 killed and wounded. This may make

## SUN FO CANTON MAYOR

CANTON, China.—Sun Fo, son of Dr. Sun Yat Sen, first president of the republic of China, has been appointed director of the Canton municipality, a position similar to that of an American mayor, under a re-organization plan recently launched here. Sun is well known in the United States and the Hawaiian Islands and holds degrees from Columbia University and the University of California.

## MARGOT ASQUITH'S DIARY

(Continued From Page 2.)  
Writer is alive, I shall not disclose who it was from.  
"My dear Margot:  
"You are not different to other people except in this respect—you have a very clear, cool head and a very hot, keen heart and you won't find everything; so choose what lasts and with luck and pluck, carrying as you are from the highest motives, you will be repaid. Asquith is far too good for you. He is not conventional and will give you a great deal of freedom. He worships you, and understands you, and is bent on making the best of you and the life together. You are marrying a very uncommon man—not so much his brains, they are good, in fact, first-rate—but he is uncommon from his determination, reality and concentrated power of love. Don't pity yourself—you would not wish to have loved Peter less—though you might wish you had never seen him—but you know you have allowed too much love and you must bear the consequences. Deep down in your heart you must feel that you ought now to put a stop to your present life, and to the temptation of making love to you. Depend upon it, with your rich and warm nature you need not be afraid of not loving Asquith intensely. By marrying him you will prove yourself to be a woman of courage and nobility, instead of a woman who is talked about and who is in reality a weak and self-indulgent. You are lucky after your storm-tossed, rather dangerous life to have found such a haven, and should bless God for it."  
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## Napoleon II Never Reigned

London, Feb. 12.—Napoleon I had a son by his second wife, born in 1811, who was made king of Rome, but was created duke of Reichstadt in 1818 by his maternal grandfather, Francis I of Austria. After the overthrow of Napoleon I the son resided at the court of Francis I until his death, near Vienna, in 1832. He was heir to the throne of emperor of France and was sometimes styled Napoleon II, though he never reigned. His mother was Marie Louise, daughter of Francis I of Austria, and his baptismal name was Francis Charles Joseph Napoleon Bonaparte.