

ORIGIN OF CHILI'S WAR.

The distribution of patronage for the purpose of furthering political ends was the prime cause of the revolution in the republic of Chili.

Under the constitution, which was adopted in 1833, the President was empowered to make a large number of appointments to important and lucrative posts, such as the Mayoralties of cities and the governorships of provinces. A clause had also been inserted in the constitution intended to check any abuse of this power-making it unlawful for the president to accept a second term.

Shortly after the election of president Balmaceda, in 1886, the dangers of this system of centralization became felt, and an attempt was made to enact reformatory election laws. This step was opposed by Balmaceda, and the accusation was thereupon made that the president was using the power of his patronage to elect as his successor Senor Enrique Sanfuentes, a man who was completely under his control.

Out of this grew the various complications that culminated on Jan. 7, 1891, in the proclamation in which Balmaceda declared himself dictator of the people of Chili. The system of government adopted in the constitution of Chili divides the power between the executive vested in the president, whose term of office is five years, and the legislative, which is controlled by the senate and a house of deputies. The term of a senator is six years, that of a deputy three years.

The bodies together form the Cortes, and the members are elected by the people.

At the outbreak of the recent rebellion the senate was composed of forty-six members, two from each of the provinces, and the house numbered 126 deputies, each deputy representing a constituency of 20,000. No member of the Cortes received any remuneration for his services.

The cabinet is composed of Ministers of State, Interior, War, Finance, Justice and Industry, and they are appointed by the president without the concurrence of the Cortes.

The Cortes is empowered to vote annually the appropriations, to fix the taxes and to regulate the members of the army and navy. The president cannot be impeached, but, on the other hand, no order of the executive is valid without the signature of a cabinet minister, who becomes responsible for such order and is impeachable.

Balmaceda was inaugurated president on Sept. 18, 1886. He was at that time fifty-one years of age and had served as deputy in five legislatures and had occupied since 1882 the post of minister of the interior. He was a member of the Liberal party. For the first two years his administration was satisfactory, but at this time he began to make wholesale removals from such offices as he controlled and to appoint party workers pledged to his personal friend, Sanfuentes, who belonged to the Clerical party, to which Balmaceda had always been opposed.

The cabinet, being at variance with the executive for his action in this matter, resigned in the early part of October, and Balmaceda appealed to congress to support his course. But Balmaceda's course in this affair, coupled with his failure to introduce an electoral reform bill and his opposition to a free ballot, brought about a coalition between the Liberals, Conservatives, Radicals and the Montt Varistas, by which he was defeated in the house by a vote of 75 to 29 and in the senate by a vote of 34 to 4.

On the 23d of October accordingly Balmaceda appointed a new ministry pledged to oppose any attempt to intervention on the part of Balmaceda in the choice of a candidate for the presidency.

Immediately upon the naming of this cabinet the Cortes upheld the executive and passed the appropriation and army bills for 1890. Notwithstanding this, however, the people distrusted the president, and the cabinet urged upon him the necessity of quieting the popular apprehensions by promising to call an extraordinary session of congress in April, 1890, when the electoral reform questions should be introduced.

This promise Balmaceda willingly gave and the announcement was made to both the senate and the house.

On Jan. 10, 1890, congress having adjourned to December, the resignations of these ministers were unexpectedly demanded by the president, with no excuse offered for such action, and he thereupon appointed a new cabinet composed of his personal friends.

This act was, of itself, an attack upon a national institution, for the cabinet depends upon a parliament for its existence, just as the ministry does in England.

From this time until April efforts were made to win over a congressional majority and, failing in that, no extraordinary session of congress was summoned, notwithstanding Balmaceda's expressed promise. And, to further irritate the opposition, on the 30th of May Sanfuentes was made chief of the cabinet.

The regular session of congress is held on June 1, and immediately upon the assembling a vote of censure was passed upon the cabinet. This should have had the effect of causing a resignation of the members composing it, but Balmaceda refused to accept any resignations, and Sanfuentes declared that in future the ministry would be presidential and not parliamentary, and that a vote of censure would be regarded

as a vote of honor. The indignation caused by this insolence was so great that the cabinet fled without a word of explanation. At the crisis the Cortes exercised the strongest privilege in its power and refused to discuss the appropriation bill and the tax assessment.

During the month of July no taxes were collected, and strikes and riots at Valparaiso and Iquique were instigated by Balmaceda with the hope of intimidating the congressionalists. This state of affairs continued until the news of the republican victory in Argentina reached Chili, and then on the 7th of August a new ministry was appointed composed of men of the highest character, at whose head was Chief Justice Frats.

The programs laid down by this cabinet was entirely satisfactory to the people and the bill authorizing the collection of taxes was accordingly passed. By this time the session was almost over and the electoral bills and the army and navy bill had not been discussed. Balmaceda therefore, through his ministry, promised an extraordinary session of congress in October. In the course of a few days, however, Judge Frats attempted to remove a dishonest officeholder, but Balmaceda interposed and stated that the man was a personal friend of his and should not be deprived of his office. Judge Frats thereupon resigned and his example was followed by his associates.

A new ministry was formed on October 15 with Claudio Vicuna at its head, Vicuna being now Balmaceda's candidate for the presidency. The other members were personal friends of Balmaceda.

The first act of this cabinet was to close congress. Balmaceda further refused to consider any petition looking to a reassembling of that body. When Jan. 1 came no appropriations for public expenses or for the army and navy had been made and Balmaceda then declared that he could not carry on the government in accordance with the constitution, and therefore by virtue of his own will he would thereafter dispose of the public funds and support the army and navy without reference to the constitution or laws.

After this announcement of dictatorship, congress exercised the power given to it by a clause of the constitution which says: "Whenever the president is found unfit to discharge the duties of his office by reason of infirmity, absence or other grave cause, the presidential office must be declared vacant." The president was accordingly solemnly deposed on Jan. 7, 1891.—New York World.

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