

# News from Soviet Russia

A SERIES of recent radio messages tell of progress in Russia along many lines. Most striking is the information that already more than ten thousand of the most important economic enterprises have been nationalized—86% of Russian industry.

Most of these have never been interrupted in their work, although a great many of the Petrograd factories had to be moved to Penza, Simbirsk, etc. In most of the big enterprises the corps of workers has increased. A number of large new factories are under construction. This year, at Poldolsk, a large locomotive plant was completed and handed over for operation. Two important electric stations will be finished before the Winter and will furnish power enough to electrify the whole Moscow region. At Saratov, has been undertaken the construction of a large plant for manufacturing agricultural machinery. Fuel production, in spite of the loss of the Baku and Donetz basins, is still sufficient for a high degree of industrial activity.

The 1919 crops are far ahead of those of last year. Raw materials, flax, wool, cotton, metals,—still impeded by the breakdown in transportation—are available in very large quantities. In fact there are not only large reserves for the domestic industry but also large quantities available for export.

The new organization of industry promotes large scale production. There is also great economy of fuel, labor and of raw materials in the unified administration through the government, which brings into co-operation all the workers in the same field.

## Foreign Commerce

The re-opening of communications with foreign countries, the Commissariat for Commerce is conducting preliminary studies of materials for export and of the organization and methods required for such transactions. A discussion is being carried on in the journal "Economic Life". An Institute was opened in the Spring, in Petrograd, for the study of International Commerce.

## Internal Commerce.

A recent decree provides for the obligatory exchange of manufactured for agricultural products. This decree now becomes possible because there is at hand sufficient machinery of administration to determine with reasonable approximation how much is manufactured in each line of industry and what stocks of agricultural products are available.

This problem of exchange between city and country has been of a most serious character. Indeed, in Hungary, competent observers have declared that it was the failure of this exchange which caused the breakdown of the Soviet rule, which might otherwise have made a far greater resistance to the Rumanian intervention. In Russia, too, there has been some measure of friction between town and country. But the fact that central exchange is now possible shows that the problem is solved.

Only the co-operative organizations are allowed to distribute goods in the country, thus barring the speculators and avoiding hoarding by the rich. The Commissariat of Provisions exercises supervising functions.

## Paper Industry.

The Central Paper Bureau now has at its disposal 63 nationalized paper mills and 39

that have not yet been nationalized. The most energetic measures are being taken to increase the efficiency of the work and excellent results have already been obtained with new processes for the manufacture of various kinds of paper.

It will be particularly interesting to watch the development of this industry in Russia alongside that of the United States, which is in the midst of a newsprint famine. It has been pointed out that our American shortage is by no means due to want of raw materials, but to the fact that the capital invested in this industry holds back the use of the Western timber supplies.

## Artificial Tea

Since the loss of Siberia, Soviet Russia has been deprived of tea, a product of prime necessity. The Supreme Council of National Economy went to work in November 1918 to organize the manufacture of artificial teas. In less than a year the production has been multiplied by fifteen, and it is still on the increase.

With such evidence of adaptability and enterprise, one can imagine what wonders of economic production will yet be performed in free Russia, once the intervention allows all of the workers' energy to go into productive channels.

## Gathering the Harvests

The Supreme Council of National Defense decided to send about 50,000 workers to the districts of Saratov, Samara, Ufa and Orenburg to help gather the exceptionally abundant harvest of this year. In about two weeks (during August), 20,000 workers were sent, under care of the various Commissariats concerned and of the Departments for Distribution of Labor of the various industrial centres.

This example of mobilization of labor is suggestive of the great possibilities in the organized economic life of the new Russia.

## Fine Arts and Recreation

On August 15th was opened at Moscow the first Museum for Western painting, in the old Schukin gallery. This gallery is now open without charge, under the Soviet power, to all visitors. All the canvasses have been systematically grouped by schools and epochs, and among the collection are numerous specimens of Matisse, Monet, Nan Jogh, Cezanne, Picasso, etc.

The Workers Cooperative of Moscow, under the auspices of the Commissariat of Public Instruction and of the Moscow Institute for Proletarian Culture, has established club houses in the different quarters of the city, attended each week by more than 20,000 persons. A Theatrical Section conducts fourteen dramatic circles, and each week gives eight performances. The instruction in dramatic art includes lectures on literature and the social sciences. The Music and Fine Arts Section conducts about fifteen musical circles and in six months has given eighty concerts attended by 50,000 persons. The programs are planned to make known the national productions and to bring out the characteristics of the various composers.

Many courses and conferences are conducted with the object of developing the taste and desire of the workers for knowledge. There are special courses for women, special clubs, homes and colonies for child-

ren. The Library Section has nineteen establishments, each of which circulates an average of one hundred volumes daily. There are also children's libraries; and in each library a circle for readings and recitations. In the Summer there were several popular concerts in the Moscow parks.

## Social Welfare

The Moscow Soviet has done a great deal of work to protect children and old people. Boarding schools, day nurseries, farm colonies, etc., have been developed to care for many thousands of children. Children from three to seven are placed in kindergartens in groups of thirty at most, in order that the establishment may have more of the character of family life than of an official institution. The feeding and physical and pedagogic care are of the highest order. Fifteen thousand Moscow children are enjoying these advantages, and as many more children, from thirteen to seventeen years of age, are on the Soviet estates near Moscow.

The Social-Welfare Section has also in its charge about 9000 invalids. Recently a systematic struggle has been undertaken to get rid of professional mendicants. They are taken, according to physical condition, either to the workhouse or to the rest houses.

The Pensions Section has under its charge 50,000 Pensioners, not counting the soldiers of the old army. It was decided to arrange at once for the care of the families of the men who have been mobilized by direct delivery to them of the national products.

In this connection, it is interesting to read the recent accounts of the Manchester Guardian correspondent, W. T. Goode, of conditions of life in Moscow. He had been told, for instance, that he would find no children left in Moscow, at least none under ten years of age. He writes: "The actuality was ludicrously opposite. Nowhere have I seen such families, so many very young children, as in Moscow and the surrounding country. What is more, to my thinking, there is no country in the world where more care, money and thought are bestowed on the children by the Government than in Russia today. To the age of 17 their wants in the way of food are supplied gratis on the level of the highest category of rations. Their schools, theatres, and amusements are a special care, and colonies have been formed in the country to which great numbers were drafted in the Summer for reasons at once educational and physiological. And the care begins before they are born."

Mr. Goode, by the way, informs us that the food supply is attaining normal again, and much of the rationing has been dispensed with. Also this correspondent again brings testimony of the fact that prostitution has disappeared from Moscow life, due to the improved economic and social position of woman under Bolshevism.

## BOLSHEVISM IN NORWAY.

The Left Party in Norway polled 250,000 votes, winning 52 seats in the Parliament.

The program is revolutionary and the party policies are of the most aggressive character, including soviets among those liable to military service. Support of the Soviet rule in Russia is without reservation.