

than ever that the question was one of personal pride and ambition, and of the smallest sort of party politics. I am afraid it is in our blood, but more than anywhere else it is evident in the Croats – they have the “mentalité Russe”, much talk and little definite accomplishment. I am done with meddling in the affairs of Parliament. I did my best, and was able to accomplish nothing. From now on I am a King “of the English type”!

70. 1925., ožujak 28., Izvješće poslanika Henryja Percivala Dodgea State Departmentu o zasjedanju Narodne skupštine i izjavi Pavla Radića o priznanju dinastije Karađorđevića i Vidovdansskog ustava.

NARA, M 358, R 3, 860h.00/240

[...] ⁴⁰⁸

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Belgrade, March 28, 1925.

Despatch No. 2632.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The Honorable

The Secretary of State

Washington.

Sir:

Referring to my Despatch No. 2616⁴⁰⁹ of the 16th instant, relative to the internal political situation, I have the honor to inform you that Parliament reassembled on the 22nd instant to hear and debate the majority and minority reports of the Committee on the verification of credentials. It will be remembered that I reported in my Despatch above referred to that, acting in accordance with the instructions of the Radical and Independent Democratic Party caucusses, the majority of this Committee had voted to propose to Parliament the annulment of all the credentials of deputies of the Raditch Party, the annulment of those of three Democratic deputies elected in the Bregalnitsa district, and to investigate the credentials of ten clerical deputies elected at Maribor. The minority of the Committee of course voted for recommending the approval of all the credentials. I enclose translations of a number of extracts from the local press which will furnish an idea of the comments made upon the Committee's decision (Enclosure No. 1).

⁴⁰⁸ Državni pečat.

⁴⁰⁹ Dopisano rukopisom: /237.

On the re-assembling of Parliament and following the reading of the Committee's reports, a debate began which lasted until the 28th instant. This debate was of such an historical character and the speeches made during it illustrate so vividly the fundamental questions at issue between the political parties that I have had as brief as possible summary made of it which I enclose herewith (Enclosure No. 2). It will be observed that the united Opposition leader, Mr. Davidovitch, opened the debate by a long speech in which he set forth the point of view of the Block of national Accord and Peasant Democracy and read the programme of this Block, which my Despatch No. 2616, above referred to, stated had thus far been kept secret. I enclose a translation of this programme as a separate enclosure (Enclosure No. 3). Although this programme declared in favor of a single Monarchical State and for freedom from any obligations towards foreign countries, many of its provisions are not clear. Mr. Ousunovitch⁴¹⁰, the Minister of Public Works, who spoke after Mr. Davidovitch, and in the name of the Radical Party, accordingly denounced this programme sharply. He was followed by a Croatian Deputy, who is especially disliked in Serbia and who provoked as uproar by his discriminating between the Government and the People's deputies. He was in turn followed by Mr. Maximovitch, the Minister of the interior, and a number of others of all parties. Finally on the morning of the sixth day, the 27th instant, when according to law the debate on the credentials must close, Mr. Paul Raditch, the nephew of Mr. Stjepan Raditch and the present acting leader of the Raditch Party, made a memorable speech lasting over three hours. The enclosure will be found to give its principal points and especially his unequivocal declaration, in the name of the Raditch Party, of recognition of the present political situation as created by the Constitution in force with the Karageorge Dynasty and of complete severance of any ties or obligations to the Peasants' International. These declarations, Mr. Paul Raditch declared⁴¹¹ would soon be confirmed at a meeting of the leaders of his party. The broad and conciliatory expressions used by this orator and his many tributes to the Serbian people and to the desire of the Croatian people for union with them and the Slovene people on the basis of complete equality, will be noted and provoked hearty applause even among the Radical benches. At the end of his speech, the Cabinet, Radical and Independent Democratic leaders withdrew for consultation and the session was not resumed until 11:30 P.M. when a Radical leader announced that his party, as well as the Independent Democratic party, proposed to vote for the confirmation of the credentials of nineteen Raditch deputies, the annulation of the credentials of Mr. Stjepan Raditch, Mr. Predavetz, Mr. Macek and the other Raditch leaders under arrest, and the investigation of the credentials of thirty-nine other Raditch deputies. (...) ⁴¹² also declared that this decision also provided that the credentials of the three Democratic deputies of Bregalnitsa and of the ten clerical deputies at Maribor were to be confirmed. No action was proposed regarding the credentials of three further

⁴¹⁰ Uzunović, Nikola (1873. – 1954.), političar. Član NRS-a. Bio je ministar agrarne reforme (1921.), prometa (1921.), građevina (1922. – 1924, 1925. – 1926.), socijalne politike (1924.), bez resora (1929. – 1932.), predsjednik vlade (1926. – 1927., 1934.).

⁴¹¹ Dopisano rukopisom.

⁴¹² Nečitko.

Raditch deputies one of whom is in Pittsburgh. A vote was thereupon taken which of course resulted in the Radical-Independent Democratic notice being carried by a substantial majority. I thereupon sent you my telegram No. 13 of March 29, 11 A. M., briefly summarizing this decision.

I learn confidentially from a prominent Radical leader that a large majority of the Radical and Independent Democratic deputies on reading the reports of the Committee on Credentials were immediately in favor of agreeing to the proposed annulment of all the Raditch credentials. Wiser councils, and especially those of Mr. Pashitch, prevailed and it was decided not to take any action until after the close of the debate. Even after Mr. Paul Raditch's speech it required all Mr. Pashitch's authority and influence to persuade a majority of his followers and what finally saved the day was Mr. Pashitch's proposal of the formula that only those Raditch credentials should be confirmed whose holders had occupied no official position in the Raditch Party during the negotiations of that Party with the Peasants' International. It was on this ground that the mandates of Mr. Stjepan Raditch and his imprisoned party leaders were annulled and that an investigation was decided into the records of thirty-nine other Raditch deputies. I learn however, confidentially, that this proposed investigation is a device for inducing the Raditch Party to confirm the important statements made by Mr. Paul Raditch, according to his promise, and that the "investigation" will probably be ended as soon as this confirmation takes place and these credentials also confirmed.

It may confidently be stated that Mr. Paul Raditch's speech and the decision of Parliament following it are generally considered here as the most hopeful steps yet taken towards a satisfactory solution of the Croatian problem. Radicals and Independent Democrats naturally attribute this success chiefly to the tactics employed by them towards the Raditch Party which are stated to have forced this party to yield some of their most prized principles. They lay their success not a little to the fact that Mr. Stjepan Raditch was unable on account of his arrest to make more demagogic speeches. The Croat leaders have undoubtedly given proof of a most conciliatory disposition but I learn on excellent authority that Mr. Paul Raditch's speech was submitted to and authorized by Mr. Stjepan Raditch. It may also be said that, although the drastic methods used by Mr. Pashitch and Mr. Pribitchevitch towards the Raditch Party would not have seemed to an outsider as the best calculated to effect a reconciliation, they have nevertheless apparently led to this result.

I now learn, also from an excellent source, that negotiations have already begun between the two Governmental parties and the Raditch Party for a coalition and for the eventual entry of some of its members into the Cabinet. Such a rapid development of the situation would seem to be premature but Radical leaders and even Mr. Pribitchevitch himself speak enthusiastically of it. Mr. Pashitch has from the beginning desired a coalition of his party, representing the majority of the Serbian people, with the Raditch Party, representing the vast majority of the Croatian people, and has believed that he could easily draw to such a nucleus parties representing all the remaining parts of the Kingdom. He now apparently believes that he has found the bases for such a coalition. It may be added that the King has always made endeavors to get the Croats into the Government.

After the verification of the credentials of deputies, the House proceeded to the election of its officers. As protest against the annulment of the credentials of a portion of its members, the Opposition decided to abstain from attending during these elections, which resulted in the choice of Mr. Marko Trifkovitch as President and that of Mr. Ousunovitch as First Vice-President. According to Serbian tradition, all the officers of the House were chosen from the Government parties. As both Mr. Trifkovitch and Mr. Ousunovitch are members of the Cabinet they have now resigned but will probably not be replaced for the moment owing to the coming reconstruction of the Cabinet. Mr. Srskitich⁴¹³, also a Cabinet minister, who has now resigned, has been elected chairman of the Financial Committee and Mr. Ljuba Yovanovitch, the President of the late Parliament, has been elected chairman of the Legislative Committee. The Financial Committee has immediately set to work upon the Bill for Provisional Twelfths for April, May and June, submitted by the Minister of Finance. It is hoped to have these voted before the 31st proximo as the present Budget ends on that date.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

H. Percival Dodge⁴¹⁴

H. Percival Dodge

American Minister

Enclosures:

- 1.- Translations of press extracts;⁴¹⁵
- 2.- Summary in translation of Parliamentary debate on the verification of deputies' credentials;⁴¹⁶
- 3.- Translation of the programme of the Block of National accord and Peasant Democracy;⁴¹⁷

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⁴¹³ Srškić, Milan (1880. – 1937.), političar. Bio je član NRS-a, ministar šuma i rudnika (1922. – 1924.), unutarnjih poslova (1924., 1932.), pravosuđa (1926. – 1927., 1929. – 1931.), vjera (1927. – 1928.), ministar pri predsjedništvu Ministarskog savjeta (1931.), poljoprivrede (1932. – 1934.), bez resora (1934.), predsjednik vlade (1932. – 1934.).

⁴¹⁴ Vlastoručno.

⁴¹⁵ Sažetci novinskih izvješća bez navođenja nadnevka o poništenju HRSS-ovih mandata: *Politika* (Beograd), *Samouprava* (Beograd), *Vreme* (Beograd), *Hrvat* (Zagreb), *Obzor* (Zagreb), *Hrvatsko pravo* (Zagreb), *Riječ* (Zagreb).

⁴¹⁶ Sažetci rasprave u Narodnoj skupštini prema pisanju „beogradskih novina“, najvjerojatnije dnevnika *Politika* od 23. do 28. ožujka 1925. Vidi: „Tuča u Parlamentu“, *Politika* (Beograd), 23. ožujka 1925., 1-6; „Sukob Pribičević – Korošec“, *Ibid.*, 24. ožujka 1925., 2; „Neće se birati sredstva...“, *Ibid.*, 25. ožujka 1925., 1-3; „Ako se odreknu Radića“, *Ibid.*, 26. ožujka 1925., 1-3; „Sudbina mandata H.R.S.S.“, *Ibid.*, 26. ožujka 1925., 4; „Pred poništaj Radićevih mandata“, *Ibid.*, 27. ožujka 1925., 1-5; „Poništeni su samo mandati vođstva H.R.S.S.“, *Ibid.*, 28. ožujka 1925., 1-5.

⁴¹⁷ Prema pisanju neimenovanih „beogradskih novina“ od 23. ožujka 1925. Vidi: „Tuča u parlamentu – Program Bloka narodnog sporazuma i Seljačke (Ljudske) demokratije“, *Politika* (Beograd), 23. ožujka 1925., 2.