

The First Northern Political Science and Public Law Congress. On September 3-6, a group of some one hundred twenty professors and experts in political science and public law from Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden met in the halls of the University of Stockholm. The purpose of the conference, as indicated by its temporary chairman, Professor Nils Herlitz (who, together with Dr. E. Fahlbeck and the Swedish society Norden, was to a large degree instrumental in bringing it about), was to give expression to the close relation between the fields of politics and law, to bring together the men who both in theory and practice deal with these subjects, and to build a new bridge uniting the Scandinavian countries, particularly the people in those countries who interest themselves in the teaching and application of law and government.

The gathering included not only professors and students of the northern universities, but also a number of men with long experience in the governmental affairs of Scandinavia. The permanent chairman, the University Chancellor Dr. Ernst Trygger, has occupied the posts of prime minister, foreign minister, and minister of justice in Sweden. One of the vice-chairmen, Dr. Rafael Erich, is the Finnish minister to Sweden, was formerly prime minister of Finland, and has more recently been chosen one of the deputy judges of the Permanent Court of International Justice. Another vice-chairman, Mr. Lars Oftedahl, is a member of the present Norwegian cabinet. The opening session, as well as some of the succeeding meetings, was attended by Prime Minister Ekman, Minister of Justice Gärde, and several other Swedish and Scandinavian statesmen.

At sessions held in the mornings and afternoons, papers were read, after which spirited discussion occurred, continuing at the luncheons and dinners. On one day the meetings were held at the University of Uppsala, and the delegates had an opportunity to see this venerable institution, one of the oldest in Europe and the world. The city of Stockholm entertained the members at an elaborate dinner in the city hall, and another memorable evening was spent on the grounds of the Stockholm Exposition.

The papers were of high caliber and wide variety. The meeting opened with a discussion by Professor Herlitz, of Stockholm, on the subject, "Characteristic Features of Swedish Public Law." The next speaker, Professor Frede Castberg, of Oslo, gave a particularly seasoned account of "The Power of Courts to Declare Laws Unconstitutional."

In this paper, not only the situation in Scandinavia was traced but many cases familiar to the American political scientist and constitutional lawyer were mentioned, even some decisions of our early colonial courts. Other speakers were S. R. Björkstén, of Helsingfors, who told "How Finland Developed into a Democratic, Parliamentary Republic;" A. Ross, of Copenhagen, who in a discussion of "The League of Nations and State Sovereignty" deplored the fact that so much emphasis has been placed by the League on the "equality of states" and held that the small states exercise a power altogether out of proportion to their actual importance. This was a rather surprising point of view to be taken by the representative of a small state, and it produced a somewhat spirited reaction in the Swedish press.¹ Another interesting paper was read by Professor Georg Andrén, of Gothenburg, dealing with parliamentarism in Sweden. In his discussion, Andrén, who is one of the four or five best known professors of political science in Sweden and a former Conservative member of the Riksdag, pointed out that parliamentarism in Sweden has not achieved the results that its champions have hoped for. There have not been powerful governments resting upon strong majorities in Parliament. Almost all of the ministries have been of the minority type, and since the autumn of 1917 nineteen months has been their average life. The Riksdag overshadows the government, and there has developed too great power on the part of the committees.

In the discussion following this address representatives of the other three countries traced the situation in their respective lands. Mr. Myer, of Copenhagen, stated that in Denmark there has been considerable increase of power on the part of the minister of finance, but said that the same has been true of the financial committee of Parliament. Criticism of the parliamentary system in Denmark is largely confined to those who are dissatisfied with the high taxes. In Norway, according to the minister of commerce, Lars Oftedahl, the situation is somewhat different. Before the introduction of parliamentary government, the committees of the Storting exercised great power; but since that time, development has been in the opposite direction, and now it is well recognized that, especially in affairs of the budget, the power should rest in the hands of the government. Even in Norway, however, the orthodox conception of parliamentary government, namely, that the government should rest upon the confidence of a

¹ See, for instance, *Nya Daglight Allehanda*, September 5.

majority of its own political faith in the legislative body, has hardly been approximated. There is rather a negative conception, due largely to the differences within the parties in the chambers, which makes possible the building of governments supported by an absolute majority and which may have long tenure of office. Minister Erich of Finland recalled that in his country parliamentary government was not introduced until 1917, and that therefore there may be just reasons for the lack of faith which many as yet evidence toward it. The building of a government in Finland is frequently a difficult matter because of personal considerations, and the average life of a ministry has been only about ten months. The position of the president under the constitution, as well as the personal strength of the chiefs of state, has to some extent ameliorated these difficulties. One consequence of minority governments, however, has been that the party represented in the ministry frequently forgets all about its program in order to remain in office and not to risk its position. This, together with other features, has led to no little dissatisfaction with the existing régime.

At the last session of the congress, the question of permanent organization was discussed. It was felt by everyone that the continued coöperation of northern scholars and statesmen in these fields was both desirable and necessary, and that conferences similar to the present one might profitably be held every three or four years. A committee was created within each country to work in conjunction with the others in making further arrangements with this end in view. That the 1930 congress aroused considerable interest throughout Scandinavia was evidenced by the active collaboration of members of the four governments and the large amount of space given the proceedings, not only by the Stockholm press, but by the leading papers of outlying smaller cities.

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Twenty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association. By common agreement, the twenty-sixth annual meeting of the Association, held at the Hotel Statler, Cleveland, Ohio, on

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