

CONSTRUCTIVE WORK IN TRANSYLVANIA

BY

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One of the most important problems of the districts of Northern Hungary re-incorporated in the mother country is *the regulation of the rivers*. Only quite recently destructive inundations swept through the valleys of the Szamos and the Körös, not only doing incalculable material damage, but also in many cases destroying human life. This was due chiefly to the fact that during the twenty-two years of Rumanian rule very little care was devoted to the work of river-regulation; but another cause of no less importance was that during the period of Rumanian occupation the forests were extirpated ruthlessly and unsystematically — a procedure which, as is well known, demands a serious penalty in the form of floods.

One of the most important tasks in this connection is *the regulation of the Sebes-Körös* in the vicinity of Csucs, Kissebes and Körösfeketető, — where last summer's inundations wrought the greatest havoc. The regulation operations were begun here shortly after the floods had subsided; and they are now in rapid progress. Regulation operations have been started in the valley of the brook Nádas within the confines of the villages of Egeres, Bogártelke, Nádas, Daróc, Sárd and Magyarszentpál. A beginning has been made also with the work of regulating the brook at Kapus. Regulation operations have been carried out on the brook Borsa above the villages of Kolozsborsa and Csomafalva with the object of restoring the productive capacity of the ploughed fields and pastures which were inundated. *The cost of these operations amounts to 120,000 pengő. The regulation works to be*

carried out on the Szamos in the vicinity of Kolozsvár have been estimated to require an outlay of 60,000 pengő.

The Ministry for Agriculture has also begun operations for the accumulation of rubble and the construction of dikes, and has further begun the afforestation of barren areas and of such areas as threaten to enhance the danger of inundation.

There has been a very considerable improvement in the possibilities of communication in the re-incorporated districts of Northern Transylvania and in particular of Széklerland. On the narrow-gauge branch line between Szászlekenye and Kolozsnagyida *there are already 44 engines and 430 cars and trucks engaged in dealing with the traffic.* And to negotiate the traffic between Beszterce and Szászrégen the "MAVAUT" (Hungarian State Railways Road Car Co.) is running *200 motor-lorries*, each able to carry on an average 3 tons a day. In addition the "IBUSZ" (Tourist Traffic Co.) has *organised a service of 400 Székler carts* to deal with the traffic between Szászrégen and Sófalva. As a result of these measures the problem of traffic between Széklerland — which area was previously cut off from Hungary proper — and the mother country has been satisfactorily solved provisionally — until the extension of the trunk line between Déda and Magyaró (which is being built with the utmost possible speed) has been finished and the railway system of Széklerland completed. *On this extension the State Railways are spending 18.6 million pengő on sleepers only — the bulk of the material required being procured in the exceptionally richly-wooded districts of Eastern Hungary.* As a result of the improvement of the possibilities of communication the health-resorts of Eastern Hungary and Széklerland this summer had a record number of visitors. The sum accruing to Northern Transylvania under this head *amounts to several million pengő*; and this amount will without doubt contribute

very considerably to strengthen the financial position of the region impoverished during Rumanian rule by artificial means.

Particularly important as a factor in the development of the agriculture and the furtherance of the work of industrialisation in Transylvania is *the establishment in County Háromszék of a spirit-distilling plant under the management of the Spirit Régie*, which will render possible the industrial utilisation of the surplus stocks of sugar-beet and potatoes of the Székler counties. In addition initial steps have been taken for the establishment of several plants for the manufacture of flax too.

As a result of the succesful efforts of the co-operative societies affiliated to the "Hangya" which have been established in Transylvania, *provision has been made for the supply to consumers in the mother-country* of some of the valuable mineral waters of Széklerland — those of Előpatak, Bodok and Székelyszalvátor. The commercial organisation established for this purpose has already begun to operate, its efforts having so far been crowned with success.

Very useful work has been done in the development of the districts of Eastern Hungary previously so backward in commercial and industrial respects by the National Fund for encouraging craftsmen and artisans to set up for themselves in business, which in the course of a single year has enabled *more than 500 craftsmen and tradesmen to start independent existences*. The total amount distributed for this purpose in the form of loans exceeds *1,500,000 pengő*.

The building works undertaken by the Rumanians in Northern Transylvania were relatively unimportant; and a large part of the buildings begun were left in a half-finished state. In one of the outlying quarters of Kolozsvár, for instance, the foundations of a building of large dimensions were laid, but the building was never completed. The

Hungarian Government immediately took steps to complete the buildings thus left unfinished as rapidly as possible, the big building in question being destined to serve as the headquarters of the army corps command. The enormous sum appropriated for the purpose is already making its beneficial effect felt among the craftsmen and industrial establishments of Kolozsvár.

In the field of public welfare too work of a noteworthy character is in progress. For the purpose of encouraging the building of house-settlements for the workers of the industrial undertakings, negotiations have for some time past been under way between the Ministry for Industry and the National House-Building Credit Co-operative Society established by the banking companies. The Social Insurance Institute, the Private Employees' Insurance Institute and the National Family Welfare Fund are all to take part in the building scheme. As a consequence, very shortly the building of houses is to be begun in several Transylvanian towns. This work will be participated in also by the several local government bodies: the town of Marosvásárhely, for instance, has decided *to take up a loan of 250,000 pengő for house-building purposes*, an apartment house with 20 flats to be built out of this amount on a site belonging to the Corporation. The town of Marosvásárhely has in any case taken the lead in the work being undertaken for the purpose of repairing the omissions committed during the period of Rumanian occupation, having for instance ordered machinery and building materials from Germany for the modernisation of the town waterworks — *appropriating the sum of 300,000 pengő for the purpose.*

Initial steps have been taken also for the development of the intellectual life and popular education of the province. At Kolozsvár, for instance, a *Workers' College* has been opened the object of which is to enlist the assistance of the

Francis Joseph University of Sciences in the national and scientific education of the working classes. The College was opened on October 29th. and is to continue its work until the April of next year. The course is to be closed with an examination, the students passing the exam. to receive certificates.

On November 10th., in two Székler towns (Csík-somlyó and Kézdivásárhely), *the popular colleges for girls* maintained by the Catholic Women's Alliance of Transylvania were opened. These schools serve two purposes: on the one hand they are intended to supply the national training which Hungarian girls were prevented from obtaining during the long period of Rumanian occupation, while on the other hand their object is to provide the villages with young girls trained in household economy (housekeeping), children's upbringing and agriculture.

In this connection we would note that in one of the most Magyar counties of Transylvania — County Csík —, in which the proportion of inhabitants of Rumanian nationality is quite insignificant, *38 elementary schools using Rumanian as the medium of instruction have been established*. That is how the Hungarian State is providing for the cultivation of the languages and cultures of the non-Magyar nationalities.

On November 9th., after a silence of twenty-two years, the *Kolozsvár National Theatre* was re-opened, — that institute which was the second most important theatre in the country after the National Theatre of Budapest. It was at Kolozsvár, more than 120 years ago, that the first stone theatre in the country was built; no wonder that the Hungarians have always looked upon the Transylvanian Capital as the mother of their theatrical culture. During the days of adversity under foreign rulers the Hungarian theatre found a temporary refuge in the summer "arena" in the Promenade, though there were two other buildings in the

town suitable for the purpose which might have been placed at the service of the Magyar Muses, — one being the new theatre-building opened in 1906 and the other the older National Theatre in Farkas-utca. The foreign rulers, not content with exiling the Hungarian Muses from the splendid new theatre, refused to tolerate them even in their ancient home in Farkas-utca.

And now History has at last given the Hungarian Muses satisfaction: and *on November 9th., 1941, the Hungarian language was once more heard on the stage in Hunyadi-tér, our actors being able to continue the performance of "Hamlet" at the point — the great soliloquy, "To be or not to be . . ." — at which, twenty-two years ago, the flash of Rumanian bayonets had forced them to break it off.* In the evening of November 9th., 1941, the auditorium clothed in purple, gold and marble — the public crowding the stalls, boxes and dress circle and gallery — joined the actors on the stage in acclaiming with heart and soul their opening words — "To be . . .!"

The audience present at the gala first-night included Archdukes *Joseph* and *Joseph Francis*, Dr. *Valentine Hóman*, Minister for Education, Baron *Daniel Bánffy*, Minister for Agriculture, M. *Denis Ghyczy* and M. *Stephen Losonczy*, Under-Secretaries of State, Count *Béla Teleki* (representing the Lower House) and Count *Nicholas Bánffy* (representing the Upper House of Parliament). Many other notabilities were present too. After the National Anthem and the Rákóczy March had been played, M. *Francis Táray*, Director, delivered his inaugural address; then the curtain rose, and the public followed the programme with patriotic enthusiasm.