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Foreign Intelligence.

FRANCE.

STATE of the REPUBLIC.

2 Brumaire, Nov. 23.

[*This article was this day presented to the Legislative Body by the Counsellors of State, Regnier, Gouvion St. Cyr, and Najac.*]

" At the moment when the Legislative Body resumes the course of its labors, the government submits to all France a sketch of its operations. This is a duty dictated by its principles, and it discharges the task with that frankness which it owes to the public interest, and the purity of the sentiments by which it is animated. All know what was the situation of the Republic on the 4th Nivose, year 8, 25th Dec. 1799.—The events of the 18th Brumaire had reanimated the courage of the people, but men's minds still floated in uncertainty.—The departments of the West were a prey to civil war; every where there prevailed feeble, distracted administrations, without unity of principles, or concert of operations. No energy in command, no promptitude in execution. A police without activity; tribunals without authority; disorder in the public receipts; requisitions which harrassed the public, and consumed our revenue; commerce and manufactures in a state of stagnation; the armies of Austria from the top of the Alps and Appenines menacing Liguria and France; neutral vessels driven from the sea by the terror of the English maritime code; America, which owed to us her independence, armed against ours; Spain, Batavia, Helvetia, Liguria, faithful to our allies, but waiting with a painful anxiety what the future should decide respecting our fate and theirs. It was under these auspices that the year 8 began. Peace was the first want, and the ardent prayer of the nation; Peace too was the first object that occupied the mind of government. Two letters written by the Chief Consul to the Emperor of Germany and the king of England, expressed to them with frankness, but without guile, the wish of France and of humanity. This prayer was rejected by the minister of Austria and Great Britain. The Cabinet of Vienna mingled some hopes with the refusal. *The Cabinet of England blended bitterness and reproach with its correspondence, and afterwards declamation and invective in the public discussions*, in which it exposed the overtures made by France. This publicity, these declamations and invectives, but ill assisted the animosity and the plans of the British administration. Frenchmen recognized in the conduct of their Chief Magistrate, the sincere desire of peace. They felt indignant at the enemy by whom the overtures were rejected, and saw that they had to expect peace only from their efforts and their courage. Hence the principle of that energy, which produced our last success, and our last victories. Hence, perhaps, in the minds of the English, a sentiment of justice towards a people, who, after so many exploits, and so much glory, sighed only for peace: hence, in the minds of other nations, a return of favor for the cause of our independence and our liberty. The rebellion in the West was suppressed. Nothing more was necessary than to support by the display of force the authority of reason and principle, in order to bring the people back to their duty. All those who had been led away by seduction and terror submitted to a government beneficent and protecting. Every day the attachment to the Republic encreased in these departments as well as respect for our institutions, and hatred towards our enemies. The establishment of *gen d' armerie a pied* will serve to clear the country from the remains of a few of wretches habituated to pillage, and covered with crimes, which the amnesty could not reach. In these departments, as in all others, the influence of the authorities established by the Constitution, has been marked by progressive improvements. A power concentred in an individual; and therefore, inevitable responsibility gives to public and private affairs a rapid movement, and will restore, by degrees, œconomy in administration. Inspection is more active; information more prompt and more certain; the citizens perceive more clearly the advantages of the power which protects them, as well as the vigor of that authority which represses and restrains them.—Throughout the Republic there still exists some individuals who regret the past; some feeble minds whom a residue of fanaticism torments; but these regrets become daily more weak, fanaticism dies away, and manly sentiment gains more the ascendancy. To wish that man should disavow with readiness, to-day, what he yesterday professed—that he should submit at once, without murmuring, to the yoke of the laws which lately he spurned, is the wish not of lawful power, but of tyranny. Let us leave to time to complete its work.—Time alone confirms institutions. It is only after they have long existed, that they come to obtain an absolute respect. The Administrators have been chosen for the people, not for a particular faction or a particular party. Government asks not to know what any man has done, or what he may have said, under particular circumstances, and at particular periods. It has required only to ascertain if he possesses virtue and talents; if he was inaccessible to hatred or vengeance: if he is likely to be always impartial and just. The maxim of the government is, that the denunciations which attack public functionaries, at this time, still full of the remembrance of ancient divisions, ought to be weighed in the balance of justice, and verified by the most strict examination. The same principles and the same views have directed the choice of the magistrates. Let them judge things, and opinions. Let them be inflexible as the laws themselves. Such is the wish, such the only wish which ought to influence a government. The Constitution guarantees to them the independence and the perpetuity of their functions. It is to the nation, and to their own consciences that they must answer for their decisions. Before the 4th Nivose December 25, it was the government which decided upon the appeals of citizens, inscribed in the list of emigrants, and it decided on the simple report of the minister of general police. Thus it had the power of deciding questions which involved the tranquility of the state, the lot of individuals and the assignment of property. In order to clear up this subject, the government wished to know what was the nature of the laws of emigration; what the nature of those of whom the list of emigrants was composed; how, and by whom it was formed, and what were the principles on which it was drawn up? It then learnt, that in each municipality, there had been prepared lists of citizens absent from the commune where they had either property or a settled abode; and that of these particular lists, collected into nine volumes, had been formed what was commonly called the list of emigrants—that citizens inscribed as absent, or emigrants in one commune, were at the very time public functionaries in another: that labourers, artizans, individuals in service, were confounded with men whom the prejudices of birth, and the interests of rank, marked out as enemies to the revolution—that inscription collected and indeterminate applied to whole families, and families too often unknown to the persons by whom the inscriptions was formed. From these circumstances, a conviction was produced that there did not exist a true list of emigrants, and it was necessary to form a new list, in which those whose names ought never to have been inscribed, should be distinguished from those whom prejudices and their circumstances pointed out as true emigrants, and hence originated the specifications and conditions of the decree of the 28th Vendemaire, (September 20). A plan of regulations will be proposed to give additional security to those who have acquired national property. An important work is on the eve of being accomplished, which during six years, has been called Legislation. In this session the civil code and a code of procedure will be proposed to the consideration of the legislative body; other objects less important will form the subject of laws, of which the elements are already prepared. Public instruction, still neglected in many of the departments, has assumed in others a better direction, and a higher activity. New asylums have been opened for the children of those who have fallen in defence of their country.—If the hospitals are still in distress, a decree secures to them at least the payment of a part of what is due to them on the capital of their rents, of which the redemption was authorised by a law passed during the last session. Measures have been taken to ascertain the number of deserted children, the number of whom has very much increased of late, and plans are adopted to succour their wants. Some manufactures which are peculiar to the nation, and which honour French industry, begin now to rise from that langour in which our former misfortunes has plunged them. Painting and sculpture have obtained encouragement and are prepared to transmit to posterity the traits and actions of those heroes who have combated for our independence and glory. The monuments of art are preserved and offered to the public admiration, in places worthy of containing them.—The high roads are almost throughout in a state of alarming decay, but the administration does every thing to remedy this, which the feeble resources entrusted to them enables them to execute. The right of keeping up the public roads has received certain modifications which public justice, and public interest, demanded. The perception of this right, separated from the obligation of keeping up the roads themselves, had been confirmed, and a fund is now provided on proper securities, which will not be vain or illusory as in former years. The application of products, still too feeble, is ascertained for each department, in the proportion of its wants. Inspection becomes every day more active, and responsibility becomes every day more clear, and approaches nearer to perfection. The government has extended its views to interior navigation, and to cannals. It is not to vast projects to which it has directed its attention, it is not a great system of general navigation which it wishes to create. The conclusion of the labours already begun, which refer immediately to inland navigation, and the commerce of France, is all that it now promises, is all that the present circumstances of the country enables it to adopt. Execution rather than project, is the fundamental maxim of its administration. The finances have been one of the objects of its constant inspection and anxiety, the primary base, and necessary support of all the plans which can be formed for the happiness and glory of the state government has thought necessary to apply itself to the consideration of all the principles, and become acquained with all the causes which can operate either their restoration or destruction.—It was not merely funds that were wanting to the Republic on the 4th Nivose, of the year 8; it was activity in the subdivision and assessment of direct contributions, regularity in the receips, care in the disbursements, a clear accountability in the public treasury, a well managed distribution in the different channels of expence. The bearers of bills authorised to draw directly on the funds of the receivers and their overseers purchased by corruptions the funds which either then had no existence, or which ought to have been reserved for the services of the republic; goods of requisitions, debts of arrear, uncertain rents were admitted as payment of direct contributions; and it was receivers, overseers, collectors who trafficked in goods of depreciated value, and exchanged them in their office for real property which they had received, paymasters concealed the payments which had been made to them to obtain from those who were to superintend their accounts, and for advances which they have never made. Thus the public treasury was ignorant equally as to the funds received, and sums which had been paid in the departments. Hence arose uncertain distributions and illusory assignments. In the mean time every thing was ordered by the ministers, every thing was sanctioned by the Directory.—Hence the want of public credit and its scandalous train of negociations and disgraceful decrees. Since the 14th Nivose (Dec. 25) the period of the subdivision and assessment of the contributions has been fixed with precision, and this year, for the first time, the quotas of almost all the Departments were in the course of payment made during the course of Vendemaire. The public treasuries have been shut against delagations (a species of Exchequer Bills) but 52 millions of delegations, or orders upon the Treasury, of this description, have been rapidly extinguished by operations which have not cost the Treasury either loan or interest, and at the same have procured effectual advances.—These delegations the Government might with some colour of Justice have objected to. They had been issued to contractors even before they entered on their contract, it was extremely probable that the service was not performed completely by any, and by few with good faith. But these delegations had been negociated under the view, and with the consent of the former Government.—They had gone out of the hand of the original holder. They were letters of exchange, of which the actual holders had advanced the value, and it was impossible, without injuring public credit, to postpone or refuse payment of them. Requisition bills have been taken out of the circle of jobbing, and must now be nearly all paid into the Exchequer for taxes, and in the year 9, there will exist almost none of them. The public creditor will receive his money in cash, and the public will receive almost nothing but solid cash. A part of the direct contributions of the year 8, that part which it was calculated would not be consumed by the bills in arrear, and requisition bills, has been, by anticipation, paid into the treasury on the obligations of the collectors, and these obligations which have in a particular fund the certain means of their discharge, are now as solid a value as the public or the merchant can offer. The direct contributions of the year 9 are already in the portfeuile of the Treasury in obligations equally solid.—These successive receipts of indirect or casual contributions are then represented by the bills of the collectors payable at sight. A fixed sum of these obligations and these bills is appropriated to the expence of every month. No order for payment will be given but in the proportion to the sums actually vested in the Treasury. Thus the orders will no longer be arbitary. There will be no mistake in the arrangement, no illusion in promises of payment will exist, and persons accepting such paper on the faith of payment, will not be deceived by a new organization. An active superintendance pervades every part of it. The arrear accounts proceed without obstacle. The current payments are in a manner at par. Every month the minister of finances, and the director of the public treasury will submit to the inspection of the government, statements of all the receipts and payments, particularly every payment made to the orders of each minister. The collection of these statements at the end of every year, will shew the receipt, the expenses paid, and the nature of each expense.—The estimate necessary for the expense for the year 9 has been formed with the strictest regard to economy. The revenues have been valued with every degree of possible precision. These revenues are not adequate to the calculated expenditure. The government will propose to the legislative body what it conceives the best expedient to cover this deficiency, and leave to their wisdom to decide on its propriety. A sinking fund has been created. The administrations of it will not increase the burdens of the finances; it will at once furnish extensive means of extinguishing the public debt, and prove a powerful instrument of public credit. In examining its operation it will be found to promote sucessfully the important end of an office of security for the bonds of the receivers.