

Assembly Committees Meet: Discussion of Estimates

Trade Committee Meeting: Ministers' Reports

The National Assembly's Trade Committee met on 28th May to discuss the trade estimates in the 1957 budget. Istvan Friss was elected chairman of the Committee. Janos Tausz, the Minister of Internal Trade, told the Committee that more than half the investment fund allowed for his department would be used to repair hotels and other catering establishments, and to raise the standard of public catering. His Ministry's most important task was to secure food supplies fully adequate to cover the population's needs, and to accumulate the required stocks. In a report to the Committee, Jenoe Inoze, the Minister of Foreign Trade, said that goods exchange agreements with every socialist country except Rumania and China had been concluded for this year and agreements with these two countries would be signed shortly. The Chamber of Commerce would have to undertake considerable work in market research abroad. There was a debate on the reports, to which the two Ministers replied. Questions connected with supplies were raised during the debate. (Budapest 21.00, 28.5.57)

Meeting of Law and Administration Committee

The 19.00 home service broadcast on 29th May contained an interview with Ferenc Harrer, Vice-Chairman of the Assembly's Law, Judiciary and Administration Committee - one of the four Parliamentary committees which had met that day. Harrer said: "We discussed the Budget of the Ministry of Justice and approved it. We also discussed the Bill on citizenship and the question of acquiring and losing citizenship. This question should be settled on the principle of equal rights. Accordingly, a Hungarian woman will not lose her Hungarian citizenship on marriage to an alien; nor will a foreign woman acquire Hungarian citizenship on marriage to a Hungarian citizen. No permission from the Presidential Council will be required for a Hungarian to marry an alien... We have recommended the setting up of standing committees for State Administration, Building and Labour. We shall submit our recommendations to the National Assembly."

Work of Social and Health Committee

Dr. Laszlo Pesta, Chairman of the Social and Health Committee, said in the same programme that the committee had put forward proposals to remedy the shortage of nurses in hospitals and the difficulties it was causing. This, of course, would mean additional expenditure.

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A report on the committee's meeting put out by MTI the same evening said that by the end of this year, the hospitals would have 6,000 more beds than in the first half of 1956. The number of workers able to take holidays at greatly reduced prices would be 160,000 - slightly less than last year. The amount spent on old age pensions would be increased by 375,000,000 forints.

According to the broadcast for Hungarians in the West (30.5.57) Dr. Frigyes Doleschall, the Minister of Health, spoke to the Committee of his Ministry's estimates. He said that nearly 13 per cent more money had been set aside this year for social and health services. Ninety new medical districts would be organised and an additional 35,000 day nursery places provided. Two hundred more places would be provided in "social centres" and special TB homes would be set up. Although the number of cheap holidays would be a little below last year's figure, the trade unions would provide holidays for 23,000, and the Councils for 10,000 children.

According to a 'Nepakarat' report on the Social and Health Committee's meeting, eight milliard 480,000,000 forints would be available for social and health purposes this year. (Hungarian information service 30.5.57)

Cultural Committee Elects Chairman and Vice-Chairman

The 19.00 broadcast on 29th May went on to report that the Assembly's Cultural Committee, meeting earlier that day, had elected Jozsef Darvas Chairman and Bela Kelen Vice-Chairman. Kelen told listeners that the committee had heard with satisfaction of the Government's steps to maintain last year's standards despite the country's economic difficulties. The Government had allowed four milliard 670,000,000 forints - 172,000,000 forints more than last year - for the further development of culture and education.

Agricultural Committee's Work

Ferenc Z. Nagy, Chairman of the Agricultural Committee, said in the same broadcast that the chief topic of its meeting had been the question of protection against damage caused by standing water. This was not shown under a separate heading in the Budget; the Agricultural Committee had therefore been concerned that in the event of damage by standing water, there might be no funds available for protection work in the future. The committee had therefore proposed - and the Ministries of Agriculture and Finance had agreed - that a fund should be set aside for this purpose under a separate heading. Another much-discussed topic was the fact that the problem of providing for aged members of the producer co-operatives had not yet been settled. Loans to producer co-operatives had been prolonged until the end of this year only and the question of what would happen when they fell due had already arisen. It was encouraging that a representative of the Minister of Finance had reacted to this question favourably and had promised to find the necessary money. Although members of the committee were aware of the country's present impecunious position, they had nevertheless complained that the amount for investment in agriculture had dropped.

Foreign Affairs Committee's Work: Kiss Elected Chairman

Ernő Mihályfi, Vice-Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, told home service listeners at 19.00 on 30th May that meeting earlier that day, his committee had dealt with two points. The first had been the election of a chairman; Karoly Kiss had been elected. The other point had been the Foreign Ministry's budget. Istvan Sebes, a Deputy Foreign Minister, had reported and after "a lively and thorough debate", the committee had found that the budget had been drawn up "in accordance with the principles of strict economy". Despite the economies made, Hungary's diplomatic relations would be expanded this year. By the end of 1957 Hungary would have 32 diplomatic missions abroad, maintaining relations with 42 countries. Hungarian participation in international organisations would also increase. Members of the Committee had drawn attention to the fact that propaganda and enlightenment was now much more important than ever before and had asked the Foreign Ministry to step up this work. Finally, the Foreign Affairs Committee had unanimously protested against the experimental atomic and hydrogen bomb explosions and the development of atomic weapons, and had demanded general disarmament.