

German Affairs

ONE of the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles most discussed at the time, tho little mentioned since, concerned the punishment of those Germans who had violated the rules of war. Kaiser Wilhelm was the only person mentioned individually in the Treaty as charged with crime, but the refusal of the Dutch Government to surrender him into the hands of the Allies has postponed—perhaps forever—the enforcement of that particular clause of the Treaty. The Allies prepared a list of war criminals of lesser standing, including individuals of all ranks from commanding generals guilty of giving orders for wholesale devastation of occupied territory down to obscure noncommissioned officers and privates guilty of individual atrocities. It was the intention of the men who made the treaty to hold the trials before some Allied tribunal, but as a special concession to Germany the Allies later agreed to permit Germany to try her own war criminals. This the Germans were very slow to do; months passed by without a conviction. But recently the Leipzig court has passed sentence of imprisonment on Sergeant Heyne and Captain Müller who were found guilty of striking and otherwise mistreating British soldiers at German prison camps during the war. This indicates a willingness on the part of the German Government to do something in satisfaction of the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles respecting the punishment of war criminals, tho it remains to be seen whether national opinion in Germany will permit any men of high military rank to be convicted.

The internal situation in Germany has somewhat improved since the Allies agreed to restore order in Upper Silesia. Fighting between Polish and German irregulars has practically ceased and both Germany and Poland are keeping the blaze from spreading beyond the plebiscite zone. The Government, having once bowed to the Allied ultimatum, seems to be sincerely endeavoring to meet the required reparations payments, to refrain from intervention in Silesia, to punish at least the minor war criminals and to curb the irregular military organizations which have sprung up so freely in Germany since the war and which have shown such contemptuous defiance of the Allies and even of the central German Government. Chancellor Wirth has appointed Dr. Rosen, former Minister to Holland, as his Foreign Minister.

Salzburg has followed the example of Tirol in voting for union with Germany; 67,533 votes were cast for union to 677 in opposition. The Austrian Government is trying to restrain other Austrian provinces from following the precedent set by Tirol and Salzburg; not that the authorities in Vienna are opposed to the idea of union with Germany, but that they are convinced that the Allies would never permit the union to take place. The Salzburg plebiscite has no legal standing and no practical effect, but it is certainly an impressive demonstration of popular sentiment.