

PARLIAMENTARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

**By Val Bowman,
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THE Parliamentary Advisory Council acts as a mirror in which the members of the Laenderrat can view the opinions of the voters back home.

The council has no actual power, but its influence can be great.

The job of the Council is to advise the Laenderrat and keep it close to the elected representatives of the people. After the Landtage became elective last fall, and the Ministers-President were elected officials instead of appointed executives selected by Military Government, a sort of stalemate occurred in the enactment of legislation at Stuttgart. The Laenderrat members, who are the Ministers-President of the three Laender and the President of the Senate of Land Bremen, became hesitant to take responsibility on their shoulders. They took the position that all legislative power originated with the Landtage, and they didn't want to commit themselves on any issue without first consulting their constituents. A period ensued in Stuttgart during which little progress was achieved in the legislative field.

To get around this difficulty German leaders suggested the creation of the Parliamentary Advisory Council, and with the approval of Military Government it was set up. So far it has met four times, including one constitutional meeting.

The Council consists of 24 members, seven from each of the larger Laender—Bavaria, Wuerttemberg-Baden, and Hesse — and three from the smaller Land Bremen. These men are appointed by the Landtage of the various Laender on a representative basis—for example, Bavaria has three CSU Parliamentary Council members because the CSU is the strongest political party in that state with 57 percent representation in the Landtag. SPD has two Council members as a result of its 30 percent representation in the Landtag, while FDP with five percent, and WAV with seven percent have one Councilman each.

According to the statute under which it was established the Parliamentary Council shall comment on:

1. All draft laws and decrees to be submitted to the Laenderrat.

2. All control Council measures placed before the Laenderrat by the Regional Government Coordinating Office.

3. Problems of basic political importance.

Proposals which fall in category 3 must be submitted to the Parliamentary Council by the Secretary-General of the Laenderrat, after they have been approved by the Directorate. The Directorate consists of four "plenipotentiaries" or permanent representatives of the ministers-president, a special representative of each minister-president from the Land capitals, and the Secretary-General of the Laenderrat.

No definite date has been set for Parliamentary Council meetings, but so far meetings have been held the day before the monthly meeting date of the Laenderrat. Each Land has one vote in the Council, and for decisions unanimity is required. The Council has a quorum only if every Land is represented at the meeting.

The Laenderrat is not bound by the action of the Council — the council is purely an advisory body — but only on a few occasions has the Laenderrat overruled the PAC. In each of these instances the overruling was in the interests of speedy enactment of legislation which was believed to require zonal uniformity. One main difference seen between the two bodies is a tendency on the part of the Council to debate an issue at length. The Laenderrat, mindful of Military Government desires and American ideas of efficiency, frequently acts in the interests of speed, while the Council, imbued with the German love of debate and circumlocution, would engage in long discussions before deciding on it.

So far the Laenderrat has taken the position that all legislative matters should be submitted to the PAC for advice and comment, but not executive or administrative matters. The Parliamentary Council would like to have everything submitted to it for comment.

TO DATE the meetings of the Council have been harmonious—which is somewhat remarkable considering the fact that such bitter political opponents as Alfred Loritz and Dr. Josef Mueller represent the same Land. Apparently the members are making a strong effort to keep the meetings on a high level for the sake of the country. The nearest thing to a row was the drawn-out debate over the proposed Compulsory Labor Draft Law. This proposal was first submitted for consideration at the meeting of 14 April, but decision was postponed until the next Laenderrat meeting, in order to permit the discussion of the law within the respective Landtag. At the next meeting, on 5 May, Bavarian Council members came instructed by their Landtag to vote against it. Dr. Kohler, CDU member from Hesse, stated heatedly that no Land delegation should come to a meeting with final instructions from its Landtag, as this would make it impossible to coordinate its opinion with those of the other Laender. He raised the question whether any Land delegation should block Parliamentary Council action by voting proposed legislation in advance.

Dr. Dehler of Bavaria submitted that since the Parliamentary Council was a bridge between the Laenderrat and the Laender, the unanimous opinion of any Landtag should be respected.

The discussion did not result in any clearcut decision, but discussion and approval of the Compulsory Labor Law was effectively blocked.

At the recent June meeting of the PAC, however, the delegation from Bremen came forward with the statement that they were prepared to support the principle behind Bavaria's

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