Radicals have always since its creation in 1848 had a majority. Hence, in the Congress formed by both houses sitting together, the Radicals have had it all their own way. This is particularly important as regards the election of the seven members of the Federal executive which is made by such a Congress. Now the Federal executive *(Federal Council)* is in no sense a cabinet, *i.e.* a committee of the party in the majority in the legislature for the time being. In the Swiss Federal Constitution the cabinet has no place at all. Each member of the Federal executive is elected by a separate ballot,'and holds office for the fixed term of three years, during which he cannot be turned out of office, while as yet but a single instance has occurred of the rejection of a Federal councillor who offered himself for re-election. Further, none of the members of the Federal executive can hold a seat in either house of the Federal legislature, though they may appear and speak (but not vote) in either, while the Federal Council as such has not necessarily any common policy, and never expresses its views on the general situation (though it does as regards particular legislative and administrative measures) in anything resembling the “ speech from the Throne ” in England. Thus it seems clear that the Federal executive was intended by the Federal Constitution of 1848 (and in this respect that of 1874 made no change) to be a standing committee of the legis­lature as a whole, but *not* of a single party in the legislature, or a “ cabinet,” even though it had the majority. Yet this rule of a single political party is just what has taken place. Between 1848 and the end of 1908, 38 Federal councillors were elected (24 from German-speaking, 12 from French-speaking and 2 from Italian-speaking Switzerland, the canton of Vaud heading the list with 7). Now of these 38 three only were not Radicals, viz. M Paul Ceresole (1870-1375) of Vaud, who was a Protestant Liberal-Conservative, Herren Josef Zemp (1891-1908) and Josef Anton Schobinger (elected 1908), both of Lucerne and Romanist Conservatives, yet the Conservative minority is a large one, while the Romanists form about two-fifths of the population of Switzerland. But despite this predominance of a single party in the Federal Council, no true cabinet system has come into existence in Switzerland, as members of the council do not resign even when their personal policy is condemned by a popular vote, so that the resignation of Herr Welti (a member of the Federal Council from 1867 to 1891), in conse­quence of the rejection by the people of his railway policy, caused the greatest amazement and consternation in Switzerland.

The chief political parties in the Federal legislature are the Right, or Conservatives (whether Romanists or Protestants), the Centre (now often called “ Liberals,” but rather answering to the Whigs of English political language, the Left (or Radicals) and the Extreme Left (or the Socialists of varying shades). In the Council of States there is always a Federalist majority, since in this house the smaller cantons are on an equality with the greater ones, each indifferently having two members. But in the National Council (167 elected members) there has always (since 1848) been a considerable Radical majority overall other parties. The Socialists long worked under the wing of the Radicals, but now in every canton (save Geneva) the two parties have quarrelled, the Socialist vote having largely increased, especially in the town of Zürich. In the country the anti-Radical opposition is made up of the Conservatives, who are strongest in the Romanist, and especially the Forest, cantons, and of the “ Federalists ” of French-speaking Switzerland. There is no doubt that the people are really anti-Radical, though occasionally led away by the experiments made recently in the domain of State socialism: they elect, indeed, a Radical majority, but very frequently reject the bills laid before them by their elected representatives.

2. *Politics.—*The cantons had led the way before r848, and they continued to do so after that date, gradually introducing reforms all of which tended to give the direct rule to the people. The Confederation was bound to follow this example, though it adopted a far more leisurely pace. Hence, in 1872 a new Federal Constitution was drafted, but was rejected on a popular vote by a small majority, as it was thought to go too far in a centralizing direction, and so encountered the combined oppo­sition of the Conservatives and of the Federalists of French- speaking Switzerland. The last-named party was won over by means of concessions as to military matters and the proposed unification of cantonal laws, civil and criminal, and especially by strong provisions as to religious freedom, since the “ Kultur­kampf ” was then raging in French-speaking Switzerland. Hence a revised draft was accepted in 1874 by a considerable popular majority, and this is the existing Federal Constitution. But it bears marks of its origin as a compromise, and no one party has ever been very eager to support it as a whole. At first all went smoothly, and various very useful laws carrying out in detail the new provisions of the constitution were drafted and accepted. But divisions of opinion arose when it was proposed to reform the military system at a very great expendi­ture, and also as to the question of the limitation of the right to issue bank-notes, while (as will be seen under 3 below) just at this time grave financial difficulties arose with regard to the Swiss railways, and in consequence of Prince Bismarck’s anti­free trade policy, which threatened the prosperity of Switzerland as an exporting country. Further, the disturbed political state of the canton of Ticino (or Tessin) became more or less acute from 1873 onwards. There the Radicals and the Conservatives are nearly equally balanced. In 1872 the Conservatives obtained the majority in this canton, and tried to assute it by some certainly questionable means. The Radicals repeatedly ap­pealed to the Federal government to obtain its armed inter­vention, but in vain. In 1876 the Conservatives at a rifle match at Stabio fired on the Radicals, but in 1880 the accused persons were acquitted. The long-desired detachment of Ticino from the jurisdiction of the foreign dioceses of Como and Milan was effected in 1888 by the erection of a see at Lugano, but this event caused the Radicals to fear an increase of clerical influence. Growing impatient, they finally took matters in their own hands, and in September 1890 brought about a bloody revolu­tion. The partial conduct of the Radical Federal commissioner was much blamed, but after a state trial at Zürich in 1891 the revolutionists were acquitted, although they loudly boasted oí their share in this use of force in political matters.

From 1885 onwards Switzerland had some troubles with foreign powers owing to her defence of the right of asylum for fugitive German Socialists, despite the threats of Prince Bis­marck, who maintained a secret police in Switzerland, one member of which, Wohlgemuth, was expelled in 1889, to the prince’s huge but useless indignation. From about 1890, as the above troubles within and without gradually subsided, the agitation in the country against the centralizing policy of the Radicals became more and more strongly marked. By the united exertions of all the opposition parties, and against the steady resistance of the Radicals, an amendment was introduced in 1891 into the Federal Constitution, by which 50,000 Swiss citizens can by the “ Initiative ” *compel* the Federal legislature and execu­tive to take into consideration some point in the Federal Constitu­tion which, in the opinion of the petitioners, requires reform, and to prepare a bill dealing with it which must be submitted to a popular vote. Great hopes and fears were entertained at the time as to the working of this new institution, but both have been falsified, for the Initiative has as yet only succeeded in inserting (in 1893) in the Federal Constitution a provision by which the Jewish method of killing animals is forbidden, and another (in 1908) prohibiting the manufacture or sale of absinthe in the country. On the other hand, it has failed (in 1894) to secure the adoption of a Socialist scheme by which the state was bound to provide work for every able-bodied man in the country, and (also in 1894) to carry a proposal to give to the cantons a bonus of two francs per head of the population out of the rapidly growing returns of the customs duties, similarly in 1900 an attempt to introduce the election of the Federal executive by a popular vote and proportional representation in the *Nationalrat* failed, as in 1903 did a proposal to make the elections to the *Nationalrat* depend on the Swiss population only, instead of the total population of the country.