

Wenceslau Braz Pereira Gomes



Biography

He was a lawyer, born in the city of São Caetano da Vargem Grande, which is now called Brasópolis, state of Minas Gerais, on February 26, 1868. He graduated from the São Paulo Law School (1890). He was a public defender in Jacuí and, later on, of Monte Santo, where he also served as mayor (1890 -1891). State Legislative representative for the Republican Party of Minas Gerais - PRM (1892-1898). He was secretary of Interior, Justice and Public Security of Minas Gerais (1898-1902). He was elected to congress for the Republican Party of Minas Gerais (1903), becoming the leader of the Minas Gerais caucus and then, the majority leader in Congress. He assumed the presidency of Minas Gerais in 1909. He was elected vice president in 1910, with running mate, Hermes da Fonseca. He was the founder and president of the Sul-Mineira Industrial Company (1912). Through a direct election, he was elected president and assumed the office on November 15 of 1914. He was a member of the executive committee of the PRM (1929-1930). Member of the Supreme Council of the Liberal Legion of Minas Gerais (1931 - 1932). He was one of the organizers and member of the directing committee of the Nationalistic Social Party (1932). President of the Industrial Power and Light Company of Itajubá; of the Codorna Textile Factory; of the Bank of Itajubá. He died in Itajubá, Minas Gerais, on May 15, 1966.

Presidential Period

At the beginning of his administration (1914), he combated the War of the Contestado. As to the economy, Venceslau Brás assumed the presidency and adopted an austere financial policy. In order to face the drastic reduction of Brazilian exports, due to the disorganization of the international market because of World War I, three million sacks of coffee were burnt, thus avoiding a drop in prices. This situation determined the second increase in value of coffee, between 1917 and 1920.

In 1916, he promulgated the 1st Brazilian Civil Code, which went into effect on January 1 of that year. After 1917, a series of general strikes erupted in the main Brazilian cities, especially in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. The general strike of 1917 of the workers of two textile factories in São Paulo, included approximately 50 thousand workers in the city, which forced the government to mobilize troops and send two battleships to the port of Santos, in order to

intimidate the strike movement. However, the successive strikes that occurred between the years of 1917 and 1920 did not bring significant gains for the totality of workers.

On April 3, 1917; German submarines torpedoed the Paraná ship, which was anchored near the French coast. In retaliation, the government confiscated all German ships anchored at Brazilian ports. After the Germans sunk the Brazilian ship, Macau, Venceslau Brás signed, on October 27, the declaration of war against Germany, which was followed by anti-Germanic manifestations throughout the country.

Source: National Archive – Information Center of Presidential Collections

Summary

Seventh Period of the Republican Government - 15.11.1914 a 15.11.1918

- ‡ Born: São Caetano da Vargem Grande. (currently called Brasópolis) -MG, on 02.26.1868
- ‡ Died: Itajubá - MG, on 05.15.1966
- ‡ Profession: Lawyer
- ‡ In office: from 11.15.1914 to 11.15.1918 (04y)
- ‡ Age when taking office: 46 years old
- ‡ Type of election: direct
- ‡ Votes received: 532,107
- ‡ Inauguration: on 11.15.1914, during solemn session of National Congress, presided by Mr. José Gomes Pinheiro Machado
- ‡ Leave of Office: from 09.08.1917 to 10.09.1917, due to illness, period when the Vice President assumed the presidency