

wrong interpretations. The main thing is to ensure peace by collective security and a universal organisation. But the Great Powers at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference were of opinion that, as the executive agents of international security, regional organisations might be formed. In that spirit I think that an agreement among the Western Powers is not only possible but necessary." M. Spaak added that during his visit he had also discussed with the British Government the provision of food for the Belgian people and of arms and equipment for the Belgian Army.

It would appear that there are still some 49,000 men in the various Belgian resistance organisations. The Government hopes to absorb a large proportion of them into the army, the gendarmerie and the civil service and to find jobs in private employment for the rest.

Some 60,000 Belgians, suspected of collaboration with Germans, have already been taken into custody, but public opinion demands yet more arrests, though some Belgians fear that innocent, as well as guilty, persons have been apprehended and ask that greater care should be taken before arrests are made.

For the Netherlands and the Civil Aviation Conference, see under "United Nations."

FRANCE.

Paris has given Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden a triumphal welcome and the Paris papers, which doubled their size on the 12th November, have paid glowing tributes to Great Britain and her Prime Minister. The success of the visit has also been emphasised by the remarkably warm tone of the official announcement issued in Paris on the 13th.

The visit was timed to coincide with the Armistice Day celebrations. On the morning of the 11th November, Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden, who had arrived by air the previous afternoon, accompanied by Sir Alexander Cadogan, Field-Marshal Sir Alan Brooke and General Sir Hastings Ismay, drove with General de Gaulle and M. Bidault up the Champs-Élysées to the Arc de Triomphe where the General and the Prime Minister laid wreaths on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. A military review in which British and American detachments took part was followed by a visit to the statue of Clemenceau and to the tomb of Foch. Later, in a welcoming speech at the official lunch at the Ministry of War, General de Gaulle said that 1,000 years hence France would not have forgotten "what was accomplished in this war through the fighting, the labours and the sufferings of the noble people whom Mr. Churchill is carrying on with him to heights of the greatest glory." The presence of the visitors was a practical demonstration of an alliance which cruel vicissitudes had shown to be more than ever necessary. In the course of his reply Mr. Churchill declared that France and Britain had shared the glories of Western Europe for so many years that they had become indispensable to one another. "It is a fundamental principle of British policy that the alliance with France should be unshakable, constant and effective."

On the following day the visitors were welcomed at the Hôtel de Ville by the Prefect of Police, the Prefect of the Seine and the Paris Committee of Liberation who had already during the preceding week received Mr. Duff Cooper and Mr. Jefferson Caffery. A diploma of honorary citizen of the city of Paris was presented to Mr. Churchill. He made a moving speech in French, which included an appeal to the French people to rally round their "uncontested chief," General de Gaulle, and do their utmost "to have France united and indivisible."

The visit of the British Ministers also gave the opportunity for political discussions. These opened in auspicious circumstances, for on the morning of the 11th November the French Government had received invitations from the Governments of Great Britain, the United States and the U.S.S.R. to appoint a full and permanent representative to the European Advisory Commission. This news was received with great satisfaction by the Paris press as marking France's return to the rank of a great European Power. According to the official announcement issued in Paris on the 13th November, the talks covered "all questions concerning the conduct of the war and the preparation of the peace." They "were devoted in particular to the immediate problems arising out of the necessity, now that France has been liberated, for as full participation by France as possible in the common struggle." Mr. Churchill's view was indicated in his speech at the Hôtel de Ville when he declared that "a strong French Army as soon as possible" corresponded to the sentiments of England and the policy

of its Government and was "absolutely necessary for the establishment of the moral equilibrium of Europe and to provide Europe with one of its factors of stability and virility which the world so sorely needs." He warned his hearers, however, that, since he could not promise a long war, it might not be possible to get many modern divisions ready, but said he would do his best to see that French forces were engaged against the Germans in the months which remained. As proof of his interest Mr. Churchill travelled by car to the front on the 13th and visited troops of the First French Army on the snow-clad slopes of the Vosges.

The Government has suffered a severe loss by the death of the Minister of Finance, M. Lepercq, who was killed in a car accident on his way back from a visit to Lille. M. Lepercq had a remarkable Resistance record and commanded the Paris F.F.I. during the August rising.

The new Provisional Consultative Assembly met for the first time on the 7th November at the Luxembourg. The opening session was purely formal. On the 8th the Assembly proceeded to elect its officers and in the second ballot chose M. Félix Gouin, the Socialist deputy, who presided over the Assembly at Algiers, to be its president. On the 9th it held its first working session and heard a brief speech from General de Gaulle in which he appealed to it to help the Government to accomplish its onerous duties. The parliamentary representatives have decided to call themselves the *Groupe de la Résistance Parlementaire*. The five remaining members of the group have now been selected, thus bringing its numbers up to the allotted 60 (see *Summary* 265). M. Maurice Thorez, Secretary-General of the French Communist Party, will be able to return from Russia to take his seat, since a decree has been issued extending to him the benefit of an amnesty granted by an ordinance of the 29th October. This empowers the Government to pardon offences against military law committed before the 17th June, 1940, in cases where the persons concerned have subsequently taken an active part in the Resistance movement. M. Thorez was sentenced for anti-militarist activities in November 1939. The amnesty follows upon a long and vigorous campaign conducted by the Communist Party in favour of his return.

The Administration of the Bank of France, first reformed in 1936 by the Popular Front Government and changed again, though not fundamentally, by Vichy in 1940, has again been reformed. On the 7th November the Cabinet approved an ordinance modifying the method of appointment of the Council of the Bank and weighting it heavily on the official side. At the same time the Cabinet approved the transformation of the Ministry of National Economy into a body charged with directing the whole economic policy of the Government, preparing and supervising the execution of a plan of economic reconstruction, and co-ordinating the work of the Ministries of Production, Agriculture and Food, and of the Ministry of Reconstruction shortly to be set up. The Minister of National Economy is also to be responsible for international economic negotiations and will in this sphere be associated with the work of the Quai d'Orsay.

From the 23rd to the 25th October the *Mouvement de Libération Nationale*, perhaps the most important Resistance organisation, held a Congress in Paris and resolved to negotiate with the *Front National* and other movements for the constitution of a single *Front de la Libération*. It decided, however, to reject the *Front National's* proposals for an agreed list of candidates at the forthcoming local elections (see *Summary* No. 263); movements should put forward their own candidates at the first ballot but join forces at the second ballot. The Congress also authorised its bureau to continue negotiations with the Socialist Party for the establishment of a common doctrine leading to joint action, and adopted a programme which goes far towards Socialism.

The Socialist Party Congress, the first party congress to be held in France since the liberation, began on the 9th November in Paris. The British Labour Party sent a delegation headed by Mr. Harold Laski and the Socialist parties of other countries were also represented. The main event on the first day was a long speech by M. Daniel Mayer, Secretary-General of the Party, who reported on its clandestine activities of the last four years and on the drastic purge that had been carried out within the Party itself. This was "un congrès de rénovation et d'épuration" which must abjure the old internal struggles. It must elect a new directing committee and decide such questions as the relations of the Party with the Christian Democrats, with M. Paul-Boncour's group, with the *Mouvement de Libération Nationale* and with the Communist Party. M. Mayer renewed the offer, made to the Communists under the occupation, of a joint committee to prepare the way to working-class unity. He referred to the German

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