

communication." In response to his appeal for financial assistance, His Majesty's Government have decided to make an immediate payment of £250,000 to Ibn Saud; further assistance for 1942 also is under consideration.

Meanwhile, Ibn Saud having decided formally to recognise the independence of Syria, the Amir Feisal has sent an appropriate telegram to that effect to the Syrian Minister for Foreign Affairs. On the other hand, there seems to be little hope of early recognition of Syrian independence by the Government of the United States, partly because of uncertainty regarding the position of the mandate and treaties based thereon, partly because of doubts whether American interests in Syria are sufficiently guaranteed by General Catroux's Declaration of Syrian Independence. It is probable that the State Department would in any case prefer to postpone seriously considering such recognition until American relations with the Free French are more precisely defined than at present.

Further discussions on the proposed Declaration of Lebanese Independence have taken place between the Free French and ourselves, and, subject to the inclusion of our latest amendments, the Declaration will be made shortly by General Catroux. Though we have reluctantly agreed to the word "indivisible" as applied to the Lebanon State, we have made a reservation in a separate document that the Syrian-Lebanese frontier is not considered final by Great Britain. The Moslem population, both in Syria and Lebanon, are opposed to the partition of the two States, or at least to a partition that gives to Greater Lebanon the boundaries laid down by the French after the last war; and we must recognise that circumstances may arise, in the near or more distant future, necessitating some modification of the frontier.

Issues of a Hebrew monthly recently received from Jerusalem contain two articles on "Palestine and Arab Union," by Dr. Magnes, president of the Hebrew University, who has long worked for closer Arab-Jewish collaboration. The first article declared that a bi-national Palestine as an autonomous unit within a larger union was the direction in which thinking should be done, and asked the Palestine Government to take the initiative in bringing Arab and Jewish leaders together. The second suggested that the High Commissioner should appoint Palestinian members of a joint commission to work out plans for an economic basis of Arab union; and that he should also "appoint a consultative body representing different sections of the population, for the purpose of bringing public opinion into close contact with the Palestine administration in all matters connected with the war effort."

With regard to the recent release of three Egyptian agitators (see Summary No. 111), Sirri Pasha, in an interview with His Majesty's Ambassador, reaffirmed his promise to reintern these men if they misbehaved again. Sir Miles Lampson, in repeating his warning already given, again protested at not having been consulted over their release.

Ahmad Maher Pasha has been elected President of the Chamber of Deputies. In the corresponding election in the Senate, a serious conflict arose between the Wafd and other parties on the subject of parity, the Wafd claiming fuller representation as the largest party in the country. When the Wafdist Senators withdrew in protest from the debate, the Prime Minister moved that no decision should be taken in their absence; and subsequent conversations between the parties have so far failed to reach a compromise.

That the Wafd campaign against the British is losing force is borne out by the results of two recent by-elections, in which Wafdist candidates have been defeated by Saadists. It is thought that the electors believe that the Wafd cannot return to power without British support, and that the anti-British campaign will retard their return.

Information has recently been received of an audience given by King Farouk to Sheikh Ahmad Osman-al-Qadi, a well-known Sudanese who was visiting Egypt on leave. Among other topics discussed were education in the Sudan and the Sudan Defence Force, both of which the King commended highly; and the cessation of the Egyptian Government's subsidy to the Sudan of £750,000, which led the King to deplore what His Majesty described as "the lack of confidence and understanding between British and Egyptians."

THE FAR EAST.

The hope of a *détente* in the Far East still hangs on the slender thread of the Washington conversations. That the thread has not yet snapped affords some encouragement. But since the United States Government makes it clear that it will refuse to compromise basic principles, and since Japan will almost certainly not back down on the primary issues, such as the total withdrawal of her armies from China, a comprehensive solution of the crisis is virtually ruled out. At the most a basis might possibly be found for a provisional and partial adjustment—the sort of "truce" which has been unofficially mooted during the last few weeks, in exchange for an easing of the economic embargo, to forgo fresh moves of aggression, to withdraw from the furthest strategic outposts to which she has now advanced, and perhaps also to loosen her Axis connexion.

General Tojo's fairly evident reluctance to embark on the gamble of war at the present juncture in world affairs makes it the more likely that he will try for some such half-measure. To have any chance of success, he must be ready to offer more than mere verbal undertakings in return for concrete concessions, *i.e.*, the relaxing of economic pressure; there would also need to be some assurance that any arrangement made with Japan would not prejudice China's struggle for independence.

After receiving a communication containing, it is stated, a concrete Japanese proposal, Mr. Cordell Hull has called the representatives of the other so-called "A.B.C.D." Powers into consultation (see under "United States"), and the conversations with Japan are clearly nearing the crucial point. As this moment approaches the division of opinion in Japan itself becomes outwardly more marked. The militarist organs of the press have adopted the view that there is nothing left but to fight, while the newspapers inspired by the Foreign Office have gone on the opposite tack, laying stress on the possibilities of compromise between Japan and the United States. The *Japan Times*, for instance, has discovered that Japan and the United States share a common view on the raw materials issue. The Atlantic Charter is adduced as evidence of this, America being represented as having forced on Great Britain the same rights of freedom of access to raw material sources as Japan wants in East Asia, and as thereby implicitly concurring in "certain features of Japan's co-prosperity plan," and putting herself in the position of "seeing eye to eye with Japan." Although, no doubt, designed to sow discord between the two democratic countries, this journalistic *tour de force* is symptomatic of the current of anti-war opinion which at the moment is making its influence felt in Japan.

Signs of internal discord showed themselves also in the special session of the Diet which has just come to an end. Although the Diet voted the war budget, the big increases in taxation and all else that the Government asked, the much-lauded appearance of unity was marred by heated disputes in the Lower House. The immediate cause was a temperately critical speech by a member of the unitary party, the "League for Assistance to the Throne." The culprit had to resign for his "improper utterances," and with him several of the leaders of the league. The parliamentary party system is again in a condition of confusion, and the House of Representatives itself seems in danger of falling back into the melting pot into which it was thrown last year when Prince Konoye set up the "new national structure."

The latest news of Japan's military dispositions foreshadows a plan of invasion into Thailand, where Japanese diplomatic pressure is again notably on the increase. Meanwhile, the Thai Prime Minister, who had been becoming more and more importunate in his demand to know precisely what assistance we can offer, has been told just how much we can afford to give in the present circumstances. It at once became clear that he had been buoying himself up with extravagant expectations, and the effect of their disappointment upon his mercurial temper is, as reported by His Majesty's Minister, very disquieting. His mood has changed to one of the deepest pessimism; he still declares that he will fight Japan if he must, but, unless he recovers his morale, there is reason to fear that the path will be made easier for Japan to enlist Thailand in the "co-prosperity zone." Every effort is being made to restore the Prime Minister's confidence and encourage his spirit of resistance, and it is to be hoped that the

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