

questioned favoured closer Scandinavian co-operation after the war, this point of view being much more strongly supported by the upper and middle than by the working class. Of the above-named 57 per cent., however, only about half positively favoured Denmark's entry into any form of Nordic Union, and those among them in favour of a common Nordic defence amounted to no more than 37 per cent.

The Finnish Radio announced on the 12th July that the S.S. battalion, which recently returned from the southern Russian front, has now been disbanded, the men included in it being drafted into the Finnish army.

ERRATUM.

Political Intelligence Summary No. 196, Scandinavia, paragraph 2, line 4: For "stripped" read "striped."

THE LOW COUNTRIES.

The Dutch doctors' protest to Seyss-Inquart (see *Summary* No. 196) has met with a prompt reply. Large numbers of doctors have been arrested and sent to concentration camps. Many others have gone into hiding to escape a like fate. The effect of these happenings on the health of the Dutch people may be serious.

It would seem that some patriotic Dutchmen have applied for membership of the N.S.B., in the hope that, as members of that body, they will be allowed to retain their wireless sets. Most of them will probably fail to get the required permission, since the N.S.B. leaders are aware of the dodge.

Attempts to interest the Dutch in the East continue. Some University students are to be sent to the Ostland for a couple of months during the Long Vacation and will thus be given a chance of studying German methods of administration as well as of doing agricultural work in that area.

There is further evidence of the hatred of the V.N.V. for De Vlag: Levridan, one of the V.N.V. leaders, in a recent speech at Ghent, did not hesitate to say that, if De Vlag tried to set up as a political party, the V.N.V. might use force to suppress it. On the 7th July the Flemish traitor, Ward Hermans, attempted to allay the mutual hostility of the two bodies in a broadcast from Bremen. But his platitudinous remarks on the dangers of dissension while the German cause, with which that of the Flemings was bound up, was at stake are unlikely to have much effect.

According to Radio Brussels, the Flemish Watch Brigade has been turned into a unit of the Luftwaffe. This change in status is represented as a great honour. Whether it involves a change in their duties is uncertain.

The Rexist daily has hinted that it may become expedient to intern all members of the Belgian Army. It is quite probable that this straw shows which way the wind is blowing.

The Dutch Government have objected to the proposed organisation of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, on the ground that it does not give their due place to the smaller Powers. The Dutch have already shown themselves apprehensive lest the rights of the small Powers be disregarded. (See *Summary* No. 195.)

FRANCE.

News of the Allied landings in Sicily has been enthusiastically received by the French population of North Africa. From General Giraud's public announcements in the last months, it is known that considerable numbers of French troops will be fully equipped and trained before the autumn. There was therefore little disappointment when no mention was made of French troops being employed in Sicily, and since then General Giraud mentioned on the 14th July that French troops were actually included in the force.

The landings were accompanied by a warning by General Eisenhower to the people of France to remain calm "until the hour of action strikes." Evidence that such an appeal was justified was simultaneously provided by the Vichy wireless. "As soon as they heard of the invasion" (declared André Demaison on the 10th July over Radio Toulouse) "some people immediately entertained foolish hopes and were already picturing the Americans in Rome, in Milan and on the 'Route Napoléon.'" He referred to Laval's recent statements and quoted the phrase: "Like Marshal Pétain, I do not want France to become a

field of ruins. I want a sufficient number of Frenchmen to remain alive to witness the resurrection of our country."

These pronouncements of Laval after a month's silence followed his broadcast of the 5th June (see *Summary* No. 192). One was to provincial pressmen on the 5th July, the other on the 10th to a meeting of 3,000 delegates of repatriated prisoners at the Salle Wagram in Paris. Both were apologetic in tone and revealed fears of the consequences of the developing war situation. In the first, Laval stressed "the prospect of possible tragedies." The German would not be beaten; but, in view of "the enthusiasm of certain elements," an American and British landing "on some corner or other of Europe" might lead to "all sorts of follies"—with disastrous results, as they would finally be thrown back. "In such a case I could no longer defend you." His diagnosis of forces of resistance was instructive: "The alliance of communism and religion" (no doubt a reference to the opposition to labour-conscription), the co-operation of "exalted reactionaries" with "radicals and freemasons." "All are convinced they are defending France." But the French people would "need much intelligence not to bring severe reprisals upon themselves, for cruel consequences would follow the indiscipline of a single day." He did not deny the damage done to Le Creusot, but queried the total effect of bombing on Germany's potential, and declared: "Battles are not won in the air." If, then, the German army cannot be defeated, the problem of peace arises, and that means the resumption by France of normal relations with her neighbours. He rejected by implication both the Paris panacea of the Single Party and the advocates of a clean sweep in the Administration, which he defended in terms calculated to appeal to the interested loyalty of civil servants: he would not remove a vital prop which had defied the centuries. He knew, indeed, that "a revolution is indispensable"; but, while recalling that that "revolution" began on the 10th July, 1940, he now made the point that it would be "fully achieved only when we are completely free."

Addressing the prisoners' delegates in Paris on the 10th Laval again recalled that day exactly three years ago when he "had asked the representatives of the country, Senators and Deputies, to pass a resolution to end not only the activities of Parliament, but also the régime." He then struck a Pacifist note, recalling his own record here, and claiming that "in 1935, when he was head of the Government, he had declared at a meeting that his signature 'would never be found at the foot of a mobilisation programme.'" When France did go to war it was not about the remilitarisation of the Rhineland, nor about the annexation of Austria or Czechoslovakia, but "for the Danzig Corridor"—which had been "the greatest mistake of the Versailles Treaty." "An agreement should have been sought between Poland and Germany." He had, indeed, assumed "a very heavy responsibility" in accepting the Armistice, but he had done so and followed a policy of reconciliation to "save his country"; and he asked the prisoners to remember the tragic events of June 1940. His meeting with Hitler at Montoire had been an event "unprecedented in history." Germany, still at war, "had stretched out her hand to France and given her every possibility [sic] of recovery." Yet he repudiated the idea that he was "an inveterate enemy of Britain," herself guilty of preventing France's reaching an understanding with Germany and Italy, her inescapable neighbours. He had always spoken the same language to Germans, Italians, Englishmen, Americans; whereas the English made concessions now to France, now to Germany, but never played a sincere game. He ended by claiming to represent French continuity and by mentioning that "the French people still had a Government." What would critics put in its place? History would record that "in these most troubled times he had been among Frenchmen, a worker of goodwill who defended his country."

Abundant evidence shows that the mass of his French contemporaries are not of this opinion. They do not forget that it was only a year ago that Laval openly opted for a German victory on the eve of the British rally at Alamein. His more recent pronouncements show no doubt some effort to hedge but none to conciliate the United Nations, whom, however, he clearly realises French opinion favours. He has, indeed, hinted earlier that he has obtained something from the Germans, and the press has now revealed that one of his Ministers, Bonnafous, showed some firmness in dealing with them in a limited field—that of food supplies. Whether or not a copy of Bonnafous's long letter of the 15th March to the German Minister of Food reached this country as a result of a calculated indiscretion and with a view to currying favour abroad for Laval's administration, it is difficult to say. It certainly shows that the occupying Power cannot now afford to assert all its

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