

Hitler has sent the Turkish Government a written invitation for General Salih Omurtag, who recently led a military mission to North Africa, to visit the Eastern front. The Turkish Government dare not refuse altogether, but may send a less distinguished officer. General Salih Omurtag they would like to send on a visit to Russia, but Moscow seems indisposed to issue any such invitation. The German press and wireless have abounded in praise for Turkish policy as laid down by President İnönü at the opening (*Summary No. 192*), and by M. Saraçoğlu at the close, of the congress of the Republican People's Party. Partly, no doubt, as a characteristic threat, the Germans profess to see in these pronouncements proof that Turkey will not be inveigled by the visit of Sir J. Cunningham or by any British blandishments into abandoning her neutrality. While it is true that Turkey still shows no sign of co-operating more actively with the Allies, M. Saraçoğlu's remarks did not amount to anything more explicit than an expression of general satisfaction with the Turco-German Treaty of Friendship no less than with Turkey's relations with the Soviet and Great Britain, and of general agreement with American views on post-war collaboration—all of which seems to imply that Turkey hopes to defer, or altogether to avoid, entry into the war, but nevertheless to have a say in the peace settlement. As regards the latter point, it is worth noting that the party added to its previous definition of nationalism, which is one of its basic principles, the rider that Turkey should wish no harm to other peoples, but should seek her progress as one of a family of nations with equal rights.

While the peasants, who are at least three-quarters of the whole population, are more prosperous than ever before, there has been widespread distress in the towns of Turkey owing to a rise of some 250 per cent. in the cost of living in the last two and a half years. Inflation, corruption, incompetent distribution and the black market are still active and, with the two important exceptions of bread and sugar, prices are still rising. Harvest prospects encourage the hope of still cheaper bread, but the economic situation is far from easy, and, in speaking of the now notorious "tax on wealth," the Prime Minister told the party that the Government would not hesitate to tax the minorities again if necessary.

#### THE MIDDLE EAST.

The capture of Pantelleria and Lampedusa has made an excellent impression in Egypt, and enthusiastic crowds watched the parades in Cairo and Alexandria on United Nations Day. King Faruq has taken the unusual step of sending his First Chamberlain to convey his congratulations to the Prime Minister on the occasion of the latter's birthday. It appears that the King's motive was a desire to dissociate himself from the anti-British campaign recently opened by certain Opposition leaders. Nahas Pasha also had, during his visit to Palestine, an outwardly cordial interview with Hassanein Pasha. This improvement in the relations of the Government with the Palace should help the Wafd to recover some of the ground it had lost in Egypt as a result of Makram Ebeid's accusations; but since the initiative in the matter was taken by the Palace it may be significant of King Faruq's intention, of which there have also been other signs, to collaborate more fully with Great Britain in the future. The Government have successfully resisted pressure from the agricultural interest for an increase in the price of wheat.

Being less dependent on variations of climate than other Middle Eastern countries, and having a more efficient administration than most of them, Egypt should be in a better position than her neighbours to provide surpluses of agricultural produce for export. Substantial quantities of rice, wheat, millet or barley and sugar have been secured, or are hoped for, from the 1942 crops. The Minister of State points out, however, that these results have only been obtained by exhausting the country's stocks of nitrates and drawing on the reserves of fertility in the soil. He anticipates that Egypt will be no more than self-supporting in 1943-44, and that she may need to import food in the following year unless the supply of nitrates from abroad can be considerably increased.

The British Advisers to the Ethiopian Government have drawn attention to the possibility that the latter's dilatoriness in tackling currency problems may have serious consequences. The principal difficulty arises from the fact that the Government are paying their employees' salaries in East African currency,

whereas essential goods can only be bought with silver Maria Theresa dollars. The great demand for silver metal hoarding in India and the Middle East has caused the price of it, and therefore of the Maria Theresa dollar, which is 83 per cent. pure silver, to appreciate in terms of sterling, and the value of salaries has already fallen by a third. The troops and police, among others, are said to be gravely discontented with this situation, and the Advisers believe that public security is menaced in consequence. They have sent a memorandum to the Emperor, ending by expressing the view that they could no longer usefully serve the Ethiopian Government should the reforms they advocate not be put into immediate effect. As an interim measure, while a more permanent currency reform is being considered, they recommend an increased supply of silver dollars, to be obtained with the assistance of His Majesty's Government. The importance attached by the Advisers to the acceptance of their views on this question arises in part from their expectation of other conflicts in the future, over the budget, political reform and the inadequacy of Ethiopia's economic contribution to the war effort. They believe that victory in the first round will help them in the others.

Ibn Saud has repeated to General Hurley, the personal representative of President Roosevelt in the Middle East, the opinions he has recently expressed on Arab unity and on Palestine (see *Summaries Nos. 184 and 189*). While insisting that the independence of all the Arab countries must precede their unification, he proposed that they should each appoint a committee of responsible persons to study Arab questions and to educate opinion. Turning to Palestine, he stated that Allied support for the Jews there would cause trouble throughout the Middle East and would drive a wedge between the Allies and the Arabs.

Preparations for the Syrian elections are now complete, but the date on which they are to be held will not be announced until the 25th June, when a similar declaration is to be made in Lebanon. The Nationalists are demanding the dismissal of the Mohafez of the Alawite Territory. The refusal of the Head of State to yield to pressure on this point is thought to be due to his hope that the Mohafez would support his candidature for the Presidency. The French are also supporting the Mohafez, and the Nationalists suspect that this indicates their desire to secure a reasonably strong Opposition in the new Parliament.

The war news continues to give satisfaction in Iraq. In his statement on United Nations' Day, Nuri Pasha touched on the subject of Pan-Arab aspirations, to which one or two newspapers also referred on the same occasion. *Al-Iraq*, a paper generally thought to be a mouthpiece of the Prime Minister, had previously published a project for an Arab Union. Its main features were the democratic organisation of the member States, a uniform educational curriculum, a common foreign policy and military and economic unity.

Dr. Millspaugh, in a letter to the United States Minister in Tehran, declares that a failure to obtain the credits he has recommended (see last week's *Summary*) would involve the Persian Government in grave difficulties. They would be unable to finance purchases of grain and other supplies which are essential to the maintenance of internal security, or to provide a living wage for large numbers of Government servants. The prestige of the Americans employed by the Persian Government would be undermined, and the administrative machine would eventually break down.

Meanwhile Dr. Millspaugh is under fire from the Persian press on account of his proposal to reduce the number of Civil Servants by 15 per cent. Among the public generally, however, his projects for reform have been well received, and it is recognised that they call for rapid and energetic action. Indignation is mainly directed against the wealthy classes and the delaying tactics pursued by their representatives in the Majlis, where, for example, the appointment of American experts to assist in carrying out Millspaugh's plan for the stabilisation of prices is now held up. Probably as a result of this criticism the Deputies initiated proposals, from which they later drew back, for the imposition of restrictions on the press. Their interests are almost confined to the maintenance of their economic privileges and the preservation of their mandates. But it is clear that any proposal for the postponement of the forthcoming elections would arouse violent hostility in the country. The Shah, who declares himself firmly opposed to such a step, still shows signs of wishing to find a new Prime Minister and continues to speak highly of Ali Mansur. The British, United States and Soviet representatives in Tehran agreed, after a discussion in which they reviewed the possible candidates, that Ali Mansur would be the most satisfactory choice.

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