

were followed by denials that the Spanish *guerrilleros* had ever crossed the frontier at all. They then said that the Spanish *guerrilleros* having been withdrawn 12 miles from the frontier, all was peace and quiet along the Pyrenees, but that there was unrest in other parts of Spain. Truth is usually to be found hanging midway between the peaks of fantasy reared up by zealous partisans, and the story of the Spanish *maquis* is no exception. The Franco press naturally made capital out of a confused situation, and by exaggerating the menace and by taking elaborate and well-publicised defence measures, Franco did himself a good turn. But to attempt to deny the reality of the *guerrilleros* by transferring anti-Franco resistance far inland is to be equally inaccurate. As has been previously reported, the *maquis* have been making nuisance raids across the frontier (see *Summary* No. 263), and latest reports indicate that, though the general situation is quiet enough and there is no alarm in Madrid, bands of *guerrilleros* are still giving trouble to the Spanish authorities. For instance, in the Val d'Aran, where the town of Viella was at one time cut off (see *Summary* No. 263), the Spanish *maquis* still hold some 20 kiloms. of the road from there to the frontier. There are about 10,000 regular troops in the Val d'Aran, but they are curiously inactive and seem to be making no attempt to clear the country. The desire to avoid casualties in difficult country and possibly the fact that they are still wearing the summer uniforms in which they left North Africa would discourage exposure on the icy Pyrenean heights. There will be no enthusiasm for a prolonged stay in this area, and General Franco must be anxious to see order restored quickly. But he would not appreciate Dr. Negrin's offer, made to the French Delegation in London, to go down to the frontier himself *pour ramener de l'ordre*. The concentrations in the Val d'Aran have led to the denuding of the Eastern end of the frontier, and there seems to be some liveliness around Perpignan with promise of more to come. The *guerrilleros* in this part seem to be undisciplined and uncontrollable adventurers. Contrary to reports circulating in France and reproduced in some of the English press, the local Spanish population, though they may not be sympathetic to the Franco régime, have not yet given active assistance to the raiders. And the story that Gil Robles, the Catholic Monarchist leader, was backing the *Unión Nacional*, has drawn an indignant denial from that exile in Lisbon who does not at all appreciate his name being coupled with an organisation which is mainly Communist and not representative of even Spanish left wing opinion. The *Unión Nacional* is working away in France—the organisation inside Spain may be solid, but there is no evidence to show that it is—and if, as is not unlikely, there is before long a movement of Spanish refugees from all parts of the world to Paris, the situation on the Pyrenean frontier should be full of interest to the student of politics as well as to the student of war. In the meantime, General Franco is not proposing to send Señor Mateu as Ambassador to Paris until things are normal along the frontier; the present arrangement is that Señor Sangroniz will be sent from Algiers as Consul-General and Chargé d'Affaires. The latest unofficial reports from Paris show that the Spanish *maquis* have evacuated most of the Franco consulates which they had occupied a few weeks ago, and there are some signs of Franco-Spanish co-operation to check the activities of the *guerrilleros*. The French Government seem to be considering granting to Spanish refugees a status analogous to that enjoyed after the last war by holders of the League of Nations "Nansen" passports. This would be a first step to administrative control of these people; it is a necessary measure.

An interesting story from Tangier may be a sign of Spanish preparation for the change the *de facto* authorities know is inevitable. For some weeks past there have been rumours that the Spanish authorities were planning a plebiscite in the Tangier Zone. His Majesty's Acting Consul-General has now obtained possession of a list of fourteen leading Moslem dignitaries who have been obliged to sign a blank paper. It is not known to what they have involuntarily committed themselves. It may be a vote for Franco if the plebiscite should take place, or perhaps merely a petition asking for the continuance of the favour of Spanish overlordship. But this is just beating the wind; even if the Spaniards were to persuade every single Moor in Tangier to sign a blank paper, these worthless cheques on Allied goodwill would not be honoured on the day of reckoning.

Since this *Summary* was written the Spanish *Radio Nacional* has broadcast an announcement by General Moscardó, Captain-General of the Fourth Region, that the Val d'Aran had been cleared of "Red" troops. It is very likely that the *guerrilleros* have, in fact, withdrawn. It seems clear that they expected more active assistance from their compatriots than they received.

ITALY.

Despite the scientific and methodical damage carried out by the Germans in liberated Italy, particularly to hydro-electric power stations, Italy's main source of power, factories have resumed the production of various necessities, amongst which silk, textiles, cement, steel and fertilizers are mentioned. Paper plants in Rome and Tivoli are also manufacturing newsprint and others are about to start work. Although there is a dearth of raw materials, the Allies are doing all in their power to co-operate with the manufacturers, particularly by helping them to procure these necessary raw materials.

The situation in Sicily has been examined at a meeting of the Council of Ministers and it has been decided to set up a special council with a High Commissioner as president to report on local problems. This council will consist of twenty-four members drawn from political and economic organisations with local experts to assist them. A grant of 500 million lire has been approved for the economic reconstruction of Sicily and the Italian police force in the island is to be reorganised and purged of unsatisfactory elements.

Emilio Lusso, a former Deputy for Sardinia and himself a Sardinian, has just completed a tour of the island and has reported to Signor Bonomi on the conditions as he found them. According to the *Corriere di Roma*, he urged that powers should be granted to the High Commissioner for the island to work out a scheme of regional autonomy within the national framework.

Signor Bonomi, in an interview with a Reuter correspondent, re-emphasised the difficulties facing Italy this coming winter. If the Germans continue their destruction of all industrial installations and carry off all the produce of the farms, immediate and great help will be needed not only in food and medicine but in transport to distribute it. The housing problem was also very difficult, particularly for the farmers, who must live close to their land. Signor Bonomi went on to say that in Italy to-day it was a question of living, and to this end political parties must unite to improve the structure of the Government by strengthening its technical powers and that other great social and political problems must be postponed. In Signor Bonomi's opinion it would not yet be possible to constitute an assembly of former Deputies, and he apparently believed that for the time being committees of experts could be set up to help with the solution of the various problems. In view of the fact that Italy to-day had no electoral lists and no electoral system, all of which had been destroyed by fascism, Signor Bonomi was preparing a temporary electoral law for the compilation of the lists, and he hoped that in three or four months these lists would be ready. Only then would it be possible to proceed with the administrative elections, which would be the first electoral experiment of a democratic Italy. Signor Bonomi finished by speaking of the urgency of finding some outlet for Italy's growing population. In present circumstances it was, he said, more urgent than ever, but he was glad to say that he had found a profound understanding of this question amongst the representatives of Brazil, whose troops were now fighting in Italy.

In accordance with the policy announced by the President of the United States and the Prime Minister on the 27th September, direct relations between His Majesty's Government and the Italian Government have been resumed. As previously stated, Sir Noel Charles, the present High Commissioner, is to assume the rank of Ambassador. Count Carandini is to be the Italian representative in London. Count Carandini will have the personal rank of Ambassador but he will not have diplomatic status. A Liberal and a strong anti-Fascist from the beginning, Count Carandini fought in the last war and during neo-fascism he played an active part on the Italian Committee of Liberation as the Liberal representative. He is also deeply interested in farming and owned large dairy farms which formerly supplied Rome with a large proportion of its milk supply. The United States and the U.S.S.R. have announced the establishment of full diplomatic relations with Italy, notwithstanding the state of war. The other American Republics have followed the United States lead. The Italian Ambassador to Washington will be Count Sforza.

In Northern Italy the week's main event was the 22nd anniversary of the March on Rome on the 28th October, when the Republican Fascists made a big effort to reproduce some of the pomp and circumstance of former celebrations. Mussolini reviewed Legionaries and made a short speech; congratulatory telegrams—even more stilted than usual—were exchanged between Hitler and the Duce; and Party hierarchs, including Pavolini, Mezzasoma and Giorgio Pini,

[28511] c 2