

Working Class. This indignantly denied that there could be any other reason for the absence of the U.S.S.R. from this conference than that officially stated (see *Summary* No. 265). The writer declared that the Soviet authorities knew only on the 24th October that Spain, Portugal and Switzerland had been invited—countries which were on good terms with Germany and her satellites, but had not seen fit to establish normal relations with the U.S.S.R. The Soviet Government had known that some neutrals would be invited, but did not know that “these specific neutrals” would be included. “Of course there would be no objection to such neutrals as Sweden and Turkey.” It was noted that the United States had not invited the Argentine, which “conducts a pro-Fascist policy and is hostile towards the United States.”

On the 12th November it was announced that M. N. V. Gorelkin had been appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the U.S.S.R. to Uruguay. M. Gorelkin was Ambassador to Italy before the latter declared war on the U.S.S.R. He was one of a number of Soviet diplomats who were recently awarded the Red Banner of Labour “for outstanding services to the Soviet State and for successful fulfilment of the Government’s assignments.” (See last week’s *Summary*.)

It was announced on the 10th November that M. P. I. Valeskain had been appointed People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Latvian S.S.R. The new Commissar, who although having a Latvian name is apparently not a Latvian citizen, succeeded M. Junius Latsis as Minister of Education in the Latvian S.S.R. in January 1941. (See also under “Czechoslovakia,” “Hungary” and “Roumania.”)

SCANDINAVIA.

The Swedish Government delivered on the 11th November a note of protest to the German Legation in Stockholm in reply to a German notification two days earlier that the Eastern Baltic and the Gulf of Bothnia were to be an operational area in which all ships would risk being mined or fired on without warning. The Swedish Government considers these measures injurious to legitimate Swedish interests, denies the right of German forces to make use of them, and holds the German Government entirely responsible for any consequences. The Swedish War Risk Insurance Board has simultaneously notified Swedish ships in the Gulf of Bothnia that they should confine themselves to Swedish territorial waters.

Protests have also been evoked by a number of recent violations of Swedish territory by German soldiers, who have looted hay belonging to Swedish peasants. Most of these incidents have taken place on the Finno-Swedish frontier, but an aggravated case occurred on the 4th November in North Värmland, when a German patrol pursued two Norwegian refugees for a distance of 4 kilom. beyond the Norwegian frontier, firing shots and ultimately compelling a Swedish forester to guide them back, pressing the muzzles of rifles into his back. General von Falkenhorst has apologised for this incident and undertaken to punish the offenders.

The allegations of protection afforded by Sweden to actively anti-Soviet refugees from Estonia and other Baltic regions have been further pursued by the Swedish Communist organ *Ny Dag*, and have, after some delay, evoked replies in other Swedish papers. In *Morgon-tidningen* especially, the defence has adopted a perhaps rather provocative form by alleging the commission of a large number of murders and acts of torture by the Russians during the occupation of Estonia in 1940-41. These charges are indignantly denied by *Ny Dag*, which demands evidence of the accusations. *Dagens Nyheter*, while describing *Ny Dag*’s presentation of the case as “narrow and mischievous,” admits the necessity of procuring a trustworthy report of the composition of the Baltic refugee groups. No doubt, says the paper, they are mostly good people, but there are also exceptions from the rule.

The split in the Finnish Social Democratic Party occasioned by the opposition to the dominant influence of Tanner has now led to important developments. On the 8th November it was announced that two Ministers from the dissident section of the Party, MM. Fagerholm and Vuori, had resigned from the Government. It was at once predicted that this move would bring about a more complete reconstruction of the Government unless the Social Democrats were prepared to elect two men to replace those who have resigned. After discussion in the party groups in the Diet, it was decided that a Government reconstruction was unavoidable. On the 10th November M. Castren’s Government resigned, and

Marshal Mannerheim is understood to have started to form a new one, the Prime Minister of which is expected to be M. Paasikivi.

A rather curious feature of the situation has been a violent attack upon M. Vuori by the Communist paper *Vapaa Sana*. Having regard to the fact that the new Government is expected to be politically further to the Left than the old, and to be purged of elements which favoured the continuance of hostilities with Russia, this attitude of the Communists is difficult to understand. The attack may have a personal basis: the political editor of the paper is said to be the daughter of Kuusinen. It may also be explained as an instance of the inveterate antagonism of Communists to orthodox trade union circles.

The discussions in Stockholm between the Swedish Government and the Norwegian Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Justice appear to have been highly satisfactory. Apart from the question of the employment of the Norwegian police forces trained in Sweden, the Norwegian Government has obtained a loan of 100 million kr. to cover expenditure in Sweden during the next six months. The question of Swedish contributions to Norwegian supplies has also been satisfactorily handled.

In spite of the attempts of German and quisling propaganda to represent the evacuation of the civil population from Northern Norway as voluntary and humanitarian (see last week’s *Summary*), there is no longer any real concealment of the fact that it is both compulsory and cruel. German sources reported on 8th November that the evacuation of Hammerfest was being carried out as a German defence measure. Actually the evacuation of Norwegians throughout the northern part of the country is being carried out by methods of the most drastic compulsion, and persons attempting to evade it have been shot. Livestock and food-stuffs, together with farm buildings, are being systematically destroyed.

The quisling Minister for the Interior, Hagelin, has finally resigned, ostensibly on grounds of ill-health. The “rowing” propensities of the Quisling Party have now been regretfully admitted by the extreme party organ *Germaneren*, in an article which states that mistrust and dissension and an inclination to row for safety are noticeable everywhere, even in the least expected quarters. The fears of the traitors are no doubt intelligible, for, apart from post-war prospects, there have been several cases of liquidation recently, and on the 6th November an act of sabotage destroyed the War Academy in Oslo, which had been occupied as the Headquarters of the Hird staff. Other cases of sabotage have been reported.

THE LOW COUNTRIES.

On the 9th November the Prime Minister was asked in the House of Commons whether he proposed to make a statement concerning the loss sustained by the Netherlands through the flooding of large areas of valuable agricultural land, and whether, in view of the statement recently (see *Summary* No. 265) published by the Netherlands Government, a joint reply by the United Nations could be made without delay. Mr. Attlee, replying on behalf of the Prime Minister, stated that, “so far as His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom are concerned, I can say that all just claims for territorial compensation at the expense of Germany which the Netherlands Government may eventually decide to put forward will be given energetic support.”

The plight of the Dutch is arousing sympathy in Belgium; a relief committee has been set up under Government patronage, and the Prince Regent has sent a donation of 50,000 fr.

Meanwhile, the Dutch Government are making such preparations as they can to repair the damage done to their country by the Germans; large orders for pumping, and other, machinery are being placed in the United States.

In the course of a speech to the Belgian Chamber on the 7th M. Pierlot adverted to the cordial relations between Britain and Belgium and said that the visit of M. Spaak to London—where he had arrived on the 4th—was aimed at making closer the co-operation of the two countries in various spheres. Belgian opinion is, in general, eager for close co-operation between Belgium, the Netherlands, Britain and France for purposes of security. But the Communists, while arguing that Belgium should maintain friendly relations with all the United Nations, deprecate a specially close understanding with Britain on the ground that Belgium would thereby be brought under British hegemony.

Towards the close of his visit to London M. Spaak said in an interview: “I have noticed that there is much discussion in the press on the creation of a West European bloc. The word *bloc*, it seems to me, is ill-chosen, and may have