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FRANCE.

France

July 16, 1940.

CONFIDENTIAL.

SECTION 1.

[C 7829/9/17]

Copy No.

036A

Viscount Halifax to Sir R. Campbell.

(No. 1162.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 16, 1940.

THE French Chargé d'Affaires came to see me to-day to bid me farewell before his departure to France, and to introduce M. Paul Morand, who is to remain here as diplomatic agent of the French Government.

2. M. Morand told me that he had as yet received no instructions from his Government beyond that he was to take charge of the "Mission de Liquidation" and maintain an unofficial contact with His Majesty's Government. He thought that the business of liquidation would take from two to three months, or perhaps even longer. Before proceeding with this work, however, he proposed to return to France for some ten days in order to get in touch with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, whom he had never met, and to receive any instructions which his Government wished to give him. His intention was to leave on the same ship as the staff of the French Embassy.

3. I told M. Morand that I saw no objection to his visit to France, and I added that His Majesty's Government were themselves about to appoint an agent to reside at Vichy, with a status similar to his own. It was hoped to find a suitable person for this post in the next few days, and his name would then be submitted to the French Government.

4. The Marquis de Castellane then reverted to the question of the French missions in this country, and expressed his disappointment that His Majesty's Government had not thought fit to allow all the members of these missions to return to France forthwith. He appreciated that we must have good reason for our decision in this matter, and did not wish to press me further on the point. But he observed that their early release would have a most favourable effect on French opinion.

5. I then drew the attention of M. de Castellane and M. Morand to the lack of reciprocity shown by the French Government in the treatment of British consular officers in the territory under their control. Whereas French consuls were still allowed to perform their normal duties in all parts of the British Empire, the French Government had made difficulties over the return of a British consular representative to the South of France, and had expelled His Majesty's consular officers from virtually all posts in French North and West African territories. We could not be expected to allow this state of affairs to continue indefinitely; and unless our consuls were permitted to resume their functions, we should be compelled to reconsider the position of French consuls in British territory. M. de Castellane saw no reason why his Government should not agree in general to the return of British consuls, but, although he had heard nothing from Vichy on the subject, he thought that there might be some difficulty over the position of His Majesty's Consuls-General at Tunis and Rabat on account of a certain *démarche* which they had made to the local authorities. It was, however, agreed that M. Morand should telegraph at once to his Government and try to secure permission for the return of the British consular officers to Lyons and Marseilles, leaving the question of the consuls in French overseas territories for discussion during his forthcoming visit to Vichy.

6. M. de Castellane finally explained that, in order to maintain some contact between the two Governments during M. Morand's short absence in France, he proposed that M. Roché of the French Embassy, who had been appointed to the French Legation at Dublin, should delay his departure for Dublin until after M. Morand's return.

I am, &c.
HALIFAX.

[7-60]