

LATIN AMERICA

Argentina

The Argentine delegation to the International Wheat Conference has decided not to join in any agreement. This, of course, is only consistent with Argentina's selling policy, which is simply to exploit the present shortage for all it is worth. Meanwhile President Perón has replied to suggestions that Argentina is hanging back in order to make money, by alleging that the Argentina sales monopoly has been forced on his Government by a buyers' monopoly. He denied that the State was making exorbitant profits, apparently on the ground that the Government had to pay for subsidising prices in Argentina. What President Perón calls "winning Argentine freedom" is, in the opinion of many, nothing more than winning votes for his régime by internal subsidies, which are compensated by screwing up export prices. President Perón is also reported to have drawn attention to the sacrifices of Señor Miranda, who, though a millionaire with many interests, gives his time to Argentine public affairs, and to his own state of poverty. Such protestations of poverty are hardly to be credited; certainly Señora Perón is not destitute.

In view of her influence, already noted in this Summary (see Nos. 366 and 385), it may be pertinent to give a few details of her career. She was born 28 years ago near Junin, where her mother was a dominating political influence. She left school at the age of 16; later tried her hand at acting, not very successfully, and only managed to hold a position as broadcaster by bestowing her favours on various directors. After the 1943 revolution she became the mistress of Colonel Imbert, then Postmaster General, in whose department she hastened to place her nominees. Soon after she transferred her patronage to Colonel Perón, with whom she lived openly, acting as his hostess. She married him in November 1945. She is a ruthless woman of limited intelligence, and her sudden elevation to the dignity of President's wife has gone to her head. She has set herself to achieve popularity with the masses, indulges in blatantly demagogic addresses to the poorer classes of the community and has her own office, where she receives delegations, it being generally accepted that she runs the Secretariat of Labour. If not concerned in questions of paramount political importance, she has sufficient influence with the President to permit her to summon Cabinet Ministers to meetings and to keep

persons of the type of Sr. Largomarsino in positions offering full scope for their corrupt methods. Señora Perón has recently widened the scope of her activities by registering a large number of trade products with the trademark "El Peronista." Criticism of the President's wife became so intense last year that she had to close her office and lie low for a while, but she emerged triumphant, and her power is now at its zenith. She has, of course, many enemies, and these, with the President's evident reluctance to restrain her, may one day imperil Perón's own position.

Colombia

Results in the Parliamentary elections held on the 16th March indicate that the Conservatives have gained seats in both Chambers, and still have a majority over the Liberal party, factions considered separately, though not if they are taken together. Dr. Gaitan has improved his position compared with the other half of the Liberal party, led by Dr. Santos, to what extent is not yet certain. The Communist Party met with a heavy defeat, losing the four seats it held, and consequently having no representation in the new Congress. The elections were marred by some unfortunate "incidents," which resulted in 11 persons being killed and 139 injured.

Mexico

President Truman arrived in Mexico City on the 3rd March, the first American President to set foot in the Mexican capital. His visit coincided with the centenary of the battle of Chapultepec, the culminating point of the 1847 war, in which Mexico lost Texas, Arizona, a large part of California and other huge extensions of territory. The loss of these lands has rankled in Mexican breasts, and there was the possibility that a sense of grievance might impel some hotheaded Mexican to chance a shot at the American President. Great preparations were made to welcome and protect Mr. Truman, who won all hearts by departing from the official programme to lay a wreath on the monument near Chapultepec in memory of the Mexican cadets who died fighting against the American forces. Mr. Truman, who declared that he and President Aleman were in substantial agreement on all points discussed, left on the 6th March. In spite of the fact that his departure took place before dawn, the entire Mexican Cabinet,

headed by President, were at the airport to wish him "God Speed." Both from a political and social point of view the American President's visit was a very great success, and he left without one critical note being sounded.

Peru

Recent serious food riots in Arequipa, and others of a similar nature in Lima and elsewhere have evoked a Presidential decree for the regulation of public meetings. This decree gives extensive powers to the authorities to break up meetings, close bars and places of amusement, obliges organisers of meetings to give

two days' notice and permits only one meeting to be held in any town on a given day. As the Apristas are the only political party strong enough to provide a threat of uprising on a national scale, the decree indicates that the Government can rely on the army, and is not quite as intimidated by the Apra party as had been believed.

It is also reported that at least three groups have been projected or formed from the minor political parties, with a view to opposing the Apristas. These budding blocks roughly represent the Right, Centre and Left, and appear to have nothing in common but a desire to get rid of Aprismo.

UNITED NATIONS

Economic and Social Council

The Council concluded its fourth session on the 29th March. On the 27th it had decided to hold only one more session in 1947, beginning on the 19th July. On the 25th March the following were elected to membership of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities: Mr. Borisov (U.S.S.R.), Mr. Chang (China), Mr. Daniels (U.S.A.), Mr. Ekstrand (Sweden), Mr. McNamara (Australia), Mr. Masani (India), Miss Elizabeth Monroe (U.K.), Mr. Nisot (Belgium), Mr. Pallares (Ecuador), Mr. Howard Roy (Haiti), Mr. Reze Zadeh Shafaq (Iran), Mr. Spanien (France). The following were elected to the Sub-Commission on Freedom of Information:—

Dr. Z. Chafee (U.S.A.).
Mr. R. J. Cruikshank (U.K.).
Mr. J. M. Pomakin (U.S.S.R.).
Dr. P. H. Chang (China).
Mr. Giraud (France).
Mr. Lopez (Philippine Republic).
Mr. Fontaina (Uruguay).
Mr. Fabrega (Panamá).
Mr. Ferguson (Canada).
Mr. Sychrava (Czechoslovakia).
Dr. Goldhart (Netherlands).
Mr. Christiansen (Norway).

Economic Commission for Europe

The establishment of an Economic Commission for Europe was finally approved by the Economic and Social Council on the 29th March and the first session of the Commission opens at Geneva on the 2nd May. The original proposal of the Devastated Areas Sub-Commission last September was well received by many European countries, including Poland and Czechoslovakia, but the Soviet Union was

at first non-committal. However, after lengthy discussions in the Economic and Social Council at its third session and in the Assembly, the Council was unanimously instructed to give prompt and favourable consideration to the establishment of a commission at its fourth session. The exact terms of reference which have been the subject of debate during the past month, have not been easy to determine; several Russian amendments were voted down, and it remains to be seen whether the differences of opinion between East and West which these amendments expressed can be settled so easily.

The chief differences of opinion were over the desire of the Russians to minimise the control of the Economic and Social Council over the Economic Commission for Europe, and to eliminate as far as possible all references to liaison between the Commission and the Specialised Agencies. The reason for the Russian attitude was, primarily, the calculation that they would command a majority of votes on the Commission and would thus be able to wipe out at Geneva the defeats suffered by them in New York. With regard to Specialised Agencies, they were principally concerned to provide themselves with a shield against the working of the multilateral trade principles of the proposed International Trade Organisation.

The first tasks of the Commission will be to take over the temporary European economic bodies—the European Coal Organisation, the European Central Inland Transport Organisation and the Emergency Economic Committee for Europe, which have already dealt with the most urgent problems of rehabilitation and co-ordination of scarce resources—and to con-