

SCANDINAVIA.

A recent enquiry by the Swedish Gallup Institute throws an interesting light on the present state of opinion in Sweden on the question of Scandinavian regionalism. Hitherto it has always appeared that Sweden was the protagonist among the Northern nations for the creation and maintenance of a Scandinavian bloc. If the Gallup figures can be trusted, however, Swedish opinion has undergone a great change in this respect as a result of the experience of the war. Of those questioned, no less than 43 per cent. expressed no view—which at least suggests a surprising lack of interest in the question, though it may be merely an instance of characteristic Swedish caution. Of the remainder, as large a figure as 27 per cent. favoured Swedish isolation, while the voters who supported some sort of bloc were remarkably uncertain as to which and how many of the neighbouring countries should be included. The largest extent of agreement was with regard to the inclusion of Norway. 14 per cent. of those approached were in favour of a wider association, including countries outside the northern group, among which England was an easy favourite. The explanation of this marked change of view is doubtless the fact that Swedish regionalism has always been associated with neutrality, and that the experience of the war has shown this to be unobtainable, except—so far—by Sweden in isolation. To some extent, therefore, the verdict may be regarded as a vote of confidence in Swedish foreign policy as pursued in the present war. A curious feature in the investigation is that Communists were mostly in favour of isolation, only a third of them favouring the inclusion of Russia in a combination.

The Swedish Government has granted to Finland a credit of 150 million kronor for reconstruction.

Opening a debate on foreign affairs in the Riksdag on the 30th October, the Prime Minister and M. Günther both reasserted the Government's intention of maintaining the policy of neutrality, though they expressed great indignation at the German treatment of Norway and Denmark, to which they seemed to attribute the restrictions which they had recently imposed on Swedish trade with Germany. The assurance was repeated that Sweden would not grant refuge to quislings or war criminals.

The Allied (Soviet) Control Commission is understood to have compiled a list of sixty-one Finns to be arrested and brought to trial for alleged war crimes, and two generals have been already arrested, one of whom is Pajari, in spite of his conduct of the opening stages of hostilities against the Germans since the Armistice. The other is General Palojarvi, formerly Finnish Military Attaché in Stockholm. Colonel Paloheimo, who was Assistant Minister of Finance in the Finnish Government until its recent reconstruction, has also been arrested.

On the other hand, the relations between General Zhdanov and Marshal Mannerheim are reported to have been very cordial from the first, and the former is said to have accepted a plea for further delay in demobilisation of the Finnish forces in view of their employment in the expulsion of the Germans. An extension of two months has been conceded.

The capture of Kirkenes by the Soviet forces was celebrated on the 26th October by broadcasts to the Norwegian people from King Haakon and M. Nygaardsvold. The King mentioned the agreement for military co-operation concluded some time ago between the Norwegian Government and the Soviet Union, expressed his pleasure that Norwegian forces were to take part in the operations in Northern Norway, and appealed for the strongest possible support to be given by Norwegians to their Russian Allies, to whose friendship and sympathy for Norway he paid tribute. The Norwegian Prime Minister asserted that Hitler's troops were now in flight in North Norway, and urged that they must be killed, annihilated or taken prisoner, since every German soldier who escaped southwards would contribute to the prolongation of the war. This appeal was no doubt intended to have merely local application to the present theatre of war in Northern Norway, though there seems some risk that it may be given a wider interpretation by those activist elements which have been so long straining at the leash.

M. Trygve Lie, the Norwegian Foreign Minister, and M. Terje Wold, the Minister of Justice, arrived in Stockholm by air from England on the 28th October. It is officially stated that the visit was planned some time ago, and implied that its coincidence with the Russian advance into Norway is accidental, though this occurrence is admitted to add to the importance of the discussions impending.

The Germans are reported to have made comprehensive plans for the complete encirclement of the Oslo district, in the event of any disturbance in that quarter. Arrests made recently confirm the view that it is the German policy at present to secure an influential body of hostages against the contingency of national disorder or armed rising.

The same policy is being pursued in Denmark, where no less than 10,000 Danes are now estimated to be prisoners. It is widely reported that Professor Fog is dead (see last week's *Summary*) but another person arrested in the same raid and stated to have since died now seems to be alive, and it is believed that the Germans circulate rumours of the death of prominent persons arrested, with the object of encouraging unguarded discussion of their possible activities.

THE LOW COUNTRIES.

In view of the possibility of almost irreparable damage being done to part of the Netherlands by the enemy through flooding and in other ways, the Dutch Government has announced that it reserves the right to demand the annexation of a portion of adjoining German territory, cleared of its inhabitants, in compensation.

In spite of a German propaganda campaign aimed at breaking their resolution, the great majority of the railway workers in enemy-occupied Holland remain on strike. In their resentment against them for hampering the military operations, the Germans have not merely disclaimed responsibility for Dutch food supplies, but have issued a decree prohibiting all forms of transport in the region of Amsterdam and The Hague, thus throwing the people of this densely populated area on to their immediately available resources. The food situation there must by now be extremely grave, since the principal stocks were only sufficient to last until the first or second week in November. Moreover, the shortage of fuel has been intensified through the cutting off of the Limburg coal supplies as a result of the Allied advance.

In Belgium the food situation continues to overshadow all other topics. On the 24th October the two Communist members of the Government handed the Prime Minister a letter addressed to him by the National Secretary of the Communist Party, in which the Government was reproached for the prevailing distress. M. Pierlot pointed out in reply that he could not permit any discussion in public between members of the Government, as this would be contrary to ministerial solidarity. In spite of the rumours which this incident not unnaturally provoked, no Cabinet crisis has developed.

Meanwhile, the Allied Supreme Command has appointed Major-General Erskine as Head of a Mission to the Belgian Government to give expert advice on the food situation. General Erskine gave a wireless address to the Belgian people on the 27th October in the course of which he announced that the military authorities had decided to give the Belgian people 200 tons of food a day during the twenty days following the 1st November—the supplies to include as much meat and fats as possible. He explained that this measure was not being taken because there was a shortage of food—in point of fact the food situation in Belgium is much less serious than in France or Holland—but to tide over the reorganisation of the system of distribution. The Belgian harvest has been satisfactory and there are sufficient stocks of essential foods in the country to carry it over at least until February.

The causes for the existing distress were explained in detail by the Prime Minister in a broadcast address on the 23rd October. Coal and transport, he said, were the major problems. Coal production per month had fallen from 2,200,000 tons to 625,000, which was a little over a quarter of the normal requirements. The chief reasons for this were shortage of labour and the lack of nourishing food for the workers who remained. Nevertheless, even 600,000 tons per month would be sufficient to allow a minimum of railway traffic and to provide enough gas and electric power for private dwelling houses and some vital industries. The bottleneck at the moment was the shortage of railway engines and trucks available for civilian traffic. To meet this, nearly all passenger trains had been cancelled except those transporting miners. Foodstuffs were being given absolute priority, coal and timber for pit props coming next. As regards water-ways, many were still unusable. Here the obstacle was not want of ships but the destruction of quays and loading apparatus. Under these circumstances, though there was sufficient food in the country, it would be unwise to release these stocks into a free market until they knew how long it would be before they would receive imported foodstuffs. This meant that controlled distribution, in the shape