

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

The fall of Pantelleria gave President Roosevelt the occasion to repeat in a more formal and deliberate way the advice to the Italians which Mr. Churchill had already given in Washington a fortnight earlier. He contrasted the peaceable qualities of the Italian people with the ruthless conduct of Mussolini; and, addressing himself directly to the former, assured them that once they had got rid of the Germans and of the Fascist régime they would be free to choose their own form of non-Fascist Government. He added that he was sure he was speaking for the United Nations, as well as for himself and the United States, in saying that the Allies desired Italy's restoration to nationhood and to a respected position among the European nations. This was hailed in the press as an important act of political strategy; Mrs. McCormick, the *New York Times* expert on European affairs, and others, stressed the effect which Italian surrender would have on German morale.

On the 10th June the State Department issued the text of a draft plan for the establishment of an agency for post-war relief, to be known as the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. On the same day the draft was submitted to the Governments of all the United Nations and of the other countries associated with them in the war, with the explanation that it had been drawn up in consultation with the British, Soviet and Chinese Governments and had met with their approval. The State Department went on to say that it was hoped that preliminary discussions among all the countries concerned would speedily clear the way for a conference, at which definite agreement for joint action could be reached.

This is not the place to attempt a description of the plan, which, though it now emerges under the sponsorship of the United States, has been the subject of consultation between the U.K., Dominion, Soviet and Chinese Governments. After the last war, the United States, on Mr. Herbert Hoover's insistence, rejected the plan for international control of relief in Europe which had been put forward by the Allied Maritime Council and the Inter-Allied Food Council. Mr. Hoover, as head of the American Relief Administration, which alone was in a position to provide relief on a very big scale, operated independently, using personnel seconded from the United States Forces in Europe. It is, therefore, of special interest that Washington should now take the lead in the contrary sense. The press in this country has put forward the suggestion that the post of Director-General of the new relief agency, which carries with it great powers and responsibilities, might be occupied by Mr. Herbert Lehman, who was Governor of New York State from 1932 to 1942, and since last December has been head of the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation.

After prolonged conferences the House and the Senate have agreed on the terms of an Anti-strike and Labour Control Bill; it has been rapidly passed through both Chambers, and will now be sent to the President for signature. Owing to the long-drawn-out menace of the coal strike, and to resentment against the conduct of Mr. Lewis, the Bill is a good deal more unpleasant for organised Labour than it would otherwise have been. Not only does it give greater powers to the War Labour Board, and make it a criminal offence to incite to strike in Government-operated plants, but it also lays down that no strike can take place until after a "cooling-off period" of thirty days: that the Unions must file with the W.L.B. particulars of their membership and funds; and that Unions may not contribute to political party funds. The last two provisions are particularly resented by Labour. A Union which must file details about its funds is as much handicapped as would be an army compelled to publish details of its stocks of ammunition. And the Unions consider it unfair not to be able to contribute to political funds while individual employers can do so. It must be remembered that they do not run candidates of their own but throw their support to individual candidates of either party whose record they consider to be pro-Labour. But apart from these specific provisions, the Unions dislike the whole Bill, and both the A.F.L. and the C.I.O. are urging the President to refuse to sign it. The question whether he will do so or not will provide much material for speculation until his decision is announced. At the time of writing, the impression in Washington seems to be that he is likely to sign. It is known, however, that the Administration regrets some at least of the provisions of the Bill; and while in earlier stages of the dispute drastic action against the miners would have given it a black mark in the eyes of the workers in general, this might not necessarily be the case if such action were an alternative to accepting what amounts to a general, if temporary, set-back in the whole position of organised

Labour. Meanwhile, various steps are being taken or planned to conserve coal supplies and to remedy existing maldistribution, in order to lessen the effects of a renewal of the strike, if that should unhappily occur when the present "truce" ends on the 20th June. Nothing, however, could prevent such a renewal from having extremely serious consequences.

Recent *Summaries* have referred to the efforts being made to improve the distribution, and reduce the cost, of food. These continue with no decisive effect: indeed, it is becoming evident that no quick and considerable reduction in prices to the consumer is possible without the use of subsidies on a large scale, and opposition to these has in no way subsided. During the last week, renewed attention has been paid to a potentially still graver problem, that of the crop prospects for the present season. The Department of Agriculture, which had previously been criticised for excessive optimism, has issued a warning that the present outlook is the worst for several years (it is true that the last three years have been exceptionally good). This has given a new urgency to the attacks on the Administration for alleged inefficiency in dealing with the various aspects of the food problem. Mr. Hoover has made a speech demanding a new and unified control over production and distribution; and, if crop prospects continue poor, the question is likely to assume serious proportions in Congress in the coming weeks.

LATIN AMERICA.

The new Provisional Argentine Government was recognised by the British, Dominions and United States Governments on Friday, the 11th June, their action having been anticipated by Berlin and Rome, as well as by various Latin American States. Brazil, where there is, perhaps, a tendency to interpret the Argentine *coup d'Etat* in terms of President Vargas's own *coup* of 1937, as well as a marked anxiety to avoid giving cause of offence to the new Argentine Government, was the first State to extend recognition, on the 9th; and Brazil's example was at once followed by Bolivia, Paraguay and Chile.

On the 9th also martial law was lifted, though the dissolution of Congress has been maintained, partly, perhaps, to obviate the dilemma caused by the fact that Sr. Patrón Costas (against whom the *coup d'Etat* was partly aimed) is President of the Senate. Communists continue to suffer from the Government's displeasure; the ex-Ministers of the Interior and Agriculture have been released from prison, though they officially await investigation; and the Governor of Mendoza has been replaced, on account of his recalcitrant attitude, by a Federal Interventor. The appointment of General Partiná as Mayor of Buenos Aires places in a position of considerable responsibility a notorious pro-Fascist.

In a statement issued on the 8th the Government declared that steps would be taken "not only by word, but by deed, to bring us even closer to our brother Americans," and on the 10th Admiral Segundo Storni, the new Foreign Minister, told a group of journalists that Argentine ties with Britain, Spain, France and the "Italian people" were particularly friendly. On the 11th, moreover, the Government issued a decree suppressing all cypher communications by radio, which operates in fact if not in theory against the Axis, since Allied missions use and control all cables. This, so far as it goes, is excellent. The late Argentine Government was never in doubt of our views and those of the United States on this matter, and its importance had been explained to the new Government by Dr. Pueyrredon, the late Mayor of Buenos Aires. Doubtless at the instance of the German Embassy, the operation of this decree was postponed till the 16th.

Both His Majesty's Ambassador and the United States Ambassador have had cordial interviews with the new Foreign Minister, and Admiral Storni left no doubt of his own pro-Allied and pro-democratic sentiments. He promised, moreover, to look into the question of *Graf Spee* internees, of whom more than 130 officers and men have escaped over a period of three and a half years without being recaptured. It should not, however, be too easily assumed that the new Government will at once proceed to a break with the Axis. It is, in the first place, as yet uncertain of itself. Secondly, it is composed, for the most part, of a body of politically inexperienced soldiers, who are also extremely nationalistically-minded and will be highly sensitive to the slightest suggestion of foreign pressure. The desire for war supplies may operate one way; *amour-propre* (of which Argentines are endowed with more than their fair share) another. Meanwhile, it is unofficially reported that the new Government has made a good impression by a statement of the domestic policy it proposes to follow.