

difficulties in May and June, which would be accentuated by the fact that last summer new wheat was threshed and milled earlier than usual, thus mortgaging the future. Appeals to the peasants by Government officials and by the bishops were multiplied, and at the beginning of May the Food Minister Bannofous promised that no more wheat would leave the country (*i.e.*, go to Germany) until the next harvest came in. Germany had already received 600,000 out of the 800,000 tons she had bespoken. The farmer's bread ration of 500 grammes daily (against the normal 275 grammes, and 350 for heavy workers) was reduced to 350 grammes, a measure which, according to the head of the Peasant Corporation, caused bitter resentment. Last year's wheat crop has been reported to have been 54 million quintals, against 61 million for 1941-42 and against a normal crop of 78 million. The critical period was at the end of June and July; and, although the new crop promised well, it was not expected to be available as flour, even in the south of France, until mid-July. Some stocks still existed in the towns, but most districts live from day to day. A national campaign for delivery of wheat was started on the 30th May, and an appeal from the Minister was read in every French village, saying: "This wheat mobilisation is not, strictly speaking, a further constraint, since producers were already under compulsion to deliver their wheat. It is a red light which we are showing on the road to famine." Three points were emphasised: the French peasants were still holding back wheat; this wheat would suffice to bridge the gap between the harvests; this gap was a purely French problem. Though round Lyons most of the wheat stocks have been gathered in, large secret stocks were suspected in the west and north. Official propaganda sought to conciliate and persuade the peasants, Déat himself having already pointed out that coercion would only lead to disorder and result in a catastrophic decrease in cultivation. Although no cut has been made in the official bread ration for the nation, local cuts have been introduced in certain departments, *e.g.*, Brittany. According to the latest official statements, however, the campaign for deliveries is proving successful, and the country should be able to tide over until the new harvest, though admittedly on a hand-to-mouth basis. The first sheaf of new corn was presented to Pétain on the 12th June.

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL.

The anti-bombing campaign in the Spanish press is now but a sunken soufflé, and General Franco, having been rebuffed in his "priest-like task of pure ablation round earth's human shores," is now turning his attention to home affairs. The Spanish Cabinet, which meets seldom, holds long sessions and usually breaks up in anger, has had several meetings. The Spanish High Command has also been summoned to Madrid, and General Orgaz, among other generals, has flown from Tetuán to attend the meetings. One of the subjects discussed will undoubtedly have been the recent troop movements to coastal war stations, which seem to have caused some alarm among the population. General Asensio, Minister of War, disclaims all knowledge of such movements and says he gave no orders for the operation, which in any other country would be an odd state of affairs. The report suggests that in order to satisfy the Germans, who are assiduously attacking Spanish nerves by alleging that the Allies will shortly violate Spanish territory, General Franco sent warnings to the Captains-General of the threatened regions, though the Caudillo is not supposed to believe the rumours himself.

The figures of foreign trade in 1942 show a surplus of 16½ million pesetas as compared with a deficit of nearly 35 million pesetas in 1941. Part of the improvement is due to Allied purchases, which have considerably increased in the past two years. Though much of the buying was pre-emptive, which, of course, gave rise to greatly inflated prices, the value of Spanish imports into the United Kingdom was in 1942 75 per cent. higher than in 1941, which in turn was considerably more than in 1939. These and other figures are an index of the success of His Majesty's Government's economic policy towards Spain, and show, contrary to popular belief in England, that Anglo-Spanish economic relations by no means consist of Great Britain's bolstering up Spain by loans and navicerts. Spain has been bribed away from unfriendliness by our policy of economic advantage, but the benefits we have received far outweigh the price we have paid. The situation, menacing in 1940, has completely changed in the last three years. Then Spain was in the grip of the Axis, both economically and politically, and the grip was tightening. Now she has to a large extent been detached economically from the Axis and brought into the sterling orbit. We are obtaining

satisfactory quantities of war supplies, such as wolfram and mercury, and are pre-empting away from Germany considerable amounts of the metals, textiles and skins which she so urgently needs. Moreover, there have been political advantages in this for us as well. In the bad old days of Señor Súñer, when almost all doors were closed to us, owing to the personal relations between the Embassy staffs and the officials of the Ministry of Commerce, valuable contacts were made and used for political ends. And, inasmuch as everything in Spain depends upon personal goodwill and "amistad," the fact that in our economic negotiations with the Spaniards there was close and cordial collaboration undoubtedly helped to counter-balance the enmity of the Falange, who at one time were particularly strong in that very Ministry. Surely in no other Western country would it have been possible for an Embassy official to call at the Ministry in the evening and draft for his opposite number a memorandum which would be submitted to him by the Ministry next morning. This instruction in international commercial practice is one of the solid benefits conferred by the British Civil Service upon the Spanish Administration.

After its earlier mauling by the Russians, the Blue Division has for some months past been having a relatively quiet spell. A recent report states that the Caudillo ordered the name to be changed to the "Division of Spanish Volunteers," and that this was regarded as an indirect answer on the part of the Spanish Government to the Russian threat to declare war on Spain if the Blue Division was considered as part of the Spanish Army, and to treat its members as *francs-tireurs* if they were considered to be volunteers. This may be so, but the press and wireless are still calling them the Blue Division, just as the well-known street in Barcelona, in spite of successive régimes giving it different names, is still called the "Diagonal." Members of the Division returning from Russia speak quite freely of their experiences. They look on the campaign as realistic manoeuvres providing excellent training, and say that they are using the Russian war as a dummy-run just as the Germans used Spain in the Civil War. Though they would hate to see the Germans beaten, they appear to have little liking for their allies, and say that, though their generalship and staff work are good, equipment is poor and morale is deteriorating. But they rather like the Russians because they do know how to sing—as good a reason as any for admiring your adversary.

A Portuguese Naval Mission has arrived in Spain and has paid a visit to El Ferrol; it was perhaps not the best moment to visit the dockyard which was damaged by fire at the end of last month (see *Summary* No. 190). The personal observation which was the source of last week's comment upon the criticism in the services of Dr. Salazar's policy is confirmed by later reports, one of which states that General Vicente de Freitas, an elderly statesman who has held several portfolios in the Portuguese Government, has sent, on behalf of a group of high army officers, a message to President Carmona, urging that, in the national interest, Portugal should now adopt an attitude more definitely favourable to the United Nations. But there is growing criticism of Dr. Salazar in home affairs too, and the rising cost of living and diminishing value of services provided has given rise to the quip that in his next speech Dr. Salazar should take as his theme the words: "Never have so many paid so much for so little."

ITALY.

Italy is profiting by the lull in military operations, other than the systematic bombing of military objectives by the aircraft of the United Nations, to hurry on and complete all possible preparations against the expected invasion. To judge by a remarkable article in the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, the Germans are anything but satisfied. The writer says that, while the possibility of a combined Anglo-French attack on the Italian coast had had to be taken into account since 1935-36 (the era of "sanctions"), the problem of an invasion "only assumed its present form as a result of the latest development of the air force—above all, its progress during the war." Referring to General Sorice's recent statement in the Senate that Italy's coastal defence does not depend solely upon immobile fortifications, but also upon mobile units, he observed that the Italian transport system was suffering from a certain "anæmia," and he interpreted General Sorice's picture of the strategic situation as meaning "the risk of landing on an Italian island or on the Italian mainland is great, very great, but perhaps not so great as the risk at any other point in Europe within the enemy's range. On

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