

calibre as Sheikh Maraghi, the Rector of the University, who was known to hold anti-Allied views and to be a dangerous element. Nahas intends at the same time to submit proposals to the King for reconstructing his Cabinet.

After showing considerable reluctance, King Farouk has at last agreed to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the U.S.S.R. and Egypt, and Nahas has been authorised to take the appropriate measures to that end. According to *The Times* correspondent in Cairo, "recognition will be on a basis of non-interference by either country in the internal affairs of the other, and the abstention by Russia from any propaganda to encourage the dissemination of communism or to undermine the present system of government in Egypt." It may be that the King, whose hatred of communism amounts to an obsession, was influenced in his decision by the news of the dissolution of the Comintern, which was put forward by the Egyptian Ministry for Foreign Affairs as an additional argument for the early establishment of relations with Russia.

In Palestine, the end of the Tunisian campaign was received with satisfaction, though without any marked enthusiasm. The Arab community is tending to rely more on organised political activity outside the country, particularly in Iraq and Egypt, rather than within Palestine itself; but this does not mean that Arab opinion will cease to be irritated by Jewish demands and ambitions. Considerable Jewish excitement was caused by the police search of the recruiting office in Tel Aviv (see *Summary* No. 189), which was exploited to exacerbate Jewish feeling against the Government, though some Jews had the good sense to agree that the action taken by the Government was justified. The figures for Jewish recruiting showed little change during the fortnight following the incident, but dropped perceptibly in the week ending the 15th May, when it reached a new low level. Arab recruiting has also declined of late.

As the impression has gained ground in the Levant States that the elections cannot now be long delayed, interest in them has tended to increase. But anxiety is growing over the economic situation, and the gold pound has now reached the level of 71 Syrian pounds, the highest previous quotation being 60 Syrian pounds on the 12th May.

Ibn Saud has sent a message to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires stating that he has definite evidence that an attempt is being made by "Hashimites and Iraqis" to stir up trouble against him among the Shammar, the important tribe inhabiting North-Central Saudi Arabia. At Hail, their principal centre, there have been demonstrations, agitation and unrest, and Ibn Saud has been compelled to arrest twenty-five trouble-makers and to send troops to Hail to assist the local Governor. Ibn Saud is sure that certain Iraqis are at the bottom of this, and that their intention is to incite the Shammar tribesmen and the people of Hail to rebel. He has asked His Majesty's Government not only to supply him with arms to maintain order and to suppress the revolt, but also to prevent Iraqi intriguers from making further trouble. The Amir Feisal, who conveyed the message, is himself convinced that a definite plot exists to stir up certain disaffected elements among the Shammar to rebel against his father, and told Mr. Wikeley that, while Ibn Saud was, as always, most anxious not to cause embarrassment to His Majesty's Government, the limit of his endurance had now, he thought, been reached. Whether such an Iraqi plot, as alleged by Ibn Saud, actually exists it is at present impossible to say; but it seems that the situation in and around Hail is potentially dangerous, and the question of sending arms to Ibn Saud for the purposes of internal-security, which had already been under consideration, is now engaging the active attention of His Majesty's Government.

On another matter Ibn Saud is seriously annoyed. He thinks that Nahas and Nuri have been trying to arrange a conference to discuss Arab unity without first consulting him. Judging from the correspondence on the subject that has taken place between Nuri and Ibn Saud, there would seem to be little ground for this complaint, at least as far as Nuri is concerned. Ibn Saud entirely agrees with His Majesty's Government that much exploratory work is necessary before a conference can be usefully called, and has asked them for their advice as to how he should best take the initiative in arranging preliminary consultations.

According to the Saudi Arabian Government, the supplies of wheat that the M.E.S.C. agreed to send to Eastern Saudi Arabia from Bahrein have not yet been received. On the other hand, the emergency in the Aden Protectorate (see *Summary* No. 190) has been very promptly met by His Majesty's Government, who, in response to the Governor's request, have allocated £30,000 to be spent on famine relief in the Protectorate. This sum will be expended mainly on the purchase of grain, to be distributed in kind to those employed on

relief work, such as road building, &c., or at reduced price to the poorer Arabs and gratis to the destitute.

The Persian press has recently discussed the possibility of Turkey entering the war on the Allied side, and many articles incline to the belief that she will do so when Italy has been or is about to be defeated—a contingency that attracts considerable attention. Persian opinion has also shown great interest in Mr. Churchill's visit to America; while the dissolution of the Comintern, though treated by the politicians with some scepticism, has favourably impressed the younger generation and appears to have had a good effect on the religious classes.

General dissatisfaction with the present situation in Persia is growing among the politically-minded. These, while tending to look for a "strong man" to solve all difficulties, hope that they themselves may continue to carry on undisturbed in the old way. At the same time there is a belief that the forthcoming elections for the Majlis will be rigged by the present Deputies, while certain vested interests are afraid that a number of Communists may be elected.

In a long conversation with the counsellor of His Majesty's Legation, the Shah, while admitting that Soheili was not entirely satisfactory, gave it as his belief that it was not in the best interests of Persia to make a change of Government at the present juncture. In the event of an emergency, however, he had decided on appointing as Soheili's successor Ali Mansur, an ex-Minister whose relations with His Majesty's Legation in the past have been friendly and agreeable.

The Shah agreed that neither the closure of the Majlis nor its prolongation was desirable, and the only course was to have a general election this year. His Majesty said that he himself was in favour of reform, had no fears of the Left Party as long as they were not corrupted by foreign money, and even thought that a small representation in the Majlis of the Tudeh Party would be beneficial to Persian interests. The Shah also favoured the establishment of a Senate; but Mr. Holman tried to discourage this suggestion by pointing out that such a step would be regarded as reactionary and likely to obstruct legislation. On the other hand, he urged on the Shah the importance of the Prime Minister announcing a definite programme of reform. This would be the best form of attack on the trouble-makers, and the public would soon know where the real responsibility for obstruction lay.

THE FAR EAST.

On the 27th May the Japanese celebrated Navy Day, which is the anniversary of Togo's victory over the Russian Baltic Fleet in the Tsushima Straits in 1905. Radio Tokyo spoke of "the battle to clear the enemy from the home waters of Japan and Greater East Asia," while "authorities close to the Navy Ministry," adding up all claims so far made by Imperial Headquarters, gave grand totals of hostile warships alleged sunk since the outbreak of the Pacific war, including 13 battleships, 11 aircraft-carriers and 55 cruisers. Somewhat discordant with this impressive record was the absence of Japanese surface warships from the waters round Attu, where, as the Japanese public was being told, a small Japanese garrison was desperately holding out against superior American forces continually reinforced by sea. Those in charge of navy publicity seem to have realised the need for some explanation of the failure to prevent the American conquest of Attu, and Rear-Admiral Yano, Chief of the Naval Press Office at Imperial Headquarters, sounded a note of warning with a statement that the United States had "recovered from the heavy blows it suffered in the first months of the war" and now aimed at "snatching mastery of the Pacific air by advancing step by step, establishing air bases as they proceed" and then "challenging Japan to a decisive fight." He added that it was because the intensification of the air battles in the Pacific had been of such decisive importance that Admiral Yamamoto had involved himself personally in naval air operations and had thus met his death.

Yano's statement is significant both in its emphasis on the struggle for oceanic air supremacy and in its suggestion that Japan's task is now to resist a formidable American sea-air offensive. After so many victory fanfares, it is clearly a matter of some difficulty to prepare the Japanese public for possible losses of positions in the Pacific owing to the navy's unwillingness to risk pitched battles for their relief. On the other hand, it should be recognised that Japan's domestic propaganda task is in some respects easier than Germany's, for, whereas the German national memory under pressure of adverse events naturally tends to

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