

Dodecanese, these islands should be demilitarised and belong to a non-imperialist Power. The Foreign Minister has now explained to His Majesty's Ambassador that it was not the British, but the Persian, authorities who were hard on the Kashgai (see last *Summary*).

A report recently received summarises the economic and financial difficulties of Turkey. Thanks to the mobilisation of a million men, military expenditure has risen from £T. 169½ million in 1939-40 to £T. 450-500 million, double the country's entire pre-war budget, and in 1943-44 it may reach £T. 700 million. Ordinary expenditure has risen from £T. 169 million in 1932-33 to £T. 394 million, and extraordinary credits from £T. 16½ million to £T. 430 million. Rises in the fiduciary circulation, in the public debt and in the cost of living have followed inevitably. The note issue rose from £T. 297 million in 1938 to £T. 763 million in 1942, was reduced by the "tax on wealth" to £T. 697 million, but has already risen again to £T. 736 million. The public debt has doubled since 1939, rising from £T. 620 million to £T. 1,300 million, owing not only to military expenses, but also to railway construction, to the buying up of utilities and industrial and to other schemes which the Government has not seen fit to forgo. The cost of living has increased 300 per cent. during the war. The resultant problem is therefore serious. The Government's face remains set against foreign loans. Internal loans arouse no enthusiasm, and it may perhaps resort to some kind of forced loan. The other alternative, increased taxation, is of dubious value, since, owing to difficulties of collection in rural areas, it can practically be applied only to town dwellers, *i.e.*, to only about one-sixth of the population.

THE MIDDLE EAST.

A further attempt, apparently again without success, has been made by the Egyptian Opposition leaders to create a fusion of their parties, this time on the basis of the "independence" of Egypt, by which they imply the abstention by Great Britain from interfering in Egypt's internal affairs. Meanwhile the Palace, while avoiding open opposition to the Government, is trying to get rid of the Ministers of Education and Defence. The former is one of the ablest members of the present Cabinet, and should certainly not be sacrificed. The latter is old and in poor health, and would be no loss. But he has been a loyal supporter of the Alliance, and if he is to retire we shall see that it is done without humiliation.

Details have been received of a pleasing gesture of friendship that was made recently by a number of leading Egyptians, who, on the initiative of Amin Osman Pasha (now Minister of Finance) opened a subscription list to provide a token of appreciation to the 8th Army for their successful defence of Egypt. Part of the £E. 42,000 collected will be spent on providing a club at Gezira, Cairo, to be known as "Al Alamein Club," for the benefit of British and Allied troops, while £E. 5,000 has been allocated to the Red Cross, through Lady Killearn, for the provision of an officers' convalescent home in Tripoli. It is intended that the balance will ultimately be used for providing a permanent endowment fund to maintain a soldiers' home or holiday rest house in the United Kingdom. The opening ceremony was held on the 25th May in Cairo, and was attended by the Prime Minister, His Majesty's Ambassador, the Commander-in-chief, Middle East Forces, and many others, and was, in Lord Killearn's words, "a notable Anglo-Egyptian occasion."

The Times has reported that Makram Pasha Ebeid was expelled from Parliament on the 12th July after a stormy debate in the Chamber, which followed a condemnatory motion on his conduct, which was stated to be unconstitutional.

General Catroux, who arrived in Beirut on the 3rd July, seems to have made a sort of triumphal progress through the Levant States. Among many rumours concerning him was a report that he was trying to hold Hashem Atassi, former President of Syria, to a promise that he would put through a treaty with the French immediately after the elections, and that Shukri Quwatli and other leaders of the Nationalist party wanted to get rid of Atassi in consequence. As, however, Atassi did not finally stand for election, nothing much is likely to come of it, even if true. Another story was that Shukri was himself committed to a treaty with the French, but that he would repudiate it if he came into power. However this may be, it is extremely improbable that a French-controlled Parliament in Syria and Lebanon would succeed in making a treaty with the French. Not only is it contrary to the policy of the United Nations to allow such a treaty to be negotiated before the end of the war, but the French Committee of National

Liberation could hardly be regarded as entitled to conclude any agreement of this kind in the name of France.

As to the decrees that Dr. Tabet recently issued increasing the number of Christian deputies in the Lebanon and otherwise affecting the position of the Moslems, General Catroux is said to be re-examining the situation in the light of the extreme discontent of the Moslem minority. The belief is gaining ground in the Lebanon that the election may be indefinitely postponed until the French feel sure that their nominees will be returned.

In the meantime, we shall do our best to ensure the holding of the Lebanese elections as soon as possible after those in Syria, and to discourage rigging as far as possible. We shall, nevertheless, carefully avoid any suggestion to regard the election as a trial of strength between the French and ourselves, nor shall we accept any responsibility for rigging should it take place.

The primary election in Syria that took place on the 10th and 11th July was followed by no serious disorder, due possibly to the efforts of Shukri Quwatli, who assured His Majesty Chargé d'Affaires prior to the election that he had "arranged" everything beforehand. Even in the Alawite territory, where Shukri has little influence, there was no trouble, though there, even more than elsewhere, polling can hardly be said to have been conducted on democratic principles. By the 12th July the results had not been announced, nor had any group published its list of candidates or its programme. An anomalous position has thus been created by which the primary electors have elected secondary electors without knowing the names of candidates for whom the secondary electors will vote for the principles for which their nominees will stand.

Ibn Saud has replied to the message delivered him on the 12th June conveying the views of His Majesty's Government on his suspicions regarding Iraqi intrigues among the Shammar tribe (see *Summary* No. 193). He says that he has no wish to quarrel with Iraq, but he insists that there are many outstanding grievances against that country. He states that his subjects have been robbed in the regions of the Iraqi frontier; that the Iraqi Government has issued regulations in contravention of its treaties with him; that Saudi subjects in Iraq have been conscripted for the Iraqi army, and that they are compelled to adopt Iraqi nationality. All Ibn Saud's protests have been ignored. He believes that all this is owing to "Hashimite intrigue," and that the "Hashimites" are trying to gain possession of Palestine and Syria in order later to "destroy him" when the occasion offers. He begs His Majesty's Government to help to solve all the difficulties between himself and Iraq. If it were not for his anxiety to avoid causing embarrassment to His Majesty's Government, and if the matter were a matter purely for himself to settle he would be inclined to settle it by force.

Ibn Saud seems to be obsessed with the idea of Hashimite intrigue and Iraqi hostility towards his country. There is little or no evidence to support any of his former suspicions. To his previous complaints he has now added two fresh allegations—conscription of Saudi subjects, and compulsory adoption of Iraqi nationality—which are being investigated by His Majesty's Embassy in Bagdad.

Saleh Jabr, the Iraqi Minister of the Interior, gave His Majesty's Embassy rather a shock on the 3rd July by suddenly releasing fifty-six persons from the internment camp at Amara. Of the total it appears that thirty are of no real importance, and twenty-two others might in any case have been released in due course. Of the remaining four, three are undesirables married to German wives, and one, Zaki Kadhim, an ex-sergeant of the Iraqi army, is known to be a dangerous character. Unfortunately Nuri Pasha was still unwell at the time of the release, and was not consulted in the matter, except possibly on the general issue. He left Bagdad a few days later for a change in Syria; but before leaving he admitted to Mr. Thompson that Kadhim should not have been released from internment, and agreed that the other three should be placed under police supervision. Orders were later given for Kadhim to be sent away from Bagdad to some provincial locality where he would be strictly watched; and an assurance was added that he would be reinterned at the slightest sign of further trouble.

The Persian Government is toying with the idea of playing a more active part in the war. On the 5th July His Majesty's Minister was summoned, together with the United States Minister and the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires, to the office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, where they found the latter, together with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs read out a document expressing the desire of certain Persian Ministers that Persia should adhere to the declaration of the

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