

Foreign Ministry are discredited, and in spite of more bribes such as educational facilities—doubtless on approved Fascist lines—and of indemnities for the families of men killed in fighting “Communists,” opinion is evidently turning more and more against the Italians. Early in June the lieutenant-general set out on a tour of inspection, beginning with a visit to Kosovo.

The reorganisation of the Greek forces in the Middle East continues. Most of the officers responsible for the trouble which occurred in the army last winter have now been removed, and at the end of the last month the Greek Minister of War inspected the Greek brigades in Syria and the Greek training centre in Palestine. The King of the Hellenes, accompanied by the Minister of Marine, also paid an informal visit to the Greek fleet, the successful activities of whose submarines have again been recorded in the press. Greeks of the 1945 class in Egypt have been called up.

In Greece itself Axis propaganda seems unable to find a better ground of appeal than the Bolshevik bogey. It takes credit for recent or expected supplies of sugar, potatoes and some other much-needed food obtained mainly by the International Red Cross. According to press reports, not only officers but also their families have been taken to Italy as hostages, part of the population of the islands and of the seaboard has been evacuated, small vessels have been requisitioned to prevent escape, and Crete has been particularly heavily fortified.

For reasons best known to themselves the Turkish Government have, for the moment at any rate, assumed a somewhat off-hand attitude towards the Allies. Foreign correspondents are impressed by the volume of Allied supplies now entering Turkey via the ports of Mersin and Iskenderon (Alexandretta) in accordance with the scheme of defensive re-armament agreed on at Adana, but the Turks, after receiving the first two of the five steamers which we promised for the carriage of these munitions, have used them for ordinary coastal traffic and have deviated two Turkish colliers to carry chrome for Germany. In the matter of the “tax on wealth,” too, the Turks’ attitude, which had tended towards reason, has stiffened perceptibly of late, and they seem little disposed to suspend action in further cases of the arbitrary and exaggerated assessment of British concerns. At the same time, however, having, for example, only two days’ supply of wheat in Istanbul, they have no scruple in pressing us to hasten our promised supplies of grain.

THE MIDDLE EAST.

Mr. James Baxter, late Financial Adviser to the Government of Burma, and at one time Financial Secretary to the Egyptian Ministry of Finance, has accepted an appointment under the Egyptian Government as expert on financial and economic affairs. The announcement has given rise to anti-British and anti-Government propaganda on the part of the Opposition, who make out that Mr. Baxter’s appointment is the price paid for our support of Nahas, and, moreover, indicates a return to the days of the Protectorate when British advisers were still appointed to certain Ministries.

Amin Osman Pasha (see *Summary* No. 192) has made a good beginning in the Ministry of Finance, where the inefficiency and inertia of the former Minister had become intolerable both to officials and to the general public. Nahas Pasha himself has been absent on a visit to Palestine. This was generally believed to be connected with his alleged claim to leadership of the Arab world, to strengthen which it was said that he proposed also to proceed to the Levant States. Nahas, however, has himself informed Lord Killearn that his visit had no political intent.

His Majesty’s Minister at Jedda has been instructed to inform the Amir Feisal that there is no evidence whatever to support Ibn Saud’s suspicions of an Iraqi intrigue against him among the Shammar tribe. Certain people may possibly have tried, for their own purposes, to stir up trouble, but it is clear that there is nothing to support the theory of any organised plot. His Majesty’s Government are naturally anxious that relations between Saudi Arabia and Iraq should not deteriorate, and it is therefore most important at this juncture that Ibn Saud should not attribute sinister designs to the Iraqi Government on inadequate evidence.

In *Summary* No. 191 reference was made to the annoyance expressed by Ibn Saud with Nahas and Nuri over their attempt, as he believed, to arrange a conference to discuss Arab unity without first consulting him. Ibn Saud’s written statement on the subject has now been received. It is much more explicit

than the original verbal message. He thinks that the proposed conference will certainly fail, whether he himself takes part in it or not, believing that Nuri or some other speaker will try to please the Arabs by adopting an anti-British attitude. If this occurred, Ibn Saud could neither applaud, nor listen in silence, nor indulge in arguments. Though he welcomes any sincere efforts to bring about Arab unity, and “places his trust in God and in His Majesty’s Government,” he fears that at any such conference the questions of Syria and Palestine would inevitably crop up. This would place him in an embarrassing position, and he wishes to call the special attention of His Majesty’s Government to such a contingency. Further, he believes that the numerous small but important matters that are still outstanding between him and Iraq should be settled first; he cannot co-operate with Nuri in questions of such complexity as would arise at an Arab conference unless Nuri is first willing to come to an amicable settlement over these minor difficulties. From all this it is evident that Ibn Saud will not take part in an Arab conference, if and when held, unless a definite lead is given by His Majesty’s Government, all outstanding disputes between himself and Iraq are first settled and, finally, unless Nahas and Nuri are able in some way to smooth his ruffled feathers.

The question of Arab unity and some of the personalities interested in it was recently mentioned in a message by *Transocean*, which quoted a report from Paul Schmitz, their correspondent at Angora. After commenting on the proposals of Nahas and the Amir Abdullah, both of which had come to nothing, Schmitz said that Nuri’s plan for uniting Iraq and Syria was again in the forefront of Arab politics. But he added, not without some foresight: “Although the idea of Arab union has many keen supporters in the Arab world, dynastic, economic and cultural differences, intrigues of ambitious politicians and finally the geographical situation in the Near East, where the populated areas are divided from each other by vast desert stretches,” render such a union impracticable. It is not only *Transocean* which sees some of the difficulties in the way of Arab unity. The Syrian journal *Echos de Syrie* published an article on the 22nd May entitled “Syrian First,” asserting that it would be a mistake for Syrians to become “Egyptophil” or “Iraqophil” rather than Syrian. The first task was to set in order their relations with their immediate neighbours. The effect of larger combinations at the present time would be to relegate Syria to a position of secondary importance.

Preparations for the election in Syria are now nearing a conclusion. Electoral lists have been posted throughout the country except in Aleppo, where they will probably appear this week, and the actual date of the election may be shortly expected. M. Helleu has informed Dr. Tabet, the head of the Lebanese State, that General Catroux wishes the elections in both States to be held early in July, and Dr. Tabet has accordingly agreed to announce on the 25th June that the Lebanese election will take place about the 10th July. The economic situation in the Levant States seems to be slightly improving. The price of gold still tends to rise, and prices remain very high, but the inflationary crisis recently threatened has, it is believed, been temporarily arrested.

It is reported from Palestine that the Allied victory in Tunisia and the successful bombing of important targets in Germany and Italy have done much to restore British prestige among the Arab community. It is said, too, that Rashid Haj Ibrahim, in response to the wishes of his adherents, has given up the idea of forming a political body in Palestine, and has also abandoned his proposal to convene an Arab conference. Though there are no signs of co-operation at present between the Defence Party, led by Ragheb Bey Nashashibi, and any other political body, Ragheb and Rashid seem to have at least one point in common, namely, that of supporting the British war effort. By so doing, they both believe that in due course the Arabs will be in a better position to demand favourable treatment for Palestine and thus attain their national aspirations.

Mr. Shertok, head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency in Palestine, is said to have stated recently that anti-Semitism was more deeply rooted in the United States than in England. He thought, moreover that in England people were better informed on the history and background of the Palestine problem, and merely wanted to learn more of recent developments. In America, on the other hand, the general public seemed to know nothing about the fundamentals of the problem, and more publicity was required there in the interests of Zionism.

Nuri Pasha has been contemplating certain changes in his Cabinet, and now that the Iraqi Parliament, which was dissolved on the 9th June, is no longer sitting, it is possible that he may proceed with his proposals, which, however,