

One result of the speech was to quieten, for the moment, the "Pacific First" campaign which has run high of late. It effectively answered the fear, frequently but not always sincerely expressed, that if the war in Europe ended before that against Japan the British would sit back and let the Americans do everything. It answered also the quite honest anxiety lest the full gravity and danger of the Pacific war might not be realised, by its revelation that the major part of the United States forces is now deployed against Japan. This was certainly news for the general public; it was confirmed two days later by the President, who told his press conference that it applied to both military and naval forces, while the air forces were about equally divided between the Eastern and the Western theatres. Other points among the many which were appreciatively referred to by press and radio commentators were the hope for a meeting which should include Marshal Stalin and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek; the reference to the air war, especially against Japan; the insistence that everything possible must be done to take more of the weight off Russia in 1943.

In spite of the absence of news of military interest, Russian affairs continue, in one way or another, to claim a notable share of public attention. The recollection that Eastern Siberia might provide bases from which Japan could be effectively bombed is never far from the thoughts of military and political commentators. It was naturally brought to mind, by the operation against Attu, where Japanese resistance, and the perhaps stiffer difficulties of climatic conditions, appear to be being gradually overcome. It was revived by the phrase in Mr. Churchill's speech in which he spoke of the duty of overcoming the military, geographical and political difficulties which hinder the process of laying in ashes the cities and other munition centres of Japan. It found a place in conjecture as to the contents of the letter from the President which was carried to Marshal Stalin by Mr. Joseph Davies. No information has been vouchsafed as to the real contents of this letter. It was duly delivered on the 20th May; and a press despatch from Moscow reported that "it had been a great success." It is certain, at least, that Mr. Davies has received a remarkable welcome from the Soviet Government, and that his visit has been the occasion for a demonstration of solidarity with the English-speaking democracies.

The abolition of the Comintern aroused keen interest. According to one paper, the heads of the American Communist Party were stunned. But Mr. Earl Browder, its definitely undynamic leader, asserted that its position was unaffected, since it had already severed its connexion with the Comintern in 1940. This was true so far as it went; but no one doubts that the Party has continued to look to Moscow for guidance, as was shown by its almost comical *volte-face* when Hitler attacked the U.S.S.R. It seems unlikely that there will be any early change in the relations between organised labour and the Communist Party. This aspect of the event occupied, however, a small place in press and radio comment, the first reaction of which was to greet the change with enthusiasm, seeing it as intended to remove an obstacle to the unity and mutual confidence of the United Nations. Mr. Johnston, President of the United States Chamber of Commerce, said it was the most heartening news since Stalingrad. After twenty-four hours' reflexion the note became more cautious; the anti-Soviet papers were asserting that no words of Moscow could be trusted, while the *New York Times* said that the action would remove many suspicions, but that its real effect would only be shown by practical results. Mr. Dies, however, is reported to have said that his committee might now close down; if this is true, it seems to admit the charge so often brought against him that in investigating "un-American activities" he looked only upon the left hand and did nothing against the pro-Fascist groups. Mr. John Gunther and Mr. William Shirer, specialists in what is known as psychological warfare, considered it a supreme example of that art. No one believed the German story that it was done in obedience to the President's letter; but many thought that the desire to improve relations with the United States had been an important factor in the decision. It has now received the official blessing of Mr. Cordell Hull.

The Food Conference at Hot Springs, Virginia, opened on the 18th May in an atmosphere vitiated by the long wrangle about the exclusion of the press, which has given an ideal target to the papers which always oppose co-operation with other countries, and has discouraged those which normally would have wished it well. In contrast to the Bermuda meeting, no Congressmen are included in the United States delegation. Various Congressmen are taking close and critical interest in the question, notably Representative Bradley (Republican of Michigan); who has visited Hot Springs already. There has not yet been time for this unfavourable start to be counterbalanced by any clear sign of effective

work, and many delegates have seemed to be uncertain as to the scope of the agenda and, in particular, as to the admission or exclusion of questions concerning the immediate needs of the participating countries. Some at least appear to be finding it difficult to treat separately immediate, short-term and long-term requirements. However, Mr. Marvin Jones announced on the 24th May, in terms that sound strangely familiar, that a satisfactory formula to govern this point has been worked out with the help of the French Delegation. Meanwhile, the committees of the conference have been meeting, and it may be hoped that the results of their labours will show that practical work is being done. The Executive Committee, which consists of eleven members, including the United Kingdom, Canada and India, has, at the suggestion of the United Kingdom Delegation, invited the Economic and Health Sections of the League Secretariat, and the International Labour Office, to send in any written material bearing on its agenda—a somewhat belated recognition of the work on nutrition done by the League in the years before the war. In accordance with the agreement between the British and United States Delegations at the Bermuda Conference on Refugees to give no publicity to its results without prior accord, the State Department issued a statement on the subject on the 19th May, simultaneously with that made in Parliament by Mr. Eden. The wording of the Washington statement, that "the two Governments are at present engaged in carrying out the recommendations" submitted by the two delegations, is presumably equivalent in meaning to the more explicit declaration of Mr. Eden that the report, the recommendations it contains, and the steps proposed to carry them out, have been approved by the War Cabinet.

An uneasy truce continues in the coal-mines. Strikes in the Chrysler factories and amongst rubber workers in Akron have marked the general dissatisfaction of the workers with what they consider the inadequate action of the War Labour Board in the face of the increase in living costs. The loss of output through strikes of this sort, which may only last a day or two, may not be great, but in view of the generally admirable record of Labour since Pearl Harbour their significance cannot be overlooked. Meanwhile Mr. Lewis has sprung a fresh surprise by applying to the A.F. of L. to receive him and his United Mine Workers back into its fold, which he quitted a few years ago and has treated with contumely ever since. This action appears on the surface to put the A.F.L., which is still in negotiation with the C.I.O. with a view to reuniting the two bodies, into a very strong diplomatic position. Mr. Lewis has powerful support within its ranks, but his application puts the A.F. of L. in an awkward predicament, for, while his friends among the Federation's leaders (Woll, Hutcheson and Dubinsky) think they can hold him in leash, William Green, the president, who is 70 years old, must know that once Lewis is admitted his own days are numbered. Many observers believe that Lewis would not have made his application unless he had already been sure of the result, and connect his action with the "combination" which he was believed to have worked out with Mr. Hutcheson of the Carpenters' Union to promote a Republican victory next year, and thereafter to dominate both the A.F.L. and the Department of Labour (see *Summary*, the 14th April). In any case, the result is likely to be an increase in pressure on the War Labour Board; the A.F.L., which is represented on the Board, is already backing Mr. Lewis's attacks upon it. On the other hand, the A.F.L., like the C.I.O., maintains its "no-strike" pledge, and Mr. Lewis would presumably be asked to reaffirm the pledge which he also gave, but which he has since declared he no longer regards as binding.

#### LATIN AMERICA.

There have of late been several signs of the concern which a number of Argentines feel at the possible consequences of Argentine neutrality, and the relative isolation of their country in the Americas. The end of the campaign in North Africa appears to have had an effect on the Government, which has always tended to be on the side of the "big battalions," and is now coming to the conclusion that the "big battalions" are on the side of the angels. No drastic change in policy is, perhaps, to be expected. Sr. Ruiz Guinazú, however, is said to have been gratified by the reactions to his anti-Axis May Day speech (see *Summary* No. 188); and it is of interest that President Castillo, instigated by evidence which has been brought to his notice of our discontent with the situation in regard to Axis espionage and Axis radio communications, is said to have instructed the Minister of the Interior to re-examine this whole question.