

governing member. They wished to collaborate closely with the British authorities and to seek an undertaking with the Arabs. One of the moderates, Mr. Shamosch, lecturer in Arabic at the Hebrew University, is reported to have recently visited Syria, where he met some of the Arab leaders, and complained to them of the extremist views held by Jews in Palestine. He advised the Jewish community in Syria to have nothing to do with Zionism, but to co-operate with the Arab nationalists, and play their part as loyal subjects of Syria in the political and economic development of that country.

The food situation in Saudi Arabia was fully discussed at the recent conference in Cairo held under the auspices of the M.E.S.C., with special reference to the Eastern territory of that State. It was agreed to send Saudi Arabia 15,000 tons of wheat held in store at Bahrein, and a further 2,000 tons before the end of May. This should be sufficient to meet the present emergency, and it was hoped to send further consignments to cover the second half of the year. In the opinion of His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Jedda, a serious situation can only be averted if immediate steps are taken in accordance with the decisions passed at the Cairo Conference.

The situation seems to be even more serious in the Aden Protectorate, where, owing to the failure of the early rains, the people are actually threatened with famine. The food shortage is acute, and deaths from starvation have already been reported. In some places cattle are being killed owing to the lack of fodder. Hunger may easily lead to tribal raiding and disturbances, and the Governor of Aden has asked His Majesty's Government for financial assistance to enable him to buy grain at once if famine is to be averted in the Protectorate.

The Iraqi press contains long articles extolling the Allied victory in Tunisia. The Persian press, too, has commented favourably on the end of the campaign in North Africa, which it tends to regard as the foundation of ultimate victory, some papers even suggesting that the Axis may be defeated before the year is over.

The court of enquiry, which sat on the case of the Indian officer responsible for the shooting of five Persian wire-stealers (see *Summary* No. 185), found that his action was justified, and exonerated him from all blame. This information has been conveyed to the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs, who had stated that the killing was quite unjustified, demanded the punishment of the guilty and asked for the payment of blood-money. His Majesty's Minister has also informed the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs that six further cases of wire-stealing have occurred since the incident in question. He has suggested that, as the Persian authorities have failed to take any effective action, the Persian Government should impress on all those concerned the importance of their responsibilities in this regard, and should warn the public of the risks entailed by stealing property belonging to the British military authorities.

THE FAR EAST.

Japanese propaganda shows notable inconsistency in the use which it is trying to make out of the Prime Minister's speech in Congress (dealt with below under "The United States"). It represents the speech as a British diplomatic triumph over America, all of whose resources are, to quote Hori, the Tokyo spokesman, being "skilfully sacrificed for the maintenance of the British Empire." This is in palpable conflict with Tokyo's previous line of argument, which was that the British Empire is in process of being swallowed up by the United States. Meanwhile, there have been two prominent features in Japanese-Axis broadcasts during the past week which are probably not unconnected with the references made by Mr. Churchill to the future of bombing Japanese cities and military centres. The first is the revival of the Siberian bases issue. Tokyo Radio—as quoted by the Germans—has threatened that if Moscow puts Siberian airfields at Great Britain's and America's disposal, the result will be a "lightning attack" by Japan on Russia; Hori, with more discretion, refused to be drawn on the subject and threw doubt on the report of American demands for Siberian bases having been carried to Moscow by Mr. Davies. The second has to do with the use of poison gas against Japanese cities. "Free India Radio" has circulated the story that the military experts now gathered in Washington had proposed the employment of gas in order to undermine Japanese morale. At the same time Tokyo announced that gas had actually been used by the Americans landing on Attu. This allegation was promptly denounced by Washington as a lie, and, it may be added, a poor one at that, since the use of gas is peculiarly unsuited to climatic conditions in Attu, which has been well described in another Japanese

broadcast as "a monotonous expanse of snow, rocks, lava and fog." The struggle for possession of the island is apparently still going on at the time of writing, and under exceptionally bitter conditions; but the Japanese garrison has been driven into a corner and the airfield, the sole object of strategic importance, is in American hands.

Chinese comment on Mr. Churchill's speech fastened with satisfaction on the phrase: "I regard the bringing of effective and immediate aid to China as one of the most urgent of our common tasks." This succeeded the Prime Minister's remark that one of the means of bringing aid to the Chinese lay with the forces marshalled by Great Britain on the eastern frontiers of India. "The speech," said the *Central Daily News*, "was the strongest made on the Asiatic theatre of war since the beginning of the year, and indicated that the war has entered a new stage."

In their own sector of the war the Chinese have suffered something of a blow in the capture by the Japanese of an army commander, General Pang Ping-hsun, who was concurrently chairman of the Hopei Provincial Government, now in exile in Honan. The Japanese assert that General Pang, after surrendering with 70,000 men, transferred his allegiance to Nanking (as they allege several other of Chungking's commanders to have recently done); the Chinese, while admitting his capture, say that General Pang had with him only the remnants of his personal bodyguard, who had fought till most of them had been killed and Pang himself wounded. Where the truth between the two versions lies it is impossible to say; the claim now persistently made by the Japanese that Chinese morale is crumbling lacks support from independent sources of information, but the possibility of its containing an element of truth cannot be ruled altogether out of account.

Japan, on her side, has lost a most eminent commander in the person of Admiral Yamamoto, the Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Japanese Fleet, who is officially stated to have met his death in an aircraft fight. He has been given the highest posthumous honours. His successor is Admiral Koga, who lately held the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Fleet in China Waters, and has been Commander-in-Chief at Yokosuka Naval Station since October 1942.

The Vichy authorities, yielding to Japanese pressure, concluded on the 18th May the long-delayed agreement giving up in favour of the Nanking régime France's Concession and Settlement rights in China. They have thereby incurred the disfavour of the Chungking Government, who have protested against this illegal action and retaliated by declaring as no longer binding the treaty provisions granting to France extra-territorial rights. It seems, however, that M. Paul-Boncour's position as French representative in Chungking will not necessarily be affected. His position is distinctly anomalous, but for the present it suits the convenience of all parties, except perhaps the Japanese; incidentally, he is in a position to perform a useful function as a liaison between the Chungking and French Indo-China authorities when tension becomes acute.

A new cultural link between India and China is being formed by arrangements which are now in hand for the exchange of university professors and students, the fruit of the recent visit to India of an educational mission led by the Vice-Minister of Education. Meanwhile the work of the British professors who are now touring the Chinese universities and lecturing under the auspices of the British Council is proving of great value and will, it is hoped, lead to further steps for strengthening the cultural bonds between China and this country.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

The Prime Minister's speech to the joint session of Congress on the 19th May was the high light of an eventful week. There is no doubt that it was an outstanding success, and Washington correspondents have reported that its good effects were confirmed in his subsequent meeting with the Foreign Affairs Committees of both Houses. There are, of course, some Congressmen whose acceptance of the ideal of the "fraternal association of the two peoples" is already complete; there are others who reject it and are not likely to be converted. But its effect is likely to have been considerable on the many members of that audience (which differed considerably from the previous Congress which Mr. Churchill addressed in December, 1941) whose feelings on the subject have not yet crystallised.

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