



PRESS RELEASE

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Visit of the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister
and the Finance Minister of France

At the invitation of the Government of Canada Mr. René Mayer, President of the Council of Ministers of France, Mr. Georges Bidault, Foreign Minister, and Mr. Maurice Bourguès-Maunoury, Minister of Finance, will visit Ottawa at the end of this week. The following programme has been arranged.

Sunday, March 29

12 noon - Arrival at Rockcliffe airport aboard special R.C.A.F. aircraft.

Welcomed by the Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers and senior officials.

Review of guard of honour by Mr. Mayer.

1.15 p.m. - Informal lunch at Prime Minister's residence.

7.45 p.m. - Dinner at French Embassy.

added - 9.30 p.m. - Informal reception at French Embassy.

Monday, March 30

10.30 a.m. - The Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Veterans Affairs will receive the Prime Minister of France at the National War Memorial.

Mr. Mayer will lay a wreath and inspect the guard of honour and talk with war veterans.

11.00 a.m. - Call on Prime Minister of Canada and upon the Secretary (or Acting Secretary) of State for External Affairs.

1.00 p.m. - Lunch at Government House.

3.30 p.m. - Call on the Ministers of Defence Production and Finance.

6.00 p.m. - Press Conference at French Embassy.

added - 8.00 p.m. - Canadian Government dinner at Country Club. *bevan*

Tuesday, March 31

9.00 a.m. - Departure from Rockcliffe airport aboard special R.C.A.F. aircraft. *not*

BIOGRAPHY OF RENE MAYER

PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

René Mayer was born in Paris on May 4, 1895. He holds degrees in arts and law from the University of Paris. After serving in the First World War he became Master of Requests in the "Conseil d'Etat", France's highest administrative court. He resigned in 1928 to devote himself to the management of large business enterprises on the national as well as the private level. In 1930 he was asked by Premier André Tardieu to conduct negotiations with the German "Reinisch Westphaelishes Kohlensyndikat", with which he signed the Essen agreement regulating the importation of Ruhr coal into France.

Mobilized in 1939, M. Mayer became head of the London Mission of the Ministry of Armaments. In 1943 he was appointed Commissioner for Communications and the Merchant Marine in the French Committee of National Liberation in Algiers, which later became the Provisional Government of the French Republic. Upon the latter's return to Paris, M. Mayer was appointed Minister of Public Works and Transportation in the first Government of liberated France. He was named General Commissioner for German Affairs in December 1945, a post which he held until July 16, 1946.

M. Mayer was elected to the Second Constituent Assembly in June 1946 and was re-elected to the National Assembly on November 10, 1946 and on June 17, 1951.

As Vice-President of the Radical Socialist Group in the Assembly he became Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs in the first Schuman Cabinet (November 1947-July 1948) and was the author of a plan for economic and financial reorganization which was approved by the Assembly in December 1947. He was Minister of National Defence in André Marie's Cabinet (July 1948) and in the second Schuman Cabinet (September 1948). He was Minister of Justice in the Government formed by Georges Bidault in October 1949 and in the first Plevén Cabinet of July 1950. As Vice-Premier and Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs in the Cabinet constituted by René Plevén on August 11, 1951, he coordinated the departments of Finance, Economic Affairs, Commerce, Industry, Agriculture and Reconstruction.

M. Mayer represented France in the United Nations Preparatory Commission and in the United Nations General Assembly in 1947. As a member of the French Foreign Affairs Committee in July 1949 he was in charge of drawing up the report which recommended to the French National Assembly approval of the Atlantic Pact. Within the Radical Socialist Party he opposed the position adopted by Edouard Herriot and Edouard Daladier, and favoured ratification of the European Defence Treaty with the addition of certain supplementary provisions.

M. Mayer became Prime Minister of France on January 8, 1953. He is Commander of the French Legion of Honour and holds the Croix de Guerre for distinguished service in World War I.

BIOGRAPHY OF GEORGES BIDAULT

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Georges Bidault was born in Moulins (Allier) on October 5, 1899. He was mobilized in 1918. After his discharge from the army he continued his studies and, in 1925, placed first in the history "concours d'agrégation", the competitive state examination for admission to the teaching staffs of the "lycées" and universities. During his student years he participated actively in the movement known as "Catholic Action", working especially with groups of young people.

After passing his examination, he became professor of history in Paris. At the same time, he was active in the Christian Democratic Party and became an editorial writer for its daily organ, l'Aube. He vigorously opposed the Munich Pact in 1938.

M. Bidault enlisted in 1939, served as an infantry sergeant, and was taken prisoner by the Germans. Released a year later, he resumed teaching, this time in Lyon. There he immediately joined the Resistance, giving anti-Nazi lectures to his students, publishing a clandestine newspaper, helping to organize the movement "Combat", and acting as liaison agent between the Resistance in France and Fighting France headquarters in London.

In 1943 M. Bidault was elected President of the National Council of the Resistance, and succeeded in uniting the various elements of the Resistance and in formulating a common program.

Appointed Foreign Minister of the Provisional Government by General de Gaulle on September 9, 1944, Georges Bidault represented France at the United Nations San Francisco, London and New York Conferences and at the Foreign Ministers' Conferences held in London, Paris, New York and Moscow.

Elected President of the Provisional Government by the Constituent Assembly on June 19, 1946, M. Bidault resigned on November 18 after the election of the first National Assembly under the Constitution of the Fourth Republic. He continued to serve as Foreign Minister from September 9, 1944 to July 19, 1948. He initiated the rapprochement between France and Germany by vigorously defending before the French Parliament, and leading it to adopt the agreements on Germany of June 1948, on which the policy of European unification is based.

Georges Bidault headed the French delegation to UNESCO in September 1948. A delegate to the Strasbourg European Assembly in September 1949, he became President of its Political Commission.

In May 1949 he became President of the MRP (Popular Republican Movement).

He served as President of the Council of Ministers (Premier) from October 27, 1949 to June 24, 1950, and as Vice-Premier in Henri Queuille's Cabinet March 10 to July 10, 1951.

M. Bidault was Vice-Premier and Minister of National Defence in the Cabinet constituted by René Pleven on August 11, 1951. In this post he coordinated the work of the Departments of War, the Navy and the Air Force. He was also given unusually broad powers in the entire rearmament and security fields and replaced the Foreign Minister in all matters connected with the Atlantic Pact and at all international conferences dealing with the defence of France.

On January 8, 1953, M. René Mayer formed a new government in which M. Georges Bidault again took the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs.

M. MAURICE BOURGÈS-MAUNOURY

MINISTER OF FINANCE

M. Maurice Bourgès-Maunoury was born on August 19, 1914. After studying at the Ecole Polytechnique he graduated in Law and Political Science. At the beginning of the War he was an artillery Lieutenant in charge of a battery until taken a prisoner in June 1940.

In 1941 M. Maurice Bourgès-Maunoury was repatriated and began preparation for the examination as an Inspector of Finance. At the same time he joined the Resistance and about the end of 1942 escaped from France via the Pyrenees with the intention of joining the Free French Forces. He was taken prisoner in Spain but managed to escape and reached London at the beginning of 1943.

In September 1943 M. Bourgès-Maunoury returned to France on a secret air mission. He became the Military Delegate for the Rhone-Alpes region and later the National Military Delegate in the Resistance. He returned to London by clandestine air service in April 1944 to report on the results obtained inside France with a view to co-ordination with the pending Allied invasion. He was parachuted back into France on the night of June 6 or 7 as Military Delegate for the southern zone.

After the liberation of Lyon he tried to reach still occupied Paris but was taken prisoner. He was liberated a few days later by members of the Resistance. In October 1944 he was appointed Deputy Chief of the Army Chief of Staff where he remained until June, 1945. At that time he was appointed Regional Commissioner of the French Republic at Bordeaux. Elected a member of the first Legislative Assembly in November 1946, he was re-elected in June 1951.

Secretary of State for the Budget in the first Schuman government in November 1947, M. Bourgès-Maunoury has been successively Secretary of State for Air, Secretary of State for War, Minister of Public Works and Deputy Minister of National Defence. He is, at present, Minister of Finance in the cabinet of René Mayer. He holds the following decorations: Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, Cross of the Liberation and Croix de Guerre with several palms.