THE WAR-WEEK—Commentary on Current Events

Britain Scorns Hitler Peace; "Die Cast", Declares Berlin

Adolf Hitler's failure last week to induce Britain to accept his "final" peace offer left him with but one alternative — to make good his threat to "annihilate" England, at whatever cost to Germany.

But as the zero hour approached, in the war's forty-fifth week, it was still a matter of guesswork how Hitler would go about breaking the power of Britain. Would he attempt it through a wholesale invasion of the British Isles? Or would he try to bring the country to its knees by pulverizing it with mass air attacks, at the same time imposing a starvation blockade by destruction of British shipping?

DOUBLE-HEADER ASSAULT

Would the attack on Britain be coupled with a simultaneous blow in the Mediterranean? Many experts last week expressed that belief. The Battle of Britain could not be a simple, straightforward affair. The conflict would have to be divided into two interlocking phases—the direct German assault on England, and the Battle of the Mediterranean (Mussolini's affair) — for from the Axis standpoint, Britain's hold on the Mediterranean would have to be broken before victory could be achieved.

One factor during the week was seen as likely to postpone the new German offensive for the time being, and that was the situation in the Balkans. Russia's thrusting of a finger into the Rumanian political pot at a moment so inopportune to Germany might be causing Hitler serious worry and giving him occasion for pause.

THE ANSWER

BRITAIN: Britain's answer to Hitler's "last chance" peace proposal came promptly, in the deeds of British air forces blasting anew at German targets; in the staggering new war budget which demanded that Britain give up almost 70 per cent of the national income to finance the war; and in the words of Viscount Halifax, British Foreign Minister, reaffirming the will to fight on.

During the week, the Government announced its formal recognition of the Czecho-Slovak National Committee in Exile, headed by former Czech President Dr. Eduard Benes, as the legal government of the German-held nation ..... Prime Minister Churchill told the House of Commons that he did not believe in the exodus of children to Canada and the United States; he thought the movement entirely unwarranted . . . the Admiralty announced the loss of the famous submarine "Salmon" (which sighted the "Bremen" last December) . . . German air attacks covered practically the whole island, ranging from Scotland to the Channel and from the North Sea to the Irish Sea. Aircraft and munitions factories were bombed, railroads and other communications, troop concentrations, coastal defense works, port facilities . . .

TO GERMANY VIA SPAIN

SPAIN: Britain's second biggest worry of the week, next to actual invasion, was the Spanish situation. General Franco had just finished declaring that it was his duty to fulfill the desire of Queen Isabella and return Gibraltar to Spain, and that he had an army of 2,000,000 men ready to back up his contention. It was anticipated that he would make a move against the Rock, aided by German guns across the Bay from Gibraltar (which had been there since the time of the Spanish Civil War) . . . American citizens returning on the liner "Manhattan" reported German soldiers overrunning Spain.

SPAIN AND THE AXIS

By last week everybody knew that Germany was getting oil supplies from the western hemisphere via Spain. The moment appeared to be at hand when Britain would have to clamp down with a blockade through which Spain would be permitted to receive only such imports as are not classified as contraband. Such a move, necessary since British victory depends to a great extent on the ability to prevent Germany from receiving essential supplies from the western world, might draw Spain into the war on the side of the Axis powers.

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FRANCE: The Fascist regime of Marshal Henri Philippe Petain last week ordered the arrest and trial of former high French Government leaders, including ex-Premier Edouard Daladier, because of their roles in "declaring and continuing the war" against Germany. The trial will be part of a new "domestic moral purge" of France by Petain's new authoritarian regime. At the same time all Frenchmen, including Daladier, who fled from France after May 10, were ordered deprived of citizenship, their property and fortunes to be confiscated . . .

DOESN'T FEAR GERMANY

RUSSIA: Comforting word came from Moscow last week. Through diplomatic channels Josef V. Stalin informed Great Britain that Russia will keep out of the European war and sees no reason to fear German domination of Europe, reliable sources disclosed. The Russian leader was reported to have said that the possibility of German domination of Europe presented no problem for Russia, because he refused to believe it would come about.

According to indications, last week Russia was following up the incorporation of the three Baltic States (Lithuania, Latvia and Esthonia) into the Soviet Union with efforts to arrive at further clarification of her relations with Finland . . . Better feeling between Russia and Turkey was evidenced when the Turkish press made a clear-cut proposal for an alliance with Russia . . .

TOWARD THE AXIS

BALKANS: A pro-Axis trend among the small countries of southeastern Europe was evident in many quarters last week. Rumania, which had been going more and more pro-Nazi for some time past, moved to confiscate the largest British oil company in Rumania; sent some of its chief ministers to confer with Ribbentrop on Balkan politics. To Berlin went Bulgarian government representatives, hoping to gain back the Dobruja from Rumania with the blessing of Hitler. Hungary appeared to think that Germany would shortly help her get part of Transylvania from Rumania. Would Germany seek to "strengthen" the Balkans by a peaceful settlement now, of these revisionist claims?

Curiously enough, the only country which seemed ready to support Rumania against the claims of Hungary was Soviet Russia . . . In the Rumanian capital, Russian quarters indicated they felt the Soviet had become a Balkan power since acquisition of Bessarabia and therefore expected to be consulted on further political or economic plans involving Balkan countries; while rumors ran that Russia had sent a note to Rumania stressing the desirability of a "popular government" at Bucharest. . . .

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CHINA WON'T QUIT

FAR EAST: The closing of the Burma Road and the Hong Kong route into China left Chiang-kai-shek's Central Chinese government with but one hope of securing supplies from the outside world—over the Old Silk Road threading up through the inaccessible, unknown Northwest into Russia. Nevertheless, undaunted, Generalissimo Chiang declared that the far eastern war would not be shortened by the closing-off of those two important arteries. "No third power can shake China's determination to resist until her territorial and sovereign integrity is attained," Chiang asserted.

SHARING THE WORLD

In Japan, the minister of home affairs in the new Konoye government said: "We cannot doubt that the day soon will come when Japan can share the world with Germany and Italy." But otherwise the new regime appeared to be proceeding cautiously in all fields. Prince Konoye in a radio address to the nation declared that the government would assiduously keep open the door for the closest relations with Germany, Italy and Russia but would not close it against any friendly overtures that might be made by the U. S. and Britain.

From this same address diplomats drew the conclusion that in the domestic field there would be a gradual intensification of the trend toward totalitarianism, without any immediate drastic steps. The Japanese Government appeared to realize that, in the end, it will stand or fall on general public opinion and hence will not follow blindly any line of action recommended by the extreme militarists. (One thing the Government knows without shadow of doubt and that is that the people want the China war stopped as soon as possible, and will concentrate every effort to that end).

NEW DEAL IS DOMINANT

UNITED STATES: With the acceptance by President Roosevelt of a third-term nomination and the naming of Henry A. Wallace as his running-mate, the New Deal came back into control of the Democratic Party in the United States, says the Christian Science Monitor. Seven years after Mr. Roosevelt took office, it is his men who are in important managerial positions and his lieutenants who guided the Democratic convention and will guide the election campaign. Those who lost control of the Party were James A. Farley, Vice-President Garner and certain Senators with Republican leanings.

Next in interest to the American public last week was the conference in Havana on Pan-American Defense attended by the Foreign Ministers of the 21 American republics (Canada ostensibly was not invited). Principal problems on the agenda were economic and military defense of the western hemisphere and disposition of European-owned New World colonies. Under fire even before the conference were several proposals, chief among them the U. S.-sponsored trade-cartel plan for this whole hemisphere; and Cuba's strong suggestion that a Pan-American protectorate be established over all foreign-owned islands off North or South America. Disruptive forces were at work at the conference, and touches of the Nazi hand were seen in more than one diplomatic manoeuvre on the part of the Latin-American republics.

U.S. CONSCRIPTION PROGRAM

In Washington, the U. S. Justice and State Departments announced changes in immigration regulations to facilitate entry of "child guests" from abroad under 16 years . . . the Department of Justice ruled that United States citizens in Great Britain could enlist in the Royal Air Force without losing their citizenship, providing they did not take the British oath of allegiance . . . the National Defence Advisory Commission reported that the country had obtained or will obtain all the supplies necessary for America's armament program . . the Senate Military Committee approved a revised bill providing for registration of 42,000,000 men, of whom 1,500,000 would be drafted in the first year. It was the first peace-time compulsory military training program in the history of the United States . . .

CANADA: The war, unemployment insurance, the grain problem. Each of these would be enough to keep the Parliament of Canada going for a whole session. But last week, the hottest and most uncomfortable of the summer, the House had to deal with all three.

Opposition to the passing of the bill providing for unemployment insurance continued to accumulate. Unanimously approved in principle when it came before the House for second reading, strong pressure against it was applied in special committee by representatives of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. It was also expected to be opposed in the Senate. but labor groups were all for the measure.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT WHEAT

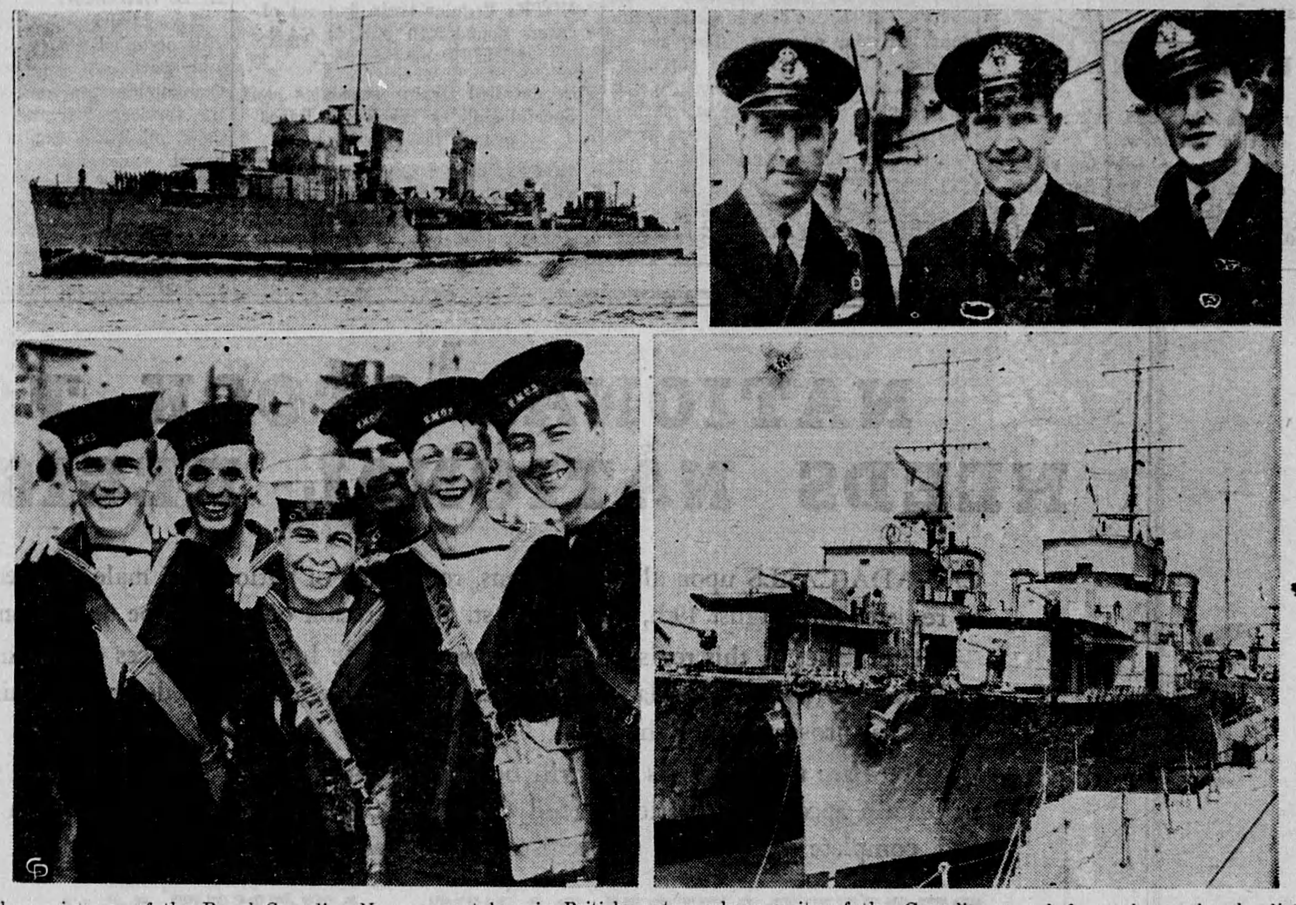
Three prairie wheat pools last week made several suggestions to Federal authorities on how to relieve the anticipated storage congestion when delivery of this summer's prairie grain harvest starts The four main points submitted by the pool organizations to the Government were: That the Canadian Wheat Board should handle all the wheat; that some method be worked out for financing wheat stored on the farm; that farmers be protected against past indebtedness as present prices are too low to leave any surplus after paying current taxes and family living expenses; that a domestic price be set for wheat which could be used to meet all or a portion of the Government's loss on wheat when the final was less than the initial price.

PUBLICITY FROM HITLER

An army shake-up took place in the Dominion last week which saw younger men placed in top positions. The new key man of the army in Canada is now Major-General H. D. G. Crerar, chief of the general staff . . . Hon. J. G. Gardiner, minister of war services, and Hon. Angus L. Macdonald, minster of national defense for naval services, were both added to the war committee of the Cabinet . . .

Canada achieved public mention in a new quarter last week: Hitler referred to the Dominion in two different passages of his "last-chance-for peace" speech. He spoke of British leaders carrying on the war from Canada should Britain itself be conquered by Germany . . .

Royal Canadian Navy On Active Service In British Waters



These pictures of the Royal Canadian Navy were taken in British waters where units of the Canadian naval forces have already distinguished themselves in action and have suffered a grievous loss in the sinking of the destroyer Fraser. H.M.C.S. Skeena, first Canadian ship to arrive in English waters, is pictured TOP LEFT, and LOWER RIGHT two of the Canadian warships are shown tied to a dock in an English port. The Canadian officers at TOP RIGHT are Lt.-Comm. H. G. DeWolf, Lt.-Comm. H. N. Lay and Lt.-Comm. J. C. Hibberd. Some of the brawny Canadian tars manning the ships are pictured LOWER LEFT as they went ashore on a brief leave. The pictures were released by the British ministry of information.

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