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# SPANISH INFORMATION

## SERVICE texts

## and documents

A WEEKLY RÉSUMÉ OF OUR DAILY "SERVICIO ESPAÑOL DE INFORMACION"

No. 8 - 9

Barcelona, February, 4, 1938

556, Av. 14 Abril

The rebel «Radio España» at Bilbao on February 2, broadcast the following announcement:

«The red Parliament celebrated its session on a somewhat cloudy day and for this reason our Air Force was not able to take action.»

# THE MEETING OF THE CORTES IN BARCELONA ON FEBRUARY 1

## Dr. Negrín, the Prime Minister, Reports to the Chamber on the Military and Political Situation in Spain

## "The war will not end owing to the exhaustion of our economic resources"

In accordance with the provisions of the Constitution the Cortes of the Republic met on February 1, 1938. The assembly which had been summoned and later postponed, took place in Montserrat instead of in the Catalan Parliament so as to prevent the fascist air force from taking this as an excuse to carry out another bombing raid on the civilian population of Barcelona.

A 8 A. M. the deputies began arriving at the Catalan Parliament as they had been requested. Among them were Señor Portela Valladares, Señor Guerra del Río, and many others, as well as many members of the parliaments of other countries whom the Spanish Government had invited especially to attend the meeting of the Cortes.

### AT MONTSERRAT

By 10 A. M. the majority of the ministers and deputies had arrived at Montserrat. A company of the Corps of Carabineers, who were lined up on the large terrace facing the old Monastery, saluted the ministers as they arrived.

The Prime Minister arrived at Montserrat about 10 o'clock. The remaining ministers followed shortly afterwards.

Among the deputies present were several members of the right-wing and centre parties such as Señor Portela Valladares, Señor Guerra del Río, Señor Alvarez Mendizábal, and Señor Rubio Chavarri, who is a nephew of Señor Alcalá Zamora, the former President.

The refectory of the ancient Monastery had been especially prepared for the session. The walls were covered with tapestries representing scenes from «Don Quijote». A special platform had been erected for the Speaker and a Blue Bench for the members of the Cabinet.

### THE OPENING OF THE SESSION

The session was opened punctually at 11 o'clock. Señor Martínez Barrio occupied the Speaker's chair and beside him sat Señor Mariano Joven, Señor Lamonedada and Señor Trabal, all of whom are Secretaries to the Cortes.

After the minutes of the previous session had been read and approved, reading was given to ordinary correspondence including communications from several de-

puties, including Señor Largo Caballero, excusing their absence.

Following this the items on the agenda were taken up.

The Speaker (Señor Martínez Barrio): The Statute for the granting of Autonomy to the Region of Galicia has been presented to the Chair. I request the various groups to communicate to this Chair the names of the deputies who are to represent them on the Committee entrusted with framing the corresponding resolution.

A proposal by Señor Gómez Hidalgo (Republican Union) to the effect that a pension should be granted to Doña María Rubio, the widow of Luis de Sirval, who was murdered in the Asturias in 1934, was taken into consideration. It was not necessary for Señor Gómez Hidalgo to defend this proposal.

At 11:15 A. M. the entire Cabinet, headed by the Prime Minister, Juan Negrín, made its appearance. All those present, rose and received the Cabinet with prolonged applause. Before occupying the Blue Bench, the Ministers approached the platform in order to greet the Speaker of the Cortes. It is of interest to note that Señor Irujo's arm was still in plaster as a result of the automobile accident which he suffered recently. Various other matters were taken into consideration without discussion. The subjects included in the agenda referred to questions dealing with administration, most of them concerning the Tribunal of Accounts.

Señor Lamonedada, the Secretary of the Cortes, read the message of greeting sent to the Parliament of the Republic by sixty members of the United States Senate and Congress. This message has already been published in the press. It was remitted through the Spanish Ambassador in Washington, Fernando de los Ríos, who sent an explanation of the message, which was also read, and in which the importance of the document because of the prestige of the signers was emphasised, since among these there are several moderate or, rather, conservative Republicans, such as the representatives for the state of Vermont.

The granting of a pension amounting to the full salary of Captain Farauco, who

was murdered in Madrid by fascists, a little before the rebellion broke out, was approved. The pension is destined to his widow and sons.

Other resolutions were taken into consideration. Señor Giral then occupied the secretaries' tribune in order to read projects for various laws, in all of which Geneva protocols were ratified. Among them was one dealing with the 40-hour week and another dealing with the transportation of mail by plane.

Dr. Negrín also read a project which confirms legally all the Decrees of the Presidency and the other ministerial departments published since the last assembly of the Cortes.

### SPEECH OF MARTINEZ BARRIO

The Speaker of the Cortes (Señor Martínez Barrio). — Deputies: The Parliament of the Republic is meeting in accordance with the Constitution for the first time this year. I comply with my duty and at the same time take the honour of greeting the legitimate representatives of the country assembled here. Furthermore, there are present qualified representatives of various foreign parliaments. I fervently greet these fellows of ours who have honoured us with their visit in order to learn of our sorrows. I do not think it necessary to emphasise to these friends the greatness of our struggle, of the struggle which we are carrying on in defence of our independence and of world democracy.

It is my fervent desire that our deliberations be presided over by the same absolute faith shown on the fields of battle by the men who sacrifice their lives for our cause, and from here I solemnly

send them an assurance of our remembrance and our solidarity.

We stand before the country. And the Spanish Parliament, the fundamental foundation of our Constitution, has come here to exercise its sovereignty and to offer its support to the legitimate Government, as the genuine representative of Republican legality and faithfully interpreting the desires of the nation.

I would stop here, if it were not my duty first to remember two of our fellows who have died since the last meeting of the Cortes. I refer to Señor Sentís and to Señor Pestaña. It is not necessary for me to describe the qualities of them both. I will only remind you of the faith and the enthusiasm with which they served the interests of the Spanish people. Before proposing that the sorrow of the Cortes at their death be written down in the minutes, I am going to let those deputies who have asked to do so to speak concerning this point.

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Señor Pascual Tomás, representing the majority, supports the expression of condolence. He says that the best tribute to the memory of those who have disappeared is to continue to work with the same ardour and faith which they placed at the service of Spain and the Republican cause.

Señor Irujo, in the name of the Government, also supports the motion.

It is agreed to include the condolence of the Cortes at the death of deputies Sentís and Pestaña in the minutes.

The Prime Minister from the first place of the Blue Bench, reads the following speech:

### DR. NEGRIN'S SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE CORTES

The Government has summoned a meeting of the Cortes in order to comply not only with a constitutional precept, but also in accordance with democratic principles in order to be in close contact with the people through parliament, and to render a full account regarding the use the Government has made of the full powers granted by the Cortes last October.

### THE CHANGE MADE IN THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

It must be remarked that the Government appears before you formed in the same manner in which it was previously constituted in spite of the change which has taken place in the Ministry of Justice. Sr. Irujo, who had on several occasions expressed his desire of resigning



his post, reiterated his desire at the end of November of last year so firmly that, availing myself of the powers granted the Prime Minister by the Constitution, I presented to H. E. the President of the Republic the necessary decrees in which I was very careful not to make any essential alterations in regard to the representation of the different parties in the Government, at the same time appointing a new collaborator who was familiar with the mechanism of the Ministry of Justice and favorably conversant with the policy of the Government. It is not necessary for me to introduce Sr. Ansó to the Cortes, as he is already well-known for his parliamentary work as a Republican. Once we secured his personal cooperation within the Government, it was important not to lose the collaboration of the Basque Nationalist Party, and this was not lost, as I have retained Dr. Irujo as a Minister without Portfolio, and this satisfies the desires of the Basque Nationalist Party, for when this Government was first constituted they suggested that they preferred to be represented in the Government without being in charge of a Portfolio.

#### THE GOVERNMENT'S TRANSFER TO BARCELONA

Ever since this Government was constituted it had the intention of moving to Barcelona. This was deemed convenient for various obvious reasons bearing on domestic and international policy. They are so clear that it is not necessary nor convenient to insist upon them. To carry out our purpose it was necessary to create the conditions which would make it possible. It was indispensable in the first place to give to the Army of the East the regular formation, consistency, discipline and the necessary command. It was also necessary for the Government to recover the political command of the zone occupied in Aragon, which was achieved, in spite of all the prophecies to the contrary, without the slightest trouble and with highly satisfactory results. In the second place we wished to have the assurance that the fronts of our Army had already such stability and firmness that our plans would be carried out without the fear of any mishap and that we could effect the transfer without causing dangerous alarm in our rear. So firm was our conviction in the strength of our fronts that in spite of the unfortunate happening in the North, we insisted on carrying out our decision.

The Government wishes to thank the local and provincial authorities and the people of Barcelona for the cordial welcome given to it and for the facilities given for the installation and commencement of the services of the Administration in Barcelona. We are convinced that the presence of the Government of the Republic in Barcelona will facilitate the coordination of the services of the Central Government and of the Catalan Government. We are quite certain that working in the same city will facilitate the necessary and speedy solution of many problems on the basis, never before so firm, of due respect for the Constitution of the Spanish Republic and the Statute of Catalonia. As we have been welcomed by the cordiality of Catalonia, we wish to show our thankfulness to Valencia for the way in which it attended to all our requirements.

#### THE REASON FOR THE PLACE CHOSEN TO CELEBRATE THE MEETING OF THE CORTES

We wished to remove any excuse or incentive that the foreign aviation might have had for bringing to the people of Barcelona a new day of mourning and for this reason, in agreement with the President of the Cortes, we decided to suspend the meeting of the Cortes in Barcelona, keeping secret until the last moment the place and time when the meeting would take place. The material inconvenience of this arrangement is fully justified by the double duty of the Government to frustrate any reason for a new criminal aggression on the part of the Fascists and to

protect the representatives of the nation and our illustrious foreign guests from an unnecessary risk.

#### THE REPRISALS FOR THE BOMBARDMENTS OF OUR TOWNS

The crimes committed by the fascists, bombing cities in the rear without any military objective, causing irreparable havoc, slaughtering with impunity defenceless citizens, women and children have deserved the condemnation of the world. But the condemnation of the whole world is not sufficient to make them stop in their ferocious behaviour, which is a clear demonstration of their impotence. Several times the Minister of National Defence has announced his readiness to renounce any warlike action against the towns of the rear on a basis of a guaranteed reciprocity. Until this is achieved — painful as it may be — the Government declares that it will be compelled to answer enemy aggressions by similar methods. It will answer with appropriate measures all the crimes of those who, not satisfied with having been traitors to their own country, handing it over to the greed of foreign imperialist powers, prefer in their mad impotence to destroy our country rather than deliver up their banners to the Republic. In this system of reprisals, to which the behaviour of our enemies has led us, the Government is under a two-fold handicap: first, that of humanitarian feeling which it tries to make consistent within the limits of the war, and the grief caused by the ruin of its own national territory, the sacrifice of innocent victims among whom predominate Spaniards faithful to the regime and loyal to the independence of their own country. And even if it were not so, the Government of Spain knows that its duty is to sacrifice a minimum number of lives and avoid as far as possible useless sacrifice and fruitless disasters. How little can these considerations weigh with Mussolini's legionaries of the air or Hitler's air force who come to Spain to train on our territory for the coming European War! What do they care if they destroy the material wealth and the historic and artistic treasures of Salamanca, Madrid, Barcelona, Seville, Valladolid or Valencia! How can the massacre of thousands and thousands of Spaniards affect the totalitarian states when they are seeking an outlet for their excess population?

These sorrows are exclusively our own, they are the sorrows of Spaniards who have a sensitivity equal to the happiness and grief of their country. Those who think that by increasing the terror they will weaken our morale are mistaken. The whole of Spain repeats the heroic example of Madrid and sees its morale of victory and its capability of resistance increase as the brutal foreign aggressions try to demoralise it. One and a half years of reverses have proved to the invaders of our country that their violence has recalled the heroic virtues of the Spanish people which many years of disuse had buried in oblivion.

#### THE WAR. PRINCIPAL PREOCCUPATION

The war — I repeat this today as I did in the past — cannot be finished except by the victory and unconditional triumph of the cause of the people and the legitimate Government of Spain. I repeat my previous words: Our peace will not be a peace of pacts, arrangements and compromises. We said that when the prospects of triumph were less promising. We reiterate it now when even the most sceptic among the neutral countries considers it possible and probable. For us that probability is certain and no one, after watching the course of the war in the last months, could think of our confidence as a sickly illusion.

Our efforts are directed towards the war, without forgetting the other factors of permanent importance to the Nation's life. I am going to inform the Cortes of how the Government has prepared the main lines of its policy and has resolved the problems that the exigencies of the struggle, the internal situation of the

country and the international aspect have presented. The basis of our policy has been the restoration to strict constitutional normality, except where the contingencies of the war force us to a narrower interpretation consistent with the spirit of our fundamental law. Whether we agree or not, we all are compelled to submit to it. This constitutional normality offers ample field for the legal development of the most ample conceptions of the political, economic and social systems. Its observance is the most solid support of our rights.

Our strength comes from the compromise of all parties joined in its defense. The promise we have made to be faithful to the Constitution is what assures our democratic principles and is also the mark which serves as a guarantee to the Government and to the representatives of the nation before the popular masses and the foreign countries.

Once the war is over, the country will be able to institute new forms, alter or keep the present ones according to its own free will. The political parties will then be able, and without any hindrance, to suggest reforms according to their programmes. But as long as the war lasts every attempt against our fundamental Charter, which binds us in the struggle against autocracy and for Spanish sovereignty and any attempt to take advantage of favourable opportunities or compromises falsely interpreted as weakness on the part of the Public Authority, will be considered as treasonable crimes committed against the common cause and which if they are not punished — be certain that the Government will punish them — would mean in themselves the loss of the war.

Loyal to the constitutional mandate we have watched over the reestablishment of the citizens' rights, with the inherent restrictions necessary in a state of war.

The first abuses and outrages produced by a war psychosis have disappeared — a psychosis which was also present in the countries which took part in the World War. It was more accentuated here on account of the peculiarities of civil war, and more excusable owing to the fact that the Government was left powerless as a result of the treason of those to whom the military power was entrusted. The Government has succeeded without violence in firmly reestablishing its full authority. The certainty of being able to answer the systematic terror initiated by our enemies with a spontaneous and uncontrollable terror of the masses saved our institutions and alleviates to a certain extent the sorrow aroused by so much bloodshed. Our conscience as rulers is clear of all responsibility in these outbursts. Since the very beginning we and our predecessors in the Government of the Republic have directed all our efforts to secure a return to normality and restoration of the authority which nobody thought possible and which today we are able to show as one of the most favourable achievements of our work.

#### THE POLICY OF PUBLIC ORDER

This conquest, which no one can deny, has permitted us to evolve a policy of public order destined to destroy those who threatened to become «interior fronts». We have reached such a degree that the extinction of this danger is in sight. At one time this was a severe menace, for unfortunately the enemy possesses general headquarters in our rear in places out of reach of the direct action of the state. This obstacle has acted as a stimulus to the zeal of those entrusted with maintaining public order in the rear.

In addition, the frontier, which is no longer an open door for deserters and smugglers, must be watched and searches instituted for weapons and hidden treasure, which have, in a considerable number of cases, been recovered. It is necessary only to allude to the constant struggle which is being waged against speculators and saboteurs for you to have a complete idea of the work of the Government in maintaining public order. The benefits obtained are the result of great

efforts and have established confidence among the people.

It is well to note that the Government, loyal to its important function of administering justice, which is the work of the tribunals, has directed its efforts to guaranteeing them independence, and has at the same time made certain for the people that this independence will not serve as a cover for work contrary to the interests of the Republic.

Organisations responsible for the punishment of crimes against the security of the state have been strengthened and trials and punishments adjusted to war conditions, although it has not yet been necessary to use most severe methods or to apply the extreme punishment established by the military laws in war time.

#### THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL FRONT

When a war is prolonged, the economic and financial front is a zone of battle as sensitive and delicate as the military front. In dealing with financial matters, the attention of the Government has always been on the alert in order to obtain the greatest possible efficiency and production in view of the large expenditure incurred by the war. Unfortunately, it has not always been understood and supported in its work by the public and by the public corporations. Efforts in this task must be united. The time has arrived when mild pressure is to be followed by energetic action, which will result in a general readjustment of our finance. This policy has already commenced with the orders recently issued by the Government. The money now in circulation is sufficient to meet the needs of the war. As a result of determined circumstances there has appeared the curious phenomenon of circumscribed inflations which have brought about an illogical anarchy in prices and unequal increase in the average cost of living. Only by making the circulating average homogenous throughout the whole of loyal territory can equilibrium in the cost of living be established.

In compliance with its primordial function as a means of exchange and payment, money must return to the vaults of the banks so that it may be lent to the State, which must employ it to satisfy the needs of the war and to encourage and give impulse to the development of the riches of Spain.

The tutelage of the State over the Banks has been of such efficiency that its results have surpassed even our best hopes. No experienced and impartial observer can deny this. Today the banks are an essential part of economy and as they are controlled by the State (though they keep their power to act autonomously) they cannot give rise to the fear that their political orientation will interfere with the action of the State and constitute a danger. On the contrary, they will be at the service of the State, serve to guide and stimulate saving, and encourage attempts at increased production.

The Government has settled a large part of its account with the Bank of Spain, raised the solvency of this organisation, reduced the number of banknotes in circulation, which are guaranteed by the body which issues them, and strengthened its reserves, which today more than guarantee the paper money in circulation.

The Government proposes to give impulse to Government loans by putting them on a popular basis and obtaining the support not only of the banks but also of small savings, which will be a powerful factor in the Spain of the future. A series of concrete measures has been begun which will give our banking apparatus an elasticity, a perfection, and a guarantee which it lacked when the war began and which will make it a useful instrument for economic and political work in the future. Uniform banking legislation and a unified administration are indispensable in order to carry this work out fully. And the Government believes that the time for undertaking this work has arrived.



## INTERVENTION IN INDUSTRIES

The aim of the economic policy of the Government has been to obtain the coordination of the different branches of economy. This coordination is always necessary and, in times of war, indispensable. In all organisations of production, and principally in the more fundamental industries, a progressive intervention has been going on, always becoming more and more accentuated, in order to control the quantity and employment of raw materials, to obtain more exact knowledge of wholesale prices, increased output, and a more just distribution of finished products, so that they may first be employed to meet those needs which are thought to be more urgent.

By means of compulsory centralisation of purchases abroad it is possible for the Government in distributing raw materials also to control production and thus to regulate its rhythm and to supply special needs which may arise at any given moment. The fixing of the wholesale price of industrial articles presents great technical difficulties whose solution requires intensive study. It has, nevertheless, been possible to publish orders fixing the prices of some manufactured articles. This work will be gradually completed and the prices of industrial articles indispensable in the cities and in the country will be stabilised.

The policy of intervening in industry made it possible to reopen enterprises which had stopped work and to obtain maximum production in those which did not work with sufficient intensity. This was done by granting credits, always with the necessary guarantees, and only in cases where economic output was insured, except when the imperious demands of the war made it necessary to waive this otherwise essential factor.

There has also been Government intervention in the development of private commercial activities, aimed at organising and putting into the proper framework of the new state the different forms taken on by commerce in the period immediately after the insurrection and at setting just limits to profit. When the traditional organisation of commerce with foreign countries disappeared, the trade unions, private organisations, local, regional, and district associations attempted to substitute their own. There is no doubt that for various reasons, which it is not set for exportation. And when they did not sufficiently exploit possibilities of exportation.

They were not able to reach a minimum set for exportation. And when they did accomplish it, they too frequently employed the profit in foreign currency for their own benefit, instead of contributing it to meet the needs of the State, thus organising the most harmful and most criminal flight of capital ever experienced in our country. It was our purpose to find a solution which, without cancelling exportation based on private initiative, would enable us to prepare and create guiding organisations for each of the principal branches of exportation. This type of intervention, which confers upon the State the administration of everything connected with exports, was thought to be more convenient than a decided policy of monopoly of foreign commerce, for which there was no adequate apparatus and which, furthermore, would have meant an orientation toward an economic totalitarian regime on which no decision had been taken either by Congress or by the people as a whole. In accordance with this plan various centres for exportation have been created; up to the present time, centres for the exportation of onions, red pepper, citrus fruits, and fine-grade grapes have been set up. These organisations are regarded as societies for public service and are composed of representatives of the producers and of the Government.

In connection with mining, the Government has focused its attention on the solution of three fundamental problems which are responsible for the deficiency in output: natural wear of the means of production, scarcity of raw materials necessary for the operation of the mines

and foundries, and the low output of the workers in practically all mining enterprises. Pursuing the same policy of intervention adopted in connection with industry and commerce, the principal mines in loyalist territory are being placed under control. This intervention, which is being carried out with absolute respect for all foreign capital involved, has resulted in the intensification of production in some of the mining regions.

A bureau which has the power to purchase, distribute, and determine the entire policy of handling fuels has been established primarily in order to meet the needs of the Ministry of National Defence, the railways, and the non-military industries.

## THE FOOD PROBLEM

One of the principal problems the Government has to face is that of food supplies, and the difficulties are almost unsurmountable. The facts of the case are: The greater part of the wheat-growing regions, the cattle and milk-producing areas are in the hands of the rebels; a year and a half of war has produced the inevitable impoverishment of our country; first a year of economic chaos and disorganisation in which riches and reserves accumulated during many years were squandered, destroyed and disappeared through misappropriation, a disorganisation which allowed the normal reserves of agricultural produce to disappear; and finally an increase in the standard of living of the farmer and of the worker and the greater requirements and necessities of the soldier. Added to this, we had a deficit in the harvest of the majority of agricultural products, especially in corn, cereals and potatoes due to two principal causes: the lack of fertiliser and other imported materials such as insecticides and the situation created by the war itself depriving agriculture of useful hands and livestock; the bad climatic conditions during the past two years; and an interruption and sometimes total stoppage of the distributive organisation. All this was aggravated by the confusion and insufficiency of transport both by land and by sea as a consequence of the struggle. The problem in itself is tremendous but it is not insoluble, ready as we are to face and solve it with all our might, demanding or compelling, if necessary, the collaboration of all.

I wish to dismiss the simple and often suspicious solution that the supplies problem is merely a question of imports. The war has to be conducted not according to the means we would wish to have, but according to those we in fact possess. A Government at war fails to fulfil its duty if it limits itself to the attention of all demands or exigencies however justified they may be. The foundation of any war policy has to be the coordination of necessities with possibilities, not allowing the exhaustion of possibilities by satisfying the needs of the moment. Spain is a nation which so far has waged its war against the rebels and foreigners without having appealed to foreign credit nor endangered the economic future of the nation. This is probably the only case of its sort in history, and this is the course which the Government invariably means to follow. Neither the future of the war nor the future of Spain will be sacrificed in order to mitigate the sufferings of today. Within the limits of financial possibility, as far as foreign currency is concerned, the necessities of the war and the primary needs of the national life will first be met. The plan provides for a war. —How could it be otherwise! a war whose end cannot be conjectured and the Government tells you that it is not going to sacrifice the success of the war by mitigating the hunger at the moment. The war may last six months, a year, two years... The war will not end through exhaustion of resources, however long it may last. (Applause.)

The solution of the supplies problem has to be found by other methods, within the limitations imposed by a regime of sacrifice. A year and a half ago supplies for the civil population of Madrid was

one of the greatest anxieties of the Government of the Republic. Today, Madrid in a war regime is one of the best supplied towns in Spain in spite of its peculiar difficulties. How has this been solved? By means of organisation, rationing, strict administration and single command in distribution. This system has to be extended throughout the territory loyal to the Republic, and it will be extended. In Catalonia friendly negotiations were initiated some time before the transfer of the Government to Barcelona and unity of action obtained in this important problem. The Decree of the 6th. January placed the supply of the civilian population of Catalonia under the control of the General Administration of Food Supplies. The constitution of the National Committee of Food Supplies was modified in order to allow the various sections and local and provincial organisations interested to form part of it. Our supply system is developing according to an increasingly stricter rationing plan. The compulsory ration ticket will very soon be the only means of getting supplies — as it is already in some places in loyal territory — thus avoiding the preference and privileges of an arbitrary distribution. The necessary rules for the movement of products will make possible the control of all transport of goods and will allow an adjustment of distribution in accordance with the needs of every district.

But it is not sufficient to provide the supplies. It is necessary to finish with the mad speculation which the enemy's agents are encouraging. In some places they have even made it impossible for poor people to satisfy their minimum needs of living. This is a crime against the State and Society. It is high treason to supply to the consumer, at prices five times the normal and more, the goods supplied by the Government to be sold and distributed at one-fifth their cost on the market. It is then only natural that the National Committee of Food Supplies should work actively in the establishment and observance of fixed standard prices. The Supplies Tribunals will take care that the regulation of the prices is duly observed.

## IT IS NECESSARY TO INCREASE PRODUCTION

Struggling against difficulties which at times seemed insurmountable, the Ministry of Agriculture, in spite of adverse circumstances, has been able to increase agricultural work and production, and is continuing its efforts with the object of obtaining sufficient crops to meet the necessities in the Loyal zone. Taking into account the exigencies of the war, for which it was necessary to take away elements which were indispensable to cultivation, the individual achievement of the Department of Agriculture is satisfactory, perhaps owing to the fact that agricultural workers have responded with great enthusiasm to the appeal for permanent and uninterrupted efforts. The energy which at present is benefiting our lands is as indispensable to victory as the blood being shed for it by our soldiers. Unfortunately, the enthusiasm of our soldiers and our peasants is not as contagious as it should be. Egoism and laziness also have their followers. We feel ashamed to have to admit it here, but the truth must be known. Those who desire victory must make enormous sacrifices, and one of the sacrifices must be towards increasing production, if we do not want to imperil our victory. But we should not only produce more; we must produce better and cheaper. Victory at the front cannot be separated from victory in production. In the same measure in which we obtain the latter the former will be made easier. A nation which is forced to win the war in order to assure its independence has a right to demand everything, but the most important of all is to improve its industrial and agricultural productive capacities. It is necessary to speed up work in the factories, mines, docks, and even then, the demand of the military campaign would impose an even quicker

rhythm. What, then, is there to be said of industries that languish and fall behind as a result of the collective manifestation of laziness, when it is not laziness encouraged by the enemy? In Russia the miners who went to defend the parapets of the revolution exhorted their wives: «Save the mine!» With the same spirit the Government, aware of what it means, calls to Spanish workers: «Save production!» To save it is to make better use of it, as well as to shorten the road to victory.

## THE EXAMPLE SET BY MADRID

The Government is ready to adopt all measures in order to cooperate in this saving of production, which is more immediately and directly the task of the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, but the resolutions of the Government will not have the proper efficiency if they do not meet with the energetic welcome support of the producers, who can make them fruitful. Let us make it clear that Madrid, heroic in war, in work also is free from this reproach. The soldier and the worker have synchronised their efforts, thus proudly asserting the military and civil power of the capital of Madrid. Let the warm greeting of the Government reach it from Catalonia at the same time as the promise that we shall remain true to the high example set by it; a very high one, but one which as a result of the needs of the war must rise even higher, because the Government insists on demanding the sacrifice of evacuation of the people from Madrid. It realises what it is asking, but it also realises that it is necessary to demand it. The security of Madrid, overcrowded by the exodus from invaded towns, demands that the women, children, and old men, should leave the capital to establish temporary homes in those provinces which are most distant from the fronts. The imposition is not arbitrary and has been imposed upon us by the necessity of defending Madrid against the risk of possible military activities on the part of the enemy in the neighbourhood of the capital.

## THE CARE OF REFUGEES

The Government connects this petition which it has been obliged to make to Madrid with the concern it entertains for the refugees from invaded provinces. I hasten to declare that, in the opinion of the Government of the Republic, all refugees, whatever be the invaded region they come from, deserve equal assistance and care.

This assertion would lack value if we did not add that it is our intention to take on the responsibility of placing this assistance on a basis of absolute equality. We do this not in order to perform a virtuous deed, but purely and simply in order to comply with one of the most elemental duties that war imposes. A very recent visit, a few days ago, to refugee homes convinced me that by organising resources and utilising the present willingness to be of assistance, it will be possible to do more for refugees than is being accomplished by the different organisations and systems. It is our duty to do more, a duty which we have towards some of our countrymen who have been spared no misfortunes, and which will be approved by all those who are at present working with laudable keenness but within narrow limits which are insurmountable for them and prevent them from rendering to refugees services imposed by the primary principles of solidarity. It is our plan to put into this work all the cordiality and good will which we can muster in order to reduce by generous assistance the suffering of the refugees caused by the separation from their native region and by the loss of the home in which they knew both joy and sorrow.

## THE CREATION OF WEALTH

Not for a moment has the Government ceased to be concerned with building up the wealth of the country. Apart from those tasks which are today indispensable because of the needs of the war, such as the improvement, development and orga-



nisation of transport — always one of our fundamental problems, made even more serious by the special peculiarities of our country — in spite of the difficult moments in which we live, the Government is continuing the plan for the development of hydraulic works planned some years ago by the Government of the Republic, the carrying out of which had been held up for some time.

#### THE FUTURE OF OUR CULTURE

We shall now discuss one of the most imperative and permanent tasks of the State: the education and training of future generations. The bitter violence of the war, which both fellow-countrymen and foreigners are waging against us, has not made us forget our duties toward childhood and youth. All that has happened is that education has changed its course. It exalts and appreciates everything which has its roots in the people, and at the same time it sees to it that the cultural level of the popular masses is raised. Certain of our victory, the Minister of Education has taken a passionate interest in the future of our culture. He has mobilised all resources at his disposal in order to make education the effective patrimony of all those who feel its call. Every vocation is given attention and care, and even the most modest and backward desires are carefully satisfied wherever they appear, whether it be in the country-side or in the city, in the Army or in the Navy. It is not a poor policy of spelling-books. It is a policy of primary schools and of scientific laboratories; of ABC's and infinitesimal calculus; of elementary class-rooms and maximum professorships; of rural schools and universities. It is a work of high educational achievement which in itself foretells what Spanish life will be like when we lay down our arms, even though we do not give them up. We are proud of this foresight. As a result of it, it will be possible for us to repair with the necessary speed the damage which the war is causing, and which is not greater, thanks to the great care that the Ministry of Education has taken to preserve from imminent ruin treasures which are an exponent of the creative genius of our people, as well as universal riches which could hardly be replaced.

These treasures must be defended by the rifles of our soldiers so that they may continue to be a joy to Spaniards, that is, to prevent them from becoming, like our iron and coal of the north and our southern wines, pledges which are taken abroad in payment for help to the rebels.

#### THE ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC

Deputies, in this brief summary of the work of the Government, we have reached that chapter in which we can happily transmit to you and to the whole country the satisfaction which we rightly feel: we have reached the chapter which deals with the Army.

Honourable Minister of National Defence... (The entire Cortes cheers the Minister of National Defence.) Honourable Minister of National Defence, permit me, in view of my greater authority, with the agreement of all the members of the Government to express before Parliament the gratitude of all of us for the great results which you have obtained. To fill the posts which have been assigned to us, regardless of weariness and desperation resulting from repeated reverses, and not to leave them even when physical pain destroys our health, are merits which are, of course, in keeping with the results. I hope this will be appreciated by the country and judged by the Chamber.

The People's Army which timidly showed itself first in La Granja in an attempt to help Bilbao, and then with more success, but still with insufficient fortune, again made its appearance in Brunete, this time with the purpose of helping Santander, the People's Army, I repeat, proved its importance for the first time in Belchite and finally gave proof of its strength and capacity in Teruel.

Let no one fear that, carried away by

my affection for the Minister of National Defence, I attribute to him alone these victories which have made the standing of our Army in the eyes of world opinion undergo such a great and favourable change. I cured myself of the disease of exaggeration long ago. These victories were won — and this was not told to me, but I have seen it with my own eyes — by the fighting capacity of our soldiers and the intelligence of their officers. They won them, and they deserve the glories of triumph. But the Minister of National Defence silently contributed to these victories by his tireless and tenacious work. What he contributed, a thing which is not mentioned in the communiqués, is that pitiless criticism, which nevertheless gives courage and confidence, the moral compass — call it what you like, for it has many names. It is that which makes me pronounce our thanks in the solemnity of this Parliament.

But we shall drop the matter here as the Minister of National Defence is averse even to the small measure of praise which I have accorded him today.

#### THE FALL OF THE NORTH

The Republican Army did not reach maturity until the conquest of Teruel. It was born after the total loss of the North, that is to say, shortly after the sceptics thought the moment had arrived to prepare the funeral of the Republic, or at least of the Government. We must state that we regret the loss of the North as much as anyone else. Vizcaya, Santander, and the Asturias are, in the estimation of the Government of the Republic, essential parts of the nation. They were doomed to fall at the time when this Government was constituted. (They were doomed ever since Irún fell, and the fall of Irún was made possible because Non-Intervention prevented the arrival of the necessary defensive material.) But we did not fail to exert ourselves to the utmost in order to liberate them from the danger by which they were surrounded.

After magnificent resistance Bilbao fell. Its fall was followed by widespread demoralisation, the consequences of which did not deceive us. The tragedy of the invasion was prolonged in Santander. (The Italian papers boastfully proclaimed it and then came Franco's shameful expression of gratitude to Mussolini.) This had its dramatic epilogue in the Asturias, a region so well loved by us all that we can be consoled only by its total recapture, as well as that of those other parts of Spain which are now provisionally beyond the authority of the Government and where, nevertheless, Spanish citizens will be content only when, as in Teruel, the arms of the Republic are victorious and imposed upon these regions.

Yes, it was after the fall of the North that Republican Army reached its maturity, obtained its first complete and great victory and aroused the respectful attention of the whole world, thus gaining another victory for Spain abroad. What our diplomats failed to win in the Chanceries was won by our soldiers at the front. Soldiers who had to learn everything before they could make war, from holding and firing a gun to obeying and commanding, learning bugle calls and guard duty... because they sacrificed the needs of their vocation, their humble and creative professions, for the independence of their country, in order to become improvised soldiers to defend peace. It will not surprise anybody who is acquainted with our national virtues that our soldiers exert themselves to be good soldiers. Tradition prompts and strengthens their will. Although the most immediate tradition is only that of guerrilla fighters, our oldest traditions give us wonderful examples of able captains who won their glory not so much by technical knowledge of warfare, but by their deep passionate love for Spain. The same passionate love for Spain moves those who are defending it today, hundreds, thousands of men who have abandoned their professions to defend the freedom of Spain, and who honor the ranks conferred on them by the Republic. These men, together

The unavoidable ups and downs of war make those at war accustomed to rejoice one day and to grieve another. Up to a short time ago our days were full of grief. They were hopeless days, very bitter days. This era has past.

with the professional soldiers, firm in character, of proved loyalty, who with complete calmness in time of adversity, possessed of clear intelligence, (I do not wish to offend their modesty; it is not necessary to mention the names of those who are present in our minds and who are the object of our deep gratitude) command the People's Army, the creation and safeguard of the Republic, the guarantee of the Independence of Spain.

Help me to send that homage to the Army which is our creation, which is its due for bravery and sacrifice, while the laurels which the Government will bestow on it are being fashioned.

#### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

A few, very few words about our front abroad, about foreign affairs. Discretion, which is usually employed to cloak euphemisms, and frequently to cloak fallacies, better suits this subject, but neither the serious situation through which we are living would allow the use of that tone nor would our people tolerate such language. As some people have been accustomed not to believe the truth, however obvious, unless it is backed by solid arguments, which Spain was not able to provide in times of peace, I shall limit myself to indicating our attitude and pointing out the outstanding facts.

In spite of all that has happened, we shall continue faithful to the League of Nations and to the pact which binds us all and which should bind all of us. We are bound by one of our constitutional laws, but even if it were not so, we still trust that the League will emerge unscathed from the severe trial to which it is being subjected. Its crisis is not due to the fact that its purposes are far-reaching nor that its aims are ambiguous. No, on the contrary, it is due to the fact that it has not proceeded in accordance with its mission and that its members did not do their duty. Corfu, Abyssinia, Spain, China are the first steps, which, if not checked in time, will lead to the total submission of free peoples to slavery with or without a war. We brought before the League the problem of the Italo-German aggression in our country and not our domestic affairs, the problems arising out of the military rebellion.

Although it may be painful to repeat it, it is necessary to state once more: The danger to world peace does not lie in the Spanish civil war; the peace of the world is imperilled by the brutal aggression of which we have been made the object by countries with whom we had no enmity of any kind — the Hon. President of the Republic has already pointed out this fact on a solemn occasion — aggression for which there were no justifiable motives, by countries which prepared, instigated and facilitated the military rebellion, thinking that they could dominate Spain; and which, when their plans failed, did not hesitate to invade Spain and make the aggression still more glaring. Two great countries showed and have continued to show in a singular and outstanding manner their affection and friendship towards Spain: I refer to Mexico and the Soviet Union. I wish to avail myself of this opportunity to express gratitude to them, for although it has been done before, I do not wish to let this occasion escape without repeating our thanks.

#### THE GOVERNMENT WILL NEVER ACCEDE TO MANOEUVRES

At the end of November of last year the Non-Intervention Committee address-

sed a note to the Spanish Government requesting authorisation for a commission to visit both zones of Spain, the loyalist and the rebel zones, in order to make technical preparations for the withdrawal of volunteers. Without going into the other contents of the note, in order not to give the impression that we are opposed to the withdrawal of volunteers, we accepted the principle but on condition that the rights of the Spanish people were at no time violated.

I wish to call the attention of the Cortes to a manoeuvre which had not been initiated for the first time, but has again been insinuated in some Spanish political spheres. Our enemies do not spare any means in their endeavours to undermine the morale in our rear, and if it were possible, to create a spirit of defeatism. In this way they endeavour to send us pleasant promises regarding possible settlements on the basis of recognising the essentials of our Republican Institutions, if we make certain concessions of a political or economic character, and these suggestions are always advanced in an artful manner so as not to create obligations for those who make them. I want to make it clear that the men who are at present guiding the destinies of Spain will never lend themselves to such manoeuvres. We would be the first victims of those deceitful manoeuvres if we mortgaged in this manner the economy, the political future and the independence of our country. A Spanish Government will never, never accede to such a thing although attempts be made to force us by ignorance to secede our rights, and by the hostility of those who, bound by existing pacts, are under the obligation of giving us assistance, and of those who should give us their solidarity because we are defending their own cause.

I feel sure that with these few words our attitude towards such manoeuvres is well defined and also that of any possible Republican Government of the future.

#### ABSOLUTE CONFIDENCE IN THE ULTIMATE VICTORY

I want to finish, but before presenting to the Cortes an account of the Government's work and thought, allow me to say a few more words. I am compelled to advise you to defend yourselves against the lack of confidence and scepticism which is of foreign creation, but which many are interested in importing into our country. When hard times come, which may perhaps come again, detach from the sorrow, which they may produce, your confidence in the final victory. The unavoidable ups and downs of war make those at war accustomed to rejoice one day and to grieve another. Up to a short time ago our days were full of grief. They were hopeless days, very bitter days. This era has past. And we are destined — you may be sure of that — to stand up holding the pennant of victory, a victory which we shall use generously, as the cause which we defend demands.

We do not advocate extermination because we do not understand or agree with doctrines of extermination. Those who will submit to the authority of the State totally, without reserve, can expect when the Republic is fully victorious, the benefits of our generosity, as the flag which we shall raise above our country cannot wave alongside the flag of mourning.

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