

ment under the most popular member of the royal house—the Duke of Aosta—which would have kept order in the country pending the holding of another election. One shudders to think what an election that would have been; and, in any event, the country did not want yet another exceptional Government. It wanted peace, a little less Fascista bombast, and a great deal more individual liberty. The waverers, therefore, thought that Mussolini was genuine and that his followers were sufficiently frightened to become normal citizens. On the whole, therefore, the grant to him of a new lease of political life has been well received.

The conditions of the grant are that Fascismo must change. The fight against the extremists is by no means finished, and signs of their renewed activity are many. The local “boss” of Cremona, Signor Farinacci, a member of the Fascista Directory, fills his paper daily with frantic appeals to “il Duce” to drop all this nonsense about normalization. Another leader, Signor Grandi, just promoted to be Under-Secretary to the Ministry of the Interior, addresses an oration in the old blood-and-thunder style to a huge Fascista gathering at Bologna. A man is murdered at Milan and a gentleman’s house sacked at Turin. On the eve of the incorporation of the militia with the army, just after the solemn promise that this force is to be distinguished from the Fascista Party and devoted entirely to the service of the

King and the state, its Commandant-General, Italo Balbo, sends a telegram to Mussolini on behalf of the officers and 90,000 men of the central provinces renewing in extravagant language their fidelity to “il Duce” and to Fascismo. More extraordinary still, Mussolini accepts their homage in the same tone! Decidedly, the progress of normalization is not going to be smooth.

Yet those who think that Fascismo is finished commit a grave error. Rome itself remembers only Matteotti; but the rest of Italy remembers the Socialist régime which Fascismo destroyed—the period of ceaseless strikes, of the black-mail of society, of brutal murders such as the massacre at Empoli, for which forty Communists are even now standing their trial. In spite of Fascista violence, life has been safer and quieter, the public services have been more efficient, and the conditions of life easier than before the Fascisti came to power. The foreign policy of Italy has been simple, strong, effective, and, with the exception of the Corfu incident, pacific. The finances are restored, and a debit of 3 milliards, reduced to one of 700 millions this year, will be transformed into a small surplus for next. This is the good side of Fascismo which should not be forgotten, for it gives it its claim to survive. The statement of the Opposition that anybody would have done as well is quite untrue. They did not when they had the chance, and they could never have had the strength. Fascismo may have

made many mistakes even in administration, but its successes have been resounding and could only have been achieved by a Government with the strength of a successful revolution at its back. Even in their excesses the Fascisti have merely copied the Italian Bolsheviks, and in drawing up the mournful balance of Fascista outrages we should not forget the roll of Fascista victims, which numbered eleven dead during the recent elections alone.

Therefore the situation at the moment is one of suspense. Will Mussolini succeed in his difficult task of metamorphosing the Fascista Party into a civilian political organization? He has already included in his Ministry representatives of all the parties of the Right, and he may be able to form an Italian Conservative Party, or at least a National Bloc, which will give him the support of the conservative elements of the nation. Or will he succumb to the obstinacy, the folly, and the absurd pretensions of those who seek to identify Italy with Fascismo, and Fascismo with their own untrammelled selfishness, and will he fritter away the golden opportunity to leave a mark on history which shall be more than the splash of an adventurer? The answer depends on whether he can keep his head, and whether he has himself learned the lesson of the Matteotti murder—that no one man, however strong, can indefinitely disregard the principle that a government must secure the consent of those whom it governs.

# The New French President

## An Impression

By CHARLES HENRY MELTZER

THE authority intrusted to the President of the French Republic is more limited than that allowed to American Presidents. Had M. Millerand not tried to extend his powers, he might to-day be at the Elysée, that palace in which Bonaparte once sat and ruled supreme.

But, modest though his position may appear to those who know the privileges and responsibilities of our Presidents, the man who has been chosen by the required majority of the French Senate and Chamber of Deputies to act as the Chief Magistrate of France must have much weight, much influence, and no little dignity. He fills a place more like that of the British King than that of the

unassuming but important little gentleman who now occupies—and, in effect, is now enthroned—at the White House.

Since his election President Doumergue has been seldom seen in public. He has attended a few harmless social functions; he has sat in his “tribune” at the races; and he has made a speech, in accordance with French custom, at the Parisian City Hall—the Hôtel de Ville. When he has shown himself, he has been treated with respect, and, according to some of the newspapers (which have their own way of interpreting plain facts), he has even been acclaimed with great enthusiasm. His urbanity has been commented on in flowery terms. His winning smile has helped to make him almost popular. Till

his election no one had given much thought, perhaps, to his merits or demerits. The French Senate, in which he had served as Speaker, stands in a backwater, and has no very great significance at most times. It is as harmless, as a rule, as the House of Lords has been since it was shorn of its once broad and weighty influence. And of course it counts for infinitely less in politics than our own domineering, meddling upper house.

I had pictured him in my mind’s eye as an elderly Prince Charming, with a touch of Theodore Roosevelt; less aggressive, to be sure, than our lost “Teddy,” and more conventional. No one had shouted for him, in or out of



President Doumergue

the French Parliament. Few had expected that he would cut out such Presidential possibilities as M. Painlevé and M. Poincaré. He was credited with shrewdness and experience. He had served in several Cabinets—as Minister, in turn, for Foreign Affairs, the Fine Arts, and Commerce. He could not, therefore, be a mere nonentity. And yet he did not mean much to his fellow-citizens. Clemenceau, Briand, Herriot, Millerand, Foch, were household words. But Doumergue? Well, like the proverbial Bourbeau, he “lacked prestige.” On the other hand, he was thoroughly respectable. He had common sense (which France values more than genius), and he had not been compromised, like many of his rivals, in ugly scandals.

His selection by the two houses at Versailles may have been due, not to his claims on public favor, but to political juggling. It was undoubtedly the reverse of welcome to the “Bloc des Gauches” and its leaders, M. Herriot and M. Briand, who had hoped to see their nominee, M. Painlevé, installed at the Elysée. But, on the whole, it had the approval of the country, which dreads violence and demagogues like poison. We

foreigners forget too frequently that the French peasants, being landholders, love order. The dwellers in the towns and the big cities may be radicals, in the extreme sense. Some may be Communists. The peasants none the less remain the greatest and the steadiest force in France.

Some days ago, as I was passing the Elysée, I had a glimpse of the new President. A squadron of mounted troops, picked men of the Garde Républicaine, with glittering cuirasses and helmets and white breeches beneath coats of blue and red, dashed round a corner in the Faubourg St. Honoré and halted at a sharp word of command. Fine fellows and good soldiers all of them, though not so smart as the Blue Horse Guards, whom I had seen only a short week or so before escorting the Rumanian and Italian royalties through London. Then from the courtyard of the palace an unseen officer barked out, “Por-tez arrr-mes!” The sabers from a hundred or more scabbards flashed and were lifted as a landau drawn by two brown horses rolled out slowly into the fierce sunlight of the street, and then on again towards the Hôtel de Ville, where

the Municipal Council waited to bid welcome to the latest French Chief Magistrate.

In the landau were three men. One an officer in uniform, with his back to the driver. Another, evidently a secretary or member of the President's household. The third, in the place of honor, M. Doumergue. About a hundred idle people on the sidewalk watched the carriage rather curiously, and indeed critically, as it passed by, while the President raised his hat and vaguely smiled at the polite but mild applause that greeted him. Alas for all my fancies about “Teddy” and Prince Charming! M. Doumergue seemed to have neither charm nor style. A touch of distinction, if you will, but nothing more. His face was pale and worn and, to tell the truth, which does not flatter him, the least bit flabby. One might have mistaken him for a tired New York “business man” who, after a long life spent chiefly in his office, had retired and was about to sail for Europe. So this was “the smiling President” of whom I had read in those newspapers. In the early sixties, he looked well on in the seventies. Above all, what one missed in him was what we call magnetism. This M. Doumergue may serve his term quite decently. It is safe to say that he will do nothing to disgrace his office. He will not set the Seine on fire, or cause upheavals like his immediate predecessor, by his ambition—which he has probably now satisfied. So far, so good. It may not be really bad for France to have a President of his type for a few years.

I could not have guessed, had I not known it, that he was a southerner, from Provence, born and educated within only a few miles of the Cevennes, the once troubled region of which Robert Louis Stevenson wrote so delightfully in his “Travels with a Donkey.” It was at Aigues-Vives, an old town not far from Nîmes, in an old mansion long tenanted (and owned also, I believe) by his ancestors, that he grew up to manhood. The present Doumergues are of stout Protestant stock, and this most famous of the Doumergues is a practicing Protestant, true to the traditions of his family and unshaken by the unfaith of some and the Catholicism of others with whom he has been associated in politics.

His family name, by the by, is a southern corruption of Dominus, which suggests dictatorships.

But, after seeing him for even a moment as I did at the Elysée, I feel confident that he will make a modest and discreet, if not a brilliant or remarkable President.

Paris, France.



# Fire-Flying in Canada

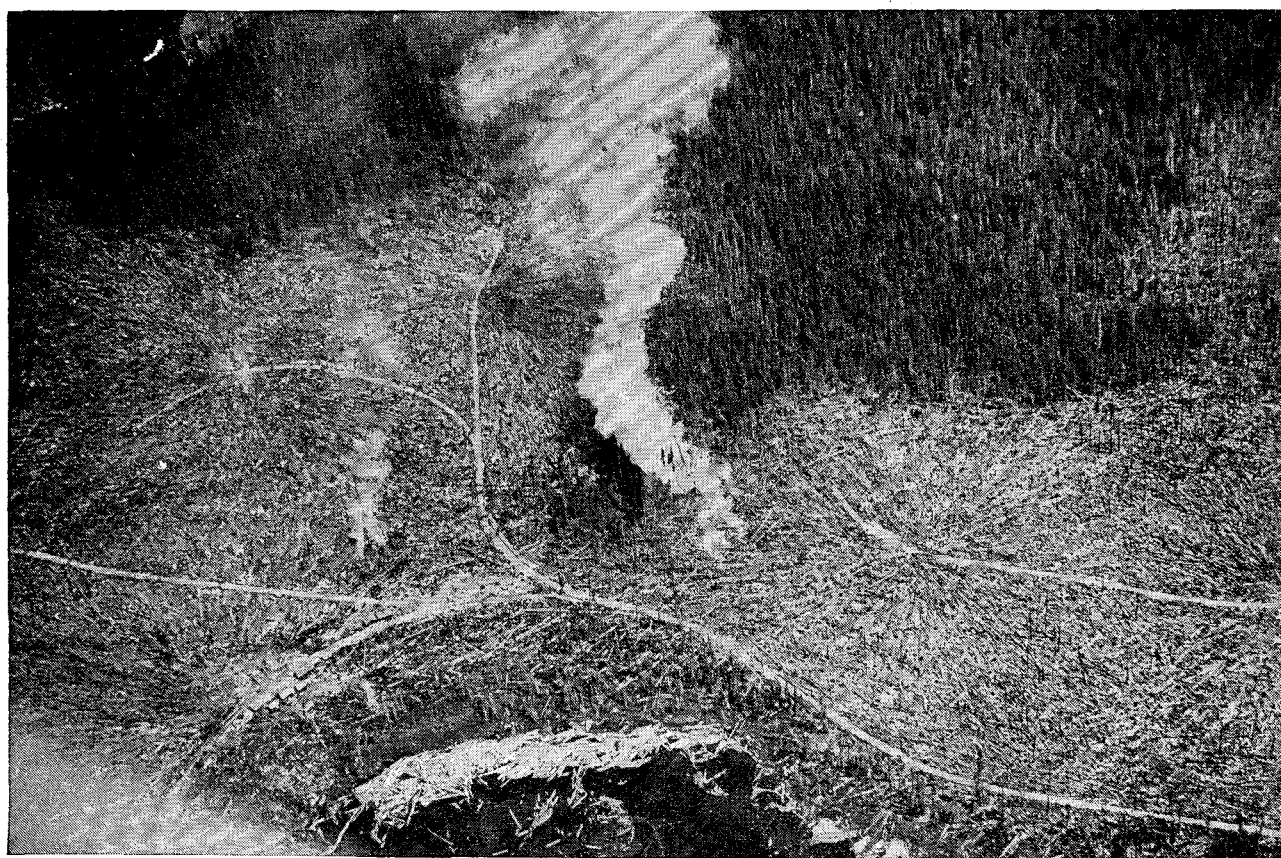
By LLOYD ROBERTS

**A**S I begin this article my ears are filled with the resonant roar of a wooden propeller tearing the air at the rate of 1,500 revolutions per minute, and, glancing up, I see a huge H.S.2L with a seventy-foot wing span sliding westward five thousand feet above the wide reaches of the Ottawa. It is a common sight—so common that farmers and villagers scarcely deign to notice it. There are motor cars on the land, motor boats in the water, and flying boats in the air—that is all. And yet before the war few Canadians had ever seen a heavier-than-air machine, and of course had not thought of it as a commercial asset. The Canadian Air Board was a war baby, born on June 6, 1919, as a natural result of the Dominion's brilliant services above the lines in Belgium, France, and Italy. The war proved the feasibility—yes, the inevitability—of the airplane as a vital factor in the pursuit of peace as well as of war, and the Armistice found the Government with a small army of youths trained in the ways of the air and \$5,000,000 worth of aircraft and equipment. Under the circumstances, it was compelled, in spite of a billion-dollar war debt, to adopt this new responsibility.

**A**PREDICTION has come true. In January, 1921, an article in *The Outlook* by Laurence La Tourette Driggs foretold in story form the use of airplanes in fighting forest fires. What was then mainly a picture in the imagination is, as the following article attests, a reality. Here is the way to save our trees from their most destructive enemy.

In the first flush of victory there was considerable enthusiasm among pilots and joy-riding among the public, and it looked as though flying would become a popular sport. The interest soon died out, however, and aeronautics fell into three distinct phases: commercial, Civil Service, and defense, of which the first is by far the most important. The cost of transporting passengers, mail, and express packages on schedule and by regular air routes is still out of all proportion to the benefits derived, but for the purposes of timber cruising, prospecting, communicating with far-flung posts, fire-fighting,

the flying boat is revolutionizing backwoods business. In British Columbia a firm is contracting for the transportation of men and supplies to mining camps situated in remote parts of the province; while last winter a Montreal firm fitted its machines with skis and made commercial flights between Cochrane, Ontario, and Moose Factory, on James Bay, and in summer undertook extensive operations in the same district, covering the distance in two and a half hours instead of the eleven days consumed by dog-team in winter and canoe in summer. Lumber companies are beginning to utilize hydroplanes as subsidiary to their main operations. Last year commercial fliers patrolled 19,678 square miles, surveyed 19,236, and photographed 791; spotted 76 fires that were either put out by the crews themselves or else reported to a base from which fire-fighters were despatched with the necessary equipment; and, most significant of all, flew a total of 185,211 miles without a single accident, thus bearing excellent testimony to the personnel and their efficiency. In addition to this the Air Board has co-operated with the other departments of the Dominion Government



A forest fire in British Columbia spotted by a fire-flying patrol just after it had started