





The native personnel of transportation services has been militarized since June 20, 1941.

Since the end of June 1940, the Congo Government has been in consultation with British naval and military authorities. General de Gaulle was given a hearty welcome at Leopoldville. While the Congo Army is not connected with the Free French Legions the Colony furnishes them with important supplies.

The notable part which the Congo Army took in the Abyssinian campaign is set out in another article in this booklet. More may be heard shortly of its participation in the fight against dictatorial powers.

In December last Pan-American Airways instituted an air-service between the United States of America and the Congo. This means a closer collaboration between this country and the Belgian Colony in every field.

III.—Aid to the United Nations.

The Congo forces have proved to be a factor in the allied military array, but the Colony's economic resources are perhaps of greater immediate importance.

When Belgium entered the war, the Belgian Government decided to place these resources unreservedly at the disposal of the Allies. Moreover, a number of the best Belgian ships which regularly traveled between Antwerp and the Congo, were directed to carry Congo products to French and British ports. When Antwerp fell into the hands of the aggressor, Bordeaux was selected as the most convenient port from which to effect distribution, and arrangements for supplies were negotiated with the French and British Purchasing Commissions. The French Armistice caused the Congo Administration to center its efforts on supplies to Britain.

A provisional understanding was soon reached between M. de Vleeschauer, in behalf of the Belgian Government, and the British Authorities. The United Kingdom would operate at its discretion all Belgian shipping, and it would receive such portion of the Congo's exportable products as it desired. On the other hand the Congo would be treated in the British Empire "as one of the family," and practically enjoy the privileges of Imperial Preference in the United Kingdom. Included in the Sterling Area, the Congo granted the British Treasury a call on such of its gold and dollar holdings as would from time to time exceed its own requirements and those of the Belgian Government. These arrangements were confirmed in a formal agreement signed on January 21, 1941, which notably specified the quantities of the various products to be delivered to the United Kingdom. Practically the entire output, for example, of copper, edible palm-oil and diamonds (the Congo is the world's largest producer of industrial diamonds, an important war material) accrues to the United Kingdom while the bulk of the Colony's timber production—varieties particularly suitable for the erection of barracks—is shipped to the Union of South Africa. A visit paid last year by M. de Vleeschauer to Fieldmarshal Smuts brought about a substantial increase in the volume of goods and services ex-

changed between the Union and the Congo, and shipments notably of cotton have gone to India and Australia.

At the same time the Congo's trade with the United States and Canada rapidly expanded. Through their purchases of Congo products as well as through their supplies of goods to the Congo, the United States and Canada are indirectly aiding Britain: they contribute to sustain the Colony's activities, avert unemployment and dissatisfaction amongst the native population, and enable the Congo to devote its energies and resources to the production of desirable commodities. Incidentally the United States is giving further aid to Britain through replenishing the dollar holdings of the Sterling Area by its purchases, and through refining Congo ores in Britain's behalf. In return the Congo is materially furthering the war effort of the United States through providing increasing quantities of strategic metals—such as tin, cobalt, manganese, zinc, cadmium, etc.—and important vegetable products—such as palm-oil, fibres, and gum copal.

In recognition of the Congo's contribution towards the attainment of the common goal, and indeed with a view to rendering this contribution possible, the English, South African, Canadian and American Authorities have given and are giving liberal consideration to the requirements of the Colony in regard to essential supplies and maritime transportation. The Belgian Congo Purchasing Commission instituted at the New York offices of the Belgian Embassy in order to recommend justified applications for priority rating certificates, export licenses and Treasury licenses in behalf of prospective importers of goods to the Congo, gratefully acknowledges the understanding and efficient support it has found at Washington and Ottawa.

IV.—The Congo Carries On.

Before the invasion of Belgium the Congo was consigning more than four-fifths of its exports to the mother country (where they entered free of duty), and it derived from Belgium nearly one-half of its imports (although Belgian suppliers were enjoying no preferential treatment). Trade between the Congo and other European countries accounted almost entirely for the remaining percentages, the most notable exception being imports of cotton goods from Japan. In 1938, exports to the U. S. amounted to \$1,550,000 and imports from the U. S., to \$1,875,000, totalling little more than 1% of the Colony's external trade.

Under present conditions the Congo must turn to new outlets, and new sources of supply. A spell of deep anxiety followed the French Armistice. Fortunately the Colony was well stocked with imported consumption goods. Indeed, until recently, the only form of rationing the Government found it necessary to establish—in a single Province—was that of infant goods, which under an Ordinance of August 5, 1940, could be delivered only on medical prescription (this to be furnished gratis). Today sales of motor vehicles and tires are restricted to essential needs.

The arrangements with Britain referred to in the preceding chapter brought immediate relief. A few senior officials of the Belgian Colonial Office, who had succeeded in escaping from territories under Nazi control, joined M.

de Vleeschauwer in London, where the Central Administration of the Colony is fulfilling its functions with an extremely reduced staff—in curious contrast with the usual war-time expansion of Government departments. With the help of these services, trade relations between the United Kingdom and the Congo soon developed. Besides, some of the principal undertakings operating in the Colony already had close business connections in England, and ever since the first World War, a branch of the Congo Bank has been established in London. Simultaneously, the South African market was approached, as we have mentioned, and an agency of the Congo Government was instituted in New York with the special duty of promoting trade with the United States and Canada. Practically every Congo concern is now represented in New York or Montreal, banking transactions passing mainly through the Banque Belge pour l'Étranger (Overseas) Ltd. or the Bank of Manhattan in the United States, and the Canadian Bank of Commerce in the Dominion. The Congo's external trade has more than regained its pre-war volume.

In particular, monthly exports to the United States (exclusive of re-exports) rose from about \$600,000 on an average in the first half year of 1940 to about \$2,700,000 in 1942. Imports from the United States averaged approximately \$850,000 a month during the past year, but the f.o.b. cost of these purchases is roughly equalled by "invisible imports:" ocean freights (shipments in both directions being carried almost exclusively on vessels owned or chartered by American companies), insurance, commissions, treatment of Congo ores in American refineries for re-exportation, etc.

In times such as the present, when production capacity is strained to the utmost and still falls short of the demand, the supplier rather than the customer bestows favors on the other party. There is a world scarcity in practically every variety of the Congo's exportable products, and the Colony's problem today is not so much to find outlets as to maintain and increase its output in order to meet, so far as it is able, the needs of the United Nations. Obviously the program can only be fulfilled provided the Congo receives from abroad such equipment and consumer goods as it needs for performing its task. Mutual aid spells mutual sacrifices.

The Congo is accomplishing its part with a stubborn will, unceasingly stimulated by the Government, to add whatever it may be able to the common resources. The Administration and the white officers of the producing enterprises are overworked. Many on the staff—particularly the younger engineers—are drafted; their remaining colleagues cannot now as in normal times take their vacations in Europe; they cannot be replaced by newcomers from Belgium. The natives too are working harder, although the trade goods which are their main inducement for working have become scarce and dear. Ore reserves are being depleted and poorer deposits developed regardless of cost. Industrial plants are being extended or newly erected with a view to hus-

banding materials and shipping. The local cotton mills will soon provide for the entire requirements of the Congo Forces and largely for those of the Free French. Scrap formerly neglected is being re-utilized, repair shops are springing up, tools and spares are being manufactured locally, and refineries are improving ores which before the war were exported in a cruder state. A rapid industrialization of the Congo is in progress.

Yet, apart from this strain on the people's energy, life in the Congo is almost "as usual."

A notice in the Administrative Bulletin reminds those who are able to take a vacation that "the Tourist Office gives all information concerning the condition of the roads, hotels, garages, etc." The local papers continue to advertise picture shows; social gatherings are calling forth most generous responses to appeals for patriotic and charitable subscriptions. Nor does the Government relinquish its efforts for the well-being of its natives. Recent ordinances contain a number of instructions directed to counter malaria and sleeping sickness, avoid soil-erosion and ensure cleanliness in the village streets (the natives are also told that they are not allowed to house cattle inside their huts). The fight against the abuse of drugs (hemp smoking) as well as against diseases is pursued unabatingly. The Governor General, Pierre Ryckmans, remains true to the policy outlined in a book which he published a few years ago under the characteristic title: "Rule in Order to Serve."

The white population of the Congo has risen from 26,000 before the war to about 40,000: Government officials and traders had their families in Europe join them when transit through France and Spain was still practicable, and company officers formerly resident in Belgium have gone over to the local managements. Yet the aborigines remain in an overwhelming majority. May it be mentioned here that the small proportion of white residents is a consequence of the policy persistently followed by the Congo Government not to encourage white men to settle in the Colony unless they are able to perform a given task materially better than would a trained native: the Congo natives have first title to any job they are able to fill.

As specialization develops in the production of goods and services, the call for specialists in every trade and branch of knowledge increases. The Belgian Congo is open to men of good-will and ability whatever their nationality, and the closer ties that are developing between the Congo on the one side and the British Empire and the United States on the other are of a lasting nature.

However, the Congo remains essentially Belgian. It constitutes for Belgium the vast field—98 per cent of her territory, free today from enemy occupation—in which she can proudly contribute towards the betterment of the world. In the present war it affords her an invaluable addition to her capacity to fight in the cause of human liberty as one of the United Nations.

The Belgian Congo is Rich in Natural Resources

by **JAMES G. WHITELEY**

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The Belgian Colony in Africa was founded by Leopold the Second, King of the Belgians, nearly three-quarters of a century ago. The King built better than he knew. Today this African whelp of the Belgian lion is fighting "all-out" for the liberation of his wounded and imprisoned parent in Europe, and is rendering valuable assistance to the Allied cause.

Until the 19th century the central part of the African continent was a mysterious and unexplored area. Various sea-going European nations had established trading posts along the sea coasts, but none of them had ventured into the heart of the continent, which was called "Darkest Africa," and was supposed to contain nothing but cannibals, wild and warlike tribes, and savage animals. Scientific geographers knew little about the African continent, and, as the poet remarked: "Geographers, on Africa's maps, with

savage pictures fill their gaps, and o'er unhabitable downs place elephants instead of towns."

That astute monarch, Leopold II, King of the Belgians, was more enterprising. Here were about one million square miles of territory, unexplored, uncivilized, given over to heathenism and inter-tribal wars, and subject to the raids of the Arab slave traders who distributed this human product in bondage throughout the world.

King Leopold was a man of action as well as of foresight. He decided that something should be done. In September 1876, he called an International Geographical Conference at Brussels, to which all nations were invited. At the opening meeting, the King announced that the object of the conference was: "To open to civilization the only part of our world where it has not yet penetrated, to pierce the darkness which covers the minds of all these popula-

King Albert aboard one of the first trains in the Congo during his visit to the Colony.

