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WESTERN EUROPE

3. American embassy in Paris optimistic on Laniel's position (page 5).

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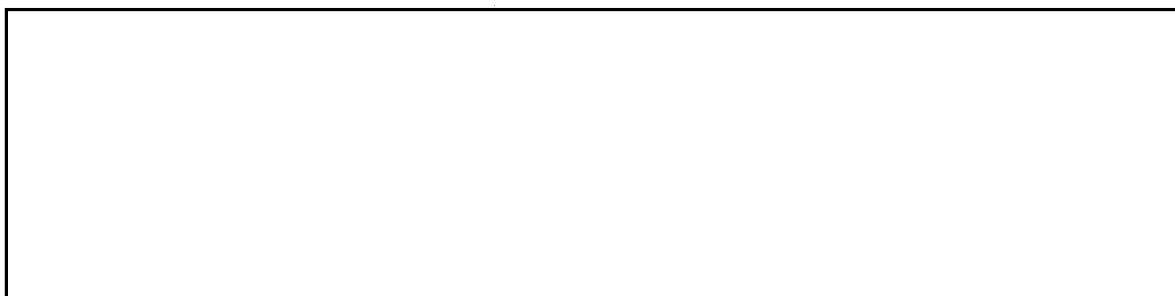
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WESTERN EUROPE

3. American embassy in Paris optimistic on Laniel's position:

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The American embassy in Paris does not foresee an early fall of the Laniel government, even if the French National Assembly should be reconvened in special session.

The broadly based right-center coalition has come through the labor crisis virtually intact and can afford some defections without risk.

The time does not appear ripe for a left-center coalition, although the long-term trend may continue in this direction, particularly if the Indochina situation deteriorates. The Socialists, whose participation would be necessary, do not seem desirous of overthrowing Laniel at this time.

Comment: Despite the parliamentary steering committee's refusal to reconvene the National Assembly, the government will be forced to do so if the Communists are successful in their call for a general strike. A reversal of the steering committee's stand might make Laniel's position untenable and would hasten the trend toward a left-center government.

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