

LAYS DEFEAT OF FRANCE TO SABOTAGE

Pétain Broadcasts
Attack Upon Those
Now Before Courts

TRIAL IS OPENED

Riom, France, Aug. 13 (AP).—The Armistice Government of Marshal Philippe Pétain formally indicted tonight before a High Court of Last Appeal the Government and military leaders whom it deems responsible for betraying the Third Republic by leading it, unready, into war and defeat.

It did not name them but it lumped them as a composite "Monsieur X" in a general complaint. The court itself will fix individual responsibility.

As the blanket charge was placed before the nation's new Supreme Court, the old Marshal, Chief of State, broadcast a rebuke for those who stand accused—who apparently include, among others, former Premier Edouard Daladier and the former Allied Commander, Gen. Marie-Gustave Gamelin. He said France fell before laziness, incompetence "and even sabotage."

Bitterly, Pétain added that the causes of France's plight had not yet disappeared; would not disappear until there is "a change of men."

Enemies of the State, he charged, still were operating in the unoccupied part of France, and he informed the nation there would be changes shortly to wipe out the "treason" of executive agents, who, he claimed, had prevented some of his measures from bearing fruit.

He promised that the revolution which started among higher-ups with the shift from Parliamentary to authoritarian regimes would "descend" to embrace all those who should be carrying out the State's orders, but because of "incompetence or treason" are not doing so.

The reference tied in with recent shifts in departmental prefects and with charges that men in many departmental public posts are not cooperating with the new regime.

The court accusation blanketed as traitors to their charge an unspecified number of "ministers, ex-ministers and their immediate civil and military subordinates." It demanded that the court inquire into the pre-war and war periods and fix individual accusations, proceeding for the time being merely against the allegedly traitorous "Monsieur X," and later lodging charges against definite persons. These will be announced from time to time, with a final public trial some weeks hence.

The general complaint, read by

Public Prosecutor Cassagneau, said:

"Crimes and offenses have been committed by ministers, ex-ministers and their immediate subordinates in exercise of their functions. They betrayed the duties and charges in their keeping by acts that contributed to the passage from peace to a state of war before Sept. 4 (war was declared Sept. 3) and by acts that later aggravated the consequences of the situation thus created."

These acts, he contended, were "attempts against the security of the State" and were "committed by persons whose identity will be determined in the court inquiry." He demanded summary procedure against "X" — "the authors, co-authors and their accomplices in the aforementioned acts."

The Government's bill of complaint was presented during a three-and-a-half-minute public session of the court, which then adjourned and met two and a half hours later to appoint three justices to conduct the investigations demanded. They were Court Vice-President Lagarde and Justices Tanon and Baraveau.

All this was done without fanfare.

In his speech, Pétain promised that those who "betray" their duties will be "sought out and punished." He charged that "pernicious propaganda" still is being carried out in France, and that many measures he has initiated for the good of the country have been blocked by "incapacity and treason of a great number of agents" who should have carried them out.

Dealing with the Germans' re-

fusal for the time being to permit his Government to return to Paris and Versailles in occupied France, Pétain asked his listeners to be patient, and said he hoped the regime could soon return. He called Paris "the natural seat of Government and authority for all Frenchmen."

"It is no more than a question of waiting," he said, until the Germans decide to authorize the transfer. This, he said, has been deferred for reasons "of a technical order" and "as long as certain material conditions are not realized."