

# BLUM CLAIMS HE INCREASED FRENCH OUTPUT

Prevented Civil War,  
Former Premier Says  
in Riom Trial Plea

SPEAKS FOUR HOURS

(By LANSING WARREN.)

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Riom, March 10—Pleading before the Supreme Court here today. Former Premier Leon Blum insistently contended that neither the social legislation nor the general policies of his Popular Front Government in any hampered or delayed French preparation for national defense.

M. Blum, who is more than seventy, held the floor for over four hours, speaking almost without consulting notes with a great flow of precise detail on the record of his ministries. At times he resorted to paradoxical flights of argumentation and to passage of emotional oratory accompanied by astonishing gestures. He directed his own defense scarcely listening to the promptings of his lawyer. Among the points he made, were:

The Supreme Court at Riom has been guilty of discrimination toward himself and Former Premier Edouard Daladier in omitting any charges against Former Premier Chautemps, who instead of occupying a defendant's bench has been given a Government mission to South America.

Far from having retarded or hampered armament production the introduction of the forty-hour-week by the Blum Cabinet actually had the effect of increasing the efficiency of the defense program.

Unlike Marshal Petain, Chief of State, when he was War Minister, and Pierre Laval as Premier, who, he said, had given excuses to avoid taking all measures of defense that were demanded, he, Blum, had readily agreed to support the full program of national defense which the high command considered essential.

## Civil War Threatened.

By his attitude at the time of taking power when in the spirit of a Republican Minister he kept his election promises but restrained striking workmen, M. Blum took credit for having saved France from civil war, which, he said at the time, was a far more imminent threat than that of war with Germany.

In addition, Blum declared that at the time he found himself considered by French employers and the bourgeoisie generally in the light of the savior and he denied that any one ever appealed to him to use force in repressing sitdown strikes or that during his tenure of office he had been called upon to arbitrate any dispute occasioned by the forty-hour-week.

M. Blum's examination gave rise to a number of caustic exchanges with presiding Judge Pierre Caous and Public Prosecutor General Casagnau.

The judge made a vigorous intervention when M. Blum was implying that there was discrimination in the choice of persons accused for France's unpreparedness.

"The morality of this trial," intervened Judge Caous, "is something for each person to appreciate according to his life, but let me say here and now that this is not and never will be a political trial."

Mr. Blum replied that it was a political trial, nevertheless, and that the whole theme of the prosecution demonstrated this.

With regard to the forty-hour-week in France M. Blum set forth an argument which, he said, was based on experience in industry from the very beginning to the effect that every time hours of work were reduced and every time wages were increased the result in practice turned out to be an increase in production.

He protested against the accusation that France fell behind because French workers were doing only forty hours a week while Germans were working sixty. What counted, said the former Premier, was not the time the workers were doing, but how long the machines were operating. He said that the object was to keep machines turning twenty-four hours per day.

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