

*Mr. Mallet to Viscount Halifax.—(Received October 24.)*

(No. 373.)

*Stockholm, September 27, 1940.*

My Lord,

IN paragraph 3 of my telegram No. 963 of the 17th August, I reported that in a conversation on that date the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs had denied rumours to which I had drawn his Excellency's attention, and according to which the German Government had officially informed the Swedish Government that they were not interested in the fate of Finland, and that the Swedish Government were at liberty to help that country if attacked by the Soviet Government, but that M. Günther had, on the other hand, informed me that in certain unofficial talks the Germans had taken the line that Finland was not included in their "Lebensraum." Since that date, and particularly since the end of August information has reached me tending in the opposite sense.

2. Early this month a member of my staff was informed in a usually reliable Swede in touch with Swedish officers, then just returned from Germany, that at about the time of my interview with M. Günther, referred to above, the Finnish Minister at Berlin was sent for by Herr von Ribbentrop, assured of Germany's sympathetic interest in his country and encouraged to look to Germany for support against future Soviet demands. According to a prominent Swedish journalist of pro-British sympathies, the Swedish Minister at Berlin on the 15th August had an interview with Herr von Ribbentrop, who told him that Germany intended to alter her policy with regard to Finland, and gave him to understand that Finland would be regarded as being within the German "Lebensraum" and would receive German assistance against the Soviet Union. The same source states that German "spokesmen" have been attempting to impress Sweden with maps showing Finland restored to her former boundaries and including the whole of the Kola peninsula, and with advice to wait patiently until in time the defeat of the British Empire leaves Germany free to help Finland and Sweden against Russia. The Swedish Government are said by this source to be basing their policy on assurances of this nature.

3. I learn further that the United States Minister at Helsingfors was recently informed by the Finnish Prime Minister that he had some reason to think that Germany had told the Soviet Government to go no further in Finland. As the Soviet Union had no wish to quarrel with Germany at present, it was thought that the Russians would give heed to this warning.

4. I questioned the Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day about German policy towards Finland, and reminded him of the conversation referred to in paragraph 1. He admitted that there were indications that Germany was not so disinterested in the fate of Finland as she pretended to be, but he stated quite definitely that the German Government had made no official communication on the subject to the Swedish Government nor, as far as he knew, to the Finnish Government either. What they had said at Moscow was a matter for conjecture, but it seemed quite possible that some warning had been given to the Soviet Government and that the troop transit arrangement through Finland to North Norway might be intended to point the moral.

5. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office and .....

I have, &c.  
V. A. L. MALLET.