EGYPT TO PENALIZE RUMOR-SPREADING
By ALBION ROSSSpecial to THE NEW YORK TIMES.
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pg. 8

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Law Is Aimed at Groups That Helped to Invite Bloody January Riots

By ALBION ROSS
Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

CAIRO, Feb. 20—The Government tonight issued a decree under its martial law authority providing for six months to five years imprisonment and a fine of 50 to 500 Egyptian pounds ($17.35 to $173,50) for propagating false rumors that excite the people, for threatening public security or for damaging the public interest.

Since mid-October Egypt has undergone one of the most extraordinary campaigns of rumor mongering that has been witnessed in recent years. Leading newspapers appeared day after day with fantastic stories under banner headlines. Painstaking efforts to discover even a grain of truth in many of them failed, while official sources issued categorical denials with monotonous regularity. A state of extreme agitation in both Cairo and Alexandria, and certain sections of the Egyptian countryside resulted and led to sanguinary riots and wholesale arson in Cairo on Jan. 26.

The present Minister of the Interior, Mortadi Moragha Bey, made several public appeals to halt this rumor-spreading which sprang up again even after the imposition of martial law. Today's order is intended to deal particularly with political groups that are known to be carrying out instructions in spreading reports intended to undermine public order.

A military order also was issued providing punishments for wearing police or military uniforms or insignia illegally.

A delegation of the Student Union of Fuad, the First University in Cairo, principal Egyptian educational institution of higher learning, met the Premier today to condemn the events of January 26 and to ask for the punishment of those responsible.

The Premier told the delegation he had not been successful in forming the national front of all parties which he had sought due to differences between the parties but that if negotiations with Great Britain were resumed he would consult them all.

A period of intense diplomatic activity was expected with the return to Cairo tomorrow of the Egyptian Ambassador to Britain, Abdul Fatah Amr Pasha, who talked twice with British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden during his visit to London as a member of the Egyptian delegation to the funeral of King George VI. Mr. Amr has not been acting regularly as an ambassador since his withdrawal by the preceding cabinet last December.

A British Embassy spokesman said today that as yet the British Ambassador here had not been requested to meet the Premier next Saturday. It had been reported that conversations regarding a possible solution to the British-Egyptian conflict would start Saturday.

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