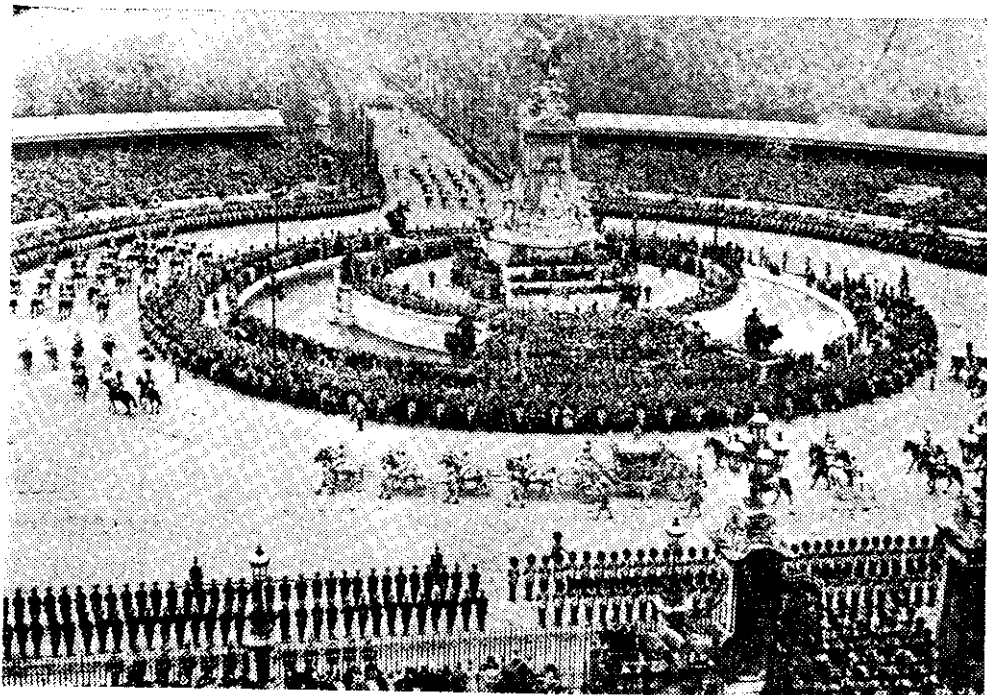


THE TURBULENT YEARS

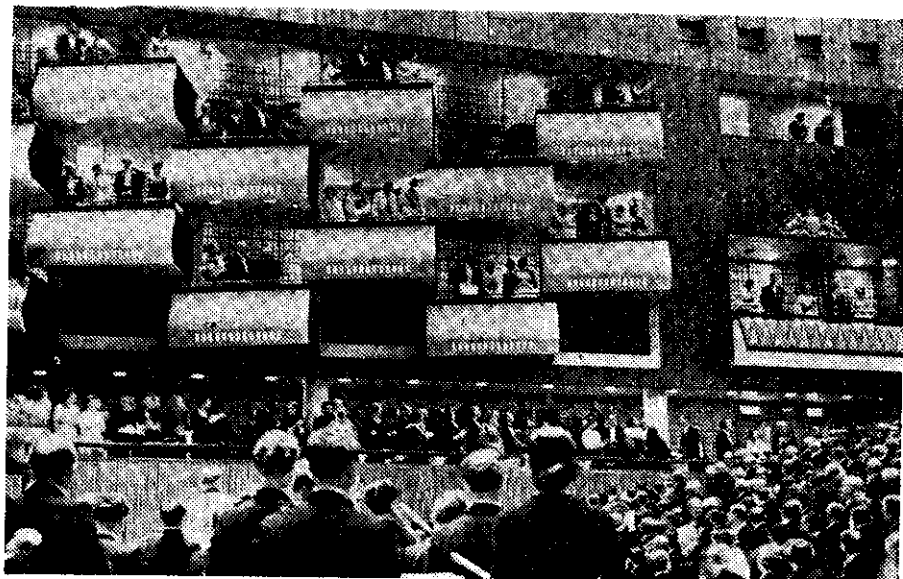
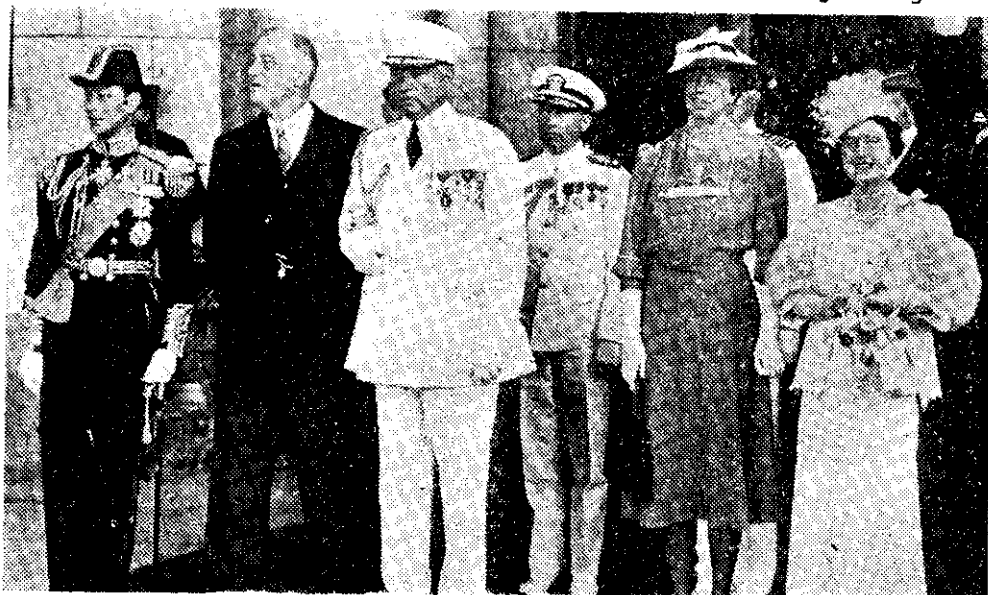
WHEN George VI came to the throne the nations were re-arming for war. The Munich Crisis brought false hopes of peace in 1938, and thereafter it was plain that the Empire would have to fight for survival. This is the true background of the reign. It was to be a war different from all others fought by the British people. The civilian population of England were to be under fire, and when the bombers came, Buckingham Palace and the humblest home were both targets. The King stayed in London. He was at the centre of the Empire when blows were falling on our armies and fleets; and he was there when the news was brought to him of Armistice and Victory. Of fifteen years, three were devoted to preparation for war, six were years of battle and unremitting effort, and the remaining six were harsh with economic crises, and the shape of new dangers rising into the skies of peace like the mushroom smoke above Bikini. To have lived through those years was sufficient strain, but for King George VI they were the years of supreme responsibility. We speak now of Britain's "finest hour," but we know now that it was to be an hour stretched out by crises which ended only to be replaced by others; and through them all the King was there.



The Coronation procession of 1937 was a glittering interlude amid the gathering storm



Munich was a defeat for the West, but by his visit to the United States in 1939 George VI. sealed an Entente greater than that achieved by Edward VII.



The Finest Hour and Festival Year founded the stormiest decade in our history, but under Providence the new Elizabethan era begins not only in sorrow, but also in hope