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EUROPE COUNCIL MEETS AS GERMAN VOTE

In ancient Strasbourg, democratic Europe bids to set her house in order. At the University arrive men of 12 nations (headed by Belgium's M. Spaak, followed by the French delegates Schumann and Bidault) for the opening of the Council of Europe. For Britain, are Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin and - to be greeted by the friendliest of Alsations - Winston Churchill.

Spaak, former Belgian Premier, is made President of the Consultative Assembly - the first Gentleman of Europe. To him and the delegates falls the task of uniting Europe - of succeeding by parliamentary means where centuries of conflict have failed. And to Winston Churchill is accorded, by Acting President Harriet, the founder's part in assembling the nations. Obtrusively absent from the Council's deliberations are the representatives of Western Germany. But meanwhile, under campaigners like Social-Democrat Kurt Schumacher, Germany has her first free elections since 1933. Max Reimann leads the Communist campaign.

Over 75 per cent of eligible voters turn out to cast their votes. Though the temper of election oratory was nationalistic, polling is orderly. In this tally, Schumacher's party runs second, the Communists last.

In Bonn as construction is speeded on the expected new home of the Government, is Kurt Adenauer, probably next Chancellor. His Christian Democrats ran first. As Western Germany draws closer to self-government, in Strasbourg Mr. Churchill moves that Germany be soon admitted to the Parliament of Europe. He offers a timely warning to the crowd - about his French.

Europe has much to forget, still more to seek for in the future. Her new Parliament offers the nations one more chance.