

WEST EUROPE'S MAINSTAY

Adenauer Is 'Indispensable' Man

By CHARLES M. McCANN
Of The United Press

A 78-year-old German has become Western Europe's indispensable man.

In Britain, Anthony Eden is ready to step into Winston Churchill's place at any time.

A change in leadership in France or Italy would not necessarily alter the present political picture.

But if anything happened to Chancellor Konrad Adenauer of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Western Allies would face a real crisis.

On Adenauer, more than on any other man, depends the successful carrying out of the London agreement by which Western Germany is to be rearmament.

Adenauer has the complete confidence of the Allies. They can trust him to see that rearmament is carried out within the prescribed limits, to ensure that the new German army is a democratic one and is not Prussianized.

Adenauer can be trusted, too, to keep Western Germany firmly aligned with the democracies against Soviet aggression or soviet schemes.

But Adenauer is Western Germany's sole outstanding leader. He rules alone. He has no political heir. There is nobody to fill his place.

Adenauer is hale and of a leathery toughness. But a man of 78 is old.

There are many Germans who

will not be satisfied with the limited rearmament permitted West Germany under the London agreement. Before long they will be clamoring for the Bonn Republic, as the most powerful country on the European continent outside of Russia, to take its proper place in the sun.

There are Germans who will oppose any rearmament. They will want Germany "neutralized," to become a military vacuum between the West and the East.

There will be Germans who will demand an agreement with Russia as the only means of reuniting East Germany with West Germany.

Adenauer is strong enough to resist all these elements. His successor might not be. He has no strong men around him. One

of the criticisms of him is that he likes to surround himself with little men.

At any rate, Adenauer is going well now. He does not show his age. He is ramrod straight. He has no need of eye-glasses. He has the energy of a man 40 years his junior. In his election campaign tours of one year ago he wore out the correspondents who accompanied him.

It is hard to realize that Adenauer was almost unknown outside of Germany five years ago, when he was elected chancellor of the new Bonn Republic.

He had spent years in politics, however, as a leader of the Christian Democratic party. He was mayor of Cologne from 1917 to 1933 when the Nazis forced him out. He served again as mayor, briefly, after World War

II. His party, in a political upset, won the first national West German election in 1949. One month later, he was elected chancellor by a majority of one vote—his own—in Parliament.

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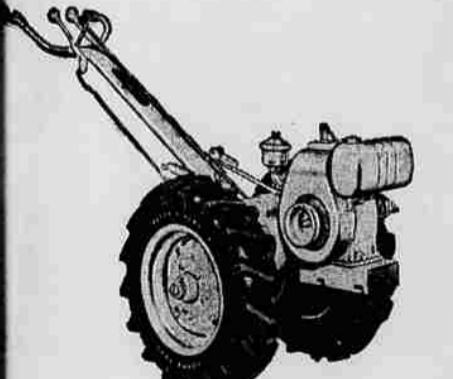
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