

NATIVE MINISTER ALLEGES:

“Half-truths” produced stories of Whites fleeing from Congo

By a Staff Reporter

PANIC REPORTING AND HALF-TRUTHS have led to stories that there is a mass-exodus of frightened Europeans from the Belgian Congo on the eve of independence—according to the Rev. George Molefe, a Presbyterian minister, who has just spent five weeks in the Congo. The stories, he says, are directed at South Africa and are an attempt at hardening the European attitude towards an independent Congo.

Mr. Molefe was the first Native minister to become a moderator of the Church over both Black and White in South Africa, when he became head of the Presbytery of the Eastern Province

He said that the present exodus of Belgians was part of the “seasonal exit” of women and children, which takes place every year.

During the months of June and July flights are usually

doubled from 30 aircraft to 60, and the exception this year is that an extra 20 flights have been laid on,” said Mr. Molefe.

HAVING NO FEAR

Many of these people leaving are children with their mothers. They have chosen to return to Belgium, not because they fear what may happen in the Congo but because they are not sure what the educational system of the new Government there will be.

“Far from there being panic in the Congo among the Whites I can say that not a single big European business is withdrawing.

“Hotels are packed with Belgians who have come for the celebrations. I am perfectly certain

that the celebrations will be a great success and that independence will also succeed.”

Mr. Molefe spoke to leaders of all political parties in the Congo and gained an impression that the Natives want the Europeans to stay.

FULL CITIZENSHIP

Moderate leaders like Albert Kalonji, Joseph Kasavubu, M. Gizenga and M. Tshombe have announced that they will grant full citizenship rights to all people, including the Europeans, when a government is formed.

Patrice Lumumba, leader of the “Leftist” element in the Congolese National Movement, had also subscribed to this view.

Mr. Molefe doubts that Patrice Lumumba will be the first Prime Minister, and got the impression that the moderate parties would form a coalition government.

Finally he said: “I am convinced the celebrations (on June 30) will be peaceful and that Europeans and Natives will participate without friction in them.”

(Mr. Molefe is a member of Moral Rearmament.)