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Catalonia home rule

Madrid.—The new leader of Catalonia's government Quim Torra yesterday said he was committed to achieving independence for Catalonia and wanted to enter into talks with new Spanish Prime

Minister Pedro Sanchez to end a standoff between Barcelona and Madrid. "This government is committed to moving towards an independent state in the form of a republic," Quim Torra said.



SANCHEZ ERA STARTS

Madrid.—Pedro Sanchez was sworn in yesterday as Spain's prime minister after ousting Mariano Ra-

joy in a vote of no confidence. The socialist came to power at a ceremony at the Zarzuela Palace on the

outskirts of Madrid presided over by the country's King Felipe VI. **See Page 25**

Ireland gives Britain two weeks to produce Brexit border proposals

London.—Britain must submit written proposals on how it plans to keep a frictionless border on the island of Ireland after Brexit in the next two weeks or face an uncertain summer of talks, Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney was quoted as saying yesterday.

The border between British-ruled Northern Ireland and the rest of Ireland will be Britain's only land frontier with the EU after it leaves the bloc. While both sides say they are committed to keeping the border open, finding a practical solution is still proving elusive.

The EU and Dublin insist Britain's withdrawal treaty must lock in a backstop arrangement guaranteeing Northern Ireland will abide by EU regulations in case a future trade pact does not remove the need for border controls. London has signed up to this but disagrees with the EU's means of achieving it.

FOX CONCERNED AT U.S. TARIFFS

No trade deal at any cost

● Britain won't sign up to any trade deal with the United States if it is not in its own interest, trade minister Liam Fox said yesterday, after U.S. tariffs on metals imports drew a rebuke from one of Washington's major European allies.

Britain has talked up the prospect of a trade deal with the United States as it prepares to leave the European Union, its biggest trading partner, next year.

But Britain, along with other EU countries, Canada and Mexico, has been hit by tariffs on steel and aluminium on exports to the United States. Fox, a champion of free trade, has called the move unlawful and asked Washington to reconsider, but he said it was not a mistake to pursue a trade deal.




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