

PART II

CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISPUTE

After this historical survey of the efforts made since January, 1935, to arrive at a pacific settlement, it is the Council's duty to deduce, from this survey and from the material before it, the circumstances of the Italo-Ethiopian dispute. The situation is such that the Council cannot wait for the full reply which the Ethiopian Government has promised to the Italian Government's detailed memorandum. The memorandum and its annexes, presented at Geneva in Italian on September 4th, have only just been received at Addis Ababa, and will naturally require protracted study on the part of the Ethiopian authorities.

The results of that study do not, however, seem absolutely essential for a general assessment of Ethiopia's position from the international standpoint, of the importance of the grievances urged by Italy, and of the development of Italo-Ethiopian relations up to the present time.

1. It has already been stated that, in its telegram of December 24th, 1934, the Italian Government represented the Walwal incident as the gravest of "a lengthy series of attacks carried out . . . in the frontier zone between Italian Somaliland and Ethiopia . . . with a view to disputing, by means of threatening acts, the legality of the presence of Italian detachments in certain frontier localities." Apart from this statement, and the subsequent statements explaining the despatch of troops to East Africa on the ground of the abnormal situation still prevailing on the frontiers and the military measures taken by Ethiopia, the Italian Government gave the Council, during a period of several months, no indication that it had any other or more serious grievances against Ethiopia.

The Council had hoped that the settlement of the question of the responsibility for the Walwal incident would put an end to the dispute. Various statements (some of which have been referred to above) made by the representative of Italy during the sessions prior to August, 1935, seemed to confirm that hope.

But, at its meeting on August 3rd, the Council found that it would be obliged to undertake the general examination, in its various aspects, of the relations between Italy and Ethiopia.

2. The memorandum which the Italian Government submitted to the Council on September 4th brought other charges against Ethiopia, which have now to be considered.

The memorandum recalls the history of the relations between Ethiopia and Italy, with the object of showing that Ethiopia does not fulfil her international obligations; it surveys the situation in Ethiopia itself, in order to prove that that country has not discharged its duties as a Member of the League, nor fulfilled the special undertakings which it contracted at the time of its admission to the League.