

ANNEX 1.

PROTEST SENT BY HIS IMPERIAL AND ROYAL HIGHNESS TAFARI MAKONNEN,
REGENT AND HEIR TO THE THRONE OF ABYSSINIA, TO THE STATES MEMBERS
OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

[Translation]

Our Government has recently received from the British and Italian Governments identical notes (Annexes 2 and 4) informing us that these Governments have arrived at an agreement to support each other with a view to obtaining a concession for the British Government to undertake the conservancy of the waters of our Lake Tsana, and for the Italian Government to construct a railway through our Empire.

We have been profoundly moved by the conclusion of this agreement concluded without our being consulted or informed, and by the action of the two Governments in sending us a joint notification.

In the first place, on our admission to the League of Nations we were told that all nations were to be on a footing of equality within the League, and that their independence was to be universally respected, since the purpose of the League is to establish and maintain peace among men in accordance with the will of God.

We were not told that certain Members of the League might make a separate agreement to impose their views on another Member, even if the latter considered those views incompatible with its national interests.

Secondly, one of the subjects covered by the agreement had already been discussed between the British Government and our own, and the fact that no conclusion had yet been reached was due to reasons of whose nature and importance we were fully aware; we had, however, never given any definite reply.

We cannot help thinking, therefore, that, in agreeing to support each other in these matters, and in giving us a joint notification of that agreement, the two Governments are endeavouring to exert pressure on us in order to induce us to comply with their demands prematurely, without leaving any time for reflection or consideration for our people's needs.

The people of Abyssinia are anxious to do right, and we have every intention of guiding them along the path of improvement and progress; but throughout their history they have seldom met with foreigners who did not desire to possess themselves of Abyssinian territory and to destroy their independence. With God's help, and thanks to the courage of our soldiers, we have always, come what might, stood proud and free upon our native mountains.

For this reason, prudence is needed when we have to convince our people that foreigners who wish to establish themselves for economic reasons in our country, or on the frontiers between it and their possessions, are genuinely innocent of concealed political aims; and we doubt whether agreements and joint representations such as those now in question are the best means of instilling that conviction.