

consequence requested the Secretary-General, in virtue of Articles 11 and 15 of the Covenant, to summon forthwith a meeting of the Council and Assembly and to ask them to take steps to end the aggression.

The Secretary-General telegraphed the text of the Finnish appeal on the day of its receipt to all Member States and requested the Members of the Council to meet in Geneva on December 9. He suggested that the Assembly should be convened on December 11, this date being later confirmed.

The Soviet Government answered the Secretary-General's telegram on December 4. M. Molotov stated in his reply that his Government considered the proposal to convene the Council and Assembly unjustified; the Soviet Union was not at war with Finland and had not threatened the Finnish nation with war; it was maintaining peaceful relations with the Democratic Republic of Finland, with which a pact of assistance had been signed on December 2; the Democratic Republic of Finland had asked the Soviet Government to assist them in liquidating as soon as possible the very dangerous seat of war created in Finland by its former rulers; the persons whom M. Holsti represented could not be regarded as mandatories of the Finnish people; if the Council and Assembly were convened at his request, the Soviet Government would be unable to take part in the proceedings; M. Holsti's letter to the Secretary-General was full of insults and calumnies against the Soviet Government and was incompatible with the respect due to the U.S.S.R.

Dispute referred to Assembly by Council

Normally the Finnish appeal would have been considered by the Council under Articles 11 and 15 of the Covenant. At the meeting of the Council on December 9, however, M. Holsti requested that the dispute should be referred by the Council to the Assembly in accordance with Paragraph 9 of Article 15, which provides for such a reference at the request of either party. By Paragraph 10 of the same Article the action and powers of the Council in such circumstances are transferred to the Assembly.

Appointment of Special Committee of Assembly

The Assembly, being thus seized of the dispute, appointed a Special Committee to consider it, after hearing a presentation of the Finnish case by M. Holsti. M. Holsti thanked States Members for the celerity with which they had answered the appeal. Soviet aggression had aroused worldwide indignation. The Soviet representatives in former Assemblies had constantly denounced aggression, declaring that it could in no circumstances be justified. He quoted extracts from a speech by M. Litvinof in the 1937 Assembly urging the League to take collective action against aggressor States. The principles professed by the Soviet Union must not be forgotten in judging their action against Finland. They now even claimed that Finland should not be allowed to present her case to the League because they had created a puppet government in a Finnish frontier village; yet the Soviet delegate in the Assembly of 1937 had declared that any assistance given to rebels against a lawful government was a flagrant violation of international law. The principles enunciated by the Soviet Government at successive Assemblies now rebounded upon themselves. Sympathy for Finland and condemnation of the Soviet Government, however, were not enough. Finland was fighting for her life as well as for the highest ideals. She was entitled to expect assistance from all civilized nations. In requesting the Assembly to meet, the Finnish Government expected it to find means to transform the world's sympathy into active help.