

It is a guarantee of an economic nature obtained for Italian enterprises as against British enterprises in order to avoid competition which might imperil the success of these enterprises and hinder that development of local resources which it may well be in the interests of Abyssinia to assist and promote.

(Signed) GRANDI.

V. LETTER FROM HIS IMPERIAL AND ROYAL HIGHNESS RAS TAFARI MAKONNEN, HEIR TO THE THRONE AND REGENT OF THE EMPIRE OF ABYSSINIA, TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

[Translation from the French]

Peace be with you.

On June 19th last I had the honour to send you, with the request that you would communicate it to the States Members of the League of Nations, the protest which the Imperial Government felt called upon to make against the agreement concluded between the British and Italian Governments by an exchange of notes dated December 14th and 20th, 1925, concerning their co-operation in the negotiations into which they contemplated entering with the Imperial Government in regard to their interests in Abyssinia.

The Imperial Government was very naturally troubled on learning that these two great Powers had come to an understanding as to their course of action towards a friendly country which is, like them, a Member of the League of Nations, without informing that country in advance.

The Imperial Government interpreted this as an indication of their intention to combine to exert pressure upon it in order to obtain certain economic advantages if the Imperial Government should consider that the general interests of Abyssinia dictated that those advantages should be withheld.

As thus interpreted, the Anglo-Italian Agreement was incompatible with the terms of the Covenant, since it constituted an indirect threat to the secular territorial integrity and political independence of Abyssinia, which, under Article 10, Great Britain and Italy, like the other Members of the League, have undertaken to respect. In our view, under Article 20 of the Covenant, they had no right to contract such an agreement; but as they had, of course, no intention of violating that article, their agreement could have no legal force in our regard and must be deemed to be null and void.

Accordingly, the Imperial Government would have felt no further apprehension had not the two Powers severally and on the same day brought the agreement officially to its notice. This simultaneous and concerted notification could only be interpreted as the first symptom of the intention to exert pressure, which the Imperial Government had from the outset thought it detected in their action.