

On behalf of my Government I have the honour to inform Your Highness that the agreement referred to is of a purely economic character, and, so far from being designed to infringe (injure) the sovereign rights of the Abyssinian Government, constitutes a further proof of the friendly intentions of Italy and Great Britain towards the Abyssinian Empire, which remains entirely free to grant or refuse any requests in connection with economic questions which either of the two Governments may make.

I shall have great pleasure in furnishing Your Highness with any particulars for which you may ask in regard to the agreement.

I have no doubt that, after due consideration, Your Highness will receive in a friendly manner, and without suspicion, the communication which I have the honour to make on behalf of my Government.

(Signed) COLLI,
Minister.

APPENDIX

Letter from the Italian Prime Minister to the British Ambassador at Rome.

[Translation from the Italian]

ROME, December 20th, 1925.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of the note of December 14th, in which your Excellency, on instructions from your Government, drew my attention to the problem of the irrigation of Egypt and the Sudan and to the negotiations hitherto conducted without result by the British Government to obtain from the Abyssinian Government the concession for the construction of a barrage at Lake Tsana with the object of storing the waters of the lake to feed the Blue Nile.

Your Excellency recalls in this connection the proposals which were presented in London in November 1919 by the delegates of the Italian Government for an amicable Anglo-Italian co-operation in this question, and you inform me that these proposals were not then accepted owing to the objection which was felt to the idea of allowing a foreign Power to establish any kind of control over the sources of rivers so vital to the prosperity and even the existence of Egypt and the Sudan; but that now, in view of the relations of reciprocal confidence so happily existing between our two Governments, His Britannic Majesty's Government desire to extend to this question the principle of friendly co-operation which has proved so valuable in other fields.

Your Excellency adds that His Britannic Majesty's Government has accordingly proceeded to a more careful examination of the question, and recognises that the Italian proposals are not in contradiction with the provisions of the Agreement of London of December 13th, 1906, since the object of that agreement is the maintenance of the *status quo* in Abyssinia on the basis of the international instruments indicated in Article 1 of the Agreement itself, and the co-ordination of the action of the signatory States in the protection of their respective interests so that these should not suffer prejudice.