

In the letter addressed to the Secretary-General by the Ethiopian delegation, the Ethiopian Government, finding that the Italian Government, like itself, was desirous of conciliation, agreed to the postponement of the discussion to the next session of the Council.

The Council decided to postpone the discussion after having taken note of these letters, in which the representatives of Italy and Ethiopia (1) declared their readiness to pursue the settlement of the incident in conformity with the spirit of the Treaty of Amity of 1928 between Italy and Ethiopia, and with Article 5 of that treaty; (2) pledged themselves to take all expedient measures and to give all instructions which could be of use for the avoidance of fresh incidents.

11. In March 1935, following this undertaking, the two Governments established a provisional neutral zone in the Walwal area. In the event of any infringement of the provisions agreed upon with regard to that zone, the Ethiopian and Italian officers commanding locally were to consult together with a view to a friendly settlement of any incidents that might occur, though they could always refer to their respective Governments.

12. The establishment of this neutral zone, intended to prevent the recurrence of such incidents as had taken place since the beginning of December 1934, seemed, at the time, calculated to diminish the tension between the two countries and to facilitate a pacific settlement by the procedure provided for in the Italo-Ethiopian Treaty of 1928.

13. According to the terms of that treaty and of the notes exchanged at the time between the two Governments, the latter, undertaking not to resort to armed force, should, if they could not settle their dispute by direct negotiations, each appoint two arbitrators to seek a solution by conciliation. If conciliation proved impossible, the two Governments should have recourse to arbitration, in which case the four arbitrators should agree upon the choice of a fifth arbitrator. The procedure provided for by the treaty might thus comprise three stages—direct negotiations, conciliation, arbitration.

Ethiopian Requests of March 16th and 17th

14. Between January 19th and March 16th, 1935, no communication was made by the parties to the League of Nations. During that period, negotiations had been pursued between the two Governments both on the question of the neutral zone in the Walwal area and with a view to the settlement of their dispute. The communications from the Ethiopian Government dated March 16th and 17th showed, however, that the Ethiopian Government regarded direct negotiations as being at an end. It complained that, in these negotiations, the Italian Government had "proceeded by way of injunctions, demanding reparation before the matter is examined at all," that it had declined the good offices of a third Power, and that it had not replied to "our repeated requests for arbitration on the dispute." This situation, which, it said, was aggravated by the "mobili-