

LETTER FROM THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT TO THE
CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE OF THIRTEEN.

(Translation).

Rome, April 3rd, 1936. XIV.

Sir,

I have received the letter dated March 23rd addressed to me by Your Excellency as Chairman of the Committee of Thirteen.

The Italian Government, while it is anxious to establish the truth regarding the facts of which a tendencious version is put forward in the Ethiopian statements, feels bound, first of all, to make every reservation regarding the competence of the Committee of Thirteen to deal with the questions referred to in your communication under reply.

I must further observe that there seems no justification for the view that charges made by the Italian Government to the League of Nations - for example, those relating to the use by the Ethiopians of dum-dum bullets, and to the atrocities practised on prisoners and non-combatant Italian civilians - could be considered as requiring no further action on the ground that they were brought at the same time to the attention of the International Red Cross Committee.

As a matter of fact, since the procedure contemplated in Article 30 of the Geneva Convention of July 27th, 1929, relates only to violations of rules laid down in that Convention itself, the charges of the Italian Government to which I have just referred, and which relate to violations of other conventions, and rules of a humanitarian character, could not normally be examined in any enquiry which the International Red Cross Committee might set on foot, and in fact are not at the present time, the object of any study on the part of that Committee.

In these circumstances, the Italian Government would be grateful if Your Excellency would be good enough to inform it whether the attention of the Ethiopian Government has been drawn - in a manner corresponding to the action taken by your letter of March 23rd above referred to - to the charges of the Italian Government relating to the use by Ethiopia of methods of warfare forbidden by International regulations, and to the atrocities practised on prisoners and non-combatant Italian civilians, and whether that Government has been requested to put forward such observations as it may desire to make on the subject.

I have the honour, etc.

(Signed) SUVICH.