

What Ethiopia asks is that, in mere justice, she should be given facilities to acquire more complete and more up-to-date defensive material than she now possesses. She does not desire it for purposes of attack. The Ethiopian Government and people only ask to live at peace with their neighbours. They are not afraid of war, but they are convinced that peace is the ultimate good of the peoples. The peace that they demand can only be a peace of justice, charity and truth, and not a peace of capitulation and spoliation.

Before replying to the "Paris suggestions", the Ethiopian Government was anxious to give the League an opportunity of hearing its observations on the impression made upon it by those "suggestions" and by the remarks accompanying them when they were submitted to us.

The Ethiopian Government has already declared, and remains convinced, that any reply it might make, before the League has expressed its opinion, would have the result, in practice, of depriving the Members and organs of the League of the opportunity of expressing publicly—that is to say, in complete independence and freedom, before the whole world—their views as to the best way of settling the existing conflict between Italy, declared to have broken the Covenant, and the League, the guardian of the Covenant.

No one can doubt that a precedent is about to be created, the consequences of which are incalculable. Will the League's authority and prestige be upheld and strengthened or will one of the fundamental provisions of the Covenant cease to exist? Will the guarantee of collective security be but a vain promise, an undertaking of no practical significance?

It is not the Italo-Ethiopian conflict alone that is involved, but a general problem of vital concern to all the States Members of the League.

The Ethiopian Government does not think it is mistaken in defining this general problem in the following terms.

In order to put an end to an aggression cynically prepared during a period of months, and duly established by the Council and the Assembly unanimously, more than fifty States have taken the resolve, unexampled in history, to exert financial and economic pressure upon the aggressor with the object of making him abandon his criminal enterprise. The aggressor has replied to the League and to the States that have exerted that pressure, by threats, reprisals, sarcasms, and Press attacks, to such an extent, indeed, that there have been moments when irreparable acts of violence seemed inevitable. The aggressor has continued to wage merciless war on his victim, massacring thousands of women and children with the aid of his powerful armament and bombing undefended towns and hospitals marked with the Red Cross. He has poured ridicule upon "sanctions against an aggressor for whom", he says, "the peoples of Ethiopia have long been waiting and who has brought them the first rudiments of civilisation"—in the form of explosive and incendiary bombs. It is at this precise moment that proposals have been submitted to the victim and to the aggressor with a view to the cessation of hostilities.