

We do not yet know how the parties will welcome our suggestions, and I suppose that, in the meantime, the Council itself will wish to avoid expressing an opinion. In any case, I think it my duty to state forthwith that, if this effort does not secure the consent of all the interested parties, the Council will not be relieved of its duty to explore every avenue and to allow no opportunity to escape with a view to bringing about an honourable and just solution of the present conflict, such as is required both by the interests of peace and by the spirit of the League of Nations.

M. WOLDE MARIAM, representative of Ethiopia: The Ethiopian Government has respectfully expressed to the League of Nations, in a note dated December 12th, 1935, its desire not to reply to the proposals of the United Kingdom and French Governments until they have been examined and freely and publicly discussed by the League.

So far as it is directly concerned, the Ethiopian Government has always attached the greatest weight to the recommendations of the organs of the League. It has placed its trust in them. It desires to renew the expression of its gratitude to them for the moral and material support it has received from the League in the terrible war in which it is engaged and which has been forced upon it in defence of its independence and territorial integrity. After the steps that have been taken to enforce observance of the obligations of the Covenant, it cannot believe that the Ethiopian people will be abandoned and delivered over to its cruel enemy, seeing that the Ethiopian Government has always punctiliously conformed to all the procedures of the Treaties and of the Covenant and has neglected no opportunity of manifesting its peaceful sentiments.

The Ethiopian Government takes this opportunity to reply to a charge that has often been brought against Ethiopia by her enemies—namely, that the Ethiopian armies are incapable of defending the territory and the independence of the Empire, and that the Emperor is calling upon the States that have condemned the aggressor to fight for him.

The Italian Government, which commands 44 millions of subjects, does not hesitate to drive to their death tens of thousands of Askaris and Dubats in order to exterminate a small nation of ten million people and to destroy their homes.

The Government and people of Ethiopia do not ask any people in the world to come to Africa and shed their blood in defence of Ethiopia. The blood of Ethiopians will suffice for that.

If they had had a larger quantity of arms and ammunition, the Ethiopian warriors, who do not fear death, would not have allowed the Italian aggressor to make even the small advance that has been achieved, after two and a half months of war, by hundreds of thousands of mercenaries, directed by Italian officers and non-commissioned officers, commanded by the best Italian generals, and served by the largest and most perfected armament that has ever been assembled on African soil. The Ethiopian Government has followed the tactics that have always been adopted by weak and unarmed peoples when attacked by a numerically strong and powerfully armed enemy.