

In conclusion, Mr. Eden said that His Majesty's Government had had before them, ever since the beginning of the Spanish conflict, two main objectives from which they had not departed and would not depart. They wished to do the utmost that lay in their power to ensure that the Spanish conflict should not spread and involve all Europe in its consequences, and, secondly, to ensure that whatever the final outcome of the Spanish civil war the territorial integrity of Spain should be preserved. He was of the opinion that the danger of the Spanish conflict spreading was less than it was in the late summer of last year, but it had not yet finally disappeared. All desired a European settlement. The preservation of the territorial integrity of Spain was a matter of great moment to His Majesty's Government.

Mr. Eden then said that surely the main purpose of the meeting of the Council was to uphold and endorse the work of the Non-intervention Committee, to emphasize their wish for the early withdrawal of all foreign nationals from Spain, and themselves to determine to do all in their power to facilitate the result both by constructive co-operation and by resisting the temptation to indulge in polemics or provocation. It was the cause of peace above all others that they were there to observe.

New Zealand was represented at the Council meeting by myself, and following is a copy of my remarks :—

"I am sure we all feel the responsibility of the position in which we find ourselves at this table of the Council of the League of Nations. We have made a definite pledge with a purpose. The eyes of the world are on the Council at this time. Whatever the matter in dispute may be, whatever the cause of the conflict, the people of the world are shocked at the dreadful happenings in Spain, and the situation at the present time surely calls for some action.

"When it was announced in the papers of the world that the League was to meet this week, prayers went up from millions of people for the success of our deliberations. I am sure that the members of the Council are conscious of the responsibility which falls upon them by being here and having to deal with this matter.

"As it is a function of the League to safeguard the lives of people, to maintain peace, and to uphold lawful and constitutional Governments against invasion and the violence of outside Powers, it is now undoubtedly time that some decision in the Spanish situation was taken if the League is going to act at all in the matter.

"It has been said that progress has been made since December, when the Council previously considered the situation. Undoubtedly, progress has been made, but during that time thousands of lives have been lost—men, women, and children; not only combatants, but innocent persons have been slaughtered. Thousands of children have been removed to England, and we express our gratitude for the action taken by the people of that country. Many of those children may never again see their parents.

"Authoritative evidence which has been made public recently shows that the military forces of outside Powers are operating in Spain. Is it the determination of those Powers to operate in opposition to the fundamental principles which the League was established to uphold? We have before us the report of the Spanish Government, which contains one hundred documents, alleging that at least one outside Power has a fully equipped army in Spain committing acts of aggression not only against the people of Spain, but also against the political independence of that country, and submitting weighty evidence in support of the allegations. Do we question the authenticity of these documents? If not, the evidence which they furnish must be received and treated with the utmost gravity by the Council.

"There is no need to detail independent reports which show what is happening in Spain. I will merely mention a report published by four prominent women in the United Kingdom, three of them members of Parliament, and also the report of a representative religious delegation. Some of the foremost of the Christian men and women of the United Kingdom visited Spain recently for the purpose of obtaining first-hand knowledge, and any one who reads these and other reports must agree that what is going on in Spain to-day is one of the most flagrant challenges to the authority of the League which has occurred in its history.

"On the other hand, we have received a copy of a statement by General Franco charging the elected Government with being supporters of anarchy and crime, but submitting no evidence in support of the statement. From this table last December the question was asked, What case is there from these people who claim that the election in Spain was irregular? The question was asked, Why do they not come forward and make a statement? How can the League Council be expected to know the details and how can these people be respected by the Council if they fight and kill the citizens of one of the League members, and at the same time withhold from us evidence of what they say is the cause of the trouble?

"Whatever the political views of the elected Spanish Government may be, is there any justification for the invasion of Spain by an outside Power? The only action taken so far by any power associated with the League appears to be the imposition of an embargo which has handicapped the Government and strengthened the hands of its aggressors.

"What is the Council definitely going to do? We have heard a speech on the prospects of success of the work of the Non-intervention Committee. We are informed that a report was presented last Wednesday. We have heard that the Governments of Europe cannot be satisfied that the objectives of the Non-intervention Committee have been realized until the last foreigner has been withdrawn and until that unhappy country has been allowed to settle her own destinies in her own way. It has been said that the main purpose of this meeting of the Council is to uphold and endorse the work of the Non-intervention Committee, to emphasize our wish for the early withdrawal of all foreign nationals from Spain, and ourselves to determine to do all in our power to facilitate the result. That sentiment is shared by all the members of the Council. We pray for the success of the Non-intervention Committee and we are determined to do all in our power to facilitate the result, but when we say we will do all in our power I ask the question, What action, if any, is being taken? In other words, are we making progress? I hope we are.