

- “(f) Trusting that these Governments did not consider that the expression ‘in the near future’ could be applied to the period of seven months which has elapsed since the draft resolution was submitted to the Assembly;
- “(g) Observing that it is a measure which can be adopted individually by each country without necessity for concerted action;
- “(h) Observing that in a similar situation the strict application of rights under international law has not resulted in a general conflagration,

“Invites the member States of the League who voted in favour of the draft resolution on the Spanish situation, presented to the Assembly by the Sixth Committee on October 2nd, 1937, to envisage as from the present moment the end of the policy of non-intervention.”

Seven months had elapsed since the Assembly had envisaged the termination of the policy of non-intervention should foreign forces not be withdrawn from Spain in the near future. It is true that when the motion embodying this was put to the vote it was lost, but thirty-two States voted for it, and amongst that number were all the members of the Council with the exception of two, who abstained. The Spanish representative's motion before the Council was put to the vote, two members voting for, and four against, but M. del Vayo must have left Geneva with a certain feeling of satisfaction that nine members had abstained from voting. These abstentions are hardly proof of the success of the policy of non-intervention. I felt it would be in accordance with New Zealand's general line of policy if I abstained. However, I, like others, felt that a few words were needed in justification of my abstention, and I quote what I said:—

“I should like to explain why I abstained from voting. I had, of course, no time to consult the Government of New Zealand; therefore I acted as I thought they would have acted had they been here. The proposal is that non-intervention be disregarded. We know that to a great extent it is disregarded already, but to pass a resolution here that non-intervention should be ended is rather a dangerous thing to do. I feel, however, that my Government would rather have passed a resolution to the effect that the League would enforce non-intervention. But to throw it open and make it ‘free for all’ would, of course, have the effect which we do not desire. I repeat that my Government would have played its part in any non-intervention work that might have been decided upon by the League. We look forward to the day when we shall do something to stop the spread of war rather than pass resolutions to withdraw from action that is being attempted, even though it may be only partially effective.”

If the Spanish Government's aim in again bringing the question of foreign intervention in Spain before the Council was nothing more than a desire to prove to the world the unfortunate way in which the policy of non-intervention was being applied, the Government succeeded in its aim, for there were certainly nine States which, though not prepared to vote for the motion, were unwilling to vote against it.

QUESTION OF THE CONSEQUENCES ARISING OUT OF THE EXISTING SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA.

This item was inscribed on the agenda at the instance of the Government of the United Kingdom. Two public meetings, both held on the 12th May, were devoted to its discussion. The Emperor Haile Selassie appeared in person to represent his country, and he was supported by a staff consisting of two Ethiopians and two English Professors. At the beginning of this report I have referred to this question. The desire of the United Kingdom Government was nothing more than to obtain a clarification of the position. Some members of the League had recognized the Italian conquest of Ethiopia, others were willing to recognize but were deterred by certain resolutions of the League, particularly one of 1932 (arising from Japanese aggression in Manchuria), and they looked for guidance; whilst others were prepared to recognize the conquest only if such recognition were the result of a decision of League members taken collectively. But, of course, the position was not so simple. I have already written enough to show that the clarification required was only part of a larger question. The minutes of the fifth and sixth meetings of the Council are well worth perusal. At private exchanges of views amongst the members of the Council which had previously taken place, the question of credentials had been raised, and there was a discussion, much of it futile. The result of the discussion was the compromise represented by the President's opening remarks:—

“It was the desire of the Council to assure the participation of delegates of the Emperor Haile Selassie in the discussions of the Council on Item 18 of its agenda, without prejudice to questions of principle and irrespective of the precise character of their full powers. I have been informed that His Majesty Haile Selassie has expressed the wish himself to participate in the discussions and, in accordance with the desire of the Council, I invite him to come to the Council table.”

When the Emperor was seated, Lord Halifax, as representing the Government which had inscribed the item on the agenda, spoke. After explaining the position, he said that the United Kingdom Government in no way criticized the action of members of the League who had already recognized the conquest. He even went further, since he suggested it was the view of his Government that the situation was one in which members might without disloyalty take such action, and at such time, as might seem to them appropriate. On the other hand, he did not suggest that the action of the Italian Government should be condoned; his Government would not go back on the judgment already given by the League. He hoped, however, that his colleagues on the Council would share his Government's view that the “question of the recognition of Italy's position in Ethiopia is one which every member of the League must be held entitled to decide for itself in the light of its own situation and obligations,” although the expression of such opinion on the part of some members would not of itself impose an obligation on others to