

1939.

NEW ZEALAND.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

REPORT OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DOMINION OF NEW ZEALAND ON THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIRST, ONE HUNDRED AND SECOND, ONE HUNDRED AND THIRD, AND ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTH SESSIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS HELD AT GENEVA IN THE YEARS 1938 AND 1939.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

ONE HUNDRED AND FIRST SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

New Zealand Government Offices,
415 Strand, London, W.C. 2, 19th May, 1938.

MY DEAR PRIME MINISTER,—

I have the honour to inform you that on the night of Saturday, the 7th May, I left London for Geneva, in order to attend, as the representative of New Zealand, the one hundred and first session of the Council of the League of Nations, due to open on Monday, the 9th May. I was accompanied by the following members of my staff: Mr. R. M. Campbell, Mr. C. A. Knowles, and Miss J. R. McKenzie.

The agenda of the session is Document C. 109 (1), M. 59 (1), 1938.

Besides a number of items which reappear regularly, the agenda contained such items as the Appeal of the Chinese Government, the Appeal of the Spanish Government, and the Question of the Consequences arising out of the Existing Situation in Ethiopia—all problems of major importance.

Each item will be considered here to the extent required by its importance, but I should like to write a few sentences by way of preface.

How often has the League been said to be suffering from *malaise*? The word is somewhat worn, but it does represent a condition, an atmosphere, which can be felt when one enters that part of the life of Geneva which is confined to League circles. The detractors of the League say that it is dead. Its most devoted friends would hardly aver that it is strikingly alive for practical action. The truth, perhaps, lies between these two extremes. That part of its work which attracts little attention in the press goes quietly but effectively on. Politically, however, it is marking time, and many of its adherents have a fear of action which might weaken its authority. They endeavour to act with circumspection, some would say with hesitation, for they that know every move is closely watched by enemies ever ready to trounce the Geneva institution. For these reasons the action of the British Government in placing on the agenda the item "The Question of the Consequences arising out of the Existing Situation in Ethiopia" was questioned in some quarters as a further possible step towards disintegration. The situation was unsatisfactory. Collective responsibility ruled when sanctions were imposed, and when they were abandoned, but collective responsibility had not marked the conduct of States in their subsequent relations with Italy in regard to the recognition of the Italian occupation of Ethiopia. Lately, members of the League were faced with the problem of squaring their loyalty to collective responsibility with ordinary acts of courtesy towards Italy; and, on first thought, the proposal of the British Government to inscribe the item on the agenda of the Council session would have brought a sense of relief to a certain number of States. But the position was not so simple. There had recently been signed in Rome a Protocol, with annexes, regulating several outstanding differences between the United Kingdom and Italy. At the same time there were exchanged between the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs and His Majesty's Ambassador in Rome letters containing Italian assurances in regard to policy in Spain, Spanish possessions overseas, and the Spanish Zone of Morocco, and the intentions of the United Kingdom concerning the clarification of the position of members of the League in regard