

to the situation in Ethiopia. As to the second of these two points, I will permit myself a quotation from a letter addressed by Lord Perth to Count Ciano :—

“ I have further the honour to inform Your Excellency that His Majesty's Government, being desirous that such obstacles as may at present be held to impede the freedom of member States as regards recognition of Italian sovereignty over Ethiopia should be removed, intend to take steps at the forthcoming meeting of the Council of the League of Nations for the purpose of clarifying the situation of member States in this regard.”

We therefore have a definite connection between the agreement and the position of Italy in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian question will be dealt with later. I mention it here because nothing, not even the Japanese action in China nor the conflict in Spain, has struck so distinct a keynote in any session of the Council with which I have been connected as did the Ethiopian question in the session under review. For, be it noted, it was not a question of the Council's taking action or not taking action on an appeal by a member State, but of a decision, or at least an invitation to express opinions, which would justify States members who had remained faithful to collective responsibility to act independently and thus perhaps to render the Covenant, or Articles of the Covenant and certain resolutions of the Assembly mere scraps of paper.

The first meeting (which was private) of the session was held on the afternoon of the 9th May, when the agenda was adopted. To the items as printed it was decided to add the following: Advisory Committee on Social Questions; Report on the Work of its Second Session; Appointments to the Committee for Communications and Transit; Effect of the Closing of the International Educational Cinematographic Institute on the Convention for Facilitating the International Circulation of Films of an Educational Character (at the suggestion of Lord Halifax, representative of the United Kingdom). The Council also decided to accept the United Kingdom representative's motion that the Report of the Advisory Committee of Experts on Slavery on the Work of its Fifth Session, together with the annexes, should be published in full. Further, the Council agreed to the proposal of Lord Halifax that he should make, at the first public meeting of the session, a statement on the agreement recently concluded between the United Kingdom and Italy.

The Council met in public on the morning of the 10th May. After a formal declaration that the session was open, the President, M. V. Munters, the Latvian Minister of Foreign Affairs, invited Lord Halifax to speak. He stated that as the agreement between the United Kingdom and Italy had been distributed to the Council it was not his intention to make a detailed analysis. Nor would he dwell on the history of Anglo-Italian relations since the invasion of Ethiopia by Italy. There had been tension, especially in the Mediterranean, and with far-reaching effects. It was not only in the interests of the two countries, but in those of others, that agreement should be reached, and he felt that the agreement that had been made would react favourably upon the general sense of security not only in Europe, but throughout the world, and contribute to the cause of international peace.

Short speeches of a congratulatory nature were made by the representatives of France, Roumania, (speaking on behalf of the Little Entente and the Balkan Entente), Belgium, and Poland. M. Litvinoff, representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, while welcoming an agreement entered into with a view to removing misunderstandings and disputes, struck the following note of warning :—

“ In dealing with bilateral pacts, we have to take into consideration not only their effect upon the relationship between the two parties concerned, but also upon the relations between those parties and the rest of the world. We have also to take into consideration the effect which such agreements may have on those problems which are still before the League of Nations and which still remain to be dealt with. We therefore reserve our final judgment upon the importance of this agreement from this point of view. We may still express the hope that these problems will certainly not suffer from that agreement.”

APPEAL OF CHINA.

The Council having taken note of the various statements, its President invited Mr. Wellington Koo, the representative of China, to address the gathering in regard to the appeal of the Chinese Government. The representative of China pointed out that the resolution passed by the Assembly in October, 1937, and that adopted by the Council in February, 1938, had remained ineffective because little or nothing had been done by States members, with one exception, to render aid to China. On the contrary, the difficulties of obtaining supplies of arms and war material by China had increased. Such apathy and indifference were not only disappointing to China, but, in his opinion, were bound to prejudice the cause of law and order and the general interests of peace, if not rectified in time.

Mr. Wellington Koo then referred to the campaign in China, to the Japanese pressure, and to the heroic efforts of the Chinese to stem the tide of invasion, efforts which he was bound to say were then favouring the Chinese in their heroic struggle. He uttered a note of warning as to the possible use by the Japanese of poison gas in an attempt to break through the Chinese lines on the Shantung front, and he drew the serious attention of the Council to this threat. He contended that in a conflict such as the Sino-Japanese conflict there could be no question of neutrality for members of the League, for they had undertaken definite obligations under the Covenant. Mr. Wellington Koo reaffirmed his view that there was a connection between the trouble in the Far East and problems in Europe, and that a termination of the conflict in China would facilitate European appeasement, and he asked for the application of concrete measures.

At the end of the speech the meeting concluded on the understanding that the Chinese representative's statement should be examined and discussed at a later meeting.

It is reasonable to suppose that in again bringing his country's case before the Council the Chinese representative had some hope that action would be taken. There was indeed an informal exchange of