

"Let us recall also Article 10 of the Covenant, which reads: 'The members of the League undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League.'

"The New Zealand Government stand by that resolution as unanimously adopted by the Assembly, and they stand by the Covenant. We repeat and reaffirm our considered view that there is no material fault in the Covenant as it stands, that the fault lies in the failure—in our failure as Governments—to apply it. While New Zealand recognizes that the League has, on more than one occasion, failed to fulfil its functions, and that the Covenant does not to-day provide the protection it was meant to afford, the New Zealand Government still regard it as absolutely necessary that the Covenant should remain in force in its present or a similar form, and deplore any step which would tend to weaken its provisions or the authority of the League.

"In our view, the League of Nations should not divest itself of responsibility by leaving the issue to individual Governments, each to choose for itself, for that is a direct denial of the collective responsibility which is fundamental.

"The League in its Assembly agreed to sanctions. The Assembly condemned Italy's aggression in Ethiopia. Now the Council is considering the question of allowing any who wish to do so to take their own line of action. It cannot be right to go back on the principles of the Covenant, or to condone acts of aggression, and while that is neither stated nor intended yet our action might be so interpreted. It was the Assembly which recommended the lifting of sanctions, at the same time reaffirming its attachment to the principles of the Covenant. It is the League, acting collectively, and not Governments acting separately, which should have dealt with the matter.

"My Government holds the view that if recognition were to be afforded it should have been in accordance with a general resolution of the League and not by separate decisions by individual members. What is the League formed for? Surely, to safeguard the independence of States. States have declared in effect that they would not interfere with the independence of other nations, the desire being to stop the operation of the laws of the jungle and to oppose the philosophy that the weak must go to the wall. The proceedings in which we are engaged, however they may be disguised, will only be regarded as a stage further in the surrender to aggression, and will be regarded as one further step in the retreat from collective security—a retreat the consequences of which are seen in the frantic search in so many countries for a security sought in the superior armed strength of each country over every other country. That is the tragedy of the retreat from collective security. It directly connects our proceedings here with the race in armaments, and we cannot help recalling that the expenditure on armaments in all countries renders impossible those high standards of well-being and living which the world to-day is capable of providing.

"The suggestion of to-day is a compromise between leaving the League and remaining loyal to the Covenant. According to this suggestion any nation may remain in the League and, at the same time, disregard the terms of the Covenant. It seems illogical to retain the Covenant and decide that any member State who wishes may disregard it.

"The New Zealand Government cannot support any proposal which would involve, either directly or by implication, approval of a breach of the Covenant."

At length the discussion came to an end, and the President summed up. I extract the following from his closing speech:—

"It is clear that, in spite of regrets which have been expressed, the great majority of the members of the Council feel that, so far as the question which we are now discussing is concerned, it is for the individual members of the League to determine their attitude in the light of their own situation and their own obligations."

On this note the debate closed, and the meeting was adjourned.

At a private meeting held on the afternoon of the 13th May the following items were considered:—

COMPLAINTS FROM CERTAIN FORMER OFFICIALS OF THE GOVERNING COMMISSION OF THE SAAR TERRITORY.

These complaints have come before the Council on several occasions, and at the one hundredth session the Council directed that the matter should be examined again. Its history is contained in Document C.183, 1938, V. The position, briefly, is that five former officials of the Governing Commission have a grievance in that they were excluded, at the instance of the German Government, from the operation of an agreement regulating the treatment to be accorded to officials of the Saar in the event of the return of that territory to Germany. After listening to a brief statement by the Secretary-General the Council decided to pay to these officials a further *ex gratia* sum of eighteen months salary, involving a total expenditure of 30,979 Swiss francs, to be taken from the item of the Budget entitled "Unforeseen Expenditure."

APPOINTMENTS.

(a) Health Committee.

This has reference to the composition of the Health Committee, a modification of which was found to be necessary owing to the difficulty on occasions of obtaining a quorum. The Health Committee itself gave consideration to the problem during its last session and made a suggestion to meet the difficulty. This is as follows: The Health Committee will include four substitute members