

(October 15th, 1935)

The League of Nations and the Ethiopian Question

BY THE HON. N. W. ROWELL, K.C., LL.D.

MR. ROWELL:—Mr. President and gentlemen, I am sure we all feel very happy today that the election is over. We are now able to turn our attention to other matters affecting Canada outside of our immediate borders. Events of transcendent importance are happening at the present time in Geneva. It is difficult for us to realize that what is going on in Geneva is something entirely new in human history. Never before has a great power been called before its peers to stand trial as to whether it has violated its obligations by commencing an aggressive war against a weaker neighbor. As a friend from England remarked to me yesterday, the thing that is noteworthy is not the caution with which the League is proceeding, but the fact that it is proceeding at all, because most critics, and many of its friends, have believed that the League would not have the courage to deal with a great power resorting to war against a smaller power. This, the League has shown it has the courage to do.

May I just enumerate the steps taken during the past week, so that we may appreciate their significance and importance. On Monday last the members of the Council of the League—the thirteen associates of Italy—rendered the solemn decision that Italy had violated her obligations under Article XII of the Covenant by commencing an aggressive war against Ethiopia. The effect of this decision was that sanctions had to be imposed. On Wednesday, the Council submitted that decision to the Assembly, and none, save Austria and Hungary, registered any dissent. On

Thursday, after hearing Italy's defence and a statement of the views of several of the Governments concerned, fifty Governments, representing three-quarters of the entire population of the world, sat in judgment on Italy's conduct and concurred in the decision of the Council that Italy had violated obligations under the Covenant and that sanctions should be imposed. On Friday, the League members approved the first collective penalty, an embargo on arms shipments to Italy, and the lifting of the embargo, so far as one existed, against Ethiopia. Yesterday, fifty nations joined in voting financial sanctions against Italy, which involve the stopping of all financial transactions between the member States and Italy, and recommended that, "The Governments be invited to put into operation at once such measures as they can enforce without fresh legislation, and to take all practicable steps so that measures recommended will be completely in operation by October 31st." Today, while we are meeting here, the Committee on Sanctions is considering economic sanctions, which involve the cutting off of trade with Italy.

In the United States events of no little importance and significance have been happening. The President has issued a proclamation under the neutrality legislation of the last session of Congress, imposing an embargo upon shipments of arms to both the belligerents, and at the same time he warned all American citizens against travelling on the ships of either of the belligerents, and Mr. Hull, Secretary of State, has warned all American citizens that if they carry on trade with Italy or Ethiopia, they do so at their own risk. As Ethiopia has no ships and Italy carries on a large shipping business, the effect of the President's proclamation is indirectly beneficial to Ethiopia.

May I review briefly the events which have led up to the present position and the action which the League is now taking?

I shall first mention the principal treaties which govern the relations between Italy and Ethiopia, and which require that both countries should settle any disputes arising between them by peaceful means.

1. *The Covenant of the League of Nations.* Abyssinia

was admitted to the League in 1923. In her application for admission appears the following:

"The Holy Scriptures bear witness that since the year 1500 after Solomon we have been contending with the heathen by whom (as may be seen from the map of our country) we are surrounded—for the faith and the laws of God, and to maintain the independence of our country and the freedom of our religion."

Abyssinia's application was referred to a Committee of the League, and it is important to bear in mind that Great Britain and certain other powers hesitated to admit Abyssinia without further inquiry as to her ability to discharge her international obligations, and also on account of the slavery existing there, but a majority of the Members of the Committee, led by France and Italy, contended that Ethiopia should be admitted. The Italian delegate, speaking to the Committee, stated he "considered that Abyssinia's request constituted a tribute to the League of Nations. This tribute was of great value as coming from a distant nation which had hitherto remained outside the great international movements, but which, by the remarkable tenacity with which it had been able to preserve its religious faith and national character throughout the ages, had acquired titles to nobility to which due justice may be paid there." The view of Italy and France prevailed. The Committee recommended Abyssinia's admission subject to her giving certain undertakings as to the suppression of slavery and the import of arms, which Abyssinia gave, and by a unanimous vote of the League she was admitted. Upon her admission she became entitled to the full benefit of the Covenant, including the provisions of Articles X to XVI.*

Under Article X 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.

Under Article XII the Members of the League agree

*For relevant Articles of the Covenant see Appendix "A."

that if there should arise between them any dispute likely to lead to a rupture they will submit the matter either to arbitration or judicial settlement or to enquiry by the Council, and they agree in no case to resort to war until three months after the award by the arbitrators or the judicial decision or the report by the Council.

Article XV provides that in case a dispute should arise between Members of the League likely to lead to rupture, which is not submitted to arbitration or judicial determination under Article XIII, the Members agree that they will submit the matter to the Council. Under this Article the functions of the Council are two-fold: first, to endeavor to effect a settlement by conciliation, and, second, if unable to effect a settlement, then to present a report on the merits of the dispute, and, if unanimously agreed to by other than the representatives of one or more of the parties to the dispute, the Members of the League agree that they will not go to war with any party to the dispute which complies with the recommendations of the report.

Article XVI sets out the sanctions which may be imposed. I shall refer to them later.

2. *The Treaty of Friendship and Arbitration*, entered into between Italy and Abyssinia in 1928, under which the two Governments pledged themselves not to take, under any pretext, any action which might be detrimental to the independence of the other, and that should any dispute arise between them which could not be settled by the usual diplomatic means, they would submit it to a procedure of conciliation or arbitration, without having recourse to the force of arms. It was under this Treaty that the Walwal incident was settled.

3. *The Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact*, of 1929, under which the signatories renounced war as an instrument of national policy and agreed to settle all disputes arising between them by peaceful means.

4. *The General Act*, which supplements the Covenants of the League and covers all classes of disputes, and makes provision for their peaceful settlement.

5. Both Italy and Abyssinia are signatories to the Protocol, constituting the Permanent Court of International

Justice, and they also signed the Optional Clause, which gives the Court compulsory jurisdiction in disputes of a juridical nature arising between them.

There are five distinct international Treaties to which Italy and Abyssinia are parties, and by which they are committed to the peaceful settlement of all international disputes. It is because Italy has, in violation of her obligations, resorted to war against Abyssinia, that the League is now proceeding against her. If a nation can thus violate her obligations with impunity, we face international anarchy, and there is no longer any secure foundation upon which international relations can be based.

In considering the Italo-Ethiopian dispute there are two distinct questions which we should keep in mind, first, the merits of the dispute, and, secondly, the method of settlement. I think there is some danger of confusing the two. We in Canada are not immediately concerned as to whether the merits of the dispute lay on one side or the other. Our chief concern is the method Italy has adopted for settling the dispute. May I give a simple illustration?

Two neighbors have a dispute over a line fence. Jones says it should be in one place, Brown says it should be in another, and they are unable to agree. Jones, instead of having it settled through the Courts, takes a club and hits Brown over the head or shoots Brown's wife or children, to force him to agree to Jones' demand; then a new situation has been created. There has been a breach of the peace, in which the whole community is vitally interested, and the State must prosecute and punish the one who has done wrong. One has only to broaden the field into the international sphere. Under the Covenant of the League of Nations provision is made for the peaceful settlement of all disputes, and for proceeding against a State which, in violation of its obligations, takes the law into its own hands and wages an unprovoked war against another State. This, Italy has done, and it is this international crime which is of vital importance to Canada.

May I, however, point out, with reference to the merits, that the original dispute arose over what was known as the Walwal incident, on December 5th, 1934, in which some

130 Ethiopian soldiers were killed, and some 30 or 40 Italian native soldiers. Italy demanded from Abyssinia an apology, that Abyssinia should salute the Italian flag at Walwal, that those who participated in the fight should be punished, and that Abyssinia should pay a substantial indemnity. Abyssinia, on the other hand, contended that Italy was responsible, and she appealed to the League, and also asked for arbitration or conciliation under the provisions of the Treaty of 1928. After a great deal of pressure by the League, and prolonged delays due to Italy's attitude, it was finally agreed that the matter should be submitted to arbitration under this Treaty. In the meantime, however, Italy proceeded to mobilize and despatch troops to Africa and mass them on the borders of Abyssinia. On September 3rd the arbitrators rendered a unanimous decision that neither Italy nor Abyssinia was responsible for the incident, which grew out of an unfortunate train of circumstances, and that no compensation was payable by either to the other. In discussing this matter at the meeting of the Council on July 31st, Baron Aloisi, referring to the procedure under the Treaty of 1928 said, "The Italian Government attaches the utmost importance to the success of that procedure which, in its view, must determine who was the aggressor at Walwal on December 5th, 1934. The aggression at Walwal was the origin of the present situation." The decision of the arbitrators covered, not only the Walwal incident, but all subsequent incidents. One would have thought that this would have ended the entire controversy; it certainly should have. But when the Council met on September 4th and received the report of the arbitrators, Italy presented a new series of charges against Abyssinia, consisting principally of:

1. Frontier incidents and violation of boundary Treaties.
 2. Perpetuation of slavery in violation of Abyssinia's pledge to abolish it.
 3. That Abyssinia was a barbarous nation and unworthy to associate with civilized nations.
- To these charges the representative of Abyssinia made

an emphatic denial and called for League action under Article XV. The Council appointed a Committee on Conciliation, and this Committee, after days of arduous labor, worked out a basis for negotiations for settlement of the dispute as between Italy and Abyssinia. This was submitted to the two nations. It was accepted by Abyssinia, but rejected by Italy.

Conciliation having failed, it then became necessary for the Council to take the further step under Article XV, of preparing a report. This, the Council proceeded to do, and their report showed Italy had no excuse for resorting to war. In the meantime, however, Italy, in violation of her obligations, commenced a war of aggression against Abyssinia, and I have already outlined to you the steps so far taken by the Council and the Members of the League to meet the situation. What is the nature of the sanctions that may be imposed, and what is the obligation to impose them? The first paragraph of Article XVI provides:

"Should any Member of the League resort to war in disregard of its covenants under Articles 12, 13 or 15, it shall ipso facto be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other Members of the League, which hereby undertake immediately to subject it to the severance of all trade or financial relations, the prohibition of all intercourse between their nationals and the nationals of the covenant-breaking State, and the prevention of all financial, commercial or personal intercourse between the nationals of the covenant-breaking State and the nationals of any other State, whether a Member of the League or not."

You will see how clear and unambiguous is the obligation resting upon every Member of the League.

Military sanctions rest on a different basis. It is for the Council to recommend to the several Governments concerned what military measures (if any) should be taken, and there is no specific pledge or undertaking by the Members to act upon a recommendation of the Council.

It should also be borne in mind that under the third

paragraph of Article XVI, the Members of the League agree to support one another in the financial and economic measures which are taken under the Article, and that they will mutually support one another in resisting any special measures aimed at one of their number by the Covenant-breaking State. It is undoubtedly this obligation which Great Britain has been asking France if she will discharge in case Great Britain should be attacked by Italy, while carrying out the economic and financial sanctions called for by the League.

Article XVI does not set out the procedure which should be followed for the imposition of these sanctions, nor does it make provision for united action. This matter received very careful consideration at the Second Assembly of the League, and a series of resolutions was agreed to setting out Article XVI, and it is this procedure which is now being followed. The procedure contemplates gradual pressure with a view of stopping the aggressor without resorting to military operations, and provides, by paragraph 18, "In special circumstances and in support of economic measures to be taken, it may become advisable, (a) to establish an effective blockade of the seaport of the Covenant-breaking State, and (b) to entrust to some Members of the League the execution of the blockade operations.

If the Council should decide that such a blockade was necessary, it would appear obvious that to Great Britain and France—if she would co-operate—would be entrusted the execution of the blockade operations.

In reference to military sanctions, there has been no suggestion so far in the Council or Assembly that the League should call for military sanctions, and if it did call for such sanctions, I do not believe there is any possible chance of a country as remote as Canada being asked to participate in these sanctions. I believe that if military sanctions were considered, the League would follow the procedure laid down in the amendment to Article X, of the Covenant, which while it did not become effective owing to the adverse vote of Persia, is recognized as settling the general policy and procedure which the League would follow under that Article. This amendment provides that the Council, in recommending military measures, "shall be bound to take ac-

count particularly of the geographical situation and of the special conditions of each State." Further, that it is for the constitutional authorities of each State to decide in what degree the Member is bound to assure the execution of its obligation by the employment of military forces.

Some have expressed impatience that the League has not proceeded more rapidly. We all must recognize the difficulty of the situation, and that they are working on an entirely new problem, and in order that the sanctions shall be effective, they must carry the judgment of all the principal members of the League, and, so far as possible, of all the Members of the League. The course the League is pursuing is beset with difficulties. Some think that it involves such dangers that it should not be undertaken, but I venture to submit it is the only course which gives any real ground for hope of ensuring peace. If a great power like Italy can repudiate all its obligations and successfully prosecute war against Abyssinia, then it has seriously impaired, if not entirely destroyed, the value of the peace machinery built up since the World War, and on which the world has based so much hope for a better international order. In my opinion a peace organization which provides no penalties for deliberate violation of obligations would not be effective, and the penalties must be imposed when violations occur. I believe that the League will proceed in an orderly way from day to day applying sanctions until Italy is compelled to cease her aggressive war.

Quite frankly, one of the difficulties in the situation has been the position of France. France reached an understanding with Italy in January last which cleared up a whole series of disputes which had existed between them since the termination of the World War. Some think that a term of this settlement was that France agreed to give Italy a free hand in Abyssinia. That has been denied by the French Prime Minister and one must accept his denial. French opinion is divided on the issue, but I believe that in the end France is bound to honor fully her obligations under the Covenant and co-operate with Great Britain and the other members of the League.

What is Canada's interest in the present controversy?

Canada is primarily interested as a Member of the League. She is under the same obligations as Great Britain and the other Members. Financial sanctions having been agreed upon, it is Canada's duty to sever all financial relations with Italy. If economic sanctions are agreed upon, it will be Canada's duty to sever all trade relations with Italy in accordance with the sanctions recommended. It may be that further legislation will be necessary to enable Canada to carry out her obligations under the Covenant, but if so, I have no doubt such legislation will be duly enacted.

There is one further point I should like to mention before closing, in reference to Canada's position. It has been suggested in articles in the press that Canada may have been in some way responsible for the present war because Italy's real need is for raw materials and Canada blocked inquiry into the question of raw materials at the First Assembly of the League. I am sure such suggestions have been made under a misapprehension of the real facts. As I happened to be one of the Canadian representatives at the First Assembly, I should like to say a word or two on this point.

First, the inquiry into raw materials was not blocked. The inquiry continued and a report was duly made to the Assembly in 1921 on the question of raw materials. In that report it was pointed out that the question had ceased to be acute because raw materials had so fallen in price that nations that possessed raw materials were searching for markets to dispose of them and finding difficulty in securing markets; and further that the restrictions on the distribution of raw materials were part and parcel of the general system of trade barriers which had been established after the war. The Economic Committee of the League, however, continued its researches and investigations and the whole matter came before the World Economic Conference in 1927 and was passed upon by that Conference. Unfortunately, owing to the growing economic nationalism throughout the world none of the recommendations of that Conference were carried out. No one questions the great importance of the matter, and Sir Samuel Hoare, in his speech before the Assembly, offered to co-operate in an investigation of the question of the supply of raw materials.

Just a word as to the position of the Canadian delegation at the First Assembly. It was suggested that under Article 23 (e) of the Covenant the League was entitled to exercise some jurisdiction or control over the distribution or supply of raw materials. The view of the Canadian delegation was that this was clearly beyond the scope of the Covenant, and was an attempt to put an interpretation on it which the Covenant could not possibly bear, and they felt it their duty to point this out. Further, at this time it was still hoped and expected that the United States would enter the League. The Canadian delegates recognized that any suggestion that the League of Nations sought to control or regulate the distribution of raw materials would put a weapon in the hands of the opponents of the League in the United States which might destroy any chance of the United States entering the League. Undoubtedly, the view in the United States was that the control of raw materials in the United States was a purely domestic question, to be dealt with by the Government and people of the United States. Further, the Canadian delegates felt that the Canadian people would share the same view, and they presented—and, I think, properly presented—these views to the Assembly.

It is also worthy of note that in the Report of the Economic Committee to the Assembly in 1921 the soundness of the Canadian contention was recognized. The Report set out certain general principles which they said, in view of the singular importance to international commerce, deserved especial emphasis. Among these principles were:

“There is no question of challenging the incontestable right which States have to dispose freely of their natural resources, or of the output of their countries in respect of raw materials. It is legitimate that in exceptional circumstances they should be anxious to reserve them to themselves, and that they should have the power to subject them, at any time, to a regime in conformity with their natural economy. But it is not less incontestable that raw materials produced by one country, being in many cases essential to the economic life of other States should not,

unless in exceptional cases, be the object of restrictions or of differential regulations of such a nature as to injure the production of such States, or to impose upon them a systematic inferiority. It is undesirable particularly that measures of restriction taken by producing countries to meet exceptional situations should be so prolonged or altered as to change their character and from being acts of precaution or defence to degenerate into measures of economic aggression.”

Had this position been taken at the First Assembly there would have been no occasion for any difference of opinion.

At the present time the League is passing through the most serious trial in its history. If it emerges successful; if it proves its ability to stop a great nation carrying on a war of aggression, then it will have placed the peace machinery of the world on a firmer foundation than at any time since the World War. If it fails, then it fails in one of the greatest and noblest attempts our humanity has ever made to stay the hand of the aggressor and to maintain international justice and peace.

One must recognize that the imposition of sanctions involves sacrifices for the nations that impose them as well as for Italy, but if it is not worth while making some sacrifice for peace, then peace is not worth having. We made great sacrifices during the World War, and many did so in the confident hope that it would result in lasting peace. It was said to be a war to end war, but if a nation, in violation of its obligations, again threatens the peace and progress of the world, should we not be prepared to make some sacrifices to stay the hand of the aggressor, so that the nations of the world will realize that the sanctity of international obligations must be maintained, that all disputes between nations must be settled by peaceful means, and that we have reached such a state of civilization that no nation can wage an unprovoked war against a smaller and weaker nation?

Surely the peoples of the world suffered enough from the last war; surely they made enough sacrifices during that period, to be prepared to put forth every effort to ensure that the system of war as a method of settling interna-

tional disputes is brought to an end. If we can succeed in maintaining the peace machinery of the world intact and effective, then I say any sacrifices we may have to make will be well worth while. If we have to face further difficulties, let us face them with courage and resolve that we will spare no effort to end war as a means of settling disputes between nations. I believe the hearts of the Canadian people are back of the Covenant. I believe they will stand side by side with Great Britain and the other Members of the League in the course they are now pursuing.

Mr. Chairman, may I pay a tribute to the course which the British Government has followed throughout this entire dispute? I do not believe the Government of Great Britain is actuated by selfish motives; I do not believe the Government has self-seeking motives. I believe the Government of Great Britain has reached the conclusion that the only hope of maintaining peace is to maintain the collective system as represented by the League of Nations. I accept that conclusion at its full face value. No statesmen have labored more industriously and more faithfully for peace than have the British statesmen ever since the dispute arose. They are continually laboring at Geneva. I wish the voice of the people of Canada might go out to Great Britain and tell her we are in hearty sympathy with her public men in the magnificent efforts they are putting forth to maintain peace, to restrain the aggressor and to relieve humanity from this awful scourge of war.

APPENDIX "A."

Article X.

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. In case of any such aggression or in case of any threat or danger of such aggression the Council shall advise upon the means by which this obligation shall be fulfilled.

Article XI.

1. Any war or threat of war, whether immediately affecting any of the Members of the League or not, is hereby

declared a matter of concern to the whole League, and the League shall take any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations. In case any such emergency should arise the Secretary-General shall on the request of any Member of the League forthwith summon a meeting of the Council.

2. It is also declared to be the friendly right of each Member of the League to bring to the attention of the Assembly or of the Council any circumstances whatever affecting international relations which threaten to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends.

Article XII.

1. The Members of the League agree that if there should arise between them any dispute likely to lead to a rupture they will submit the matter either to arbitration or judicial settlement or to enquiry by the Council, and they agree in no case to resort to war until three months after the award by the arbitrators or the judicial decision or the report by the Council.

2. In any case under this Article the award of the arbitrators or the judicial decision shall be made within a reasonable time, and the report of the Council shall be made within six months after the submission of the dispute.

Article XIII.

1. The members of the League agree that whenever any dispute shall arise between them which they recognize to be suitable for submission to arbitration or judicial settlement, and which cannot be satisfactorily settled by diplomacy, they will submit the whole subject-matter to arbitration or judicial settlement.

2. Disputes as to the interpretation of a treaty, as to any question of international law, as to the existence of any fact which, if established would constitute a breach of any international obligation, or as to the extent and nature of the reparation to be made for any such breach, are declared to be among those which are generally suitable for submission to arbitration or judicial settlement.

3. For the consideration of any such dispute, the court to which the case is referred shall be the Permanent Court of International Justice, established in accordance with Article 14, or any tribunal agreed on by the parties to the dispute or stipulated in any convention existing between them.

4. The Members of the League agree that they will carry out in full good faith any award or decision that may be rendered, and that they will not resort to war against a Member of the League which complies therewith. In the event of any failure to carry out such an award or decision, the Council shall propose what steps should be taken to give effect thereto.

Article XV.

1. If there should arise between Members of the League any dispute likely to lead to a rupture, which is not submitted to arbitration or judicial settlement in accordance with Article XIII, the Members of the League agree that they will submit the matter to the Council. Any party to the dispute may effect such submission by giving notice of the existence of the dispute to the Secretary-General, who will make all necessary arrangements for a full investigation and consideration thereof.

2. For this purpose the parties to the dispute will communicate to the Secretary-General, as promptly as possible, statements of their case with all the relevant facts and papers, and the Council may forthwith direct the publication thereof.

3. The Council shall endeavor to effect a settlement of the dispute, and if such efforts are successful, a statement shall be made public giving such facts and explanations regarding the dispute and the terms of settlement thereof as the Council may deem appropriate.

4. If the dispute is not thus settled, the Council either unanimously or by a majority vote shall make and publish a report containing a statement of the facts of the dispute and the recommendations which are deemed just and proper in regard thereto.

5. Any Member of the League represented on the

Council may make public a statement of the facts of the dispute and of its conclusions regarding the same.

6. If a report by the Council is unanimously agreed to by the members thereof other than the Representatives of one or more of the parties to the dispute, the Members of the League agree that they will not go to war with any party to the dispute which complies with the recommendations of the report.

7. If the Council fails to reach a report which is unanimously agreed to by the members thereof, other than the Representatives of one or more of the parties to the dispute, the Members of the League reserve to themselves the right to take such action as they shall consider necessary for the maintenance of right and justice.

8. If the dispute between the parties is claimed by one of them, and is found by the Council, to arise out of a matter which by international law is solely within the domestic jurisdiction of that party, the Council shall so report, and shall make no recommendation as to its settlement.

9. The Council may in any case under this Article refer the dispute to the Assembly. The dispute shall be so referred at the request of either party to the dispute provided that such request be made within fourteen days after the submission of the dispute to the Council.

10. In any case referred to the Assembly, all the provisions of this Article and of Article 12 relating to the action and powers of the Council shall apply to the action and powers of the Assembly, provided that a report made by the Assembly, if concurred in by the Representatives of those Members of the League represented on the Council and a majority of the other Members of the League, exclusive in each case of the Representatives of the parties to the dispute, shall have the same force as a report by the Council concurred in by all the members thereof other than the Representatives of one or more of the parties to the dispute.

Article XVI.

1. Should any Member of the League resort to war in disregard of its covenants under Articles 12, 13 or 15, it

shall *ipso facto* be deemed to have committed an act of war against all the Members of the League, which hereby undertake immediately to subject it to the severance of all trade or financial relations, the prohibition of all intercourse between their nationals and the nationals of the covenant-breaking State, and the prevention of all financial, commercial or personal intercourse between the nationals of the covenant-breaking State and the nationals of any other State, whether a Member of the League or not.

2. It shall be the duty of the Council in such case to recommend to the several Governments concerned what effective military, naval or air force the Members of the League shall severally contribute to the armed forces to be used to protect the covenants of the League.

3. The Members of the League agree, further, that they will mutually support one another in the financial and economic measures which are taken under this Article, in order to minimize the loss and inconvenience resulting from the above measures, and that they will mutually support one another in resisting any special measures aimed at one of their number by the covenant-breaking State, and that they will take the necessary steps to afford passage through their territory to the forces of any of the Members of the League which are co-operating to protect the covenants of the League.

4. Any Member of the League which has violated any covenant of the League may be declared to be no longer a Member of the League by a vote of the Council concurred in by the Representatives of all the other Members of the League represented thereon.

Article XIX.

The Assembly may from time to time advise the reconsideration by Members of the League of treaties which have become inapplicable and the consideration of international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world.

Article XX.

1. The Members of the League severally agree that this Covenant is accepted as abrogating all obligations or

understandings *inter se* which are inconsistent with the terms thereof, and solemnly undertake that they will not hereafter enter into any engagements inconsistent with the terms thereof.

2. In case any Member of the League shall, before becoming a Member of the League, have undertaken any obligations inconsistent with the terms of this Covenant, it shall be the duty of such Member to take immediate steps to procure its release from such obligations.

Article XXIII.

Subject to and in accordance with the provisions of international conventions existing or hereafter to be agreed upon, the Members of the League:

- (e) Will make provision to secure and maintain freedom of communications and of transit and equitable treatment for the commerce of all Members of the League. In this connection, the special necessities of the regions devastated during the war of 1914-1918 shall be borne in mind;