

allowed to administer Eritrea and to resume the civilizing mission it had formerly carried out. In Somaliland Italy would be pleased to assume and fulfil the responsibility of trusteeship. The efforts of the United Nations should be directed not to punishing Italy, but to ensuring that European influence in Africa was worthily upheld in the light of the re-awakening of the peoples of Asia and Africa.

These contentions were directly denied by Aklilou Wold of *Ethiopia*. Italy's achievements, he asserted, were only superficially impressive. In reality, despite her long occupation of Eritrea, Italy had done little to advance the interests of the local population, who were still in a lamentably backward state. He recalled that Ethiopia had suffered aggression from Italy—both Fascist and pre-Fascist—and warned that if it were planned once again to place Italy on both sides of his country Ethiopia would in self-preservation “have to do something about it.” Mr Wold claimed that all Eritrea was linked to Ethiopia by close racial, economic, historical, religious, and cultural ties and asked that the two countries should speedily be reunited.

#### *General Views of the Political Committee*

Discussion speedily revealed considerable divergence of views both on how the Assembly should proceed to a decision and on what the decision should be. The delegate of *Australia* at an early stage suggested that the Assembly did not at present possess the information necessary for an equitable solution ; he suggested that it might prove profitable to appoint a body to collect information and to study the problem so that specific recommendations might be submitted and examined later in the year. Differences of opinion were also expressed concerning the need for simultaneous decisions in respect of all the territories concerned. In the opinion of certain delegations the problem of the Italian colonies was a single problem and should be settled as a whole ; piecemeal solutions were thus undesirable. Others emphasized the differences and distances separating the territories and claimed that since circumstances in the territories differed widely and since the colonies were widely separated there was no reason why, if a solution for one or more of them were obvious or immediately possible, it should not be applied at once.

On the question of disposal it was apparent after a fortnight's discussion that two blocs of opinion were in existence, one of which was certainly, and the other almost, numerically strong enough to prevent a decision by the requisite two-thirds majority on any solution with which the members of either bloc did not agree. Moreover, one bloc (the Latin American States) advocated a solution—return of all or most of the colonies to Italy—which the other (the Arab and Asian States linked for the time being with the Eastern European group) was determined to oppose.