

will allow me just to go through the dates and events, and point out exactly what the League did do and what the League did not do.

The murder of General Tellini took place on the 27th August, and the Italian ultimatum was issued on the 29th August. The Greek reply was the next day—the 30th August—and, after acceding to the first three or four demands, and explaining that the Greek Government was not able to accede to the other three without abdicating its sovereignty—that is, undertaking to hang somebody, to allow another Power to take its place in trying the criminals, and, above all, to undertake to pay 50,000,000 lire whatever happened—those three demands the Greeks refused, and concluded by saying that, if their reply was not deemed to be satisfactory, they were quite willing to submit the whole matter to the League; and they bound themselves beforehand to accept whatever the League should suggest. On the same day—the 30th—came the Ambassadors' note making their demands, for the Ambassadors were parties to the dispute; they made their demands on the same day, and also on the same day the Italian Government intimated that they would not accept the League. It is rather important that that should be emphasized, because it has been suggested that it was something which the League did which induced the Italian Government to reject it, but as a matter of fact they rejected it before the League had done anything. On the 31st the Ambassadors' note was delivered and the bombardment and occupation of Corfu took place, and articles appeared in the Italian Press hostile to the League.

#### **Appeal to League by Government of Greece, and Action taken by Council.**

On the 1st September the Greek request for a hearing before the Council of the League was received in Geneva. The Council of the League happened to be in session already. It immediately met on the morning of the 1st in private; it is an illusion of some of our critics to suppose that the first meetings of the Council to deal with this matter were in public. It met in private, and the Greek representative, M. Politis, presented his request for the consideration and decision of the League. He read Articles 12 and 15—or, at any rate, the material parts of them—and under those articles any one can see who refers to them that there is an absolute right given to any member of the League to submit to the League any dispute likely to lead to a rupture with any other member of the League, and it becomes the absolute duty of the Council to take that matter into consideration and endeavour to effect a settlement of it, and, if a settlement is impossible, then to hear and report upon the issue submitted to it, the parties agreeing that they will not resort to war until the dispute has been heard and reported upon.

In making his speech M. Politis disclaimed any desire that Article 16 should be applied. Article 16, as every one knows, is an article which provides for economic pressure and blockade, and ultimately stronger measures, in case a country resorts to war without having submitted its dispute to the League. In other words, M. Politis did not claim that there had been a resort to war. I think he was right in the attitude he took. There had been an act which might have been treated as an act of war, but in fact was not treated as an act of war by the party against whom it was directed; and therefore there was technically no resort to war, and M. Politis very explicitly said that he had no desire that Article 16 should be applied. I do not know whether the Conference may have noticed a letter by Sir Frederick Pollock in yesterday's *Times* in which that distinguished jurist explains his views that there was no resort to war in this case.

#### **Question of Competence of League.**

The Italian representative, Signor Salandra, said that he had no instructions, and asked for an adjournment, but incidentally called attention to the fact that, since the matter was also an offence against the Conference of Ambassadors, they were involved, and it was a question—he did not actually say that the League had no competence at that stage, but suggested that it was a matter that the Conference of Ambassadors ought to deal with. That was not accepted at that stage by the Greek representatives, and on behalf of the British Government I said we had no doubt at all as to the competence of the League, and I, while deploring deeply the murder—which I, of course, did—said on behalf of the British Government that we felt there was no question as to the duty of the League to entertain the request of the Greek Government under the clear terms of Article 15. I think the Conference would agree that the position was clear. There was a dispute if ever a dispute existed which could be described as likely to lead to a rupture; it was a dispute of that nature; it was a dispute which at any moment might have caused war between the two countries. Any hasty action on the part of the Greek commander might have precipitated the two countries into a war, and it may be with other countries as well; that was clearly a dispute likely to lead to a rupture. It was submitted to the Council of the League by one of its members expressly asking them to act under Article 15, and, as any one who will read that article will agree, there was no option or discretion in the matter: the Council were bound to act, and they did act. The line which I took on behalf of the British Government was very warmly supported by the Swedish representative, M. Branting, and there was no question on the part of any member of the Council as to what the duty of the Council was, apart from the Italian representative. However, we adjourned till the 4th in order to allow the Italian representative to receive his instructions, merely passing a resolution to the effect that we hoped nothing would be done on either side to aggravate the situation.

#### **Feeling in Assembly.**

The Assembly met on the 3rd, and it had become quite evident that there was a very strong and a unanimous feeling in the Assembly on the point. It is perhaps worth while to remind the Conference of the position of the Assembly—I mean, of the delegates. The larger Powers are usually represented by persons of more or less importance, commonly ex-Ministers or persons of note of that kind; the