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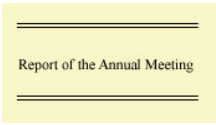

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CANADA AND SANCTIONS IN THE ITALO-ETHIOPIAN CONFLICT[1]

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The application of sanctions in the Italo-Ethiopian conflict is the one serious attempt in the history of collective security to use economic means to stop aggression.[2] Despite the rapidity with which collective action was organized in October, 1935,[3] the initial measures put into force were not sufficiently stringent to achieve their end. Of those later considered, the one most likely to prevent a continuation of the Italian campaign was an embargo on oil, but Italy threatened to regard this as an act involving war against her.[4] In an attempt to find an alternative to a measure which might cause the outbreak of general hostilities,[5] a new basis of settlement was proposed early in December through the Hoare-Laval plan for the partition of Ethiopia. Although this plan was not accepted and sanctions continued until June, 1936, the spirit behind them had been lost, and the hope of a successful enforcement of the Covenant of the League of Nations by economic means had been brought to an end.

The importance of an embargo on oil gives a particular significance to the proposal made by the Canadian representative at Geneva on November 2, 1935, to single out oil and two other products for special attention in formulating subsequent League action against Italy, and to the Canadian government's statement regarding this proposal made on December 2. In presenting the background to the proposal, indicating the reasons for the Canadian government's action, and considering the effect of that action on the general issue of oil sanctions, light is thrown on an incident which is of importance in Canadian foreign policy as well as in the history of collective action.

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[1]The material for this article was collected while the author was holding a fellowship of the Royal Society of Canada and working on a general study of "The British Dominions and Collective Security."

[2]Under Art. 16, para. 1, economic sanctions were immediately obligatory upon each state member of the League on its decision that a breach of the Covenant had been committed. Interpretative resolutions respecting the postponement of enumerated measures if such would facilitate the object desired or was necessary to minimize loss and inconvenience to Members, were accepted in the Assembly, Oct. 4, 1921. Though they had not been ratified, the resolutions were taken as "rules of guidance" in the Italo-Ethiopian campaign. According to Sir John Fischer Williams in "Sanctions under the Covenant" in *The British Year Book of International Law*, 1936, the resolutions did not weaken the essential obligation of the article. Under para. 2 military sanctions were to be recommended to the governments concerned by the Council.

[3]By Oct. 31, 1935, within three weeks of setting up the special organization for the proposal of sanctions, answers from governments had been received on the five non-military sanctions which had been proposed. Fifty governments had accepted the arms embargo, 49, the financial embargo, 48, the import embargo and ban on certain essential materials, and 39, the measures for mutual support. Cf. *League of Nations, Official Journal, 1935, Special Supplement*, no. 150, pp. 2-12 for official texts of the proposals.

[4]*Great Britain, House of Commons, Debates,* Dec. 19, 1935, vol. 307, no. 16, col. 2004-2005, (Sir Samuel Hoare).

[5]*Ibid.,* col. 2005.

The sanctions programme in the Italo-Ethiopian conflict and the particular policy of the Canadian representative, both have their roots in a committee set up to deal with an earlier situation, the unilateral denunciation by Germany in March, 1935, of the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. This action by Germany had led first to the meeting of British, French, and Italian statesmen at Stresa[6] to consider plans for their own security in the face of German rearmament and then to an extraordinary meeting of the League Council which set up a Committee of Thirteen on Collective Security to draft measures which might be applied if a state endangered peace by a unilateral repudiation of its international obligations. In this Committee most of the measures subsequently adopted as sanctions proposals were discussed and formulated,[7] and it was in these discussions that the Canadian representative first pressed for the equalizing of sacrifices between member states which at least in part underlay the November 2 proposal.

Although there is as yet no access to the minutes of the Committee of Thirteen and to the report it presented to the Council in September, 1935, the reports of its sub-committees,[8] references to its work in subsequent meetings,[9] and personal conversations have made it possible to gauge the general direction of its work. All types of sanctions, direct and indirect, were considered and much attention focused on means of preventing an aggressor country from securing commodities essential for war. While the first proposal regarding this limited the embargo to raw materials, the Canadian representative attempted to broaden it by proposing an extension to products into which these raw materials entered. The effort to secure a more general distribution of the sacrifice entailed in imposing an embargo did not result in a decision at this time, but the conception remained as the key-note of subsequent proposals by the Canadian representative.

This attempt to protect the interests of Canada as a raw material producing country was in line with traditional policy, although the general Canadian attitude to League obligations had been negative rather than positive. From the first days of the League, Canadian representatives of both parties had opposed the guarantee in Article 10 of the Covenant of the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all member states, with the aim of limiting automatic obligations, of having it recognized that Canada had particular rather than general interests and that it was necessary to secure parliamentary approval before Canada undertook any action under the Covenant.[10] In accepting membership on the Committee of Thirteen, the Bennett government had publicly noted that it considered that any proposal for the application of sanctions in case of a state repudiating its obligations without recourse to war should be con-

[6]The desire to retain the "Stresa Front" against Germany strongly influenced Premier Laval in his policy during the Italo-Ethiopian conflict.

[7]The importance of the work of the Committee of Thirteen as a basis for the subsequent sanction proposals has been overlooked, e.g. by A. J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs*, 1935, II, 228.

[8]These reports were circulated privately and have not appeared in print.

[9]E.g. *O.J., 1935, Spec. Sup.*, no. 145, pp. 37, 38, 80, 87, 106; and *O.J., 1935, Spec. Sup.*, no. 146, p. 55.

[10]The Canadian action led to an interpretative resolution accepted by the League Assembly in 1923 embodying these points in general terms.

sidered on its merits.[11] Though no direct attack had been made on the obligations of Article 16 prescribing the measures which should be taken against a member of the League resorting to war in disregard of its covenants under previous articles for the peaceful settlement of disputes, there had been a marked caution over assuming any initiative or binding obligations.

By September, 1935, the German action, which was the centre of attention in the spring, had been overshadowed by increasing tension between Italy and Ethiopia. Mediation was attempted by the great powers, while the smaller ones voiced their fears in the meetings of the annual League Assembly. Speaking in the general discussion, Mr Ferguson, Canadian High Commissioner in London for the Bennett government, expressed the hope that a peaceful solution of the controversy could still be found, but if this were not possible, pledged Canada to join with other members of the League in considering "how by unanimous action peace can be maintained."[12]

In Canada, the coming parliamentary election, which was to result in a change of administration at the end of October, gave an opportunity for statements by parliamentary leaders in regard to future Canadian policies in case the dispute should become more serious. While both Mr Bennett[13] and Mr Mackenzie King indicated unwillingness for participation in a dispute which did not directly affect Canadian interests, Mr King challenged the Prime Minister, though without result, on what answer he would give if Canada were asked to participate in action likely to lead to war. While not indicating unwillingness for participation in League economic action, Mr King gave a clue to his own general attitude by citing the Chanak crisis, in regard to which he declared that "the action of Canada in refusing to plunge into a conflict of which we knew nothing averted action which might have resulted in a perilous war."[14]

In October, events began to move swiftly. Despite efforts at mediation, the Italian troops crossed the Ethiopian frontier on October 2. By October 11, an overwhelming majority of the League members had declared Italy an aggressor and set up a Co-ordination Committee[15] composed of one delegate from each participating member of the League to formulate sanction proposals. To guide the work of the larger body, a Committee of Eighteen was selected which included in its membership nine of the states which had been represented on the Committee of Thirteen, now terminated, Canada being one of them.

In the first meeting of the Committee of Eighteen, on October 11, Canada was brought into some prominence through a vigorous speech by Mr Ferguson in favour of immediate action.[16] His suggestion to deal at once with the arms embargo was taken up and the same evening the Committee of Co-ordination adopted a general embargo on export of arms to

[11] *League of Nations, Documents,* C. 175, M. 96, 1935, VII.
[12] *O.J., 1935, Spec. Sup.,* no. 138, pp. 77-8.
[13] Quoted in *New York Times,* Sept. 7, 1935.
[14] Quoted in *Winnipeg Free Press,* Sept. 9, 1935.
[15] This was "a Conference of States Members meeting to consider together with a view to the application of the provisions of Article 16" (*O.J., 1935, Spec. Sup.,* no. 138, p. 109).
[16] *O.J., 1935, Spec. Sup.,* no. 145, p. 30.

Italy. This incident focused attention on Canada's representatives and their subsequent suggestions were treated with particular interest.

The placing of an embargo on products useful for Italy's military measures was one of the next proposals to be made in the sanctions discussions. In an effort to put the embargo into effect quickly, it was decided to propose immediate action on those key products which were controlled by participating members of the League, and to put on a second list those products which were not controlled by the participating members alone and which required the co-operation of others before an embargo could be feasible.

On October 15 was begun the detailed consideration of the division of products between List 1 and 2. From this time on Dr Riddell, who had long been Canadian Advisory Officer at the League of Nations, acted as Canada's representative. Dr Riddell had been the Canadian representative on the Committee of Thirteen and he reiterated in the Committee of Eighteen and in its Sub-Committee on Economic Measures, his earlier attitude in favour of broadening the burden of sanctions in case of an embargo so that an unequal share of the burden should not be borne by those countries possessing raw materials.

On October 17, in the Sub-Committee on Economic Measures, Dr Riddell took the opportunity afforded by the consideration of nickel, subsequently placed on List 1, to stress the problems involved in cases where the production of raw materials was controlled by participating members, but processing done in other countries. He had pointed out in the first meeting in which he had acted as Canadian representative that while a state possessing a raw material might be prevented by the embargo from exporting it, another country could buy the raw material, make it into a finished article and sell it to the state against which the embargo on raw materials had been placed.[17] He now suggested that some kind of qualifying statement should be made in regard to a number of substances to prevent injustices of this character. While he did not make a definite motion, Dr Riddell suggested that the list drawn up should be held to include:

> (*a*) All forms of these materials, whether ores, scrap, alloys, products or derivatives, from which any of these materials may readily be extracted or derived;
> (*b*) Such products or derivatives of these materials as represent a stage in the manufacture of war materials, or implements of war, or any forbidden article or product;
> (*c*) Such products or derivatives of these materials as may be utilized in the manufacture of war materials, implements of war, or any forbidden article or material.[18]

The chairman of the committee noted this suggestion as one which might be discussed later but no comments were made upon it at this time. However, when Dr Riddell the next day drew attention to the fact that he had raised the question of a general clause to cover all forms of the materials placed on the embargo list,[19] the chairman "recalled" that the

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 93-4. [18] *Ibid.*, p. 104. [19] *Ibid.*, p. 115.

Sub-Committee had already adopted this proposal and that it would be transmitted for consideration to the Drafting Committee and the Committee of Eighteen. This suggestion concerning derivatives is of particular importance because of similarities to the subsequent proposal which concerned oil.

On the following day, October 19, the Committee of Eighteen considered the draft proposal, known as Proposal IV, for embargo of certain exports to Italy. These comprised articles which had been put on List 1 by the Sub-Committee on Economic Measures. It was in this meeting that Señor de Madariaga, representing Spain, raised a matter which later became the immediate cause of Dr Riddell's second proposal. The Spanish representative objected to the fact that while iron ore and scrap iron were included on the list of products whose export and re-export to Italy was to be prohibited, iron and steel, the finished products, were not. The omission of the latter made the inclusion of the former worthless. It was pointed out that products were included on this list because participating members could enforce the embargo and that iron and steel were not controlled by participating members while scrap iron and iron ore were. Dr Riddell again raised the point which he had brought up in the Sub-Committee, noting that his delegation felt that any scheme of economic sanctions should be comprehensive and stressing the fact that all the responsibilities were being placed on the states producing raw materials. Noting that he was "not in a position at present to make any definite proposal," he thought that the question should be very carefully considered.[20] After further discussion, it was decided to accept the list as it stood and to leave further comments to the home governments to which the proposals were now to be sent.

By October 31, twelve days later, most of the answers from governments had been received. In the meantime, the Canadian election had taken place, and Mr Mackenzie King had come into office. In one of his first official statements[21] he declared that necessary steps would be taken by the Canadian government to secure the "effective application" of the economic sanctions against Italy which had been proposed by the Co-ordination Committee. He emphasized, however, that the Canadian government did not recognize any commitment binding Canada to adopt military sanctions and that the government's course in approving economic sanctions in this instance was not to be regarded as necessarily establishing a precedent for future action. This caution may have been motivated in part by some division within Canada as to the wisdom of supporting League sanctions. Opposition to this policy had been particularly noticeable in a number of French-Canadian newspapers.[22]

The League committees began session once more following the replies of the governments. Various points raised in these replies had to be considered as well as a further elaboration of the sanctions programme. Among the special cases to be investigated was the question concerning

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

[21] Statement given to the press by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Oct. 29, 1935, included in *Canada, 1936, Documents Relating to the Italo-Ethiopian Conflict*, no. 17.

[22] E.g., *Le Devoir, La Patrie, La Renaissance, Le Soleil.*

iron ore which the Spanish delegation had raised previously, and this came up for discussion by the Committee of Eighteen on November 2.

This is the meeting in which Dr Riddell made his second proposal. The re-introduction of the question of derivatives on which he had already spoken several times opened the way for a further statement. It has been said that the Spanish and Dutch delegates approached him privately before the meeting to ask him to revive the proposal,[23] but whether or not this was so there would be a natural expectation that he would make some comment. It could be assumed that his previous suggestions in regard to derivatives had been accepted in Canada. A new administration had come into office, however, since the first suggestion had been made and it could be questioned whether the October 29 statement of Mr Mackenzie King was not intended as an indication that while existing sanctions would be enforced, further proposals would be considered on their individual merits. In this case, there would be hesitation on the part of a Canadian representative in making a further proposal without consulting his government. The usual diplomatic procedure in such a situation would be to wire for instructions and it appears that Dr Riddell did so.[24]

In view of the cases to be considered at the session of the Committee of Eighteen, it might have been expected that the Spanish reply would not be brought up until the afternoon. Due to unusual speed, however, it came up for consideration by twelve o'clock, too early for instructions to have been received from Canada. It might have been possible for Dr Riddell to use delaying tactics, such as making an excuse to put the matter off to the afternoon meeting or leaving the meeting and giving his place to one of his younger colleagues. If he chose to stay, he was faced with the dilemma of allowing the opportunity to pass, or of accepting the responsibility of bringing forward a proposal which might widen the basis of sanctions.

The Spanish reply had challenged the inclusion of iron ore on the sanctions list as a "question of logic and principle,"[25] pointing out that iron and steel were the products useful for arms and that if an embargo were not placed upon them, iron ore should be taken off the list. The chairman declared that the Committee was not competent to modify the list adopted by the Co-ordination Committee, "It could only make additions to it, e.g., it could add iron and pig-iron, as the Canadian delegate proposed." This opportunity was taken by Dr Riddell to make a statement. He reminded the Committee that it was entrusted with the task of making suitable proposals to governments on the subject of the embargo of certain exports to Italy. It was evident that the list of key products was not complete, in as much as important products like "petroleum and its derivatives, coal, iron and steel" were not on the list. The Committee had been successful in obtaining acceptances regarding the embargo as far as it went, and he now ventured to propose that the substances he had named should be added to the list "in principle" and that measures with regard to them should come

[23]It is interesting to note that the *Montreal Gazette*, Dec. 9, 1935, wrote in an editorial that Dr Riddell had sponsored the resolution "at the request of his fellow delegates. As Dr Riddell is dean of Geneva's diplomatic corps, his selection as mover of the resolution before the Committee of Eighteen was a natural gesture and a logical part of procedure."

[24]*Canada, House of Commons, Debates,* Session 1936, vol. I, Feb. 10, 1936, 92 ff. (Mr Mackenzie King).

[25]*O.J., 1935, Spec. Sup.,* no. 146, p. 37.

into effect "whenever the Committee found that an embargo could be made effective." He hoped that the inclusion of iron and steel in this way would give satisfaction to the Spanish delegate. He then suggested that:

> In execution of the mission entrusted to it under the last paragraph of Proposal IV, the Committee of Eighteen submits to Governments the following proposal:
>
> "It is expedient to adopt the principle of the extension of the measures of embargo provided for in the said proposal to the following products: Petroleum and derivatives; Coal; Iron, cast iron, and steel.
>
> "As soon as it appears that the acceptance of this principle is sufficiently general to ensure the efficacy of the measures thus contemplated, the Committee of Eighteen will propose to Governments a date for bringing them into operation."[26]

This proposal did not suggest an immediate extension of embargo measures but picked out from List 2 certain products of particular importance for serious consideration in the light of a future extension of the embargo list. That this was understood by the Committee is evidenced by a later statement of the French delegate that the resolution was "a decision of principle, which was not to come into force pending the accession of the non-participating countries whose co-operation was required for the effectiveness of the measure proposed."[27] The aim of the proposal was thus to meet the general problem of derivatives as it had been raised by Dr Riddell in earlier comments and to indicate the direction in which extension of sanctions should go if feasible.

The proposal as formulated by Dr Riddell was referred to the Sub-Committee on Economic Measures and, considerably amended and in a more specific form, was subsequently returned by the Drafting Committee to the Committee of Eighteen as Proposal IV (*a*). It read:

> In the execution of the mission entrusted to it under the last paragraph of Proposal IV, the Committee of Eighteen submits to Governments the following proposal:
>
> "It is expedient that the measures of embargo provided for in Proposal IV should be extended to the following articles as soon as the conditions necessary to render this extension effective have been realized: Petroleum and its derivatives, by-products, and residues; Pig-iron; iron and steel (including alloy steels), cast, forged, rolled, drawn, stamped, or pressed; Coal (including anthracite and lignite), coke and their agglomerates, as well as fuels derived therefrom.
>
> "If the replies received by the Committee to the present proposal and the information at its disposal warrant it, the Committee of Eighteen will propose to Governments a date for bringing into force the measures mentioned above."[28]

In this form, it was adopted as a statement of principle embodying action which might be taken if the Committee at a later meeting decided that the measures should be put into force. In a circular letter of November 7 the Secretary-General of the League, in communicating to the governments

[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 37-8. [27] *Ibid.*, pp. 61-2. [28] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

the texts of the proposals which the Committee of Eighteen had adopted for recommendation during its second session, drew special attention to the last paragraph of Proposal IV (*a*), since subsequent action by the League committees on this proposal would depend on the extent of the support it received from the governments.

In the meantime, the Canadian government had privately disapproved Dr Riddell's action.[29] In any case the government considered that he "had exceeded his authority."[30] In a statement[31] to the House of Commons in February, 1936, Mr King declared that it had been considered very carefully whether Dr Riddell should not "immediately publicly repudiate his act." Such action had not been taken only because it might have embarrassed the situation in Europe, or have indicated even a slight exception by Canada to what was being done in other parts of the British Empire.

It seems fair to assume that in the beginning the Canadian government opposed the taking of initiative in this matter rather than the substance of the proposal itself. The Prime Minister subsequently declared that Canada might support "oil and any other sanctions" and that the "attitude of the government towards the League and its objects has never changed."[32] Had there been no further complicating factors, the matter would no doubt have been allowed to rest.

The complicating factor came with the prominence given to the inclusion of oil in the proposal.[33] It became apparent that an oil embargo would have serious repercussions on Italy, perhaps to the extent of forcing it to discontinue its effort in Ethiopia. As interest focused on the proposal, the press began to designate it as the Canadian proposal. Mr King told the Commons later that British and other representatives were told by newspapers[34] that they should hasten their action "because Canada was

[29]Instructions "to do nothing in the matter of extending sanctions" had been sent from Canada following the receipt of Dr Riddell's cable, but did not arrive until after he had spoken in the Committee (*Canada, House of Commons, op. cit.*, 92 ff.).

[30]In regard to whether a member of a League committee should feel free to speak as such or should feel bound to secure the authorization of his government before making a proposal, Mr. King declared in the House of Commons that "Dr Riddell as regards the action he took says, and I think quite rightly, that he was not in any sense to be regarded as acting for Canada, that he was simply acting as a member of a committee." Nonetheless while approving Dr Riddell's intentions, he believed that he had "no right to take any step that was at all likely to be of importance in a critical situation . . . without specific instructions . . . from the government of Canada." It is interesting to note that General Hertzog, Prime Minister of South Africa, declared in regard to a suggestion made by the South African representative on the Committee of Eighteen, "Members of this committee do not in their discussions, speak on behalf of their Governments." Cf. *South Africa, House of Assembly, Debates*, 1936, 26, 515-16.

[31]*Canada, House of Commons, op. cit.*, 92 ff.

[32]Quoted in the *Daily Telegraph*, Dec. 7, 1935.

[33]As Mr King noted in his speech in the House of Commons the discussion in the Committee of Eighteen had centred around derivatives of natural products. Oil had been mentioned frequently in earlier considerations and its inclusion in the proposal awakened no discussion at the time it was made.

[34]The Prime Minister cited: *The News Chronicle* of Nov. 4, and Nov. 5, *The Morning Post* of Nov. 5, *Observer* of Nov. 4, *Daily Telegraph* of Nov. 4, *London Spectator* of Nov. 22, a Canadian Press dispatch dated London, Nov. 26, and a Canadian Press-Havas dispatch dated, Geneva, Nov. 26. Cf. *Canada, House of Commons, op. cit.*, 92 ff.

anxious and insistent in the matter." This coupled with "the critical situation that was known to exist at that moment in Europe," and also, perhaps, charges of initiative in the matter levelled against Liberal members in the provincial campaign in Quebec where newspaper opposition to sanctions was still strong,[35] decided the Canadian government to make it known that the proposal had not been a government proposal but simply that of an individual member of the Committee. This explanation was given to the press on December 2 by M. Lapointe,[36] Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs, in a statement[37] in which he declared that the government had not taken and did not propose to take the initiative in the extension of the embargo upon exportation of key commodities to Italy, "particularly in the placing of a ban upon shipments of coal, oil, iron, and steel." He emphasized that the opinion which had been expressed by the Canadian member of the Committee "represented only his own personal opinion, and his views as a member of the Committee—and not the views of the Canadian Government."

In the meantime, the whole situation had changed. The question of determining whether Proposal IV (*a*) could be applied in practice had become imminent. Enough favourable replies had been received to make it worth while to discuss the proposal and the Committee of Eighteen was convened for November 29 with Proposal IV (*a*) on its agenda. On November 25, Premier Laval of France asked as a personal favour that the meeting be adjourned.[38] After considerable hesitation and discussion with both French and British representatives, the chairman of the Committee consented to postpone the meeting until December 12. Before the Committee was convened, Sir Samuel Hoare meeting with M. Laval in Paris had agreed to what became known as the Hoare-Laval plan, for the partition of Ethiopia, the terms of which appeared in French newspapers on December 9.[39]

It remains to consider what effect, if any, the Canadian government statement had upon the postponement of the discussion of an oil embargo and indirectly upon the proposal of the Hoare-Laval plan and whether further light can be thrown by this approach on the reasons for the statement. The dates have already made it clear that the statement was made after M. Laval had acted to postpone the meeting of the Committee of Eighteen which would have discussed the imposition of an oil embargo. It was made, however, before Sir Samuel Hoare went to Paris on December 7, and from the point of view of time, might have had an effect on his decision to accept the plan. Sir Samuel's own *apologia*[40] for the Hoare-Laval plan made to the House of Commons cited as reasons for his action, the necessity of preventing "a European conflagration," and of doing everything "to avoid an isolated war between Great Britain and Italy."

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[35]*Manchester Guardian,* Dec. 3, 1935, reported that: "isolationist sentiment in the Dominion, notably in Quebec, has been thoroughly aroused by the suggestion that the Canadian Government is leading a drive for the extension of sanctions and a statement was regarded as necessary to meet these criticisms. . . ."

[36]Mr King subsequently declared that he had been consulted before the statement was issued (*Canada, House of Commons, op. cit.,* 92 ff.).

[37]*Canada, 1936, Documents, op. cit.,* no. 19.

[38]Toynbee, *op. cit.,* p. 278.

[39]*Ibid.,* p. 301.

[40]*Great Britain, House of Commons, op. cit.,* col. 2003.

Since Italy threatened to regard an oil embargo as a military sanction, he believed his action to have been "the only course that was possible" as he felt he could not propose postponing the oil embargo unless the League could be shown that negotiations had actually started.

What relation exists between this statement and the Canadian government's action cannot be finally determined until the relevant documents have been made public. Many factors must have entered into Sir Samuel's final decision to accept the Hoare-Laval plan. Among these must stand high the fear of war threatened by Signor Mussolini and pressure by M. Laval. Somewhat inferior to these but still important might have been the knowledge that Canada would be reluctant to enter a conflict arising from the imposition of an oil embargo. On the other hand, it is possible that Sir Samuel Hoare's belief that an oil embargo would result in war led him to indicate to the Canadian government that his task in proposing an alternative plan would be simplified if a public statement were made that there had been no official Canadian initiative for the proposal to explore the possibilities of imposing an embargo on oil. In view of the closeness of contact between the British and Dominion governments, it may be that these two points somewhat interacted on each other. Certainly Prime Minister Mackenzie King believed that the December 2 statement was essential since he declared in February, 1936, that: "I am not at all sure that, when the whole story comes to be told, it may not be discovered that, but for the action of the government of Canada in this particular matter, at that particular time, the whole of Europe might have been aflame today."[41]

The determination of whether the Canadian action restrained the British government by indicating unwillingness for support in case war came on this issue or aided it in endeavouring to eliminate the danger implicit in an imposition of the oil embargo or achieved some other end related to the possibility of war, must wait upon fuller documentation. It seems evident, however, from the Prime Minister's words that the Canadian statement was, in the end, motivated by general not merely local considerations, and that it had a direct bearing on the general course of events in Europe.

The relation of Canada to the question of oil sanctions in the Italo-Ethiopian conflict is another illustration of the close relation between the local and the general, between individual states and group action. In the analysis of an incident in the history of sanctions and collective security, the problems facing the organization of such effort may be seen even more clearly than in a general consideration of the subject. May it not be valuable to re-consider these problems in the perspective of recent events. We cannot now assume a policy for the future, but we can use past events as a basis for bringing issues of future policy to mind and for planning for the future.

Discussion

Mr Adair asked Miss Carter what her opinion was in regard to the sincerity of the British and French governments in proposing to shut off Italian supplies, in view of the fact that both England and France exported

[41] *Canada, House of Commons, op. cit.*, 92 ff.

large quantities of the goods in question to Italy. Miss Carter replied that it appeared that both Sir Samuel Hoare and M. Laval were in agreement that no action should be taken that would lead to war. There was no evidence that M. Laval was at any time willing to take action that would seriously inconvenience the Italian government.

Mr Glover asked whether the real reason for Britain's policy had been the fact that her armaments had fallen so low, or that she regarded the Italian issue as a "sideshow," in comparison to the problem of Germany. Miss Carter replied that there was no doubt that the British government wished to preserve Italy as a possible ally, and that it feared that Great Britain might have to act alone against Italy, if events resulted in a war.

Mr Glazebrook asked if there was evidence of any difference of policy between the two Canadian parties in regard to the question of sanctions against Italy. He asked also whether or not the procedure of the League justified the position taken by Mr Lapointe in stating that the Canadian representative had acted as a private individual. Miss Carter replied that both parties attempted to safeguard themselves, but that the Bennett government was probably more ready to implement a League policy. In regard to procedure, she said there had been a division of opinion. Mr King had said that he did not believe that such a representative should make a statement of this kind without the consent of his government, whereas Mr Hertzog has said that the South African representative had been within his rights in making proposals of a similar nature. The King government, however, did specifically take exception to its representative acting without instructions.

Mr Sage asked if there were any significance in the fact that Mr King had been absent from Ottawa when Mr Lapointe made his statement. Miss Carter replied that Mr King had said that he and Mr Lapointe had been in consultation over the matter.