The Council met this morning under the chairmanship of Baron ALOISI (Italy) for its seventy-first session (extraordinary).

M. MATOS (Guatemala) reminded the Council that a frontier dispute had existed for a century between Guatemala and Honduras. In July, 1930, however, the two States had decided to submit their dispute to arbitration, and on January 23rd last the Arbitration Tribunal presided over by Mr. Hughes, President of the Supreme Court of the United States, had announced its award which the two countries had decided to accept. He hoped that this example would be followed by all states, who should prefer the supreme interests of peace above all other considerations.

M. de U.DARIGA (Spain) thanked M. Matos for his timely communication. The example just quoted showed that the important factor in international life was not so much the significance of the problems raised as the wisdom with which they were dealt with by the states concerned.

Mr. LESTER (Irish Free State) said that the instance recalled by M. Matos showed that it was possible to settle the most difficult problems. He hoped that the example of Guatemala and Honduras would be followed.

M. BENES (Czechoslovakia) congratulated M. Matos and Guatemala on the communication which he had made to the Council.

The PRESIDENT congratulated Guatemala and Honduras on the success of their efforts.

M. MATOS said that he would convey these observations to his government, and thanked the members of the Council.

The Council then entered upon consideration of the dispute between Colombia and Peru and the appeal of the Colombian Government under Article 15 of the Covenant.

M. SANTOS (Colombia) came to the Council table.

The President announced that the representative of Peru had intimated that pending instructions he would not attend the meeting of the Council. The representative of Peru had been notified of the meeting of the Council on Saturday. His absence was to be regretted, but the absence of one party could not interrupt the proceedings. The party which was not represented at the meeting incurred a responsibility both towards the League and towards his country. The President reminded the Council of the terms of the appeal of Colombia.

Mr. LESTER, Chairman of the Committee of the Council, instructed to follow the dispute, said that since the last session of the Council the Committee had met several times. He recalled the telegram addressed to the Government of Peru on February 16th following upon the incident which occurred on the 14th February between Colombian and Peruvian nationals. He referred also to the reply of the Government of Peru, the second telegram sent by the Committee of the Council on the 17th February, and the reply received from Peru on the same day. On February 17th, the Government of Colombia had asked that the Council should be urgently convened under Article 15.
The SECRETARY-GENERAL observed that Article 16 of the Covenant, paragraph 1, provided that in the event of an appeal being made to the Article, he should take all necessary measures with a view to a complete examination of the case in dispute. He therefore asked the delegates of Peru and Colombia what documents might be regarded as conveying the statement mentioned in paragraph 2 of Article 15. The delegate of Peru had intimated that the memoranda submitted to the Council presented the substance of the Peruvian case and had asked that his Government should be given time to submit additions.

M. SANTOS (Colombia) regretted the absence of the representative of Peru at a moment when his country was accused of aggression. Colombia, victim of an aggression, had been obliged to appeal to the Council. For two years, under a treaty regularly signed, peace had reigned in the region of the Amazon. The example of wisdom, to which M. Matos had referred, had been given eleven years ago by the Peruvians and Colombians who had settled by a treaty a dispute which had lasted for generations. Paraguay and Bolivia had never been able to fix their frontiers, but between Colombia and Peru, the situation in law was clear. The representative of Peru, in his telegram of February 19th, did not contest the treaty, but declared that the treaty was almost intolterable. The treaty was, in point of fact, a perfectly regular agreement, which gave to Colombia a very small access to the Amazon, and it had even been criticized by the opposition in the Colombian Parliament. In the territory claimed by Peru, Peru had done nothing during the whole of the time when that region had been Peruvian. He would remind the Council of the enquiry which has been conducted by Sir Roger Casement into the ill-treatment to which the natives of the district of the Putumayo had been subjected. When the dispute had been brought before the Council, the Council had expressed itself in a way which Colombia had found to be entirely satisfactory. Peru had paid no attention to the observations of the Council, and the Peruvian Minister of War had recently declared that the Peruvian flag would never be withdrawn from Leticia. The President of the Republic of Peru had also declared that Leticia would not be restored to the Colombians.

Colombia had unreservedly accepted the mediation of Brazil, whereas Peru had only accepted it subject to a modification of the conditions laid down. Brazil, on February 3rd, had announced that it abandoned its mediation. It was because of that mediation had now come to an end that Colombia now came before the Council asking for justice. The aggression against Leticia had been followed by other aggressions equally scandalous, particularly at Tarapace. When the Colombian forces reached Tarapace, they were received with bombs dropped from Peruvian aeroplanes. Colombia had broken off diplomatic relations with Peru. The Minister of Peru at Bogota had withdrawn without incident. At Lima, on the other hand, the Legation of Colombia had been attacked and destroyed by the mob, and the Minister of Colombia with his family had been driven to take refuge in the Legation of Chili. Anti-Colombian demonstrations had been organised at Lima. At a 1000 kilometres from Leticia, Colombian frontier posts had been attacked. A Peruvian aeroplane, following an attack by Peruvian aircraft, had been brought down.
To judge from the conduct of Peru, it would seem that no treaty or right existed but that the situation was governed entirely by the desire of certain persons from Loreto who had invaded Colombian territory, and that Colombia only had the right to discuss the question at Geneva, but not to take measures of defence.

Colombia had brought the dispute before the League of Nations, not only under Article 15, but in virtue of the entire Covenant which had been violated by Peru. He would represent that only one thing was superior to the rights of Colombia in the case, namely, justice. He would ask whether Peru, when she declared that she was unable to abide by her undertakings owing to the desires of the Department of Loreto, regarding herself as an illegally organised country within the meaning of the Covenant, Colombia would willingly have agreed to demilitarize the region of the Amazon by prohibiting fortifications and artillery, but Peru wished purely and simply to drive Colombia from the Amazon. Colombia, which had many military achievements to her credit, desired no further distinctions of that kind. The question which had arisen was serious for Colombia, but it was equally serious for the League since the case was typical. This was a typical violation of the Covenant. It was for the League of Nations to announce its decision. Colombia would accept the recommendation of the League without forgetting that she must at the same time defend herself. Colombia asked for no more than an execution of the treaties. She was not asking for any change of frontiers, but only for a legitimate indemnity in view of the fact that the aggression of Peru had made it necessary to incur military expenditure. On behalf of the Colombian people, he desired to state that in a question of which the issues were so clear he awaited in full confidence the reply of the League of Nations.

The President said that the Council must first endeavour to settle the dispute in conformity with paragraph 3 of Article 15 of the Covenant. The Committee of Three, already instructed to follow the dispute, might, in collaboration with the representatives of Colombia and Peru, seek a basis of agreement. Meanwhile, he would urgently appeal to the parties to show a liberal spirit of conciliation. The Secretary-General would forward to the Governments of Colombia and Peru the feelings of the Council.

M. SANTOS (Colombia) thanked the Council and stated that Colombia would be happy to collaborate with the League of Nations in any steps which the League might take for the pacific settlement of the dispute. The League of Nations had twice recognised the right of Colombia to ensure order in her territory. Colombia would be patient without prejudice to her right to restore order and defend herself against acts of aggression. He was sure that the League of Nations would fulfil its duty which was to secure respect for treaties and prevent the Covenant from becoming an empty formula.

Mr. LESTER (Irish Free State), on behalf of the Committee of Three, thanked the President for the responsibility with which the Committee was entrusted. They would perform their duties with the utmost possible impartiality.

The Council approved the declarations of the President.