

From the Sydney Herald, February 16, 1933

On the Japanese Invasion of China, and the Appropriate International Response (excerpted)

COMMITTEE'S REPORT:

There are outspoken passages in the report of the Committee of Nineteen, and the report rivals the Lytton report in size. It declares: "While Japanese officers in Manchuria on the night of September 18, 1931, might have believed that they were acting in legitimate defense, the Japanese military operations at Mukden and other places cannot be regarded as being in self-defense, any more than Japan's subsequent military measures, which, inspired by political considerations, acquired control of all the important towns. Moreover, the adoption of legitimate defense measures does not exempt a country from obligations under Article 12 of the League Covenant, providing for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

"A group of Japanese civil and military officials planned and carried out in Manchuria independence movement as a solution of the situation thus created, using for the purpose the names and activities of certain prominent Chinese and minorities with grievances against the Chinese Government. This move, supported and guided by the general staff, could only be achieved owing to the presence of Japanese troops, and cannot be considered as a spontaneous & genuine independence movement."

The report, in dealing with events producing the recent crisis, emphasizes that both China and Japan had legitimate grievances. Japan, it states, took advantage of questionable rights, and China obstructed by the exercise of her undoubted rights. The Geneva correspondent of the "Daily Telegraph" says: "The report, which was approved unanimously, proposes that China and Japan shall be given three months in which to accept or reject the recommendations. It is hoped that the parties will agree to direct negotiations."

The "Daily Telegraph" French correspondent says: "The report insists on the withdrawal of Japanese troops within the South Manchuria railway zone, and recommends the establishment of an organization under the sovereignty of China to deal with conditions in Manchuria, taking due account of the rights and interests of Japan, and the formation of a committee of negotiation for the application of these and other recommendations."

The Sino-Japanese dispute, the prospects of fighting in Jehol, and the repercussions at Geneva are the leading features of most newspapers in London. [Japan's proposals of February 8 consisted chiefly of a request to the committee to incorporate in the "statement of reasons" a sentence from the Lytton report expressing the opinion that a "satisfactory regime for the future might be evolved from the present one without violent change."]

ASSEMBLY TO MEET:

(British Official Wireless.)

The Committee of Nineteen this evening decided to call an extraordinary meeting of the League Assembly for next Tuesday.