

DOUBT over Ethiopia

AS ITALIAN armies descended on Ethiopia in 1935, Luigi Orazio, Italian minister to that country, sent an optimistic note to Premier Mussolini: "Haile Selassie's kingdom is a ripe, golden plum, ready to drop into Il Duce's lap."

Now that the plum has dropped into Il Duce's lap, the Italian Premier is not so sure that it is either ripe or golden. After eighteen months of occupation, the Italians find that native agriculturists will not coöperate and that exports of coffee, hides and skins, valued in 1934 at over £1,000,000, have virtually terminated.

In a recent dispatch from its correspondent in Jibuti, French Somaliland, the *London Times* declares that "the Ethiopians have persisted and still persist in passive resistance. Valuable coffee plantations and tracts of agricultural land that they will not cultivate have been allowed to go fallow for two years."

As there are no exportable commodities to take the place of those lost, it is apparent, says the *London Times* correspondent, that many years must pass before other products, such as cotton, can be grown in sufficient quantities for export. In the meantime it has been found necessary to import wheat and flour, though these products once were on Ethiopia's export list.

Currency complications have added to Italian headaches in Ethiopia. "The Maria Theresa dollar (silver) has been officially supplanted by the paper lira," says the *London Times*. "The Italians, when they set out to force their paper money on the natives, relied on pressure, but the native is biding his time and living on little."

Some Italian sources disagree with the correspondent's conclusions. Recently former Viceroy Graziani cabled Mussolini that "my surveys demonstrate that tranquillity is absolute. The native population is with Italy." But a writer in the *Tribuna* of Rome admitted that "nobody must delude himself with the idea that the former Shoan-Galla ruling caste have resigned themselves to the loss of their privileges and have welcomed our Italian Empire."