LEAGUE OF NATIONS

CONFERENCE FOR THE REDUCTION AND LIMITATION OF ARMAMENTS

PUBLICITY FOR NATIONAL DEFENCE EXPENDITURE

ACTION TAKEN ON THE BUREAU'S RESOLUTION OF MAY 31ST, 1937.

Note by the Secretary-General:

With reference to the resolution adopted by the Bureau on May 31st, 1937, and further to documents Conf.D.178 and 178(a), the Secretary-General has the honour to communicate to Members of the Bureau and to all Governments represented at the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments the replies to Circular Letter Conf.D./C.L.16, dated June 19th, 1937, received from the following Governments:

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The Peruvian Government has acknowledged receipt of the Circular Letter.

Brazil

[Translation from the Portuguese.]

Rio de Janeiro, September 15th, 1937.

With further reference to this Ministry's note No. LA/25/953, dated July 1st last, I have the honour to inform you that the draft Convention on Publicity for National Defence Expenditure has been carefully considered by the competent organs of the Federal Administration.

2. In view, however, of the present international situation, the Brazilian Government does not deem it expedient to conclude a convention of this kind.

(Signed) M. DE PIMENTEL BRANTAO.

Chile

[Translation from Spanish.]

Santiago, October 27th, 1937.

In reply to your Note No. C.L.16 of June 19th last, in which you were good enough to consult my Government with regard to a draft Convention on Publicity for National Defence Expenditure, I have the honour to inform you that the Chilian Government accepts that draft Convention in principle, provided that its provisions are also approved by the principal countries of the American continent.

(Signed) J. Ramon GUTIERREZ.
Netherlands

The Hague, October 28th, 1937.

In your circular letter dated June 19th last (Conf.D./C.L.16), you were good enough to forward to my predecessor the resolution adopted on May 31st, 1937, by the Bureau of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments.

With regard to your question concerning publicity for national defence expenditure, I have the honour to inform you that the Netherlands Government is prepared in principle to accept a system of publicity based on the draft Convention drawn up by the Technical Committee of the National Defence Expenditure Commission. Her Majesty's Government is of opinion, however, that it would be advisable to simplify the very detailed provisions proposed in the draft. It is already the Netherlands Government's practice to publish general information about the above-mentioned expenditure, but it could not give an undertaking that the documents published would provide a great deal more information than those published at present.

In accordance with the spirit of the report submitted by the Third Committee to the Eighteenth Assembly on the reduction and limitation of armaments, the consent of Her Majesty's Government is subject to the condition that the system of publicity is accepted by a sufficient number of other States, and in particular of the principal military and naval Powers.

For the Minister:

(Signed) A. M. Snouck Hurgronje, Secretary-General.

Spain

Valencia, September 28th, 1937.

With reference to my communication No. M. 56, dated August 11th, 1937, concerning the draft Convention relating to publicity of national defence expenditure prepared by the Technical Committee of the Commission for the Limitation of Armaments, I have the honour to inform you that the Spanish Government considers that in present circumstances it is impossible for the National Defence Department to undertake to fix the expenditure in question. At the present moment, this is unusually high and bears no relation to normal future expenditure which it is impossible to foresee, since it depends on the course, conditions and duration of the campaign which Spain is obliged to wage.

(Signed) p.p., R. de Ureña.

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Moscow, January 3rd, 1938.

As regards the draft International Convention on Publicity for National Defence Expenditure, the adoption of which, in the opinion of the Governments of France, Great Britain, and other States, must be contingent on its acceptance and application by the principal military Powers, this question can no longer be regarded as of immediate concern, in view of the fact that the Japanese Government, in its communication of August 27th, 1937, states that it is not prepared to publish its national defence expenditure in the form contemplated in the Technical Committee's draft.

(Signed) M. Litvinoff,
People's Commissary for Foreign Affairs.

1 Note by the Secretariat. — The letter from the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, dated January 3rd, 1938, was sent in reply to circular letter Conf.D./C.L.17 regarding the resolution adopted by the Assembly of the League of Nations on September 30th, 1937. As, however, the second part of the Soviet Government's reply also refers to the subject dealt with in circular letter Conf.D./C.L.16, that part has been reproduced in the present document.

2 Note by the Secretariat. — See document Conf.D.178, page 5.