

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments

VERBATIM RECORD (REVISED)

OF THE

EIGHTEENTH PLENARY MEETING

SATURDAY, JULY 23RD, 1932, AT 11.55 A.M.

President : The Right Honourable A. HENDERSON

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38. — **RENEWAL FOR A PERIOD OF FOUR MONTHS FROM NOVEMBER 1st, 1932, OF THE ARMAMENTS TRUCE: RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY THE GENERAL COMMISSION.**

The President. — At its twenty-sixth meeting held this morning, the General Commission adopted a resolution containing, among other things, a chapter on the Armaments Truce, which reads as follows :

“ In order to ensure that, pending the resumption of the meetings of the General Commission and during the second phase of its work, no steps shall be initiated by any Power which might prejudice the preparation of the General Disarmament Convention, the Conference decides to recommend to the Governments to renew for a period of four months from November 1st, 1932, the truce provided for by the resolution of the Assembly of the League of Nations of September 29th, 1931. ”

The General Commission, having adopted the whole text of the resolution, decided

to submit to this Conference the chapter on the truce, in view of the immediate action it requires on the part of the Conference. I will therefore now put to the vote the text adopted by the General Commission with regard to the truce, and I think it of such importance that the vote will be taken by roll-call.

The vote was taken by roll-call.

There voted in favour of the resolution : Afghanistan, Union of South Africa, Albania, Argentine Republic, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hejaz, Hungary, India, Irish Free State, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Persia, Poland, Portugal, Roumania, Siam, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United States of America, and Yugoslavia.

Abstained from voting : China.

The resolution was adopted by 49 votes, with one abstention.

Husein Aziz Khan (Afghanistan) :

Translation : I voted in favour of this resolution, but, as the Afghan Government was not represented here last year, all that I can do is to inform it of this recommendation.

M. Ansari (Persia) :

Translation : I vote for the resolution, subject to the explanations which the Persian delegation gave when the Italian proposal was put forward in the Assembly.

39. — CONCLUSION OF THE FIRST PHASE OF THE CONFERENCE.

M. Herriot (France) :

Translation : May I ask your permission to extend, on behalf of you all, the thanks of the Conference to our President, Mr. Henderson. He is no doubt entitled to the individual thanks of every one of us, but, as he himself told us just now in the General Commission, he has received so many letters, telegrams and post-cards that he will certainly be grateful to me for addressing to him a single message.

He has conducted our work throughout with impartiality, patience and kindness. He even pushed his heroism to the pitch of offering to work with us at night, but we preferred to pursue our work in the light of day as a symbol — or at all events a hope — of what the international policy of the future is to be.

Though he has not always succeeded in disarming the speakers, of whom I was one, he has at all events continually disarmed ill-humour, which was always possible; he has brought calm and tranquillity into our debates. I should like, then, to offer to our good shepherd a tribute of respect and affection from his peaceful flock.

Sir John Simon (United Kingdom). — May I again take the liberty of occupying your attention for one moment only and express the hope that I, too, may on this occasion speak for you all. I ask you to join me in rendering homage to our admirable Rapporteur, whose modesty has caused him at this moment, for the first time, to be absent from his usual place. We thank him for his devotion, for his patience, for his ingenuity and for his courtesy. He has done his utmost to keep us together on the right road, and, whatever the methods he has employed, he has never resorted to any offensive weapon. He still has some work to do before he has discharged his task. We thank him for the effort which he has made on behalf of us all in bringing us to our conclusion to-day. I have, during the last six months, from time to time, inflicted on you some long speeches. Let me earn your approbation by making a short one, for Dr. Beneš' praise is in all our mouths. I take the liberty of saying to him in your name that we thank our Rapporteur very much indeed.

Mr. Gibson (United States of America). — I should like very briefly to associate myself with the words of thanks expressed by M. Herriot and Sir John Simon to our President and Rapporteur, words which have so faithfully reflected the views of us all.

I feel that I, too, shall truly reflect the feelings of the Conference in expressing our deep sense of gratitude to the members of the Secretariat. I confess that, with each succeeding day of our work, I have felt a growing admiration for the splendid way in which they have carried out their task, and even more for their really super-human patience in face of the demands which most of us have made upon them. As regards our interpreters, perhaps the best course would be to follow the methods of the Preparatory Commission and "leave a blank" where you may all fill in your own adjectives. I could not undertake adequately to express our admiration for them; no matter how genuinely we thank them, I doubt if even we realise how much we owe them — how far the progress of our work is due to their facility, to their faithful translation of our thoughts and emphasis, as well as their faithful translation of our words.

I am confident that none of us will wish to leave Geneva without recording our very genuine debt of gratitude to all these friends who have borne so large a part of our burden.

M. Benes (Czechoslovakia), Rapporteur :

Translation : I am touched by Sir John Simon's kind reference to myself. I regard it as evidence that I have succeeded in satisfying my colleagues, at all events in part. That is the greatest satisfaction I could have, and I can assure you that I will endeavour to do better still in future.

The Secretary-General. — Mr. President, I have to thank you and the Conference, and particularly Mr. Gibson for his kind words about the work of the Secretariat. It has been a happiness to us to do what we could. Our business is to work and not to speak, and I am going to follow that rôle. I hesitate to say anything more, because I should add to the burden of the interpreters, whose qualities I am very grateful that you have so warmly acknowledged, I think they are one of the glories of the Secretariat, and I too thank them for my part.

The President. — May I express to M. Herriot my very high appreciation of the manner in which he proposed the vote of thanks to the President. I was particularly pleased with his reference to the impartiality of the Chair, the more so because a member of his own Parliament, on one occasion in a debate, said that he objected to Mr. Henderson being President, and added that he could not be impartial

because he was in favour of disarmament ! Be that as it may, that opinion evidently has not prejudiced the mind of the French Prime Minister, and I thank him and you all for the way you have supported me during the meetings of the Commission and the Bureau held in the course of the past six months.

I could not close this meeting without expressing my very high appreciation of the assistance I have received from the Vice-Presidents, the Rapporteur, and the Secretary-General with his staff, and especially the head of the Disarmament

Section — M. Aghnidès. Only the person who presides over any Conference held under the auspices of the League can have that true sense of the value of the organisation that is behind the Chair on such occasions. I hope it will always be my good fortune to have the valuable help that has been mine during the whole of this phase of the Conference.

The meeting is now closed. I trust we may all come together again to begin the second phase of our work.

(The Conference rose at 12.20 p.m.)
