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RECORDS

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of Armaments

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FORTY-SEVENTH MEETING (PRIVATE).

*Held on Monday, October 9th, 1933, at 4.15 p.m.*

**Chairman:** Mr. HENDERSON.

65. **Negotiations undertaken in accordance with the Decision of the General Commission of June 29th, 1933.**

The **Chairman** made the following statement:

Acting on the decision of the General Commission taken at its meeting on June 29th, 1
I visited Paris, Rome, Berlin, Munich and London and had conversations with the heads
and other representatives of the respective Governments, with a view to securing a greater

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\[1\] See Minutes of the seventy-ninth meeting of the General Commission, page 637.
Measure of agreement on a number of points which had not yielded to negotiation during
the first reading of the draft Convention submitted by the United Kingdom delegation.

Useful conversations have been held between Mr. Norman Davis and myself on several
occasions and, when in Paris in July, I took the opportunity of having a conversation with
our Vice-President, M. Politis. I also visited Prague and discussed the situation and the
future work of the Conference with Dr. Beneš, our Rapporteur. During those visits, I was
accompanied by M. Aghnides, Head of the Disarmament Section, and two of his assistants.

Believing that the General Commission was desirous of taking decisions on the second
reading of the United Kingdom draft Convention only after every effort had been made to
secure the greatest measure of common agreement, I left London on September 18th and
returned to Geneva, and during my journey I had separate conversations with Mr. Norman
Davis, Mr. Eden, and, on the morning of the 19th, with M. Paul-Boncour in Paris.

In view of the published statements to the effect that my tour of the capitals failed in
its object, it is necessary for me to say that the visits accomplished useful work and made it
clear that, on most of the points outstanding, no serious difficulty stood in the way of agreement.
I freely take this opportunity of expressing to all the Governments concerned, in the name
of the Conference, my sincere gratitude for the frank manner with which they discussed all
the points and for receiving the mission with more than ordinary courtesy. The negotiations
on the whole have shown a marked disposition in favour of securing a first-stage Convention
and on the majority of the points listed by the General Commission agreement could, I think,
be reached without our encountering any insuperable difficulty. But on some of the more
important questions, the approach was manifestly influenced by the present unsettled state
of Europe and the ensuing distrust, fears and alarms.

Nevertheless, when my visit to the capitals was concluded, the situation was clarified
to a considerable extent in that I was made more aware of where the real difficulties lay and
how some of them might be overcome.

It may be helpful if I divide the outstanding questions into two categories—those on
which agreement appeared to be relatively easy, and those which had shown themselves not
so easy of adjustment.

In the first category could be placed:

(1) Non-recourse to force on a universal basis;
(2) Definition of the aggressor;
(3) Control and supervision;
(4) Standardisation of European continental armies:
   (a) Trained reserves;
   (b) Effectives;
   (c) Colonial forces;
(5) Control of budgetary publicity;
(6) Bombing from the air;
(7) The early setting up of the Permanent Disarmament Commission;
(8) Naval questions.

The second list of more difficult, though less numerous questions, includes:

(1) The period of the duration of a first-stage Convention;
(2) Size of tanks and artillery;
(3) Reduction of land war material either by destruction or otherwise;
(4) Manufacture of and trade in arms;
(5) Military and naval aviation;
(6) Penalties against the violation of the Convention.

Two opinions prevail on the question of the duration of the Convention. Some countries
have shown a decided preference for a five-year Convention, during which the destruction
of the forbidden material and the equality of rights might be realised by stages. Other countries
have suggested an eight-year Convention divided into two periods of four years, the first
of which for the sake of convenience might be called a period of experience or of adaptation.
The Permanent Disarmament Commission would be charged with the responsibility of deciding
whether the machinery of control and supervision had been effective; in which case, the
reductions embodied in the Convention would be effected during the second period in the
manner described in the Convention.

The Bureau is of course aware that my negotiations were, so to speak, a first step towards
securing a larger measure of agreement likely to help us in the preparation of the texts for
a second reading. Those conversations were, as you know, continued between various heads

Two points have been found to be particularly difficult.

(1) The system of penalties for the violation of the provisions of the Convention
   in order to give a greater sense of security.
(2) The application of the principle of equality.
I have already referred to the early setting up of the Permanent Disarmament Commission. During my visits to the capitals, I made a suggestion on this subject which was well received at the time by all the statesmen with whom I discussed this point.

The draft Convention now under consideration lays it down in Article 84 that the Permanent Commission shall meet for the first time on being summoned by the Secretary-General of the League of Nations within three months from the entry into force of the Convention to elect its provisional officers and to draw up its rules of procedure. That means that this work could not be undertaken till after ratification, which involves a great loss of time. In my opinion, it is unnecessary to wait for the ratification of the Convention and still less for a further three months, as certain Governments may require time for ratification.

I therefore venture to suggest that the Commission should meet immediately on the signature of the Convention by, say, twenty States. This might be provided for either by a resolution of the Conference or by means of transitory provisions embodied in the Convention. In this manner, the Commission would be enabled to perform, between the times of signature and ratification of the Convention, all those provisional duties mentioned in the Convention and such other temporary tasks as the Conference may consider desirable to entrust to it.

The moment the Convention comes into force, the machinery set up by the Commission in what may be called the pre-ratification stage will come into operation.

If this proposal is accepted, the Commission will be ready to assume its permanent functions the moment the Convention enters into force.

I have already pointed out to you that the extent of common agreement so far secured does not cover all the outstanding contentious points. In the circumstances, I feel sure that the Bureau will agree with me that it is essential that the conversations should be actively pursued for another two or three days in order that a satisfactory solution may be found for the differences of opinion still existing, particularly as regards the question of the defensive weapons claimed by the disarmed countries during the period of experience and the question of penalties.

I feel equally sure that the Bureau will agree with me that, in view of all the preparatory work that has been done, there should be no delay in the meeting of the General Commission. The conversations to be undertaken in the next few days should be conducted with the object of clarifying still further the situation and narrowing the issues in time for the meeting of the General Commission on October 16th. There is no longer need for technical discussions. What is required now are political decisions. The General Commission would thereby be enabled, when it resumes its work on Monday, to embark upon the second reading of the United Kingdom draft.

In preparation for the General Commission, the draft Convention has, at my request, been communicated to you in a tabulated form, so that the Bureau should be put in possession, not only of the text of the United Kingdom draft as modified in the course of the first reading, but also of the amendments presented up to the present.

But, in view of the negotiations and conversations carried out both by your President and by most of the delegates present here, and which are continuing, it is obvious that some of the articles will have to be amended in the light of any agreements reached. Someone will therefore have to be appointed at some stage to assume the responsibility of presenting new texts. The United Kingdom delegation, which has already provided us with the original draft, adopted by us as the basis of the future Convention, is likely to carry out this work with greater ease than any other. If that delegation is good enough to assume this further responsibility, I am confident that the Bureau and the General Commission would be grateful to it.

In conclusion, may I say that I am not satisfied that sufficient progress has been made during the conversations to justify the hope that an immediate public discussion, on one or two points, would serve any useful purpose? On the other hand, I am profoundly convinced that further postponement of the General Commission would arouse suspicion, and give credence to the suggestion, already freely circulated, that the Conference no longer intends to formulate a genuine Convention providing for the reduction and limitation of armaments. This is not my opinion by any means, for, as I have already stated, the negotiations have shown a marked disposition in favour of securing a first-stage Convention, and it is difficult to see how it could be otherwise, in view of the important decisions to which the General Commission is already committed, especially when it resolved that a substantial reduction of world armaments shall be effected, to be applied alike to land, naval and air armaments.

If the delegations are determined to apply the general principles contained in the resolutions already adopted by the General Commission, then success is assured, but I am convinced that it is of the highest importance that we should press on without delay and without intermission.

The conclusion I have reached, therefore, is that everything must be done, by a continuance of the private conversations and negotiations, to remove existing divergencies of opinion and to find a method of procedure which would enable us to do the remainder of our work with reasonable expedition and without increasing the risk of failure. To this end, I suggest that the Bureau at the close of this meeting should stand adjourned until Saturday morning at 10.30 a.m.

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2 Document Conf.D.163(1).
Mr. Eden (United Kingdom) was convinced that the members of the Bureau would be particularly grateful to the President of the Conference for the tenacity he had shown in carrying out the mission, entrusted to him by the General Commission, of endeavouring to bring about an agreement. He had only asked to speak in order to comply with the desire addressed by the President to the United Kingdom delegation, and to assure his colleagues that his delegation would be only too happy to embody in definite terms any agreement which might be reached, though he trusted that he would not be asked to try to make bricks without straw.

The conversations which had been carried on during the last weeks had dealt with the fundamental points in the problem. The United Kingdom Government was convinced that, unless agreement was reached upon these fundamental points, it was useless to deal with the decorative details.

Mr. Eden thought that it might be said that progress had already been made and, at least as far as concerned certain delegations, they were nearer agreement. He recalled, however, the President's remarks regarding the insecurity of the European situation, a fact which did not lighten the Conference's task.

M. Nadolny (Germany) thanked the President for his efforts to facilitate the task of the Conference, and thus to work towards the establishment of a stable and general peace. He had pleasure in accepting the procedure proposed by the President.

The German delegation had always considered it preferable to carry on the discussion in the General Commission and to proceed to the second reading of the United Kingdom draft. M. Nadolny hoped that the negotiations carried on by the President would make it possible to start the second reading with confidence in the ultimate achievement of the results which all delegations desired.

In accordance with the Chairman's proposal, the Bureau decided to meet on Saturday, October 14th, at 10.30 a.m., the meeting of the General Commission being fixed for Monday, October 16th.

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FORTY-EIGHTH MEETING (PRIVATE)

Held on Saturday, October 14th, 1933, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. A. Henderson.

66. Negotiations undertaken in accordance with the Decision of the General Commission of June 29th, 1933 (continuation).

The Chairman reminded the Bureau that, at the last meeting, he had made a statement with regard to the conversations and negotiations which he had been authorised to carry through by a decision of the General Commission on June 29th. He had intimated that, in spite of all the efforts that had been made, one or two points had not yielded to negotiation. It had been thought that further conversations might be necessary, and he understood that those conversations had been carried on since the last meeting of the Bureau. The Bureau would, he felt sure, be most anxious to hear the result, and he could not do better than ask Sir John Simon, as being responsible for the draft Convention submitted by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in March, to make a statement as to the present position.

Before doing so, however, he desired to inform the Bureau that M. Motta had expressed regret at being unable to attend the meeting.

Sir John Simon (United Kingdom) made the following statement:

Mr. Henderson has invited me to give some account of the conversations to which I have been a party from time to time during recent weeks, both at Geneva and elsewhere, and in which the participants have attempted to ascertain, by means of a friendly exchange of views, what are the prospects of reaching agreement on various vital matters. I will do the best I can to comply with the President's request. I feel that I should speak plainly and frankly, for the time has gone by for glossing over difficulties by vague optimistic phrases. A system of agreed disarmament promptly entered into and loyally carried out would, I believe, be of the greatest value to the world, but I am equally clear that nothing is gained by interminable discussions which do not face essential matters on which differences may still exist.

The account which I have to render is as follows:

So far as the United Kingdom representatives are concerned, we have taken part in meetings, at different times, with the French, German, Italian and American representatives, as well as in a number of talks with the representatives of some other Powers. Those
conversations have led me to take the view that the draft Convention, which the United Kingdom Government put before the General Commission over six months ago and which has been unanimously adopted as the general framework for the proposed agreement, will require to be in some respects recast. The draft Convention is at present drafted to cover a period of five years: the discussions which I am summarising indicate on the part of some Powers a wish that the period should be extended to perhaps eight years and, so far as I recall, no serious objection to this extension has been raised.

It was further proposed that this total period of eight years should be occupied by the fulfilment of a continuous programme, designed to secure at the end of the period two essential conditions: (a) a substantial measure of disarmament actually realised and completed on the part of the heavily armed Powers, and (b) the achievement of the principle of equality in a regime of security which, ever since December of last year, has been the declared objective, not only of the Powers who signed the Declaration of December 11th, but of the Disarmament Conference itself. But, in order to attain this, it is necessary to proceed by steps. Indeed, the method of stages has from a very early date been adopted as the necessary method by the general vote of the Conference. And when I speak of a programme which would gradually unfold in action so as to secure at the end of the period these two essential conditions, I recall the language of Mr. Henderson, in his report to the Bureau on October 9th, last, when he declared:

"On some of the more important questions, the approach was manifestly influenced by the present unsettled state of Europe and the ensuing distrust, fears and alarms."

The present unsettled state of Europe is a fact, and statesmen, in drawing up their plans, have to face facts. The need, therefore, for modifying the draft Convention so as to accomplish this purpose by a process of evolution is clearly established.

The scheme, therefore, which emerged for consideration, as the result of a number of these interviews, was one in which the proposed period of eight years would begin with the transformation of continental armies on the lines set out in the United Kingdom draft, together with the setting up, through the medium of the Permanent Disarmament Commission, of an adequate system of supervision, so that the sense of security, which the due observance of the Convention will afford, should provide the groundwork for the practical attainment of the twin ideas of disarmament and equality. Mr. Henderson has suggested that the Permanent Disarmament Commission might be set up as soon as the Convention is signed without waiting for ratification. If this suggestion is found feasible, it ought to be welcomed, for it aims at shortening the period when actual disarmament and attained equality would be effectively reached. It is understood on all hands that the supervision contemplated would be of general application. Its purpose would be to ensure that the undertakings contained in the Convention were being loyally observed. It is a matter for close consideration to determine how much of the eight years would be needed for the initial steps, to which I have referred. Transformation of armies involves technical questions which will govern the time-table, and, in the meantime, a real feeling of confidence should develop, when it is seen that the whole plan is agreed to and is in due process of execution. I must report that the period of four years was mentioned by several Governments, though others have raised the question whether it could not be somewhat shortened.

Whatever the length of this first stage may be, it is essential to make clear that the Convention itself would have to contain, at the time of its signature, the detailed scheme of disarmament provided for as the final result to be attained by the time its full period of, say, eight years comes to an end. I have described that disarmament as "substantial" and the extent of it has been the subject of detailed discussion. Since general phrases will not advance matters, I add that by "substantial" disarmament is meant either the disarmament provided for in the United Kingdom draft Convention or some comparable variation of it. I say quite definitely that the whole scheme would not be satisfactory to my Government and we could not lend our own support to it unless the degree of disarmament by the heavily armed Powers is both fully defined in the Convention and really adequate. But there is another feature in the second stage of the plan which is equally definite. It is this: the result of the abolition of various kinds of armament and of prohibition against their further use, will be to constitute a common list of permitted arms, which would become the same for all countries, and thus the differential position of the Powers whose armaments were limited by the peace treaties would finally cease. Quantities, and other detailed regulations, would of course be in each case the subject of negotiation and agreement.

The Bureau will therefore see that the plan I have outlined is one which, if it were adopted and loyally observed, would bring into practical operation the principle of equality of status by the method of substantial disarmament on the one hand and the application to all countries of a common list of prohibited arms on the other.

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1 See Minutes of the twenty-eighth meeting of the General Commission, page 207.
But this programme involves a feature which appears to me to be essential. I must state it with complete frankness to the Bureau. The scheme involves the principle that the Powers now under restriction of the peace treaties should not begin to increase their armaments forthwith, but should express their willingness to conform to a time-table such as I have indicated. The Government of the United Kingdom takes the view that agreement could not be reached on the basis of a Convention which would provide for any immediate rearmament. In speaking of "no re-armament", I do not mean to dispute the reasonableness, as the Reichswehr is transformed into a more numerous short-service army, of a proportional numerical increase in its armament. And there should be, from the beginning of the Convention, an agreement that no Government will manufacture or acquire any further weapons of any of the types to be eventually abolished.

In our view, therefore, for the reasons indicated by Mr. Henderson in the passage I have quoted, the attainment of the object which we all have in view at the Disarmament Conference must be in accordance with a regular programme. We earnestly desire to establish, by international agreement, the attainment of equality of status and we point out that it is attained in a most complete and effective way by providing for disarmament through the adoption and loyal fulfilment of such a programme as I have indicated. By accepting the principle of no immediate re-armament and co-operating with the rest of us in framing a Convention which best is calculated to restore the sense of confidence which has recently been so rudely shaken, the necessary conditions of success can be established.

The statement I have been asked to make has necessarily involved some plain speaking and a perfectly clear declaration of our own point of view. I feel that if the General Commission, which meets on Monday, is now to do useful work, it is most desirable to ascertain what is the view of other countries on these essential points, and I sincerely trust that we may thus find a way of removing the obstacles which at present stand in the way of an agreed Convention.

Mr. Norman Davis (United States of America) pointed out that Sir John Simon's statement contained an account of conversations in many of which he himself had participated. It also contained a very definite indication of the modifications Sir John Simon felt should be introduced into the United Kingdom draft Convention to make it more generally acceptable. Mr. Norman Davis was glad to be able to confirm Sir John Simon's account of the conversations and to endorse and support the position he had taken upon the important questions of substance before the Bureau for immediate decision. He was the better able to give his support to the statement just made, because, as a result of the frequent and exhaustive conversations he had had during the past few days with Sir John Simon, they had come to the common conclusions so clearly and forcibly expressed in that statement.

It was not difficult for Mr. Norman Davis to state his position in that frank and unequivocal manner. The report that had been laid before the Bureau, both in its broad outlines and in many of the points of detail, was in agreement with the position of the United States Government, as set forth in the communication which President Roosevelt had addressed to the heads of Government represented at the Conference in May last, and with the statement which he himself had made in the General Commission a few days later. In those statements, his Government had taken the position that a Disarmament Convention could not properly be made an instrument for re-armament and that qualitative equality in armaments should primarily be sought through the reduction of the armaments of the heavily armed Powers and not through action on the part of others to attempt to build up. Under present conditions, steps were necessary in attaining that equality. It could not be achieved at one stroke.

He would not attempt to restate, on that or on other points, the position which had been so adequately presented to the Bureau. He only wished to emphasise one point to help reassure those who were impatient or sceptical because of the long delay. From the conversations in which many of the members of the Bureau had recently participated, he was more than ever convinced of the sincere purpose of the more heavily armed countries to make effective measures of disarmament a reality. He would add that no treaty would be satisfactory, as far as his Government was concerned or would justify its participation in a system of supervision designed to ensure its faithful observance, unless that treaty contained precise provisions for such measures of disarmament.

M. Di Soragna (Italy) made the following declaration:

The Italian delegation thanks Sir John Simon for his very clear and full statement on the present position of the very serious question with which we are dealing. We also thank him for the programme of work he has indicated and which we deduce from his remarks.

1 See Minutes of the fifty-ninth meeting of the General Commission, page 461.
2 See Minutes of the sixty-first meeting of the General Commission, page 474.
We shall be very glad once more to join our efforts to those of all the other delegations on the lines he has laid down. We are hopeful and confident that the world may find in this programme, as we do, a positive basis for the subsequent work which has still to be done in achieving the aim to which we all look forward in the same spirit of conciliation and peace.

M. Paul-Boncour thanked Sir John Simon and Mr. Norman Davis for the accurate account they had given of the negotiations that were proceeding among a number of Powers. Those negotiations had been undertaken at the request of the General Commission; they could only be of a preliminary character, for questions affecting all the Powers could be decided only by the Conference itself.

The conversations had led to results which were sufficiently important to justify real optimism.

A United Kingdom plan, which embodied many of the features of an earlier French plan, had been accepted as a basis for discussion and had received a first reading. It had been realised that, if the second reading were to lead to good results, important reservations formulated by certain Governments, including the French Government, must be taken into consideration, as must also political events, which the Conference could not ignore, and the exact position of various Powers in relation to the armament limitations established by international agreements. The United Kingdom plan must therefore be amended and revised in the light of those circumstances.

M. Paul-Boncour wished to state explicitly that he accepted the essential principles just enumerated by Sir John Simon.

Since realities had to be taken into account, the Convention, to be concluded for eight years, must be executed in two stages, of which the first must be a preliminary and preparatory stage. The political atmosphere of Europe must be improved before it would be possible to contemplate actually effecting substantial reductions in armaments, which must, moreover, be embodied in the Convention in the form of specific undertakings as soon as the conditions laid down for the first stage had been fulfilled.

There was another equally strong reason for the preliminary period.

Under the contemplated system, supervision was of capital importance. Effective supervision was an essential feature of any system of security; it was absolutely necessary that supervision should have been tried and found satisfactory and that the undertakings given should have been proved to have been faithfully observed before States could abandon part of the armaments they possessed.

With regard to the length of the first stage, it was not by any arbitrary choice that a period of four years had been contemplated in the conversations of which Sir John Simon had given an account; that figure was justified by several important considerations which M. Paul-Boncour would advance at the proper time. He wished, however, to say forthwith that his Government attached the utmost importance to that figure.

An equally essential point was that a disarmament movement should not begin by the rearming of the States disarmed by treaties.

It was understood that equality of rights should be brought about at the end of the Convention through gradual disarmament during the second stage, according to a specific programme which would be embodied in the Convention.

The General Commission must pronounce without delay upon the principles laid down, otherwise its work would be useless.

Baron von Rheinbaben (Germany) said that, in the absence of M. Nadolny, he desired to limit his observations to the following declaration:

I take it for granted that the Bureau is aware that the view of the German Government on disarmament is marked by two claims or elements: (a) real and substantial disarmament of the highly armed Powers, and (b) the immediate practical application of equality of status, the question of quantity being open for negotiation. In this sense, I have taken note of the very important statement of Sir John Simon and shall report it at once to my Government.

M. Bourquin (Belgium) said that the Belgian delegation unreservedly concurred in the ideas expressed by Sir John Simon and supported by those who had spoken after him. It seemed to M. Bourquin absolutely essential that the efforts of the Conference should not end in rearmament. Moreover, he was convinced that a first stage, such as that contemplated, was absolutely indispensable in the present state of affairs, as it would give experience in the working of the Convention. It would be useless to build on nothing. The realities must be faced. But undoubtedly there was at present such a feeling of anxiety as might paralyse any attempt at disarmament unless guarantees calculated to allay that feeling were obtained.

M. Bourquin noted that once again the problem of security had arisen, but that it appeared, in a new and more clearly defined aspect. The question was one of security in disarmament, of security closely connected with measures of disarmament. It was obvious that the fundamental condition of that form of security was to be found in the organisation of real, practical and efficacious supervision.

With regard to the length of the first stage, M. Bourquin supported M. Paul-Boncour's observations. When the period had been fixed, the technical conditions of supervision would have to be taken into account in order to judge of its efficacy.
M. Beneš (Czechoslovakia), speaking as both Rapporteur and representative of Czechoslovakia, desired to make two observations with regard to Sir John Simon's statement.

The first was an observation of form. In his opinion, the second reading of the United Kingdom draft could only usefully be embarked upon if certain questions of principle were settled first. Among these questions he mentioned: (a) the duration of the Convention and the establishment of a graduated plan divided into two stages; (b) effective permanent and general supervision; and (c) prohibited or permitted arms and no rearmament.

The second observation related to the substance of the problem. M. Beneš unreservedly concurred in the ideas expressed by Sir John Simon with regard to the three points he had just mentioned. He specially desired to emphasise his agreement in that connection as he was convinced that, if those questions were not settled, the General Commission would be unable to continue its work.

M. Politis (Greece) replied on behalf of his Government to the question Sir John Simon had asked at the end of his statement. He was in complete agreement with Sir John Simon as to the two fundamental principles to which the latter had referred. The question of the principle of no rearmament was one which settled itself. It had been repeated on many occasions since the beginning of the Conference that it would be disastrous to the Conference and to its standing in public opinion if its efforts led to rearmament. The second question was the establishment of a first experimental period. In M. Politis' opinion, that period was absolutely essential for the purpose of creating a feeling of security, the need for which had often been indicated during the Conference's discussions.

M. Politis hoped that agreement would speedily be reached on that point; otherwise the General Commission would be unable to continue with its work. Once agreement had been achieved, it would be necessary to work quickly, proceeding to an adaptation of the United Kingdom's plan on the two bases just mentioned.

The Chairman reminded the Bureau that Sir John Simon had concluded his statement with the following words: "It is most desirable to ascertain what is the view of other countries on those essential points." It appeared to the Chairman that, after the expressions of opinion the Bureau had just heard, it ought to decide to transmit Sir John Simon's report to the General Commission, not only for information, but also as a subject for discussion.

If there were no objection to that procedure, a full report of the morning's proceedings would be sent to the General Commission as early as possible in order that the latter might open its discussion on Sir John Simon's report at its next meeting on the following Monday.

The procedure proposed by the Chairman was adopted.

FORTY-NINTH MEETING (PRIVATE)

Held on Monday, October 16th, 1933, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. A. HENDERSON.

67. DECISION OF THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT TO LEAVE THE CONFERENCE: MODIFICATIONS IN THE PROCEDURE TO BE PROPOSED TO THE GENERAL COMMISSION.

The Chairman informed his colleagues that immediately after the meeting on Saturday last he had received from Baron von Neurath, the German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, a telegram which he had at once communicated to the members of the Conference, together with the acknowledgment he had sent pending an appropriate reply, which he could not make without previously consulting the General Commission. The telegrams exchanged were the following:

"Berlin, October 14th, 1933.

"On behalf of the German Government, I have the honour to make to you the following communication: In the light of the course which recent discussions of the Powers concerned have taken in the matter of disarmament, it is now clear that the Disarmament Conference will not fulfil what is its sole object—namely, general disarmament. It is also clear that this failure of the Conference is due solely to the unwillingness on the part of the highly armed States to carry out their contractual obligation to disarm."
This renders impossible the satisfaction of Germany's recognised claim to equality of rights, and the condition on which the German Government agreed at the beginning of this year again to take part in the work of the Conference thus no longer exists. The German Government is accordingly compelled to leave the Disarmament Conference. — Baron von Neurath.

To this telegram the President had sent the following acknowledgement:

"Have the honour acknowledge receipt your telegram of October 14th which I am communicating to the General Commission of Conference for Reduction and Limitation of Armaments. — Henderson, President."

His reason for having resorted to that procedure was that Baron von Neurath's telegram contained, as the members of the Bureau could see, certain estimates of the situation on which, although the Chairman might have anticipated the feeling of the General Commission, he could not take immediate action without consulting it.

Those estimates—three in number—were as follows:

1. "It is now clear that the Disarmament Conference will not fulfil what is its sole object—namely, general disarmament."

2. "It is also clear that this failure of the Conference is due solely to the unwillingness on the part of the highly armed States to carry out their contractual obligation to disarm."

3. "This renders impossible the satisfaction of Germany's recognised claim to equality of rights."

It had occurred to him that the General Commission might not like to let those statements pass unchallenged. He had therefore prepared a draft reply which he would submit to the Commission at the coming meeting and which he proposed to send to the German Government, unless the Commission had objections to that course. The draft reply had just been communicated to the members of the Bureau.¹

The procedure proposed by the Chairman was approved.

The Chairman also wished to inform the Bureau of the procedure which, he thought, the General Commission should follow as regarded the programme of work which had been discussed and approved by the Bureau at its last meeting. He proposed to suggest that, under the changed circumstances, the General Commission should do no more than take note of the Bureau's report on the matter.

The Chairman's proposal was approved.

The Chairman then informed his colleagues that, in view of the entirely new situation with which they were faced, certain delegations desired to consult their Governments. He was quite prepared to propose to the General Commission, with the Bureau's approval, certain measures which would meet the wishes of those delegations or at least of those which were able to get into rapid communication with their Governments—namely, that the date of the Bureau's next meeting should be fixed for Wednesday, October 25th, and that the General Commission should adjourn until Thursday, October 26th.

M. de Madariaga (Spain) wished to know what the General Commission would do if it met on October 26th.

The Chairman replied that he was in the same state of perplexity as M. de Madariaga. That was why he had suggested that the Bureau should meet on Wednesday, October 25th. The delegations would then have consulted their Governments and it might perhaps be possible to take decisions.

In any case, he wished to emphasise the fact that he was opposed to an adjournment. When he had returned from London two days ago, he had hoped that the Conference would have completed its work about Christmas time; but the days were passing and it was to be feared that the Conference would shortly be celebrating its second anniversary. He therefore hoped that on Wednesday, October 25th, the Bureau would be in a position to take a decision on the course of the work to be followed by the General Commission.

The procedure proposed by the Chairman was adopted.

¹ For the text of the reply, see Minutes of the eightyieth meeting of the General Commission.
68. ARRANGEMENTS FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS AND FOR THE PREPARATION OF A REVISED TEXT OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION FOR SECOND READING.

The CHAIRMAN said that, before the immediate programme was considered, a brief review of the recent position might be helpful.

At its meeting on June 29th, the General Commission had agreed, on the recommendation of the Bureau, that the second reading of the draft Convention should begin only after a greater measure of common agreement had been secured. Monday, October 16th, was fixed as the date of the General Commission's next meeting in the hope that, by then, the negotiations and conversations would have produced successful results.

In a report to the Bureau on October 9th, the Chairman had stated that two points had been found to be particularly difficult: the system of penalties and the application of the principle of equality.

At the forty-eighth meeting of the Bureau, held on October 14th, Sir John Simon had made a statement on the position resulting from the conversations, which was supported by a number of delegations and was transmitted to the General Commission for consideration by a unanimous decision of the Bureau.

The General Commission had met on October 16th, when a telegram announcing the German Government's withdrawal from the Conference was read, together with the proposed reply. The General Commission had decided to adjourn until October 26th, to enable delegations to consult their Governments.

Another important event had to be noted—namely, the fall of the French Government. In the report he had presented to the Bureau on October 9th, the Chairman had definitely stated that sufficient progress had not been made to justify the hope that an immediate public discussion on some of the points outstanding would serve any useful purpose. The position remained unchanged in that respect, but the immediate difficulties might have been intensified by recent happenings.

In deciding what was the best course to follow under existing circumstances, the Bureau should keep clearly before it two important points:

(1) That the task of the Conference was to produce a Disarmament Convention;
(2) That the United Kingdom draft had to be the basis of the new Convention.

For the Conference, at that critical moment, to adopt any policy which could be interpreted as an indication of its inability or unwillingness to complete its task would be disastrous. It would be a serious blow to the League, to the cause of disarmament by world action, and to the honour of the Conference, as it would play into the hands of all those who for many months had said that certain Powers did not intend to reduce and limit their armaments.

The Conference had a heavy responsibility upon it, which could only be discharged by the conclusion of a genuine Disarmament Convention within a reasonable period of time. If he spoke plainly, it was because there had been so many published statements about the adjournment of the Conference until the coming year that he must make it known that he was definitely opposed to such a course. He was not unmindful of the difficulties, some of which rendered it inadvisable that public discussion should begin immediately without a further effort to narrow the existing differences. But even that did not render it necessary for the Conference to adjourn, as had been suggested, for so long a period or to discontinue its work entirely.

He strongly urged, therefore, that the General Commission be requested to authorise the Bureau to go forward with all the necessary arrangements, so as to enable the General Commission to begin its second reading on the basis of a revised and entirely up-to-date draft.

1 See Minutes of the seventy-ninth meeting of the General Commission, page 637.
2 See Minutes of the forty-seventh meeting of the Bureau.
3 See Minutes of the eightieth meeting of the General Commission.
If the Bureau decided to recommend that course, as he strongly hoped it would, it might also recommend that the General Commission should again be adjourned to permit of a further effort to narrow the differences, but on the understanding that it should meet not later than December 4th.

M. Massigli (France) said that, as the Chairman had referred to certain events in French domestic policy, he would venture to open the discussion. He desired to say immediately that he could fully support the proposal that the work of the Conference should continue, for on October 16th the French Parliament had approved that programme by a majority of three-fourths.

While not taking a final decision until he had heard his colleagues' views, he thought he might say that the proposal to ask the Bureau or some other suitable body to continue the work had the full support of the French delegation.

Mr. Eden (United Kingdom) said, with regard to the general situation, that His Majesty's Government was fully determined to persevere in the work of disarmament. As to the immediate procedure to be followed, the plan outlined by the Chairman seemed eminently practicable and reasonable, and the United Kingdom Government would be happy to fall in with it.

M. MoreSCO (Netherlands) asked for certain explanations with regard to the work to be entrusted to the Bureau. He wished to know whether the Bureau would amend the United Kingdom draft Convention in accordance with Sir John Simon's declaration, or whether it would have to examine the amendments and any other proposals that might subsequently be made.

The Chairman said that, in the first place, it must be kept very clearly in mind that the Bureau had been from the beginning, and still was, the constitutional working organ of the Conference. It would have to see that, by some method or other, negotiations—which he hoped would be successful—were carried on with regard to the points still outstanding. A few days previously he had reported that several points had not yielded to conversations. Those points must be cleared up and the existing divergencies of opinion lessened, on the responsibility of the Bureau, though that did not mean that the Bureau would carry on the negotiations itself.

It must be remembered that no text embodying the decisions reached during the first reading of the United Kingdom draft Convention had as yet been prepared, and that it might be necessary to make still further changes in the draft, if the coming negotiations were successful. He hoped that it would be possible to place a clean text in the hands of delegations a few days before the meeting of the General Commission on December 4th, in order that they might consider how far the revised text represented their views.

M. Motta (Switzerland) was glad to note that the Bureau was unanimously of opinion that the Conference should continue. It would, indeed, be a great mistake to break it up. The really serious events that had recently occurred would not justify such a decision.

By what method should the work be continued? The Chairman had said that the Bureau was the body to which that task should be entrusted. Personally, M. Motta agreed with him. It would be difficult to find a body to substitute for the Bureau which had already been utilised successfully during certain earlier crises. M. Motta had been glad to hear the Chairman say that the Bureau would mainly concern itself with clearing up difficulties and with negotiations. At the same time—and he raised the question without settling it—he wondered whether the Bureau could undertake the delicate and decisive business of negotiation. If it were decided in the affirmative, he would support that view.

As to the date on which the General Commission should meet again, December 4th, M. Motta was not sure whether sufficient progress would have been made to enable the discussions to continue usefully. He hoped it would. Nevertheless, the suggested date would perhaps be too near, if difficulties were encountered. In his opinion, it would be better not to take a definite decision at once, but to leave the Bureau to fix the date.

He made no formal proposal, but in his opinion it would be enough to say that the Conference was continuing, that the Bureau would work on the wording and adjustment of the draft Convention, that the General Commission would probably meet on December 4th, but that the Bureau was free to decide otherwise.

The Chairman explained that the date had to be fixed not too far ahead in order to avoid creating the impression that the Conference was to be given a "decent burial". On the other hand, it could not be too early, because of the very difficulties to which M. Motta had referred. After all, the second reading must continue to depend upon a greater measure of common agreement being secured. If it had not been secured by the time the Bureau met, the latter
might have to take the responsibility of suggesting that that part of the General Commission's decision still operated. After long and careful consideration, the Chairman had come to the conclusion that it was better to leave the matter as it stood and not to give any ground for the impression that, as the Press had suggested, there was to be a long and indefinite adjournment. If the Bureau found it impossible to keep to the programme fixed, he was sure that the General Commission had sufficient common sense to understand that the date of its next meeting might have to be changed.

M. Motta also seemed to have some doubt as to whether the Bureau was the body to carry on the negotiations. As the Chairman had said, the Bureau would be responsible, but would not necessarily conduct the actual negotiations. That responsibility had been placed upon the Chairman by the General Commission some time previously. He had done his best and had then stood aside to allow the private conversations to continue. It might be necessary for him to see to the conduct of the negotiations, but he would report to the Bureau if it was in meeting. If, after that, some further plan had to be resorted to in order to reach agreement, the Bureau would be at liberty to put forward any suggestions.

As the big Powers were all represented in the Bureau, it might assist towards a solution if some of the difficulties were discussed there. The Bureau would, as it were, supervise the whole matter.

M. MORESCO (Netherlands) understood, after M. Motta's observations and the Chairman's reply, that the date of the next meeting of the General Commission would be fixed provisionally subject to adjournment if necessary. In these circumstances, he wondered whether it was necessary to convene the General Commission if a decision were taken for a further adjournment. He proposed that, in that case, the Chairman, who would remain in permanent contact with all the Powers, should be asked to adjourn the General Commission if the need arose.

M. MASSIGLI (France) asked the Chairman whether the Bureau would meet after the General Commission on the following day. In M. Massigli's opinion, it would be essential for it to meet to organise its work in such a way as to prevent any misunderstanding as to what was meant by negotiations. He felt that the negotiations should take place at Geneva, for the work was being done at Geneva and the Conference would continue there.

The CHAIRMAN said that he had intended to call a meeting of the Bureau after the General Commission if time permitted, or, if not, on the following day. As the question might be raised in the General Commission, it might be as well for the Bureau to consider it, so that the President could state that the Bureau would meet immediately to fix its programme of work. Great advantage was to be gained by showing that the Conference had not fallen to pieces for reasons he need not name.

In reply to M. Moreesco, the Chairman thought it would be strictly in conformity with his responsibilities to postpone, still further, if necessary, the date of the General Commission's meeting. He did not suggest, however, that the General Commission should meet in order to adjourn. The Bureau would, he hoped, meet several days before December 4th, and, if it were found impossible to distribute a new text by that date, he would consult it as to the advisability of an adjournment.

He hoped that, on the understanding that the Bureau would meet after the General Commission's next meeting, it would approve his recommendations.

M. DI SORAGNA (Italy) desired an explanation as to the meaning of the suggestion that the Bureau should be asked to prepare the text of a Convention. Did that mean a text accepted by all, or, on the contrary, that the position of each question would be made clear? In the latter case, the Bureau could doubtless do useful work, but in the former it would unquestionably encounter very great difficulties.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that it had already been decided, at a previous meeting, that the Bureau should prepare a text upon which the General Commission could begin its second reading. It had been unable to do so because certain negotiations had not been sufficiently fruitful, and the Bureau would therefore be responsible for seeing that by some method or other they continued. He hoped they would be successful. The present text could then be brought up to date in such a way as to make it easier to consider than if it were taken in its present form.

Everyone was aware of the difficulties between certain Powers. If their views could be harmonised and the difficulties removed, very little might remain to be done. He would not say that the Bureau would come forward with a fait accompli, but it was anxious to be of the greatest possible assistance to the General Commission. He felt sure M. di Soragna would agree that it would be better to proceed on the basis of a clean text.

The Chairman's proposals were approved.
69. Execution of the Work Entrusted to the Bureau in Virtue of the General Commission's Decision of October 26th, 1933: Date of the Next Meeting of the Bureau.

The CHAIRMAN recalled that the Bureau's recommendations had been accepted by the General Commission,¹ and that consequently, unless the Bureau decided otherwise, the General Commission would stand adjourned until December 4th.

The recommendations made to the General Commission entailed a certain amount of work and responsibility upon the Bureau, and the latter must be under no illusion as to the amount of work to be done or the difficulties to be overcome. There were, in the Chairman's judgment, one or two important points to be determined at once. Should the Bureau continue to sit from now on to see what it could arrange by way of a programme of work, or was it preferable, owing to circumstances to which he need not refer, to adjourn for a few days? The latter course might make it much easier to carry out some of the tasks that had to be taken in hand.

If the Bureau could not continue its meetings immediately, Mr. Henderson hoped that the adjournment would not be for more than a fortnight—that was to say, until November 9th. But, if it did adjourn, the members of the Bureau must appreciate the fact that they had undertaken to be responsible for any negotiations which might be necessary to remove, or at any rate to limit, such divergencies as existed on important questions. Some arrangement must therefore be made immediately for some sort of conversations or negotiations.

Another point to be decided was whether the Chairman should have prepared for the Bureau's next meeting—on the assumption that the Bureau agreed to adjourn till November 9th—a text of the United Kingdom draft Convention in the form in which it had left the General Commission at the end of the first reading, so that the Bureau could see exactly how the articles stood.

The Chairman proposed first to consult the members of the Bureau on the question whether the latter should continue to sit day by day for the present or whether it should adjourn under the conditions he had suggested.

Mr. Norman Davis (United States of America) thought that the members of the Bureau would want first to know what was going to be done between the present date and November 9th. He did not as yet see a definite enough programme to be able to take a decision as to whether November 9th would be a wise date to fix or not.

The CHAIRMAN said that if the Bureau were to continue to meet daily until about November 9th, it did not seem to him that very much could be done beyond the business transacted in the actual meetings of the Bureau. If, on the other hand, it were decided to adjourn until November 9th, it would be possible to take up the question of the negotiations and see whether any were possible before the date in question. Whatever progress was made as a result of those negotiations could then be reported to the Bureau on November 9th. That idea did not exclude his other suggestion—namely, that the Secretariat should prepare a roneoed text of the draft Convention as it stood at the end of the first reading, so that, when the Bureau met on November 9th, it would have before it the report on any negotiations that had taken place and a draft on which to begin work, in order that it might be in a position to make all the necessary arrangements to transmit a text to the General Commission.

The Chairman wanted to make it clear that, though he had taken the responsibility of suggesting the 9th, he personally was prepared to begin work the next morning and to sit from day to day.

Mr. Norman Davis (United States of America) did not object in principle to a short adjournment. He recognised that it would probably be difficult to proceed on the following day, since there was certain detailed work to be done, as the Chairman himself had suggested, and the latter would probably find it necessary to have a number of consultations. A two-weeks' adjournment, however, seemed to Mr. Norman Davis rather long.

The CHAIRMAN confessed that, if the Bureau decided to continue its meetings immediately, he would have to ask for three days' holiday, because he was anxious to take his seat in the House of Commons on November 7th.

¹ See Minutes of the eighty-first meeting of the General Commission.
Mr. Eden (United Kingdom) considered that the Bureau’s decision depended to some extent upon the course of work which it was going to undertake. It was, he thought, difficult for any member to determine that point without further consultation with his Government. Mr. Eden, for one, would find it very difficult to do so. He wondered, therefore, whether it was a possible solution to leave in the Chairman’s hands the question whether the Bureau should meet next week or at a later date, giving the delegates some time to consult their Governments and to report to the Chairman their views. It would be a pity if the Bureau were to be convened next week and were then to find that the time had not been long enough for the work which clearly must be done before any useful discussion could take place.

M. di Soragna (Italy) supported Mr. Eden’s proposal.

M. Sato (Japan) observed that for many weeks a discussion had been going on concerning certain important questions which were essentially matters within the domain of European politics, the question of equality of rights for example. In view of the position in which Japan had found itself for some months past, the Japanese delegation considered that it was not possible for it to interfere in discussions of that kind. The situation at the Disarmament Conference had changed since the event of October 14th, but the questions on the solution of which depended the achievement of a tangible result were still matters within the domain of European politics. The Japanese delegation was experiencing some difficulty in accepting a certain part of the United Kingdom draft, but before taking up a final attitude, it seemed to it necessary that the ground should first be prepared by the Powers directly concerned and that the questions connected with the European situation should be cleared up. In these circumstances, the Japanese delegate considered that the European Powers should open fresh negotiations next week or at any other date deemed suitable by the Chairman. Until these conversations had had a satisfactory result, for which the Japanese delegation would wait patiently, the latter would refrain from taking part in the discussions.

The Chairman observed that, at the General Commission’s meeting that afternoon, a reference had been made to the possibility of another meeting of the Commission. As no desire had been expressed for such a meeting, he had taken it for granted that that was not necessary. Since the meeting, however, members of the Commission had asked him whether they were free to leave Geneva. He thought he would be interpreting the position correctly if he said that they were free and that for the present no meeting of the General Commission would be required.

Agreed.

M. de Vasconcellos (Portugal) recalled that he represented a technical committee with special conditions of work, which did not allow it to adjourn.

He supported Mr. Eden’s view which, in his judgment, reconciled, as far as was possible, the different opinions expressed.

M. Motta (Switzerland) expressed his satisfaction at the way in which the Chairman had stressed the inexpediency of a further convocation of the General Commission so long as the situation had not developed and so long as there was no decisive reason for convening it.

M. Motta also supported the United Kingdom delegate’s view. He had been surprised to hear certain speakers say that an adjournment until November 9th would be too long. His personal feeling was the very reverse. He considered that time was an indispensable factor in the developments which were necessary in order that the Conference might come to a successful conclusion. For that reason, he entirely concurred in the Chairman’s suggestions.

The important thing, however, was that, at its next meeting, the Bureau should be faced with a different situation from that existing to-day. He, therefore, supported Mr. Eden’s proposal that the Chairman should be empowered to convene the Bureau when he had consulted the delegations of the Powers most directly concerned in the matter. There must be no undue haste. On the contrary, time must be allowed to play its part, and there should be no meeting until the situation made it possible to do useful work.

M. de Madariaga (Spain) felt unable to accept a decision as to the date of the resumption of the Bureau’s work until two or three points had been cleared up.

The present position was that the members of the Bureau were being asked to decide between continuing the work, adjourning for one week and adjourning for two weeks. Before deciding, the members must know whether the Bureau was prepared at once, or would be prepared in one, or two weeks, finally to draw up a draft Convention, since it was no longer possible to do anything else. M. de Madariaga confessed that he could not express an opinion on this point. It was his feeling that none of the delegations was absolutely clear as to the
exact state of the work and of the previous negotiations—more particularly after the events of October 14th—from the standpoint of general principles. Before drafting the text of a convention, it would be well first to have the general principles set forth in a paper of two or three pages. In M. de Madariaga’s opinion, the work could not be continued until this condition had been fulfilled.

If, therefore, an interval of one or even two weeks was necessary to prepare for work, M. de Madariaga would like to know how this interval would be utilised, what consultations would be undertaken and by whom the negotiations would be carried on. He would be glad to be enlightened on these two points, after which he thought it would be easy to solve the question of dates.

M. Massigli (France) said that he had asked leave to speak after M. Motta, because he had feared that a misunderstanding was about to arise. Mr. Eden had proposed that the Bureau should leave to the Chairman the possibility of convening the various delegations next week if he thought it useful to do so. There were grounds for the view that the meeting of the Bureau itself could be held before the proposed date, but it must be remembered that certain delegates would be obliged to go home during the next few days. Agreement, therefore, might be reached for reassembling on November 9th. M. Motta, however, had seemed averse to maintaining that date, or rather he refused to consider it final; he held that the meeting might be convened later, and that caused M. Massigli much misgiving because such an eventuality would naturally tend to adjourn the work. It was necessary to choose a definite date, if need be one fairly distant, so as to enable all the members of the Bureau to obtain precise instructions from their Governments; that date, once fixed, must be maintained. What was the question at issue? It was to know how the various delegations conceived the work incumbent upon them of preparing a convention. Various types of convention could be envisaged. By November 9th, each delegate would have had the necessary time to have precise ideas on this point.

The Bureau could not adjourn and merely say that certain negotiations were going to be undertaken. What would be the subject of negotiation? Probably nothing tangible, as experience had already shown.

The members of the Bureau would have to ask their Governments whether they were prepared to work out a draft Convention and on what principles. The various Governments could, of course, get into touch with one another. The problem had already been studied with sufficient thoroughness to make it possible for everyone, within some ten days, to have a definite idea of what was feasible and what was not. If all work were impossible, that must be stated clearly. Nothing could be worse than to resume the discussions and then suspend them on one pretext or another, for the delegations would then separate in infinitely less favourable circumstances.

The Chairman was afraid that there was some misunderstanding as to the suggestions he had put forward.

If it were proposed to continue the discussion immediately, the members of the Bureau must keep very clearly in their minds the fact that there were two pieces of work to be carried out. First, there was the question of bringing the text of the draft Convention into line with the position achieved at the end of the first reading, in order that the Bureau, when it met, might be able to go through the draft article by article, and satisfy itself as to whether the new text could be sent to the General Commission. That work would go on irrespective of the possibility of convening the various delegations for the purpose of discussion. That possibility would naturally depend on the result of the previous negotiations and the desire of the delegations to continue the work.

If the members of the Bureau would keep very clearly in their minds the fact that there were two pieces of work to be carried out, the Chairman thought it could be said that November 9th was not too early, as there would be certain work which the Bureau could do.

Count Kaczynski (Poland) associated himself with the remarks of the French and Spanish delegates. In his view, there were two separate questions. The first was whether the Bureau was agreed to meet again and proceed to work. The second was that of the date of the next meeting, and that was a question of expediency. The point to consider was which date would be the best in order to enable delegations to receive instructions from their Governments. Speaking personally, the Polish delegate did not think that many of the delegations present would be able to adopt forthwith a definite position on the substance of the various questions involved.
The Bureau, therefore, might to-day decide in principle to return to work as soon as possible and to select a sufficiently distant date to make it certain that the question would be properly prepared and that the work could be usefully resumed.

Mr. Norman Davis (United States of America) thought that the Chairman's explanation had cleared the situation satisfactorily. He wished, however, to ask one question. He understood that the Chairman proposed that November 9th be fixed as the latest date, but if, as the result of the conversations, negotiations or developments in the next few days, the Chairman found that it would be useful to call a meeting of the Bureau at the end of the coming week, he would do so.

The Chairman replied in the affirmative.

M. Di Soragna (Italy) agreed with M. Massigli on many of the points he had raised. He would like, however, to have an explanation on one. M. Massigli, he thought, had referred to the preparation of a draft Convention by the Bureau as if the Bureau had received from the General Commission a mandate to that effect. M. di Soragna had understood that there was no question of a mandate, but rather of a power. There was an important distinction here, and it was this distinction which had enabled him on the previous day to accept the Chairman's proposal as to the aim of the Bureau's work.

The Chairman thought that there was some misunderstanding as to what he had said on the previous day. He had had no idea that the Bureau, either itself or through any Committee or through any means it could devise, was going to draft a new text of a convention. What he had said on the previous day, and repeated to-day, was that, with the help of the Secretariat, he would try to put into the members' hands the draft of the United Kingdom Convention as it had left the General Commission at the close of the first reading. That was an entirely different thing from preparing the text of a new convention.

He had referred on the previous day to the only powers upon which the Bureau could go to work—namely, the decisions of the General Commission. The first decision of the Commission had been that the United Kingdom draft should be the basis of discussion, while its second decision, taken on June 29th, had been that that draft was to be the basis of the new Convention. During the first reading, certain committees had been set up, some of them presided over by the Vice-President. These committees had taken certain decisions, and the Chairman's only idea had been that the members of the Bureau would wish to have everything that had been agreed to at the first reading put before them in proper order.

The proposals of the Chairman were adopted.

FIFTY-SECOND MEETING (PRIVATE)

_Held on Thursday, November 9th, 1933, at 3.30 p.m._

Chairman: Mr. A. Henderson.

70. PREPARATION OF A CLEAN TEXT OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION WITH A VIEW TO THE SECOND READING: APPOINTMENT OF A SMALL COMMITTEE TO MAKE PROPOSALS REGARDING THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE WORK.

The Chairman recalled that, on October 26th, 1 the General Commission had decided to stand adjourned until December 4th in order to permit of a further effort to narrow existing differences. The General Commission, at the same time, had authorised the Bureau to go forward with all the necessary arrangements, so as to enable the General Commission to begin its second reading on the basis of a revised and entirely up-to-date draft.

It had been understood that an endeavour would be made to place in the hands of the delegations, a few days before December 4th, a clean text which would enable them to consider how far the revised text represented their views.

In the statement which he had made to the Commission and to the Bureau, he had also hinted at the possibility of the Bureau having to set up committees in order to expedite the work of bringing up to date the draft Convention.

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1 See Minutes of the eighty-first Meeting of the General Commission.
He thought that the powers that the Bureau had obtained from the General Commission were wide enough to authorise the Bureau to join to its committees the delegates of those other countries, not members of the Bureau, which were particularly interested or had tabled amendments.

In accordance with the closing statement which he had made in the afternoon of October 26th, the Secretariat had circulated the draft Convention as it had left the General Commission at the close of the first reading. That text contained certain decisions of proposals secured during the first reading either in the Commission itself or in committees, some of which had been presided over by M. Politis, the Vice-President of the General Commission.

In that connection, he desired to recall that when, on June 8th, 1933, the General Commission unanimously adopted the recommendation of the Bureau that the draft Convention submitted by the United Kingdom delegation should be accepted as a basis of the future Convention, it did so with the understanding that such acceptance "would be without prejudice to amendments or proposals submitted before or during the second reading, particularly as regards additional chapters concerning the manufacture of and trade in arms and budgetary limitation".

The Bureau would note that, on page 23 of document Conf.D./Bureau 49, appeared the provisional text of articles on publicity of expenditure prepared by the Technical Committee of the National Defence Expenditure Commission, in accordance with the resolution adopted by the General Commission on June 8th. In that connection, he wished to inform the Bureau that on October 30th, 1933, he had written to M. de Modzelewski, Vice-Chairman of the Technical Committee, with regard to the complete draft of the articles on publicity of expenditure, a letter as follows:

"I have been following as closely as possible the arduous work done by the Technical Committee in execution of the decision on publicity of national defence expenditure taken by the General Commission on June 8th last.

"By your letter of July 11th last, you were good enough to transmit to me the first reading draft of the articles which the Technical Committee expected to propose for insertion in the Convention.

"At the same time, you informed me that the second reading of the articles would take place after the study of the various annexes necessary to give effect to the decision of the General Commission.

"In order to effect the necessary co-ordination of the documents which will have to be discussed by the General Commission, I should be very glad to know when the Technical Committee expects to be able to submit its complete draft. I may perhaps in this connection remind you that the General Commission, at its meeting on October 26th, decided to meet again not later than December 4th, but I am sure it would be most useful if the Technical Committee could see its way to prepare its draft early enough to enable it to be circulated in printed form before the meeting of the General Commission.

"(Signed) A. HENDERSON."

On November 1st, 1933, M. de Modzelewski had replied to him in the following terms:

"I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of October 30th, 1933, concerning the work undertaken by the Technical Committee of the National Defence Expenditure Commission in pursuance of the resolution adopted by the General Commission on June 8th last.

"The Committee, to whom I submitted your letter, has directed me to inform you that it will doubtless be in a position to present to the General Commission before December 4th next the definitive text of the articles which it proposes should be inserted in the Convention in order to give effect to the adoption of the principle of controlled publicity of national defence expenditure.

"In case the Committee is not in a position to add to these articles the complete texts of instructions and other annexed documents, these will be forwarded to the General Commission shortly after December 4th.

"(Signed) DE MODZELEWSKI."

He had said in the General Commission that the work that the Bureau was about to start was not intended to settle anything definitely over the heads of the delegations which did not form part of the Bureau. The Bureau, or any committee which it might set up, would confer with the interested delegations, and especially with those which had tabled amendments, and the whole matter would eventually come before the General Commission, which would be absolutely free to decide upon every detail of the articles presented.

He had thought that he should briefly place before the Bureau the decisions adopted before the adjournment late in October, in order that the Bureau should be in a better position to decide upon the methods to be followed as regards the future work.

It was obvious that, if a clean text of the draft Convention was to be circulated to the delegations in time to receive consideration before the meeting of the General Commission

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1 Document Conf.D.163(1).
2 See Minutes of the seventy-seventh meeting of the General Commission, page 630.
on December 4th, the Bureau must give careful attention to the programme of work and the procedure to be followed.

There were several courses any one of which the Bureau could adopt:

1. It might at once begin a general discussion on the draft Convention in the light of what the General Commission expected the Bureau to do by way of preparation for its meeting on December 4th. At the close of the general discussion, the Bureau could decide its procedure or invite the President, Vice-President and Rapporteur to report on the matter.

2. The Bureau could begin at once an examination of the draft Convention article by article and thereby ascertain what amount of common ground now existed.

3. The Bureau could examine those questions upon which wide divergence of opinion was revealed during the first reading and satisfy itself as to whether a sufficient amount of agreement now existed on any of those questions to warrant their being discussed in the General Commission.

4. The Bureau could at once appoint a small Committee to deal with each part of the draft Convention, with authority to consult those delegations not represented on the Committee especially those delegations responsible for amendments. Each Committee could appoint its own Chairman and Rapporteur.

5. It might be that certain questions had been sufficiently considered to enable the Bureau to appoint at once a Rapporteur, giving him power to consult where necessary and to produce draft texts of new or amended articles on the question entrusted to him.

M. MASSIGLI (France) supported the last suggestion put forward by the Chairman. That suggestion, which was to appoint, according to the questions, either a small working committee or a Rapporteur, seemed to him a wise one. In the first place, it indicated the intention of the delegations, whatever the difficulties—which no one could underestimate—to continue the work in accordance with the mandate they had received. Secondly, it was an 'elastic' proposal. There was no doubt that on certain of those questions, so varied in character, the work had reached a point at which discussions in a wide circle were no longer necessary. What was necessary was that the delegations should inform the Rapporteur in confidence of the limits of their possibilities. There were, on the other hand, other questions which had not been fully explored, and in such cases discussions between a very large number of delegations were desirable in order that the work might be further advanced.

Lastly, Mr. Henderson's proposals offered the advantage—essential at that most difficult moment—of modesty and discretion. There was no question at that juncture of holding big public meetings where no really useful work could be done and where, on the contrary, there was the risk that ill-informed opinion, based on incomplete information, might increase the difficulties. It was essential to work discreetly and in silence until positive results could be produced. The Chairman's last suggestion seemed to comply with those various requirements, and M. Massigli was prepared accordingly to endorse that suggestion.

The CHAIRMAN interpreted the silence of the other members of the Bureau as signifying that they associated themselves with M. Massigli's remarks and that they regarded the last suggestion made by himself as the best. Such being the case, they must now proceed to appoint the small Committee suggested. The Bureau would adjourn until Saturday morning—November 11th—when he hoped that the Committee would be able to submit its recommendations, and the Chairman was prepared to offer the Committee every facility in the matter.

The last suggestion put forward by the Chairman in his initial statement was approved.

The CHAIRMAN proposed that the small Committee should include, in addition to himself, the Vice-President and the Rapporteur, and the delegates of France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, Norway and Poland. The Bureau would note that he had chosen three representatives of great Powers and three representatives of other Powers.

The composition of the small Committee, as proposed by the Chairman, was approved.

M. DI SORAGNA (Italy) enquired why the small Committee could not get to work that very day. Unless the Chairman saw any objection, he thought that his colleagues on that Committee would be prepared to meet at once.
The CHAIRMAN said that there were cases in which the dictum "festina lente" applied. In suggesting that the small Committee should meet the following day—Friday, November 9th—his idea had been that the Disarmament Section could get to work at once in order to place before the Committee on the following day the necessary material for its work. He proposed to discuss the matter with the Director of the Disarmament Section; he thought that in that way no time would be lost.

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FIFTY-THIRD MEETING (PRIVATE)

_Held on Saturday, November 11th, 1933, at 10 a.m._

Chairman: Mr. A. HENDERSON.

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71. **Preparation of a Clean Text of the Draft Convention with a View to the Second Reading**: Report of the Committee set up by the Bureau on November 9th, 1933.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee set up two days before had held two meetings the previous day, at which it had gone very closely into the question referred to it. The recommendations made by that Committee were now submitted to the Bureau (document Conf.D./Bureau 50).

_Security._

The questions of non-resort to force and the definition of the aggressor and the question of Article 6 of the United Kingdom draft would be entrusted to M. Politis.

_Approved._

_Disarmament._

The question of effectives would be entrusted to M. Westman.

Mr. CADOGAN (United Kingdom) noted that, in the first paragraph of this part of the report, there was a reference to Table I concerning the effectives for continental Europe. On the previous day, he had suggested to the Committee that that somewhat difficult question should be dealt with on rather different lines from the others, which were purely technical. His remark had been duly taken into account, and, as indicated at the end of the fourth paragraph, it had been agreed that the questions connected with the table might be entrusted to a Rapporteur. It might be better, accordingly, to delete the reference to Table I in the first paragraph.

Since the meeting on the previous day, it had been pointed out to him that—in the General Commission, if he remembered rightly—the United Kingdom delegation had been asked, and had agreed, to institute negotiations with regard to the figures to be inserted in the table. The United Kingdom delegation had, in that capacity, received from a number of other delegations figures which they would like to have finally inserted in the various tables; but the majority of those delegations had insisted that the information should be regarded as confidential, and the United Kingdom delegation had given an undertaking to that effect. It would thus be difficult for it to quote the information in question or to communicate it to a Rapporteur without authorisation from the delegations concerned. Moreover, some of the Governments interested were not represented in the Bureau.

It might perhaps be useful to the Rapporteur to know what had already been done in the matter by the United Kingdom delegation, and he would, perhaps, when he thought fit, get into touch with that delegation in order to consider the best way of settling the question.

The CHAIRMAN thought that the Rapporteur, M. Westman, would be at the same time Chairman of the Committee mentioned in that part of the Committee's report. Obviously, he could not examine the question without consulting the United Kingdom delegation, and, before the confidential figures to which reference had been made were communicated to him, it would be necessary to obtain the consent of the delegations concerned, either by convening them to a meeting or by inviting them to meet the Rapporteur and a representative of the United Kingdom delegation.

Subject to the above explanations, the Committee's recommendation was approved.

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1 See minutes of the fifty-fourth meeting of the General Commission, page 440.
Material.

The Committee proposed that this question should be entrusted to M. Beneš as Rapporteur.

Mr. Cadogan (United Kingdom) submitted an observation of the same kind as before concerning the table relating to tanks. The United Kingdom delegation had already done a certain amount of work in the matter, and the Rapporteur might be invited to get into touch with it in order to examine what had actually been achieved.

*The Committee's recommendation was approved, due account being taken of Mr. Cadogan's remark.*

Naval Armaments.

The Committee proposed that this question should be entrusted to M. Moresco as Rapporteur.

Mr. Cadogan (United Kingdom) asked that the words, "they [the United Kingdom delegation] would be only too happy to hand over to M. Moresco the results of the negotiations they have conducted in this respect", should be replaced by the words, "they would be only too happy to submit to M. Moresco certain suggestions resulting from the negotiations, etc."

*Mr. Cadogan's amendment was adopted, together with the section of the report in question.*

Air Armaments.

The Committee proposed that this question should be entrusted to M. Lange.

*Approved.*

Manufacture of and Trade in Arms.

The Committee proposed that this question should be entrusted to M. Komarnicki.

*Approved.*

Budgetary Publicity.

M. de Vasconcellos (Portugal) noted that it was stated in the report that "no action at present seems called for". The work of the Technical Committee was, however, well advanced, and it would be expedient in so complex a question to take the same decision as for the questions already dealt with and to appoint a Rapporteur, whose report would be transmitted to the Bureau or possibly later to the General Commission.

The Chairman thought that the Committee's suggestion was the best, since the Technical Committee was just about to submit to the General Commission a final text, as stated in the report. The Committee, which had met on the previous day, had come to the conclusion that the Technical Committee should be allowed to finish its work and submit its final report to the General Commission.

M. Massigli (France) wondered, on reflection, whether the Committee which had met on the previous day would not have done better to propose the appointment of a Rapporteur who might have submitted a report to the Bureau, while leaving the Technical Committee to present its final text to the General Commission. The Technical Committee would have finished its work in a few days, and possibly its conclusions, at all events on certain aspects of the question, might be of interest from the standpoint of the Bureau's work on other points. While he was not suggesting that the matter should no longer go before the General Commission, it might save time if a report on the question of expenditure were submitted to the Bureau.

He proposed, further, that the expression "national defence expenditure" be substituted for "budgetary publicity", in order not to prejudice either the question of publicity or that of limitation.

The Chairman said that he would defer to the Bureau's opinion, but reminded M. Massigli that the Technical Committee was not peculiar in this respect, and that other Committees were in exactly the same position. The Technical Committee would duly transmit its report to him as President of the Conference, and he would see that the report was brought to the knowledge of the Bureau.

*The Committee's recommendation was approved.*

Exchange of Information.

The Committee's suggestion to leave this matter to the United Kingdom delegation was approved.
The Committee's suggestion was approved.

Miscellaneous Provisions.

Permanent Disarmament Commission (Control, Supervision and Penalties).

The Committee proposed that the questions of the Permanent Commission and of supervision should be referred to a Committee with M. Bourquin as Chairman and Rapporteur, and that of penalties to the President.

Mr. Cadogan (United Kingdom) submitted an observation similar to that which he had already put forward concerning Table I relating to effectives. There was a reference in the title of this part of the report to penalties. It had been agreed, however, at the meeting the previous day, that that question, which was on a different plane from that of control, should be treated somewhat differently, as was indicated in paragraph 3 of Part V of the report.

The Chairman proposed that the word "penalties" be deleted at the beginning of the first paragraph and that it be inserted at the beginning of paragraph 3.

M. Massigli (France) proposed that, as the French word "sanctions" was regarded unfavourably in certain quarters, it should be replaced by the expression "garanties d'exécution".

Further, effectives should, he thought, be included in the list at the end of paragraph 1.

The Committee's recommendations were approved, due account being taken of the observations submitted.

The Chairman, in proposing that the Bureau should adopt the report as a whole, observed that the procedure recommended by the Bureau appeared to have given rise to certain apprehensions. It was feared that it might have the effect of delaying the work of the Conference. He was convinced that none of his colleagues would accuse him of any such intention. He desired to state clearly that that procedure had been adopted as being the most practical and that it would not have the effect of delaying matters. The work to be done had been divided up and distributed between Committees and Rapporteurs, who would set about their several tasks at the beginning of the following week. The Committees would perhaps agree to meet more than once a day, and he hoped that it might prove possible in ten days or a fortnight to draw up reports which would be communicated to him. He proposed to convene the Bureau as soon as the work of any Committee or Rapporteur was complete, without waiting for all the texts to be handed to him. The other Committees or Rapporteurs would continue their work while the Bureau examined such reports as might be ready. An undertaking had been entered into, as regards the members of the General Commission, to place in their hands some days before December 4th a clean text, so that they might have time, if necessary, to consult their Governments. More than one meeting of the Bureau would be required to approve the various texts before they were distributed. It was very desirable that the texts should be circulated about November 29th, and it would require very strong pressure indeed before he himself, as President of the Conference, would agree to postpone the date for the convening of the General Commission beyond December 4th.

The Bureau agreed that the Effectives Committee (Chairman and Rapporteur, M. Westman) should meet on the morning of Monday, November 13th, and that the Committee on Control and Supervision (Chairman and Rapporteur, M. Bourquin) should meet in the afternoon of the same day.

M. Di Soragna (Italy) observed that, both in the General Commission and in the Bureau, the Italian delegation had frequently shown that, in the matter of procedure, it desired, whenever possible, to fall in with the opinion of the majority, especially when the proposals came from the President. It did so for several reasons. Above all, it felt very great deference for the President personally; it had a very strong sense of esprit de corps, and it was actuated by a desire not to appear to create difficulties.

It was his duty to say frankly to-day that the Italian delegation's acceptance of the procedure resulting from the Bureau's last meeting but one, from that of the Committee yesterday and from the Bureau's present meeting, had been guided solely by those considerations of deference and esprit de corps. As to the substance of the question—that was to say, the decision that had been taken to continue the discussion in committees and in the form of reports, even in the technical sphere of disarmament—the Italian delegation felt that that decision was neither really useful nor genuinely expedient. Needless to say, it appreciated so highly the ability and qualities of the members appointed either as Rapporteurs or as Chairmen of the various committees that it was prepared to give proof of optimism and to hope that they would succeed in finding in the material they would examine some new aspects which the Italian delegation was really unable to discern at the present moment. His delegation desired, above all, to rely on their prudence and wisdom to refrain...
from attempting to infer too much from that material—that was to say, attempting to deduce therefrom principles and suggestions, even of a technical nature, which might give rise to certain objections or involve consequences reaching far beyond the technical sphere. In any case, the Italian delegation would avail itself, with the fullest freedom, of the procedure suggested by the Chairman to examine thoroughly the reports when they came before the Bureau and adopt, with regard to the action which should be taken on those reports, the attitude which seemed to it indicated from their contents and from considerations of general policy which the Italian delegation and Government deemed of the first importance.

In view of the foregoing observations, it might naturally be supposed that the Italian experts belonging to the said Committees would have to confine themselves more specifically to the rôle of simple observers.

The Chairman, after thanking M. di Soragna for the kind way in which he referred to himself as President of the Conference, wished to refer to an opinion expressed in the last part of M. di Soragna’s remarks—namely, the opinion, which the Chairman was unable to share, that the work entrusted to the Committees and to Rapporteurs was of a technical character. The Chairman thought, on the contrary, that, in certain respects, that work was essentially of a political character. If he had imagined that the only purpose was to embark again upon the boundless ocean of technical problems, so fully explored last year, he would certainly not have thought of asking the Bureau to set up new committees or appoint new Rapporteurs. The Conference had now reached the most critical phase in its history. Work was proceeding slowly, more slowly perhaps to-day than ever, but that was certainly not due to any lack of goodwill on the part of the delegations. It was merely because it was now necessary to take certain grave and complete decisions upon which depended the outcome of the Conference, whether it would lead to a concrete Convention or to a failure which might give rise to a new race in destructive armaments. No one could contemplate an issue of that kind, and if the Chairman spoke that morning with some warmth it was because it was the anniversary of the Armistice, and he was one of those upon whom the events preceding the Armistice had imposed heavy sacrifices. In any case, he wished to say as categorically as possible that the procedure now contemplated was not restricted to purely technical questions, but constituted a fresh effort for the achievement of a substantial disarmament Convention.

He wished in passing to mention the fact that the ugliest rumours were going round at the present moment. It had been agreed on the previous evening that the Committee’s meeting would be regarded as strictly confidential. He had, however, been asked more than once whether that meeting had not provoked violent incidents between certain delegations. If such rumours were spread in the corridors, that meant that they were finding their way into the Press as well; it showed, therefore, that the promise given on the previous evening that the Committee’s meeting would be regarded as confidential had not been respected. In point of fact, the two meetings held on the previous day had been extremely helpful and animated with the best possible spirit. It was true that the Italian delegate had stated very clearly that during the forthcoming work the Italian delegation proposed to adopt the attitude which seemed to it indicated from their contents and from considerations of general policy. Nevertheless, it was his duty as President of the Conference to recall that, at the meeting of the General Commission held on October 16th, he had submitted the text of a telegram to be sent to Berlin, and, although certain objections had been raised, no delegation had voted against the despatch of that telegram. In these circumstances, was there not a danger that the results might be the reverse of those desired, if certain speculations were indulged in and if the idea were entertained that all work should be dropped because a certain seat was empty—temporarily, the Chairman hoped?

The Chairman trusted that the Italian delegate would not press the last remarks in the speech he had just made and that he would not confine himself to a position of observer during the work that was about to be pursued. Hitherto, the Italian delegate had taken an active part in all the Conference’s work, and the Chairman would be grateful if he would immediately define his attitude after what he had himself just said as to the desire felt by all to see the chair at present empty occupied again, notwithstanding the difficulties of the moment. There might be differences as to the methods to be followed and as to the time at which certain efforts should be undertaken, but there was general agreement on the fact that no convention, whether European or worldwide, could be complete unless Germany were a signatory. The task entrusted to the Committees and Rapporteurs must be contemplated with the utmost seriousness. It was not a purely technical task, one of the kind that merely required the attendance of Italian delegates as simple observers.

M. DI SORAGNA (Italy) thanked the Chairman for his observations, which gave him an opportunity of defining better his position with regard to the various points. He had not said that during the forthcoming work the Italian delegation proposed to adopt the attitude of observer, and that had not been his idea. He had merely spoken of the rôle of the Italian experts in the two Committees proposed, in view of the opinion he had expressed as to the utility and expediency of the latter’s work. If a delegation held a negative opinion as to the utility and expediency of one special committee or another, it was clear that, even if certain of its members took part in the meetings, their contribution to the work must inevitably be very much less than it might have been if contemplated from another angle.

1 See Minutes of the eightieth meeting of the General Commission.
With regard to the outcome of the Conference, he could give the assurance that the Italian delegation and Government were no less anxious for its continued existence and final success than any other Government or person in Europe. They considered it essential that the Conference should succeed, and appreciated the dangers that would be involved if it were obliged to end in failure or after having reached a solution which was equivalent to an avowed failure.

There were, notwithstanding, different ways of conceiving the most desirable course which any particular activity should take. Some might feel that the continued existence and success of the Conference would be assured if it worked at all costs and in all conditions. Others might hold the view that an interval would allow a particular situation to clear up and that the Conference’s work, without ever having been officially suspended, might be resumed on bases from which the negative elements had been removed. This, however, was not the time to re-open a discussion on the different points of view.

Everyone agreed that the Conference was not closing, and that one day every effort would have to be made for its success. The real difference, therefore, was as to the conception of methods, and not as to the aim to be pursued. The Italian delegation would continue as heretofore to give its most loyal and sincere support to the Conference’s work, but it could not at the present stage refrain from defining the various points of view and the responsibilities incumbent upon each member in the method now being adopted for the work.

The CHAIRMAN thanked M. di Soragna for his explanations and apologised for having interpreted his previous remarks too narrowly.

FIFTY-FOURTH MEETING (PRIVATE)

_Held on Wednesday, November 22nd, 1933, at 3.30 p.m._

Chairman: Mr. A. HENDERSON.

72. ADJOURNMENT UNTIL A LATER DATE OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION ARRANGED FOR DECEMBER 4TH, 1933.

The CHAIRMAN reported that, being very much concerned with the present position of the Conference, he had invited into consultation the representatives of France, Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and the officers of the Bureau. A full examination of the situation was made in which the difficulties and dangers were considered. The unanimous opinion had been expressed that a supreme effort should be made to conclude a convention, and different methods were explored with a view to achieving that object. No decisions were taken, as it was fully appreciated that that function rested only with the Bureau or the General Commission.

It was suggested that, under present circumstances, it was inadvisable for the President to convoke the General Commission for December 4th, as it had to be remembered that the work of the Commission when it met would be the second reading of the draft Convention. It was recognised that the existing divergences on several important political questions were too great to encourage any hope of a successful issue from a premature discussion in the General Commission. In consequence of that position, it was suggested that the Bureau should consider the advisability of agreeing to a postponement of the General Commission until a date during or immediately after the January session of the Council of the League of Nations, such date to be fixed by the President in consultation with the officers.

If that postponement were agreed to by the Bureau, it would not seem necessary to convoke the General Commission for confirmation, as the General Commission had agreed on October 26th that, if it were found impossible to distribute the new text in time, the President would consult the Bureau as to the advisability of further postponing the meeting of the Commission.

The Bureau must also consider what methods should be followed with a view to making progress on important questions upon which agreement had not yet been reached. It had been suggested that the work of the Disarmament Conference would at that stage best be assisted by parallel and supplementary efforts between various States and the full use of diplomatic machinery. The hope had been expressed that those efforts would be at once undertaken with energy, with a view to advancing in every way possible the work which lay before the General Commission. It had also been suggested that Governments should keep the President informed of their efforts and that they should report to him the final results of those efforts.

The President, after consultation with the officers and the Chairmen of the Committees, should advise how far the work of the Committees should be carried on in the meantime.

_The Chairman's proposals were approved._

_1 See Minutes of the eighty-first meeting of the General Commission._
FIFTY-FIFTH MEETING (PRIVATE)

Held on Tuesday, April 10th, 1934, at 3.30 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. A. HENDERSON.

73. Progress of the Negotiations undertaken since the last Meeting of the Bureau.

Date of the next Meeting of the Bureau and of the General Commission.

The Chairman, opening the meeting, apologised to the members for the postponements that had taken place; but he could assure them the delay had been absolutely unavoidable, since it had been necessary to work according to circumstances.

The Chairman then drew attention to the note summarising what had happened since the Bureau last met, and indicating the chief points that emerged from a consideration of the various documents exchanged between the Governments in the course of the parallel and supplementary efforts that had been proceeding since the end of last year.

There was no need to go over the ground already covered in that note. But he thought the record of events before the Bureau showed that, whereas agreement had not yet been reached on certain important points, there was nothing to warrant the conclusion that further effort would be unfruitful. Having conferred with the Governments chiefly concerned with the parallel and supplementary efforts, he found that a little further time was required. In the circumstances, it would, in his opinion, be highly inadvisable for the Bureau to do other than grant the required time.

But before any further adjournment was entered upon, the Bureau should consider the future programme of work of the Conference. In this connection, it should be borne in mind that the Bureau had been charged by the General Commission last October to go forward with all the necessary arrangements so as to enable the Commission to begin the second reading of the draft Convention on the basis of an up-to-date text.

What, under existing circumstances, and having regard to all that had transpired since October 26th when this decision had been taken, was the best method of procedure? In the light of the conversations which he had had with delegates, he had reached the conclusion that the Bureau should at the present meeting fix the date of the next meeting of the General Commission. This should not be fixed too early or too far ahead.

In order to facilitate the work of the General Commission when it met, he would venture to suggest that a date should be fixed at the present meeting for the convocation of the Bureau in order to make the arrangements necessary for circulating to the General Commission an up-to-date text of the United Kingdom draft Convention.

Those were the Chairman's proposals on procedure. They concerned two points: (1) fixing the date of the General Commission, (2) fixing the date of the Bureau.

The Chairman would, however, ask leave to make one or two further observations. The general situation was now such that he felt it his duty to draw attention to certain broad facts with which he believed it was imperative that the Bureau should reckon.

Three years ago the League Council, at its May meeting, had extended a unanimous invitation to Mr. Henderson to preside over the Disarmament Conference. Twenty-six months ago—though his health was at that time greatly impaired—he had entered upon his duties with faith and devotion. Although there was even then a storm-cloud in the Far East, the opening of the Conference proceedings had been full of inspiration and encouragement. The peace-loving people of every nation were roused to a high level of enthusiasm and expectancy. There was widespread confidence that the Conference was opening a new era by securing a world agreement for the reduction and limitation of armaments; that Article 8 of the League Covenant was to be applied, and that the nations would experience a real diminution in the unproductive military burdens which their peoples had had so long to bear. On all hands it was felt that disarmament had become a question of immediate urgency and of paramount importance. It had seemed that at last the Governments were going to act on the promises they had so often and so solemnly made, that at last the peoples were to be given the peace for which they so ardently longed. Such were the promising conditions, on February 2nd, 1932, under which the Conference had begun its effort to secure a worldwide agreement for the reduction and limitation of armaments.

2 See Minutes of the eighty-first meeting of the General Commission.
What was the position to-day? In almost all the leading countries armament budgets were beginning to increase. A new race in armaments had already begun, although it had not yet gathered much momentum. That was the situation. What was the Bureau to do?

There were sections of public opinion that had for long been saying that the situation was hopeless, that the delegations had better cut their losses and go home. These sections of opinion had for years scarcely troubled to conceal their contempt and dislike of the whole idea of disarmament through collective security and the reign of law. They contemplated with equanimity a return to the conditions that had led to the world war. They urged, indeed, a return to international anarchy, where every nation was a law unto itself and all were armed against each other.

But the delegates present at that meeting, charged with responsibility for the destiny of their peoples, knew that to give up the enterprise of disarmament and of organising peace would not mean the end of their troubles. They knew that, if they closed down to-morrow, they would all go home to face difficulties in comparison with which the troubles with which they were now wrestling would seem almost insignificant. They knew the price that must be paid for disarmament and peace. Most of them represented States that were pledged to pay that price by treaties concluded at the peace settlement.

Such was the great task upon which the Conference had entered two years ago. Such were the conditions that it had itself accepted as necessary to success.

The delegations were bound to recognise that changes had occurred in the last few months that made the discharge of their task more difficult. But those changes had at the same time made still clearer the urgency and importance of the task and the grave consequences of failure. The Chairman appealed to those present, and through them to all the Members of the Conference, not to abandon the great enterprise to which they were committed, nor to fall into the error of supposing that they could diminish their difficulties by whittling down what they had set out to achieve. To attempt to do too little was courtng failure just as surely as to pitch their hopes too high. He, for one, believed that the pressure of public opinion and the statesmanship of the Governments committed to the reduction and limitation of armaments by world agreement might yet turn this grave emergency into a great opportunity. He believed that it was their solemn duty to bring the Conference to a conclusion that would be in accordance with their treaty obligations and their own previous decisions, for only through such a conclusion could they stop the drift to ward a new race in armaments and put an end to the growing danger of war.

Mr. Eden (United Kingdom) wished first to thank the Chairman, on behalf of the United Kingdom delegation, for his appreciation of the present situation and also for his eloquent and moving appeal to the Bureau, an appeal to which Mr. Eden felt sure each member could not but be deeply sensible.

In reporting upon the efforts made by the United Kingdom Government, since the Bureaus last meeting, to promote an agreement upon the complex problems of disarmament, it was not, he thought, necessary to go farther back than the memorandum addressed by that Government on January 29th last to the Governments represented at the Disarmament Conference. That memorandum had been in the hands of members of the Bureau for over two months, and had recently been circulated again by the President of the Conference together with the text of the explanatory statement made by Sir John Simon in the House of Commons on February 6th. The reasons which had moved the United Kingdom Government to circulate the memorandum and the purpose which it was intended to serve had been fully set forth in the earlier paragraphs of the memorandum itself and in Sir John Simon’s speech and were, no doubt, now familiar to the members of the Bureau. Mr. Eden need, therefore, do no more than briefly recapitulate them.

The international exchanges which had begun immediately after the last meeting of the Bureau had been of undoubted utility in making clearer than had up to then been possible the attitude of the various Governments to the problem of disarmament. None the less it had become apparent to the United Kingdom Government by the close of 1933 that the utility of this method was nearly exhausted. Some new effort of reconciliation was then, in its judgment, required. The main objective of such an effort had clearly to be a basis of accommodation between France and Germany. Only thus could full benefit be drawn from the exploratory work already done through the diplomatic channel. The special interest of His

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1 Document Conf.D.166.
Majesty's Government in avoiding a new race of armaments, and its special connection with
the work of the Conference as author of the United Kingdom draft Convention, had encouraged
it to do its utmost to compose differences of others which caused it so much concern, and
impelled it to make a further contribution on its own account in pursuit of a solution. The
United Kingdom Government, therefore, while still adhering to its draft Convention, by the
underlying conception of which it still stood and every article of which it would be happy to
sign at the present moment, were agreement possible, had proposed certain modifications of
the Convention in its memorandum of January 29th. The revised plan proposed in this
memorandum was far from being what the United Kingdom Government itself would regard
as an ideal solution. It would have much preferred, and still preferred, the terms of the draft
Convention itself. The memorandum of January 29th, however, represented what had appeared
to the United Kingdom Government to be the plan best designed to secure a fair and reasonable
compromise between the divergent points of view revealed by the diplomatic exchanges and
to afford the best means of reconciling the varying and sometimes conflicting claims put forward
under the headings of security, disarmament and equality of rights.

In order to make clear the character of the proposals made in the memorandum, it might
be useful to recall the more important modifications which they sought to make in the United
Kingdom draft Convention.

In the first place, ten years was proposed instead of five years as the duration of the
Convention. This period not only concurred with that of the non-aggression pacts proposed
by the German Chancellor, but should facilitate, first, the acceptance and realisation of a
substantial reduction of armaments, which still remained in the United Kingdom Government's
view the fundamental condition for its agreement to any arms Convention, and, secondly,
the full realisation of equality of rights for all countries.

So far as effectives were concerned, the United Kingdom Government would have been
content, and, indeed, would have preferred, to maintain the figures of average daily effectives
shown in Table I in its draft Convention; but the German Government had suggested that the
German figure should be 300,000 instead of 200,000, and, in view of this, the United Kingdom
Government thought it possible that some accommodation might be found between this
figure and the figure given in the draft Convention, subject to the condition, which the United
Kingdom Government considered essential, that parity should be maintained between the
average daily effectives stationed in the home country, as between France, Germany, Italy
and Poland. The complication introduced into the question of effectives by the existence of
so-called para-military training—that was to say, military training outside the army—might,
it had been suggested, be solved by prohibiting such training and checking the prohibition
by a system of permanent and automatic supervision, in order to remove once and for all
this well-founded source of anxiety.

As regarded land war material, the United Kingdom Government had made certain
important proposals. First as regarded tanks, it had suggested that tanks above the 16-ton
limit should be destroyed by given stages by the end of the fifth year of the Convention,
instead of by the end of the third year as proposed in the original draft; that the "further
international examination" of the question of tanks contemplated but not provided for in
Article 21 of the Convention should be held by the Permanent Disarmament Commission
and completed not later than the end of the third year of the Convention, and that the new
German short-term-service army, as it came into being, should be equipped with tanks up
to 6 tons, which the German Government regarded as necessary for defensive purposes.

As regarded mobile land guns, the United Kingdom Government had departed from the
proposals of the Convention with great regret. But, as the German Government had maintained
that mobile land guns up to 155 mm. were necessary as part of the equipment of their new
short-term-service army, and as the French Government for its part also, in its memorandum
of January 1st, had given this as the downward limit of the reduction of the calibre of mobile
artillery authorised for all States, the United Kingdom Government had felt that it could no
longer insist on the proposal in the draft Convention that the maximum limit of mobile land
guns for the future should be 115 mm. Destruction of mobile land guns over 155 mm. would
be spread over seven years instead of three years as proposed in the draft Convention.

There remained the question of air armaments. In this regard, the United Kingdom
Government, while maintaining the proposals contained in Articles 34 to 41 of the draft
Convention, had proposed to supplement them in such a way as to set a term to the post-
ponement of the claim of those States not at present entitled to military aircraft. It had
suggested therefore that, if the Permanent Disarmament Commission had not decided on
the abolition of military and naval aircraft at the end of two years, all countries should be
entitled to possess some military aircraft.

2 Document Conf.D.166.
Finally, the United Kingdom Government had itself offered two concessions as a contribu-
tion towards agreement on the lines proposed. In the first place, it had stated its willingness, if
general agreement were reached on all other issues, to agree to the application of a system of
permanent and automatic supervision, which, as the United Kingdom Government
understood it, extended considerably beyond the simpler proposals made in the draft
Convention which had already been generally agreed. The second concession, which was of
even greater moment, was in the sphere of security or, more properly speaking, guarantees of
execution. It consisted in the extension of the principle of consultation in the event of a breach
or threat of breach of the Pact of Paris, embodied in Part I of the draft Convention, to the
event of a breach or threat of breach of the disarmament Convention itself. It would be the
object of such consultation “to exchange views as to the steps to be taken for the purpose
or restoring the situation and of maintaining in operation the provisions” of the Convention.
This new provision would, in the view of the United Kingdom Government, emphasise the
inseparable duty of all signatories to do whatever was right and possible to prevent or remedy
any violation.

In the concluding words of the memorandum, the view was expressed that the return
of Germany to Geneva and to the League ought to be an essential condition of agreement.

Mr. Eden had thus dealt with the reasons which had induced his Government to put
forward its memorandum of January 29th and had given an account of its contents.

It now remained for him to deal with events since that date so far as the United Kingdom
Government had been concerned in them.

Having put forward this memorandum in an attempt to find a middle way towards
agreement, that Government had thought it desirable to follow up the issue of its memorandum
by way of personal contact with some of the Governments principally concerned. The purpose
of Mr. Eden’s visits to Paris, Berlin and Rome in the second half of February had been to give
any necessary explanations of his Government’s point of view and to learn at first hand the
attitude of these Governments to the memorandum itself.

Of the result of his tour he would say two things. The first was that in each of the three
capitals he had been assured of the sincere and even anxious desire of the Governments
concerned to reach an agreement. The second was that, despite this, it had become evident
that the United Kingdom memorandum would require amendment if it were to command
general assent and to constitute the terms of an acceptable compromise.

The Italian Government, indeed, would not itself have found the memorandum impossible
of acceptance, though it had legitimate doubts as to the likelihood of the memorandum
proving acceptable to others. On the other hand, both the French and German Governments,
while welcoming the memorandum, had subjected it to some criticism.

The actual situation was therefore that the United Kingdom memorandum of January
29th and the personal contacts which ensued had so far succeeded in that they had provided a
fresh incentive, had led to further interchanges of views between the Governments whose
differences had proved most stubborn of solution, and had revealed the possible appreciation
of those views. It was none the less clear that the United Kingdom memorandum was not
going to produce agreement without modification. Whether there were modifications which
could be accepted by the Powers was as yet uncertain. If agreement were sincerely desired
by all concerned, agreement ought to be possible. But the United Kingdom Government
was very much concerned at the continued delay and at the changes in the situation which
might take place while waiting for agreement.

At the moment, he could say nothing of the German view of the United Kingdom
memorandum, since this had not yet been made public. His Majesty’s Government was also
waiting for a supplementary statement of the French attitude, inasmuch as the note it had
recently received from Paris had been an interim and provisional statement, to be supplemented
by a definitive reply which had been promised shortly.

At the same time, Mr. Eden did not wish to conceal from the Bureau what he regarded
as the difficulties of the situation. Those difficulties were still very great. This was, indeed,
evident both from the documents before the Bureau and from the outcome so far of the efforts
of the United Kingdom Government to find a compromise. There still subsisted two
fundamental differences between the French and German views, which were insisted upon again
and again in the documents exchanged by the two Governments. These were, first, differences
connected with the computation of effectives and the account to be taken of overseas troops
and of para-military organisations on the other; and secondly, differences as to the date at which
and the extent to which the future German short-term-service army was to be equipped with so-called defensive weapons at present
denied to Germany. It was essential, if a Convention was to be achieved, that these and other
formidable, if less crucial, difficulties should be resolved. These were, as Mr. Eden saw them,
the hard actualities of the present situation.

If he had spoken thus frankly, it was because he believed that the situation demanded it.
Time was not on the side of agreement. If a Convention embodying disarmament was to be
reached at all, it must be reached soon; and assuredly only a Convention which included
dismantlement could be regarded as an outcome worthy of so much endeavour. What, therefore,
seemed to the United Kingdom Government more important than the question of summoning
the General Commission was the course of the work in the next few weeks. The United Kingdom
Republics had extended for ten years the Pact of Non-Aggression and Neutrality existing which had signed the Balkan Pact. Only a few days previously the Union of Soviet Socialist and Finland. A little later, the same definition had been made binding among the Powers Roumania, Estonia, Latvia, Persia, Afghanistan, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Lithuania that definition binding in all relations entered into by the Soviet Union with Poland, Turkey, of peace by all means. The London agreements on the definition of the aggressor had made the part of the Soviet Union and had not arrested its systematic efforts for the consolidation States of America concerning a general pact of non-aggression.

M. Stein (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) observed that from the report of April 9th 1 and the statement by the Chairman, there was no doubt that the Disarmament Conference had not, during recent months, and more particularly since the Bureau's last meeting, emerged from the deadlock in which it had found itself.

It was obvious that, fundamentally, the Conference had ceased work during the summer of 1933. The fact that after two years' work the Conference was reduced to a vain search for a way out of the deadlock justified the belief that the work which had led to such poor results was based on a grave and fundamental error.

In the Soviet delegation's view, this fundamental error lay in the rejection of the Soviet proposal for total, general and immediate disarmament. The Soviet delegation was convinced, to-day more than ever before, that general and total disarmament was the only possible method of overcoming all differences between the Members of the Conference, of rendering effective supervision possible and of creating a guarantee of real, firm and durable peace.

It was quite plain that in no case could the responsibility for the sorry results—if, indeed, the absence of any result could be termed a result—at which the Conference had arrived after more than two years' existence be laid at the door of the Soviet Union, whose proposals had in most cases been discarded.

Still less, perhaps, could there be any question of responsibility resting upon the Soviet Union for the present position of the direct conversations, since it had taken no part in them.

He thought it necessary to lay stress on the fact that the Soviet delegation's position in regard to the question of the reduction of armaments was still the same as before, and that, now as before, the Soviet Union was prepared to agree to any reduction in existing armaments, however insignificant, on the express condition, needless to say, that such reduction was universal—that was to say, that it applied to all countries without exception and obligatorily to all the Soviet Union's neighbours.

Did the collapse of the efforts for at least a partial reduction of existing armaments necessarily involve an obligation to interrupt the work for strengthening the existing guarantees of peace and creating new guarantees by other processes and methods, even though they were less efficacious than the direct reduction of armaments? Did the failure of the efforts for the reduction of armaments necessarily mean that a general race in armaments on land, on sea and in the air was accepted as the sole and universal law? Did that mean that the Disarmament Conference must help in the framing of a re-armament law? Was there any need to point out that the general race in armaments had never served the cause of peace, but that, on the contrary, it had precipitated and set loose armed conflicts? This inevitable consequence of the armaments race had been proved true more than once by history, and now again all mankind was faced with the menacing spectre of war.

The Conference could not restrict itself to stating, more or less openly, that the efforts for the reduction of existing armaments had collapsed. The situation in which the Conference at present found itself was unquestionably a most disquieting one, but the Soviet delegation did not think that there was anything in it to prevent further efforts to enable the Conference to reach concrete results. Any such efforts would certainly have the Soviet delegation's support.

During the Conference, numerous proposals had been put forward whereby new guarantees for security might be created, and whereby, even if the danger of war could not be conjured, certain barriers might be erected to stem the advance of war and its materialisation made as remote a contingency as possible.

In the first place, the Soviet delegation considered it necessary to recall its own proposal concerning the definition of the aggressor. It would next remind the Bureau of the French proposals to the Conference, and lastly of the proposal made by the President of the United States of America concerning a general pact of non-aggression.

The sterility of the work for the reduction of armaments had not led to inactivity on the part of the Soviet Union and had not arrested its systematic efforts for the consolidation of peace by all means. The London agreements on the definition of the aggressor had made that definition binding in all relations entered into by the Soviet Union with Poland, Turkey, Roumania, Estonia, Latvia, Persia, Afghanistan, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Lithuania and Finland. A little later, the same definition had been made binding among the Powers which had signed the Balkan Pact. Only a few days previously the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had extended for ten years the Pact of Non-Aggression and Neutrality existing.

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between itself and Lithuania, Latvia, Finland and Estonia, and had thus enhanced still further the feeling of peace in that part of Europe.

The Soviet delegation would propose that, following the line of these efforts for peace made by the Soviet Union, the Conference should immediately proceed to study all the proposals before it for strengthening security, and that, first of all, it should bring to a successful conclusion the interrupted discussion on the definition of the aggressor, with the object of making this definition binding on all Members of the Conference.

The Soviet delegation therefore considered it desirable that the work of the General Commission should be resumed at as early a date as possible.

M. Massigli (France) thought that the report circulated by the Chairman on the previous day, the terms he had used at the opening of the present meeting, the compilation issued by the Secretariat of the diplomatic notes exchanged, and, lastly, Mr. Eden's very complete statement, made it unnecessary for him to enter upon any long description of a situation of which all the factors were now in the hands of the Bureau. In order to explain his Government's position, he would therefore merely state some of its essential aspects.

It might be said that, up to October 14th, 1933, the Conference had tried to bring about a progressive reduction of armaments. It had sought to effect this reduction mainly by means of qualitative disarmament, immediate quantitative re-armament in particular being accepted only to the extent strictly necessary for the qualitative reduction of certain military systems under which an army of shock troops was supported by auxiliary formations that could be used immediately.

That, also, had been the aim of the formula which had been expounded in the Bureau on October 14th and from which the French Government had not departed in its memorandum of January 1st, while its desire for the reduction of armaments was confirmed in its proposal for an immediate and proportional 50 per cent reduction of the existing air services.

Certain new facts, however, had arisen since October 14th, in particular, the announcement of programmes of immediate re-armament, both quantitative and qualitative; and when M. Massigli spoke of programmes he thought he was using a very moderate expression, since it might be asked how far some of the claims put forward were at present removed from their actual accomplishment. To these should be added another important declaration, which had not perhaps been sufficiently stressed: according to the terms of the last paragraph of the German document of March 13th, the claims presented would in any case be maintained, irrespective of any formula which the Conference might otherwise adopt—formula relating to the status quo or formulae for a reduction of armaments. That point, too, was fundamental.

Such were the circumstances that had faced the Conference with the grave problem due to two mutually incompatible terms: demands for immediate re-armament on the one side and, on the other side, disarmament for other countries. It was to that problem that the French Government had referred in its memorandum of March 17th, when it stated that it could not understand that claims of this nature "should be regarded as an argument for calling upon other Powers to reduce their armaments in a manner prejudicial to their security." While emphasising the fact that, in its opinion, to recognise these claims would lead to a complete alteration of the bases on which the Conference had been working hitherto, the French Government recalled that those principles were common both to the League Covenant and to the Disarmament Conference, and that, if they were to be disavowed, that could only be done by a vote of the General Commission. "Only the General Commission, with the participation of all the States concerned, would be competent to decide whether those principles, by which its activities have hitherto been guided, are now to be abandoned."

Such was the situation. It was a difficult one, no doubt, but that was no reason for failing to make an attempt to overcome the difficulties. The French Government was deeply and sincerely grateful to the United Kingdom Government for the efforts it had made to this end. It was not less sensible to the recent communications received from London for the purpose of clearing up one fundamental question, that of the guarantees of execution. The French Government had already intimated its views on this subject to the President of the Conference and was endeavouring to furnish very shortly, as, indeed, it had informed the Government in London, the further explanations desired by the latter.

The French Government earnestly hoped that a solution could be found. M. Massigli hardly needed to assure the Bureau that his Government entirely agreed with the United Kingdom Government that the work should be pushed on as rapidly as possible. Referring a few months ago to the events which, in his opinion, made prompt decisions necessary, Mr. Eden had said that time pressed. M. Massigli would like to remind his colleagues of the terms used by M. Barthou on the same subject in his communication to the President of February 10th: "Present circumstances, and more particularly the increasing pace at which certain countries are continuing to re-arm in contravention of the provisions of the treaties, necessitate a rapid solution of the problems with which the Conference is concerned."
If, therefore, a fresh interval was considered necessary for submitting, not solutions for that would be over-sanguine—but at any rate a clear and definite balance-sheet of the situation, M. Massigli was anxious to inform the Bureau that the French Government would do everything in its power to see that such a balance-sheet was presented to the Conference as soon as possible.

M. Sandler (Sweden) informed the Bureau that the Swedish Government was preparing a declaration in which its view of the present situation would be expounded. He would merely outline three of the main points.

What was wanted was, firstly, agreement on a definite programme for substantial disarmament, such as to render possible the conclusion of a general disarmament Convention worthy of the name.

Next, decisions should be taken as to the immediate application of the principle of the equality of rights. This application should be designed in such a way that it would make it possible to arrest armaments at the lowest possible level.

Finally, decisions would have to be taken for certain fresh guarantees of security, this being an essential condition for a substantial measure of disarmament.

M. Sandler therefore warmly supported the Chairman's appeal and the statements made by previous speakers calling for the establishment, not of a Convention on armaments, but of one on disarmament.

M. Motta (Switzerland) said that, if he had understood the Chairman's views, the Bureau should be convened after a three weeks' interval to prepare the work of the General Commission, which would meet a few weeks later, towards the end of May. Was there serious reason to hope that in three weeks the Bureau would be able to prepare the work of the General Commission? As he had received no direct or precise reassurance on this point, M. Motta had intended to put the question, but M. Massigli had been kind enough to say that his Government—and there was no need to stress the preponderant and decisive part which it played in the questions under consideration—was also of opinion that the work must be expedited and that to allow time to run on might do more harm than good, and that he hoped that, within approximately three weeks, the conversations between the various Governments chiefly concerned would have resulted, if not in any solutions, at any rate in a precise, clear and complete balance-sheet of the situation. M. Motta wished to thank M. Massigli very sincerely for his statements.

M. Motta would add that, however carefully the memoranda exchanged between the Governments were read, however closely the news in the papers was followed and however great the importance attached to the diplomatic reports received, the feeling still prevailed that the living word, as used at a meeting like the Bureau's present meeting, was still of far greater importance. He had arrived at the meeting with a feeling of uncertainty, one of half-depression, and he was happy to say that the statements made by the Chairman, Mr. Eden, M. Massigli and others had rather confirmed him in the impression, which was of very great significance at the present juncture, that, in the last analysis, there was general goodwill and that everyone regretted the impossibility of finding more speedily a method of reconciling the different points of view. The fact that there was no Government in the world which did not contemplate the failure of the Conference with dismay, the fact that everyone was endeavouring to work along the lines of conciliation was an essential element which must be borne in mind at the present time.

The two main points of view which seemed to confront one another at present might be summarised as follows. On the one hand, there was the policy of fixing the present level of armaments; that would entail a considerable measure of re-armament in some countries—almost re-armament on a large scale. On the other side, there was the policy of securing certain reductions of armament; that would entail a moderate measure of re-armament in some countries and, dominating the whole, effective supervision, or, in other terms, first and foremost a Convention which would be not only controlled but guaranteed by all the States parties to it. It had no doubt been very reassuring to everyone to find that, from this angle, there had been a considerable change on the part of the British Empire. The pact of pre-consultation was beginning to take shape, the guarantees for the execution of the Convention were increasing, and that afforded the hope that, if everyone really wanted it and if everyone went to work with goodwill, success would be achieved.

M. Motta noted with the utmost pleasure that countries like the United Kingdom, France and Italy had laid special stress on the need for Germany to resume her place at the Disarmament Conference and in the League. M. Motta had ventured more than once to emphasise this need. He was one of those who had viewed Germany's departure, not only with chagrin, but also with the deepest alarm. He had always considered that it was morally almost impossible to discuss a Disarmament Convention in Germany's absence. Recent events had confirmed the accuracy of this opinion, and M. Motta had observed with satisfaction that, latterly, even the German Government's language had, in matters connected with this problem, become more moderate and more temperate and was such as to afford ground for hope.

In conclusion, M. Motta thought that the Bureau could, conscientiously and with good reason for hope, accept the proposals put forward by the Chairman.

M. MASSIGLI (France) asked leave to correct a slight misapprehension. M. Motta had done him a very great honour by ascribing to him Mr. Eden’s proposals. M. Massigli had stated that his Government intended to reply very shortly to the United Kingdom Government, but he had not suggested any date. He had merely stated that the French Government would act as quickly as possible. Mr. Eden, who was as familiar with the case as M. Massigli himself, had proposed that the Bureau should meet within three weeks; he was responsible for his proposal.

Count RACZYŃSKI (Poland) had no need to assure the Bureau that his country, like all those represented at the Conference, was determined to make every effort for the achievement of a Convention which would be in accord with the Conference’s mandate and founded on the texts and engagements forming the basis of the Conference. Poland had consistently held the view that those texts and engagements implied a limitation and reduction of armaments. During the years of discussion that had preceded the present meeting it had invariably upheld the opinion that such a decision could not be accepted tacitly and that, moreover, it could not be taken by one of the technical or special organs of the Conference or even by the Bureau. The Polish delegation considered that such a decision could not be accepted tacitly and that, moreover, it could not be taken by one of the technical or special organs of the Conference or even by the Bureau. Such a decision could be taken by the General Commission only. It must be a clear and definite decision, and all the representatives of the States taking part must face their responsibilities when it was taken.

The CHAIRMAN summed up the proposals before the Bureau.

Mr. Eden had proposed that the Bureau should meet again on April 30th, the President of the Conference having the power to fix a date two or three days later if circumstances so demanded.

Mr. EDEN (United Kingdom) pointed out that he had not specified any time-limit for the extension of the date of the next meeting.

The CHAIRMAN replied that, like some of the other delegates who had spoken, he wanted to push on as rapidly as possible. Whether the time was extended for two or three days would, naturally, depend upon circumstances. If he found that the conversations or negotiations between Paris and London were about to come to a satisfactory conclusion, he would not convene the Bureau for April 30th, supposing, for example, May 2nd or 3rd would be more advantageous.

M. Stein had proposed that the General Commission should meet at an early date. The Chairman himself had appealed to the Bureau to let the General Commission be convened not too early and not too late. M. Barthou and he, in their recent discussion, had thought that round about May 23rd might be a suitable time, and the Chairman would like to ask the Bureau to approve that date on the same condition as was attached to the convening of the Bureau. For example, if the Bureau decided to meet on April 30th, or May 2nd, and found that May 23rd was a few days too early, it ought, he would suggest, to have the power to postpone the meeting for the two or three days that might be necessary. The Chairman wanted to make it clear, in both cases, that he was anxious not to send out a notice convening the delegations for a certain date and then find that he had to call an adjournment. The previous adjournments had been unavoidable, but he thought that a slightly bad impression had been created by the fact that there had been one adjournment after another. He would therefore prefer not to ask the Secretariat to send out the notices convening either the Bureau or the General Commission until he saw that those bodies were really going to meet on the particular date in question.

M. Stein had suggested that the study of the question of the definition of the aggressor should be resumed. His suggestion would be circulated in the Minutes, but the Chairman did not see how the study of that question could be begun until the study of all the questions was resumed when the General Commission met. The question of the definition of the aggressor would not be overlooked. It was a very important one, and the Chairman, when he had stressed the importance of security in his opening observations, had had in mind, not only one form of security, but also other forms, including the definition of the aggressor.

At its next meeting, the Bureau would try to prepare the up-to-date draft which was to be the agenda of the General Commission, and he was anxious that that agenda should be despatched to every Government if possible ten days before the meeting at which it would be considered.

Count CARTON DE WIART (Belgium) thought that the documents which had been circulated and the exchange of views which had just taken place showed that it would be inexpedient to fix too early a date for convening the General Commission. This convocation presupposed the assembling of the delegates of a large number of Powers and all the publicity entailed by the deliberations of the General Commission, and it was desirable to avoid such an upheaval
if the only result would be to note that it was impossible for the Commission to reach any result. He would, however, gladly accept the Chairman’s proposal that the General Commission’s meeting should be fixed for May 23rd, subject to the option which the Chairman himself had suggested, and provided that the information at his disposal justified the hope that a really useful discussion could take place on that date.

As regards the Bureau’s next meeting, which was much less important, Count Carton de Wiart saw no objection to fixing it for the end of the present month, the Chairman having the power to choose another date later—or even earlier—if he considered that desirable. It was well to leave the Chairman a certain discretion in this matter, for it was necessary, in the present circumstances, above all to avoid any possible mistake of procedure or tactics.

Count Carton de Wiart concluded from Mr. Eden’s statement, which was of great interest to the Belgian Government, that everything depended on the pace of the discussions which were taking place between certain Governments. Nothing but satisfaction could be felt at the fact that those discussions had become really active and that a certain reconciliation of views had already been achieved, the importance of which could not be over-estimated, particularly in regard to the serious question of supervision and guarantees of execution, which the Belgian Government had always considered to be essential.

Count Carton de Wiart added that he also was of the opinion that time was not working on behalf of the Conference and that therefore it was desirable that the present discussions should be pursued at a brisk pace. Time lost could not be caught up, and therefore, in agreement with the feelings so happily expressed by M. Motta, Count Carton de Wiart, on behalf of his Government, concurred in the dual proposition concerning the convocation of the Bureau and that of the General Commission, it being left to the President’s discretion to vary the dates a little if he thought that circumstances so demanded.

M. DI SORAGNA (Italy) endorsed the views expressed by Count Carton de Wiart. The Italian delegation had felt the same anxiety as the Chairman in regard to fixing the dates of meetings which had later to be postponed. To do so produced an extremely bad impression. In point of fact, the question was less serious in the case of the Bureau, since, when it met, delegates saw one another, talked over the news, drew up a balance-sheet, as M. Massigli had termed it, and separated until next time. The question, however, was much more serious in the case of the General Commission. First of all, a large number of people had to leave their homes, and, secondly, it attracted far more public attention than did a simple meeting of the Bureau.

M. di Soragna accordingly supported Count Carton de Wiart’s proposal; but, while a margin of two or three days was entirely acceptable in the case of the Bureau, he hoped that it would not be stated in the Minutes that this margin applied also to the convening of the General Commission. The Chairman must be left discretion to fix the period he might consider necessary after consulting the Bureau.

M. STEIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) supported the Chairman’s proposal that the date of the General Commission’s meeting be fixed for May 23rd.

The CHAIRMAN said that, if there were no objections, he took it that the procedure to which he and other speakers had referred was accepted by the Bureau.

He would do his best to see that the General Commission was not summoned only to be postponed, but it must be borne in mind that the date mentioned was very nearly the beginning of June. As the President of the Conference, he had a desire to report on his stewardship to the next Assembly. It would be the third Assembly since his appointment, and it was, he thought, very natural that he should not want to have to wait until the fourth Assembly.

The proposed procedure was approved.

FIFTY-SIXTH MEETING (PRIVATE)

Held on Monday, May 28th, 1934, at 3.30 p.m.

Chairman : Mr. HENDERSON.

74. SUMMARY OF EVENTS SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE BUREAU : PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IN CONNECTION WITH THE FORTHCOMING WORK OF THE CONFERENCE.

The CHAIRMAN said that, at its last session on April 10th, the Bureau had decided, in principle, that it would meet again on or about April 30th, and that the General Commission should be summoned for May 23rd, leaving the President a certain discretion as to the exact dates.

In view of subsequent events, he had arrived at the conclusion that the meeting of the Bureau, scheduled for April 30th, could serve no useful purpose.
On April 23rd, he had informed all the members of the Bureau of this opinion and asked them whether they would agree that the meeting should be held on the morning of May 29th and that of the General Commission on the afternoon of the same day. The replies received had led him to maintain the date of May 29th, but to summon the Bureau one day earlier.

In the report which the Chairman had had the honour to submits to the Bureau at its last meeting, he had endeavoured to give a summary of the outstanding divergencies of opinion revealed by the exchange of notes, memoranda, etc., which had taken place between the Governments of France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom during the period December 18th, 1933, to March 17th, 1934.

At the meeting of the Bureau held on April 10th, a series of important statements had been made as regards the possibility of resuming the work of the Conference and as to the general lines that might possibly be adopted in order to reach an agreement. Mr. Eden, of the United Kingdom delegation, had given a general survey of the negotiations which had taken place since November last. Other members of the Bureau had commented also upon the situation then existing.

Since the Bureau had met, several new documents of importance had been produced:

(a) The memorandum, dated April 14th, 1934, by the Danish, Spanish, Norwegian, Swedish and Swiss delegations on the present state of the work of the Conference;

(b) The German statement of views of April 16th, 1934, on the United Kingdom memorandum of January 29th, 1934;

(c) The letter of April 10th, 1934, from Sir John Simon to the French Ambassador in London;

(d) The memorandum by the French Government of April 17th, 1934.

In order to enable the members of the Bureau to bring up to date the summary circulated to them on the eve of the last meeting of the Bureau, he had prepared and circulated for its convenience a further summary of the principal considerations put forward in the papers just mentioned.

Since the circulation of this summary, the French Government had published a comprehensive collection of documents. Certain of those documents have not been published previously—namely, those of November 15th, December 5th and 13th, 1933, and April 6th and 11th, 1934.

In view of the opinion expressed in the French memorandum of April 17th, it seemed that the diplomatic negotiations between the Powers could hardly be carried on any further. In order to obtain a clearer indication as to the points of view of various Governments, the Chairman had, in the beginning of May, had conversations in London with Sir John Simon and Mr. Eden as well as with M. Suvich, Italian Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and M. Grandi, Italian Ambassador. Subsequently, he had had various conversations in Paris, where he had been received with the utmost courtesy by M. Barthou, French Minister for Foreign Affairs. M. Barthou had pointed out to the Chairman that French policy had not varied since the Conference suspended its political activities and the parallel efforts had been initiated. He had further confirmed to the Chairman the contents of the French note of April 17th, which he considered to be a natural development of the antepenultimate paragraph of his letter to the Chairman of February 10th, which had been distributed to the Bureau in the White Paper (document Conf.D.166).

The paragraph referred to read as follows:

"The French Government could not accept an immediate reduction of its armaments which would be accompanied by an immediate rearmament of a qualitative character of the Powers bound by the military clauses of the Treaties."

At this point the Chairman desired to remind the Bureau that, at its last meeting on October 26th, 1933 the General Commission had decided to adjourn in order to permit of further efforts to narrow existing divergencies and, at the same time, to authorise the Bureau to go forward with all the necessary arrangements so as to enable the General Commission to begin its second reading of the draft Convention on the basis of a revised and entirely up-to-date draft.

During the discussions on procedure which had taken place at the meetings of the Bureau on October 25th and 26th, 1933, the Chairman had called attention to the responsibility laid upon the Bureau by this decision of the General Commission. When suggesting on November 22nd, 1933 that the work of the Conference would at that stage best be assisted by parallel

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2 Documents Conf.D.166 and Conf.D.166(a).
5 See Minutes of the eighty-first meeting of the General Commission.
6 See Minutes of the fiftieth and fifty-first meetings of the Bureau, pages 188 to 192.
7 See Minutes of the fifty-fourth meeting of the Bureau, page 200.
and supplementary efforts between various States and the full use of diplomatic machinery, he had made it clear that it was advisable that the various Governments should keep the President of the Conference informed of their efforts and report to him on the final result of those efforts.

The Chairman had now put before the Bureau the various elements of the present critical situation. It would be for the Bureau to examine the position and to decide what procedure, in view of the recent events, should be recommended to the General Commission at its meeting on the following day.

The Bureau might consider it advisable to await the statements of those who had been actively concerned with the private negotiations which would be made at the General Commission before deciding to recommend any future plan of work.

The Chairman wished to add one final word. Numerous statements had been circulated regarding the future of the Conference. Some of these seemed to him to be of a defeatist character. He ventured to hope that the Bureau would be of one mind in recommending to the General Commission that the gravity of the situation commanded more than ever an unflagging determination to pursue their efforts towards securing a Convention in accordance with the mandate given to the Conference.

M. Barthou (France) said that the recapitulation of past history in the Chairman's statement was scrupulously faithful and accurate. There was, however, one point on which M. Barthou wished to make a very simple but very definite correction, in order to prevent any misunderstanding in the General Commission. The Chairman's statement seemed to indicate that it was since the suspension of the Disarmament Conference's political work that France had affirmed the continuity of her policy.

M. Barthou desired to point out that, presented in that way, France's policy would not be exhibited in all its continuity. It was not since the suspension of the Conference's political activity for the purpose of permitting conversations between different countries, but since the opening of the Conference that France had, through her successive delegates, adopted a certain attitude in the Conference. That attitude had never changed, and, consequently, M. Barthou intended to demonstrate and to defend before the General Commission the continuity of French policy since the opening of the Disarmament Conference.

With regard to the future, Mr. Henderson had said that certain attitudes were prompted by a sort of defeatism in regard to disarmament. He had appealed to the Bureau for joint action based on confidence and good faith from to-morrow onwards. M. Barthou shared the Chairman's sentiments. On behalf of the French Government, he declared that the Disarmament Conference, however arduous its development, must not be regarded as an incident that had been closed, but that a persistent effort must be made for its success. He added, speaking again on behalf of his Government, that he would use all his energy, his determination and his good faith in supporting the effort for which the Chairman had called.

The Chairman noted that the members of the Bureau approved the proposals which he had put forward and which had been supported by the French delegate. The Bureau would accordingly await the declarations to be made in the General Commission. The Bureau or some other body would then be called on to take a decision as to the procedure to be adopted for the future.

The proposal of the Chairman was adopted.

FIFTY-SEVENTH MEETING (PRIVATE)

Held on Monday, June 4th, 1934, at 3.30 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. HENDERSON.

75. Action to be taken with regard to the Proposals submitted to the General Commission on May 29th, May 30th, and June 1st, 1934.¹

The Chairman said that, at the meetings of the General Commission on May 29th and 30th and on June 1st,² a number of proposals had been made by certain delegations. Those proposals could be divided into two categories: proposals of a general nature and proposals presented in a more definite form. The latter, three in number, were submitted by the delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, by the Turkish delegation, supported by the delegations of the Little Entente and the Balkan Entente; and by the Danish, Spanish, Netherlands, Norwegian, Swedish and Swiss delegations in a joint declaration.

¹ Tevfik Rüstü Bey (Turkey) was invited by the Chairman to attend the meeting as being responsible for one of the resolutions referred to in the discussion.
² See minutes of the eighty-second, eighty-third and eighty-fourth meetings of the General Commission.
The texts of these proposals are as follows:


Taking as a basis the report of the President of the Conference and the documents which he has circulated, indicating that the parallel and supplementary negotiations between certain Governments since the last meeting of the General Commission in October 1933 have not removed the obstacles which previously made it impossible for the General Commission to frame a draft Convention acceptable to all States and that they have not created conditions justifying hopes of a larger measure of success in the present discussion or of the establishment of a convention at the present moment;

In view of the fact that the general political atmosphere which was not particularly favourable when the Conference opened can hardly be said to have improved during the course of the Conference (see the Statement of the President of the Conference of May 29th);

Continuing to recognise the great importance of a reduction of armaments, an indispensable measure in a general system for guaranteeing the security of States and decreasing the danger of war, but considering that a continuation of a discussion on the reduction of armaments does not at present hold out hopes of any really effective results;

Being still firmly resolved not in any case to cease its efforts to secure a unanimous decision on the reduction of armaments as soon as circumstances permit;

Noting that the present international situation offers threatening indications of an increase in the danger of war and that the nations, alarmed by this danger, expect the Conference to take effective measures as rapidly as possible to safeguard peace;

Observing that the Disarmament Conference has included among its tasks, not only the establishment of a Disarmament Convention, but the framing of other measures of security for all States, that, in its resolution of February 25th, 1932, it provided for the study of all questions connected with the organisation of peace and that the lack of progress in the work hitherto undertaken in the field of disarmament with the political circumstances responsible for this lack of progress renders imperatively necessary the speedy adoption of all possible measures of security;

The General Commission decides:

(1) To resume immediately the work which was interrupted of studying existing proposals for pacts of mutual assistance and the definition of the aggressor;

(2) To recommend the Conference, in plenary meeting, in view of the special importance at the present moment of an extensive and continuous organisation for the safeguarding of peace, to declare the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments a permanent body, to be described as the Peace Conference, with the following aims:

(a) Continuation of the task of securing an agreement upon the establishment of a Convention for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments;

(b) Establishment of agreements and the adoption of decisions and measures creating new guarantees of security;

(c) Adoption of any preventive measures likely to prevent armed conflicts;

(d) Supervision of the execution of the conventions and decisions of the Conference;

(e) Consultation in the event of a violation of international treaties for the maintenance of peace.

[Note. — The change in the name of the Conference will in no way affect the relations previously existing between the Conference and the League of Nations.]

(3) To instruct the Bureau of the Conference to reconsider the Rules of Procedure of the Conference in the light of the extension of its aims and to submit them, after revision, for examination by the Conference in plenary meeting.

2. Draft Resolution submitted by the Turkish Delegation.

The General Commission,

Considering that, as the President of the Conference observed in his speech on May 29th, the subject of security has occupied a prominent place throughout the proceedings of the Conference; for, if a nation believed itself exposed to the danger of being overwhelmed in war by a more powerful enemy, it would not refrain from making the