LEAGUE OF NATIONS


RECORDS
OF THE
Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments

SERIES C
MINUTES OF THE BUREAU

VOLUME I

September 21st, 1932 — June 27th, 1933

(Pages I to VIII and 1 to 178)
The Rules of Procedure adopted by the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments on February 4th, 1932, contain the following stipulations in Chapter III:

"(1) The Bureau of the Conference shall consist of the President, the Vice-Presidents, and the Chairmen of the Commissions, on which all the delegations are represented. The Honorary President shall be a member of the Bureau ex officio.

"(2) The Bureau shall assist the President in the general direction of the work of the Conference."

The Bureau was accordingly constituted on February 5th, 1932, after the election of the fourteen Vice-Presidents of the Conference—namely, the representatives of the following countries: Argentine, Austria, Belgium, United Kingdom, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United States of America—to which were added, on February 27th, the Chairmen of the Land Commission, the Naval Commission, the Air Commission and the National Defence Expenditure Commission, and M. Politis (delegate of Greece), Vice-Chairman of the General Commission.

On several occasions the President of the Conference, the Vice-President, the Rapporteur of the General Commission and the Secretary-General of the Conference met in private as the officers of the Bureau.

The Bureau held its first meeting on February 5th, 1932. Until September 21st of the same year, its meetings were private and no Minutes were kept. On that date, the Bureau decided that, in order to give effect to the resolution adopted by the General Commission on July 23rd, 1932, 1 Minutes should be kept of its meetings and should be communicated to the members of the Conference. The present volume therefore contains the Minutes of the fourteenth to forty-sixth meetings, covering the period from September 21st, 1932, to June 27th, 1933.

The Minutes of later meetings will be published in Volume II of Series C.

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1 This resolution said, *inter alia*: "Pending the resumption of the meetings of the General Commission, the Bureau will keep the delegations informed of the progress of the work".
TABLE OF CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION ........................................... III

FOURTEENTH MEETING (Private, then Public), September 21st, 1932, at 11 a.m. :
1. Publicity of Meetings ................................ 1
2. Statement by the Chairman ................................ 1
3. Publication of the Minutes of the Bureau and Circulation to the Members of the Conference .......... 2
4. Representation of Certain Delegations on the Bureau or on Committees which the Bureau may set up ........ 2
5. Representation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Technical Commissions of the Conference .......... 3
6. Action taken by the President since July 23rd, 1932, Date of the Adjournment of the Conference :
   A. Correspondence with the German Government concerning the Latter's Participation in the Present Session of the Bureau 3
   B. Armaments Truce .................................... 5
   C. Correspondence between the President of the Conference and the President of the National Defence Expenditure Commission 5

FIFTEENTH MEETING (Public), September 21st, 1932, at 4.30 p.m. :
9. Complete Prohibition of Air Attacks against the Civilian Population ........................................ 10
10. Prohibition of Chemical Warfare .......................... 10
11. Supervision ............................................. 12

SIXTEENTH MEETING (Public), September 22nd, 1932, at 11 a.m. :
12. Supervision (continuation) ................................ 13

SEVENTEENTH MEETING (Public), September 22nd, 1932, at 3.30 p.m. :
13. a (1): Complete Prohibition of Air Attacks against the Civil Population; b(1): Abolition between Contracting Parties of All Aerial Bombardment, subject to Agreement with regard to Measures to be adopted for the Purpose of rendering effective the Observance of this Rule .......... 18
14. Heavy Artillery and Tanks ................................ 19
15. Effectives .............................................. 19
16. Trade in and Manufacture of Arms ........................................ 20
17. Chemical and Bacteriological Warfare ...................... 20
18. Violation of the Provisions concerning the Prohibition of Chemical, Bacteriological and Incendiary Warfare ............... 20
19. General and Political Questions .......................... 20

EIGHTEENTH MEETING (Private, then Public), September 26th, 1932, at 3.30 p.m. :
20. Question of fixing a Date for the Meeting of the General Commission .................. 21

NINETEENTH MEETING (Public), November 3rd, 1932, at 3.30 p.m. :
21. Action taken by the Chairman since the Last Meeting of the Bureau :
   Question of the Representation of Governments at the Disarmament Conference and at the Monetary and Economic Conference .......... 23
   Meeting of the General Commission ........................ 24
   Committee for the Regulation of the Trade in and Private and State Manufacture of Arms and of Implements of War .......... 24
   Armaments Truce ........................................... 24
Nineteenth Meeting (continued):
  22. Progress Reports ........................................ 25
  23. Question of Supervision: Report by M. Bourquin (Belgium) .... 25
     Attributions of the Permanent Disarmament Commission ........ 27
     Preparation of Revision Conferences ........................ 29

Twentieth Meeting (Public), November 4th, 1932, at 11 a.m.:

Twenty-first Meeting (Public), November 4th, 1932, at 3,30 p.m.:
  25. Question of Supervision: Report by M. Bourquin (Belgium) (continuation):
     Question of Procedure ...................................... 38
     Attributions of the Permanent Disarmament Commission (continuation) 39
     Means of Supervision .................................... 39

Twenty-second Meeting (Public), November 7th, 1932, at 3,30 p.m.:
  26. Question of Supervision: Report by M. Bourquin (Belgium) (continuation):
     Means of Supervision (continuation) ...................... 44

Twenty-third Meeting (Public), November 8th, 1932, at 3,30 p.m.:
  27. Question of Supervision: Report by M. Bourquin (Belgium) (continuation):
     Composition of the Permanent Disarmament Commission ........ 51
     Internal Organisation .................................... 56

  28. Prohibition of Chemical Warfare and Violations of the Prohibition to use
     Chemical, Bacteriological and Incendiary Weapons: Report by
     M. Pilotti (Italy) ........................................ 56
     I. Absolute or Relative Character of the Prohibition .......... 56

Twenty-fourth Meeting (Public), November 9th, 1932, at 4 p.m.:
  29. Prohibition of Chemical Warfare and Violations of the Prohibition to use
     Chemical, Bacteriological and Incendiary Weapons: Report by M.
     Pilotti (Italy) (continuation):
     I. Absolute or Relative Character of the Prohibition (continuation) .... 58
     II. Prohibition of Preparations for Chemical, Incendiary and
         Bacteriological Warfare ................................ 59

Twenty-fifth Meeting (Public), November 10th, 1932, at 4,15 p.m.:
  30. Prohibition of Chemical Warfare and Violations of the Prohibition to use
     Chemical, Bacteriological and Incendiary Weapons: Report by M.
     Pilotti (Italy) (continuation):
     IV. Sanctions in the Event of the Use of Chemical, Incendiary and
         Bacteriological Weapons ................................ 64

Twenty-sixth Meeting (Public), November 11th, 1932, at 3,30 p.m.:
  31. Prohibition of Chemical Warfare and Violations of the Prohibition to use
     Chemical, Bacteriological and Incendiary Weapons: Report by M.
     Pilotti (Italy) (continuation):
     IV. Sanctions in the Event of the Use of Chemical, Bacteriological and
         Incendiary Weapons (continuation) .................... 71

  32. Prohibition, and Supervision of the Prohibition, of the Preparation of Chemi-
     cal, Incendiary and Bacteriological Warfare: Case of a Breach of the
     Prohibition to use Chemical, Incendiary and Bacteriological Weapons
     against an Opponent: Draft Questionnaire proposed by M. Pilotti
     (Italy) .................................................. 75

Twenty-seventh Meeting (Public), November 12th, 1932, at 11 a.m.:
  33. Prohibition of Chemical Warfare and Violations of the Prohibition to use
     Chemical, Bacteriological and Incendiary Weapons (continuation):
     IV. Sanctions in the Event of the Use of Chemical, Bacteriological
         and Incendiary Weapons: Text proposed by the Drafting
         Committee ............................................. 78

Twenty-eighth Meeting (Public), November 15th, 1932, at 3,30 p.m.:
  34. Heavy Artillery and Tanks: Statement by M. Buero (Uruguay) .... 83
  35. Supervision: Examination of the Second Report by M. Bourquin (Belgium) .... 83

  36. Appointment of a Drafting Committee ........................ 88
TWENTY-NINTH MEETING (Public), November 17th, 1932, at 10.30 a.m.:
37. General Statement by the Delegate of the United Kingdom ........ 89
38. Equality of Status: General Discussion .......................... 94

THIRTIETH MEETING (Public), November 18th, 1932, at 3.30 p.m.:
39. Work of the Committee for the Regulation of the Trade in, and Private
and State Manufacture of, Arms and Implements of War: Examination
of the Progress Report submitted by M. Komarnicki (Poland) ....... 98

THIRTY-FIRST MEETING (Public), November 22nd, 1932, at 4 p.m.:
40. Regulation of the Trade in, and Private and State Manufacture of, Arms
and Implements of War: Examination and Adoption of the Draft
Resolution submitted by M. Komarnicki (Poland) .................... 106
41. Air Forces: Examination and Adoption of the Report submitted by M. de
Madariaga (Spain) .......................................................... 109

THIRTY-SECOND MEETING (Private), December 13th, 1932, at 10.30 a.m.:
42. Communication of the Agreement concluded between the Representatives
of the Governments of Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy
and the United States of America: Fixing of the Date of the Next
Meetings of the Bureau and of the General Commission ......... 110

THIRTY-THIRD MEETING (Public), January 23rd, 1933, at 3.30 p.m.:
43. Progress Report by the Chairman ................................. 113
44. Supervision: Examination of the Third Report by M. Bourquin (Belgium)
and of the Draft Articles prepared by the Drafting Committee .... 114

THIRTY-FOURTH MEETING (Public), January 24th, 1933, at 3.30 p.m.:
45. Supervision: Examination of the Third Report by M. Bourquin (Belgium)
and of the Draft Articles prepared by the Drafting Committee
(continuation) .................................................................. 121
46. Future Programme of Work of the Conference .................... 128

THIRTY-FIFTH MEETING (Public), January 25th, 1933, at 3.30 p.m.:
47. Armaments Truce: Communication from the German Government .... 128
48. Participation of the German Delegation in the Work of the Air Commission:
Communication from the German Delegation ......................... 129
49. Programme of Meetings of the General Commission and of the Bureau .... 129
50. Chemical, Incendiary and Bacterial Weapons: Draft Conclusions submitted
to the Bureau by M. Rutgers (Netherlands), Rapporteur of the Special
Committee ................................................................. 129

THIRTY-SIXTH MEETING (Public), January 30th, 1933, at 3.30 p.m.:
51. Chemical, Incendiary and Bacterial Weapons: Draft Conclusions submitted
to the Bureau by M. Rutgers (Netherlands), Rapporteur of the Special
Committee (continuation) .................................................. 136
52. Programme of Work proposed by the United Kingdom Delegation with a
view to embodying in a Convention the Proposals already made by
Various Delegations ......................................................... 142

THIRTY-SEVENTH MEETING (Public), January 31st, 1933, at 10.30 a.m.:
53. Supervision: Immunities: List of Questions submitted by the Drafting
Committee with a view to the Establishment of a Formula: General
Discussion ........................................................................ 143

THIRTY-EIGHTH MEETING (Public), February 9th, 1933, at 3 p.m.:
54. Preparation of the Agenda of the Forthcoming Meetings of the General
Commission ................................................................. 149

THIRTY-NINTH MEETING (Public), February 10th, 1933, at 3.30 p.m.:
55. Preparation of the Agenda of the Forthcoming Meetings of the General
Commission (continuation) ................................................. 155
FORTIETH MEETING (Private), April 27th, 1933, at 10.30 a.m.:

56. Questions of Procedure arising out of the General Commission's Examination of Part I (Security) of the Draft Convention submitted by the United Kingdom Delegation ........................................ 162

FORTY-FIRST MEETING (Private), May 8th, 1933, at 11 a.m.:

57. Questions of Procedure concerning the Continuation of the Examination by the General Commission of the Draft Convention submitted by the United Kingdom Delegation ........................................ 167

FORTY-SECOND MEETING (Private), May 9th, 1933, at 4.30 p.m.:

58. Questions of Procedure concerning the Continuation of the Examination by the General Commission of the Draft Convention submitted by the United Kingdom Delegation (continuation) ........................................ 171

FORTY-THIRD MEETING (Private), May 12th, 1933, at 3.30 p.m.:

59. Questions of Procedure concerning the Continuation of the Examination by the General Commission of the Draft Convention submitted by the United Kingdom Delegation (continuation) ........................................ 171

FORTY-FOURTH MEETING (Private), May 23rd, 1933, at 11.30 a.m.:

60. Proposal of the Bureau for the Examination concurrently by the General Commission of Part I (Security) and Part II, Section II (Material), of the Draft Convention submitted by the United Kingdom Delegation ........................................ 173

FORTY-FIFTH MEETING (Private), June 7th, 1933, at 5.30 p.m.:

61. Procedure for the Negotiations preliminary to the Second Reading of the Draft Convention : Date of the Next Meeting of the Bureau ........................................ 174

62. Future Conduct of the Work of the Committee on Effectives ........................................ 174

FORTY-SIXTH MEETING (Private), June 27th, 1933, at 3.30 p.m.:

63. Tribute to the Memory of M. de Agüero y Bethancourt ........................................ 175

64. Future Work of the General Commission : Proposal to adjourn the Commission until October 16th, 1933 ........................................ 176
FOURTEENTH MEETING1 (PRIVATE, THEN PUBLIC)

Held on Wednesday, September 21st, 1932, at 11 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. HENDERSON, President of the Conference.

I. PUBLICITY OF MEETINGS.

The CHAIRMAN observed that, at its meeting on July 23rd, 1932, the General Commission had decided that the Bureau of the Conference should meet during the week beginning September 19th, and that it should give effect to certain decisions adopted on July 23rd.

In accordance with the terms of the resolution, he had, in consultation with the Secretary-General, convoked the Bureau to meet on September 21st. The Bureau had been entrusted with the preparation of practical solutions for a certain number of very important questions. Before actually embarking upon the examination of the tasks devolving upon it, the Bureau should decide on a matter of procedure concerning the publicity of its debates. Personally, the Chairman was inclined to recommend that the meetings should as a rule be held in public, the more so as the tasks the Bureau would have to discharge conferred on it the character of an important political commission. Indeed, the General Commission had referred to it certain problems which originally fell within the Commission's own competence.

If there was no objection, he would take it that the Bureau decided to hold its meetings in public, except when it considered it necessary, in conformity with the practice of the League Council, to hold a private meeting.

The proposal of the Chairman was adopted.

(The Bureau went into public session.)

2. STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN.

Before coming to the more practical and detailed remarks which he proposed to make about the work entrusted to the Bureau by the General Commission, the Chairman desired to say a few words of a more general nature with regard to the present situation.

The task devolving upon the Bureau was of the highest importance, since the crucial stage in the work of the Conference was now opening. It was close on eight months since the Disarmament Conference had begun. At that time, he, as President of the Conference, had ventured to declare that the case for the policy of international disarmament was overwhelming. No thinking statesman would deny that, on economic, political and moral grounds, the duty of all the Governments represented at the Conference lay plain before them. Was it going too far to say that there was no Government which, at the present time, was not struggling in a morass of economic and financial difficulties such as Governments had never known before? Could it be right that, in such circumstances, they should ask their peoples to go on bearing the immense burden of unproductive expenditure which their present armaments involved? Moreover, it was becoming more and more clear that only international co-operation of a kind far more developed than anything yet attempted would make it possible to end the present crisis and solve the difficulties of the modern world. The development of that co-operation was the greatest political task which lay before the present generation, but, unless a disarmament treaty could be made, there would be the risk of failure before the work had been begun.

As for the moral aspects of the case, could anyone look around the world to-day and survey the conflicts which were raging, the passions, hatreds and suspicions that were springing up, without feeling how urgent it was that a great new effort should be made to start afresh upon a better road? Could anyone doubt that, unless this new start could be made here and now, much that was good and useful in existing civilisation might be gravely imperilled, if not destroyed?

In any case, the Chairman was satisfied that the argument for disarmament was stronger to-day than it had ever been. Everything that had happened since the Conference's last meeting had immensely strengthened the argument, and for that reason he regarded the second phase of the Conference as particularly momentous.

1 The discussions which took place during the first thirteen meetings being private in character, no Minutes were published.
It was clear from the decisions taken by the General Commission that it expected the Bureau to prepare and submit practical proposals which would enable the Conference to achieve a first decisive step to cover a substantial all-round reduction of armaments.

As the Chairman saw it, there rested upon the Bureau a twofold responsibility. There was, first, a general responsibility derived from the imperative need for disarmament to which he had just referred, a responsibility which came with a new urge as a result of the grave situation in which the world found itself to-day. There was, secondly, a specific responsibility upon the Bureau. Two months previously, the Commission had drawn up the general instructions upon which the Bureau was to act. These instructions made it the Bureau's duty, not only to prepare detailed texts on certain matters upon which preliminary decisions had been taken, but also to draw up plans which should provide for substantial and comprehensive measures of armament reduction to be brought about by a general convention to be applied alike to land, naval and air forces.

That, and nothing less, was the task which lay before the Bureau. The latter could not discharge its plain duty without making the framework of a comprehensive document which would deal with military strength in all its forms. In this task the Bureau was, happily, not without guidance from the resolutions which the Conference had already adopted. On April 22nd, 1932, on the motion of Sir John Simon, it had been unanimously decided that weapons which were most dangerous to civilians, most offensive, and most efficacious against national defence, should be abolished or internationalised by a general convention. On July 23rd it had been agreed that, in preparing the plan for what was called a substantial reduction of world armaments, the Conference should be guided by the general principles underlying President Hoover's declaration and that the primary objective should be to reduce the means of attack.

It was in the spirit of those resolutions that the Bureau had now to propose to the nations of the world the measures required to solve the problems which the first phase of the Conference had brought to light. The manner in which the Bureau discharged this task must vitally affect the future of mankind. The Conference was approaching the cross-roads at which the fatal decision must be taken for peace and disarmament or for a renewal of the mad competition in armaments and ultimate war.

The Chairman was certain that there was no representative of any Government present who would lightly assume this responsibility. That was why he still held to the belief, expressed two months previously, that this second phase of the Conference would effect a great gathering-in of concrete results. Neither the Conference as a whole nor any of the countries represented on the Bureau would regard it as other than their highest duty to make a supreme effort to achieve the full purpose for which the Conference was brought together.

3. PUBLICATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE BUREAU, AND CIRCULATION TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CONFERENCE.

The Chairman proposed that Minutes should be taken of the Bureau's proceedings. In support of this proposal, he drew attention to paragraph 6 of Part III of the General Commission's resolution stating: "Pending the resumption of the meetings of the General Commission, the Bureau will keep the delegations informed of the progress of the work".

The proposal of the Chairman was adopted.

The Chairman proposed that the final Minutes of the Bureau should be circulated to the Members of the Conference. This, he considered, would be the best way of giving effect to paragraph 6 of Part III of the resolution quoted above.

The proposal of the Chairman was adopted.

4. REPRESENTATION OF CERTAIN DELEGATIONS ON THE BUREAU OR ON THE COMMITTEES WHICH THE BUREAU MAY SET UP.

The Chairman informed the Bureau that certain delegations had expressed a desire to be represented when questions of particular interest to them were dealt with in the Bureau or in the Committees which the Bureau might set up. He suggested that, when expedient, countries interested in a particular matter should be given an opportunity of expressing their views. This procedure should not entail an increase in the membership of the Committees to be set up or of the Bureau, which otherwise would risk becoming as large as the General Commission.

The proposal of the Chairman was adopted.
5. REPRESENTATION OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS ON THE TECHNICAL COMMISSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE.

The CHAIRMAN informed the Bureau that, on September 5th, 1932, M. Litvinoff had sent the Secretary-General a letter containing the following passage:

"I take this opportunity of informing you that, in accordance with my declaration at the General Commission's meeting on July 23rd, my Government does not propose to send representatives from Moscow to the technical Commissions of the Conference as long as the Conference has not taken essential decisions on the reduction of existing armaments. This refers in particular to the Commissions not sitting simultaneously with the General Commission. With reference to the Secretariat's communication dated August 8th, I have the honour to inform you that the competent services are completing the compilation of the supplementary data on the Union's expenditure on national defence and that these data will shortly be despatched to the Chairman of the National Defence Expenditure Commission."

The Bureau took note of this communication.

6. ACTION TAKEN BY THE PRESIDENT SINCE JULY 23RD, 1932, DATE OF THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE CONFERENCE.

A. Correspondence with the German Government concerning the Latter's Participation in the Present Session of the Bureau.

The CHAIRMAN informed the Bureau that he had received from Baron von Neurath, German Minister for Foreign Affairs, a letter, dated September 14th, 1932, conveying his Government's decision not to participate in the present work of the Bureau of the Disarmament Conference summoned for September 21st. The letter read as follows:

"Berlin, September 14th, 1932.

"On behalf of the German Government I have the honour to communicate to you the following.

"In the course of the discussion of the General Commission, which led up to the adoption of the resolution of July 23rd, 1932, the Head of the German delegation indicated the reasons for which the German Government was unable to accept the resolution in question. He pointed out that, in view of the stage reached by the discussions of the Conference, the question of equality of rights of the disarmed States could no longer remain without a solution. On that occasion he accordingly declared that the German Government could not take part in the further labours of the Conference before the question of Germany's equality of rights had been satisfactorily cleared up.

"The resolution having been adopted, nevertheless, it is clear even now that the future Disarmament Convention will fall far short of the system of disarmament laid down by the Versailles Treaty, and will differ therefrom essentially both as regards the form and the manner of the disarmament. The question of how the future regime is to be applied to Germany thus becomes a matter of direct and immediate importance. It is obvious that, unless this question is answered, no settlement of individual concrete points of the disarmament problem is possible.

"In the German Government's view, only one solution can be considered—namely, that all States should be subject to the same rules and principles in respect of disarmament and that no discriminatory exceptional system should exist in the case of any one of them. Germany cannot be expected to take part in the negotiations with regard to the measures of disarmament to be laid down in the Convention, until it is established that the solutions which may be found are also to apply to Germany.

"With a view to the earliest possible realisation of the condition for the future co-operation of Germany with the Conference, the German Government has in the interval endeavoured to clear up the question of equality of rights through diplomatic channels. Unfortunately, it must be stated that the German efforts have not hitherto led to any satisfactory result. Under these circumstances, I find myself compelled, to my regret, to inform you that the German Government is unable to avail itself of the invitation to the session of the Bureau of the Conference which is to begin on September 21st, 1932.

"The German Government is now, as ever, convinced that thoroughgoing general disarmament is urgently necessary for the purpose of ensuring peace. It will follow the labours of the Conference with interest, and will determine its further attitude by the course which they may take.

(Signed) Baron von Neurath."
On September 18th, he had sent the following reply:

"I have the honour to acknowledge Your Excellency's letter of September 14th.

"Need I say how much I regret the information which you convey to me that the German Government has decided not to participate in the session of the Bureau of the Disarmament Conference which I have summoned for September 21st, in accordance with the resolution of the General Commission?

"The German Government apparently bases that decision on the assumption that, the resolution of the General Commission of July 23rd having been adopted, it is clear that the future Disarmament Conference will fall far short of the system of disarmament laid down by the Versailles Treaty, and will differ therefrom essentially, both as regards the form and manner of disarmament.

"It would be outside my competence as President to enter into any discussion as to the system of disarmament laid down by the Versailles Treaty'. Since, however, I do not believe that the form and extent of disarmament to be brought about through the Convention are already determined, I feel bound to express my doubts as to the construction placed by the German Government on the bearing of the resolution of July 23rd. May I call Your Excellency's attention to certain provisions of that resolution?

"First, in the preamble it is stated that 'a substantial reduction of world armaments shall be effected, to be applied by a General Convention alike to land, naval and air armaments'. Second, in the part concerning the conclusions of the first phase of the Conference (I would beg Your Excellency to notice these words, 'the first phase'), the following passage occurs:

"'The Conference, noting that agreement has now been reached on a certain number of important points, decides, without prejudice to more far-reaching agreements hereafter, to record forthwith the following concrete measures of disarmament which should form part of the General Convention to be concluded.'

"Third, Part IV of the resolution, General Provisions:

"'The present resolution in no way prejudices the attitude of the Conference towards any more comprehensive measures of disarmament, or towards the political proposals submitted by various delegations.'

"I trust Your Excellency will therefore agree that the form, extent and scope of the ultimate Convention are still undetermined, and remain to be treated at the forthcoming sessions of the Conference and its Committees.

"So much for the resolution itself. But, further, may I ask Your Excellency to read the speech which I made as President of the Conference at the meeting of the General Commission on July 23rd, when the resolution was under consideration?

"After quoting certain passages of the resolution, I said that a time would come when all the preparations in which we had been engaged month after month for six long months would produce a great gathering-in, and I added that, if I thought that that gathering-in would not come in the second stage of the Conference, I should have to ask the Commission to excuse me from again coming to Geneva for a further six months; and, lastly, that I trusted that all the representatives would vote for the resolution to come to Geneva in the autumn with the determination that we should have a great gathering-in and that our work would terminate in a General Convention which would secure a substantial reduction of world armaments, to be applied to land, naval and air armaments.

"This is still my firm and honest conviction, and, after weighing the reasons set out in this letter, I sincerely trust that the German Government may reconsider its decision, and resume its participation at the earliest possible moment in the work of the Bureau, particularly as the prolonged absence of Germany from our deliberations may seriously affect the cause of general disarmament. I make this appeal the more confidently in view of the closing sentence of the letter which Your Excellency has been good enough to address to me.

"I am naturally communicating to the members of the Bureau copies of Your Excellency's letter and of this reply.

(Signed) A. Henderson,
President of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments."

The Chairman hoped that the Bureau would consider that the action he had taken in this matter was appropriate; he therefore suggested that it should not discuss the question for the moment, in case the German Government might desire to reply to his letter of September 18th.
The CHAIRMAN observed that he had communicated to the members of the Conference the resolution concerning the renewal, for a further period of four months as from November 1st, of the truce established by the 1931 Assembly, and had requested the various countries to send in their replies before November 1st, if possible. So far fourteen replies, all favourable, had been received.

C. Correspondence between the President of the Conference and the President of the National Defence Expenditure Commission.

The CHAIRMAN acquainted the Bureau with the correspondence between himself and the President of the National Defence Expenditure Commission concerning the completion of the latter Commission's work and of that of its Technical Committee, and the submission of their report within the shortest possible time (document Conf.D./Bureau/I5).

1. Letter from the President of the Conference to the President of the National Defence Expenditure Commission, Dated July 27th, 1932.

"At its meeting on the 23rd of this month, the General Commission adopted a resolution dealing, among other matters, with the limitation of national defence expenditure. Paragraph 2 of Chapter III of that resolution is framed as follows:

"'2. Limitation of National Defence Expenditure.

"'(a) The Conference shall decide, on the resumption of its labours, taking into account the special conditions of each State, what system of limitation and publicity of expenditure on national defence will provide the peoples with the best guarantee of an alleviation of their financial burdens, and will prevent the measures of qualitative and quantitative disarmament to be inserted in the Convention from being neutralised by increases or improvements in authorised armaments.

"'(b) With a view to the decisions to be taken under this head, the Conference requests the Committee on National Defence Expenditure and its Technical Committee to continue and complete the work entrusted to its organs and to submit their report as soon as possible. The Conference requests its Bureau to draw up, on the basis of this report, a plan accomplishing the purpose aimed at and taking into consideration the special conditions of the various States.'"

"In informing you of this decision of the General Commission, I have the honour to direct your attention more particularly, for purposes of information and action, to sub-paragraph (b) of the above text.

For the President of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments:

(Signed) Th. AGHNIDES,
Secretary of the Conference."

2. Reply from the President of the National Defence Expenditure Commission to the President of the Conference, Dated July 29th, 1932.

"I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of July 27th, communicating the part of the resolution adopted by the General Commission on the 23rd of this month which concerns more particularly the National Defence Expenditure Commission.

"As regards the Technical Committee set up by the Commission, I have the honour to forward herewith copy of a letter from the Chairman, giving detailed information concerning the progress of the Committee's work.

"According to the programme contemplated by the Technical Committee, I think that it is unlikely that the Technical Committee's report can be submitted to the Plenary Mission before the end of November. In the circumstances, the Commission will hardly be able to communicate its conclusions to the Bureau before January next.

"Trusting that this information may be of use to you.

(Signed) A. DE VASCONCELLOS."


"It is my agreeable duty to inform you of the present state of the work of the Technical Committee set up by the National Defence Expenditure Commission on March 16th.

"The Technical Committee has been sitting continuously since April 7th and has held forty-eight plenary meetings. An even greater number of meetings have been held by its various sub-committees.
"As you are aware, the task entrusted to the Technical Committee consists, on the one hand, of the examination of the documents forwarded by the various Governments on their expenditure on national defence, and, on the other hand, of the examination of the questions which have been referred to it by the National Defence Expenditure Commission (see attached list).

"As regards the examination of documents forwarded by the Governments, the present position is as follows:

"(a) The examination has been completed for the following countries:

- United Kingdom
- Czechoslovakia
- Denmark
- France
- Germany
- India
- Italy
- Poland
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- United States of America (in the case of this country, a second reading will take place in September).

"(b) The observations on the documentation supplied by the following countries will be sent to them before August 5th:

- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Irish Free State
- Japan
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Roumania
- Union of South Africa
- Yugoslavia
- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

"Hence, the oral examination of the documentation concerning the above-mentioned Powers can take place from September onwards.

"Thirty-nine States have not yet forwarded any information, or have only supplied incomplete documentation.

"The work of preparing reports on the budgetary documentation has been entrusted to M. Jacomet (France), Rapporteur-General, M. Worbs (Germany), M. Sandler (Sweden), Mr. Lyon (United Kingdom) and General Barberis (Italy).

"The Technical Committee has not so far been able to examine the special questions referred to it by the National Defence Expenditure Commission. It has, however, proceeded to a division of the questions into two groups: those which may be considered together with the budgetary information, and those which, in its view, should be dealt with separately. Rapporteurs have been selected for each of the questions in this second group.

"The Technical Committee intends to break up on August 5th and to resume its work on September 12th.

"During its next session the Committee will: (1) continue the examination of the documents forwarded by Governments, beginning with those of the States represented on the Committee whose documentation has not so far been examined; (2) take up the study of the various questions held over by the Committee; and (3) proceed to the drafting of its report.

"I hope that the above statement may be of some use to you in case you may wish to inform the President of the Conference of the actual situation as regards the work of the Technical Committee.

(Signed) Savel Radulesco."


A. Definition of the Term 'Annual Expenditure'.
   1. Definition of the expression 'expenditure'.
   2. Accounts of the financial year.
   3. Publicity of estimates of expenditure on the basis of parliamentary votes.

B. Meaning and Scope of the Term 'National Defence Expenditure' (Universality).
   4. Secret funds and changes in appropriation.
   5. Gross and net expenditure.
   6. Subsidies, loans and participations.
   7. Special expenditure occasioned by the reduction of armaments.
   9. The definitions of the draft annex are not limitative.
   10. Carrying forward of credits.
   11. Annexed tables C, D, E, F.

C. Classification of National Defence Expenditure.
   12. The Model Statement.
   13. Changes in appropriations.
   15. The definitions of the draft annex are not limitative.
   16. Division of expenditure in respect of the three forces.
   17. Annexed tables A and B.
   18. Reconciliation tables. Derogations.
7. **Questions particularly concerning Publicity.**

19. Date of despatch of final statements of account.
20. Article 33 of the draft Convention.
21. Communication of certain laws and regulations likely to affect national defence.

**E. Questions concerning the Fixing of Limits.**

22. Transfers between the limits of the three forces.
23. Fixing of limits taking into account variations from one year to the next.
24. Fluctuation in the purchasing power of the different currencies.

**F. Other Questions.**

25. Uniformisation of the budgets and military accounts (German proposal)."

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The **Chairman** observed that the Bureau's first task would be to take cognisance of the text of the General Commission's resolution and to define the tasks thus assigned to it. With this aim in view, the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, the Rapporteur of the Bureau and the Secretary-General had held two meetings at which the best method of proceeding to give effect to the resolution of July 23rd had been considered and a programme of work agreed upon for submission to the Bureau.

He would request **M. Beneš**, the Rapporteur, to read the suggested programme of work.

**M. Beneš** (Czechoslovakia), Rapporteur, read the following statement:

"The questions dealt with in the resolution may be grouped in the four following categories:

**a. Drafting of Texts for the Points in regard to which Agreement has already been reached.**

**b. Questions in regard to which it will be necessary to negotiate, but on which the points of principle are already settled.**

**c. Questions of a controversial character, the solutions of which must be prepared.**

**d. General and political questions.**

**a. Drafting of Texts for the Points in regard to which Agreement has already been reached.**

These questions are the following:

1. Complete prohibition of air attacks against the civil population.
2. Prohibition of chemical warfare.
3. Supervision.

Although point 1 might be sent immediately to a Drafting Committee, the Bureau may consider it more advisable to postpone the consideration of this point in order to take it in connection with point (b) 1.

Point 2 raises the question of the preparation of chemical, bacteriological and incendiary arms in time of peace and of the training for the use of the said arms. These questions might be treated either in the Bureau or referred to the Special Committee on Chemical and Bacteriological Warfare, which, as will be remembered, only dealt with the question of the use in war-time of these arms.

Point 3 must also be examined in the Bureau, in view of its eminently political character. It will be for the Bureau to define the 'extension of powers' referred to in the resolution, as also the composition of the Commission and its jurisdiction or competence.

**b. Questions in regard to which it will be necessary to negotiate, but on which the Points of Principle are already settled.**

These questions are the following:

1. Abolition between contracting parties of all aerial bombardment, subject to agreement with regard to measures to be adopted for the purpose of rendering effective the observance of this rule.
2. Limits to be fixed for the calibre of heavy artillery.
3. Maximum tonnage of tanks.

In regard to 1, it will be necessary to undertake certain technical studies. It will be remembered that the Air Sub-Committee is already dealing with the questions of publicity and regulation of civil aviation. It will be for the Bureau to decide if it wishes to entrust to
the same Sub-Committee the other points regarding air armaments implied by the resolution or if it prefers to set up an ad hoc Committee. As stated above, this point will be considered in conjunction with point (a) 1.

"As regards the questions coming under numbers 2 and 3, in view of the fact that the technical studies in regard to them seem completed, it will be necessary to determine the figures by negotiation.

"(c) Questions of a Controversial Character, the Solutions of which must be prepared.

"The questions coming under this heading are the following:

1. Effectives.
2. Limitation of national defence expenditure.
3. Manufacture and trade in arms.
4. Naval armaments.
5. Violation of the provisions relating to the prohibition of the use of chemical, bacteriological and incendiary weapons.

1. As regards effective, in view of the fact that the resolution invites the Bureau to study the Hoover proposal, it will be for the Bureau to proceed to a preliminary discussion on the question and then to refer the matter to the Effectives Committee or to another organ. It is essential that the Bureau should in that case give to the Committee very precise instructions.

2. In regard to the work of the Defence Expenditure Committee, it will be remembered that, in accordance with the correspondence exchanged between the President and M. de Vasoncellos, the work of this Committee cannot be completed before the end of this year. As certain countries have not yet forwarded their documentation, the Bureau might authorise the Secretary-General to address a reminder to them.

3. In regard to the trade and manufacture of arms, the Bureau might, after a preliminary discussion, set up a committee to examine this question. The President or the Rapporteur might in due course suggest a list of names to the Bureau.

4. In regard to naval armaments, the Bureau would desire to know if the naval Powers, in conformity with the text of the resolution, have been able, up to the present, to agree on any new measures of naval reduction, so that it may inform the General Commission thereof before it resumes its work.

5. As regards violations of the provisions on the prohibition of chemical, bacteriological and incendiary warfare, it might be possible for the Bureau itself to treat this question and to refer it for drafting to the Chemical and Bacteriological Warfare Committee or to a Drafting Committee composed of persons competent both in drafting and in the question of chemical and bacteriological arms, which are of a very special character.

(d) General and Political Questions.

"Under the heading 'General Provisions' the resolution refers to a certain number of general questions. It will be for the Bureau to decide as to when and how these problems should be prepared."

M. Beneš added that the Bureau had full powers to take all decisions as to its programme of work. During the discussion of the various points in the document which he had read, the members of the Bureau would see whether the suggestions submitted to them were acceptable or required modification.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that certain delegations might think that questions which in their view were of special importance should be discussed first. As the members of the Bureau must have an opportunity of examining in detail the programme submitted to them by the Rapporteur, he proposed that the discussion should be postponed to the following meeting.

FIFTEENTH MEETING (PUBLIC)

_Held on, Wednesday, September 21st, 1932, at 4.30 p.m._

Chairman: Mr. HENDERSON.


M. Litvinoff (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) observed that the Bureau was about to decide the order in which it would deal with the programme of work that had been drawn up with a view to carrying out the resolution of the General Commission. It was clear that all the questions on the programme were not of equal importance, and he was afraid that the Bureau might be tempted to deal first with those which raised the least difficulties, even though they might be of minor importance and though their connection with the question of the reduction
of armaments might be somewhat remote. He did not regard such a method as acceptable: the Bureau must not forget the atmosphere of pessimism and disappointment which had marked the conclusion of the first stage of the Disarmament Conference. The President himself, in an article published that day, had admitted that the results of this first stage had been somewhat slender, somewhat disappointing, and might be regarded, up to a certain point, as discouraging. In order to dissipate this atmosphere of pessimism, it was necessary to attack the most serious questions, the solution of which might be regarded, in the words of the resolution itself, as constituting "a decisive step involving a substantial reduction of armaments."

In M. Litvinoff's opinion, nothing but a quantitative reduction in armaments could bring about such an advance. However desirable it might be to prohibit or limit what were called the more offensive weapons, such measures would not involve a substantial reduction in armaments and should be placed, as he had pointed out on several occasions, among measures tending towards humanising war. The quantitative reduction of all armaments according to a certain percentage would be of more significance than any reduction in offensive weapons, such as the limitation of the calibre of artillery, the tonnage of tanks, etc.

He was of the opinion that the suggestion that the Bureau should immediately undertake the discussion of quantitative reduction did not come outside the terms of the resolution of the General Commission, although the Soviet delegation had not voted for this resolution. The words of the text were: "That a substantial reduction of world armaments shall be effected, to be applied by a general Convention alike to land, naval and air armaments." The resolution even admitted that such a reduction might reach a proportion of one-third. He wondered whether the time had not now come to deal with the concrete proposals in this sense which were made in the Soviet plan and in that put forward by the United States of America.

In this connection, M. Litvinoff wished to refer to the declaration made at the previous meeting by the President, in which he informed the Bureau of the correspondence exchanged with the German Minister for Foreign Affairs. M. Litvinoff was sure that all the members of the Bureau deeply regretted the absence of their German colleague and were anxious to see him return as soon as possible. M. Litvinoff had observed that Baron von Neurath admitted, at the conclusion of his letter, the possibility of such a return, if the work of the Conference took a certain direction. He was naturally not in a position to say exactly how that phrase should be interpreted, but, in view of the fact that the German Government explained the withdrawal of its representative by the smallness of the results hitherto achieved, he thought it was a fair presumption that, if the Bureau decided to recommend to the General Commission definite action in the direction of a substantial reduction of armaments, for example by one-third, as had been proposed by M. Litvinoff himself, the members of the Bureau might once more have the advantage of the presence among them of a German delegate.

This, however, was not the main or only reason for the suggestion which he put forward. It was his firm conviction that the Bureau could carry out the responsible tasks imposed upon it, if it decided not to put aside the most important problems of disarmament, even if these problems appeared to be also those most difficult of solution. Confidence in the Disarmament Conference would not be re-established by the solution within the Bureau of matters of minor importance, or by the creation of new commissions or sub-commissions. The Bureau should not separate without declaring to the world to what extent it intended to bring about the reduction of every kind of armament; the only method by which this result could be obtained would be to put on one side for the moment all matters of minor importance and to concentrate attention upon the concrete proposals already submitted to the General Commission by the United States delegation and by the Soviet delegation.

M. Benes (Czechoslovakia), Rapporteur, observed that the proposals of M. Litvinoff would to some extent upset the procedure proposed by the Rapporteur himself at the previous meeting. He would therefore give the reasons which had led him to propose the adoption of the programme of work submitted. The question had been asked whether it would be of advantage to begin by the most important questions and to solve them as far as possible at once. The decision reached had been that it would be preferable to keep to the resolution of July 23rd, 1932, and to follow it point by point, as the various questions were set out therein in a logical order and in accordance with their readiness for discussion. Would it not involve further discussions if the Bureau were to attack certain questions at once without having first carried out a fresh preparatory work among the delegations, particularly if it was borne in mind that certain other questions were at the moment ready for immediate discussion? The question of the prohibition of chemical warfare, for instance, was settled apart from one single point—namely, whether the prohibition should extend to the preparation of chemical warfare in time of peace. A text could be drawn up as soon as a decision had been taken on this point. The question of supervision was also very important. On this matter a decision of principle had been taken, and the question could be readily settled, once agreement had been reached regarding the competence and composition of the supervisory commission.

In the second category, questions of the tonnage of tanks and the calibre of heavy artillery had already formed the subject of long and difficult discussions. They had reached the final stage—the fixing of figures—and in his opinion this matter might now be dealt with.

Finally, the third category included the most awkward questions—such, for instance, as that of effective. All the members of the Bureau were certainly very anxious to reach a rapid conclusion, and it appeared to him that the order proposed for the examination of the various questions provided the best means of achieving this result.
Mr. Wilson (United States of America) thought that, with a view to avoiding the difficulties and delays which arose from the fact that it was impossible for the Bureau to examine more than one question at a time, it would be well to distribute between the various subcommittees the questions which called for examination. There were certain matters, such as that of the manufacture of arms, which, owing to their great complexity, would require several months of study before any satisfactory text could be prepared. The examination of the question of effectives by the very competent experts who had dealt with that matter had given him the impression that there was no technical method by which the military value of a soldier could be measured according to the degree of his military instruction, etc. He therefore thought it would be advisable to submit those questions, and more particularly that of effectives, which were not yet ripe for decision, to a committee which would be given complete freedom, which would itself decide on the extent of its mandate and which would be composed, in addition to the delegations composing the former Effectives Committee, the members of the Bureau who had not been represented on it, it being understood that the Committee should be composed, not of experts, but of political delegates.

M. Beneš (Czecho-Slovakia), Rapporteur, observed that Mr. Wilson's proposal was not in any way inconsistent with the programme submitted. Before setting up a committee and entrusting it with a task, it was advisable that the Bureau should decide, at least in principle, on the questions referred to it.

The Chairman noted that the majority of the Bureau was in favour of the adoption of the programme submitted at the previous meeting, subject to any modifications which might be considered expedient during the course of its examination.

9. Complete Prohibition of Air Attacks against the Civil Population.

The Chairman reminded the Bureau that it had been agreed that this question should be decided at the same time as Question (b) I: "Abolition between the contracting parties of all aerial bombardment subject to agreement with regard to measures to be adopted for the purpose of rendering effective the observance of this rule".


The Chairman recalled that it had previously only been decided to prohibit chemical warfare in time of war. It was now for the Bureau to come to a decision as to the advisability of extending this prohibition to cover the preparation of chemical warfare in time of peace.

M. Beneš (Czecho-Slovakia), Rapporteur, set out the state of the question as follows:

The draft Convention drawn up by the Preparatory Commission provided in Article 39 for:

(a) Absolute prohibition of bacteriological warfare;
(b) Prohibition, subject to reciprocity, of chemical warfare.

The Special Committee on Chemical Weapons had decided in favour of the prohibition of chemical, bacteriological and incendiary weapons. No mention was made of training in time of peace or of the manufacture of the weapons in question. The Bureau had therefore to take a decision on the two following questions:

1. Should the requirement of reciprocity be maintained, or should the prohibition of chemical warfare be made absolute?
2. Should this prohibition cover questions of training in time of peace and the manufacture of chemical weapons?

These questions had been raised in a practical manner by a letter from the Norwegian delegation (see document Conf.D./Bureau./14, distributed on August 1st to the members of the Bureau), which called for:

(a) Absolute prohibition of the employment of chemical and bacteriological weapons and methods of warfare;
(b) The destruction of all methods of chemical warfare and of all existing apparatus therefor;
(c) The prohibition of preparation in time of peace of such methods and of training for their use.

Sir John Simon (United Kingdom) asked for an explanation as regards procedure. It had been his belief that the Bureau would go through the various questions mentioned in the programme of work, which personally he approved, with the object of drawing up a definite programme of discussion for subsequent meetings, reserving till then the discussion of questions which had not yet been decided. Personally, he was not in possession of the necessary documents for proceeding to a fundamental discussion of the questions on the programme, and he would prefer that the Bureau should confine itself to an examination of the procedure to be followed regarding each question.
The Chairman explained that, in the absence of any suggestions other than those put forward by M. Litvinoff and Mr. Wilson, he had thought that the Bureau wished to start the discussion of the programme before it. It was, however, always open to any members of the Bureau to propose the adjournment of the examination of any questions until they were in a position to undertake a full discussion.

M. Beneš (Czechoslovakia), Rapporteur, did not think that there was any difference of opinion as to the procedure to be followed. The question before the Bureau was that of ascertaining the present state of the various questions mentioned on the programme; the discussion should therefore be restricted to fixing the procedure to be adopted in each case. The Bureau was called upon to decide the manner in which each of these questions should be examined in the future and what instructions should be given to any committee that might be set up.

M. Litvinoff (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) was of the opinion that the Bureau should be given exact information regarding the discussions which had taken place at the Special Committee on Chemical Weapons, and that the Chairman of that Committee should therefore be requested to report to the Bureau. The Bureau would then confine itself to the discussion of those points on which there had been any disagreement in the Special Committee.

M. Motta (Switzerland) observed that there was no difference of views regarding procedure. It was not possible to enter upon a fundamental discussion of the various questions, as there was still some preparatory work to be done. The programme drawn up by the Rapporteur arranged the questions in the best order for examination. That, however, was not enough, for an examination of these various points raised a large number of allied questions; for example, in connection with chemical warfare there was the question whether chemical warfare should be prohibited absolutely or whether—which he personally would regret—provision should be made for reciprocity, whether apparatus for chemical warfare should be destroyed, etc. It was therefore essential that the Secretariat should prepare a document in which each question would be divided into its component parts. The Bureau would then be in a position to decide whether it would itself settle certain controversial points or whether they should be referred to a special committee.

Sir John Simon (United Kingdom) shared the views of M. Motta. He added that, before considering the question of chemical warfare, it was important that the Bureau should have certain definite information. The scientists who had studied the matter had come to the conclusion that it would be extremely difficult to prevent the preparation in time of peace of basic substances required for the manufacture of poisonous gases. That was a point on which the technical experts should give an opinion before the Bureau could come to any conclusion. Was it in practice possible to prohibit in time of peace the preparation for chemical warfare? There was another question. It was proposed to prohibit absolutely bacteriological warfare and to prohibit chemical warfare subject to reciprocity. It would be of advantage to know exactly what was meant by these phrases. If they were to admit the right to employ chemical warfare if the enemy began it, then it would be necessary to make preparations in time of peace. A definite opinion was necessary on this point also. It was advisable therefore, if the Bureau were to perform a useful task, that a certain number of questions should first be worked out in detail and brought to a definite point. If any attempt to prohibit during peace-time the preparation for chemical warfare was doomed in advance to failure, it would be best to say so, and for that reason the Bureau should then and there decide on the body from which it would secure the necessary information. Sir John Simon therefore proposed that in the next few days some eminent person should be entrusted with the task of enquiring into the exact state of the question and of making proposals regarding the points which should be referred to a scientific committee.

M. de Madariaga (Spain) supported the views of Sir John Simon. From the point of view of the future of the Conference, it would be a dangerous procedure to endeavour to settle certain questions in a superficial manner, for this would lead to accusations that the public were being deceived. Chemical warfare was one of the matters on which public attention was particularly concentrated, and, if the problem were not thoroughly discussed, there was a danger that inadequate solutions might be proposed. So far, merely a pious recommendation had been adopted—namely, the prohibition of chemical warfare. In the opinion of the Spanish Government and in the personal opinion of M. de Madariaga, such a decision did not go beyond the humanising of warfare. It was not a question, however, of humanising warfare, but prohibiting it, and this result would not be obtained by the pronouncement of recommendations.

The question of the prohibition of chemical warfare was one of primary importance if it were decided to make a fundamental study of it, and of secondary importance if it were to be left at the point at which it was at present. This matter raised the questions of the prohibition of the manufacture of poisonous gases, of the preparation of apparatus for their projection, of the training of supervisory staff in time of peace, and of the sanctions which should be applied in the event of any breach of the prohibition of such preparation in time of peace. It was essential that such sanctions should be peace-time sanctions.

If the Bureau decided to refer the matter to a competent committee, M. de Madariaga wished to remind it that in the early stages of the history of disarmament a Committee composed of chemists of indisputable authority had met at Geneva, and that the results of
this Committee's work were contained in documents which were in the archives of the Secretariat. In these documents could be found an answer to the following definite question which had been raised: Is it easy to turn a peace-time chemical factory into a war-time chemical factory? The answer had been that such a transformation was extremely easy and that the change over could be made within a few hours or a few weeks. To the question: Is it possible to maintain stocks of raw materials for the manufacture of poisonous gases?, the reply had been: The maintenance of such stocks is extremely easy, as all the materials employed are materials which are indispensable for industry in time of peace. The enquiry which had been asked for had therefore already been made.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France) referred to the necessity for the Bureau to take a decision as to what it intended to do at this stage of its work. The duty of the Bureau, in starting a fundamental discussion of any problem, was only to make proposals to the General Commission or the Conference. It was desirable that the General Commission and the Conference should be placed in possession of definite texts which they could start immediately to discuss; these texts might be of two kinds, some setting out the questions on which agreement had already been reached, and the remainder detailing the points on which agreement had not yet been reached. In the latter case the Bureau would submit a suggested solution. Whether it was a question of texts embodying an agreement or proposals with a view to an agreement, the Bureau should take certain decisions of a technical nature—such, for instance, as that regarding the prohibition of chemical warfare, regarding which agreement seemed to have been reached.

M. Paul-Boncour shared the opinion of M. de Madariaga and thought that preparation of chemical warfare should be prohibited in time of peace. Such a step was possible if supervision existed, whereas it would be useless to endeavour to obtain the same results in time of war. The question then arose, Is supervision possible? To this question it was necessary to have an expert's reply. If the matter were referred to an expert committee, there would probably be a difference of opinion and the time would arrive when the statesmen who composed the Bureau would have to take the responsibility, see what could be done in the way of reconciliation of views, and take a decision. It was clear, moreover, that on a large number of questions the elements of a decision were already available, for most of these questions had already been examined, and M. Paul-Boncour could only approve, in this connection, the proposal to begin by making some research into the documentation resulting from work already done.

M. BENES (Czechoslovakia), Rapporteur, thought that it might be possible and of advantage to add to the programme which he had submitted at the previous meeting the definitions requested. He went through the various matters contained in this programme and gave a summary of the way in which they could be defined. When this had been done, there would be certain questions of principle on which the Bureau would have to come to a decision. In accordance with the request of M. Motta, the preparatory work would clear up certain questions of detail and bring out the points on which the Bureau would be called upon to take a decision and those on which it should ask the opinion of specialists. The moment had arrived when the decisions to be taken were mainly of a political nature; questions which the politicians could not decide without the advice of experts would be reserved. M. Beneš proposed to complete on these lines the programme of work for submission to the next meeting.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France) wished to make it clear that his object was to avoid, when possible, any fresh consultation of experts on points on which the preparatory work had already been done; he had naturally no objection to referring to experts matters which were not yet settled. This was the case, in particular, as regards the question of the manufacture of arms.

Sir John SIMON (United Kingdom) submitted the following draft resolution:

"The Secretary-General is requested to report to the Bureau as soon as possible, from the records of enquiries already made:

"(1) What is the state of expert opinion as to the practicability of prohibiting the preparation of gas as distinguished from prohibiting its use in warfare;

"(2) Whether there is any sufficient reason why the preparation and possession of machines and instruments for the use of gas should not be forbidden;

"(3) The same as to training in use of gas."

The draft resolution was adopted.

II. Supervision.

The CHAIRMAN reminded the Bureau that the question of supervision was one for examination by the Bureau, in view of its pre-eminently political character, and that it would be for the Bureau to define "the extension of powers" which was referred to in the resolution, and also the composition of the Permanent Commission, its jurisdiction and its competence. He mentioned that an explanatory document would be distributed to the members of the Bureau before the next meeting.
M. Litvinoff (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) doubted whether there was any advantage in discussing the question of supervision, in view of the fact that up to the present no one had assumed any obligations. No supervision was, therefore, possible. As M. Beneš had pointed out, this was a pre-eminently political matter and one depending on the nature of the obligations which the Governments considered acceptable and on the extent of disarmament to which they submitted. It was not possible to speak of supervision before taking decisions regarding disarmament.

M. de Madariaga (Spain) preferred, on the other hand, to follow the procedure suggested by Mr. Wilson and to deal with the subjects concurrently. It might be accurate to say that it was difficult to discuss the question of supervision without knowledge of the extent of the obligations assumed by the Governments, but personally he preferred not to discuss the extent of the obligations without knowledge of the possibilities of supervision.

M. Paul-Boncour (France) entirely supported the remarks of M. de Madariaga.

The Chairman replied that M. Litvinoff appeared to be convinced that the Conference would never reach the stage referred to in the resolution adopted by the General Commission on July 23rd, 1932. If M. Litvinoff, who had quoted a portion of the President’s speech, had continued this quotation, he would have also quoted the words in which the President expressed his confidence in the desire of the Powers which had adopted the text of the resolution to bring into force this text in its entirety.

SIXTEENTH MEETING (PUBLIC)
Held on Thursday, September 22nd, 1932, at 11 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Henderson.

12. SUPERVISION (continuation).

The Chairman, in opening the discussion, recalled that since the last meeting the Secretary-General had caused to be distributed a short note showing the present state of the question of supervision.

The note read as follows:

"1. The question of supervision is dealt with in Chapter A of Part VI of the Preparatory Commission’s draft Convention, Articles 40 to 50 (document C.687.M.288.1930.IX). These articles bear on the constitution, the working and the competence of the Permanent Disarmament Commission. There are, too, certain other articles in the draft which refer to the Permanent Disarmament Commission, in particular Articles 8 and 13 dealing with the communication of certain information, Article 50 with derogations, Article 52 with procedure regarding complaints, and Articles 58 and 59 with the revision of the Convention.

"The Preparatory Commission’s report contains certain comments and explanations with regard to these various articles. See, in particular, paragraphs 232 to 244, 263 and 264, 275, 287, 288, 296 (document C.690.M.289.1930.IX).

"2. Certain delegations have, moreover, laid before the Conference proposals concerning supervision. A list of these proposals is given on pages 25 and 26 of the Coordinating Table (document Conf.D.102). The text of each will be found in the Survey of Proposals (document Conf.D.99).

"3. On the subject of supervision the General Commission adopted the following text, which appears in its resolution of July 23rd:

"There shall be set up a Permanent Disarmament Commission with the constitution, rights and duties generally as outlined in Part VI of the draft Convention submitted by the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, with such extension of its powers as may be deemed by the Conference necessary to enable the Convention to be effectively applied."

"An interpretation of this text was given by M. Beneš, Rapporteur, at the twenty-third meeting of the Commission. (See Minutes of the General Commission, page 158.)"

"Having decided itself to deal with this question on account of its eminently political character, the Bureau will have to define the significance of the words: ‘with such extension of its powers as may be deemed by the Conference necessary to enable the Convention to be effectively applied.’"

"It appears, moreover, that the work of the National Defence Expenditure Commission may have some influence on the system of supervision to be set up by the Conference.”
M. Bened (Czechoslovakia), Rapporteur, said that the only question to be discussed was the extension of the powers of the Commission entrusted with the duty of supervision.

When, as Rapporteur, he had submitted to the General Commission the draft resolution which the latter had adopted on July 23rd last, he had made a speech which had been recognised as an authorised commentary on the text under discussion. With regard to the question of supervision, he had said:

"The second part of the resolution proposes, lastly, a third important principle—namely, supervision over the execution of the Disarmament Convention to be concluded. It provides for the setting up of a Permanent Commission whose powers and prerogatives, generally speaking, would be on the lines contemplated in the draft Convention framed by the Preparatory Commission. The resolution employs the term, 'generally speaking'. It is clear, then, that the details of the constitution and powers of the Commission will form the subject of further discussions and decisions. I do not think it necessary therefore, at the moment, to analyse the constitution and powers of the Commission as provided for in the draft Convention framed by the Preparatory Commission, especially as the resolution which I am now submitting makes it clear that the Conference will decide to extend its powers to the extent that may be necessary for it to ascertain in practice that certain provisions of the General Disarmament Convention are being applied. What I do wish to stress, however, is the following capital fact: the constitution of such a Commission makes it impossible in future that there should be competition in armaments such as is found under present conditions. All armaments will in future be under the direct or indirect supervision of the Commission; any increases will have to be brought to the knowledge of the contracting parties and will, indeed, have to be approved by them. The absolute liberty which exists to-day will disappear and, for the first time in the history of the world, the nations—thus following the principle already adopted at the Washington Conference—are about to bind themselves in regard to their armaments.

"I do not propose to examine at the moment how this machinery which is to be set up will work; I simply desire to note the tremendous progress in the relations of States, one with another, which is now being placed on record by a decision on these lines.

"That is all that I wish to say in order to indicate the importance of the points on which agreement has been reached in our work up to date—points which are recorded in the second part of the resolution on which you will have to vote. If we decide to stop there for the moment, that does not signify by any means that the first stage of disarmament will go no further. It means that, as regards the questions to which I have just referred, the first phase of the Conference has achieved practical results on which we can take a decision immediately, and that the second phase of the Conference will have to deal with all the other questions which we placed on our agenda at the beginning of the Conference's work."

He had merely desired to show that the Bureau ought to examine the general aspects of the principle of extending the powers of the Permanent Disarmament Commission. There were two ways in which the Bureau could discuss the matter: it could take, point by point, the text of the preliminary draft Convention prepared by the Preparatory Commission—a method he held to be somewhat unpractical. The second way—which personally he advocated—would be to open a general discussion on the extension of the powers of the Commission.

M. Paul-Boncour (France) thought it was absolutely indispensable in the first place to define the exact subject of the discussion. Had the Bureau been called upon to examine texts and, if so, were these texts contained in the preliminary draft drawn up by the Preparatory Commission? If so, the Bureau would have to consider whether the texts appeared to be adequate. He would then have to explain why the French delegation, which had regarded these texts as adequate during the discussions of the Preparatory Commission, now thought that they were no longer satisfactory. He argued that the General Commission had, by implication, agreed that these texts were inadequate, because in its resolution it mentioned the possible extension of powers which had previously been defined.

M. Bourquin (Belgium) thought that the Bureau ought to decide what should be the starting-point of its discussion. He reminded his colleagues of the terms of the resolution of July 23rd with regard to supervision, which was, in fact, the decision that the Conference had taken in July. So far as procedure was concerned, it was for the Bureau to decide on the details of that decision. He therefore thought that the Rapporteur had rather narrowed down the scope of the discussion by limiting it to a definition of what was meant by "extension of powers".

In reality, the General Commission's resolution had a wider meaning. It first stated that a Permanent Disarmament Commission would be set up. It then said that the powers and duties of this Commission would be those outlined in Part VI of the draft Convention. This, then, was one question which the Bureau was called upon to discuss. Finally, the resolution referred to an extension of the Commission's powers. In other words, it regarded the indications in the draft Convention as an acquired minimum and raised the question whether it might not be possible to go further.

The problem was therefore a complex one, and, if it were to be solved, it would have to be separated into its essential elements.
The first element was the question of the composition of the Commission. The Preparatory Commission’s draft already contained definite indications on this point, but these indications could be modified: first, because the Conference had full powers; secondly, because, in the course of the discussion which had occurred in the Preparatory Commission itself, several reservations had been made with regard to these indications, and the text had only been adopted on a majority vote; and, finally, because, since the beginning of the Conference’s work, a number of formal proposals for amending these indications had been submitted.

Then came the question of powers. That was a very important question which itself possessed two aspects. The first point to be considered was the jurisdiction of the supervisory body and the duties to be entrusted to it. The substance of the Preparatory Commission’s proposal was that the supervisory body should follow the manner in which the Disarmament Convention was being carried out and should give a decision if complaints were made. In this connection also the Conference had received new proposals from the Swiss and Norwegian delegations to the effect that the Permanent Disarmament Commission might be entrusted with the task of preparing the future stages of disarmament. That would obviously be a task different from the work of mere supervision.

There was another aspect of the question of the Commission’s powers: What means would it possess for the fulfilment of its duties, and, in particular, what means of supervision would be provided? On this subject the Preparatory Commission’s draft contained a whole series of clauses which he did not propose to analyse in detail at present. Nevertheless, these clauses showed that the Preparatory Commission did not admit the idea of investigations on the spot. That was another point on which formal proposals had been submitted with a view to extending the Commission’s means of action by allowing it to carry out investigations locally. In this connection, mention should also be made of the Soviet proposal to organise supervision through the workers.

Finally, the Bureau would have to examine the question of the way in which the Commission would operate. This aspect of the problem, though of some importance, was of a secondary nature as compared with the question of the Commission’s composition and powers.

This brief survey showed that the problem was by no means a simple one. He thought it would not be sufficient to discuss the matter briefly and then refer it to a Drafting Committee. The whole problem ought to be very carefully studied and prepared before it was submitted to such a Committee. He therefore proposed the following procedure: the Bureau might instruct one of its members to study the problem and submit a report. The Bureau of course possessed in M. Benes a distinguished Rapporteur who could carry out this task admirably, but M. Benes was already overburdened with work. Consequently, M. Bourquin proposed that this new task should be entrusted to another member of the Bureau, who would get in touch with the various delegations, would collect their opinions, would ask them to define those opinions in the form of definite texts and would finally submit a report to the Bureau. The Bureau would then be able to discuss the substance of the matter with some hope of arriving at practical results.

M. MOTTA (Switzerland) entirely approved M. Bourquin’s exposition of the question and agreed with him that the Rapporteur-General, in his desire to facilitate the discussion, had perhaps somewhat minimised the complexity of the problem.

When, at the previous meeting, the Bureau had examined the programme of work submitted to it, it had admitted that agreement had been reached on the first three questions. During the discussion, however, it had transpired, for instance, that the question of chemical and bacteriological warfare was made up of several separate parts on all of which full agreement had not been reached, and that outstanding differences of opinion must be eliminated. The situation was the same with regard to the problem at present before the Bureau.

The first question to be settled was whether the Bureau desired to take up this problem and discuss it with a view to submitting proposals to the General Commission and finally to the Conference. As the problem was a pre-eminently political one, M. Motta thought the Bureau was called upon to deal with it. Nevertheless, there were various aspects of the question, and he wondered whether it would be possible for a Rapporteur to achieve any useful results until a discussion between the members of the Bureau had thrown some light on the matter for his guidance. M. Motta therefore thought it indispensable that, in the first place, there should be an exchange of views.

Chapter VI of the draft Convention drawn up by the Preparatory Commission contained definite indications but left several questions open. The first of these was that of the actual character of the Permanent Commission. Would this Commission simply be concerned with supervision or would it have wider terms of reference?

M. Bourquin had reminded the Bureau that the Swiss delegation had proposed that this Commission should be entrusted with the preparation of the future stages of disarmament. Switzerland, in fact, had always considered that disarmament should be carried out by successive stages. It was therefore necessary to ascertain, in the first place, whether the Commission would merely have to supervise the execution of the measures decided upon, or whether it would also have to study the manner in which these measures could be subsequently extended.

The second question was that of supervisory procedure. Ought the Commission to be provided with very wide, or limited, powers of investigation? On this subject rather sharp differences of opinion had been noticeable at the beginning of the Conference, and the
examination of the question had been postponed till later, the idea being that it might be taken up again in the form of the extension of the Commission’s powers—in other words, in correlation with the degree of supervision.

The third question was the method of appointing the members of the Commission. According to the draft Convention, they were to be appointed by the Governments. That system might not meet with universal approval: they might, for instance, be appointed by the Council of the League, always taking into account the fact that certain Powers were not Members of the League. The draft Convention also laid down that the members of the Commission, although appointed by the Governments, would not represent those Governments. That was an illogical concept which ought not to be allowed to remain. In view of the delicate and important nature of the work they had to do, it seemed indispensable that the initiative of the members of the Commission should not be limited by the desires or anxieties of the Governments concerned.

Finally, there was the question of the number of members of the Commission. In this connection, there were naturally two tendencies: some desired a small Commission, while others preferred a Commission including representatives of all the States. Personally, M. Motta felt that the latter alternative was undesirable—so large a Commission could not work properly. He preferred a small Commission which would include, for instance, all the Great Powers—that was to say, seven States to whom nine others might be added by some system of rotation.

Having thus expressed his opinion on the problem, M. Motta warmly supported the Belgian representative’s proposal to the effect that a member of the Bureau should be appointed to study the matter and submit a report. He thought that no one was better suited for this task than M. Bourquin himself.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France) entirely agreed with M. Motta both as to the desirability of selecting M. Bourquin as Rapporteur and as to the need for a preliminary discussion. The Rapporteur would find it easier to consult the delegations if he already possessed some general indications concerning this vital problem.

Personally, he felt that the question of supervision was the very axis of the draft Convention. M. Litvinoff had said at the previous meeting that it was paradoxical for a body to discuss supervision before it knew what was to be supervised. He did not share that view. He believed with M. de Madariaga that the attitude of the various delegations might be strongly influenced, at the time of the adoption of the various provisions for limitation and reduction, by the guarantees they would be able to obtain as to the manner in which these provisions would be observed. Both as regards its form and its extent, the question of supervision had a decisive influence on the attitude adopted by States in the matter of the reduction of armaments.

When the problem of supervision was studied, the first question which arose was obviously that of the composition of the supervisory body. Nevertheless, M. Paul-Boncour thought it would be preferable to consider first of all the question of its terms of reference. The draft Convention prepared by the Preparatory Committee had already defined some of the future duties of the Permanent Commission: (a) it would have to examine at least once annually the conditions under which the Convention was being applied; (b) according to Part VI of the draft, it would have to decide on the exemptions requested by certain States in view of special circumstances. That was obviously a very delicate task; (c) finally, it would have to take a decision regarding complaints made to the effect that some nation was not complying with the provisions of the Convention it had signed. M. Paul-Boncour thought, moreover, that there would be very close correlation between these last two elements of the question and that requests for exemption would constitute a sort of set-off to complaints. If, for instance, the Commission failed to remedy certain failures reported to it, it might very likely receive a request for exemption on the part of the complainant State.

These, then, would be the three duties of the Permanent Commission as provided in the preliminary draft Convention.

During the discussions of the Conference it had become clear that a new and still more important task would devolve upon the Commission. Several delegations, including the Swiss and Norwegian delegations, had proposed that the Permanent Commission should be instructed to prepare the later stages of the reduction of armaments. This suggestion was entirely justified, because, seeing that it had been decided that disarmament was to be effected by progressive stages, some organ would certainly have to be responsible for their preparation. In this connection, however, he wished to observe that, if the future mechanism were to remain within the framework of the Covenant, it would, under Article 8 of the Covenant, be the duty of the Council of the League to prepare plans for such reduction. The Permanent Commission could therefore, in this sphere, only act under powers delegated to it by the Council. But, just as the Council had appointed Committees to study certain other questions, it would find that, in preparing plans for future disarmament, it would be unable to carry out its mission under Article 8 without the help of the Permanent Commission. Accordingly, there opened out before the Commission a new vista of activity.

M. Paul-Boncour wished it to be clearly understood that it was the opinion of the French delegation, and probably of several other delegations, that, in view of the direction taken by the work of the Conference, the powers of the Permanent Commission would necessarily have to be extended. He reminded the Bureau that the question of the creation of a Permanent Commission had been raised for the first time in 1927 by the French delegation. At that date
the suggestion had not been well received, but, by the time the work of the Preparatory Commission was drawing to an end, the French delegation had had the satisfaction of noting that several important delegations had been won over to its view. Naturally, it had only been possible to reach agreement on the basis of a compromise to the effect that, although the Permanent Commission would be entitled to conduct enquiries with regard to complaints concerning the non-observance of the Convention, such enquiries could only be conducted on the basis of documents and not on the spot.

Under the draft Convention drawn up by the Preparatory Commission, which only referred to total limitation and total effectiveness, it could be argued that the powers of the Commission as thus defined were adequate. Now, on the proposal of several delegations, the Disarmament Conference had entered upon the path of more definite limitations, including qualitative disarmament. This form of disarmament had been discussed at great length both in public and in private. If the principle of such disarmament were accepted, it would be impossible, if the security of those who had accepted it were to be adequately assured, to limit enquiries simply to the sifting of documentary evidence. The Commission should be given the possibility of verifying the information supplied to it. It therefore appeared necessary that its powers should be extended—namely, that it should be allowed to carry out investigations on the spot. Evidently some method would have to be found for safeguarding the dignity and independence of countries against which complaints were launched, but the Permanent Commission must in some way or other, he thought, be accorded the necessary powers to allow it to pursue its investigations on the spot.

M. Litvinoff (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) was still convinced that all consideration of the question of supervision was premature at present. He had no desire to return to Moscow and be obliged to report that the question of supervision had been settled, though no decision had been taken regarding the reduction of armaments. He would have understood the attitude of M. de Madariaga and M. Paul-Boncour if any difference of opinion had existed as to whether there should or should not be supervision. On that point, however, opinion was not divided; the need for supervision was unanimously admitted. Differences of opinion only arose as to the degree of supervision to be instituted and as to the composition of the controlling organs. The Soviet delegation insisted that very rigorous supervision should be established. It asked that, contrary to the stipulations of the draft Convention, the members of the Commission should not be chosen by Governments, but by legislative bodies, trade unions and peace organisations. It also desired the institution of dual control by the creation of local workers' committees.

However, in dealing with the question of the Commission's duties, one could not fail to note that these duties depended on what decision would be taken concerning the reduction and limitation of armaments. M. Paul-Boncour had maintained the same argument as he himself had done, because the former had said that, in view of the present tendency of the Conference to look towards a more specific reduction of armaments, the powers of the Commission might have to be modified. Was not that the very argument of the Soviet delegation? Did not the Soviet delegation maintain that, until the question of the reduction of armaments had been settled, it would be impossible to define the duties of the Permanent Commission?

He was opposed, for the present, to all discussion of the problem of supervision, but, since the Bureau had decided to consider this question, he asked the Rapporteur, when submitting his conclusions to the Bureau, to take into account the proposals set out in detail in Part VII, Articles 39 to 46, of the general plan for disarmament submitted by the Soviet delegation, (document Conf.D.87). He wished to draw special attention to the fact that under the Soviet proposals there would be no military members of the Commission. The members of the Commission should be civilians who would seek the advice of military experts on technical points. "And so, persons directly interested in war industries should have no seat on the Commission, and arrangements should be made for the participation of trade unions and workers' organisations."

M. de Madariaga (Spain) warmly supported the proposal to appoint M. Bourquin as Rapporteur for this question.

He felt some doubt as to the advisability of the present title of the supervisory body. This body was called the "Permanent Disarmament Commission". He thought it would be preferable to call it the "Permanent Disarmament Organisation", which would be more consonant with what must actually be set up in the future.

He thought that the body could not possibly be composed solely of Government representatives, though the presence of such representatives was essential. It might therefore be preferable to contemplate a tripartite system including a Government Commission which would shoulder responsibility and take decisions. Side by side with this Commission would be organs free from Government control, and in this direction he supported M. Litvinoff's proposal to accord a large share to workers' organisations, without the help of which it would be impossible to obtain information regarding preparations for war in the innermost recesses of factories. In addition, provision should be made for military experts. While paying all due tribute to the experience, disinterestedness and tenacity of the military experts, he thought it would be undesirable to set up a committee of experts. It would be preferable to draw up a list of experts who would be constantly at the disposal of the Commission for special duties.
As regarded the powers and organisation of the Commission, he agreed with M. Paul-Boncour that these powers should be extended as the French representative had suggested. A clear distinction should, however, be drawn between the Commission's powers and its jurisdiction. It could already be foreseen that the Commission would possess, not only the jurisdiction already defined, but also that accruing to it under the various chapters of the Convention, particularly as regarded the supervision of private manufacture and private trade in arms, the accounts rendered for stocks of material, the utilisation of chemical factories with a view to chemical warfare, the transformation of commercial and civil aviation into military aviation, naval questions, etc. There would, in fact, be in the Convention a series of chapters in which recourse would be had to the Permanent Commission. It was therefore indispensable to examine the question of supervision immediately, because, during the ensuing discussions, numerous questions of substance would arise which it would only be possible to settle by adequate supervision.

Finally, M. de Madariaga would emphasise the importance of public opinion in this question of supervision. In the last resort, whatever mechanism might be set up at Geneva, the truth could only be known and the work only carried to its logical conclusion if it were supported by a public opinion which was perfectly free to express itself.

The CHAIRMAN proposed that, in accordance with M. Motta's suggestion, which had been supported by various other speakers, M. Bourquin should be asked to study the problem of supervision and submit a report to the Bureau when the latter resumed its work after the close of the session of the Assembly.

The proposal was adopted.

SEVENTEENTH MEETING (PUBLIC)

Held on Thursday, September 22nd, 1932, at 3.30 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. HENDERSON.

13. a (1): COMPLETE PROHIBITION OF AIR ATTACKS AGAINST THE CIVIL POPULATION;
b (1): ABOLITION BETWEEN CONTRACTING PARTIES OF ALL AERIAL BOMBARDMENT, SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT WITH REGARD TO MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED FOR THE PURPOSE OF RENDERING EFFECTIVE THE OBSERVANCE OF THIS RULE.

The CHAIRMAN reminded the Bureau of the decision it had reached to examine together questions a (1) and b (1) of its programme of work. According to the procedure followed in connection with other questions on the Bureau's agenda, he proposed that M. de Madariaga, President of the Air Commission, should be requested to explain his suggestions with regard to the procedure to be followed in connection with these questions, and in particular the latter question.

M. DE MADARIAGA (Spain) said that he was called upon to speak on this question in his capacity of President of the Air Commission. He had already explained the attitude of the Spanish delegation with regard to air attack. The Spanish delegation had, from the beginning of the Conference, attached particular importance to air bombardment. The question of the complete prohibition of air attack against the civilian population constituted, in his opinion, merely a platonic recommendation of little interest from a general point of view. Only fear of being accused of exaggeration restrained him from saying that the civilian population had no claim to any particular sympathy, because nations only made war if they wished to do so. Moreover, it was unlikely that a prohibition of the kind indicated would produce any results in war time, because war was governed by its own objective rules and it was certain that belligerents would never agree, when once at war, to refrain from employing any methods which might ensure victory.

Fortunately, the second question embodied a more effective prohibition. Several ideas were contained in the wording of this question, which first of all implied a restriction, since prohibition was limited to the contracting parties. He would point out later the disadvantages of such a restriction.

The second idea was that prohibition should be subject to agreement with regard to the measures by which the application of this rule might be rendered effective. Nevertheless, if aerial bombardment were not prohibited absolutely and without reservation, the States would still be at liberty to maintain machines for air bombardment, which might be carried out under conditions subjected to reservations. It was obvious to all who had studied the question of air bombardment that, so long as certain operations only were forbidden, while the employment of the machines used in such operations and the training of personnel to use
those machines was not forbidden, no tangible result would be obtained, owing to those objective rules of war to which he had already referred.

Reference was made to the steps which could be taken to render the observance of such prohibition effective. In this connection it seemed necessary to have a safeguard, which could not exist unless means were discovered for rendering the potential resources of civil aviation unutilisable for purposes of war. Those who had studied the question had come to the conclusion that it would be necessary to go so far as to internationalise, or at any rate to internationalise the supervision of, civil aviation. One delegation however—the German delegation, whose absence once more he must deplore—had stated that this would be going too far and that prohibition should be limited to air bombardment and the training of personnel.

M. de Madariaga thought that the Bureau would realise in these circumstances the difficulty of achieving a result in this domain without taking into account the concomitant questions. It would be impossible to achieve quantitative and qualitative disarmament without certain measures which would make it possible to ensure that the factor of aggressiveness, eliminated from military, should not crop up again in civil, equipment. In view of the attitude of the German delegation, and precisely because it was so strongly opposed to the view of the Spanish delegation in particular, M. de Madariaga would ask the Bureau to reflect carefully before it undertook the examination of these questions. He would strongly urge it to postpone that examination until all the members of the Bureau were present.

The CHAIRMAN, in view of the absence of one delegation particularly interested in this question and in view of the suggestion for postponement which had been put forward, proposed that the examination of these questions should be postponed to a later meeting of the same session.

The Chairman's proposal was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN proposed that the following questions on the agenda should be examined in the order indicated:

1. Heavy artillery,
2. Tanks,
3. Effectives,
4. Trade in and Manufacture of Arms,
5. Chemical and Bacteriological Warfare,
6. Violation of the Provisions concerning the prohibition of chemical, bacteriological and incendiary warfare.

14. HEAVY ARTILLERY AND TANKS.

The CHAIRMAN proposed that these two questions should be examined together. The technical discussions on these points had been practically completed. He suggested that the best procedure would be, as had been done at the previous meeting in the case of super-vision, to appoint a special Rapporteur, whose task it would be to get into touch with the various delegations in order to ascertain whether they had any definite proposals to make which might serve as a basis for the decisions of the Bureau as regards fixing the figures. The Bureau might possibly be called upon to begin the discussion of certain aspects of these questions if the negotiations conducted by the Rapporteur showed that such a discussion was necessary.

He proposed that this duty might be entrusted to M. Buero, President of the Commission on Land Armaments, who had already had occasion to deal with the questions of heavy artillery and tanks.

The Chairman's proposals were adopted.

15. EFFECTIVES.

The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee that Mr. Hugh Wilson, representative of the United States of America, had on the previous day made a suggestion which, as far as he was aware, had not met with any opposition. Mr. Wilson had suggested that the question of effectives should be studied by a special committee consisting of delegates of the countries represented on the former Committee on Effectives, and including also delegates of those countries which were members of the Bureau but were not represented on the former Committee. Unless he were mistaken, Mr. Wilson had also suggested that, in view of the practical character of the problems raised by this question of effectives, the members of the special committee should be Government delegates and not experts.

Mr. Wilson had further suggested that the members of the new committee should themselves decide the scope of their mission and their programme of work, subject to the approval of the Bureau. The latter, after confirming the Committee's mission with such changes as it might deem necessary, would request the Committee to proceed rapidly with the study of its programme and submit a report to the Bureau.

M. Paul-Boncour (France) thought that it should be definitely stated that the new Committee, like the earlier one, would be allowed to receive the delegates of countries not represented thereon, when questions of particular interest to those countries came up for discussion.

The CHAIRMAN said that he had made it quite clear on the previous day that M. Paul-Boncour's request applied to all the Commissions of the Conference.
16. TRADE IN AND MANUFACTURE OF ARMS.

The CHAIRMAN thought that the best procedure in this case would be to appoint a special Committee which might consist of delegates of the following countries: Union of South Africa, Belgium, United Kingdom, China, Denmark, France, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Persia, Poland, Spain, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Turkey, United States of America.

The Chairman's proposal was adopted.

17. CHEMICAL AND BACTERIOLOGICAL WARFARE.

The CHAIRMAN reminded the Bureau that it had decided to examine this question in the light of the supplementary information provided by the Secretariat, in accordance with the desire expressed by certain members of the Bureau, and also in the light of the resolution adopted on the previous day by the Bureau on the proposal of Sir John Simon.

He had been informed that the Chairman of the Special Committee on Chemical and Bacteriological Warfare was at Geneva. He therefore suggested that, after the preliminary discussions which the Bureau might consider necessary, M. Pilotti should be requested to submit a report on this subject.

The Chairman's proposal was adopted.

18. VIOLATION OF THE PROVISIONS CONCERNING THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL, BACTERIOLOGICAL AND INCENDIARY WARFARE.

The CHAIRMAN said that this question was intimately connected with that of the strict observance of the measures laid down under the Convention regarding chemical and bacteriological warfare. He therefore proposed that M. Pilotti should also be requested to submit a preliminary report on this subject. It was understood that, in preparing his report, he could rely on the assistance of the Secretariat and of the members of the Bureau.

The Chairman's proposal was adopted.

19. GENERAL AND POLITICAL QUESTIONS.

The CHAIRMAN invited the members of the Bureau to make suggestions regarding the general questions to which the resolution of July 23rd referred, and in particular as to the manner in which the study of these questions should be prepared. As stated in its paragraph VI, the resolution of July 23rd, 1932, "in no way prejudged the attitude of the Conference towards any more comprehensive measures of disarmament or towards the political proposals submitted by various delegations".

M. Litvinoff (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thought that, as the Bureau had terminated the examination of the secondary questions included in its agenda, the time had perhaps come when it should begin to consider the vaster problems with which the Conference was faced. He had bowed to the Rapporteur's objection that it was preferable to settle the easier questions first of all. Now that result had been attained, he would be glad if the Bureau could discuss the proposals made by the Soviet and United States delegations, which were entirely in accordance with the terms of the resolution of July 23rd, 1932, because they referred to more comprehensive measures of disarmament. If there were any measure more comprehensive than that advocated by the Soviet delegation, he would be only too happy to accord it priority.

Sir John Simon (United Kingdom) did not wish to occasion any delay in the examination of particularly important questions, but, on a point of procedure, he would point out that Part III of the resolution, which dealt with the preparation of the second phase of the Conference, definitely limited the questions which the Bureau was called upon to study during the period of the General Commission's adjournment. There was no suggestion anywhere in the resolution that certain questions of very great political importance should be entrusted to the Bureau for examination, particularly as the Bureau did not include all the members of the General Commission and only acted as an executive organ. He had never understood that the Bureau would be entitled to take the place of the General Commission and itself commence the study of questions which had not been submitted to it.

M. Paul-Boncour (France) supported Sir John Simon's views. There could be no doubt that the resolution clearly distinguished from other questions those which, having been dealt with by the General Commission, could be put into final shape and had been submitted to the Bureau for the purpose of the drafting of texts on which agreement might be reached. He thought that the general provisions in Part IV of the resolution meant that the partial solutions obtained could in no way prejudice the possibility of more complete solutions, not merely in the matter of disarmament but in the political sphere, in conformity with the proposals submitted by certain delegations, and in particular the French delegation—plans which were still on the agenda and which the French delegation would always be prepared to discuss before the competent body, when this was considered necessary.
M. Beneš (Czechoslovakia), Rapporteur, opined that Sir John Simon had correctly defined the extent of the Bureau's terms of reference resulting from the resolution of July 23rd. The Bureau had to prepare texts which would be submitted to the General Commission when an agreement had been reached. That, moreover, was the manner in which the various items on the agenda had been dealt with.

The Chairman hoped that the Bureau would not interpret too rigidly certain opinions which had been expressed during the meeting, because he did not believe that it was absolutely precluded from commencing the consideration of certain highly important questions before the meeting of the General Commission. It should be remembered that the Bureau was called upon to give a month's notice before the General Commission was convened. There were certain questions connected with the correspondence exchanged between the Chairman and the German Government which the Bureau ought, he thought, to examine.

He was, moreover, rather surprised to have heard one delegation argue that the major questions should be settled by the General Commission only, whereas the same delegation had previously seemed to admit that certain of these questions ought to be discussed, not by the General Commission, but by the Political Commission.

EIGHTEENTH MEETING (PRIVATE, THEN PUBLIC)

Held on Monday, September 26th, at 3.30 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. HENDERSON.

20. QUESTION OF FIXING A DATE FOR THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION.

The Chairman explained that the purpose of this private meeting was to see if it was possible to fix a date for the meeting of the General Commission. He recalled that one month's notice must be given of such a meeting. With the single exception of that relating to aviation, all the questions on the Bureau's programme had been referred to Committees or Rapporteurs. He hoped that the latter would be able to make proposals to the Bureau at its meeting of October 10th. The necessity of again interrupting the work for the Christmas holidays made it rather difficult to fix a date for the meeting of the General Commission, which ran the risk of being unable to devote enough time to examining the questions which would be submitted to it. Two dates had been suggested for the General Commission's meeting, November 1st and November 10th. November 10th had been proposed, owing to the fact that important elections were about to take place in two countries and that these elections might have an influence on the development of the Conference's work.

M. De Madariaga (Spain) thought that the choice of a date for the meeting of the General Commission depended on the Bureau's conception of its own work. What kind of report did it intend to submit to the General Commission? Would it constitute a general survey of all the questions examined by the Bureau—that was to say, a sort of preliminary draft convention, or would it be a series of individual reports? In the second case, the General Commission could meet at quite an early date. In the former case, however, it could hardly meet before Christmas.

The Chairman thought that the reports could be examined as and when submitted, as soon as the Bureau had resumed its work, and could then be referred to a Drafting Committee which would be appointed to embody their suggestions in a text. In his opinion, it would be a mistake to try and collect all the reports in a single document of the Bureau for the use of the General Commission. He pointed out that, if it were decided to convene the General Commission for November 10th, no results might by then have been achieved in the study of two particularly important questions, that of security and that of equality. Personally, the Chairman was very much in favour of a meeting of the General Commission in November. As regards the two questions he had just mentioned, if it were thought that they could be brought to a stage which would bring back to the Bureau the delegation of a country which was at present absent, it might be an advantage to consult the General Commission as to this eventuality.

Mr. Wilson (United States of America) begged the Chairman not to consider the Presidential elections of the United States as an essential factor affecting the future of the Conference's work, particularly as the Hoover proposal had been generally accepted by the American people.

Mr. Wilson's opinion as to the date of summoning the General Commission differed according to the point of view from which this convocation was envisaged. If political reasons militated in favour of a comparatively early meeting, the United States delegation would have no objection. If it were only a question of examining the reports submitted, he must
express doubt as to the wisdom of this procedure, for it might cause fresh delay through the reference of questions to the higher body by the Bureau which had the task of examining them, etc. They had pledged themselves at this Conference to effect a substantial reduction in armaments and reduce the offensive power of States. This was the Bureau’s present task. It should now endeavour to determine whether such a result could be attained or not, and Mr. Wilson thought that this question ought to be dealt with at once, as this definite mandate had been placed upon the Bureau. If any progress were made, the Bureau should then give the proper notice to the General Commission, but, at the present time, Mr. Wilson would greatly hesitate to decide on the date of summoning the General Commission for the mere purpose of receiving reports on the other aspects of the Bureau’s work.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France) naturally shared the Chairman’s desire to avoid loss of time owing to a mere question of procedure. This would be the case if the General Commission could not be summoned in due time to sanction, as M. Paul-Boncour hoped, the results of the preparatory work entrusted to the Bureau by the resolution of July 23rd, when that task was completed. But he also fully agreed with Mr. Wilson that, if the General Commission were to meet before the Bureau’s work had been concluded, time might be lost instead of gained by once more opening the door to old discussions, which would again call in question the whole task of the Bureau. The various problems thus reopened would infallibly be referred back to the Bureau and to the competent Commissions, and the result would be the opposite of what the Chairman desired.

In any case, he was sure that it was useless to fix a date now. The Bureau would meet frequently, and, when it found that a sufficient number of questions had been settled, it could easily judge as to when the General Commission could be summoned.

Moreover, the question which the Chairman had raised was whether political problems might not arise exceeding the scope of the mission entrusted to the Bureau and for the examination of which the necessity of giving notice might prove a difficulty. M. Paul-Boncour pointed out that the Bureau could always have recourse to the Political Commission, which consisted of the same countries as the General Commission and hence represented the whole Conference. As regards the summoning of this or any other technical commission, the Bureau was not bound by any procedure as regards giving notice.

The French delegate therefore proposed that, at its forthcoming meetings, the Bureau should judge the degree of maturity of the questions appearing on its programme of work and then only decide upon the summoning of the General Commission.

Sir John Simon (United Kingdom) did not think there was any fundamental difference between the opinions which had been expressed. All the members were trying to find the best procedure. What was the object in view? The Bureau was in the first place endeavouring to obviate the drawbacks caused by the necessity of giving notice to the General Commission before convening it. In the second place, all the members of the Bureau agreed with Mr. Wilson and M. Paul-Boncour that it was undesirable to invite the General Commission to resume its work at an inopportune moment. One way out of the difficulty, however, was for example, to give the General Commission notice on October 10th to meet on November 10th, while giving the Chairman the right to postpone this meeting until later, if he thought it necessary. The difficulty would be evaded since the notice would have been given. In this way, the necessity of giving a month’s notice would not lead to delay, and, at the same time, the Bureau would not be obliged to convene a meeting of the General Commission before the work to be submitted to it was ready.

The Chairman thought that the Bureau could also decide to place the question on the agenda of the private or public meeting which it would hold in the week beginning October 10th, and could then see how nearly the reports were ready.

The Chairman then outlined the communication he was going to make at the public meeting of the Bureau. He would recall that the study of questions a (1) and b (1) of the programme of work had, for the reasons already stated, been judged inopportune for the moment, and he would ask M. de Madariaga to undertake to prepare a report for October 10th on the best procedure to be followed in regard to these two questions. He would also ask a member of the Bureau to prepare a report on the naval questions which arose in connection with the resolution of July 23rd, and requested Sir John Simon to undertake this task.

Sir John Simon (United Kingdom) said that this request placed him in an awkward situation owing to the calls on his time. He was naturally anxious to give the Conference all the help he could, but he wondered whether the negotiations now taking place would be in any way advanced by making a report on them.

The Chairman said that there was no intention of going into details. The idea simply was to keep the Bureau and, through it, the General Commission, informed of the progress made.

Sir John Simon (United Kingdom) said that, in that case, he could accept the task entrusted to him if it were simply a case of transmitting to the Bureau the information he had obtained.

(The Bureau went into public session.)
The CHAIRMAN said that the Bureau had just held a private meeting, during which it had studied the question of the date on which the General Commission might be asked to resume its work, the resolution of July 23rd requiring that the convocation of the General Commission should be preceded by one month’s notice. After an exchange of views it had been decided that the question should be re-examined at a meeting to be held by the Bureau on or about October 10th, by which date the Bureau would be in a position to judge the state of the questions which had been entrusted to Committees or to Rapporteurs.

The Chairman further recalled that the resolution of July 23rd invited the Powers parties to the Naval Treaties of Washington and London to confer together and to report to the General Commission, if possible before the resumption of its work, as to the further measures of naval reduction which might be feasible as a part of the general programme of disarmament. At the same time, the Conference invited the Naval Powers, other than the Powers parties to the above Treaties, to make arrangements for determining the degree of naval limitation they were prepared to accept in view of the Washington and London Treaties and the general programme of disarmament envisaged in the resolution. Lastly, this resolution added that the Bureau would be kept informed of the progress of these negotiations which it would be its duty to co-ordinate within the framework of the General Convention in preparation for the comprehensive decisions of the Commission.

The members of the Bureau had accordingly proposed that a representative of a naval Power should be requested to see to the execution of the Commission’s resolution in this connection and should report to the Bureau. Sir John Simon had agreed to inform the Bureau of the progress of the negotiations undertaken in conformity with this article of the resolution of July 23rd.

The questions of the complete prohibition of aerial attack against the civil population, and the abolition as between the contracting parties of all aerial bombardment, subject to agreements on the measures adopted to enforce the observance of this prohibition, were, according to the resolution adopted at the last meeting, to be examined at the Bureau’s next meeting. For the reasons stated by the Chairman himself, and the Chairman of the Air Commission at the meeting of September 22nd, it seemed inadvisable to open the discussion on the question for the moment. Meanwhile, the Bureau would request M. de Madariaga to make such enquiries as he might deem likely to facilitate the submission of a report, when the Bureau resumed its discussions, with regard to the best procedure to be followed in regard to these questions.

The Chairman added that he had met the German Minister for Foreign Affairs, that he hoped to have a further interview with him in two days’ time, and that it was for this reason that he urged the Bureau to accept the suggestion he had just made. M. de Madariaga had already accepted the task which was to be entrusted to him.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France) had no objection to the procedure proposed by the Chairman. He asked whether it would be better to wait until M. de Madariaga had made his report before submitting the definite proposal for the internationalisation of civil aviation which the French delegation intended to put forward, or whether it should do so now.

The CHAIRMAN hoped that this plan would be submitted to M. de Madariaga as soon as possible in order that he could take it into account in his recommendations.

The Chairman’s proposals were approved.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Bureau’s next meeting would take place, so far as could be foreseen, on Monday, October 10th. He hoped, moreover, that the Committees and Rapporteurs who had been appointed would by then have concluded the difficult task entrusted to them, and that their reports could be circulated by the Secretariat by that date.

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NINETEENTH MEETING (PUBLIC)

Held on Thursday, November 3rd, 1932, at 3.30 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. HENDERSON.

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21. ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIRMAN SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE BUREAU.

Question of the Representation of Governments at the Disarmament Conference and at the Monetary and Economic Conference.

The CHAIRMAN said it would be remembered that, at the private consultation which took place on October 13th, the Bureau had seen the possibility of the General Commission having to work in January at the same time as the Monetary and Economic Conference. The Chairman had been authorised to communicate to the President of the Organising Committee of the Monetary and Economic Conference a suggestion that a request should
be sent to Governments that their delegations should not be composed of their delegates to the Disarmament Conference.

In a letter from the British Foreign Office, dated October 25th, it was stated that the Secretary-General of the League of Nations had been requested to send the necessary communication to the Governments concerned.

Meeting of the General Commission.

The Members of the Bureau were no doubt aware that on October 15th, acting on a decision of the Bureau, the Chairman had sent one month's notice to the members of the General Commission in accordance with the resolution of July 23rd, 1932. Although the Bureau had authority to convocate the General Commission during the week commencing November 21st, the work seemed likely to require that the actual date of meeting should be somewhat later. The Bureau would shortly have to consider the exact day for which the Commission should be summoned and prepare the agenda of the session.

Committee for the Regulation of the Trade in and Private or State Manufacture of Arms and of Implements of War.

By a letter dated October 31st, M. de Scavenius, Chairman of the Committee for the Regulation of the Trade in and Private or State Manufacture of Arms and Implements of War, had communicated to the President of the Conference a questionnaire elaborated by that Committee, together with the extract of the Minutes of the meeting at which that question had been discussed. M. de Scavenius had requested the Bureau to send out as soon as possible the questionnaire and the relevant Minutes to all the Governments participating in the Conference in the hope that the replies would reach the Secretariat before the end of the year.

As the Bureau had not been in session and the matter had seemed to the Chairman to be urgent, he had ventured to send out circular letters to all the delegations in accordance with the request of the Chairman of the Committee for the Trade in and Manufacture of Arms, in the hope that the Bureau would approve of the procedure he had followed for reasons of expediency.

Armaments Truce.

The Bureau would remember that, in accordance with the resolution adopted on July 23rd by the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments, its President had requested the Governments represented in the latter to inform him before November 1st, if possible, whether they were prepared, in accordance with the resolution, to agree to the renewal for a period of four months as from November 1st, 1932, of the Armaments Truce proposed by the League Assembly on September 29th, 1931.

Up to date, the following forty-seven countries had sent in replies, which have been duly distributed:

- Afghanistan, Union of South Africa, Albania, United States of America, Australia, Austria, Belgium, United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa-Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, India, Irish Free State, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Roumania, Siam, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Venezuela, Yugoslavia.

An examination of the replies showed:
- That none of the Governments that had so far replied were opposed to the renewal of the truce and that all declared themselves willing to accept it;
- That some Governments made their acceptance conditional upon reciprocity;
- Lastly, that some of the replies renewed the interpretations and observations made last year on the same subject, but those interpretations and observations seemed to be in keeping with the resolution and the report originally adopted by the Assembly.

In these circumstances, the Chairman ventured to think that the best procedure would be to consider, unless and in so far as Governments did not forthwith intimate any objection to this course, that the Armaments Truce was, under the conditions laid down in the resolution and the report adopted by the Assembly in September 1931, renewed for four months as from November 1st by the Governments participating in the Conference. This procedure followed the precedent set by M. Briand in November 1931 when, as Acting-President of the Council, he interpreted in the same manner the replies then received to the Assembly's invitation.

M. MASSIGLI (France), said that, while he had no objection to the Chairman's proposal, he would like to remind the Bureau of the terms of the letter in which his Government, on October 30th, 1931, had accepted the truce, and to which he had referred when expressing his readiness to agree to its renewal. The French Government had stated that it was prepared to accept the truce, provided it was observed by France's neighbours. He understood that one of those countries had not yet replied to the Chairman's communication. Consequently, while accepting the truce, the French delegation was obliged to draw the Conference's attention to the fact
that a situation might arise for which the French Government could not accept the responsibility.

Finally, he pointed out that the truce was not the result of the initiative of the Conference. It had been proposed by the Assembly and it was the Council which, last year, had submitted it to all the Governments invited to the Conference for their acceptance.

The CHAIRMAN noted the French delegate’s statements and took it that the procedure which he had proposed was adopted.

Agreed.

22. PROGRESS REPORTS.

Special Committee on Effectives.

The CHAIRMAN recalled that the work done by the Effectives Committee had already been brought to the knowledge of the Bureau by the Secretary-General’s memorandum (document Conf.D./Bureau 26).

That memorandum recalled the circumstances in which the Committee had been created, and submitted to the approval of the Bureau its decisions as regards its terms of reference and its programme of work. The members of the Bureau had received the Minutes of the proceedings of the Committee, and were therefore acquainted with the manner in which the latter had interpreted the mandate given to it by the Bureau on September 22nd.

He thought that the Bureau would endorse the procedure established by the Committee.

Agreed.

Committee concerning the Manufacture of and Trade in Arms.

The Rapporteur of this Committee would shortly circulate to the Bureau a report on the work of the Committee.

National Defence Expenditure Commission.

The National Defence Expenditure Commission had also continued its meetings, and had made progress with its work, as the Bureau was aware from the memorandum circulated by the Secretariat (document Conf.D./Bureau 25).

Statement by the French Delegation.

Having been informed of the French delegation’s desire to make a statement to the Bureau on the constructive plan (which was to be communicated to the Bureau during the coming week), the officers of the Bureau suggested that Friday morning’s meeting should be devoted exclusively to the hearing of that statement.

Reports on: (a) Supervision, (b) Air Forces, (c) Chemical and Bacteriological Warfare, (d) Heavy Artillery and Tanks.

The Bureau had received the reports of M. Bourquin, M. de Madariaga and M. Pilotti respectively on the questions of (a) supervision (document Conf.D.140), (b) air forces (document Conf.D.141), (c) chemical and bacteriological warfare (document Conf.D.142).

The report on heavy artillery and tanks could not be distributed, as M. Buero had not yet concluded the necessary consultations with the various delegations.

These reports would be discussed one by one in the order just mentioned.

23. QUESTION OF SUPERVISION: REPORT BY M. BOURQUIN (BELGIUM).

M. BOURQUIN (Belgium), Rapporteur, did not consider it necessary to summarise the whole of his report (document Conf.D.140). In his opinion, the various questions dealt with in it should be examined one by one and it would be simpler and more practical for him to indicate, in due course, the solutions which were suggested to the Bureau for each of those questions.

He desired to explain the circumstances in which his report had been drafted and its rather special character. The report did not represent the results of a discussion, as the debate on supervision was not yet finished. That matter had been discussed by the Preparatory Commission, by the Plenary Conference, by the General Commission and by the Bureau, but, as regards a decision properly speaking, there was only the resolution adopted on July 23rd last by the General Commission which was, though very important, incomplete. The General Commission had asked him, as Rapporteur, to complete this part of the work, and he was
therefore submitting to the Bureau proposals and ideas which had not yet been sorted out. Some of them it would no doubt be desirable to utilise, while discarding others. The duty of the Rapporteur was to prepare for the forthcoming discussion.

He would next state the reasons for the method he had followed in drafting his report. His colleague, M. Pilotti, who was in a somewhat similar position, had succeeded in incorporating in his report a series of conclusions which, as they stood, constituted a definite project. The method M. Pilotti had adopted had given excellent results, but it would have been unsatisfactory in the case of supervision. Had M. Bourquin attempted to submit concrete proposals, they would, at the present stage, have been too subjective in character to be of any practical value. The question of supervision contained an important political element, and it was essential to agree in advance upon certain principles and tendencies. Only when such agreement had been reached could there be any idea of formulating rules or drafting precise texts. If he had adopted any other method, he would only have complicated the discussion. He was not therefore submitting any conclusions, but had merely carried out a work of documentation and classification.

On one fundamental point a definite decision had already been taken: in the resolution of July 23rd it was expressly stated that there was to be a Permanent Disarmament Commission, and that fact must constitute the basis of the Bureau’s discussions. Hence four questions remained to be determined:

(a) What would be the attributions of that Commission?
(b) What means would it have at its disposal to exercise them?
(c) What would be its composition?
(d) How would it function?

The last question was of secondary importance and really one of procedure, which would be easily solved when the time came. The three other questions were important and involved questions of principle. As regards each of those questions, he had aimed at presenting the various proposals and suggestions which had been put forward, between which a choice would have to be made, and to indicate the arguments advanced for or against each of them.

In conclusion, he proposed to discuss the substance of the problem, question by question and point by point.

The Chairman said that the question of supervision as a whole had been submitted to the Bureau. The Rapporteur desired to obtain the Bureau’s assistance on the questions of principle before continuing his work. The Chairman hoped that the members of the Bureau were ready to begin the discussion.

Mr. Wilson (United States of America) was sure he was interpreting the feelings of all in congratulating M. Bourquin on his very clear presentation of a very complex problem. There was hardly any other problem before the Conference which had so many facets and ramifications. He was particularly glad that M. Bourquin, in his report, appraised at what Mr. Wilson felt to be its real value, the work of the Preparatory Commission as it appeared in the chapter dealing with the constitution of the Permanent Disarmament Commission and its powers. Those who had taken part in the formulation of those chapters would realise, as he did, the amount of laborious negotiation which they represented, and recognise, as he did, the real effort at conciliation which had been made by the various countries there represented to reach that result. When that result had been reached, the people of America were of opinion, and Mr. Wilson knew that they were not alone in that opinion, that a very far-reaching step had been taken in the direction of supervision and control. They had been convinced at that time, and they were still convinced, that the establishment of such a body with the functions attributed to it in the draft Disarmament Convention, would constitute for the future one of the most important and continuing contributions to the disarmament movement.

Feeling as it did in regard to those chapters of the draft Convention, the United States delegation would have preferred to concentrate its efforts at that time upon the problem of figures, which, in its view, were the essence of a disarmament treaty. There arose in that connection, as so often happened in any of the questions attacked, the old debate of which was the cart and which the horse. The United States delegation believed that the horse was reduction of armaments and that the cart was the control and machinery for its application which should come after. It would have infinitely preferred to concentrate on the realisation of that portion of the resolution of July 23rd which ‘‘decides forthwith and unanimously, guided by the general principles underlying President Hoover’s declaration, that a substantial reduction of world armaments should be effected’’.

The United States delegation recognised, however, that the views of any one delegation as to procedure, however sound they might seem to that delegation, must sometimes be subordinated to the views of the majority, if any advance was to be made in the work. The views of the majority of the Bureau seemed to be clearly indicated in the debates on this subject—namely, that the matter of supervision should now be examined before the final results of the Conference could be seen, and before other delegations could commit themselves on those results. The delegation of the United States was therefore ready to enter into that discussion
with its colleagues and to examine the problem of the extension, if any, which should be made to the powers of the Permanent Disarmament Commission beyond those attributed to it in the draft Convention.

Mr. Wilson assured his colleagues that the United States delegation would discuss that question with them most earnestly, but he must ask them to bear in mind its position in the matter. For the sake of clarity, he must restate the United States position. The extension which his delegation might be willing to give to the powers of the Permanent Disarmament Commission, as provided in the draft Convention, was directly dependent upon the measure of achievement of the Conference, and, until that definitive achievement was visible, a final acquiescence on the part of the United States delegation in the extension of such powers was contingent upon the contents of the final convention, specifically in relation to the accomplishment of substantial reduction.

The CHAIRMAN opened the discussion on the first question raised in M. Bourquin's report.

**Attributions of the Permanent Disarmament Commission.**

M. BOURQUIN (Belgium), Rapporteur, entirely shared Mr. Wilson's opinion that the work performed by the Preparatory Commission was such that it must not be forgotten. Mr. Wilson had also expressed an idea which should underlie all the Bureau's deliberations—namely, that the draft Convention should be taken as the point of departure in examining the various problems to be solved. Indeed, it was on the basis of that consideration that M. Bourquin had drawn up the list of proposals contained in his report. He first recalled the suggestions contained in the Preparatory Commission's draft and then mentioned new proposals.

With regard to the attributions of the Permanent Commission, the draft Convention stated that the Commission would have a general function of supervision and control. Under Article 40 of the draft, the Permanent Commission was entrusted with the duty of following the execution of the Convention. The draft gave effect to that idea in two ways:

1. Under Article 49, the Permanent Commission was enjoined to furnish regularly and, so to say, automatically, reports on the manner in which the Contracting Parties had carried out their undertakings. Those reports were to be made at least once a year and might be made more frequently, if circumstances required. Such reports, which did not imply any special incident, were addressed by the Permanent Commission to the Council and the Governments and were to be published. That was the normal action of the Permanent Commission under the draft Convention.

2. Then there was the case of a complaint being directed by one State against another State. That was a special incident. Article 52 of the draft provided for the intervention of the Permanent Commission, which investigated the affair, heard the explanations of the parties and drew up a special report on the subject of the complaint. This report also was communicated to the Council and the Governments and published.

The draft also contained other articles providing for the intervention of the Permanent Commission in other cases: temporary derogation (Article 50) and the convening of Revision Conferences (Articles 58 and 59). Nevertheless, as M. Bourquin had said in his report, he was of opinion that it would be difficult to deal at the present stage with Articles 50, 58 and 59, because, although they certainly involved action by the Permanent Commission, their essential object was to be found elsewhere. The question of derogations and that of revision were bound up with other problems such as the duration of the Convention and another problem raised by Article 60—that of the right of denunciation. In short, there was a complicated series of interrelated questions which it would be difficult to deal with separately. Consequently, he had merely inserted those questions in his report and drawn the Bureau's attention to them.

As regards the other points, the Bureau's only task was to formulate proposals for transmission to the General Commission. In that connection, he agreed with Mr. Wilson that, if the question of supervision were taken up at the present stage, as that question was closely bound up with other problems and, in particular, with that of disarmament properly speaking, the final decision would only be taken when the other problems had been cleared up. The only thing the Bureau could do for the time being was to indicate its general ideas on that aspect of the problem.

To keep to the draft, there were only two questions on which the Bureau should pronounce:

1. The Permanent Commission was to supervise regularly and automatically the execution of the Convention, publish reports, etc. ;

2. In the event of a complaint, the Commission would deal with it, investigate it and communicate reports under the conditions laid down.

The Rapporteur had received no proposal for restricting the attributions of the Permanent Commission under the draft Convention. Consequently, all seemed agreed as to that minimum of powers. He wondered whether, with a view to facilitating the discussions, it would not be better provisionally to stop there and, before going further, examine the question whether there was real agreement as to the minimum fixed in the draft Convention.
M. Motta (Switzerland) congratulated the Rapporteur on his excellent work. He understood that the Bureau would now discuss paragraphs 8 to 14 of the report, as there was to be a separate discussion of the chapter on Attributions from paragraph 14 onwards. He desired to submit some observations on paragraph 10. Article 49 of the draft Convention provided for the despatch of annual reports to the Council and Governments. Would it not be right and desirable to indicate in that part of the Convention that the Assembly also must have a say in that connection? He did not suggest that the Permanent Commission should submit its annual reports direct to the Assembly, but he thought that it might be provided that the Council should send the Assembly regular communications, so as to give it an opportunity to discuss those questions. It was, of course, not desirable that several bodies should deal with the same matter, as there was a tendency in such cases for them to trespass upon one another’s provinces. Nevertheless, it seemed, to some extent at least, improper that, while the Assembly could deal with communications, health, economic, and humanitarian problems, etc., a question of such essential and vital importance and one which lay at the very centre of the League’s work should be taken out of its hands. He therefore thought it would be desirable to formulate—the form of words would have to be considered—a clause to the effect that the Council, after receiving the Permanent Commission’s reports, should itself submit a report to the Assembly, so that the latter might also be able to discuss it in due course.

M. Politis (Greece) was glad M. Motta had raised this question, as any possibility of a misunderstanding could now be avoided. He thought that the present general rules of the League, as normally applied, gave satisfaction to M. Motta’s wish. There was another branch of its work with which a permanent commission dealt—that of mandates. The report of the Permanent Mandates Commission was communicated to the Council, which mentioned it in its annual report to the Assembly. The problem was therefore laid before the Assembly, and the latter was able to decide whether it should be referred for examination to one of its Committees.

There was also the problem of minorities. In that case, there was no permanent commission, but the Council devoted to this question a special section of its report to the Assembly, and on numerous occasions the Assembly had decided to refer the question to its Sixth Committee. When the Permanent Disarmament Commission had been constituted, when its reports had been addressed to the Council, and when the latter had mentioned these reports in its own annual report to the Assembly, that body could decide to refer the report to its Third Committee, which could undertake the necessary discussions.

M. Bourquin (Belgium), Rapporteur, entirely appreciated M. Motta’s idea and his desire that the Assembly should be kept informed of all work in connection with armaments, particularly as regards the execution of the Convention. M. Politis’s reply was perfectly correct. The problem was one which offered a remarkable parallel with that of mandates. In the case of mandates, the Council received the reports under Article 22 of the Covenant. It then made an annual report to the Assembly on its activities, including this question. Similarly, as regards disarmament, the Covenant, in Articles 8 and 9, assigned special powers to the Council. Article 8 referred solely to the Council. Article 9 was still more significant, at any rate for purposes of comparison, since it said that the Permanent Advisory Commission was to advise the Council on military, naval and air questions. Consequently, no departure was made from the Covenant. On the contrary, there was complete conformity with that instrument, and, as the tradition had grown up that the Council should report every year to the Assembly on its activities as a whole, there was no doubt that the Assembly would be kept informed on this subject also. The Rapporteur was doubtful whether it would be helpful to add a provision recommending the Council to make a report to the Assembly on this question. This was a matter of internal procedure for the League. As regards the substance of the question, there was complete agreement.

M. Motta (Switzerland) thanked M. Politis and M. Bourquin for their explanations, which he thought correct. He was nevertheless glad that he had raised the question. Notwithstanding the tradition which had grown up that the Assembly was entitled to examine every part of the Council’s report, even those dealing with questions which the Covenant had assigned rather to the Council than to the Assembly, all those who were familiar with the Assembly’s habits and methods knew that doubts often existed as to the Assembly’s right to pronounce on a particular question. There must therefore be an absolute understanding that the disarmament questions which went to the Council through the normal channel of the Permanent Commission’s reports were to be dealt with in a chapter of the Council’s report to the Assembly; in this way, the matter would be duly laid before the Assembly.

M. Politis (Greece) said that these various observations, which would be recorded in the Minutes, might also be mentioned in the report to the General Commission. There would therefore be a record of M. Motta’s very valuable suggestion and of the replies made to it, the corollary being that the Conference desired that the practice followed in other directions—such as mandates, for example—should be continued in the case of disarmament.
M. Politis added that this examination of the disarmament question by the Assembly would depend on the initiative being taken by a delegation; it would not be automatic. It was to be hoped that there would be good years without incident, and that the delegations, after taking cognisance of the Permanent Commission’s reports and of the Council’s report, would not think it necessary to raise the question in the Assembly.

The CHAIRMAN noted that there was general agreement on the first point raised by M. Bourquin’s report, and he requested the Bureau to discuss the second point.

Preparation of Revision Conferences.

M. BOURQUIN (Belgium), Rapporteur, said that the supplementary proposals that had been made arose in this connection. In the first place, there was the preparation of the later stages of disarmament—that was to say, of the revisions of the Convention. A formal proposal had been made, in particular by the Swiss and Norwegian delegations. The Permanent Commission was to be given competence to prepare revisions of the Convention. In the conversations which the Rapporteur had had with a large number of delegations, he had acquired the conviction that this idea would be favourably received everywhere. Such a proposal had been found natural, and it had even been considered strange that it had not been thought of when the draft Convention was prepared. Evidently, the work would be very important and it would sometimes be of a very technical character. Undoubtedly, the most suitable organ for this purpose would be the Permanent Commission.

There was a second supplementary proposal connected with the first, and conceived in the same spirit. Many delegations, more especially the Soviet in its 1928 draft, which it had brought forward again at the Conference, had thought that the Convention would probably require certain supplementary agreements as to its execution, the object being to ensure its loyal application. In examining the problem, it would probably be seen that certain difficulties would arise in this connection. The forthcoming Convention would be a somewhat theoretical instrument so long as it had not stood the test of facts. When it had to be applied, it would be found that on certain points it would need further definition. For example, if it were decided to enter upon the path of qualitative disarmament—that was to say, the abolition of certain implements of war—these weapons would have to be designated by certain technical characteristics. What would undoubtedly happen would be that the definition adopted would arouse the ingenuity of the experts, and the latter, by a slight technical readjustment, would soon find a means of evading the accepted definition. Provision should therefore be made for an agreement, not to modify the Convention, but to permit of its loyal application. Who would be better qualified to prepare such agreements than the Permanent Commission? The delegations in favour of this idea thought that the Commission would not have to take a decision on this subject, but only to do preparatory work, the drafts being submitted to the Governments, which would pronounce upon them.

Lastly, there was the draft submitted by the Soviet delegation which, in Article 39, defined the Permanent Commission’s powers as follows:

"Within three months from the date of entry into force of the present Convention, a Permanent International Commission of Control shall be organised, with the following duties:

(a) The supervision, control and general co-ordination of the measures relating to the application of the present Convention, and the notification to each State of breaches of the provisions of the present Convention;

(b) The preparation of an agreement concerning the pressure to be brought to bear upon States which may fail to carry out the provisions of the present Convention and of the supplementary conventions and technical arrangements completing it;

(c) The selection of the places, the procedure and the technical conditions for the destruction of material, and the preparation of all the necessary supplementary technical agreements;

(d) The study of questions relating to further reductions of armaments and the preparation of international Agreements relating thereto;

(e) Communication to the contracting States and the public of information concerning progress in the work of reducing armaments."

This text therefore contained several elements, but it was, apparently, already covered by the text of the draft supplemented by the two proposals which the Rapporteur had already mentioned. As regards two points only there might be some doubt:

(1) Sub-paragraph (b), concerning measures of pressure, raised the problem of sanctions, a question which clearly could not be dealt with at present, and was not on the Bureau’s agenda. Nevertheless, if special sanctions were provided for, they would have to be contained in the Convention itself. This was a serious and delicate matter which would also call for executive agreements, but here again the previous formula applied and it would be for the Permanent Commission to prepare these agreements;

(2) Sub-paragraph (c) dealt with the destruction of material. The details would have to be settled by the Convention itself, but this subject was also outside the Bureau’s agenda for the moment. Possibly, supplementary executive agreements would again be necessary, and here again it would be for the Permanent Commission to prepare such agreements.
The Rapporteur had endeavoured to understand the Soviet delegation’s idea, and he definitely believed that the provisions provided for by the Preparatory Commission in its draft, combined with the proposals concerning the preparation of supplementary agreements by the Permanent Commission, would answer to that delegation’s requirements.

Mr. Eden (United Kingdom) associated himself with the tribute paid to the Rapporteur for his admirable work. Everyone who had had conversations with M. Bourquin had been struck by the impartiality with which he had taken the different opinions into account.

As regards the paragraphs under discussion, the United Kingdom delegate was rather in the same situation as his United States colleague, and he shared his opinion as to the relative positions of the cart and the horse. He would certainly have preferred that an attempt should first be made to determine the extent of the disarmament measures and only then deal with the method to be followed. For these reasons, Mr. Eden felt some doubts as to paragraph 16 in M. Bourquin’s report. In its conversations with the Rapporteur, the United Kingdom delegation had probably failed to make itself clear, for in reality it found some difficulty in pronouncing on the point whether the Permanent Disarmament Commission should be entrusted with the work of revision. In his opinion, it would be necessary first to know what the composition of the Permanent Commission was going to be. It was said that it might be composed of independent persons, and would then include no Government representatives.

The Rapporteur quite agreed that there existed obvious and inevitable connections between the powers and the composition of the Permanent Commission. Its composition would depend on what it was intended to do and vice versa. It was the old story of the cart and the horse which had been cropping up ever since the opening of the Conference. At the same time, a start must be made somewhere; it was impossible to settle all the various problems simultaneously, and any one solution was always conditioned by other solutions that might be arrived at later. That fact had to be admitted, if anything were to be accomplished.

In any case, although the task of revision would certainly be important, the first Convention itself would be much more important, and the United Kingdom delegate had only wished to draw the Bureau’s attention to the question so that it might bear these different considerations in mind when deciding on the composition of the Permanent Commission.

M. Bourquin (Belgium), Rapporteur, noted a certain similarity between the observations of Mr. Eden and M. Sato. The United Kingdom delegate had said that it would be difficult for him to express an opinion immediately on paragraph 16 of the report without knowing what the composition of the Permanent Commission was to be. The Japanese delegate thought the Permanent Commission would have to put forward in regard to the execution of the Convention proper and deal with the question of supervision only later. It acquiesced, however, in the urgent desire expressed by other delegations to examine M. Bourquin’s report immediately.

The Japanese delegation felt some doubt as regards paragraphs 15 and 16 of the report. His colleague on the United Kingdom delegation had said that it would be difficult for him to discuss the powers of the Permanent Commission until he knew what the composition of that Commission was to be. The Japanese delegate thought the Permanent Commission would have to ensure the due observance of the various articles of the Convention. It was now suggested that the Commission should be given further duties—namely, to prepare for any revision of the future Convention and for future Disarmament Conferences. In virtue of these new powers, the Permanent Commission would express its opinion as to the revision of the Convention and would itself be entrusted with the duty of supervision in regard to the Convention as thus revised. There seemed to be some inconsistency there. If a Disarmament Convention proved defective on this or that point, the question would have to be studied by Government delegates, whose duty it would be to decide on its revision or amendment, and then to prepare for future Conferences.

Under the terms of Article 48 of the draft Convention, it would be for the Permanent Commission, not only to take note of opinions submitted to it by Governments, but itself to submit opinions or criticisms and even recommendations. All the Governments would thus know, at any given moment, what criticisms and observations the Permanent Commission had put forward in regard to the execution of the Convention. On the basis of that material, they would be able to judge how the Convention was being carried out, to consider, if necessary, the most suitable methods and to remove any difficulties. The duties of the Permanent Commission had to be limited then to what was laid down in Article 48, and questions of revision should be considered by some organ other than that Commission. The Japanese delegate was not offering objections, but merely a few observations. His delegation would wait until the position was clear before adopting a definite attitude.

M. Bourquin (Belgium), Rapporteur, noted a certain similarity between the observations of Mr. Eden and M. Sato. The United Kingdom delegate had said that it would be difficult for him to express an opinion immediately on paragraph 16 of the report without knowing what the composition of the Permanent Commission was to be. The Japanese delegate thought that it would be preferable not to entrust the Commission with the preparation of revisions of the Convention, as that work must be done by Government delegates. Accordingly, the question of the composition of the Permanent Commission arose again in that connection.

The Rapporteur quite agreed that there existed obvious and inevitable connections between the powers and the composition of the Permanent Commission. Its composition would depend on what it was intended to do and vice versa. It was the old story of the cart and the horse which had been cropping up ever since the opening of the Conference. At the same time, a start must be made somewhere; it was impossible to settle all the various problems simultaneously, and any one solution was always conditioned by other solutions that might be arrived at later. That fact had to be admitted, if anything were to be accomplished.
When preparing his report, M. Bourquin had himself wondered where to begin. He had considered dealing first with the composition of the Permanent Commission, but had felt that the fundamental point was to determine what was expected of it. It was like planning a house; it was necessary to know to what use the house was to be put before deciding what materials to use. It had accordingly seemed to him only logical first to consider the powers and duties of the Permanent Commission. The attitude of delegations towards that problem would undoubtedly affect their attitude as regards the composition of the Commission. That point was brought out clearly, moreover, in the passage in his report setting forth the arguments of those delegations which were in favour of a Commission consisting of Government delegates (paragraph 45 (b) of the report).

As regards the procedure suggested by the Japanese delegation for preparing the future stages of disarmament, the Rapporteur felt that it might be somewhat difficult of achievement. According to his colleague, the Permanent Commission would supervise the execution of the Convention, would note any shortcomings, any defects and any gaps, and in its report to the Council and to Governments would suggest this or that amendment; that should be the extent of its duties. Then would come the moment to prepare for revision. But if, as the Japanese delegate suggested, that work were entrusted to another body, would not the latter's first care be to convene the Permanent Disarmament Commission itself, as being the body best qualified to express an authorised opinion? M. Bourquin explained that at this point he was speaking, not as Rapporteur, but as a delegate. It seemed to him much more practical to simplify the operation, and, seeing that the Permanent Commission was the body best qualified by reason of its actual functions, he thought that the preparatory work for any revision should be entrusted to it. That solution, subject, of course, to the decision that might be taken as regards the composition of the Permanent Commission, would, he thought, offer supporters of a Commission consisting of Government delegates a very powerful argument.

M. Motta (Switzerland) had two observations to submit as to the reasons which appeared to him decisive in favour of the proposal of the Norwegian and Swiss delegations. He quite understood the astonishment which had been expressed that the Preparatory Commission, when framing its draft, should not have thought of entrusting to the Permanent Disarmament Commission, among the other duties devolving upon it, that of preparing for the later stages of disarmament. That was explained by the fact that, at the time of the Preparatory Commission, the idea of the stages to be followed by disarmament had not been brought out as clearly as had since been done. It was, however, one of the fundamental ideas embodied in the resolutions of the Conference. Any man taking thought for the future must realise that it was impossible to demand too much to begin with. Obviously, it was necessary to go as far as possible at once, but there must be no discouragement if the final goal could not be reached forthwith. That idea had now impressed itself on people's minds. It was only natural to provide for a body which would be responsible for preparing the various future stages, and no body could be better qualified than the Permanent Disarmament Commission.

M. Dovgaleski (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) did not propose to dwell on the Soviet delegation's standpoint, which had already been explained by M. Litvinoff at the meeting at which M. Bourquin had been asked to prepare the report. M. Bourquin had alluded to a certain point in the Soviet delegation's proposals concerning the powers of the Permanent Disarmament Commission. That special point, however, formed an integral part of the whole scheme embodied in the Soviet delegation's proposal. M. Dovgaleski regretted that he had not been able to study M. Bourquin's report sooner. He would, if necessary, revert to M. Bourquin's observations in the course of the discussion.

M. Sato (Japan) thanked M. Bourquin and M. Motta for their explanations. He had had in mind the analogy of the Public Prosecutor in any country; it was that official's duty to follow and see to the proper execution of the law, but not prepare that law. The Permanent Disarmament Commission would be in the same position as a Public Prosecutor; it would, within the limits of its powers, follow the execution of the Convention and that, in the Japanese delegation's view, would be its chief rôle, but it ought not to have the duty at the same time of preparing for revisions of the Convention. He might perhaps have been wrong in suggesting such an analogy. He would not insist on it and was prepared to accept the part of the report under discussion.

The Chairman felt sure that he would be expressing the unanimous opinion of his colleagues in thanking M. Bourquin for his most valuable work.

The continuation of the discussion was adjourned to a later meeting.
TWENTIETH MEETING (PUBLIC)

Held on Friday, November 4th, 1932, at 11 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. HENDERSON.

24. FRENCH PLAN: EXPLANATORY STATEMENT BY M. PAUL-BONCOUR.

The CHAIRMAN announced that the meeting would be entirely devoted to the statement concerning the French plan.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France) spoke as follows: I warmly thank the President of the Conference for being good enough to summon this special meeting, and I beg the Bureau to excuse me for interrupting its normal agenda for a few moments. But France, on her own initiative and to give further proof of her ardent desire for the success of this Conference, had agreed to a meeting and given a promise. Nothing could prevent her from being punctual and from keeping that promise, and in the absence of the French Prime Minister, whose duties detain him elsewhere, it is to me—the Permanent Delegate of France to the League of Nations—that the great honour has been entrusted of explaining to you summarily, yet as completely as I can, the general lines of the plan which we shall place on the table of the Conference.

It has been called the French plan. However honourable and flattering that title may be for my country, it is not quite correct.

It is certainly a French plan in that it expresses the profound aspirations of a people which, each time it expresses its opinion, gives evidence of its renewed confidence in the League of Nations and its attachment to the policy of organising peace, such profound aspirations that the French Prime Minister had desired first to explain, while reserving, as was right, the details for you, the general outlines of the plan before the French Chamber; thus the plan comes to you with the authority of the large majority which gave it approval. But it is not, properly speaking, a French plan, and we should be gravely failing in our duty if, for reasons of personal or even collective pride, we did not fully realise that we have jointly here to seek for the common element that may exist in the proposals that have been formulated, in order to avoid the catastrophe of gravely disappointing the hopes which the peoples still place in us.

The fact is that at all times during the elaboration of this plan the French delegation has kept in contact with many other delegations. It has sought for, and not merely welcomed, the suggestions which the most qualified persons—the general Rapporteur of the Conference, its Vice-President, M. Politis, and many others, have been good enough to make. Above all, it has drawn its inspiration less from its own ideas than from those which, during the first six months of our work, seemed to emanate from the various proposals made to the Conference. For we think that at the present moment our main task is to measure exactly the difficulties with which we have met in order to endeavour together to overcome them.

These difficulties are of two kinds: some relate to a general problem—one which in the present stage of the League’s evolution is encountered, sometimes tragically, in all the fields of its activity; others relate more especially to the purpose of this Conference—the limitation and general reduction of armaments. The first of these general difficulties, which we have encountered during recent years and this year in particular, has been met in all fields; it is that the League of Nations, universal in principle and in purpose, must, to be effective, measure and vary its solutions according to the different requirements of the various parts of the world. How much truer does this need for diversity and variety appear when applied to this field of mutual assistance, which is the purpose of all our work, lying as it does at the root of Article 8 and of the Covenant of the League of Nations? If we would succeed, how can we possibly insist on applying rigid solutions to the whole surface of the world when, especially at this Conference, we have the inestimable advantage of counting amongst us great nations which have come to give us their constant support without themselves being bound by the provisions of the Covenant of the League of Nations?

It is for this reason that the first guiding idea in the proposals which we lay before the Conference is the diversity of the pacts therein proposed. If I may make a comparison, which might be unfortunate if we only remembered the successive circles of the Hell of the great Italian poet, I will say that we conceive of a number of pacts forming concentric circles. The widest might include all the nations represented here; they would simply transpose into public international law and give full legal significance to that great moral affirmation to which two statesmen of two great countries have attached their names: the Briand-Kellogg Pact.