Further, the chief aim, in the present case, was the protection of the civilian population, and M. Nadolny believed that these measures were precisely of concern to the civilian population. The German delegation felt that it was impossible to protect the civilian population against the effects of air-bombing unless air-bombing was absolutely prohibited.

In view of the resolution of July 23rd, 1932, and the opinion generally held, it appeared that M. de Madariaga’s observation might be regarded as of good omen for the question of military aviation, and it was from that point of view, likewise, that M. Nadolny would again propose that this issue should be settled at once.

Mr. Eden (United Kingdom) thanked the General Commission for the reception it had given to the United Kingdom proposal, and M. de Madariaga for his very interesting suggestion. The United Kingdom delegation would naturally be happy that the committee should meet in public. He thought that the order in which the questions should be put to the committee was a matter for the committee to decide itself, and he imagined that, if M. de Madariaga would consent to act as Chairman of the committee, the questions would be put in the order in which he thought fit.

Mr. Riddell (Canada) recalled that, both in the Preparatory Disarmament Commission and in the Air Commission last year, he had urged the peculiar position of his country as regards civil aviation and had pointed out that it was possible to conceive of a fairly effective European scheme, but that the question assumed a different form in regard to North America. That statement had received support from one of the other members of the North-American continent, the United States of America, and had met with the approval of the French delegate who had made it clear that he understood the situation. The French delegate had said that the statement made by certain delegations showed that there were parts of the world which might quite easily dispense with any consideration of the question which was at present engaging the attention of the Commission. Certain overseas countries were interested in the problem, only in so far as they were interested in the reduction of European armaments. There had further been a statement by Sir John Simon, who had referred to “certain regions where such a regime (an international regime) was not suitable”. This was followed on July 23rd, 1932, by the resolution of the General Commission which was quite acceptable in North America, and which stated:

“Civil aircraft shall be submitted to regulation and full publicity. Further, civil aircraft not conforming to the specified limitations shall be subjected to an international regime (except for certain regions where such a regime is not suitable) such as to prevent effectively the misuse of such civil aircraft.”

The reply given by the President to Mr. Wilson entirely satisfied the Canadian delegation, and Mr. Riddell could therefore accept the United Kingdom proposal.

M. Pierre Cot (France) shared M. Nadolny’s view that, before appointing a committee, it would be an advantage to settle the questions of principle in the General Commission.

To explain his meaning, M. Pierre Cot would suppose that the committee to which the question would be referred, and which, without being a committee of experts, would have a very limited membership as compared with the General Commission, came to the conclusion that it was not expedient or not possible to abolish military aviation entirely. In that case, it was quite clear that the question would come back to the General Commission and would then have to form the subject of a general debate, so that the only result would be a loss of time.

Suppose, on the contrary, that the committee decided that it was desirable to abolish military aviation entirely, and came to the further conclusion that it could only be abolished on two conditions—first, the organisation of a system of supervision for civil aviation, and, second, the organisation of an air force. In that case, the result would be the same, and it was again evident that another general debate would be necessary in the General Commission.

That being so, M. Pierre Cot wondered whether the General Commission should not itself settle the questions of principle at once. When they had been settled, and the Commission had decided, for instance, upon the total abolition of military aviation, when each delegation had indicated the conditions which, in its view, were the necessary accompaniments to abolition, the committee could get to work. It would have, not only directions, but very clearly defined limits.

These considerations led M. Pierre Cot to propose what he might call a compromise; namely, that the General Commission should appoint, as it had previously done, a Drafting Committee to draw up very speedily the list of questions of principle—and they were not, after all, very numerous—on which agreement must first be reached in the General Commission. After the debate in the latter, after the adoption of conclusions on those questions of principle, the Air Committee would be instructed to consider the details and to suggest any measures of application. In this way it would be possible to have as wide a general discussion as possible, in which—and this was indispensable in M. Pierre Cot’s view—all members of the Conference would take part. It must be remembered that, when the object was to try to preclude the dangers of air warfare, there were no air Powers and non-air Powers. All Powers had an equal concern in that problem, and they all had the same right to state their opinion on the question of principle. Only after conclusions had been reached on the principles could precise terms of reference be sent to the smaller committee, which would be asked to suggest measures of application and execution.
Mr. Eden (United Kingdom) had listened with very great interest to the French delegate’s declaration. Nevertheless, he was not very clear as to the advantage of the procedure he had suggested. For example, as regards the question whether military aviation should be abolished, Mr. Eden thought that, in the present state of information concerning the control of civil aviation, that was very largely an academic issue. Presumably it was every nation’s desire that, in respect of the air, abolition of the military air arm was impossible unless accompanied by the control of civil aviation, and that the committee itself would be able to say whether or not such a scheme could be worked out. He considered in all sincerity that this academic question would be virtually unanswerable until the General Commission had the information it required from the committee. Therefore he would have thought that the proposition should be put clearly to the committee with a request that it report as soon as possible to the General Commission, which could then take its decisions on the information received from the committee.

M. Nadolny (Germany) said that he adhered to the principle of his amendment. He did not quite understand Mr. Eden’s explanations. The matter could, of course, be considered under two aspects, and it was possible to say either that military aviation could not be abolished without the control of civil aviation or that it was necessary to know whether military aviation would be abolished or not before the question of civil aviation could be settled. Both these attitudes were logical, each in its own way.

The essential point, however, was not the control of civil aviation, but the question with which the General Commission was at present concerned—namely, qualitative disarmament; that was to say, the question of the abolition or maintenance of the military air arm. Agreement must first be reached on this principle; and then, according to circumstances, the manner of the control to be exercised over civil aviation could be examined.

If M. Pierre Cot’s proposal referred simply to the drafting of the questions to be submitted to the General Commission and settled by it, M. Nadolny would not oppose it, since it was not, in fact, an amendment to his own proposal.

The President suggested that the Commission should at once appoint the special committee to deal with the air question, with M. de Madariaga as its Chairman; that the United Kingdom proposal, M. Nadolny’s amendments and M. Pierre Cot’s suggestion should be referred to this committee; and that the latter should refer back, as early as it felt able to do so, any questions upon which it desired a decision from the General Commission.

The President pointed out that, in suggesting this solution, he was proposing the appointment, not of a special drafting committee, but of the committee that would have to continue to sit and deal with the whole question, and which he hoped would be able, under M. de Madariaga’s guidance and driving power, to settle it in two weeks.

The proposal of the President was adopted.

On the proposal of the President, it was agreed that the Committee should be composed of representatives of the following countries: Argentine, Belgium, United Kingdom, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Siam, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United States of America, Yugoslavia.

72. Question of Effectives: Questionnaire drawn up by the Drafting Committee: Statement by M. Politis, Chairman of the Committee.

M. Politis (Greece), Chairman of the Drafting Committee, pointed out that the General Commission, at its thirty-fourth meeting, had asked a Drafting Committee over which he had had the honour to preside, to draw up, taking into consideration the various suggestions submitted to the Conference with regard to effectives, a list of the questions on the principles underlying which the General Commission would have to take a decision before referring them for more detailed examination to the Committee on Effectives.

The Drafting Committee had completed its work and had prepared a list in three parts. The first part contained the questions, drawn up on the basis of the French memorandum, which were associated with the idea of the standardisation of the European continental armies. The second part contained the questions relating to effectives generally. The third part dealt with overseas effectives.

The Drafting Committee had grouped the questions in the order just indicated, because it had thought it advisable first to consider the problems connected with the idea of the French plan, for the questions contained in the second part would assume a different aspect according to whether the General Commission adopted that idea or not.

The Committee therefore proposed that the General Commission should begin its examination with the first series of questions (document Conf.D./C.G.41), and should then pass to the other series, finally coming to the draft instructions to be given to the Committee on Effectives (document Conf.D./C.G.43).
73. Question of Effectives: Questionnaire drawn up by the Drafting Committee: Questions relating to the French plan for the standardisation of the European Continental Armies.

I (a): "Is the General Commission of opinion that the European continental armies should be standardised by being converted into armies with short-term service and limited effectives?"

The President, in opening the discussion on Question I (a), observed that it would depend upon the answer to that question whether some of the following questions had to be discussed or not.

M. Pierre Cot (France) pointed out that on several occasions—on four occasions if he was not mistaken—the French Government had explained why it thought that the armies of the European continental countries should be standardised by being converted into armies with short-term service and limited effectives. The French delegate could therefore only repeat the arguments already put forward. He was prepared to do so if the General Commission desired, but believed that that would only tire the Commission and waste its time. The French Government’s arguments were known. It was that Government that had asked for the insertion of this provision, which was to be found in the French plan. It had stated its reasons for doing so, and in these circumstances M. Pierre Cot thought he need only say that the French delegation maintained its attitude and that he himself was at the disposal of the members of the Commission to reply to any objections to its proposal that might be raised.

M. Beneš (Czechoslovakia) had already had occasion, during the discussion on the French plan, to say that Czechoslovakia was prepared to accept all the measures embodied in the plan. One of its fundamental bases was precisely this question of the standardisation of armies, which would be converted into armies with short-term service and limited effectives. M. Beneš thought, indeed, that this measure was indispensable and supported the principle for several reasons, which he would state briefly.

In the first place, if they were really desired to reduce effectives, terms of comparison were necessary. M. Beneš did not desire to speak at length on this point, but the Commission was aware—in particular, those of its members who had followed the discussion in the Committee on Effectives—how difficult it was to make a real comparison of armies in the present state of Europe and in view of the diverse forms of European armies.

In the second place, the question of military formations and military and pre-military training must be considered. The Commission was aware that extremely lengthy, arduous and even delicate discussions had taken place on this matter in the Committee on Effectives. This question was undoubtedly important, particularly in so far as it concerned the comparison to be made between different countries. It arose immediately when the problem of the limitation of effectives was examined and when means were sought to make this comparison and to determine its factors. Indeed, if the Conference succeeded in standardising the different types of armies, it would be easier to solve the question of military formations and military and pre-military training and to lay down criteria for comparison, for the delicate question of the military formations at present existing in European countries would be solved.

Apart from these two technical questions there was a question of substance, with which all delegates were familiar and on which M. Beneš would not expatiate at length. It was indubitable that the standardisation of the types of armies, as proposed by France, would in practice bring about a measure of qualitative disarmament. If armies were modified in such a way that from being of the professional type they became of the militia type, this would inevitably lead to the disappearance of important and powerful war material. In their new form, armies would cease to have the same offensive character.

For these reasons, the General Commission should give very serious consideration to this suggestion and should pronounce in its favour. Both from the technical point of view and from that of substance the Czechoslovak Government had, from the beginning, been in favour of it, because his Government believed that, if it were adopted, the Conference would find it easier to fulfil its task.

M. Nadolny (Germany) said that, as the General Commission must take a decision on Point I of the Drafting Committee’s proposal, he would explain Germany’s point of view in that connection.

The Commission would certainly realise that the French plan for the standardisation of the military systems was of particular interest to Germany. It would also appreciate that Germany was in a somewhat special position in regard to this proposal. In 1919 there had been imposed upon her a new military system; she had had to transform her short-term service army into a long-term service army. Scarcely fourteen years had elapsed and she was now asked to return to a short-term service army. It was for that reason that the history of the military systems showed that some States—for instance, Switzerland and the Anglo-Saxon countries—had adopted a special system which differed from that of the other States and from the plan now before the General Commission. He doubted whether the former States would be prepared to abandon the traditions of
many centuries. He was also sure that none of these States would be persuaded that just the system it had adopted was of a specially offensive character. It was, however, precisely the offensive character which was alleged to be the basis of certain types of armies that were to be standardised under the French plan. A distinction was thus made between types of armies having an offensive character and others having a defensive character. The German delegation ventured to express some surprise at such a distinction being drawn between the different types of armies which, it was claimed, had a particularly offensive or defensive character, whereas, in the case of weapons, it was stated that all could be used both for aggression and for defence and that their character was, in the last analysis, determined by the spirit in which they were used.

The French plan precluded, first of all, the maintenance of units for national defence consisting of men serving on a long-term engagement. There were, however, no professional armies on the European continent except those of the Powers which had been disarmed by the Peace Treaties. M. Nadolny accordingly had somewhat the feeling that the proposal, by suppressing these units, aimed precisely at abolishing what had been imposed on those countries fourteen years previously expressly for the purposes of disarmament. The German delegation was far from regarding a purely professional army as ideal or as appropriate to the natural conditions of Germany, but it would be appreciated that it was impossible to destroy a whole system that had been laboriously built up in fourteen years, solely because opinion as to the characteristics of that military organisation had changed in certain quarters. Accordingly, before the German Government could come to a decision on the problem of the new standardised type, it would have to know exactly what, in the last analysis, was to be put in the place of the organisation it was proposed to destroy. The French plan gave merely the outlines of the new system, and M. Paul-Boncour's statements had not so far given the necessary explanations on this point. M. Nadolny therefore was obliged to state that the German delegation could only take a final decision when it knew the details of the proposed organisation and when a decision had been taken as to the extent to which aggressive war material would be abolished.

There was another question to be considered. The proposed system aimed at creating armies the strength of which would indubitably reside in their trained reserves. How was it to propose to make allowance for the fact that, in the fourteen years following the war, the countries possessing conscript armies had formed trained reserves numbering hundreds of thousands of men, against which the States possessing professional armies could not put into the field any similar force? If, under the French plan, all the European countries were in future to maintain short-term service armies, the immense difference between countries which had compulsory service for many years and the others—fourteen classes of reservists were thereby involved—must be taken into account in one way or another.

Further, if M. Nadolny had understood the French plan correctly, the intention of its authors was that the standardisation of the military systems should apply only to the home forces and not to those overseas. It was, however, plain that the armed forces stationed in territories near the mother country—which fairly large contingents were already stationed in the home country itself—would have to be regarded as forming part of the armed forces of the home country. It also went without saying that the measure on which the whole French plan was based—namely, the limitation of long-term service as compared with short-term service—would have to be applied in an identical manner at least to the forces in the home country and to those in the nearer overseas territories.

According to the explanations given of the French plan, another object of standardisation was to facilitate comparison of the various armies. M. Nadolny would recall, in this connection, that there were other means of achieving that end. He had in mind, for example, the method of estimating the various categories of arms proposed in the German memorandum of April 4th, 1929. In the German delegation's view, therefore, that factor should not be of decisive importance.

Confining himself for the moment to the foregoing observations, M. Nadolny summed up his country's general point of view as follows: The German delegation took up a waiting attitude with regard to the suggestion for standardising the various military systems, but was prepared to discuss the details of the problem in the Committee on Effectives.

The continuation of the discussion was adjourned to the next meeting.

THIRTY-SIXTH MEETING

Held on Friday, February 17th, 1933, at 3.30 p.m.

President: The Right Honourable A. HENDERSON.


Question I. (a) Is the General Commission of opinion that the European continental armies should be standardised by being converted into armies with short-term service and limited effectives? (continuation).

M. Beelaerts van Blokland (Netherlands) wished to state in a few words the attitude of the Netherlands in the matter under discussion.

He might, in this connection, refer to his speech of the previous week. The Netherlands had no objection to the adoption of a standard general type represented by a national army with short-term service and limited effectives. Such a type would be substantially similar to that of the Netherlands army. In the Netherlands, there was short-term service, there were limited effectives on the basis, as the Commission knew, of a system of conscription whereby the young men called up for compulsory military service were selected every year by lot up to the statutory number. He did not particularly recommend that system; he was aware that there were others.

While, therefore, M. Beelaerts van Blokland was quite prepared to reply in the affirmative to question 1(a), he would like to explain how, in his view, an affirmative reply should be interpreted. In the first place, it must be clearly understood that, after the transformation required for the standardisation of armies to the desired type, there would be no other land forces apart from those armies.

Needless to say, in laying down that principle he was in no sense seeking to prejudge the Conference’s ultimate decision regarding the French proposal for specialised units to be used for common action. He would also make a reservation in regard to the decisions to be taken on the subject of overseas forces, especially so far as concerned very remote possessions. In the case of the Netherlands, the reply to the question whether the contemplated conversion should apply also to the effectives of the overseas army could only be an emphatic negative. In comparison with the population of the Netherlands, the effectives of its colonial army were notoriously very small. Short-term service, however, as contemplated for Europe, could not be applied to the Netherlands overseas territories.

He would like to deal with another point. When, in connection with the question under consideration, reference was made to an army with short-term service, the Netherlands delegation took it that that expression applied both to the period of military training and to the period of service with the colours.

Thirdly, it was necessary to be quite clear as to what was understood by an army with short-term service and limited effectives. In his view, the two desiderata must be taken in conjunction: no man would serve longer than the statutory number of months for training, considered in conjunction with the length of his subsequent service with the colours; at the same time, the number of men called up in the annual contingent would be limited.

In conclusion, he would point out that an affirmative reply to the question under discussion in no sense constituted a reduction of armaments; all it amounted to was a method that might lead to the desired reduction. Whether that goal would be reached depended on the period that would be fixed for service and on the limitation that would be imposed on effectives.

General TÁNCZOS (Hungary) said that the Hungarian delegation accepted the principle of the conversion of the European continental armies into armies with short-term service and limited effectives.

In that conversion account would have to be taken of the “individuality” of each country in every sphere of the national life, and more particularly of its geographical position and the conditions of its national security. He would, in due course, submit detailed proposals falling within the scope of that declaration of principle. With that end in view, and having regard to the great importance that Hungary attached to this problem, he would be most grateful if the President would kindly invite the Hungarian delegation to sit on the Committee on Effectives, because he agreed with the German delegation that the question ought to be dealt with in that Committee.

M. Pierre Cot (France) thought that it was the duty of the mover of a proposal to try immediately to find some basis of conciliation in the matter of procedure. He believed that he had succeeded in doing so when he said, both to M. Nadolny and to General Táncoz, that he agreed with them that, as regards its details, the French plan for the standardisation of the armies of the European continental countries would have to be considered by the Committee on Effectives.

Having thus made a step towards them, he would ask them to make a step towards him. If the Committee on Effectives was to be able to do useful work, it was essential that all delegations should first pronounce on the questions of principle. The predominant question was whether it was really possible to bring about an appreciable reduction of armaments without having first effected this transformation of the European armies, which, as M. Beneš had so rightly said the day before, would have the result of rendering them comparable.

If the various nations desired to reduce their effectives, they must be able to compare them with one another; they must, as a mathematician would say, reduce them to a common denominator. It would be futile, at the present time, to attempt to compare the degree of offensiveness or defensiveness of a militia army—like that, for instance, of Switzerland—with that of a professional army. That had been found by the experts in the various Commissions, and hence the need, on which M. Pierre Cot would not insist, for attempting, if it were desired to reach any conclusion,—the question whether it was possible and whether it was easy to do so being reserved—to standardise the armies of the continent of Europe. That was the first point, and it was from that point that M. Pierre Cot would set out.

1 See Minutes of the thirty-second meeting of the General Commission.
Having thus laid down the principle, he came to the essential question which he would attempt to discuss in all its length and breadth. While in doing so he would try to be brief, he would endeavour to probe the various arguments to the bottom. If it were desired to standardise armies, what type should be adopted in the European sphere? That, he thought, was the crucial question. After considering it and after presenting the French Government's solution, he would take up the questions of application, the importance of which he did not overlook, but which were ancillary to the question of principle.

M. Nadolny had, of course, been right the previous day in stating that there were no armies that were inevitably offensive or defensive. A priori, it was not, of course, apparent that a country was, so to speak, condemned to the offensive because of the type of army it possessed, and that another country having another type was thereby dedicated, in international life, to a purely defensive attitude. That was true. There might well be countries which, even if they were given a short-term service army, might be a danger to the peace of the world; and others which, even if they were given a professional army, would never become a menace. He would, however, ask his colleagues to examine with him the characteristics of the different types of army, and, after making this general reservation, to consider the real problem, not the problem of what might happen in such and such circumstances, but what was likely to happen in the "quod plurimum fit", in the Latin phrase—that was to say, the question whether with such and such a type of army, with such and such a military system, the peoples were not embarking upon a road that might be more or less fraught with danger, the question whether, in examining the characteristics of the different types of army, the Conference would not have to decide that there were some which were more particularly fitted for offensive designs and others which were more particularly dedicated to the defensive, with the result that, if on this point the Conference eventually decided to choose the army which appeared to be predestined rather for defence than for attack, it would accomplish the qualitative disarmament in the sphere of war material for which all had been striving, in particular, for several months past.

If the different types of army were considered, it would be seen that there were two main systems: the professional army, on the one hand, and the short-term service army with reduced effectives, on the other. He would endeavour to describe the characteristics of both types.

Take first the professional army. Such an army appeared to have two characteristics. The first was that, by its structure, if he might so express himself, it was an army that was always ready, that could be mobilised at the instant and transported at the instant, and, in using that term, he meant, not merely that that could be done fairly quickly, but—and the importance of this point would be appreciated—in secret. It consisted of men who were available at all times, professional soldiers who lived, so to speak, permanently on the qui vive. He did not mean by that—he had said so already and he desired to repeat it—that these men were always, or more particularly, imbued with the spirit of aggression. He simply stated the facts: they were always ready and on an order could set out, be embarked or conveyed especially by the mechanical means of transport which were spreading—in a perfectly normal manner since it was due to the very progress of science—in all countries. That was their first characteristic.

The second characteristic of the professional army was that it was necessarily a small army, because it was costly, and because, at the present time, impecuniosity was the main reason everywhere for wisdom. The professional army was a paid army. It was therefore dear, and this army, which could at any moment be mobilised and transported, was an army with limited effectives. What did that mean?

It meant, in the first place, that this army with limited effectives was very unsuitable for the defensive, for placing along the whole length of a front or frontier, for that network of continuous fire which was, so to speak, the very armour of the defensive. It was very unsuitable, because it was an army that necessarily would have wings, and consequently weak points in the defensive. On the other hand, this small professional army would be very highly trained and very suitable for manoeuvres. Its leaders would consequently seek for victory in rapid success.

Hence, the second conclusion: M. Pierre Cot would show that this professional army, which could be mobilised and transported rapidly, was unsuitable, or at least not very suitable, for defensive operations.

He wished to repeat that nations with such armies would not necessarily, in the course of time, take the offensive; they would simply have in their hands an army specially suitable for offensive operations, and that was the only conclusion he desired to draw.

He then passed to the characteristics of the army with short-term service and limited effectives, to the part that might be played by the army with short-term service, particularly when confronted with these professional armies. Its characteristics were quite different, the very opposite to those of the professional army which M. Pierre Cot had just described.

The army with short-term service was a popular army and therefore slow to mobilise and requiring time to transport. The army with short-term service implied reserves, and to call up reservists it was necessary to issue a mobilisation order. The Commission would perceive already the first difference: the professional army was mobilised secretly, and the army relying on the use of reservists necessitated a mobilisation order. No secret operations were therefore possible in the latter case.

The second characteristic of an army of reservists, an army of soldiers on short-term service, was that, during the first days of mobilisation, it was "out of hand". If it was suitable for defensive operations, it did not, on the contrary, lend itself well to attack. A number of
weeks would be required, often a fairly long period, to fuse cadres and troops composed of men up to that time civilians, workers, peasants, intellectuals, who were not accustomed to work together, did not think in the same way, were not professional soldiers; so much so that for the first few weeks it would be very difficult, with an army at least nine-tenths of which consisted of reservists, to attempt operations of attack or aggression.

On the other hand, it would be a popular army, as he had said, and war experience showed that the best means of ensuring the defence of a country or a front was to place along the whole length of the frontier or front a chain of men armed with automatic weapons, capable by their presence alone, and because that act of heroism always more or less constituted by an attack was not demanded of them, of assuring the defensive.

What about the professional army? The professional army was specially suitable for the offensive. The army with short-term service—the militia, to use the word employed, for example, by the country in which the Conference was meeting—was specially suitable for the defensive.

That was why, when the French Government, anxious to develop this movement in favour of the standardisation of the different military systems, while realising, moreover, all the difficulties—and in a moment M. Pierre Cot would explain this point—had thought that attention should be turned, if it was desired to give these different systems a specially defensive aspect, towards the army with short-term service and limited effectives, rather than towards the professional army.

In this connection there was one objection, which the French delegate would himself raise in order to reply to it and so save the Commission's time. It was that the army with short-term service was an army with compulsory service and that, consequently, to create or extend compulsory military service to all European countries might have the effect of spreading the militarist spirit. He would reply briefly, avoiding raising any unnecessary susceptibilities, for he was seeking grounds for agreement and not for discussion.

Events showed that the growth of a militaristic spirit was not confined to those countries in which compulsory military service existed. In other countries there might be a number of associations which were lawful, legitimate perhaps—he said "perhaps" in order to cover all opinions on this point—but which encouraged a militaristic spirit perhaps even more than compulsory military service, owing to the fact that membership was presumably voluntary.

As he had just said, on the one hand there were armies which were admirably adapted, even if the country possessing them was an entirely pacifist country, for attack and the offensive. On the other hand, there were armies which were only suitable for national defence—he used the term "national defence" in its best and most noble sense, the urge of a whole nation united in a desire to defend itself against aggression without for a moment contemplating the possibility, even later and by force of circumstances, of becoming in turn an aggressor.

Between these two types of armies France had made her choice, not in her own interests, but in the interests of peace.

There was also what might be called the combination of the two systems, professional army and militia, a regular army which could be mobilised rapidly and the masses which could be mobilised to support that army.

He thought this would be the worst possible solution from the standpoint of peace and the maintenance of peace. To place side by side a regular army and a militia or short-term service army would be to endow a country with the most formidable army for aggression conceivable. It would make it possible—if he might venture to illustrate his meaning thus—to hit out and then, having committed this act of aggression, to occupy the territory conquered and entrench the forces with the aid of the armed masses.

He had been glad to note that the Netherlands delegate had, in a concise and clear speech, signified his entire agreement with this conception. The Conference would therefore have to choose between two types of armies; he had indicated the reasons why France chose the defensive type of army.

M. Pierre Cot concluded from those reasons that only one system was desirable, under conditions which he would state presently. He now came to the objection of principle which M. Nadolny had advanced on the previous day against the French proposal.

M. Nadolny had asked whether it was really conceivable that countries which, by a tradition and often by century-old tradition, had adopted armies so different in type as those of the United Kingdom and Switzerland, for instance, could agree to adopt a uniform type of army. The answer was simple: the United Kingdom was out of the question. It was not—and the representatives of the United Kingdom would forgive him for saying so—out of any respect for the susceptibilities of this great Power, but simply because he had raised a limited and definite question. He wished to avoid the possibility of certain types of armies being especially suitable for aggressive purposes. The British army was unsuitable for aggression because Great Britain was separated from the continent by the sea. Consequently, the military system of the United Kingdom could quite well be that of a professional army. It was certain that the United Kingdom, apart from all other reasons, would, from a technical point of view, be unable to commit a sudden and secret act of aggression. Consequently, the objection did not stand in this case, since his reasoning was based solely on what he would call the continental type of army.

Switzerland had forestalled the other nations; she had shown them the way; she was a forerunner. She possessed a short-term service army with limited effectives. He did not know whether the other countries could immediately go as far as Switzerland or whether the type to be adopted would be modelled exactly on the lines of the Swiss army. He did feel, however, that, along the general lines traced and within the limits of the whole system which had
been conceived, there could be no objection to it, and that, having thus disposed of the psychological argument concerning the United Kingdom, it was not even necessary for him to refute the psychological argument regarding Switzerland.

He now came to the other objections which had been raised, in particular, on the previous day by M. Nadolny, and he desired to repeat, because that was the very substance of his argument, that the French delegation really and truly desired to establish a system which would satisfy everyone and to which M. Nadolny—and all Germany with him—could agree.

M. Pierre Cot fully appreciated M. Nadolny’s objection. He fully appreciated that, at first sight, a country on which a particular army system had been imposed in 1919 might be such that it surprised that another military system should be proposed to it now; he intentionally refrained from using the word asked, because the object was to make a common effort. He admitted the objection, but with M. Nadolny he ventured to say two things. In the first place, he had believed, and he persisted in believing, that Germany and France would both find it to their advantage, and equally so, and peace would be better safeguarded. He would next ask permission to say that the system imposed on Germany in 1919 had perhaps been applied in such a manner and accompanied by private associations of such a nature that the position was no longer what it had been in 1919.

One thing was apparent to M. Pierre Cot, namely, that the question was now, for the first time, lifted to another plane, the definite advantage of which would be to obviate the discussion which he had no desire to start and which it would be a delicate matter to embark upon, because, whatever its conclusion, it might cause misunderstanding between France and Germany. What was particularly apparent to him was the need for something new at the present stage; all nations should take their stand on the need for standardising the types of army and devising the army system most compatible with the interests of peace. If that were done, all the rest, as he had stated earlier in his remarks, became of secondary importance. It would, of course, be necessary to work by stages, and to allow time for the change-over from one system to another. M. Nadolny would perhaps allow him to say that that was required as much in the interests of Germany as in those of France, and that it was in no way the French Government’s intention to ask any country whatever to change its military system overnight. The idea was that all countries, after clearly perceiving the aim which their anxiety to maintain peace set before them as the final goal, should move towards it, while accepting necessary stages and compromises.

He thought he had thus replied to M. Nadolny’s objection of principle. He would next observe that it was precisely the need for proceeding by stages that would make it possible to settle the problem of reserves, raised by the German delegate. The latter had said, and it was true, that for fourteen years the countries on whom the professional system had been imposed had been unable to build up reserves. M. Pierre Cot would not raise the question whether in fact these countries had not—though perhaps unintentionally—built up reserves by means of quasi-military formations. What he would ask was that the question should be settled without any hostile pronouncements on either side, since it could be settled perhaps in such a manner and accompanied by private associations of such a nature that the position was no longer what it had been in 1919.

He now came to the other objections which had been raised, in particular, on the previous day by M. Nadolny’s statement that, in air questions, before considering practical details of application, it was first necessary to come to a decision on questions of principle and—this he believed to be the right method—to agree on the aim in view, to which the French delegation should at once state whether it was of opinion, first of all, that the types of army and the military systems in Europe should be standardised, and, secondly, whether it considered that the system most nearly conformable to the principle and—which his anxiety to maintain peace set before them as the final goal, should move towards it, while accepting necessary stages and compromises.

He now came to the detailed proposals for which he had been asked. He would beg leave to say that he had been somewhat surprised, for the following reason. The previous day he had supported M. Nadolny’s statement that, in air questions, before considering practical details of application, it was first necessary to come to a decision on questions of principle and—this he believed to be the right method—to agree on the aim in view, to know what it was desired to do and the conditions upon which that aim would depend, and then to refer to a special committee, the new Air Committee in the present case, the questions of application and the possibilities of application.

The arguments that applied to air questions applied equally to that of army types. The Commission could, of course, proceed immediately to discuss the methods of application. It could begin by a debate on the question of what should be the period of military service for each country—for the period would obviously vary, if not in the case of the great Powers from whom equality of status was contemplated, at any rate in that of certain countries which were in a special position. M. Pierre Cot personally thought that the first step was to come to a decision on the principle. He believed, too, that the Commission should at once state whether it was of opinion, first of all, that the types of army and the military systems in Europe should be standardised, and, secondly, whether it considered that the system most nearly conformable with peace was that recommended by the French delegation, that was to say, the short-term service system. The French delegation would submit its detailed proposals in the Committee on Effectives, but it went without saying that they presupposed effective control.
and would vary according to the degree of international security obtained by France. The Commission would not be surprised if the French representative stated that his country, prepared as it was in all circumstances to move, in agreement of course with the other countries, towards the short-term army system, which, in its view, was more compatible than any other with the interests of peace, would advance further in that direction the greater the progress made in the matter of security. France was anxious to go very far. She must be helped to do so by being given a full measure of security, since she would thereby be enabled to undertake a full measure of disarmament.

Purely as an indication, and without giving any undertaking, since the undertakings would be given in the Committee on Effectives in correlation with the work which would be done in another sphere, M. Pierre Cot would state that France, for her part, since of course all special circumstances were reserved—and on this point he entirely agreed with the Hungarian representative that there were certain special circumstances—contemplated three detailed proposals, which he would state with pleasure and in the following terms:

"First proposal: We will, if the Conference agrees, if the conditions of general security to which I referred just now are fulfilled—I will not say a hundred per cent fulfilled, but sufficiently fulfilled—move towards a system of short-term service of less than one year, which might possibly lead us to eight or nine months' service, if you will give us corresponding security.

"Second proposal: We contemplate that the non-commissioned officers of this short-term service army would be in the same proportion for all the great Powers and for each of the categories of forces suggested under the French proposal. Thus here also we should gradually achieve identity of status.

"Third proposal: To provide for the necessary adaptations, the need for which is immediately apparent to Germany and, indeed, to the delegations, we contemplate at least two stages, each of which might cover four years in order to meet all situations.

"Further, we will give you in the Committee on Effectives all the detailed explanations you may deem necessary. I would add that these explanations will, of course, vary according to the replies to the other questions in the questionnaire, particularly to one question we regard as essential: namely, the extent to which what I will call pre-military or quasi-military training should be reckoned—that is to say, organisations outside the army that give military training. Obviously, they must be brought within the general system of the armed nation and the short-term army, which we suggest would gradually bring about that equality of status towards which we shall move if we obtain sufficient security.

"These are the brief considerations I have thought fit to place before you today."

M. Pierre Cot came now to his conclusion. The General Commission must take up a position with regard to the question of principle; this discussion would immediately determine its future work, for a professional army had different weapons from an army with short-term service of a more particularly defensive character.

It would be advisable, not only for the progress of the work, but for public opinion also, that the General Commission should take up a position with regard to these questions of principle as soon as possible. Its decision would remove uncertainty and distrust. It would show that the French delegation desired to proceed towards a system common to all, but ensuring for all the maximum peace and security. That was why it had handed in the following draft resolution which had just been distributed:

"The General Commission notes:

"(a) That only a military status of a definitely defensive character is compatible with a regime of security.

"(b) That in continental Europe an army with a short-term service and limited effectiveness is the type of military organisation which represents the most defensive character and with which mobilisation is slowest and which therefore is the most capable of ensuring that the pacific procedures provided for in the Covenant can be set in motion, without the League of Nations, in case of aggression, being faced with an accomplished fact.

"It considers that the general adoption of this type of army will in itself bring about a general reduction of effectives both by a decrease in the number of men called up and by a reduction in the duration of service; that in addition it will render the effectives comparable and will permit of the application of methods of calculation like those which have been proposed by the United States delegation and of which the Effectives Committee has undertaken the study.

"It decides to pass on to the study of the conditions in which this general adoption might be brought about on the European continent in order to lead to an equality of defensive status between the Powers of that continent."
In the above resolution, the Commission was asked to state that it was desirable to bring about the standardisation of the European continental armies, to adopt a type of army that appeared to the French delegation to be most compatible with the interests of peace. Once these two decisions of principle were taken, all questions of detail would be referred to the Committee on Effectives, which would be requested to settle, not questions of principle that ought to be settled on the political plane, but questions of application and adjustment, in accordance with instructions it would be given.

On the President's invitation, M. de Brouckère, Chairman of the Committee on Effectives, came to the platform.

M. Litvinoff (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said he had listened to M. Pierre Cot with great pleasure.

The Soviet Union had no professional army, and it was not for M. Litvinoff, therefore, to accept the proposal for standardisation. It would be a very cheap concession to accept a proposal that did not concern his country, at the expense of other delegations which were more concerned in the matter.

There were various types of armies with short-term service, and M. Litvinoff presumed that M. Pierre Cot had not had these various types in mind. There were the militia type, the territorial type and others, and none of them could be characterised as a specially offensive type of army. In consequence, M. Pierre Cot would presumably have no objection to leaving the different countries to some extent free to retain the type of army they thought most suitable to their needs, as long as it was not a professional army. After all, it was not very easy to change a system that had existed for many years and was adapted to a country's requirements. Moreover, to change a system required considerable time, from five to eight years was mentioned in the Drafting Committee. He hoped it would not be necessary to wait for five to eight years until all the armies had been standardised, before armaments were reduced.

It might be said that standardisation was necessary in order to provide a basis for comparing the value of the armies in the different countries. In reply, M. Litvinoff would say that this proposal was confined to European continental armies. Some European countries might be omitted from the scheme, and all non-European States would be left out. He hoped there would be a general Disarmament Convention, however, and that armaments and effectives would be reduced, not only in European, but also in non-European States. If it were necessary to adopt only one type of army, in order to compare the value of armies, how would the non-European Be dealt with? How would the European armaments be compared with the armies of non-European States, which were also to be reduced? That was another argument in favour of leaving European countries free to adopt those types of short-term service armies which best suited them. That was M. Litvinoff's first reservation.

His second reservation was formal and concerned the reference in the draft resolution to the League of Nations, of which his country was not a Member.

Subject to these two reservations, he had no objection to the French proposal.

M. Nadolny (Germany) desired to tender his sincere thanks for the very explicit and detailed explanations which M. Pierre Cot had given in answer to the objections raised by himself on the previous day.

It was precisely these details which made it impossible for the German delegation to express its opinion immediately on the substance of the question. He therefore asked the President to be good enough to allow him to explain his views at the next meeting. All those present would recognise that this question was of the highest importance to Germany. It must not be forgotten that Germany was here to obtain a reduction of armaments, naturally on the basis established by the Treaty of Peace. Instead of that, she was being requested to transform her army. It would therefore be understood that she desired to go into this question very carefully and could not state her position at the present meeting.

He wished, however, to make one comment. He could not yet understand nor admit the principle laid down by M. Pierre Cot that the standardisation of armies would, so to speak, be a sine qua non for reduction. The German delegation did not believe that failure to standardise would exclude reduction, because, as he had said on the previous day, there were other methods for the comparison of armies which would make it possible to achieve the aim of this Conference —namely, reduction.

M. Nadolny hoped, and was himself certain, that M. Pierre Cot's explanations would make it possible to deal with this question on a higher plane than had been the case up to the present, so that something positive might be achieved in their common task. He also hoped that, in his own explanations on the following Monday, he might be able to make, in accordance with the French delegate's invitation, proposals which would take matters a step further forward.

He also had a few words to say with regard to M. Pierre Cot's reference on two occasions, he believed, to para-military associations. In his first reference M. Pierre Cot had said that, in many countries, such associations existed and might perhaps contribute to the formation of a militaristic spirit. M. Nadolny had nothing to say to that. Everyone knew that, in many countries, there were associations which gave their members military training, held congresses,
Mr. Wilson (United States of America) said that his delegation had not intended to take part in the present discussion, since it bore on an item of the agenda which was of special and immediate interest to the States of continental Europe. It was only because the draft resolution presented by the French delegation referred to the plan which the American delegation had proposed for the reduction of effectives that Mr. Wilson felt obliged to make certain observations on the text of that resolution.

On points (a) and (b) the United States delegation did not feel called upon, of course, to take a position, and it was only on the third paragraph that he wished to offer observations.

Mr. Wilson's delegation considered that the third paragraph entered the realm of speculation, or rather aspiration, and, while the tenets which it set out might prove in the main to be accurate, they were tenets which must be justified by the result before they could safely be proclaimed, and the accuracy of which it would be possible to judge only after a term of years.

Mr. Wilson asked permission to explain the reasons for these remarks. The document stated, "The general adoption of this type of army will in itself bring about a general reduction of effectives . . ." That might be entirely true, and no one hoped more than Mr. Wilson that it would prove to be entirely true. But he would venture to point out that it was true only if the annual contingent or the reduction of the period of service were such as to bring about substantial reductions. Furthermore, the reduction would depend in a large measure upon the number of so-called professional soldiers left in the possession of the short-term armies. Further, the paragraph stated that the adoption of the plan would render the effectives comparable. That, he thought, might be an admissible statement if the word "eventually" were inserted, because, as M. Pierre Cot had himself said, there must be a transition period during which comparison between the various types of soldiers would be just as essential and no less difficult than if the French plan did not exist.

Again, the following words occurred in the draft resolution: "and will permit of the application of methods of calculation like those which have been proposed by the United States delegation . . ." While Mr. Wilson's delegation believed that the realisation of the French plan might and probably would simplify the application of the plan of the President of the United States by bringing a meeting of minds and a relaxation of tension, it did not believe that the realisation of the French plan was an essential condition precedent to the reaching of reductions by President Hoover's plan. In any event, his delegation would deplore the postponement of all discussion of the application of the American plan until the complete realisation of the French plan. It would also deplore the prejudging of the question of the order of work of the Committee on Effectives which the same paragraph would seem to imply.

It therefore ventured to propose to the French delegation that the third paragraph of the resolution might well be omitted, and hoped that the French delegation did not attach high importance to it.

M. Pierre Cot (France) suggested, in the first place, that the third paragraph of his resolution might be revised as follows to meet the United States delegate's point:

"It considers that the general adoption of this type of army would permit more easily of the realisation of a general reduction of effectives both by a decrease in the number of men called up and by a reduction in the duration of service; that, in addition, it would progressively render the effectives comparable and would assist in the application of methods of calculation like those which have been proposed by the United States delegation and of which the Committee on Effectives has undertaken the study."

He was sure that M. Nadolny would not be surprised if he said to him in the most friendly manner that, obviously, he had nothing to add and nothing to withdraw from what he had just said. He felt sure that M. Nadolny would do him the justice of agreeing that the tone he had used was entirely conciliatory. In the French delegation's view, there was no doubt that certain
General Cavallero (Italy) had listened with the greatest interest to the French delegate's statement and expressed appreciation of its lucidity and precision, qualities which M. Pierre Cot had displayed, not only in the general part of his remarks, but in the technical part as well. General Cavallero desired to state that the Italian delegation sympathised with this initiative as, indeed, with any initiative which aimed at making an effective contribution to the Conference's task, namely, the reduction and limitation of armaments.

He would only say a few words on the first paragraph of the questionnaire, leaving till later the observations he might have to make on the draft resolution.

First of all, what was meant by short-term service? The French delegate had explained his idea very clearly. In his view it was a period of service well below twelve months. It was a well-known principle that a country's military regime, particularly as regards the period of military service, must conform to certain geographical, racial and other needs. General Cavallero desired, however, to urge that, in Italy, the period of service had been adopted with a view to applying the best solution possible coupled with all due allowance for the complex requirements of any military institution, economic exigencies included. Thus, under Italian law, the period of service was twelve months, a longer period therefore than that which the authors of the plan regarded as the maximum for short-term service.

In fact, however, the law was applied with special qualifications to make allowance for other national needs, so that the average period of service for an entire recruits' class was somewhat lower than twelve months.

How then was the Italian army to be classified? Was it a short-term army? Was it a long-term army? In General Cavallero's opinion it was without any doubt a short-term army. Everyone knew that the Italian effectives were limited and that Italy called to arms only a contingent far smaller than the possibilities of recruitment would enable her to do. He desired to emphasise that the Italian army was already a short-term army with limited effectives.

He hastened to add that, in his opinion, it would be very difficult for his country, for the moment at any rate, to change its military system, which was the outcome of long and mature experience, even with the object, the importance of which Italy did not fail to appreciate, of rendering the armies of the different countries comparable inter se.

Another question was that of the standardisation of the colonial armies. On that point M. Pierre Cot had given assurances of a nature to allay certain misgivings. Nevertheless, while it was true that the organisation of the colonial forces had its own entirely special requirements, the Italian delegation considered that for its country, as for others, the effective reduction of the colonial forces closest to the home country would have to be put on the same footing as those of the European armies, since they were in a position to give a greater or smaller measure of assistance, according to circumstances, in the defence of the home territory.

As to the reduction of effectiveness in itself, he would venture to recall that, so far as Italy was concerned, quantitative reductions, among which the Italian delegation included, firstly and foremost, the reduction of material which could be more easily and more speedily realised than any other, were interdependent on one another. In his opinion, they constituted an indivisible whole which should, moreover, be accompanied by qualitative reductions.

He would remind the Commission that the Italian delegation had never disguised its belief that no disarmament measure could ever be effective unless it bore, first and foremost,
on war material. That was why it had invariably insisted on the principle that all measures affecting the different spheres to which the work for reduction and limitation was to apply must necessarily be interdependent. It therefore considered it superfluous to reaffirm this principle and, moreover, it doubted whether it was at present possible to make any radical changes in the Italian military organisation which, as he had just said, already consisted of a short-term army with limited effectives.

The Italian delegation hoped that the General Commission would realise the difficulties with which it was faced, in view of the premises on which it had been obliged to insist, in associating itself with any conclusion whatever affecting the present complicated problems, before it knew what decision was going to be adopted, more especially in regard to material.

He would, if necessary, submit later any observations he had to make on the draft resolution. He trusted that the question of quantitative and qualitative reductions—in particular as regards material—would be a little better elucidated than it was at present. He did not hesitate to say—and the French delegate would not resent it—that he would prefer that the text of the resolution just submitted, whether revised or not, should be referred, in accordance with the decision taken in connection with air questions, to the Committee on Effectives.

M. Pierre Cot (France) said that he agreed entirely with Tevfik Rüstü Bey, and ultimately with M. Beneš, in thinking that the period of military service would be fixed in accordance with the conditions of Article 8 of the Covenant, and with all due allowance for special circumstances and the special security of each State.

Moreover, the text he had proposed appeared to him to give Tevfik Rüstü Bey full satisfaction. The latter would no doubt acknowledge that fact if he observed that the first sentence was drafted in the conditional: “It considers that the general adoption of this type of army would permit more easily of the realisation . . . .”, which consequently, from this point of view, implied an eventuality or a wish applying to the whole mass of effectives represented, if he might say so, by all the delegates at the Conference, and which would enable the discussion on the particular case of each country to be taken up in the Committee on Effectives.

Again, the last paragraph in the draft resolution stated that the General Commission decided to pass on to the study of the conditions in which this general adoption might be brought about. Thus, with the use of this conditional, and with the aforesaid addition, it would seem that the entirely legitimate misgivings which had been expressed were entirely met.

He would reply in brief to General Cavallero, whom he thanked for his straightforward and frank statement. The Italian delegate had said that it would be difficult for his country to shorten the period of military service below twelve months. He had appeared to think that the French delegate was making this reduction a sort of sine qua non. M. Pierre Cot desired to make it clear that this proposal had been made purely as an indication, that he had said that the French delegation could itself contemplate this reduction, given certain conditions as to security and subject to the future development of the Conference, that, moreover, each country might have its own individual point of view and that the figure he had thrown into the discussion, not as a pledge, but purely as an indication, appeared to him to apply exclusively to certain Powers and not to others on whose position the delegate of France was not called upon to pronounce.

General Cavallero had further stated that it would, he thought, be difficult for his country to change its military system. But that was true of all countries. It was hardly a reason for thinking that it would not be desirable for everyone to do so. All delegates had come to Geneva to make sacrifices, to give pledges, and as international public men to solve difficulties with which they were faced as national public men. The point was whether, in the interests of peace, all the countries as a whole, or certain individual countries, should or should not modify their military organisation. M. Pierre Cot felt certain that if it were proved in the Committee on Effectives that a reduction in effectives, combined with the other reductions, would be rendered easier, because comparisons had been rendered easier.

As to the question of colonial effectives, he would merely say that it should be discussed under paragraph 1, sub-paragraph 2. He had merely desired to suggest a guiding line and to say that all the colonial Powers were in a special situation, that they realised that they could not, in settling that matter, fail to take into account the anxieties of others, and that, when this second point was considered, the various delegations would have an opportunity of intimating their opinions.

Finally, he had already dealt briefly with the question of the interdependence of the reductions that all countries might have to make as regards material and effectives. France had always contended that the negotiations bore on factors which were all interdependent and formed an indivisible whole, and, in that respect, he saw no difficulty now.

The Italian delegate had asked that the consideration of these matters should be referred to a special committee that would, M. Pierre Cot thought, be the fourth sub-committee—a kind of new Committee on Effectives. He could not agree to that proposal, since, in the present case the question at issue was one of principle which was within the General Commission’s
jurisdiction. He thought that the indications he had given would allow it to be realised that the French delegation’s aim was twofold—first, to give real encouragement to the general reduction of effectives by the institution of a defensive type of army, and, secondly, to make allowance for all special situations.

Within the limit of the foregoing general observations, he would ask the General Commission to pronounce on the principle. It was clear that, if agreement could not be reached on the measures of application, there would have to be a further debate in the General Commission, but it was only possible to pass to measures of application and execution if the General Commission had first determined the main lines of the work to be done. There had already been three Committees on Effectives. They had all held long discussions, in which the technical experts had gladly taken part; but the politicians had apparently given the technical experts insufficiently precise terms of reference. When experts, and experts alone, were asked to solve questions, experience showed that, in the matter of disarmament, no conclusion could be reached. A change of method was therefore necessary. Let the General Commission enunciate the principle and afterwards—and this would be the perfect method—the experts would have to apply the Commission’s political decisions in the general plan of peace.

M. Nadolny (Germany) keenly regretted, in the interests of the Conference’s progress, that M. Pierre Cot had not attempted to clear up the position at once and remove what was equivocal in his observations. The French delegate would understand that M. Nadolny could not permit any stricture whatever, or even the shadow of a stricture, on his country’s conduct. In these circumstances, the only course available to him was to hold the question open. He very sincerely hoped that it would be possible to remove all ambiguity and to make the position perfectly clear and plain.

The continuation of the discussion was adjourned to the next meeting.

THIRTY-SEVENTH MEETING

Held on Wednesday, February 22nd, 1933, at 3.30 p.m.

President: The Right Honourable A. Henderson.

75. Question of Effectives: Questionnaire drawn up by the Drafting Committee: Questions relating to the French Plan for the Standardisation of the European Continental Armies (continuation).

Question 1. (a): “Is the General Commission of opinion that the European continental armies should be standardised by being converted into armies with short-term service and limited effectives?” (continuation).

M. Nadolny (Germany) said that the detailed and very interesting explanations which the French delegate, M. Pierre Cot, had given on the previous Friday in his remarkable speech concerning the French plan for the standardisation of types of armies, in regard to which he had given certain particulars, had naturally keenly interested the German delegation, particularly as they were to a large extent addressed directly to it. It was for this reason that the German delegation had again submitted the French proposal to a close scrutiny.

The German delegate now wished to express his opinion on M. Pierre Cot’s explanations as a whole and, at the same time, to state his attitude towards the draft resolution which the French delegate had submitted to the General Commission.

M. Pierre Cot had emphasised in his explanations—and the draft resolution also began in the same way—that armies should be given a defensive character. As the German delegation understood it, this idea constituted the kernel of the French proposal for standardising the status of armies. The German delegation entirely approved of it and considered that it must indeed be the fundamental idea underlying the general disarmament which was the Conference’s aim. It was therefore necessary, before taking up an attitude towards the general question of standardisation, to gain some idea as to how the defensive character of armies could best be ensured.

In this connection, M. Pierre Cot had thought fit to assign decisive importance to military status. M. Nadolny had followed his explanations with the greatest interest. But he regretted to say that M. Pierre Cot had not entirely convinced him. In M. Nadolny’s opinion, military status certainly had some importance, but it was not the decisive factor. No one would deny that personal qualities were an important factor in the value of an army. In his opinion, M. Pierre Cot was wrong, however, in attaching the chief importance to the period of service. The spirit of aggression could be as keen in a soldier on short-term service as in a soldier on long-term service, while either type of army might, according to the spirit and training of the
troops, be only capable of use for national defence. Nor could M. Nadolny regard as convincing the argument that a short-term service army required a long period of mobilisation before it could be employed for war. The organisation of short-term service armies could be so devised and their mobilisation could be so prepared that an essential part thereof might be ready at very short notice to penetrate into the territory of another State. There were States in which several classes of trained reserves and reserve officers of all classes might be called up without a mobilisation order and, although previous permission from Parliament. Everything depended on the mobilisation arrangements which, if prepared down to the minutest detail, might make the whole nation ready for war at the shortest notice. It was interesting to read what an eminent Swiss expert had recently written on this subject in a Swiss periodical:

"With a suitable organisation such as exists in Switzerland, such a 'national' army can be mobilised in a very few days."

It followed that a country which, owing to carefully prepared mobilisation arrangements, was in a position to convert the whole of its population which was capable of bearing arms into an instrument of war at the shortest notice, could always carry out with success an aggression against a neighbouring country which had only a small professional army without trained reserves. From the point of view of an offensive force, the question of numbers in the comparison of the different armies was of much greater importance. If therefore it were desired, as the French draft intended, to weaken the offensive power of armies and increase their defensive power, the first thing to be done was to effect a large reduction in the effectiveness of powerfully armed countries and to place armaments on an equal footing. Without such a reduction and without such a numerical equality, any other measure such as a reduction in the period of service would only be of problematical value.

In this connection the question of overseas troops could not be forgotten. M. Pierre Cot had not yet completely explained his ideas on this subject; but, as everyone knew, in some countries, the overseas forces were so close to the home country—or were actually in the home country—that, in case of war, they could be employed in the same way as the troops of the home country. It would be remembered that such forces had been employed in the world war and had played an important part in it. If these forces consisted of long-term service soldiers, they would indeed have precisely the same quality as, according to M. Pierre Cot's explanations, were possessed by professional armies. It resulted from the ideas embodied in the French draft and also in the event of a reduction and limitation of effective forces, that it was impossible to leave out of account the overseas forces which were situated in the vicinity of the home country or in the home country itself, if this measure was not to be rendered illusory.

Whatever importance it might be considered possible to attach to military status from the point of view of the defensive or offensive character of an army, the really decisive factor in this connection was, in the German delegation's opinion, the arms and war material at an army's disposal. No army, however well trained, could be employed for aggression if it did not possess the material necessary for such an operation, and this lack of material could not be remedied by a long period of service or by rapid mobilisation. Moreover, short-term service troops might very well take part in an aggression if they were provided with necessary arms, if long-range guns kept under fire the roads of access and the railways of the opponent, and if heavy artillery and large numbers of tanks blasted a way for the troops through all obstacles. But what was most important, from the point of view of their use for purposes of aggression, was the air fleets which gave armies their character. From the first moment, these fleets could carry aggression into the heart of the enemy country and, by means of air bombardment, not only destroy military objectives, but at the same time spread terror and disaster among the civilian population.

In view of all this, what was the value of a longer or shorter period of service for the land troops? In the last resort, it was the material which was decisive. Hence, if it were desired to achieve genuine disarmament while ensuring general security, the main task was to abolish totally all specifically offensive material; this, however, at the same time constituted the most important—and, indeed, the essential—means of giving armies a defensive character.

Having examined the factors upon which, in its view, depended the offensive or defensive character of armies, the Commission could pass to the question of standardisation. It could not, of course, be denied that the existence of a standard type of army in all countries would facilitate comparison, and M. Nadolny well understood that the French mind, always aiming at logic and system, desired to apply the most perfect methods possible to the comparison of armies. But M. Nadolny had already had occasion to explain recently that there were other means of rendering possible a comparison of order and that it could never be overlooked that the particular requirements of each country formed and determined the military status that suited it and guaranteed its security. Moreover, if his memory served him well, Mr. Wilson had pointed out the other day that the Hoover proposal for the reduction and limitation of effective forces could be realised, even without standardisation. Indeed, if it were not possible to reduce effectives and give armies a defensive character without standardising military systems, this measure must certainly be extended to the armies of all States, for the armaments of all States must be settled by the Convention. In any event, the German delegate must point out that any measure aimed at giving armies a defensive character must not be limited to the
European continent, but must be extended to the whole world, or at least to the whole of Europe.

To sum up: the German Government had always urged the view that a system safeguarding the security of all States must, in the first place, entail a reduction in the armaments of the heavily armed countries and the proportionate adjustment of armaments.

It was glad to support the idea of giving armies a defensive character. It was of opinion, however, that, in bringing this about, the following points of view must be borne in mind:

1. The defensive or offensive character of armies was determined, not so much by the military system (that was to say, by the organisation and period of service of the personnel) as by armament consisting of categories of arms which were mainly aggressive. The abolition of the means of aggression (heavy mobile artillery, tanks, air forces, bombing from the air), equality of abolition for all States without exception, and proportionate adjustment of material were therefore of decisive importance.

2. With regard to effectives, the aggressive possibilities of armies would be influenced, not so much by the introduction of a particular standard military system not arising out of conditions peculiar to the respective States, as by a substantial reduction in and proportionate adjustment of the degree of armament, in accordance with the right of all States to security. It was understood that the overseas forces which a State maintained near the home country or any part of the overseas forces stationed in the home country should be regarded as part of the armed forces of the home country.

The German delegation was therefore prepared, as it had already said, to discuss the French plan. Its decision must, however, depend upon the satisfactory solution of the questions just mentioned. It had summarised its views in the following proposal which it had the honour to submit to the General Commission:

"The General Commission notes:

(a) That only armies of a specifically defensive character are compatible with a system of security;

(b) That, in order to give armies a defensive character, it is necessary, in the first place, to deprive them of the means of aggression by abolishing arms of a specifically offensive character (mobile heavy guns, tanks, air forces, prohibition of air bombardment) and to fix the quantity of war material authorised for each army;

(c) That, in order to establish a system of security, it is further necessary to carry out a substantial reduction in the effectives of powerfully armed States and an equalisation of the effectives of all States. It is understood that, in this respect, overseas forces in overseas territories near the home country, and overseas forces stationed in the home country itself, should be regarded as part of the home forces.

In this connection, before pronouncing on the principle of the standardisation of types of army, the General Commission decides:

(a) Itself to settle without delay the question of the abolition of specifically offensive weapons and the limitation of authorised war material;

(b) To instruct the Committee on Effectives to frame rules for the reduction and equalisation of effectives on the basis of the principles of the Hoover proposal, and to submit a recommendation on the subject to the General Commission within... days."

M. MUNCH (Denmark) said that the problem of comparing the effectives of armies of different types, with which the Conference was at present dealing, had always been very difficult to solve. It had been discussed at length in the Preparatory Commission and again in the various committees of the Conference, but unsuccessfully.

The system discussed so fully in the Preparatory Commission, that was to say, the system of adopting as a basis for comparison the average days of service, was satisfactory in comparing armies of the same type. But it did not appear possible to apply it when comparing armies having a short period of service with armies based on long-term service.

Denmark, which belonged to no political group, had followed these efforts with very great interest and deeply regretted their failure. As long as the present state of insecurity lasted, she would be as seriously threatened by the consequences of a European conflict as the countries in which such a conflict might break out. The general distrust that was a feature of the present position weighed as heavily on the economic life of Denmark as on that of the large countries. That was why it was of the greatest importance to Denmark, also that a way out of the very disturbed situation at present prevailing should be found.

As regards the problem of effectives, this very important problem which consisted in finding a reasonable basis for a comparison of different types of armies, M. Munch confessed that it was, in his view, almost impossible to solve it. The Conference could, of course, decide,...
by an act of will, in favour of a particular system, but a solution of that kind would always be more or less arbitrary, and obviously there would be serious difficulties in the way of its general adoption. It was clear that comparison would be much easier if the countries concerned adopted an approximately standard type of army.

That was why M. Munch had read with the greatest interest the French proposal for the standardisation of types of armies in the different countries; his interest was increased by the statement in which the representative of France had explained, on Friday last, the reasons for his proposal. M. Munch hoped that, at this time, when the Conference's work was hampered by so many difficulties, this proposal would open up possibilities that it had been difficult, up to the present, to contemplate.

It was true, as had been pointed out, that, during the transition period of six to eight years contemplated by the French representative, it would still be difficult to make a comparison, and that the end of that period should not be awaited before bringing about substantial reductions in effectives. But it appeared to the Danish delegate that it would be far easier for the States most concerned to resign themselves to more or less arbitrary solutions during a transition period, when they knew that, after a certain time, a rational and fair system would be established, than if the arbitrary solutions were to be permanent.

M. Munch hoped the Commission would adopt the principle of a common basis for comparing countries. If so, it must be supposed that it was extremely elastic. What specially concerned the discussions, and Count Raczyński would venture to draw attention to the Polish speech in support of that statement on February 6th.

During the past few days the Danish delegate had received the impression that all the delegations agreed that it was neither possible nor necessary to establish such a system of standard army in all countries. Everyone admitted that there were certain countries, important countries like the United Kingdom and the United States of America, in which this system would be too contrary to tradition and in which the problem of comparison was not as important as elsewhere. Nevertheless, M. Munch wondered whether it would not be possible and advisable, in the future Convention, to make the provisions relating to this point general by specifically stipulating that exceptions could be made in those cases where comparison would be unimportant. The problem was, of course, most burning in Central Europe, but there were other parts of the world in which rules of this kind might also have their value, and, in M. Munch's opinion, rules applying to continental Europe alone—a term somewhat difficult to define—should only be adopted when that was unavoidable.

Attention had also been called, during the discussion on Friday afternoon, to the importance of a reduction of material, of the abolition of specially offensive material. Obviously, M. Munch fully concurred with this. It seemed to him, however, that to adopt the system of short-term service and limited effectives for the reasons explained by the French delegate—that was to say, in order to create a type of army not suited to attack, particularly to sudden attack—would necessarily involve the abolition of specially aggressive material. The natural consequence of an agreement relating to effectives would be an agreement with regard to material.

All the delegations agreed that it was neither possible nor necessary to establish such a system of standard army in all countries. Everyone admitted that there were certain countries, important countries like the United Kingdom and the United States of America, in which this system would be too contrary to tradition and in which the problem of comparison was not as important as elsewhere. Nevertheless, M. Munch wondered whether it would not be possible and advisable, in the future Convention, to make the provisions relating to this point general by specifically stipulating that exceptions could be made in those cases where comparison would be unimportant. The problem was, of course, most burning in Central Europe, but there were other parts of the world in which rules of this kind might also have their value, and, in M. Munch's opinion, rules applying to continental Europe alone—a term somewhat difficult to define—should only be adopted when that was unavoidable.

During the past few days the Danish delegate had received the impression that all the delegates were convinced that tangible results must now be achieved very rapidly. Day by day the economic depression, accentuated and prolonged by the policy of economic isolation by which the Governments had unfortunately sought to remedy the difficulties of the moment, embittered the psychological condition of the nations. At a time when modern technical methods were providing man with the means amply to satisfy all his needs, it would be increasingly difficult to induce the peoples to submit to the general impoverishment which was the inevitable result of this policy of isolation. It was everywhere creating disequilibrium in men's minds which, day by day, would complicate, would even seriously complicate, the Conference's work. If it desired to succeed, it must go quickly. That was why M. Munch hoped the Commission would adopt the principle of a common basis for comparing the armies of the countries in question, in the expectation that that resolution would facilitate the work of the Conference in the very difficult sphere of effectives and consequently in other spheres.

Count Raczyński (Poland) said the Polish delegation had followed with great interest the General Commission's discussions on the principles to be applied to the reduction and limitation of effectives. The scope of those discussions was continually extending. The Polish delegation had been fully aware of this serious disadvantage since the beginning of the discussions, and Count Raczyński would venture to draw attention to the Polish speech in support of that statement on February 6th. 1

The Commission had heard the most diverse interpretations of the proposed system. It might almost be concluded therefrom that the system was already fully applied by many countries. If so, it must be supposed that it was extremely elastic. What specially concerned

--- 291 ---

1 See Minutes of the thirty-first meeting of the General Commission.
his delegation was an objection that might be called an objection of procedure, but that was nevertheless of fundamental importance.

The Commission had been assured that the discussion on the technical aspects of disarmament, which was taking place in the General Commission, was closely connected with the Political Commission's progress in the sphere of security, and that the General Commission was not required to take any decision with regard to the substance of the matter. As the French plan formed a whole, the parts of which were interdependent, it was impossible to separate any one part and deal with it alone.

In the resolution now before it, the Commission was asked to take a final decision with regard to a system of military organisation, independent of any other consideration.

Poland's attitude was quite clear. It was not prompted by any consideration alien to the business of the Conference. Poland desired to safeguard peace and to preserve the conditions of real international co-operation. The Polish delegation felt that the Conference's work could not with impunity depart from the stable bases on which rested the whole structure of disarmament. These bases were constituted by the precise texts of treaties in which the obligations of the parties were clearly defined. Those texts were valid. They still bound the parties, and only by taking them into consideration could the Conference proceed with its work. The General Commission, and still less the Committee on Effectives, was not required to modify them, or even usefully to discuss them. Neither body was competent to do so.

The Polish delegation was glad to note that the German representative had himself testified to the German Government's devotion to and respect for the provisions to which Count Raczyński had just referred.

On the basis of these considerations, the Polish delegate would draw attention to a principle of moral, political and legal value and one of primary importance. It was the principle referred to by Sir John Simon in his remarkable speech in the Bureau on November 17th, 1932. During the present disturbed period, the words of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs for the United Kingdom retained their full importance and value: it was still true that "freedom to readjust her fighting forces"—that was to say, the fighting forces of Germany—"should be governed by the condition that readjustment is carried out in such a way as not to conflict with the principle of limitation and reduction of armaments".1

The Polish delegation had always shared this view. It was convinced that the Conference would not be carrying out its mandate if, as the result of the discussions on disarmament, it granted any State the right to re-arm. In that spirit the Polish delegation reserved its right to examine carefully any proposals that might be made. In that spirit, too, it had proposed, during the General Commission's discussions, a programme of work which it still believed was the best from the practical point of view, and in accordance with the principles Count Raczyński had just mentioned.

Mr. Eden (United Kingdom) had listened with the greatest interest to the speech of his colleague the German representative. It might, perhaps, be thought that those nations which were least directly concerned with the very important problem under discussion should abstain from making any contribution to the debate. Mr. Eden did not share that view. Detachment had its responsibilities also, and it was in an attempt to discharge those responsibilities that he would put a few brief observations before his colleagues.

He had been deeply impressed by the nature and character of the arguments which M. Pierre Cot had presented the previous week in emphasising the essentially defensive character of the military organisation, so far as concerned effectives, which the French representative had then outlined. He was glad to find that that view was fairly generally shared at the present meeting.

Many members would recall that, during the long years of the Preparatory Commission's work, it was often argued, notably by the United Kingdom representative at that time, that the Swiss model was the ideal which all countries would wish to attain, and it must, he thought, be recognised that the proposals put forward by M. Pierre Cot on behalf of the French Government did approximate very closely to that model.

During the present meeting the Commission had been rightly reminded that the offensive or defensive character of armies had to be judged, not only by the length of service that might be accepted, but also by the armaments of those armies. Mr. Eden quite agreed. Disarmament must deal with arms no less than effectives. The United Kingdom Government had always attached the greatest importance to this problem of material, and that was why it had been the first to emphasise the importance of qualitative disarmament. But while it was quite clear that, if armies were to be given defensive characteristics, weapons also must have defensive characteristics, he would respectfully suggest that that was the next stage of the General Commission's work. He hoped that, for the time being, the Commission would stand by the order which it had provisionally accepted, as set out in the British programme,2 and deal with effectives at once and with material next.

1 See Minutes of the twenty-ninth meeting of the Bureau, page 93.
There were many delegations who would be unable to accept a final decision upon effectives until decisions had been arrived at upon material. Well and good! But that did not prevent the taking of decisions upon effectives subject to satisfactory conclusions being reached later upon material. He fully appreciated the position in which many delegations found themselves in deciding upon effectives immediately, while the subject of material was still undecided, but he thought, if they would be content to keep those reservations in their minds and, if they deemed necessary, upon their tongues, the Commission could still proceed to take those decisions upon effectives which the French delegate had with reason asked it to take.

Mr. Eden therefore welcomed the fact that, subject to the conditions which the German delegate had made with such force at the present meeting, M. Nadolny had not opposed a blank negative to the French delegate's proposition. To that extent, he thought that the present discussions had marked a step forward.

The problem under consideration was one of the most important in the whole work of the Conference. The measure of agreement that could be recorded in it, even though provisional in the judgment of some delegations, was at least the first stage in a wider agreement which should embody, not only effectives, but material also. He therefore proposed that the Commission should adhere to the programme as it stood at present, that it should continue the discussion and reach decisions upon effectives, it being freely understood by all that those decisions were subject, in the judgment of certain delegations, to the decisions to be reached immediately afterwards upon the subject of material.

M. de Vasconcellos (Portugal) said the Government of the Portuguese Republic had instructed him to reply in the affirmative to the question concerning the standardisation of the armies of the countries of the European continent by converting them into armies with short-term service and limited effectives.

With regard to overseas effectives, the Portuguese delegation reserved its right to deal with the questions they raised in the Committee on Effectives, where all such questions would have to be examined in detail.

Portuguese military status, since the advent of the Republic, was based on short-term service and limited effectives. Portugal had universal, personal and compulsory military service. One whole class was trained each year and only the small number of effectives indispensable to security were kept with the colours. The total effectives of the Portuguese army did not exceed the maximum that would certainly be accorded by the Conference to Powers with limited interests, to use an ambiguous term that had been applied to certain nations.

M. de Vasconcellos hoped that questions of principle on which depended the whole structure of the future Convention would be discussed and settled in the respective Commissions. Whenever international meetings were confronted with great difficulties, difficulties, moreover, that had been foreseen, and it was decided not to make a frontal attack on them with the object of removing them, it was usual to say that the problems raised had not been studied sufficiently and that the meeting had not been well prepared. That could not possibly be said here after a year's work. There had been complete preparation. The Conference must accept its responsibilities and take decisions. M. de Vasconcellos hoped that these collective responsibilities would at last be embodied in a system of international fellowship without which all the Conference's efforts would be sterile and ineffectual.

M. Paul-Boncour (France) would first thank the United Kingdom delegate very sincerely for the valuable support he had given, in so far as concerned procedure at any rate, to the attitude adopted by the French delegation, to which it attached the utmost importance. He did not, of course, question the German delegate's desire for the speedy conclusion of the Conference's work. Moreover, the unanimity with which the members of the Commission had evinced their anxiety to conclude quickly was, if not a guarantee that they would succeed in doing so, at any rate evidence of the strong feeling by which they were animated. He ventured, however, to think that the very precise proposal—for it had been made the subject of a resolution placed upon the table—presented by the German delegation would quite certainly have the opposite result.

M. Paul-Boncour was grateful to the German delegate for his appreciation of the French plan. He was grateful for all the appreciative references to the plan, but he was anxious that the Conference should enter upon the period of confirmation and achievement.

The German motion began by the affirmation that only armies of a specifically defensive character were compatible with a system of security. That consequently amounted to acceptance of the fundamental principles put forward by the French delegation. If it were made clear that only armies of a defensive character were a guarantee of security, that led ipso facto towards the unavoidable corollary of standardisation, once it had been determined what precisely were the forms of army which were defensive in character.

The conclusion of the German representative's motion, however, tended completely to reverse the order of work proposed by the Drafting Committee, which M. Paul-Boncour thought the German delegate had finally accepted after, it was true, raising certain objections. There were, in the last analysis, only two ways of deciding the order of work. It was necessary
to begin either with effectives or with material. It was now plain, from the German delegate's motion, that M. Nadolny was asking the Commission to begin with material and then go on to a study of the reduction and proportional adjustment of effectives on the basis of the principles in the Hoover proposal. Where would that lead the Commission? It would undoubtedly lead it back to the very difficulties from which it claimed to have emerged.

If he might say so once again, the French delegation had not constructed the French plan for its own entertainment or as an embodiment of any of its own preferences. It was constructed in response to the appeal that had been made to it—a plea which had been made in consequence of the inextricable difficulties in which the Conference had found itself last July. While it had been the common desire of all members to give the widest possible welcome to the United States proposal, the diversity of armies and the uncertainty as to points of comparison had brought out the practical impossibility of coming down to figures.

Accordingly, the French delegation, taking advantage of the interval between the sessions, had brought to the Conference a plan which was not a French plan, strictly speaking, but a plan to which France had applied her inclination for and habit of synthetisation, with the object of attempting to bring out the fundamental points that had emerged from the Conference's discussions. The first of those points had been that, to achieve, he would not say slight reductions—for those were always possible—but solid reductions of effectives, it was necessary to begin by having comparable effectives. The Committee on Effectives, in spite of all its goodwill, had, it must be confessed, lost its way in the more or less imaginary coefficients which might be employed in order to find a term of comparison which would give the different States some guarantees as regard the reductions they could contemplate.

The French delegation had thought—if not for all countries, because there was so great a diversity of geographical conditions that world-wide uniformity could not be contemplated, but for the principal countries of Europe at any rate, which were those between which the need for reductions of land effectives arose—that it might be possible, in order to bring about these reductions, to make an effort at standardisation, and that in a more strictly defensive direction. The problem had therefore been put. The Drafting Committee had proposed that the General Commission should decide that this, while not the only problem, was the initial problem, because on its solution would depend the practical possibility of the reductions contemplated.

He would venture to say to the German delegate that if an attempt were made to revert to the position from which the Commission claimed to have emerged, and to study reductions, limitations and proportional adjustments of effectives as dissimilar as possible, the Commission would be faced more than ever with an extremely complex problem. On the eve of 1914, it had been perfectly possible, in continental Europe at any rate, to compare the different armies: they had all conformed to the same type, and the only difference was the period of service. Since then, as a result of the Peace Treaties, of the political changes in certain countries and the general trend of affairs, there had arisen in continental Europe armies which differed totally in type, but which would all have to be considered. The French delegation was proposing that they should all be considered in discussing reductions, because it desired to know whether, owing to the very publicity given to them, certain regular forms of army would not, by reason of the reductions imposed on them, be placed in a position of inferiority unless other types of army, which perhaps were less apparent, were also taken into account.

There were at one and the same time certain professional, very long-term service armies which had not existed or had existed only to a very slight extent in continental Europe on the eve of the world war; secondly, armies of the type prior to the world war—although, in almost all countries, the period of service in such armies had been reduced and the period was by no means identical—and, lastly, those semi-political, semi-military organisations in which sometimes the political and sometimes the military character predominated, but which all more or less involved the instruction of trained reserves and, in particular, the rapid utilisation of young men. These were grouped in permanent organisations which did not conform to the pre-war military type, but which would enable them to be made use of at the very outset of a possible dispute. It was this initial period with which the Conference must concern itself, because it was then that the world would be faced with the tangible reality of the forces of aggression. If the League was not strong enough to prevent war, if its procedures were impeded, all the limitations that might be agreed to at the present Conference would weigh very light in the scales. The countries would fight with the total strength that they could put into the field. What concerned the Conference was the beginning, the possibility of aggression at the beginning, and it was in that sense that the standardisation of the types of army and the definition of certain characteristics as being more strictly defensive appeared to be manifestly the very basis of its work.

The Conference had decided to begin with that. What good reason was there for departing from what had been decided? Was not continuity dictated by the anxiety, shared, he was certain, by all delegations, to arrive as quickly as possible at decisions, or at least at results which would enable all parties to have a clear vision of what they could do?

The United Kingdom delegate had just said as much in the clearest possible terms. It was only common sense to say, but it was always well to recall it, that it was self-evident that any decision taken in any question of principle could be made subject to other decisions taken later. The German delegation, however, was not alone in that position. It was common to all the delegations. So far as the French delegation was concerned, and no doubt there were many
others, M. Paul-Boncour could say that all the decisions taken of whatever nature, and all the reductions that might be contemplated of whatever nature, were subject, in its mind, to the existence of effective international supervision. In the last resort, no reductions would be regarded as possible by the French delegation, and no reduction could receive its endorsement in the ultimate Convention, unless this effective supervision existed. All delegations were in the same position in the matter of partial decisions. The latter manifestly depended on subsequent decisions and on the final decision.

Subject to the foregoing observations, and in agreement with the United Kingdom delegate, M. Paul-Boncour would venture to urge that no change should be made in the proposal received by the General Commission from its Drafting Committee, and that the second question in the questionnaire should be examined after the first, and so on.

General Cavallero (Italy) recalled that, at the last meeting, his delegation had expressed its sympathy with the French delegation’s proposal. M. Paul-Boncour had just stated that, while he appreciated such testimony, he would prefer that the Conference should enter upon the era of achievement. General Cavallero would endeavour to comply with his desire.

The Italian delegation’s aim was to see whether it was possible to find a compromise between the two texts before the Commission. At the last meeting, moreover, he had reserved his right to submit, if necessary, some amendments to the French draft resolution. However, upon examining the draft, he had been confronted with the primary difficulty which had been brought out by most of the delegations who had spoken at the present meeting and which he was anxious to remove. In his previous remarks he had already stated that the Italian delegation would have difficulty in associating itself with a decision for the reduction or limitation of armaments in which no regard was had to material. He had noticed, both at the last and at the present meetings, that this point of view was shared by several delegations, probably by more than was thought.

The Italian delegation was of opinion that, although the question of effectives was undoubtedly very important, that of material took precedence. There was no need to be an expert to realise that men could be sent to the front after a few weeks’ training, but that a heavy gun could not be delivered before six or eight months. This illustration would suffice to convince everyone of the importance of the question of material.

He had said that this question took precedence over that of effectives. He would not press this point. He would content himself with saying that the two problems were commensurate in importance. It followed that, in any document that attempted to give a definition of the type of army having the most defensive character, it was necessary, in order that that definition might be complete, that the two terms of the problem—there were, of course, others, but he was referring to those of which the importance was manifest—should be placed on the same level and considered pari passu.

He, too, would thank the United Kingdom delegate for recognising that this point of view was correct, and he would associate himself with M. Paul-Boncour’s expression of thanks for the contribution Mr. Eden had made to the progress of the work. He believed that the United Kingdom delegate’s contribution was more valuable in regard to the substance of the question than in regard to the order of the Commission’s discussions. The question of substance was always more important than that of procedure. But what was the question of substance? It was that the anxiety with regard to material was entirely justified, and it followed that the only possible solution was to include a reference to material in the body of the resolution. He would read later a text which the Italian delegation had prepared in the hope of finding a compromise, but he would deal first with another matter—namely, the period of service.

This question affected both the substance and the form. In his statement on Friday last, he had said that the official period of service in the Italian army was eighteen months. In this connection, he would venture to correct a slight error made by M. Pierre Cot in his reply, to the effect that the legal period of military service in Italy was twelve months. The official period, he would repeat, was eighteen months, but it was applied with certain qualifications which made allowance for the exigencies of the service and for certain social and, more especially, certain economic exigencies. The result was that the average period of service of an entire recruits class in Italy was less than twelve months. Moreover, everyone knew that the Italian effectives were limited. They were limited for budgetary reasons. It was on that account that he had said the Italian army must be regarded as a short-term army, to use the term in the French resolution, with limited effectives. He had added that it would, he thought, be difficult for his country to change its military system in this respect, since, as at present organised, it conformed to various requirements, more particularly those of an economic nature. The Italian delegation believed—and several delegations had already brought out this aspect of the question—that an army with too short a period of service would cost far more than an army with a longer period. That was a point that would have to be very carefully examined during the discussion of the details.

With regard to the period of service, however, certain other points had been made during the debate. It was for that reason that the Italian delegation had thought that, in order to attempt to solve this question, which appeared at first sight somewhat difficult, it would perhaps be advisable to alter the term employed. Further, several delegates had asked what exactly was meant by a short-term army and a long-term army. No precise definition of these phrases had been given, either during the long debates in the Preparatory Commission or during the discussions in the Technical Commissions last year. It might perhaps be easier to
secure adoption of this part of the draft resolution if, for these expressions, there were substitued the terms "army with a limited period or service and with limited effective". He came next to the third point in the Italian proposal. The French resolution said: "decides to pass on to the study of the conditions in which this general adoption might be brought about on the European continent, in order to lead to an equality of defensive status between the Powers of that continent." 1 He had thought that, perhaps in view of the number of questions contained in the Drafting Committee's questionnaire, it might be difficult to terminate the discussion within a reasonable period of time, and that if the question of material were incorporated in the resolution—as he would propose shortly—it would obviously be necessary to instruct some Committee—the Drafting Committee perhaps—to draw up as soon as possible a questionnaire for material similar to that drawn up for effective.

M. Cavallero came next to the proposal of Mr. Eden, who had said that the problem of material should be examined immediately after the question of effective. But how could that be done unless the necessary material had been prepared? In the Italian delegation's view, it would be advisable to draw up the questionnaire at once. In the meantime, and with due regard to certain non-technical difficulties with which the Commission was faced, it would, he suggested, be useful that consideration of the questionnaire concerning effective should be carried on for the moment in the Committee on Effectives.

M. Pierre Cot had said that the French delegation's attitude would, in any event, depend on the guarantees received by France and by all the other countries in regard to security, and that, in the matter of effective, the French delegation would be prepared to go further, the greater the guarantees thus given. That being so, there was something else to be done in this sphere. Would not the Commission be confronted with certain technical difficulties when it came to consider the questionnaire concerning effective if this burning question had not been solved?

For these reasons, the Italian delegation had thought fit to propose that the question of material should be studied by a Committee—which might be the Drafting Committee—with the object of preparing a questionnaire to facilitate the General Commission's work. In the meantime, the questions concerning effective could be referred to the Committee on Effectives.

General Cavallero then read the following draft resolution 2 prepared by the Italian delegation:

"The General Commission notes:

"(a) That only a military status of a definitely defensive character is compatible with a regime of security;

"(b) That, in continental Europe, an army with a short-term service, limited effective and a corresponding limitation of material in service and in reserve would be the type of military organisation which represents the least aggressive character and with which mobilisation is slowest, and which therefore would be the most capable of ensuring that the pacific procedures provided for in the Covenant can be set in motion without the League of Nations, in case of aggression, being faced with an accomplished fact.

"It considers that the general adoption of this type of army would permit more easily of the realisation of a general reduction of armaments, both in the sphere of effective and in that of material; in addition, it would progressively render the different armies more comparable with one another; in particular as regards effective, it would assist in the application of methods of calculation like those which have been proposed by the United States delegation, and of which the Committee on Effective has undertaken the study. It is understood that, in this connection, overseas forces stationed in the vicinity of the home country and in the home country itself should be considered on the same footing as the forces of the home country.

"The General Commission decides to entrust to the Committee on Effectives the study of the conditions in which this general adoption might be brought about on the European continent; and decides, at the same time, to instruct the Drafting Committee to draw up as soon as possible a similar questionnaire as regards material."

The President had hoped that the Commission would have been able to finish the discussion at the present meeting and to take a vote upon the draft resolution submitted by the French delegation. That was no longer possible. The Italian delegation had proposed an amendment which must be circulated, and the President would venture to suggest that the French and Italian delegations might perhaps compare notes on the proposal and the amendment and see if it were not possible for them to reach an agreement.

He had listened to the discussion, and he was bound to confess, with the Minutes before him, that the debate had covered again much of the ground covered at the meeting on February 13th. The Commission seemed to have lost sight of the fact that it was trying to answer questions sent to it by a Drafting Committee which it had itself appointed. Instead of answering those questions, it seemed to be getting away on to entirely new methods of procedure.

---

1 See page 283.
M. NADOLNY (Germany) pointed out that the President had referred only to the French and Italian proposals, considering no doubt that the German proposal related solely to procedure. That was not the case. It bore on the substance, and indeed upon the essential points under discussion. In paragraph (a), for example, the German proposal stated, as did the French, how much importance should be attached to the change over of armies to the defensive type. That, in the German delegation's view, was the kernel of the French proposal. The rest of the German proposal consisted of amendments reserving certain points for later discussion, but leaving point (a) as the fundamental point. It followed that the German proposal should also be regarded as an amendment to the French proposal and treated in the same way as the Italian proposal.

The President replied that the German delegation's proposal was still before the Commission, but he did not accept that proposal as an amendment to the French proposal in the same sense as he accepted the Italian amendment to the French proposal. For instance, the German resolution contained the following paragraph:

"In this connection, before pronouncing on the principle of the standardisation of types of armies, the General Commission decides:

"(a) Itself to settle without delay the question of the abolition of specifically offensive weapons and the limitation of authorised war material."

That, in his opinion, was in complete contradiction with a decision taken by the Commission at its meeting on February 13th. The President was responsible for seeing that the procedure was properly carried out and assisting, as far as he could, the General or any other Commission to be consistent with its own decisions, and that was the way in which he regarded the German amendment.

The continuation of the discussion was adjourned to the next meeting.

THIRTY-EIGHTH MEETING

Held on Thursday, February 23rd, 1933, at 3 p.m.

President: The Right Honourable A. HENDERSON.

76. QUESTION OF EFFECTIVES: QUESTIONNAIRE DRAWN UP BY THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE: QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE FRENCH PLAN FOR THE STANDARDISATION OF EUROPEAN CONTINENTAL ARMIES (continuation).

1 (a). "Is the General Commission of opinion that the European continental armies should be standardised by being converted into armies with short-term service and limited effectives?" (continuation). 

The President recalled that, at the close of the meeting on the previous day, the Commission had three proposals before it in an endeavour to reply to the first question on effectives submitted by the Drafting Committee. There was the French proposal, a separate proposal by the German delegation and, finally, an amendment to the French proposal submitted by the Italian delegation. All these proposals were now before the Commission, and it must make an effort to come to a decision which would constitute a reply to that question.

M. NADOLNY (Germany) wished to deal with the comments offered concerning the German proposal by several of the speakers at the previous meeting. He would attempt to make the character of that proposal quite clear.

With regard to the question of procedure, it had been stated that the German proposal conflicted with the decision taken by the General Commission on February 16th to deal first with point 1(a) of the Drafting Committee's questionnaire. What was the exact wording of point 1(a) of the questionnaire? It was:

"Is the General Commission of opinion that the European continental armies should be standardised by being converted into armies with short-term service and limited effectives?"

--- Document Conf.D./C.G. 41. ---

2 See Minutes of the thirty-sixth meeting.

3 See Minutes of the thirty-seventh meeting.
The decision which the General Commission was asked to adopt in this matter could, without any doubt, take one of various directions. It could be in the affirmative or in the negative; but the Commission could likewise make its reply dependent on certain modifications or conditions; it could even, if, in the course of the discussion, it found that there were certain obstacles to an immediate decision, decide that these obstacles should be removed first and take its decision afterwards. That being so, every delegation was entitled to put forward any arguments and any proposals it might think useful in one direction or the other. That was what the German delegation had done. It had been led to take up that position as much on account of the general attitude it had adopted with regard to the measures proposed, on which it had indicated its view more than once, as by the contents of the French draft resolution, which, in the German delegation’s view, did not give a simple reply to question 1(a), but was already extended so as to bring in certain conclusions of principle which the German delegation could not accept.

Such were the reasons for which the German delegation considered that it had been necessary to present, in connection with the French draft resolution, the proposal it had submitted to the General Commission. This attitude on the part of the German delegation, moreover, did not in any way conflict with its acceptance of the idea underlying the United Kingdom programme, which put the question of effectiveness before that of material. The French proposal concerning standardisation occupied only the third place in the United Kingdom programme, whereas the first and second places were occupied by the question of the methods for giving effect to the Hoover proposal, which, as M. Nadolny had observed on the previous day, could be carried into effect without standardisation. It would therefore be perfectly possible for the Conference to proceed at once to consider the real measures of disarmament without deciding first on the question of standardisation, especially as the latter was certainly a very complicated problem.

The United Kingdom representative, in complete harmony with the German contention, had observed that it was impossible to pronounce on the defensive character of armies without taking into account the material in their possession, and he had recalled that it was the United Kingdom delegation which, with the approval of the entire Conference, had proposed the discussion of qualitative disarmament in the sphere of material. The Italian representative had gone even further in that direction. He had expressly emphasised the importance of the question of material and had suggested that a drafting committee should be immediately instructed to frame a questionnaire on the method to be followed in the discussion of qualitative disarmament in connection with material.

It must be remembered that standardisation, as proposed by the French delegation, did not yet constitute a measure of disarmament, but merely a method of calculation and study, the realisation of which would certainly encounter very great difficulties, and which would undoubtedly throw the Conference back to the stage of enquiry, of which all delegations had had experience during the work in the commissions of experts. If the delegates were to look at the other questions in the questionnaire before the Commission, they would agree with M. Nadolny that the problem raised was one of great complexity and that its solution would demand extremely detailed and protracted work, if, as the French proposal suggested, the General Commission were to take up that matter before concerning itself with questions of real disarmament.

In these circumstances, it was impossible for the German delegation to pronounce on the French proposal before it was certain that decisive measures would also be taken in the sphere of real disarmament—namely, the settlement of the question of material and the reduction of effectiveness. M. Nadolny was therefore obliged to maintain his proposal, which, in the German delegation’s opinion, definitely affected the substance of the French proposal.

M. Holsti (Finland) said that, broadly speaking, his delegation was in favour of the French programme, as it embodied the two principles of increased security and a reduction in the heavy burden of armaments. As regarded the term of service, he would merely add that Finland had the shortest period possible, and it would be very difficult for her to contemplate any further reduction.

Mr. Eden (United Kingdom) said that, with all respect to his German colleague, he did not quite understand the difficulty. Apparently, some delegations wanted to discuss at one and the same time the important subjects now before the General Commission, but Mr. Eden would find it extremely difficult to speak on one of those subjects at a time, and certainly did not look forward to dealing with all of them together. It was quite obvious that a beginning must be made somewhere, and that was why he had rallied to the Drafting Committee’s proposal to begin with question 1(a) relating to the French plan. He fully agreed, of course, with what the German delegate had said: materials were as important as effectiveness, but both could not be discussed at once. Mr. Eden therefore repeated the proposal made on the previous day that the General Commission should take a decision on question 1(a) on the strict understanding that that decision would depend upon what might be agreed to at a later stage in connection with materials. Otherwise, he must confess he saw no escape from the present impasse.

General Cavallero (Italy) said that his delegation felt that it was its duty to explain the reasons for which it had submitted a compromise text at the last meeting.

As he feared that his statement on the previous day might have left certain points obscure, he would reply first to the United Kingdom delegate's remarks concerning material.

He agreed with Mr. Eden that it was quite impossible to discuss two or three questions simultaneously. The right procedure was to probe one point to the bottom before going on to the next. But the Italian delegation had suggested something entirely different. It was not advocating a discussion of the question of material. As a compromise—and that was, moreover, entirely logical and necessary, and he was sure that, on this point, the entire Commission would concur—the Italian delegation had urged that, as the discussion on effectives had been begun, the Drafting Committee or some other committee should draw up an outline or framework which would be represented by a questionnaire concerning material. It did not insist on the formula used for effectives being employed in the present case, but it considered it necessary that, during the discussion on effectives in the General Commission, the elements required for the discussion on material should be assembled so as to avoid any delay. On this point, he thought that agreement could be easily obtained.

On another fundamental point connected with material, the Italian delegation had not asked for an immediate discussion, because the necessary elements were not available and because it would be better not to discuss two matters at once. The Italian delegation was merely asking that no decision of principle should be taken regarding the more or less defensive or more or less offensive character of an army, without some mention being made of the question of material. It could not accept any resolution which ignored this point, which in its view was a fundamental one. He believed that the great majority of the General Commission would approve the principle underlying that contention. It might not perhaps agree upon the procedure, but, on the substance, it would no doubt assent to the Italian delegation's views.

The Italian delegation was asking that, in conformity with the statements made during the long work of the Disarmament Conference, and even earlier, it should be said perfectly clearly that the General Commission was concerning itself with the question of effectives and that was the conclusion of the draft resolution; but the preamble said that all delegations agreed in recognising that the question of material must rank equally with that of effectives. That point of view was, he thought, absolutely logical, and he wondered how anyone could fail to see that it was inevitable, since there were some who were unwilling to recognise that what was being asked for was not the immediate discussion of the substance of the question, but the recognition of the principle.

It might be said that the resolution of July 23rd, 1932, which covered the different points, consequently referred to the question of material also. He would not insist on the fact that the Italian delegation had not taken part in the vote on that resolution, but he might recall that, in that resolution, there were points relating to material in connection with which unanimity had not been obtained and which, in any case, had not received the Italian delegation's assent.

It might be thought possible to insert a reservation in the heading of the draft resolution or in the Minutes, but, even if every delegation made a reservation concerning material, the reduction and limitation of effectives would not rank equally with the reduction and limitation of material, since the former would be covered by a resolution and the latter by a reservation only. That was not the same thing.

On the question of overseas forces, he was perhaps again departing from the procedure—and he was prepared to admit it—since the Commission was discussing point I(a) in the questionnaire, whereas the overseas effectives were referred to in point I(b). That problem, however, was of as much importance for some delegations as the questions of effectives and material. It might be said that the resolution of July 23rd, 1932, which covered the different points, consequently referred to the question of material also. He would not insist on the fact that the Italian delegation had not taken part in the vote on that resolution, but he might recall that, in that resolution, there were points relating to material in connection with which unanimity had not been obtained and which, in any case, had not received the Italian delegation's assent.

It might be thought possible to insert a reservation in the heading of the draft resolution or in the Minutes, but, even if every delegation made a reservation concerning material, the reduction and limitation of effectives would not rank equally with the reduction and limitation of material, since the former would be covered by a resolution and the latter by a reservation only. That was not the same thing.

On the question of overseas forces, he was perhaps again departing from the procedure—and he was prepared to admit it—since the Commission was discussing point I(a) in the questionnaire, whereas the overseas effectives were referred to in point I(b). That problem, however, was of as much importance for some delegations as the questions of effectives and material. It might be suggested that the decision on the draft resolution should be postponed until the second point had been discussed. It was also possible to agree that the question of principle was covered by the draft resolution, to which the Italian delegation would be willing to make an addition. The formula it had proposed read:

"It is understood that, in this connection, overseas forces stationed in the vicinity of the home country, and in the home country itself, should be considered on the same footing as the forces of the home country."

The following words could perhaps be added:

"subject to any rectifications which may be authorised in order to take into account such special requirements as may be recognised as legitimate for each State."

A formula of that sort covered all points of view and all the reservations that could be made.

In any case, the Italian delegation was obliged to insist that a decision of principle on the definition to be given of the army having the most defensive character—or, if it were preferred, the least aggressive character—should not be taken before the third point, which he had just mentioned, had been examined.

In conclusion, he repeated that the Italian delegation had proposed its draft with the object of finding a compromise between the two proposals before the General Commission, which, in its view, practically cancelled one another. He hoped that his delegation's intention would be appreciated by the Commission.
M. BUERO (Uruguay) regretted that the French and Italian delegations had been unable to fall in with the President's suggestion and present an agreed draft, which might perhaps have made the present debate unnecessary. As, however, the debate had been opened, he desired to offer a few remarks.

In the first place, he entirely agreed with the United Kingdom delegate that it was essential to keep to the procedure adopted, since otherwise the Commission would be merely marking time. There was nothing common to the three proposals before the Commission—namely, that only a military status of a definitely defensive character was compatible with a regime of security. The divergences appeared when the attempt was made to define this status. In the French delegation's view, this character was conferred by the actual organisation of the army itself. The Italian delegation held that there were two elements—the army's organisation and the fact that it might have in its possession certain material. The German delegation considered—and this was the extreme contention, the reverse of the French—that the characteristic feature of a defensive army was the fact that it did not possess certain categories of material.

The German proposal would have the result of reversing the order of the discussions. The characteristic feature of an army was the possession of certain material; hence, the first thing to examine was the material. It seemed, therefore, that, under the guise of a detail of procedure, the German delegation was asking the Commission to reverse its decision, and for this reason M. Buero thought that the delegations should approve the view expressed by the President the day before that this part of the German proposal clashed with the Commission's previous decision. The Commission could, of course, at any time reverse its decision, but it was advisable to make it plain that, under the guise of an amendment to the French proposal, what was really proposed was a complete change in the procedure.

The Italian delegation suggested that the Commission should examine the question of material, because material was essential for defining the characteristics of an offensive or defensive army and that a special committee should frame a questionnaire so that the question of material could be examined by the Commission in due course. That work would be very simple, thanks to the admirable report by M. Bourquin, who, on the conclusion of the work in the Land Commission, had put precisely the questions which would have to be solved by the General Commission as the body which gave general instructions to the technical commissions. If it were desired to adhere to these methods, the question concerning effectives must in any case be liquidated, after which it would always be possible to come back to questions of material, but a little later. He would explain the reason.

At the Bureau's meeting on November 15th, 1932, he had presented a short report on the question of material, in which he had said that the difficulties he had encountered in carrying out his duties were closely bound up with the solution of two vital political problems with which the Conference was at grips—the question of security and that of equality.

Certain delegations considered that the question of effectives was closely bound up with that of security, and consequently with that of material as well.

So long as no decision had been taken on the question of security, certain delegations would not be prepared to make concessions in the matter of effectives. Accordingly, if a memorandum or questionnaire was to be drawn up, it should ask the countries possessing the most powerful material in exchange for what they would be prepared to reduce certain material, to dispossess themselves of certain material or to internationalise certain material. For that, certain points would have to be cleared up, and that could only be done by a discussion on effectives and security.

It would therefore be far better to limit the discussion for the moment to the French proposal as amended by the Italian delegation, but it would, he thought, first be necessary to hear the authors of the French proposal in order to know just how far it would be possible to go in a direction that might enable the Conference to make headway.

To sum up, he considered that the German proposal, as submitted, would inevitably result in the Commission's having first to examine the question of material. He wondered whether it was possible to proceed with that matter at the present stage. He did not take up a final attitude, but simply observed that there were serious difficulties in reversing the order of work.

With regard to the Italian proposal, he would be glad to hear once again the observations of the delegation which had submitted the original proposal in order to know whether the acceptance of certain amendments contained in the Italian proposal would not conflict with the programme of work upon which the Commission had decided at its meeting of February 16th, 1933.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France) had asked leave to speak again because certain delegations had challenged an agenda which had seemed to have been definitely fixed. He hoped that the Commission would believe that the French delegation was not actuated by amour propre—far from it. Its only concern was that things should be perfectly clear. For that, however, it was necessary that the different questions should be settled one by one, as, moreover, the Drafting Committee had proposed. That there might be no doubt as to what the French delegation had in mind, and in order to reassure the Italian and German delegates, it would be sufficient to read again some of the fundamental passages in the French plan.

2 See Minutes of the twenty-eighth meeting of the Bureau, page 83.
He entirely agreed that the question of material was of very great importance, and that France had no wish to evade it was shown by the fact that the French plan stated in Chapter III, Section B, I, in the clearest possible terms, that the standardisation of the armed forces must involve the progressive standardisation of material, and that the so-called national defence armies—i.e., those which were to conform precisely to the type of short-term service army with limited effectives—was to possess no powerful offensive material, which, under the French plan, would be reserved to the international contingents.

Hence the question of material was placed in the very centre of the French plan, and his colleagues might feel every assurance that, not only was France not evading that question, but that, as was her habit, she was explaining her views on it with the utmost candour. As, however, the United Kingdom delegate had very properly said, the various questions must be solved one by one.

The Commission had decided—and that was the point of view that had been adopted, whether rightly or wrongly—that a beginning should be made with effectives. The French delegation had indicated perfectly frankly the reason for this procedure. It was that, in examining questions relating to material, its use and the distinction to be made between the various categories, the decision which the countries would take would depend upon the conditions of security surrounding the Convention, conditions resulting from a continental pact of mutual assistance. It would depend also upon the form to be given to the armies, whether that form was in itself purely defensive in character, a fact that would constitute a guarantee of security. When that question had been solved, that of material would come up and would be judged by the French delegation precisely in relation to the degree of the security that would be given by the purely defensive type of army consequent upon the limitation of the period of service and of effectives; this guarantee would at the same time result from a pact of mutual assistance. But how could the two questions be merged in one another? How could a clear reply be given unless a distinction was made? The solution was given in the French delegation's draft resolution.

A reply must be given to the first question, "Is the General Commission of opinion that the European continental armies should be standardised by being converted into armies with short-term service and limited effectives?" According to whether the delegations replied in the affirmative or the negative, the general trend of opinion in the Conference would be known beyond any doubt.

The aim of the French resolution was to state the ideas of its authors in more concrete terms and to prevent any ambiguity in the decision taken. But the motion did not contain a single word that prejudged the other questions; the entire text kept strictly within the limits of the first question to which he hoped the Commission would give a reply, the importance of which would not be negligible. When listening to the German delegate a short while ago, M. Paul-Boncour had realised that even more definitely than in the text of his resolution M. Nadolny saw the greatest difficulties, and even objections, to the standardisation of the armies according to the type suggested in the French resolution. There were, indeed, great difficulties, but the question was whether they should not be surmounted in order that in neighbouring countries in continental Europe there might be created a type of army the reciprocal adoption of which, being in itself a condition of security and supplying comparable elements, would make possible the large reductions which had been the intention of the American proposal. If it were thought that that was not possible, the Conference should say so. If the General Commission did not take that line, a different solution must be sought. But it was necessary first to say, and to say clearly, whether yes or no, this standardisation was judged feasible and, if so, in what form. That was all that the French resolution said. It contemplated an army with a very reduced period of service and with limited effectives. It did not prejudge any other issue.

He was not so blind as to be unable to perceive the importance of the question of material and of that of the colonial forces, which would indubitably give rise to one of the principal difficulties. Those were questions which would come up in due course. It was possible that a delegation, having taken up a certain attitude on some principle, would reach the conclusion, when the methods of applying that principle, or some other, had been decided, that it could not accept the whole of what had been decided. But all delegations were in the same position. All were compelled to make certain decisions dependent on those that would be taken in regard to other questions. But if the questions were not dealt with in order, where would the Conference find itself? That was a question which he would venture to submit to his colleagues in all simplicity.

Tevfik Rüstü Bey (Turkey) wished to deal with two points which he thought very important: one was connected with the substance of the French draft resolution, the other with procedure.

With regard to point (a) in the first question, the Turkish delegation had said at a previous meeting that it had no need to state that it accepted the French proposal, because the Turkish type of army was definitely the short-term army as defined in that proposal.

The French draft resolution, however, contained the words: "only a military status of a definitely defensive character is compatible with a regime of security". The resolution then replied to the question: What was the type of army which presented the most defensive character?

1 Document Conf. D.146.
The General Commission, however, had previously agreed, on a motion by the United Kingdom delegation, that a distinction should be made, in the matter of war material, between offensive and defensive weapons. The draft resolution proposed by the French delegation must not be accepted to prejudge that question, and for that reason it would be necessary to say in the relevant passage in the resolution, "in so far as concerns effectives".

With regard to procedure, the Turkish delegate understood that the Drafting Committee, after discussion, had decided to combine points (a) and (b) of the first question in the questionnaire, because certain delegations held that it was only possible to reply to the two questions together. If the reply were in the affirmative, the remainder of the questionnaire, being mainly of a technical character, could be referred to the Committee on Effectives with such reply as the General Commission might give in answer to points (a) and (b).

Consequently, the Turkish delegate thought it very difficult to take a definite decision on point (a) before point (b) had been discussed, and he thought that matters would be made much easier for the Committee on Effectives if the reply to these two points, which related to the same question, could be combined. In any case, the Turkish delegation would abstain from voting until point (b) had been examined by the Commission.

General Cavallero (Italy) wished to give an explanation to M. Buero and to make his intentions clear. M. Buero, in commenting on the Italian proposal, had certainly realised that the Italian delegation was not asking the Commission to examine the problem of material simultaneously with that of effectives; it merely wished that, in the preamble to the draft resolution under discussion, mention should be made of the importance of material in the organisation of an army having the least possible aggressive character. M. Buero thought that the question of material was dependent on the solution of the problem of security, and he saw that, according to the degree of security achieved, it would be possible to ask the various countries what they were prepared to give in exchange.

General Cavallero did not think that the problem of material arose in that way, for it was far more complex. The first question was to see just how far it would be possible to solve the problem of the qualitative reduction of material, and then how far that of the quantitative reduction of material could be solved. If the effectives of any army were reduced in any way, it was an inevitable corollary that a parallel reduction—he would not say proportional—was a matter for further study—must be made in the sphere of material.

The question, therefore, was not merely that of giving up certain heavier or more powerful armaments in exchange for a greater measure of security. The problem of material must be studied in all its details and as a problem in itself. That was the consideration by which the Italian delegation had been prompted in deciding to raise the question it had submitted to the Commission. Once again, it was asking, not that the Commission should examine the problem of material at once, but that, in the decision which it would take and which would involve a solemn affirmation concerning the armies to be reduced, transformed or standardised, the Commission should mention the importance of the question of material.

If that were agreed, he was fully prepared to assent to M. Buero's opinion that, if the report of the Land Commission was satisfactory, it would not be necessary to appoint a Drafting Committee or to ask the other Committee to draw up a new questionnaire. The Italian delegation considered that it might have been desirable to add a few questions to those in the questionnaire, but it was quite prepared to agree that M. Buero's report, the great value of which it fully appreciated, should be utilised by the Commission.

He came now to the point which he wished to make clear. M. Paul-Boncour, in his last remarks, had referred to the French plan, which said, in Chapter III, Section B: "There shall be prohibited for the national armies of the Contracting Powers, at least all powerful mobile material, especially such as would facilitate an attack on permanent fortifications (powerful artillery and powerful tanks). It is quite obvious that the General Convention will have to be established in conformity with these restrictions on material and with the provisions which follow"; and further on: "Apart from the normal armaments of the contingents contemplated above, any mobile land material . . . ."

General Cavallero would venture to point out that the French plan, though extremely well thought out, very interesting and deserving of the closest attention, was nevertheless an ex parte proposal. Would it be possible for the Italian delegation to treat as if they were on the same footing a solemn declaration like that which the General Commission was asked to adopt and an assurance which, though undoubtedly of great importance, was still a purely ex parte statement? It would, he thought, be sufficient to lay stress on this situation to justify the Italian attitude, which he hoped would not be regarded as due to obstinacy. That attitude was really in conformity with the interests of the work on which the Conference was at present engaged and which the Italian delegation warmly hoped would lead to the desired goal.

After so many assurances given on all sides that the problem of material would not be overlooked, General Cavallero wondered what was the reason that prevented the inclusion in the text of the reference his delegation had proposed—that was to say, that the least aggressive army would be one with a limited period of service, reduced effectives and reduced material, whether distributed or in stock.

The General Commission would take such decision as it thought fit. It was mistress of its decisions, but, after the explanations he had given, he thought that an arrangement could be found. In any case, while giving a fresh assurance of the Italian delegation's goodwill and
anxiety to achieve the object in view, he was obliged to state that his delegation could not associate itself with a vote on a text which did not take account of the request it had put forward as it considered that that request was entirely legitimate and fully justified.

Upon a vote being taken by show of hands, one delegation voted in favour of the German resolution, five in favour of the Italian amendment to the French resolution, and twenty-one in favour of the French resolution.

M. NADOLNY (Germany) said that he would have preferred to speak before the vote on the Italian and French proposals.

The German delegation viewed with much sympathy the Italian proposal, which contained various factors that the German delegation entirely approved, in particular, the point relating to material and that relating to the procedure with regard to material. The proposal, however, contained certain points of principle and others on which M. Nadolny had already explained his views and on account of which the German delegation could not adhere to the Italian proposal.

The German delegation must therefore reserve its vote on both the Italian and French proposals, pending the realisation of the conditions which he had mentioned in his various remarks.

The President announced that, at its next meeting, the General Commission would discuss question I(b):

"Should such transformation also apply to all or part of efectives stationed in overseas territories?" (Erratum to document Conf.D./C.G.41.)

As soon as the discussion of that question was terminated, he intended to ask the Committee on Effectives to begin work on the replies given to questions I(a) and (b).

THIRTY-NINTH MEETING

Held on Monday, February 27th, 1933, at 3.30 p.m.

President: The Right Honourable A. HENDERSON.

77. QUESTION OF EFFECTIVES: QUESTIONNAIRE DRAWN UP BY THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE: QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE FRENCH PLAN FOR THE STANDARDISATION OF THE EUROPEAN CONTINENTAL ARMIES (continuation).

Question I(b): "Is the General Commission of opinion that the transformation contemplated in paragraph I(a) should also apply to all or part of efectives stationed in overseas territories?" 1

M. RUTGERS (Netherlands) said he would not examine all the aspects of the question before the General Commission, but would simply make a statement with regard to the Netherlands delegation's attitude, in view of the situation of his country.

When asked whether a distinction should be drawn between the efectives stationed in the home country and those stationed in overseas territories, the Netherlands must reply in the affirmative. The Netherlands territories overseas were at a very great distance from the home country. The land forces sent to those territories were neither militia nor short-term troops, but volunteers.

As the Minister for the Netherlands had already stated during the general discussion,2 the French proposal, which would compel the Netherlands to send to her overseas territories only troops on short-term service, was quite unacceptable to the Netherlands. M. Rutgers believed that, in view of the position of the Netherlands, no delegation would wish to compel her to send troops on short-term service to her overseas territories. It was for that reason that the Netherlands delegation could not accept such an obligation. From the point of view of the Netherlands, therefore, leaving aside all other questions that might arise during the discussion, M. Rutgers would reply that, in the opinion of the Netherlands delegation, a distinction must be drawn between the two categories of forces.

M. BOURQUIN (Belgium) unreservedly supported the Netherlands delegate's observations. During the past week, the General Commission had considered whether it was desirable to standardise the European continental armies by converting them into armies with short-term service and limited efectives.

2 See Minutes of the thirty-second meeting of the General Commission.
The Belgian delegation had unhesitatingly replied in the affirmative, but the problem upon which the Commission was now required to take a decision was obviously quite different. The question involved was whether this principle, that had been considered good and desirable in the case of the continental armies, the armies of the home country, should also apply to colonial armies.

It was hardly necessary for M. Bourquin to say that there was a considerable difference between the two situations, and that the main difference between a colonial army and the army of the home country was connected with the possibilities of recruitment. Belgium was in exactly the same position as the Netherlands. It would be quite impossible for that country to contemplate any but voluntary enrolment for the colonial army for many reasons: because public opinion would not accept the proposal and also because it was formally prohibited by Article 1 of the Belgian Constitution.

Mr. Eden (United Kingdom) observed that the subject of the present discussion was a rule which was intended, in the terms of the questionnaire, to be of universal application. On that basis he could not see that the answer to question 1(b) could be anything but "no". The Netherlands delegate had called attention to the practical difficulty. In most cases the impossibility of employing short-term service men overseas was so evident that it hardly needed any emphasis. The objections were largely physical, and consequently insuperable. The duties expected of troops stationed in outlying places and the degree of discipline required of them would make it impossible, or at least extremely cruel, to send raw recruits to such stations. Conditions of climate and of equipment made the suggestion obviously impracticable. Furthermore, to take the example of the British Empire, there were stations so far removed from the home country that a voyage of six weeks or more was entailed in either direction. Obviously, it would be impossible to garrison such distant stations with men serving such a short term as that contemplated for continental armies.

That, however, did not mean that some limitation and regulation for overseas troops would not be necessary. Some limitation would clearly be required, and on this matter there would be a discussion that would arise from a number of subsequent questions contained in the questionnaire. To the question at present before the General Commission, however, Mr. Eden’s answer would be that such transformation could not be applied to effective stationed in overseas territories owing to practical and physical conditions of which as yet even the General Commission was not master.

M. Nadolny (Germany) had listened with great interest to the explanations of the representatives of a number of colonial countries on the principle of standardisation. It was very interesting to hear the same representatives who had voted for the principle of standardisation now oppose this principle for the very practical reasons which M. Nadolny had invoked against this idea, and ask for an exception to be made for colonial troops.

Moreover, it had been some consolation to M. Nadolny to hear Mr. Eden admit that colonial troops should be subject to measures of reduction and limitation. Mr. Eden was right in saying that the question did not arise at present, but the Commission would have to come back to it later.

M. Nadolny had already explained the German delegation’s views on the question whether colonial troops should be included in measures of standardisation. If standardisation was accepted, it followed that colonial troops, overseas forces and colonial forces stationed in the territory of the home country or in its vicinity must be treated in the same way as the troops of the home country.

As the proposal had been put forward by the French delegation, M. Nadolny wished to revert to a few reasons which had already been advanced by the German delegation. According to the particulars supplied to the League by the French Government, it must be reckoned that about half the French army was composed of overseas troops, an essential part of which consisted of long-service soldiers and professional soldiers, and about two-thirds of which were stationed in the home country and in the overseas territories situated in its vicinity, so that, in case of need, they could be employed without any difficulty in the same way and for the same purposes as the home forces.

If the French delegation considered that only a short-term service army could have a definitely defensive character, the French plan would leave a gap in stipulating the exclusion of overseas forces from the proposed regime. It had been pointed out that overseas forces would have special duties to perform, which would involve the necessity of establishing a different regime for them. But what guarantee was there that, in case of a conflict, these forces would not take part in fighting on European soil? During the great war, nearly a million French colonial soldiers had been utilised on the European battlefields. To-day, a considerable part of these forces were stationed either in the home country itself or in the vicinity of its frontiers, and received their training on the European drill grounds and in the same conditions as European troops. The speedy utilisation of the part of the overseas forces stationed in the vicinity of the home country had been further facilitated by the construction of railways, the equipment of ports and the establishment of assured communications between these ports and the home ports.
Hence it would be in the logic of the French plan itself to submit at least the forces stationed in the home country or in the near-by overseas territories to the same regime as the troops of the home country proper.

Moreover, the Turkish delegate had rightly pointed out some time ago that the social, economic and cultural differences between some of the overseas territories situated in the vicinity of the home country and the territories of the home country itself were not greater than the differences between nations of the European continent at a great distance from one another.

In M. Nadolny's opinion, this was a further reason for not submitting colonial forces, or at any rate those stationed in the home country or near it, to a regime different from that which would be adopted for the home forces.

M. DI SORAGNA (Italy) said that the Italian delegation's position as regards question 1(b) of the questionnaire on effectives was simply and solidly based on the general Italian point of view concerning the armed forces of the overseas troops, their effectives and armaments. This point of view had been so fully stated, illustrated and studied for a long time past in the Preparatory Commission, the Committee on Effectives, the Colonial Committee and even the North African Sub-Committee that it would be sufficient for M. di Soragna to summarise it.

The Italian delegation considered that the colonial forces stationed in overseas territories near the home country, and still more those which, for any reason, were quartered in the home territory, were inseparable from the forces of the home country proper for all purposes of calculation and estimates. It logically followed from this principle that the Italian delegation must give the following reply to the question put to it: In case of the acceptance of the principle of the standardisation of the armed forces of the European continental countries on the basis of short-term services and conscription, this measure should extend not only to the home forces proper, but also to the colonial forces of which M. di Soragna had spoken. In the contrary eventuality—that was to say, if a State thought itself able to fulfil the conditions of standardisation by confining the latter to the home forces—the Italian delegation would consider that standardisation had not been really effected, for the State in question would in reality have two armies, one of them standardised and the other professional.

The Italian delegate preferred to declare at once quite frankly that in this case, and for essential reasons of security, even if all other preliminary objections to standardisation had been removed, it was extremely improbable that his delegation could continue to entertain the possibility of accepting this principle.

The Italian delegation would vote "no" as a reply to the first part of question 1(b), thus indicating that it did not believe that the principle of standardisation should be applied to effectives stationed in colonies or territories at a distance from the home country; and it would reply "yes" as regards the second part of the same question. In its view the word "part" naturally signified "part of the effectives and armies stationed in territories in the vicinity of the home country and especially those stationed in the home country itself".

Tevfik Rüstü Bey (Turkey), while thanking M. Nadolny for having quoted one of his remarks concerning overseas forces, wished to make the point clearer. M. Nadolny's quotation was quite correct. As regards the question whether "a distinction should be made between effectives stationed in the home country and effectives stationed in the overseas territories", the Turkish delegate had maintained that there was less difference, both from the point of view of climate and training, between the overseas forces and those of the home country than between the armies of States in different parts of the world, and when this question came to be discussed the Turkish delegation would maintain the same view.

The point at present under discussion was whether the standardisation of armies should also apply to the whole or part of the overseas effectives. After M. Pierre Cot's very eloquent speech on the defensive character of this standardisation, Tevfik Rüstü Bey could not personally think it expedient—and, in fact, he even thought it would be harmful—to deprive the colonies and their neighbours of a transformation which would have such happy effects from the point of view of peace.

In any case, while voting "yes" on point (b), the Turkish delegation would not oppose the decision of the majority; but when it came to the question of coefficients of reduction it would insist on its view that there must be the same coefficient of reduction for all armies. If the General Commission adopted another solution, the Turkish delegation would ask, as a sine quâ non condition of its consent, for a corrective coefficient in favour of countries which, like Turkey, were in the immediate neighbourhood of small or large States which had colonies or of countries which were placed under the authority of these States.

M. DE MADARIAGA (Spain) thought that the difficulty of this question arose out of the fact that point 1(a) related to a zone which was uniform from the political point of view and from what might, for want of a better word, be called the technical point of view.

The armies of the countries of the European continent constituted as a whole a homogeneous political problem and also a homogeneous technical problem. They belonged to the same geographical zone; they belonged to countries whose political constitution and culture were, although with profound differences, comparatively homogeneous.
The colonial armies of these countries also constituted, up to a certain point, a politically homogeneous problem, since it was always the same countries which were affected from the point of view of political sovereignty and of the use which might be made of these armies. But, from the technical point of view, the question was not at all uniform, and all these colonial armies had been constituted to deal with a series of local situations of the greatest variety.

Here seemed to lie the root of the difficulty which the General Commission would have to face in solving question (b), for, if the delegations concentrated their attention on the technical problem, whether they wished it or not, they would always have in mind the influence which colonial armies might exercise as auxiliary forces in the case of a hypothetical conflict. But, at the same time, when, under the influence of their political interests, delegations wished to generalise the principles which had been adopted for the European continent, they would find themselves faced with insurmountable difficulties owing to the fact that the local reasons for which these colonial armies had been founded and were being maintained were entirely different; nor could they hope that the problem would be facilitated if the factor of distance was brought in. However important might be this factor—which had been defended with singular tenacity and remarkable political intelligence by the Italian delegation—it could not but be recognised that this factor of distance was only of value from the political point of view, and had none from the technical point of view. Could the distance from Europe be of any value as a coefficient to measure the conditions which a colonial army must fulfil? What had the distance from Europe to do with the difficulty of maintaining order in a particular country or with the more or less warlike or pacific character of the population of the countries for which these armies were maintained, or with the difficulty or ease of civilising a particular territory?

This factor of distance was no doubt of great importance, and it would have to be discussed with great care and tact, but it was not a factor which should be rigidly applied; it must be dealt with with prudence and even—M. de Madariaga hoped that the Italian delegation would not misinterpret this word—with all the necessary brutality if the question were to be settled.

The conclusion was that it was not possible to answer question (b) briefly by "Yes" or "No". The problem of colonial armies was eminently a problem of individual cases, which must be approached with the sincere desire of arriving at a Disarmament Convention and with mutual confidence. Any attempt to settle this problem by a general principle would only increase confusion and distrust.

M. Pierre Cot (France) would attempt to bring the question back on to its proper ground. The problems which the General Commission had to discuss were complicated enough without attempting to mix them up with one another. It was a question of method, and good method, if it were desired to progress quickly.

He fully appreciated the German and Italian delegates' preoccupation with the two questions they had raised. Their concern was all the more justified because these two questions were contained in the questionnaire before the Commission. They did not, however, arise at the present stage. The question whether certain effectives that were equivalent to overseas forces but stationed in the home country should be reckoned in the home defence forces, and the question whether, in examining the more general case of the overseas forces, a particular regime should be contemplated for the troops stationed in overseas territories near the home country would be discussed by the General Commission when the latter came to the questions in the second series, following the order established by the Drafting Committee.

Speaking some ten days ago on behalf of the French delegation, he had stated that the French delegation also considered that the problem arose and that it must be dealt with. But, at the present meeting, after the statement he was about to make to the effect that his delegation intended neither to shelve the discussion nor to postpone it, the members of the General Commission would no doubt agree that the subject at present under discussion was something else. That subject was whether the conversion into a short-term army with limited effectives, recommended for home armies, could apply to the whole or part of the overseas effectives. That was the problem under discussion, and that was the only question to which he would attempt to reply.

There were three questions: the question whether the overseas armies should be limited, the question whether they should be short-term service armies, and—lastly and subsidiarily, so to speak—the question whether the overseas armies should be standardised.

First question: Should the overseas armies be limited? There could be no doubt that they should be, and that there was general agreement that they should be. The States of the world were making an effort for the general reduction of armaments. That effort should apply to the overseas armies in the same way as to the armies intended for home defence. No one had gainsaid that, and the principle was explicitly affirmed in the French delegation's plan.

Second question: Should it be recommended that the overseas armies should be organised on the basis of short-term service? Like Mr. Eden and previous speakers, including M. Rutgers, M. Pierre Cot would reply that it was impossible to recommend short-term service for the overseas armies. He would reply briefly to M. Nadolny's arguments. The German delegate had said that the reasons advanced by some Governments in favour of home armies applied with equal force to the overseas armies.
M. Pierre Cot dissented; first of all, because—and this was of course an elementary truth—in the case of overseas armies the risks of aggression, those risks which the Conference was attempting to dispel from the international atmosphere, were far smaller and more limited, and, secondly, because, as M. de Madariaga had said, there were technical reasons. Mr. Eden had very properly remarked that it would be impossible for Powers with overseas possessions some three, four, five or six weeks away from the home country to carry out their police duties—for M. Pierre Cot regarded the function of the colonising countries in the light of duties rather than rights—to carry on their police functions with troops serving for so short a period as that contemplated last week—that was to say, eight, nine or ten months. That was impossible even with an army whose term was for a period of one year, and therefore still more impossible with an army with a still shorter period of service.

Consequently, for this technical reason, for this psychological reason, because there were not the same risks of aggression, because the question was less acute, because there was a coefficient of distance for which allowance must be made, it was quite plain that the Powers with overseas armies could not be expected to maintain order in their colonies with short-term service armies.

The last question was whether the overseas armies should be standardised. In examining this point, he was perhaps transcending somewhat the limited question put before the General Commission, which was simply whether the overseas armies should be converted into armies with limited effectives and short-term service. To this latter question, he had already replied in the negative.

Would it, however, be desirable to standardise the overseas armies? Here, too, in order not to waste the Commission's time, he would merely refer to what had been said earlier. It was perhaps necessary to standardise the armies. The French delegation entirely appreciated that this problem might arise. It was ready on this, as on all other points, to consider any suggestions that would help on the work of disarmament, which all the delegations had met to achieve by common endeavour. He would, however, point out that conditions differed widely in the different countries in which overseas armies were stationed. One State might find it to its advantage, in a country where order was completely secure, to have simply a locally recruited army, a sort of militia, which would obviously be very close to the system that would have been adopted for Europe. That country might find it advantageous to adopt such a system in a possession where peace and security were absolutely assured. In another country, on the other hand, where everything still had to be done, where order was being continually endangered, or where the police functions which he had mentioned had to be carried out at any time, it might be found necessary to have an army consisting of professional soldiers.

Accordingly, while reserving his delegation's attitude on this latter point, it seemed to him at first sight that conditions differed too widely in the various overseas territories and colonial possessions for it to be possible reasonably to say that the overseas armies should be standardised.

Such were the few observations he desired to submit on behalf of the French Government. He would sum up as follows. Should the overseas armies be standardised? On this point, he had indicated the French delegation's reply. It did not think that that should be done, but, on this matter, it was prepared, when the question came up, to discuss it with all members of the Conference and particularly with those with overseas possessions. Should the colonial armies be converted into armies with short-term service and limited effectives? The French delegation replied in the negative, for the two reasons he had just indicated: the conditions were not the same in the overseas territories as in the home territories; the risks of aggression were not the same; the conditions of military service were not the same; the great distances made it impracticable.

He came, therefore, to the following conclusion. If it were desired at any price that the colonial Powers should be required to keep order in their overseas possessions with short-term service armies, the probability would be that, in order to do so, they would be forced to ask for a smaller reduction in the period of military service than they could accept if the short-term service were adopted only in respect of their home forces. The French delegation therefore would reply in the negative to the second question, but would, at the same time, give an assurance that it would reply to the points raised by M. Nadolny and M. di Soragna when they came up for discussion.

M. Nadolny (Germany) took note of M. Pierre Cot's declaration concerning the treatment of overseas forces. That point would be discussed when the Commission came to the second questionnaire and proceeded to consider the reduction and limitation of the troops.

The German delegation fully understood what it was that was actually under discussion. The Commission, however, had now come to the question of standardisation, and, on that point, his delegation could not depart from its point of view with regard to the forces stationed in the home territory or near by. If the principle of standardisation were agreed, the troops to which he had just referred must be placed on the same footing as others.

M. de Madariaga had explained that, owing to conditions of communications, the difference between the distant countries and near countries did not at present play any part. That was possible, but, in that case, the German delegation would, as matters stood, be making a concession in agreeing to differential treatment for the troops stationed in the distant countries.
In this connection, he might say that he entirely concurred in his Italian colleague’s standpoint. The German delegation was prepared to agree to differential treatment according to whether the forces under contemplation were those stationed in remote colonies and employed in those colonies or those stationed in territories near the home country or in the home country itself.

The definition of these troops and territories would have to be examined by the Committee on Effectives.

M. DE MADARIAGA (Spain) wished to remove a misunderstanding. He greatly regretted that M. Nadolny had not quite understood his meaning, probably because he had expressed himself ambiguously.

He had not said that distance had been suppressed by the progress made in communications. He had said that distance could not be used as a criterion for solving the problem because it did not govern any of the conditions defining the technical needs of any particular non-home army. He had meant that, while, from a political point of view, he admitted that distance played a part, from the technical point of view it played none at all, or, if it did play one, it could not be intelligibly defined in the form of a general principle.

To his very great regret, he could never agree to a general principle based on distance. He believed that the solution would be found in a thorough examination of each special case and in an analysis of the technical and especially the political conditions, which would clear up the reasons for any attitude that might be taken, but whenever an attempt was made in the General Commission to take a general decision of principle based on distance he would be obliged to resist, because such a decision would be tantamount to handling a purely political question from the technical standpoint. At the present stage, political questions must be dealt with as political questions and technical questions also as technical questions.

The President suggested that the Commission should proceed to a vote. Question 1(b) was, however, so worded that it would be necessary to take two votes. The first question was, Should the transformation referred to in paragraph (a) be applied in its entirety to all effectives stationed in overseas territories? The second was, Should it be applied in part? If there were a decision in favour of the transformation being applied in part it would, the President thought, be necessary to leave the Committee on Effectives to decide what that part should be.

He would accordingly put the first question in the following way:

"Should the colonial effectives be standardised in their entirety by being converted into armies with short-term service and limited effectives?"

This question was answered by two delegations in the affirmative and by sixteen in the negative.

The President invited the delegations to reply to the second question in the following terms:

"Should the colonial effectives be standardised in part by being converted into armies with short-term service and limited effectives?"

This question was answered by five delegations in the affirmative and by eight in the negative.

78. QUESTION OF EFFECTIVES: PROCEDURE TO BE ADOPTED IN DEALING WITH THE REMAINDER OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE DRAWN UP BY THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE.1

M. NADOLNY (Germany) thought the General Commission intended to take a decision only with regard to the question of principle constituted by point 1 of the questionnaire, and then to refer all other questions relating to the application of that principle to the Committee on Effectives. If that were, indeed, the General Commission's intention, there was nothing more to do now but to refer all these questions to the Committee on Effectives.

The President saw no objection to the General Commission taking a decision on the lines indicated by M. Nadolny, but pointed out that it had not yet taken that decision. He was therefore only in the position of stating the question and leaving it to the Commission to discuss it.

Mr. EDEN (United Kingdom) was inclined to share M. Nadolny's view. It seemed to him that many, if not all, of the remaining questions were matters with which the Committee on Effectives might deal. He would only suggest that that Committee be instructed that it could refer any question of principle back to the General Commission and that it should complete its examination within, say, a fortnight.

1 Documents Conf.D./C.G.41 and 43.
M. Antoniade (Roumania) said he would have no objection to this proposal if all the questions, beginning with No. 2, were exclusively technical. But there were some which raised questions of principle, and, in these circumstances, it would be preferable for the General Commission to take decisions in regard to those questions. Indeed, if the Commission adopted any other procedure, its work might be delayed, as experience had already shown. The Committee on Effectives would undoubtedly sometimes be confronted with questions of principle it was unable to settle and would be compelled to refer them to the General Commission.

Moreover, it must not be forgotten that the Committee on Effectives was a small body on which a number of delegations were not represented.

In conclusion, M. Antoniade thought the General Commission should first study all these questions in order to see whether there were any that it should not settle itself or at least any in regard to which it could give instructions to the Committee on Effectives.

M. Di Soragna (Italy) had a marked preference for M. Nadolny's proposal, which had been supported by Mr. Eden. Moreover, General Cavallero, on behalf of the Italian delegation, had always been in favour of referring all these questions to the Committee on Effectives as soon as possible. Mr. Eden had replied to the only really valid objection—namely, that there might be questions of principle which the Committee on Effectives would not be in a position to decide.

In that event, it would simply have to apply immediately to the General Commission, which would give the necessary replies.

Mr. Wilson (United States of America) observed that very often the so-called questions of principle put to the General Commission were questions covering particular difficulties between two or more States. In his opinion the debates in the General Commission upon such questions of principle had accomplished little. It was true that votes had been registered, but decisions reached by a majority of eight votes to five, or even sixteen to two, determined nothing. He thought the only thing to do was to put the remaining questions to another committee—for example, the Committee on Effectives—and to encourage the people most interested in their solution to get together and try to find empirical solutions.

M. de Madariaga (Spain) agreed with Mr. Wilson. It seemed to him to be of little importance whether the question was settled in the General Commission or in the Committee on Effectives, provided the members of the latter Committee knew exactly how to take a decision and were aware of the views of the members of the General Commission with regard to the principles. The Committee had nothing to gain by referring to another committee questions on which it could not itself reach agreement. The main point was that the most important delegations, those upon which the success or failure of the Conference depended, should give their representatives on the Committee on Effectives—for they would certainly be represented on it, however small that Committee might be—the necessary instructions to reach an agreement. That was the first condition.

The second condition might perhaps constitute a stimulus to the first. It would be that the Committee on Effectives should sit in public. There was always great advantage in holding these committees in public.

The third condition was that to which the United Kingdom delegate had very appositely referred—that a time-limit should be fixed for the work of the Committee.

M. Motta (Switzerland) desired to express a feeling that would, he hoped, be fairly general: it was, in any event, the feeling of the Swiss delegation. For some time, he had felt that the General Commission's discussions would enable what were called questions of principle to be settled in a clear, definite and useful manner. He must say that he had now somewhat lost faith in this method: his faith was somewhat shaken. He would take as an example the second question in the questionnaire, which read as follows: Should pre-military training be reckoned in the period of training? He had been glad to hear it said—and he supported this view—that it would be better to refer this question to the Committee on Effectives, along with the others. He felt bound, however, to point out that, if he were well informed, this question had already been discussed in that Committee and, as the latter had been unable to settle it, it had stretched out its arms to the General Commission, appealing for help. Now the General Commission, in its turn, was stretching out its arms to the Committee on Effectives.

What conclusion must be drawn therefrom? M. Motta did not feel that a vote on this question would at present be of great importance. There would be a majority and a minority, as had already been pointed out. But what did these majorities and minorities mean? When a particular group of States was to be found in the minority, everyone knew very well that the vote of the majority would to some extent be inoperative. Would it not be wise, then, to ask the Committee on Effectives again to take up certain questions it had regarded as questions of principle, on condition, of course—and here M. Motta agreed with M. de Madariaga—that the experts ceased to regard themselves as experts only, that they were imbued with a political spirit, which spirit should be conferred on them by their delegations? In the last resort, to
put it plainly, all the questions the delegations were discussing hopefully—but also, sometimes, with some anxiety—were above all questions for the great Powers. The great Powers, who were all represented on the Committee on Effectives, must set the others a good example. If they reached agreement, the others would follow.

M. Rutgers (Netherlands) said he had now reached the point at which he was no longer in favour of referring the matter back to another Committee. To do so would not lead the Conference towards its aim. This procedure had already been adopted too often. M. Rutgers must, in particular, admit that he saw no great advantage in referring questions to committees of experts. The chief danger of such committees was not that they consisted of experts who were examining questions as experts, but that those experts were not merely experts, but received instructions from their delegations and introduced politics into the committees. M. Rutgers held a slightly different opinion on this matter from M. Motta, and believed that the great danger of committees of experts was that the members of those committees were tied by their delegation's instructions.

If such questions as whether the contingent under training—or in other words the number of trained reserves—should be limited, a question that had led to many discussions and was mainly political in character, were referred to a committee of experts, the consequence would be that political arguments would be presented as technical arguments, and that was the danger against which M. de Madariaga had often warned the delegations.

If the majority of the General Commission were of opinion that this question should be referred to the committee of experts, M. Rutgers would resign himself to that solution, but he hoped the committee of experts would not again send it to the General Commission. For his part, he thought the decision taken last March to the effect that certain questions of principle must be settled by the General Commission before the committee of experts studied the details was right.

Among the questions of principle that it had been decided, in March, to discuss in the General Commission—and this decision was reached after M. Benès had done long, arduous and conscientious work—was precisely that of the limitation and reduction of trained reserves; that was to say, the limitation and reduction of the annual contingents. Such a question could be referred to the experts, but they would not budge, and would be content to maintain positions tenaciously defended for years. In the General Commission, however—M. Rutgers ventured to say this after hearing M. Pierre Cot’s very interesting statements on this point—it might be possible to find a political solution that would mark a step forward by the Conference. Progress must be made in the political domain, but the Netherlands delegate did not think it should be expected of committees of experts. If progress was to be made, it must be made by the General Commission.

M. Nadolny (Germany) desired to explain to M. Motta and to M. Rutgers that no committee of experts was concerned in the present instance. He could assure them that he would be the first to object to referring the matter back to a committee of experts, after the experience of such procedure gained during the past year. The committee in question was a political committee, consisting of delegates. In these circumstances, he fully agreed with M. de Madariaga’s explanations and noted that this time there was no misunderstanding between them.

M. Pierre Cot (France) said he personally had no great liking for questions of procedure. He was anxious to try to lead the General Commission towards the solution that would save most time. For that reason, he asked it to follow the suggestions of the Drafting Committee and to declare that the questions to be discussed should be settled in the General Commission and not in the Committee on Effectives. He would explain his idea in a few words.

In the first place, a preliminary question arose, What would be referred to the Committee on Effectives? Would it be question 2(a), or all the other questions? Obviously, if only the second question relating to pre-military instruction were referred to it, little time would be saved. If all the other questions were referred to it, since among these questions were important questions of principle, the General Commission would proceed, on this point of procedure, to take a number of votes, which would themselves be preceded by a whole series of discussions. Thus the discussion of innumerable questions of procedure would be added to discussions on principle.

There was a second question. Even if the precise question of pre-military training were referred to the Committee on Effectives, was it certain that time would be saved, that the solution of the problem would be facilitated? M. Pierre Cot did not think so.

Since, to his regret, he did not agree with M. Nadolny, his colleague would allow him to employ the words of a member of the German delegation, M. Brandenburg, who had said, at the first meeting of the Air Committee, that a useless game of "battledore and shuttlecock" must be avoided. Time must not be wasted in sending questions to the Committee on Effectives referring them to the General Commission, which would refer them back to the Committee on Effectives, which would again refer them to the General Commission. That game was all very well for people or nations who had time to waste, but not for the Conference.
The question of pre-military training had already been examined by the Committee on Effectives. The latter had been preoccupied about it. It had been unable to reach a decision, and because it had been unable to reach a decision it had stated in July that whereas the points on which the reservations have been formulated have only been adopted by a majority of the Committee and that, in consequence, they must be submitted to the General Commission for a final decision. What! The Committee on Effectives had examined the question. It had noted its inability to reach a decision, it had referred the problem to the General Commission; the General Commission—a court of appeal, so to speak—had taken it up because the Committee on Effectives had been unable to settle it. Was a second expert opinion really necessary, in view of the inability of the Committee to settle a question of principle, a political question? What was the good of that? It was very well known that the question was one of principle, was political. Mr. Eden had just said that, if the Committee on Effectives found difficulties of principle, it would again refer this problem to the General Commission. M. Pierre Cot must say that this was beyond his understanding. He was in favour of simple solutions. The members of the General Commission were asked to settle the problem. It was important that they should continue to deal with it, because, after a discussion over which much time would be wasted, the problem would return to them again.

If there were any need for M. Pierre Cot to convince himself that his argument was right, he would find an additional argument in what M. Nadolny had just so aptly observed. He had declared—and M. Pierre Cot thanked him—that the Committee on Effectives did not consist of experts. It was political. It, also, would settle the question from the political aspect. But then what difference was there?

This was a political question. It would be settled by a committee that would necessarily be political. What was the difference between the two? M. Pierre Cot saw only one difference, and he would apologise for drawing attention to it. One was a small committee on which everyone was not represented; the other was a general committee on which all were represented. Might he be permitted to prefer a democratic solution when questions of principle, political questions, had to be settled? When a question was really not technical, but one of principle in which everyone was interested, everyone had the same rights. There were no small and great Powers. Each was entitled to be heard. Each had the same right to vote and the duty to do so, since a question of principle was involved.

M. Motta had said that, above all, the great Powers must reach agreement. M. Pierre Cot thought that, here especially, agreement should not be reached in a small committee in which—as his colleague had rightly said—there were what were called Powers with greater interests than the others. It was precisely because the Powers with greater interests than the others were in touch, in the General Commission, with the small Powers that they were more disposed towards conciliatory solutions. For these reasons of expediency, of speed, of democratic principle, the French delegate asked that questions which were fundamentally questions of principle, which had already been to the Committee on Effectives and had been referred back to the General Commission, should not, in a hopeless game of "battledore and shuttlecock", be referred back in order to be referred again to the General Commission.

Mr. Eden (United Kingdom) said he agreed with only one of the sentiments expressed by his French colleague—he, too, hoped that the General Commission might soon settle the question of procedure.

M. Pierre Cot had said that the Committee on Effectives was likely to get into difficulties. That was extremely probable, and the General Commission wanted to hear what those difficulties were, in order to settle them. So far as Mr. Eden was aware, the Committee on Effectives had never presented any report to the General Commission on the questions on which the Committee had been unable to agree. Let the Committee at least make a full report on those difficulties, therefore, so that, with the facts before it, the General Commission could judge of them and come to a decision.

On looking at the list of questions, Mr. Eden really did not see how the Commission could be expected to deal with them. For instance, with regard to question 2, he frankly confessed that he had not the least idea whether pre-military training should be reckoned in the period of training, and what were the criteria of such pre-military training. That was surely a question on which the advice of the Committee on Effectives must be sought. To take the next question, Mr. Eden again frankly admitted that he could not say whether military training received in any form elsewhere than in the army should be reckoned in the period of training, and what were the criteria of such military training. The General Commission could hardly be asked to answer those questions in his view, and should refer the technical part of the programme to the Committee on Effectives.

It must also be remembered that, in its previous work, the Committee on Effectives, had not had the assistance of a very influential delegation which, happily, was now present.

Mr. Eden joined M. Motta in hoping that the reunion of those military Powers most concerned with the difficulties in question might assist towards an early conclusion of the work.

Mr. Eden reminded the General Commission that there were other matters with which it was very anxious to proceed. During recent weeks, it had tried to keep the programme...
of work moving forward simultaneously on all sides. The two main political principles embodied in question 1 had been decided, and it could very well be left to the Committee on Effectives to see what it could do, and to report any difficulties of principle to the General Commission for settlement.

M. Nadolny (Germany) expressed his satisfaction at the general desire to expedite the work. So far as he saw, the only question was the method to be used for that purpose. It was for that reason, from the purely technical point of view, that he thought that the quickest method would be for two committees, the General Commission and the Committee on Effectives, to work simultaneously.

When suggesting reference to the Committee on Effectives at the beginning of his remarks, he had referred to the Commission’s attitude. He would now refer to the speech of M. Pierre Cot himself, and he hoped that that would help M. Pierre Cot to accept his point of view.

M. Pierre Cot had said 1:

"That was why it [the French delegation] had handed in the following draft resolution which had just been distributed.

In the above resolution, the Commission was asked to state that it was desirable to bring about the standardisation of the European continental armies, to adopt a type of army that appeared to the French delegation to be most compatible with the interests of peace. Once these two decisions of principle were taken, all questions of detail would be referred to the Committee on Effectives."

General Burhardt-Bukacki (Poland) said that, as he took part in the Conference both as a delegate and as an expert, he had participated in the work of all the Committees on Effectives, which had studied the various questions. It seemed to him that to refer question 2 to the Committee on Effectives would serve no useful purpose. The matter would very soon come back before the General Commission.

Question 2 had been previously discussed by the Committee on Effectives for more than a week. The Committee had concluded with a vote of seven votes to five, all of which appeared in the Minutes.

So far as he could see, the position of the various delegations which had taken part in the debates of the Committee on Effectives had undergone no change. The result would be a futile loss of one or two days. The Committee on Effectives had come to no agreement either upon the principle or upon the criteria, without which nothing could be decided as to the principle. The situation was exactly the same for the other questions. The Committee on Effectives had, for example, discussed the question of what was to be meant by "assimilated officials" but had not succeeded in finding a definition. It seemed to him that the position was still the same. That being so, it would merely be playing tennis to send question 2 to the Committee on Effectives again. That question could as well be settled in the General Commission as in a smaller committee, and recent experience with the Air Committee afforded no reason to think that much could be hoped for from a reference of questions to a special committee.

Tevfik Rustu Bey (Turkey) apologised for dealing, at a time when one important matter of procedure was under discussion, with the question of procedure in general. His object was to indicate what he believed to be the origin of the difficulty.

Whether question 2 was considered in the General Commission or in the Committee on Effectives, the difficulty would always be the same, so long as the question of material, which was connected with it, remained unsettled. That was why, as he had proposed at the beginning of the discussions, it would be necessary to study alternately the fundamental questions regarding effectives and the fundamental cognate questions relating to war material. It was impossible to study the one and leave the other aside. There was complete interdependence between the two. Hence, either an alternate procedure in the General Commission must be accepted or two committees must be set up—a committee on effects and a committee on material, on which all delegations would be represented and which would work pari passu. The second committee would not be less useful than the first.

In any case, so long as the difficulties subsisted, the Turkish delegation would be obliged to abstain from voting, because it did not know the exact situation.

The President said that, before taking a vote, he thought he should remind the Commission that it had appointed a Drafting Committee, which had considered all the amendments sent to the Commission and had prepared the list of questions. He had been rather surprised to find that some of the delegations that had agreed, in the Drafting Committee, to refer certain principles to the General Commission for decision, were now recommending that another committee should deal with them. He could only say that, if the impression created upon his mind were the same as that created upon the public mind, the public would not think the Commission was a very businesslike body.

1 See Minutes of the thirty-sixth meeting of the General Commission.
What was likely to happen? As the President saw the position of the Committee on Effectives it was as follows: it would hold a discussion to decide whether the matter was one of principle or was a technical question. As the General Commission had reached no decision, it would conclude that it was not a matter of principle but was a technical question. It would then appoint a committee which would spend a little time—perhaps a long time—over the question and would report back that it was not technical but political. The Committee on Effectives, finding itself in a difficulty—and it had already been in difficulty on several occasions—would send the question back to the General Commission.

The President understood that there was a great desire, first, that there should be no private conversations, and, secondly, that the work should not be done by the Bureau. All were hungering to do work in the General and Political Commissions. But, the moment difficulties arose, there was a difference of opinion as to whether they should be dealt with in the General Commission or the Committee on Effectives. As he had already said, the impression created on his mind was very bad indeed; the General Commission had got itself into such a position that it would not be very long before it made itself look somewhat ridiculous.

As there was a clear division of opinion in the meeting, the President was compelled to take a vote; but he asked the delegations to realise, when voting, that, if the Committee on Effectives thought these matters were matters of principle, it would merely say so and would again ask the General Commission to decide them. He was not sure that it would not be wiser, now these questions were before the Commission, to get down to them and decide them, afterwards referring them to the Committee on Effectives.

The President had been trying to get rid of this question as speedily as possible because he realised that the next question the General Commission had to take in hand was material, and he clearly desired that the Committee on Effectives to get to work in order that, while the General Commission was discussing material, the Committee on Effectives might be endeavouring to settle points appertaining to effectives.

He hoped it would prove possible to carry out the idea he had put before the General Commission the previous week, and to work the General and Political Commissions as nearly as possible on parallel lines. That could not be done, however, unless the General Commission more speedily settled some of these questions of principle sent to it by the Drafting Committee, thus enabling the Committee on Effectives to set to work with the necessary time in which to reach the important conclusions it must report back to the General Commission.

M. NADOLNY (Germany) said that, as he had raised the question of reference to the Committee on Effectives he would like to say a few words. He thanked the President very sincerely for his comments and more particularly for his explanations, from which it resulted that the Committee on Effectives, if instructed to study these questions, would be asked to see that its work was carried out to good effect, so as to facilitate, as far as possible, the solution of the problems with which the delegations were concerned. The President, like the Turkish delegate, had further pointed out, and very properly, that the questions of effectives and material should be considered together. When M. Nadolny had urged this point previously, the President had made the following remark which appeared in the Minutes of a previous meeting:

"His own idea was that the sooner the question of effectives could be got away to the Effectives Committee with a proper term of reference the better."

These terms of reference were now decided and it would be for the Committee on Effectives to comply with them.

The President pointed out that, on more than one occasion, he had intimated his desire, immediately questions (a) and (b) were settled, to call upon the Committee on Effectives to deal with them, while the General Commission discussed the remaining questions. That had been his position, and he was sorry if he had failed to make it clear.

The President then put to the vote the following question: "Should the entire questionnaire set out in documents Conf.D./C.G.41 and 43, together with the decisions taken by the General Commission on questions (a) and (b), be referred to the Committee on Effectives for decision and report?"

Seventeen delegations replied to this question in the negative, and ten in the affirmative.

The discussion of the questionnaire was adjourned to the next meeting.

---

1 See Minutes of the thirty-fourth meeting of the General Commission.
Question 2: (a) Should pre-military training be reckoned in the period of training? (b) What are the criteria of such pre-military training?

M. Pierre Cot (France) hoped that his colleagues would reply in the affirmative to this question, for the following reasons. The question had been discussed in the Technical Committee and it would certainly be discussed again. The subject of the present debate being the principle involved, he would not attempt to give a complete definition of what was meant by "pre-military" or to examine what in the various countries were the different associations which should be regarded as giving pre-military instruction. He was asking the General Commission to pronounce only on the principle. He considered that the delegations would be running a grave risk if they failed to take pre-military training into account. The general system which the French delegation had proposed to the General Commission was as follows: standardisation of the different types of army and adoption for these types of short-term service with limited effectives. If that principle were agreed and it was said that in all Europe there would be comparable armies with the same period of service, at any rate for all countries situated in equivalent circumstances, and if the Conference did not deal with the question of pre-military training, the result would probably be, not only to disturb the equilibrium which it was hoped by means of this proposition to establish, but also to falsify the comparisons.

He would take a concrete example. Take two countries, A and B, which were both to move in the direction of equality of status. To do that, they agreed to adopt the same type of army, the same number of recruits and the same period of military service. A, however, made arrangements so that all young men between 18 and 21 years of age were legally and compulsorily to receive pre-military training before they went into barracks. B, on the other hand, did not adopt the same measure. What would happen? The equality which it had been hoped to establish between B and A would be upset to the advantage of the country which had instituted pre-military service. The young men in the latter country would arrive at the barracks to undergo a short-term military service—nine or ten months—after having received previous military instruction spread out over two or three years, as a result of which they would, so to speak, have had the corners knocked off from the military point of view and be better fitted to receive military instruction in the strict sense of the term. They could thus be mobilised at the end of three months instead of five, six or seven months, as would be the case in the other country. It followed that the whole system would be falsified, comparison would no longer be possible and that the balance would never become a fact. That was the reason why, not wishing to launch the General Commission upon a discussion which might give the impression of a dispute and would lead to a deadlock, the French delegation asked the General Commission to pronounce on the principle and to say that, in order to standardise the armies in a way which would render them really comparable, it was essential that pre-military training should be taken into account.

If, as he hoped, the General Commission took this decision of principle, it would have done good work. This decision would apply to "pre-militaries" in all countries, since all States without distinction would be subjected to this equality of status towards which the Commission desired to approach.

The technical question of defining pre-military training would be left to the Committee on Effectives to determine. In the French delegation's idea, pre-military instruction meant solely instruction given compulsorily to young men who were required to undergo it by law, in the same way as others were required to undergo military service, to young men who had reached the age of 18 years—i.e., the age from which they were capable of being turned into soldiers.

M. Di Soragna (Italy) asked whether there was any definition of pre-military training generally acceptable to all members of the Commission. It was obvious that the vote might be in the affirmative or the negative according to the meaning given to that term.