General Benítez (Spain) thought that field artillery, whether light or heavy, had the most specifically offensive characteristics, since it accompanied the infantry everywhere and played an essential part in the attack.

The President asked whether in that case the Spanish delegation wished to withdraw its proposal reading as follows:

"All weapons can be used for offensive and defensive purposes. Those most effective for the former are also most effective for the latter."

Did the Spanish delegation feel that the United Kingdom text made its own proposal unnecessary, or did it still prefer to retain it?

General Benítez (Spain) replied that, having accepted the United Kingdom proposal, he withdrew the Spanish proposal, while reserving the right to submit, in the form of an amendment to the United Kingdom proposal, such parts of his original text as he felt should be retained.

M. Aubert (France) explained the reasons for which the French delegation had asked for the deletion of the last lines of the paragraph (a); the first part of that paragraph expressed an idea admitting of no dispute which had already been brought out in the Sub-Commission "A"’s report and the Commission should, in the French delegation’s view, content itself with that statement.

He felt that the second part of the sentence might give rise to unnecessary controversy. The Spanish delegation had observed that the most effective artillery for offensive purposes was also the most effective for purposes of defence. Such being the case, the Commission should not stress the fact that the offensive character increased in proportion to the power unless it said that the same applied also to the defensive character. Much emphasis had been placed, in the proposed text, on calibre and perhaps not enough on range. He asked whether the United Kingdom delegation could agree to delete that part of the sentence.

General Temperley (United Kingdom) regretted that he could not accede to the request, as the United Kingdom delegation attached some importance to the passage in question. While it was true that the defensive character increased along with the offensive character, it was necessary to take into account the fact that the General Commission’s question applied to the offensive power of artillery. The United Kingdom delegation felt that the clause formed a useful preamble to a more detailed study of offensive artillery.

In view of the publicity given to the Commission’s work, it might be well to stress even what appeared self-evident facts, such as the relationship between the offensive character and power. Feeling that it would be well to direct the General Commission’s attention to the fact that the offensive capacity increased with the calibre, the United Kingdom delegation wished the passage under discussion to be retained in the reply to the General Commission. The United Kingdom delegate added that the French delegate would not find him so strongly opposed to the majority of the other amendments put forward by the French delegation.

M. Aubert (France) appreciated General Temperley’s argument, which answered clearly his own question. He agreed that the General Commission’s question had in view the offensive character of artillery. It was quite certain, however, and this fact was clear from the Commission’s discussions, that the first criterion must be defined in the light of the second. He feared that, in view of the difficulties which had already arisen in that connection, fresh difficulties might be caused uselessly if the Commission reverted to so abstract a problem. He noted that the members of the Commission were agreed as regards the substance of the question, and pointed out that the later passages of the document would illustrate General Temperley’s point by showing that some calibres might be more offensive than others. Fearing, however, that fresh difficulties might be caused in return for what was a very minor gain, the French delegation reiterated its request that the second part of paragraph (a) be deleted in the interests of greater clearness.

He proposed the following text, which was, he said, based on General Temperley’s suggestion:

"... but the offensive character increases proportionately with the efficacy against defensive works and against civilians — i.e., proportionately with the power and range."

General Temperley (United Kingdom) accepted M. Aubert’s text.

The President read the new text, drafted as follows:

"All artillery can be used for offensive and for defensive purposes, but the offensive character increases proportionately with the efficacy against defensive works and against civilians — i.e., proportionately with the power and range."

Paragraph (a) was adopted.
Paragraph (b).

The President read paragraph (b) of the United Kingdom proposal, as follows:

"Leaving aside the question of artillery constituting the fixed armament of permanent fortifications, which raises certain issues more appropriate for separate discussion, the Land Commission is of the opinion that those types of mobile artillery which are capable of destroying permanent fortifications of average, or of more than average, strength — that is to say, pieces of calibres from 250 mm. upwards, firing projectiles weighing from 200 kilogrammes upwards — should be regarded as the most specifically offensive and the most efficacious against the national defence."

He stated that amendments to that paragraph had been submitted by the French delegation. There was firstly a formal modification to the first phrase.

The formal modification in question was adopted.

The President observed that the French text involved a further modification by the addition of another category of material to those already included in the United Kingdom text.

M. Aubert (France) explained that the French delegation's object in proposing the amendment was, on the one hand, to keep more closely to the experts' reply, in which the distinction for which it was asking appeared, and, on the other, to reflect as far as possible the various tendencies exhibited in the course of the Commission's proceedings, in order to increase the likelihood of the Commission being able to come to a unanimous decision, which would have a good effect on public opinion. He thought that the Commission would be well advised to be as explicit as possible.

After a discussion in which General Bonomi (Italy), the President, M. Aubert (France) and General Temperley (United Kingdom) took part, the Commission adopted the following text:

"(b) Subject to such solutions as may hereafter be found by the General Commission for the questions raised by the fact that the fixed artillery of permanent fortifications and mobile artillery can be rendered interchangeable, the Land Commission is of opinion that the types of mobile artillery most threatening to national defence comprise those which are capable of destroying permanent fortifications of considerable strength, namely:

(1) In the case of permanent fortifications of medium strength, artillery of a calibre weight exceeding 320 mm., firing projectiles exceeding 500 kilogrammes in weight."

General Temperley (United Kingdom) proposed an amendment to sub-paragraph 2 of the French proposal in deference to the findings of the Committee of Experts concerning the calibre for use against permanent fortification of medium strength — namely, a calibre of "about 250 mm.", which had represented a mean (document Conf. D./C.T.8, Chapter II, paragraph (b)). The words "and upwards" might be added to reflect the second figure (320 mm.) named in the French draft.

The Commission adopted sub-paragraph 2 of the French proposal as amended. The text, as adopted, read:

"(2) In the case of permanent fortifications of medium strength, artillery of a calibre of about 250 mm. and above, firing projectiles exceeding 200 kilogrammes in weight."

M. von Weizsäcker, speaking on paragraph (b) as a whole, noted that in the text as adopted the first line of the United Kingdom proposal had been suppressed; he assumed that the reservation embodied in the latter still applied.

The President confirmed that view.

Paragraph (c).

The President read paragraph (c) of the United Kingdom proposal, as follows:

(c) In a second and a lower category of offensive power should be included those weapons which are capable of effective action against lightly-protected permanent fortifications or against non-permanent field-works and entrenchments — that is to say, pieces of calibres between 155 mm. and 250 mm., firing projectiles weighing between 50 kilogrammes and 200 kilogrammes."
He added that, in addition to the French proposal, amendments to this paragraph had been received from the German and Italian delegations. These amendments were as follows:

**German Amendment.**

Substitute for paragraph (c).

"In a second and lower category of offensive power should be included those weapons which are capable of effective action against lightly-protected permanent fortifications or against non-permanent field-works and entrenchments — that is to say, pieces of calibres between about 100 mm. and 250 mm., firing projectiles weighing up to 200 kilogrammes. 'About 100 mm.' should be understood to mean guns of 77 mm. and over."

**Italian Amendment.**

Replace the words:

"... calibres between 155 mm. and 250 mm., firing projectiles weighing between 30 kilogrammes and 200 kilogrammes"

by the following words:

"... calibres between about 100 mm. and 250 mm., firing projectiles weighing between 15 kilogrammes and 200 kilogrammes."

M. AUBERT (France) explained the principle underlying the French amendment as embodied in paragraphs (e) and (d) of the French delegation's draft — namely, that a distinction should be made between the category of "lightly-protected permanent fortifications" and "works on the battlefield" and that of "improvised field-works and entrenchments": that distinction reproduced more closely the terms of the experts' reply.

General TEMPERLEY (United Kingdom) agreed.

General DE NÁNÁSY-MEGÁY (Hungary) endorsed the views just expressed. He proposed further that the Commission should repeat in its text the experts' reference to a 105 mm. calibre for use against lightly-protected permanent fortifications (document Conf. D./C.T.8, Chapter II, paragraph 1 (e)).

M. AUBERT (France) observed that the French delegation's text dealt with "artillery capable of effective action". The passage in the experts' reply to which the Hungarian delegate had referred simply stated that "variable results" might be obtained with the calibres named; "effective action" was mentioned in a later paragraph.

General DE NÁNÁSY-MEGÁY (Hungary) thought it preferable to adopt the experts' text.

General BONOMI (Italy) was in favour of inserting paragraph (e) of the experts' reply, so that the General Commission might have the experts' views before it. He supported the proposal to mention the 105 mm. calibre, a suggestion already embodied in the Italian amendment.

M. LOUNATCHARSKI (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) noted the experts' statement that variable results might be obtained, and thought that some mention should be made of the fact that the effectiveness of the action might vary.

M. AUBERT (France) proposed, in deference to the last speaker, to add to paragraph (e) of the French text a passage as follows:

"Variable results may be obtained against the same objectives according to the kind of projectile, the nature of the fire (flat trajectory or high-angle trajectory), thickness of earth or concrete, with artillery of calibres varying from 220 to 105 mm."

General BONOMI (Italy) thought it preferable to take the experts' reply and to say that in a second category variable results might be obtained according to the kind of projectile, etc.

The President enquired whether the Commission agreed to the sub-division suggested in the French proposal. If so, it would be possible to satisfy the French view and those of the Italian and Soviet delegations and the others by retaining the sub-division and redrafting the French text.

General DE NÁNÁSY-MEGÁY (Hungary) stated that the Hungarian delegation accepted the sub-division proposed in the French draft, but asked that the Commission should adopt the experts' text, that text having already been accepted by everybody during the earlier discussions.

M. VON WEIZSÁCKER agreed that it seemed reasonable to take the text of the experts' reply.
The President suggested that a possible solution might be to make a distinction, as the experts had done, between permanent fortification and entrenchments, field-works and other objectives of the battlefield.

(The meeting was suspended, in order that a draft text might be prepared on the basis of the views expressed.)

On resuming the meeting, the President noted that the new draft, prepared by several delegations, followed, in the main, the text of the Committee of Experts; it would, he thought, satisfy the views of the Italian and Hungarian delegations. The draft text submitted read as follows:

"Against permanent fortifications with little protection variable results may be obtained according to the kind of projectile, the nature of the fire (flat trajectory or high-angle trajectory), thickness of earth or concrete, with calibres varying from 105 to 250 mm.

"As regards artillery capable of effective action against improvised field-works and entrenchments, this includes generally pieces of a calibre varying from about 250 to 100 mm., firing projectiles of from about 200 kilogrammes to 15 kilogrammes in weight."

M. von Weizsäcker (Germany) said that the German delegation was prepared to accept the new text if by the phrase "about 100 mm." was meant guns from 77 mm. upwards.

General Temperley (United Kingdom) regretted that the United Kingdom delegation could not accept the text under discussion. It did not consider a 100 mm. calibre effective against field-works; at least a 155 mm. calibre was required. If the findings of the Committee of Experts were correct, paragraph (d) of the new text could not stand. He referred in detail to the terms of the experts' reply, which read:

"As a rule, artillery of a calibre up to about 100 mm. can only be effectively used against the least strongly protected personnel and objectives of the battlefield.

"Artillery of a higher calibre — particularly of about 150 mm., which is the calibre most commonly employed — and up to a calibre of 220 mm. inclusive, is capable of effective action against most entrenchments, field-works and other objectives of the battlefield which can be organised and constructed in a short time . . . ."

M. Aubert (France) agreed with the United Kingdom delegate on the merits of the question. He asked that a decision might be postponed until the discussion of the second sub-paragraph of paragraph (d) of the French proposal, when each delegation could state what calibre it thought necessary for effective use against field-works.
the Land Commission offers the following recommendations for consideration by the General Commission:

"(a) All artillery can be used for offensive and for defensive purposes, but its offensive capacity becomes greater as its effectiveness increases as far as defensive organisations and the civilian population are concerned—i.e., with the increase of its power and its range.

"(b) Subject to such solutions as may hereafter be found by the General Commission for the questions raised by the fact that the fixed artillery of permanent fortifications and mobile artillery can be rendered interchangeable, the Land Commission is of opinion that the types of mobile artillery most threatening to national defence are those which are capable of destroying permanent fortifications of considerable strength—namely:

1. In the case of permanent fortifications of great strength, artillery of a calibre exceeding 320 mm. firing projectiles exceeding 500 kilogrammes in weight.

2. In the case of permanent fortifications of medium strength, artillery of a calibre of about 250 mm. and above, firing projectiles exceeding 200 kilogrammes in weight."

A difference of opinion had so far prevented unanimity on the subject of paragraph (c) of the United Kingdom proposal, which had been considered in conjunction with paragraphs (c) and (d) (first part) of the French proposal. It was hoped that a new text submitted by M. Bourquin as Rapporteur would permit of agreement.

**Paragraph (c) (continuation).**

M. BOURQUIN (Belgium), Rapporteur, submitted the following amended text:

"In a lower category of offensive power should be included pieces of a calibre between 250 and about 100 mm.

These pieces, particularly those of about 150 mm., which is the most commonly employed, are capable of effective action against most entrenchments, field-works and other objectives of the battlefield which may be organised and constructed in a short time with limited personnel and material. On the other hand, variable results can be obtained by the use of the same pieces according to the kind of projectile, the nature of the fire (flat trajectory or high-angled trajectory), thickness of earth or concrete, on permanent fortifications with little protection to which can be assimilated the entrenchments and field-works of battlefields when the time, personnel and material at the disposal of the defence attain a sufficient degree of magnitude."

He explained that his amendment represented a co-ordination of the elements embodied in the experts' reply. The experts had examined the question of artillery in relation to the various objectives—on the one hand, permanent fortifications of great strength, of average strength, and with little protection, and, on the other, entrenchments, field-works and other objectives of the battlefield. Those elements had now been regrouped for an immediate purpose—namely, in order that the Commission might examine, in accordance with its terms of reference, the various weapons.

The second category named in the United Kingdom proposal covered calibres of 250 mm. and below (down to 155 mm.), while the calibres indicated by the experts as being capable of being used against permanent fortifications with little protection (105 mm. to 250 mm.) and field-works (100 mm. to 220 mm.) might be conveniently grouped together in one category extending from 250 mm. to 100 mm., as suggested in the new text; the remainder of the amendment followed the experts' reply.

If the Commission decided to adopt that text, framed in the interests of unanimity, it was essential to state in its report to the General Commission that it had been guided by purely technical considerations and that, when it came to fixing a limit at which artillery became particularly dangerous either to national defence or to civilians—a question which was not of a purely technical character—the existence of three main currents of opinion had become evident [(the calibres named being respectively about 100 mm., 150 mm. and 220 mm.).

Only by remaining on technical ground could the Commission hope to reach unanimity—unless it decided to adopt a text so complicated as simply to bewilder the General Commission. An endeavour must be made to reach unanimity, as long as it really reflected the views of the various delegations.

General BENITEZ (Spain) observed that at the end of paragraph (b) of the text adopted there was a reference to weapons most specifically offensive and most efficacious against national defence. He thought that a similar reference should be made in paragraph (c). While agreeing with the Rapporteur as to the importance of unanimity, he felt that clearness
was even more important, for unanimity might perhaps be achieved only by sacrificing the minority or by adopting a colourless text; moreover, the Land Commission's opinion was not in any case binding on the General Commission.

The President pointed out that the idea of a graduation in the offensive character of weapons, which General Benitez wished to add, was already covered by paragraph (a) where it was said: "but its offensive capacity becomes greater as its effectiveness increases as far as defensive organisations and the civilian population are concerned — i.e., with the increase of its power and its range ".

General Temperley (United Kingdom) thought that the members of the Commission must all be very grateful to the Rapporteur for having endeavoured to find a text to cover their views. He agreed with the Rapporteur that it would be necessary to inform the General Commission that three main groups of opinion existed in the Land Commission.

Commenting on the new text, he stated that the objection which he had felt bound to offer to the text submitted at the end of the previous meeting still existed; from his particular point of view, he could not see that the new text differed very much from the old one. His fundamental objection to both texts was that they stated that guns of a calibre of 100 mm. were capable of effective action against field-works. The United Kingdom delegation did not believe that statement to be true. Most commanders, if given the task of attacking an enemy with field-works and entrenched positions, would ask for guns of at least 150 mm. and would not attack without, or, if they did so, would suffer great loss of life or be unsuccessful in the attack. The United Kingdom delegate could not put his signature or agree to any document sent to the General Commission and containing that statement, a statement which, as a soldier, he did not believe to be correct. True, the Rapporteur's text referred in the last sentence to "variable results", etc., but that sentence told the General Commission nothing that it did not already know. Even if he had to make a reservation for the United Kingdom delegation alone, he could not agree that guns of such a low calibre were effective against field fortifications or entrenchments of the kind in question.

M. Bourquin (Belgium), Rapporteur, thanked the delegate of the United Kingdom for his appreciative remarks. The criticism offered applied rather to the experts' reply, for the new text reflected the text of that reply.

The Rapporteur had hoped that the work of the Commission might progress in the technical field, but if unanimity were impossible, the Commission might simply transmit the experts' reply, adding in its report to the General Commission that when it had tried to fix a limit the existence of three groups of opinion had become evident.

M. Aubert (France) thought that some of the difficulties which had arisen were perhaps due to the fact that the Rapporteur had not kept sufficiently closely to the text of the experts' reply. He drew attention to two points in regard to which that appeared to be the case. First, it would be well, after mentioning calibres of 100 mm. and 150 mm., to mention (as in the experts' reply) 220 mm. Further, he thought mention should be made of the fact that the "calibre required may even be as much as 250 mm. when the time, personnel and material available have made it possible to increase the degree of resistance
of the position”, the text continuing: “Further, variable results may be obtained, according to the nature of the projectile, with pieces of a calibre between about 250 mm. and 100 mm.”

He thought that the text adopted by the Commission would thus be clear and would bring out the fact that the various opinions and tendencies could be grouped round three main calibres. He feared that if the Commission summarised the experts’ reply too drastically some misunderstanding might arise.

General Nuyten (Belgium) recalled that the purpose of the Rapporteur’s amendment was to reconcile the United Kingdom and French theses. At the meeting on May 11th the Belgian delegation had stated that it would ask for the abolition of all howitzers and mortars of a calibre exceeding 220 mm. and all guns of a calibre exceeding 155 mm. Despite its spirit of conciliation, the Belgian delegation had not changed its views on that point.

General Temperley had said that the different tendencies apparent during the Commission’s debates should be mentioned in the Commission’s report. The formula at present under consideration applied to all calibres from 250 mm. to 100 mm. If that formula were adopted, the Belgian delegation would be unable to express its own particular views.

M. Bourquin (Belgium), Rapporteur, accepted M. Aubert’s text. He proposed to keep even more closely to the terms of the experts’ reply and to modify his amendment as follows:

“As a rule, artillery of a calibre up to about 100 mm. can only be effectively used against the least strongly protected personnel and objectives of the battlefield. Artillery of a calibre higher than about 100 mm.— particularly of about 150 mm., which is the calibre most commonly employed — and up to a calibre of 220 mm. inclusive, is capable of effective action against most entrenchments, field-works and other objectives of the battlefield which can be organised and constructed in a short time with limited personnel and material. The calibre required may even be as much as 250 mm. when the time, personnel and material at the disposal of the defence have made it possible to increase the degree of resistance of the position. Further, variable results may be obtained, according to the nature of the projectile, with pieces of a calibre between about 250 mm. and 100 mm.”

He hoped that that modification would meet General Temperley’s views, and he thought that, as there was some difference of opinion as to interpretation, it would be better to keep to the experts’ text.

General Nuyten had said that the Belgian delegation’s views would not appear if the Commission adopted the formula proposed. It was unfortunately not possible, in a joint text, to mention all the figures which had been proposed by the different delegations. The Commission could only keep to the text of the experts’ reply and state in its report to the General Commission that agreement had not been reached in regard to the actual figures as regards limits, adding that, despite that divergence of opinion, three main tendencies had been clearly distinguished.

General Benitez (Spain) observed that, while taking into account the relationship between the offensive character and the calibre of artillery, the Commission had entirely neglected the question of mobility. He proposed, in due course, to submit a text on the subject of field artillery.

The President requested General Benitez to hold over his proposal until agreement on the principle had been reached.

Paragraph (e) was adopted.

M. von Weizsäcker (Germany) accepted the new formula, subject to the objection already put forward by the German delegation regarding 100 mm. calibres, which also applied to paragraph (e).

The President noted the German delegation’s reservation.

Paragraph (d).

The President read paragraph (d) of the United Kingdom proposal, as follows:

“Artillery of natures lighter than those referred to in paragraph (e) above are the least specifically offensive in character.”

He observed that, in addition to the French proposal, amendments had been received from the German and Italian delegations.
German Amendment.

Substitute for paragraph (d):

“Artillery of natures lighter than those referred to in paragraph (c) above are not of a specifically offensive character.”

Italian Amendment.

Replace the words:

“are the least specifically offensive in character”

by the following words:

“are not of a specifically offensive character”.

The President added that, in his view, paragraph (d) should be deleted.

General Benítez (Spain) pointed out that if it were retained, it would appear to indicate that 75 mm. guns, for example, were regarded as practically non-offensive.

M. Aubert (France) recalled that the discussion on the second sub-paragraph of paragraph (d) of the French proposal had been postponed. In view of the amendments made in the preceding paragraphs of the reply to the General Commission, the French delegation wished to amend the text of the second sub-paragraph of paragraph (d) as follows:

“Certain delegations regard artillery capable of effective action against improvised field-works and entrenchments as threatening to national defence, while others consider it necessary for national defence.”

The experts’ reply stated that artillery up to a calibre of 220 mm. inclusive was necessary to reduce field-works. The French delegation could not include such weapons in the category of those most threatening to national defence.

The fundamental reason for this attitude had been repeatedly stated; the French delegation considered it essential to retain the means of defence required to drive out an enemy who had invaded the country by a surprise attack and entrenched itself in the national territory.

The Netherlands delegate, who was Vice-President of the Commission, had said, it was true, while agreeing that calibres of 220 mm. might perhaps be necessary to reduce field-works, that if such pieces were prohibited, the defence would no doubt be weakened, but that at the same time it would only have to cope with an offensive which was also less well armed.

That reasoning would be accurate if it were agreed that the defence and the attack employed the same weapons and that it was equitable to disarm them simultaneously. There was reason to believe, unfortunately, that the aggressor would not worry about a prohibition which the victim of the aggression had perhaps made a point of observing. The aggressor would tend to concentrate as secretly as possible, not the most powerful, but the most rapid material in the hands of his best troops, and if he entrenched himself on the territory which he had invaded very powerful material would be required to drive him out when he was on his guard. Surprise was a factor in the aggressor’s favour.

On those grounds the French delegation held that artillery of a calibre of at least 220 mm., which was necessary to destroy fortifications, could not be included in the category of weapons most dangerous to national defence. It was, on the contrary, necessary for purposes of national defence.

The question of differentiating between weapons which could and those which could not be included in that category having arisen, the French delegate observed that the line of demarcation could not be rigid and absolute. If it were, there would be clear evidence to prove the aggressive nature of certain material, and such material need only be abolished to do away automatically with aggression.

The many and varied conclusions, however, which had emerged from the debates showed that no rigid line could be drawn. All weapons, if placed at the disposal of a country which was itself aggressively-minded, could assume an offensive character. A fleet of battleships, for example, might be destroyed by sloops carrying torpedoes, or other implements might be used which could not at present be brought under any system of regulation. The French delegate thought that the Commission should give up the idea of trying to identify aggression with this or that war material.

It was true that, during the discussions, it had been agreed that certain arms were more dangerous than others, but the idea on which this agreement was based was not purely technical.

In stating that material of a calibre sufficient to destroy permanent fortifications was most dangerous to national defence, the Commission had chiefly had in mind the fact that the aggressor was invading the territory, since he was attacking its fortifications. That introduced an idea which was quite independent of the offensive capacity of the weapons in themselves — namely, the definition of aggression, the establishment of the aggressor’s intentions. From these considerations M. Aubert would conclude that, if it were desired to
suppress aggression or at all events to discourage it — which was the fundamental task of the League — it was not sufficient to abolish certain material: it was essential to establish some system of control which would deprive the aggressor of the benefit of surprise and — more important still — to convince the aggressor that aggression did not pay.

The French delegate, reverting to the remarks of the Polish delegate, pointed out, further, that the relative and empirical character of the line of demarcation to be drawn between offensive and defensive weapons would vary according to whether the first-named category were abolished or placed at the service of the League. Abolition would mean embarking on the unknown and upsetting the existing situation in regard to security. The prohibition of certain categories of weapons would be to the advantage of States which did not at present possess them, and the value of the material still remaining would be greatly enhanced, as would any new process or invention that had not yet come under a system of regulation, so that the aggressor could employ the means in question for the purpose of a surprise attack.

If another formula for regulation were adopted, such as internationalisation, as the French delegation proposed, those drawbacks would disappear.

Subject to his observations as regards a higher calibre, the French delegate repeated that it was impossible for the French delegation to regard artillery of 220 mm. and under as most specifically offensive or most efficacious against national defence.

The President noted that the Commission appeared to be in favour of deleting paragraph (d) of the United Kingdom proposal.

He enquired whether the French delegation would agree to its reservation appearing in the form of a footnote.

M. Aubert (France) reserved his reply on that point until he had heard the observations that other delegations might have to submit. He pointed out that the French delegation's formula was not intended simply to express its own views, since two opposite tendencies were clearly expressed in it.

General Bonomi (Italy) made the following statement:

"I have followed M. Aubert's interesting statement most attentively, but I would venture to point out that both in the French delegate's proposal and in his statement an idea occurs which exceeds our terms of reference under the General Commission's resolution. The resolution in question states that the range of land, sea and air armaments should be examined by the competent special commissions, with a view to selecting those weapons whose character is the most specifically offensive or those most efficacious against national defence or most threatening to civilians. That resolution does not, however, authorise us to discuss what weapons are necessary for national defence. I am convinced that if we discussed the proposal submitted by the French delegate we should be acting contrary to the definite instructions given us by the General Commission. I would ask the President, therefore, not to open a discussion on that proposal."

The President thought that, in view of the lateness of the hour and the importance of the question raised by General Bonomi, it would be preferable to adjourn the discussion to the next meeting.

The President's proposal was adopted.

---

ELEVENTH MEETING

Held on Friday, May 20th, 1932, at 10 a.m.

President: M. BUERO.


Paragraph (d) (continuation).

The President, resuming the discussion at the point at which it had been adjourned on the previous day, noted that, in the course of the debate on the text of paragraph (d)
(second part) of the French proposal, the Italian delegation had raised the previous question concerning the competence of the Commission to examine matters which, in its view, did not come within its terms of reference under the General Commission's resolution of April 22nd. The Commission must first discuss the previous question.

General NYGREN (Sweden) observed that in paragraph (b) the Land Commission had given a direct reply to the General Commission's question by stating that the weapons specified—i.e., the weapons of highest calibre, were the most threatening to national defence.

The text of paragraph (c) simply stated, however, that certain other pieces should be included in a second category of lower power; the paragraph then enumerated certain technical facts, but no opinion was expressed on the real problem at issue—namely, whether those weapons, or some of them, should be regarded as specifically offensive, etc. It might simply be concluded that they were less offensive than the ones referred to in (b), but that was self-evident. In view of the actual aim of the Conference, which was to subject certain particularly aggressive weapons to special measures of qualitative limitation and reduction, the Land Commission should give a more direct reply. General Benitez had drawn attention to that point on the previous day, and that view was apparently shared by the French delegation, for, in the last paragraph of its text as amended at the previous meeting, it stated that certain delegations regarded the weapons in question as threatening to national defence. The Swedish delegation thought that text too vague and general.

Since it seemed impossible at present to reach unanimity on the question of which of the weapons in paragraph (c) should be regarded as specifically offensive and threatening, it was preferable to say so frankly, instead of taking refuge behind general phrases, which meant very little.

As regards the Italian observation, the Swedish delegate agreed with General Bonomi. The last sub-paragraph of paragraph (d) of the French proposal should be replaced by the formal statement to the effect that unanimity had not been reached, but that the pieces regarded as possessing specifically offensive characteristics were artillery of a calibre exceeding, in the opinion of certain delegations, 105 mm., in the opinion of others, 155 mm., and in the opinion of a third group of delegates, 220 mm.

M. AUBERT (France), in view of the Swedish delegation's statement, wished to refer to paragraph (a) as adopted 1:

"All artillery can be used for offensive and for defensive purposes, but its offensive capacity becomes greater as its effectiveness increases as far as defensive organisations and the civilian population are concerned—i.e., with the increase of its power and its range."

That paragraph, he said, covered all that followed. Paragraph (b) gave the calibres most threatening to national defence, and paragraph (e) would deal with a lower category of offensive power, in regard to which agreement had not been reached: a general statement had seemed all that was possible in the circumstances, but he had no objection to making it more precise if the Commission wished. There still remained the question of "dosage"; certain weapons should be regarded as less offensive than others, by reason of the fact that they were required for defensive purposes. A discussion on the "dosage" of the offensive and defensive characteristics of weapons was, in his view, quite within the Land Commission's competence.

M. VENTZOFF (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Soviet delegation had not considered it necessary up to the present to intervene in such a way as to disturb the unanimity of the Land Commission, which had, moreover, confined itself to a mere enumeration of the different groups of opinion revealed in the Committee of Experts. M. Aubert, however, had raised a series of questions of principle concerning qualitative disarmament, and it became necessary to explain the Soviet position.

M. Aubert had very rightly stressed the relative value of qualitative disarmament; he had demonstrated that even if modern artillery having a large calibre were abolished, offensive operations could still be pursued with the technical means left intact. For that very reason the Soviet delegation had maintained, in all the Commissions, that qualitative disarmament was useless without quantitative disarmament. If both those operations could be put through together, the offensive capacity of aggressive States would be greatly undermined. The big-calibre campaign had been going on for the past three weeks, and it was by this means that an endeavour was being made to save from "perdition" all, or practically all, heavy artillery. Unanimity on such principles, the Soviet delegate felt,

1 See Minutes of the previous meeting.
would not do much to advance the cause of disarmament. The technique of artillery on which the whole scheme of the weight of projectiles and artillery calibres was based could not be regarded from the standpoint of statics. From the standpoint of dynamics, a consideration of modern artillery tendencies, a cursory glance at military publications and an examination of experimental models showed that each type of new artillery possessed higher technical properties while the calibres remained unchanged. Technical improvements in the form of modifications in the structure of the pieces, in the mounting, in the shape of the projectile, and in other details, permitted of an enormous increase in the range and weight of the projectile, while keeping the same calibre. The Soviet delegation, therefore, maintained that for the purposes of really qualitative disarmament the Commission should (1) select from the Committee of Experts' list the lowest calibres which could be a menace to national defence, and (2) prohibit the qualitative improvement of existing models.

It might be objected that the technique of fortification was also improving. The Soviet delegation did not agree that, to constitute a threat to national defence, the projectile must be capable of penetrating one or two metres into the concrete or of piercing an armoured turret. Few countries could establish so costly a system of defence as that would imply, and for that reason the Soviet delegation still held that all artillery (guns and howitzers) of a calibre exceeding 100 mm., firing a projectile exceeding 16 kilogrammes in weight and possessing a range of more than 15 kilometres were covered by the General Commission's criteria. The passage in the resolution which M. Aubert had brought into discussion should, in the Soviet delegate's view, be framed as follows:

"In the opinion of certain delegations, such artillery might constitute a considerable danger to national defence."

Was it necessary to add that certain States considered the maintenance of that artillery necessary for national defence? M. Ventzoff thought not, as the General Commission had not asked the Land Commission for a reply to questions relating to defensive weapons.

M. SATO (Japan) agreed in the main with M. Aubert's statement of the previous day. The Land Commission's business was to indicate the weapons which answered to the three criteria contained in the General Commission's resolution. Paragraph (b) designated clearly the artillery types most threatening to national defence. A lower category of offensive power was indicated in paragraph (c), and the question to be settled now was whether that second category was to be regarded as threatening to national defence. In the Japanese delegate's view it should not be grouped with the first; the Commission should simply designate the first category — that was to say, category (b) — as most offensive, and leave it at that.

The Soviet suggestion to abolish heavy artillery, on the principle that all such pieces were menacing to national defence, should logically imply the abolition of light artillery, machine guns and other types. But the idea of defence could not be ruled out when deciding which weapons were offensive, since the same weapon might serve both offensive and defensive purposes.

It was preferable to make no comment on paragraph (c) but simply to say that that second category was of a less offensive character than the first. The Japanese delegation would be prepared to accept a compromise statement to the effect that certain delegations regarded the second category of weapons as offensive, while others considered it necessary for defensive purposes.

M. VON WEIZSÄCKER (Germany) observed that the question which the Commission had to decide, as defined by the President, was whether it should insert in its reply to the General Commission a phrase of the nature suggested by the French delegation and amended by other delegations. That suggestion had raised objections on the part of the Italian delegation, and the German delegation also felt that some of the arguments adduced in favour of the French proposal went rather far. Without going into questions such as control, good faith, internationalisation, etc., which were, he thought, for the General Commission to decide, M. von Weizsäcker felt that certain of the elements mentioned by the French delegation might properly be said to come within the Land Commission's sphere. It had been urged, for example, that to abolish calibres above a certain figure would be to venture into the unknown and would be compromising the idea of security. That idea, however, was already compromised; that was why the Conference had been convened — to re-establish security. Much had been said on the subject of the aggressor and the defender, and the temptation was to strengthen the defence: State A might have to defend itself against aggression on the part of State B, but it was necessary also to take into account the fact that the roles might be reversed. A and B should be given the same degree of security; there should be no premium on aggression for either State. The French delegation had spoken of relativity, and it would certainly be desirable to take that idea into account in the Commission's resolution or report. The German delegate said that he himself would have had no difficulty in inserting figures in the text — his views on that point were known.
He desired to submit an addition to point (d) of the French proposal, in the form of a text as follows:

"The lowest limit of calibre above which artillery possesses an essentially offensive character is, moreover, a relative one."

"The limit of calibre above which the artillery of a State has an essentially offensive character is lower in proportion as the calibres of the artillery available for the national defence of the opponent are smaller."

General Benítez (Spain) noted that it was the point under discussion that had led the Spanish delegation to insert in its proposal a reservation relating to offensive and defensive weapons; it had indicated that arms which were most efficacious for purposes of offence were equally so for the defence. He thought that the Land Commission need not go into the question of weapons for offensive and defensive purposes, since paragraph (b) already offered a solution of the problem before it. That paragraph as adopted reads:

"(b) Subject to such solutions as may hereafter be found by the General Commission for the questions raised by the fact that the fixed artillery of permanent fortifications and mobile artillery can be rendered interchangeable, the Land Commission is of opinion that the types of mobile artillery most threatening to national defence are those which are capable of destroying permanent fortifications of considerable strength — namely, etc. . . ."

If the French proposal was not adopted by the General Commission, the defence might have to be strengthened by allowing it to have heavy fixed artillery.

The President thought that the previous question raised by the Italian delegation, relating to the Land Commission’s competence, might be regarded as practically settled.

General Bonomi (Italy) said that he would be prepared to accept the French text of paragraph (d) (second part) if the words “necessary for national defence” could be deleted and replaced by the words “more or less offensive.”

M. Aubert (France) regretted that he could not agree to the statement that some delegations considered the artillery in question “more or less offensive”: he personally did not so regard it. Further, the phrase “while others consider it more or less offensive” did not at all reproduce the opinion of the second group of delegations — namely, of those who regarded the said artillery as “necessary for national defence.”

Each delegation was naturally trying to adapt the text to its own convictions, and unanimity appeared to be impossible. The French delegation desired to submit a proposal amending paragraph (d), as follows:

"(d) It was not possible to obtain unanimity either as to the threatening character in relation to national defence of this second category of artillery (referred to in Section (c) above), nor as to the calibre above which this character exists.

Whilst certain delegations consider that this category of artillery is more necessary for national defence than threatening to it, a first group of other delegations places at about 100 mm. the limit above which artillery is threatening to national defence, a second group places it at 155 mm. and a third group at 220 mm."

M. Sato (Japan) stated, in reply to a question of the President, that while he would have preferred simply to retain the text adopted up to date, he would be prepared, if the majority of the Commission so desired, to accept a paragraph on the lines of the French delegation’s proposal. He pointed out, however, that while the Japanese delegation would have no objection to the statement concerning the three groups of opinion in regard to calibre limits, mention must also be made of a fourth class in favour of the 250 mm. limit referred to in paragraph (c): “. . . On the other hand, variable results can be obtained by the use of a calibre between 250 mm. and 100 mm. etc. . . .” The Japanese delegation wished to insist on the fact that a calibre of 250 mm. should serve as a line of demarcation.

The President regretted that it had not been found possible for the Commission to avoid taking a formal decision on the question raised by General Bonomi. The Italian delegation insisted that the Land Commission’s terms of reference did not permit of its examining what categories of artillery were necessary for national defence, and stated that it could not accept any text on the lines of the French proposal.

1 See Minutes of the seventh meeting.
2 See Minutes of the tenth meeting.
3 Assistance to a State the victim of aggression.
Although, in practice, the Commission had already answered General Bonomi’s question by the fact of having examined the German and French proposals, the Italian delegation asked for a vote.

In order to avoid a majority or minority decision, the President would ask the Commission if it was of opinion that it could examine the amendment proposed by the French delegation.

General Temperley (United Kingdom) pointed out that, as the French delegation’s proposal referred simply to the opinion of “certain delegations”, the responsibility of the Commission as a whole was not involved, any more than that of the Italian delegation.

General Bonomi (Italy), while admitting the justice of General Temperley’s remarks, maintained that the question was one of principle, and reiterated his request that the Commission should state whether it thought it could or could not examine categories of armaments not covered by the General Commission’s resolution.

Mr. Wilson (United States of America) stated that some years’ experience of the League’s methods of procedure had shown him that the interpretation of terms of reference was more elastic there than was generally the case in national Parliaments. As a rule international Commissions took the view that a certain latitude was allowed them as regards the development of their work. He thought that in the present case the Land Commission was entitled to supplement its reply to the General Commission, so far as it might think fit, and that if the suggestions which had been submitted were of interest to it, they would be of the same interest to the General Commission.

M. Von Weizsäcker (Germany) asked whether General Bonomi could perhaps submit an amendment to the text under consideration, as that might make it possible to obtain a unanimous vote.

The President proposed that the Commission should examine the French amendment at once, duly noting the fact that the Italian delegation had stated that, for reasons of principle, it could not accept that text.

The President’s proposal was adopted.

M. Sato (Japan) stated that the text of the French proposal satisfied his preoccupations and met with his delegation’s approval.

M. Ventzoff (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) stated that the delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics desired to associate itself with the Italian delegation’s reservation.

General Temperley (United Kingdom) accepted the French proposal, but asked whether it would not be well, if it were adopted, to delete the last part of paragraph (c), since the French proposal represented the idea embodied in paragraph (c).

General Nuyten (Belgium) suggested that it might be possible to reach a unanimous decision by deleting the first sub-paragraph of paragraph (d) now under consideration. The Italian delegation might, perhaps, be able to accept the French amendment in that form.

The President did not think that the Belgian proposal would be acceptable to the Italian delegation; the latter’s objection related primarily to the examination by the Commission of the categories of artillery necessary for national defence and not to their danger to national defence.

The text proposed by the French delegation was adopted.

The delegations of Hungary, Turkey, Bulgaria, Afghanistan, Germany and China, like that of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, associated themselves with the Italian delegation’s reservation.

The Commission proceeded to examine the German delegation’s proposal.

M. Aubert (France) said that, if he had rightly interpreted the German delegation’s amendment, it meant that the calibre of any given artillery must be determined by the calibre of the enemy artillery. In his view, the calibre of the piece employed was determined not by that of the enemy artillery but by the objectives against which it was to be used.

M. Von Weizsäcker (Germany) recalled the arguments which he had already adduced in support of this amendment.

General De Nánsy-Megay (Hungary) observed that the Commission’s task was to determine which weapons should be prohibited and not which weapons should be employed by States. Nevertheless, if a country attacked constructed entrenchments in order to protect certain arms, it required for the defence of those entrenchments pieces equivalent to those of the enemy. The solution would be to say what weapons a country must not possess.
M. Aubert (France) replied that he had not so far interpreted the General Commission’s resolution as implying equalisation of armaments. If there were any question of equalising security, he would recall that the original French proposal contained guarantees in regard to this matter; he hoped that that draft would meet with the Hungarian delegation’s support.

General de Nánásy-Mégay (Hungary) thanked M. Aubert for the suggestion that means of defence should be given to States which were disarmed; he wished to be sure, however, that such weapons would be at the disposal of the States concerned whenever they might be the object of aggression.

M. Aubert (France) noted the views of the Hungarian delegation, which would no doubt be prepared, in order to ensure that rapid assistance might be given to a State victim of aggression, to collaborate in establishing a definition of the term aggression.

---

**TWELFTH MEETING**

*Held on Friday, May 20th, 1932, at 4 p.m.*

President: M. Buero.

---


Paragraph (d) (continuation).

The President noted that the general discussion on the German proposal was closed, and invited the Commission to discuss it paragraph by paragraph.

*The first paragraph was adopted without discussion.*

General Benítez (Spain) proposed that the word “opponent” should not appear in the text.

M. von Weizsäcker (Germany) having stated that he had no objection, General Nuyten (Belgium) proposed that the paragraph should end as follows:

“... artillery available for the defender.”

M. Aubert (France) said that he had had no difficulty in accepting the first paragraph of the German proposal, as he had himself developed the thesis of the relativity of the offensive character of artillery. From this relativity he had established two facts: (1) that the offensive character of certain artillery pieces varied according to whether they were used by an aggressor State or by a State defending its own territory; and (2) that the calibre limit to be chosen must depend on the action taken by the General Commission on the Land Commission’s reply — i.e., on the choice to be made between the principle of abolition and that of internationalisation or placing at the League’s disposal.

The second paragraph of the German proposal brought out two further aspects of this relativity. It should be noted, however, (1) that so far the only question at issue had been the relationship between guns and objectives, and not between the guns of the two parties concerned, and (2) that any attempt to take into account the relative importance of the armaments of States would mean encroaching on the political sphere, and the Commission would be exceeding its terms of reference.

The French delegate therefore had a double objection — on technical and political grounds — to the second paragraph of the German proposal.

General Temperley (United Kingdom) said that he did not feel very well qualified to speak on questions of relativity, but that he wished to direct M. von Weizsäcker’s attention to one difficulty which had occurred to him. There might conceivably be more than one aggressor to be considered in the case of certain countries. That was the case, for example, with the British Empire, which had frontiers on several continents. For each of the countries concerned, the calibre limit would have to be selected by reference to the strongest artillery among all the possible aggressors, and relativity would thus no longer play a very important part.
M. VON WEIZSÄCKER (Germany) explained that the second paragraph of the German proposal was simply intended to bring out the meaning of the first paragraph, which might otherwise not be properly understood.

In reply to the political objection raised by the French delegate, he would be quite prepared to accept a different formula, in which the words "a State" did not appear.

As regards M. Aubert's technical objection, he agreed that so far the only question at issue had been the relationship between guns and fortifications. It would be well, however, in his view to take into account the fact that the defender might or might not possess big calibre artillery. The defence was protected both by fortified works and by gun fire, and it was to the interest of the defender to be able to keep the aggressor at a distance with guns of a range corresponding to that of the aggressor's artillery. That question came directly within the purpose of the General Commission's resolution.

The German delegate declared lastly that General Temperley's preoccupation would cease to exist if an equal basis could be found for all States.

M. AUBERT (France) thought that if the Commission intended to go into such considerations it would be necessary to find a formula reflecting all the different meanings of relativity referred to during the debate. It might be well to show the General Commission how very relative the replies to its questions were bound to be.

The PRESIDENT submitted to the Commission two formulas, one of which had been framed by the Rapporteur and the other, based on the same idea, by the President himself. Either of those formulas might perhaps permit of agreement being reached.

The President's formula was as follows:

"The calibre limit above which the artillery of a State is essentially offensive becomes lower in proportion as the power of the means of national defence at the disposal of the defender also becomes lower."

The formula prepared by the Rapporteur was as follows:

"The calibre limit . . . bears a relationship to the extent of the means of defence at the disposal of the State against which the weapons in question might be used."

M. AUBERT (France) insisted on the importance of being perfectly clear. He did not think that the General Commission could get any clear idea from an answer such as was proposed.

It was essential, in his opinion, to avoid any confusion between aggression and the offensive, since a country that was obliged to drive the enemy out of its territory might have to take the offensive.

If the Commission meant to go into the question of relativity, it must proceed very carefully and must give explanations for the different cases. The French delegation could only support a formula that complied with those conditions.

The PRESIDENT, with the German delegation's consent, proposed to suspend the discussion on that delegation's proposal, owing to the difficulty of drafting a text during the meeting. He invited the Commission to continue its examination of the United Kingdom proposal.

Paragraph (e) (continuation).

The PRESIDENT observed that the United Kingdom delegate had proposed to delete the last sentence of paragraph (e), in view of the new paragraph (d).

The Commission decided to delete the last sentence of paragraph (e), from the words: "On the other hand . . . .".

Paragraph (e).

The PRESIDENT read paragraph (e) of the United Kingdom proposals, as follows:

"(e) As regards the third element in the resolution of the General Commission (document Conf.D./C.G.28(2)), the replies submitted by the Technical Committee to questions (1) and (2) of Chapter III of the questionnaire lead to the conclusion that artillery material of over 200-millimetre calibre, having an effective range of more than 25 kilometres is the most menacing to the civil population.

"Pieces of over 155-millimetre calibre, having an effective range of more than 20 kilometres, may also be a menace to the civil population, but in a less degree. It should be noted that these calculations apply only to normally constructed guns at present existing."

He added that, in addition to the French proposal, amendments had been submitted by the German, Italian and Japanese delegations:

1 See Minutes of the ninth meeting.
German Amendment.

Substitute for paragraph (e):

"As regards the third element in the resolution of the General Commission (document Conf.D./C.G.28(2)), the replies submitted by the Technical Committee to questions (1) and (2) of Chapter III of the questionnaire lead to the conclusion that artillery material of over 105-millimetre calibre, having an effective range of more than 15 kilometres, is the most menacing to the civil population.

"It should be noted that these figures apply only to normally-constructed guns at present existing."

Italian Amendment.

Replace the words “pieces of over 155-millimetre calibre having an effective range of more than 20 kilometres, etc., by the following words: “Pieces of over 105-millimetre calibre having an effective range of more than 15 kilometres, etc.”

Japanese Amendment.

Replace the first sub-paragraph from the words “...lead to the conclusion that artillery material of over 200-millimetre calibre...” by the following text:

"It may be considered that artillery material having an effective range of approximately more than 55 kilometres is the most menacing to the civil population."

The President stressed the essential difference between the French and British proposals. The first was an endeavour to frame a unanimous reply to the Land Commission, while the second was designed to show exactly the position of the different delegations. The Commission would have to choose between those two methods.

M. Sato (Japan) observed that the Japanese proposal substituted for the calibre limit of 200 millimetres in paragraph (e) of the British proposal a range limit of 55 kilometres. The Japanese delegation had always considered that it was desirable to fix the depth of the battlefield at 50 kilometres. Its object in now proposing 55 kilometres as the range limit was to follow logically its own arguments. Since, however, the experts' reply did not reveal unanimity of opinion as regards the depth of the battle zone, the Japanese delegation now thought it preferable to adopt the method suggested by the French delegation.

General Temperley (United Kingdom) pointed out that the United Kingdom delegation had simply submitted its proposal in a spirit of conciliation. If agreement could not be reached on that formula, it was obviously better not to waste time, but to drop the proposal and adopt the French formula.

The Commission decided to accept General Temperley's suggestion and to take as a basis for discussion paragraph (e) of the French proposal.1

The President thought that there was no need to allude in that paragraph to the experts' reply, and proposed that the first sub-paragraph be drafted as follows:

"(e) As regards the third element of the resolution of the General Commission, certain delegations consider artillery material of over 200-millimetre calibre having an effective range of more than 25 kilometres as the most menacing to civilians. Other delegations attribute this character even to artillery of a calibre of over 100 millimetres or with a range of over 15 kilometres."

The experts' reply would, of course, be annexed, for purposes of information, to the Land Commission's reply.

General Bonomi (Italy) proposed to substitute in the first sentence for the words "having an effective range of more than 25 kilometres" the words "or with a range of 25 kilometres", in order to make the two sentences of the sub-paragraph uniform.

M. Aubert (France) explained that the difference in form between the first and second sentences in the sub-paragraph reflected a divergence of view among the experts. In the first case, there were two simultaneous conditions, whereas, in the second, there was simply an alternative.

General Bonomi (Italy) said that he would not insist on this proposal, but pointed out that there was a likelihood that guns might be constructed in the future of a calibre of under 200 millimetres but with a range of above 25 kilometres; such guns, he said, would obviously be menacing to civilians.

---

1 See Minutes of the ninth meeting.
The President noted that the present drafting corresponded to the terms of the experts' reply, as follows:

"Considering the minimum distance as 10 per cent of the range, and considering the effective range of normally constructed guns at present existing, it is to be observed that:

(a) Only guns of more than 105-millimetre calibre have a range of 15 kilometres beyond the front line;

(b) Only guns of over 155-millimetre calibre have a range of 20 kilometres beyond the front line;

(c) Only guns of over 200-millimetre calibre have a range of 25 kilometres beyond the front line."

The President pointed out, in order to reassure General Bonomi, that to the Land Commission's reply would be annexed the experts' reply, the last sentence of which read:

"This would also be necessary in order to ascertain what general restrictions should be imposed to prevent abnormal ranges being obtained with any calibre."

M. Aubert (France) proposed, in deference to General Bonomi's suggestion and in order that the two sentences in the first sub-paragraph might be uniform, to replace in the second sentence the words "or with a range" by the words "having a range".

General Bonomi (Italy) did not think that the new formula would reflect the views of certain delegations or indeed of the experts.

M. von Weizsäcker (Germany) proposed, in deference to General Bonomi's suggestion and in order that the two sentences in the first sub-paragraph might be uniform, to replace in the second sentence the words "or with a range" by the words "having a range".

General Bonomi (Italy) did not think that the new formula would reflect the views of certain delegations or indeed of the experts.

M. von Weizsäcker (Germany) asked for the deletion of the word "even" in the second sentence of paragraph (e).

This was agreed.

The Commission adopted the following text for the first sub-paragraph of paragraph (e):

"(e) As regards the third element of the resolution of the General Commission, certain delegations consider artillery material of over 200-millimetre calibre having a useful range of more than 25 kilometres as the most menacing to the civilian population. Other delegations attribute this character to artillery of a calibre of over 100 millimetres or with an effective range of over 15 kilometres."

M. von Weizsäcker (Germany) would have preferred to delete in the last sub-paragraph of paragraph (e) an argument which appeared to put the interests of civilians after military requirements.

If the text were retained, he would ask for a passage to be inserted between the two sub-paragraphs stating that certain delegations were of a different opinion.

General Benítez (Spain) thought that the last few lines of paragraph (e) were inaccurate, in view of the fact that the effective range of guns — that was to say, the distance at which they could sight certain objectives accurately — differed appreciably from the maximum range.

M. Aubert (France) stated, in reply to the German delegate, that, in his view, the interests of civilians were given an important place in paragraph (e), and, in reply to General Benítez, that the risks incurred by civilians varied according to the proportion between the military objectives and civilian establishments in the zone in question. The French proposal had simply been intended to indicate that, beyond 50 kilometres, there was more likelihood of gun-fire hitting civilian establishments than military objectives. The "corresponding" range was, in point of fact, the "effective" range.

M. von Weizsäcker (Spain) had no objection to paragraph (e) being retained. He thought, however, that a reference to a gun firing "effectively" at 50 kilometres meant that the range of the projectile was in this case sufficiently accurate to hit specific objectives. The chief danger to civilians consisted in the fact that, when a gun was fired at maximum range, the extent of the zone in which the projectile fell was such that civilian establishments might be hit even involuntarily.

The President noted the importance of General Benítez's observations. He enquired of M. von Weizsäcker whether, after M. Aubert's statement, the German delegation wished to insist on a draft amendment giving priority to the protection of civilians.

M. von Weizsäcker (Germany) explained that he desired to have inserted in the French proposal a passage from the experts' reply stating that certain delegations...
were in favour of adopting the figure named, as it was impossible under existing conditions to indicate a limit beyond that distance. He suggested the following text:

"... they would not go farther than this figure, seeing that beyond that distance are situated objectives of military importance (places for the assembling of reserves, with motor transport, railway stations, airports, armaments factories, etc.) for which, as regards the distance from the battle front, it is impossible, in existing circumstances, to indicate a limit, and that it is therefore necessary that, in this zone, the protection of the civil population should be regarded as more important than military requirements."

M. Aubert (France) said that he would raise no objection to the German proposal, as every delegation must be given an opportunity of expressing its own particular views in the text to be forwarded to the General Commission.

M. Lounatcharski (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) accepted the German proposal.

The President declared the first sub-paragraph of paragraph (e), as supplemented by the German proposal, adopted.

The second sub-paragraph of paragraph (e) was adopted.

**Fixed Artillery.**

The President asked what procedure the Commission wished to adopt in regard to fixed artillery, the consideration of which had been held over. Did it wish simply to forward the text of its report to the General Commission, that the latter might note the question?

M. Aubert (France) thought that the Land Commission should simply send its own report to the General Commission, together with the text of the Committee of Experts' reply.

*This proposal was adopted.*

**Paragraph (d) (continuation).**

The President observed that the Commission had suspended its examination of the German amendment on the relativity of calibres. He announced that the Commission now had before it a French proposal designed to satisfy the views of the German delegation and more complete in form than the text submitted by the latter. It read as follows:

"Paragraph 1. — (Unchanged.)

"Paragraph 2. — The limit of calibre above which artillery need be regarded as possessing an essentially offensive character depends on the power (calibre and range) of the artillery capable of resisting it; it also depends on the nature and the protection of the objectives on which it is to fire, and more generally on the whole of the activities brought to bear on the one side and on the other. This limit also depends on the strategic situation then existing, which situation generally varies according as the offensive is launched by a defender by way of counter-attack on an aggressor who has penetrated the defender's territory, or is undertaken by an aggressor with the intention of invading the territory of another State. Lastly, the limit in question also varies according to the nature of the system to which artilleries of higher calibre may be subjected."

M. Lounatcharski (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, at first sight, the amendment appeared to him to be of a political character and to go beyond the Land Commission's competence.

M. Von Weizsäcker (Germany) stated that he could not express an immediate opinion. It seemed to him that the French amendment went rather beyond the Land Commission's powers, since the President himself had said that the latter's task was simply to indicate to the General Commission certain categories of weapons which should form the subject of special measures. He would give a definite reply later.

M. Aubert (France) pointed out that the Commission could not pass over the fact that the questions put to it had been asked with the object of bringing about regulation in the form of abolition or internationalisation. He did not think that the French delegation's amendment contained any new element or that the Land Commission, by accepting it, would be exceeding its terms of reference.

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

Paragraph (d) (continuation).

The President said that the Commission would continue the consideration of the German proposal and the French amendment to that proposal submitted at the last meeting. The Italian delegation had submitted another amendment on the same point which read as follows:

"The limit of calibre above which artillery possesses an essentially offensive character is lower in proportion as the power (calibre and range) of the artillery of the side under attack, the strength of its defences, and the resources at its disposal in general are smaller."

He proposed that the basis of the discussion should be the German proposal which came first in date, and he recalled that the first paragraph in that proposal had been adopted at the previous meeting.

General Nygren (Sweden) recognised that the German proposal was based on sound reasons. Nevertheless, as he had pointed out at a recent meeting of the Air Commission, it would be wise not to lose sight of the object of the Commission's work — namely, qualitative limitation. With a view to that limitation, the members of the Commission must determine the limit above which certain arms might form the subject of special restrictions.

That being so, it was, he thought, extremely difficult to take into account considerations of relativity or of the variable character of the different objectives. It would be better to take as a basis the special characteristics of the various weapons irrespective of the difference in value they might have for one country or another, since that would complicate the Commission's later work. He thought that neither the German nor the French nor the Italian proposal should be adopted. In view of the pertinency of the German delegation's remarks, reference might perhaps be made to them either in paragraph (a) of the resolution or in the report to the General Commission, so that the latter's attention would be drawn to the important question of relativity.

M. von Weizsäcker (Germany) thought that General Nygren's proposal might perhaps simplify the Commission's work. He would prefer his delegation's proposal to be introduced in paragraph (a) of the resolution rather than in the report.

Nevertheless, it was, he considered, necessary for the Commission to make some reference, not only to the relation between arms and objectives, but also to that between the arms employed and certain other important factors.

If the form which the German delegation had proposed for the reference to the question of relativity was not acceptable to the Commission, it might be possible to revert, as a compromise, to that suggested by the President, which read:

"The calibre limit above which the artillery of a State is essentially offensive becomes lower in proportion as the power of the means of national defence at the disposal of the defender also becomes lower."

This text was, he thought, sufficiently wide to allow of its acceptance by the Commission.

The President noted that the remarks of the last two speakers showed that the Commission could perhaps agree to the passage under discussion being embodied in the resolution under paragraph (a) instead of under paragraph (d). The Italian and German proposals were very close to that which he had himself submitted at the last meeting.
M. AUBERT (France) made a reservation as to the place in which the text to be adopted by the Commission would be inserted. It would, he felt, be dangerous to decide on its position before the formula itself was known, since, if the Commission decided to insert it in a section which had already been adopted unanimously, it might nullify the advantages of the agreement obtained.

The President wished to reassure M. Aubert; he also thought that it would be wiser to agree on the wording of the text to be inserted before determining the place of insertion. The Commission must first decide whether it desired to mention the question of relativity or to make no reference to it at all. In the former case, it would then have to agree on a text, and decide later the place of insertion.

The President supposed that General Nygren’s idea was that the first sub-paragraph should be taken as maintained, the point in dispute being, not the affirmation of the principle of relativity, but its definition.

M. AUBERT (France) said that he could not regard the first sub-paragraph as adopted unless it was accompanied by the commentaries which, in the view of the French delegation, completed it.

M. VON WEIZSÄCKER (Germany), noting that, even if he withdrew his proposal, the Commission would not achieve unanimity, maintained his request that the passage concerning relativity should appear in the body of the resolution.

The President asked whether the French delegation could accept a text other than that which it had itself presented.

M. AUBERT (France) replied that the French delegation could only agree either to the total omission of any reference to the question of relativity or to a complete definition comprising all the points it had itself suggested. The question of relativity might perhaps be referred to another Commission, but, if the Land Commission took it up, M. Aubert considered that it must be treated exhaustively.

The President thought that it would be possible to find a wording similar to that which the Commission had already employed, stating that certain delegations had expressed such and such an opinion on this matter, whereas others had expressed themselves differently.

M. AUBERT (France) urged that it would be essential to accompany the affirmation of the existence of relativity with commentaries.

The President still thought that it would be possible to find a compromise formula indicating the divergence of opinion in the Commission.

General VAN TUYNEN (Netherlands) referred to his delegation’s proposal,1 which had been withdrawn from the agenda on May 17th because the United Kingdom delegation’s proposal had been taken as the basis of discussion.

The Netherlands delegation’s suggestion had been based on the idea that the Land Commission’s task was to give concrete replies to the questions raised by the resolution of April 22nd. There were still certain outstanding difficulties which, he thought, prevented the Commission’s replies from being given a concrete character. Furthermore, there was no clear dividing line between the task of the Land Commission and that of the General Commission, since questions such as that of relativity cropped up in discussions which were supposed to be purely technical in character. This question of relativity was open to a variety of views; in fact, all arms might have an offensive character.

It had been argued that to abolish certain heavy artillery would be to confer a premium on the aggressor. It might be replied that competition in armaments conferred a premium on the country which was defending itself. If such considerations were to be advanced, it was hardly possible to expect to attain the object set before the Conference, which could only be reached by a long road marked by numerous milestones. The Netherlands delegation’s proposal was intended to mark a first milestone, and the Commission knew what was the significance of that proposal.

The President reminded General van Tuynen that the Netherlands proposal had only been withdrawn with the consent of the Netherlands delegation, at the time when the Commission had decided to take the United Kingdom delegation’s text as a basis of discussion.

---

1 See Minutes of the seventh and ninth meetings.
M. Ventzoff (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) made the following declaration:

"The Soviet delegation contends that the Commission must remain within the framework fixed by the General Commission. On the basis of the mandate received on April 22nd, the delegation declares itself resolutely opposed to any proposal concerning the relativity of qualitative disarmament."

In the event of the Commission's accepting the text proposed by the President, M. Ventzoff asked that the following words might be added:

"Finally, other delegations were against any mention of relativity."

The Soviet delegation should appear in this category.

The President, while agreeing that every delegation had the right to have its views mentioned in the text adopted by the Commission, wondered whether the Soviet proposal did not conflict with the German proposal, and whether it would not be necessary to revise the first sub-paragraph if the Soviet proposal were accepted.

He proposed to adjourn the meeting, to enable the Bureau to prepare a text of paragraph (d).

On resuming the meeting, the President read the following text framed by the Bureau:

"The lowest limit of calibre above which artillery possesses an essentially offensive character is, moreover, a relative one.

"Certain delegations consider that the limit of calibre above which the artillery of a State is of an essentially offensive character is lower in proportion as the means at the disposal of the defender are weaker.

"Other delegations consider that the problem is more complex. In their opinion, the limit of calibre above which artillery need be regarded as possessing an essentially offensive character depends on the power (calibre and range) of the artillery capable of resisting it; it also depends on the nature and the protection of the objectives on which it is to fire, and more generally on the whole of the activities brought to bear on the one side and on the other. This limit also depends on the strategic situation then existing, which situation generally varies according as the offensive is launched by a defender by way of counter-attack on an aggressor who has penetrated the defender's territory, or is undertaken by an aggressor with the intention of invading the territory of another State. Lastly, the limit in question also varies according to the nature of the system to which artillery of higher calibre may be subjected."

He observed that the text took account of the question of relativity specially noted by the German delegation.

M. von Weizsäcker (Germany) pointed out that relativity had from the beginning formed the basis of the Commission's discussion on guns and defences.

General Bonomi (Italy) noted that the main points of the French proposal appeared to be covered by the Bureau's text.

M. Aubert (France) expressed his gratification that a general agreement appeared to have been reached on the basis of the essential elements of the French proposal. None the less, it was well to be perfectly explicit and to stress the importance attached by the French delegation to the words "on the one side and on the other". The point to bear in mind was that the questions of attack and defence could not be regarded as absolute.

The President, observing that the text of the Bureau was designed to reflect the various tendencies in the Commission, said that he understood that the Soviet delegation's views would be met by the insertion of a footnote to the first paragraph, to the effect that, in the opinion of the Soviet delegation, no reference was required to the question dealt with therein.

M. Ventzoff (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) replied that the President's suggestion gave the Soviet delegation entire satisfaction.

The Bureau's text was adopted, with the footnote suggested by the President.

The President enquired whether the Commission wished to insert the new text in paragraph (a), as suggested by General Nygren, or at the end of paragraph (d), in accordance with the German delegation's suggestion.

M. Aubert (France) though it preferable not to disturb the unanimity which existed as regards the earlier part of the Land Commission's reply to the General Commission. A text on which there was not unanimity would fit in better after paragraph (d).

M. von Weizsäcker (Germany) agreed.

The Commission decided to insert the Bureau's text after paragraph (d).
The President recalled that the question of tanks, armoured cars, etc., had been held over for later consideration. The Commission must now decide on the procedure to be adopted in this matter.

When artillery material was under consideration, the Commission had held a general discussion in plenary session, and this had led to the appointment of a committee of experts to draw up a questionnaire. This committee had taken a proposal by the French delegation as a basis and had submitted to the Commission a questionnaire, to which the latter, meeting as a committee of experts, had given replies. After a fresh discussion on the basis of a proposal by the United Kingdom delegation, the Commission had concluded that part of its work.

The President thought that a similar method might be adopted in regard to tanks. The Commission would avoid a long preliminary discussion if, as in the case of artillery, a technical committee were instructed to draw up a questionnaire and replies to the questionnaire. He proposed accordingly that a committee consisting of a few members should be set up to prepare a draft questionnaire, which might be considered by the Commission sitting as a committee of experts, but in public session.

General Benitez (Spain) thought that, while a committee had been indispensable in the case of artillery, which raised many questions with regard to calibre, it was not necessary to have one for tanks.

Mr. Wilson (United States of America) considered the President's proposal as to procedure admirable. He did not think that the Commission could discuss the question of tanks without frequently consulting technical experts, more especially upon questions of definition. He thought that it would save time if that method were adopted.

Lord Stanhope (United Kingdom) also supported the President's proposal and agreed with Mr. Wilson. He thought that, after the Commission had drawn a precise distinction between, for instance, armoured cars and tanks, it would be necessary to consult experts. Nevertheless it was not, perhaps, absolutely essential to set up a committee to draft a questionnaire. The United Kingdom delegation, basing itself on the work of the artillery experts, had prepared a questionnaire which it was ready to submit to the Commission and which would perhaps make it unnecessary to set up a committee of experts.

M. Aubert (France) said that, following the precedent set for heavy artillery, the French delegation too had drawn up a draft questionnaire on tanks. The French text differed very little from the English one.

The President thanked the United Kingdom and French delegations assistance for their and submitted to the Commission the two following draft questionnaires prepared by those delegations:

**Draft Questionnaire proposed by the United Kingdom Delegation:**

1. What is the definition —
   "(a) of a tank?
   "(b) of an armoured car?

2. What are the special characteristics required in a tank for the penetration of:
   "(a) a permanent system of fortification of great or average strength?
   "(b) improvised entrenchments or field works?

   Is there any type of tank unable to penetrate either (a) or (b)?

3. Is an armoured car capable of acting effectively against 2 (a) or (b) above?

4. Are there any characteristics of tanks or armoured cars which make them specially menacing to the civil population?

5. To what extent and in what time can commercial vehicles be converted into (a) tanks or (b) armoured cars?"
Draft Questionnaire proposed by the French Delegation.

"1. Is it technically possible to make a distinction between the different categories of mobile armoured appliances such as:
   "(a) armoured cars of all kinds;
   "(b) tanks of various categories;
   "(c) mobile armoured cupolas;
   "(d) armoured trains of all categories?

"2. In the affirmative, what are the technical characteristics of each of these categories of appliances?

"3. What is the effectiveness of the various categories of mobile armoured appliances on permanent fortifications?

"4. What is the effectiveness of the various categories of mobile armoured appliances against field works?

"5. What are the capacities of the various categories of mobile armoured appliances outside the battle zone?"

The President asked the United Kingdom and French delegates to be good enough to prepare a joint text for consideration at the next meeting.

-------

FOURTEENTH MEETING

Held on Tuesday, May 24th, 1932, at 10 a.m.

President: M. BUERO.

19. APPLICATION TO ARMOURED FIGHTING VEHICLES OF THE RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL COMMISSION ON APRIL 22ND, 1932: ADOPTION OF A QUESTIONNAIRE.

The President observed that the Commission had to consider the following draft questionnaire framed by the French and United Kingdom delegations:

"1. What are the general characteristics of:
   "(a) tanks;
   "(b) armoured cars of all kinds;
   "(c) mobile armoured cupolas;
   "(d) armoured trains?

"2. What is the effectiveness of the various categories of the above against permanent fortifications?
   "Is there any type of these appliances incapable of breaking through the latter?

"3. What is the effectiveness of the various categories of the above against field works?
   "Is there any type of these appliances incapable of breaking through the latter?

"4. Are there any characteristics of armoured fighting vehicles which make them specially menacing to the civil population?

"5. To what extent and in what time can any vehicle be converted into:
   "(a) a tank;
   "(b) an armoured car;
   "(c) an armoured train?"

M. LOUNATCHARSKI (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) wished to submit an observation on the procedure to be adopted for examining the question of tanks.

The tank was a recently invented weapon which had assumed great importance since the world war as a powerful aid in infantry operations and for use in independent offensive operations.
The Soviet delegation feared that paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the draft questionnaire would involve too long discussion, and proposed that those paragraphs should be deleted and that the Land Commission should reply to the General Commission's questions, as regards tanks and armoured cars, after having exhausted the programme laid down in paragraph 1 of the questionnaire. In view of several proposals which had been put forward, that procedure would seem to be simpler, especially as some ten delegations had, during the general discussion, already pronounced in favour of the total abolition of tanks.

General Benítez (Spain) urged upon the Commission the necessity for sticking to realities. During the world war, tanks, originally of large dimensions, had gradually evolved towards a lighter type, which was the type chiefly found at the present time. The Commission should examine the existing types from the standpoint of the three criteria named in the General Commission's resolution; it should not engage in theoretical speculations as to the future.

The President, with the assent of the Soviet and Spanish delegations, invited the Commission to examine the draft questionnaire paragraph by paragraph.

**Paragraph 1.**

Paragraph 1 was adopted without discussion.

**Paragraph 2.**

M. Lounatcharski (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thought that the characteristics referred to in paragraph 2 would be defined by the replies to the questions in paragraph 1. He asked that paragraph 2 be deleted.

M. von Weizsäcker (Germany) saw no objection to deleting paragraph 2, which did not seem necessary from the standpoint of the replies to the General Commission's questions.

General Burhardt-Bukacki (Poland) thought that, even if the characteristics referred to in paragraph 2 were covered by paragraph 1, they should still be expressly mentioned. He did not see why a special paragraph should not be devoted to them.

General Benítez (Spain) observed that, if the Commission decided to delete paragraph 2, for the reason indicated by the Soviet delegate, it would also wish to delete paragraph 3 and the paragraphs following.

General Laidoner (Estonia), Vice-President, pointed out that the Committee of Experts appointed to answer the questionnaire on artillery material had repeatedly come up against difficulties due to the fact that certain questions had not been put with sufficient precision. The clearer and more explicit the new questionnaire was, the easier it would be to reply to it.

General Nuyten (Belgium) thought that the question of efficacy against permanent fortifications should be examined, as in the case of artillery material. The Commission, he felt sure, would come to the conclusion that tanks could be used against permanent fortifications.

The President noted that several delegations thought it preferable to mention expressly in the questionnaire the various elements which should make it possible to determine the more or less offensive character of tanks and armoured cars. The Commission must decide, then, whether it wished to retain paragraph 2 as it stood, always with the possibility of incorporating it in paragraph 1, in deference to the Soviet delegation's suggestion.

M. Lounatcharski (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he would not insist upon his proposal.

The Commission decided to retain paragraph 2.

General de Nánásy-Mégoay (Hungary) pointed out that, in the French text of the second sentence of paragraph 2 — "Existe-t-il des types de ces engins incapables de franchir et réduire ces organisations ?" — the conjunction "et" should be replaced by the conjunction "ou", unless the two conditions were regarded as simultaneous.

M. Aubert (France) explained that the United Kingdom and French delegations had been held up for some time by the difficulty of finding a satisfactory translation for the
expression “break through” in the English text. He thought that the expression “franchir et réduire” was a fairly accurate rendering. He had no objection, however, to adopting the solution proposed by the Hungarian delegate.

The Commission agreed to replace the conjunction “et” by the conjunction “ou”.

General NUYTEN (Belgium) directed the Commission’s attention to the word “incapable” in the second sentence of paragraph 2. That word had, no doubt, been deliberately chosen; but at first sight it seemed that the Commission’s task was rather to determine what appliances were capable — rather than incapable — of breaking through the field-works of the defence.

Lord STANHOPE (United Kingdom) thought that he could explain that point. It was quite true, as the Soviet delegate had said, that certain delegations wished for the abolition of all tanks. Other delegations thought, however, that a distinction should, if possible, be drawn between tanks of a specifically offensive character and those regarded as purely defensive, with a view to abolishing the first-named category and keeping the second. That was why paragraph 2 consisted of two sentences, the first being designed to cover appliances capable of effective action against permanent fortifications and the second to cover appliances which were incapable of such action.

M. BOURQUIN (Belgium), Rapporteur, suggested that the first sentence of paragraph 2 covered all the various preoccupations to which expression had been given. The Commission, sitting as a Committee of Experts, was going to examine, for each category of appliances, what capacity they possessed against permanent fortifications; that would show which appliances were “incapable”. The second sentence of paragraph 2 having given rise to difficulties — in particular, a difficulty of translation — he proposed that it be deleted.

Lord STANHOPE (United Kingdom) thought that it would facilitate the Commission’s task if the second sentence of paragraph 2 were retained, as the Commission could then state that appliances of this or that category were incapable of effective action against permanent fortifications. At the same time, he appreciated the logic of the objection put forward, and would not oppose the deletion of the second sentence of paragraph 2 if the majority of the Commission so desired.

M. AUBERT (France) pointed out that the Commission had been instructed to establish distinctions and to classify the capacity of the various weapons. It seemed to him that the second sentence of paragraph 2, alluding to appliances which were incapable of breaking through permanent fortifications, gave a useful supplementary indication. The Commission must not be afraid of being precise.

The President stated that the Rapporteur did not propose to insist on his proposal; further, he understood that the Belgian delegate had been satisfied by the United Kingdom delegate’s explanation. He thought, then, that paragraph 2 should be retained, the conjunction “et” in the French text being replaced by the conjunction “ou”.

Paragraph 2, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraph 3.

The President proposed that the word “énumérées” be inserted after the words “des différentes catégories de matériel ci-dessus”.

The foregoing amendment was adopted, and also the amendment, in the last sentence, replacing the conjunction “et” by the conjunction “ou”.

General DE NÁNÁSY-MÉGAY (Hungary) wished to direct the Commission’s attention, before it came to examine paragraph 4, to the importance of paragraph 5 of the French delegation’s draft questionnaire:

“What are the capacities of the various categories of mobile armoured appliances outside the battle zone?”

Some countries possessed no fortifications, and tanks could cross their frontiers and carry out a surprise attack.

The Hungarian delegation proposed that the foregoing paragraph be inserted after paragraph 3 of the questionnaire.

1 See Minutes of the previous meeting.
M. VON WEIZSÄCKER (Germany) supported the proposal, which he considered very sound.

General TARBUK (Austria) also supported the Hungarian delegate's proposal.

M. AUBERT (France) explained that, in order to shorten the questionnaire, the text of paragraph 5 of the French delegation's draft had been deleted, since it was held to be covered by paragraph 4 of the new draft. The French delegation would have no objection, however, if the United Kingdom delegation agreed, to inserting both formulas in the new questionnaire, in the interests of greater precision.

Lord STANHOPE (United Kingdom) said that paragraph 5 of the original French draft questionnaire had been deleted on account of the difficulty of determining the depth of the battlefield. The new draft appeared to cover all the criteria named in the General Commission's resolution, and it would be better to keep paragraph 4 of that draft and not revert to the very complicated question of the depth of the zone in question.

General DE NÁNASY-MÉGAY (Hungary) admitted the justice of the last remark. He thought, however, that the Commission should consider the possibility of the battlefield being less extensive than that of the world war. Tanks and, more particularly, armoured cars might carry out a flanking movement or attack the adversary in the rear.

General BONOMI (Italy) agreed with the Hungarian delegate that a distinction must be made in the questionnaire between capacity against fortifications and capacity against national defence when no fortifications existed and tanks could carry out a surprise attack.

General NUYTEN (Belgium) recalled that, when discussing the question of artillery, the Commission had examined the effectiveness of such material against permanent fortifications and also against improvised fortifications on the battlefield; it had not been necessary to consider its effectiveness against active means of defence. That, however, was not the case for tanks or armoured cars, which, owing to their great mobility, could carry out flank attacks and might prove very effective against national defence, on account, in particular, of the moral effect produced by their appearance, quite apart from their effectiveness against civilians.

The Belgian delegation proposed, therefore, that paragraph 5 of the original French draft be inserted in the new questionnaire.

Lord STANHOPE (United Kingdom) feared that, if the Commission adopted that course, the discussion would become interminable. If it considered all the possibilities of a surprise attack, when no fortifications existed, it must necessarily apply the same criterion to all other arms, such as cavalry, or even infantry. The Commission could not examine every arm and every form of transport; it must confine itself to studying the means of action against national defence and against civilians.

M. VON WEIZSÄCKER (Germany) agreed that an endeavour must be made not to complicate the task of the Commission. National defence, however, included elements other than permanent or improvised fortifications, and he wished, accordingly, to support the Hungarian delegate's proposal.

M. BOURQUIN (Belgium), Rapporteur, noted that the formula employed in the questionnaire on artillery material, in paragraph 2 of Part II, was wider than that found in paragraph 3 of the draft now under consideration. He proposed the insertion of that wider formula in paragraph 3, the first sentence of which would read:

"3. What is the effectiveness of the various categories of the above against entrenchments, field-works and other objectives of the battlefield?"

Lord STANHOPE (United Kingdom) accepted that proposal.

M. AUBERT (France) said that it had, at all events, the merit of being clear. The Commission must confine itself to the battlefield. Tactical manoeuvres could not, by definition, be carried out outside the battlefield, the limits of which were, in point of fact, defined by those manoeuvres as a whole.

1 See Minutes of the sixth meeting.
Further, as the United Kingdom delegate had pointed out, a surprise action might be carried out by any arm. If the Commission were going to take account of that fact, it would have to examine all the existing arms one by one.

General de NÁNÁSY-MÉGÁY (Hungary) was prepared to accept the Rapporteur’s proposal, but asked that it might be completed by the words: “and other elements of national defence”.

The President said that he, naturally, did not desire to oppose the last suggestion, but pointed out that the Commission had endeavoured hitherto to maintain a certain symmetry between the questionnaire under consideration and the questionnaire on artillery material. If the vaguer notion of national defence were introduced, some confusion might arise.

M. VON WEIZSÄCKER (Germany) said that he would be prepared to accept the Rapporteur’s proposal, on the understanding that any region in which tanks or armoured cars were operating should be regarded as forming part of the battlefield.

He pointed out, however, that, if the Rapporteur’s proposal were adopted, it would be necessary to redraft the second sentence of paragraph 3, as the word “field-works” could not be employed to describe all the objectives of the battlefield. He suggested replacing the word “field-works” by the words “elements of national defence”.

M. AUBERT (France) was afraid that the attempt to introduce greater precision might place the experts in a difficulty. The words “elements of national defence” opened up a limitless expanse, especially if the Commission did not confine itself to the zone of the battlefield. The introduction of the idea of mobility would necessitate a detailed examination of all existing arms.

The French delegate thought that the Commission should resist the tendency to allow its work to cover too many questions; it should confine itself to examining the objectives and the specific characteristics of the weapons.

M. BOURQUIN (Belgium), Rapporteur, thought that his suggestion should satisfy M. Aubert’s views, as it gave more precision to the questions put to the experts. The Hungarian delegate, however, wanted the Commission to go even further. The characteristics of tanks, however, from the standpoint of their action outside the battlefield, appeared to be confused with their characteristics from the standpoint of danger to the civilian population. This was, for example, the case as regards an attack against the seat of Government.

The Rapporteur proposed that paragraph 3 should refer merely to the battlefield. In paragraph 4 the problem could be considered from a more comprehensive standpoint.

General de NÁNÁSY-MÉGÁY (Hungary) pointed out that armoured cars could rapidly traverse the battlefield and attack certain objectives of national defence, and that such action could not be said to be directed against the civil population.

The President thought that M. Bourquin’s suggestion to adopt for the questionnaire the model followed for heavy artillery was very sound. Any ideas or reservations not taken fully into account in the questionnaire to be referred to the experts could be embodied in the Commission’s reply to the General Commission.

Lord STANHOPE (United Kingdom) hoped that the Commission might reach agreement on the lines of M. Bourquin’s suggestion, subject to a drafting amendment to elucidate the connection between the two clauses of paragraph 3. He observed that the members of the Commission were inclined to go into the question of mobility, whereas the question referred to them concerned the offensiveness of certain weapons.

The President noted the United Kingdom delegate’s point and the stress laid by the Hungarian delegate on the question of the elements of defence situated outside the actual battlefield. He invited the Commission to accept a text for paragraph 3 framed as follows:

“What is the effectiveness of the various categories of the above against entrenchments, field-works and other objectives of the battlefield?

“Is there any type of these appliances incapable of breaking through the element of national defence referred to above?”
Lord STANHOPE (United Kingdom) expressed himself in agreement with the text.

General DE NÁNÁSY-MÉGAY (Hungary) said that this text did not express the idea he had in mind. He desired to see mentioned in the text both the elements of national defence situated on the battlefield and those outside it. Swift tanks and armoured cars could act 50 kilometres behind the battlefield on ammunition dumps, railway stations, etc., which were not necessarily objectives of artillery, so that the terms employed in the questionnaire on artillery no longer applied. He wanted the experts to pronounce on the offensiveness of such arms outside the battlefield, in a zone which only became a battlefield when the armoured cars reached it.

The President assured the Hungarian delegate that his idea could still be introduced, either in the Committee of Experts' report or in the report to the General Commission, and pointed out that it would naturally assume some prominence, in view of the present discussion. The questionnaire under discussion was intended to indicate a line of conduct for the experts, and over-meticulous drafting might tend to limit the scope of their proceedings. He referred again to M. Bourquin's suggestion that the Hungarian delegate's point might be taken up in discussing paragraph 4.

General BURHARDT-BUKACKI (Poland) accepted the text submitted by the President, which would, he thought, give full scope to the experts. He hoped that the latter might be able to supply the Commission with some information on the subject of the weapons which could be used against tanks.

M. VON WEIZSÄCKER (Germany) accepted the President's text. He said that he shared the Hungarian delegate's scruples, since, wherever a tank was in action, a battlefield might be said to exist.

M. AUBERT (France) suggested that the Hungarian delegate's views might be met by redrafting paragraph 4 as follows:

"Are there any characteristics of armoured fighting vehicles which make them specially menacing:

(a) To the civil population;
(b) To military objectives outside the zone of the battlefield properly so-called?"

Lord STANHOPE (United Kingdom) thought that that text would not cover the real issue — namely, the mobility of motor vehicles and the use of motor transport in general for military purposes. He suggested that an entirely separate paragraph be inserted in the questionnaire on the following lines:

"What is the effect of the mobility of motor vehicles on national defence?"

General DE NÁNÁSY-MÉGAY (Hungary) pointed out that that last text corresponded to his own original suggestion. The French delegate, however, had found a satisfactory solution by adding a paragraph (b) to paragraph 4.

Lord STANHOPE (United Kingdom) said that paragraph 4 could not be said to cover the case, since it referred to armoured fighting vehicles. He maintained that the same results could be obtained by means of commercial lorries or omnibuses conveying troops.

Paragraph 3, in the amended form submitted by the President, was adopted.

Paragraph 4.

The President enquired whether paragraph 4, the drafting of which had determined the acceptance of paragraph 3, could be allowed to stand, notwithstanding the fact that it failed to take certain vehicles into account. He enquired, in particular, whether it met the United Kingdom delegate's views.

Lord STANHOPE (United Kingdom) replied that he did not think that the Commission would get a correct answer to the real question at issue without including non-fighting vehicles in the text. He repeated his suggestion that it might be necessary to include an entirely separate paragraph, a separate question, on the subject of mobility and national defence.
General de NáNÁSY-MÉGAY (Hungary) said that the French delegation's text for paragraph 4 met his views. He agreed that it would be well if the experts could give their opinion on non-armoured vehicles; it would be better, however, to embody the suggestion made by the United Kingdom delegation in a separate paragraph.

Lord STANHOPE (United Kingdom) said that he would have preferred a separate question, so as to have a clear answer. If, however, the Commission preferred the French delegation's text, he hoped that the experts would give a definition of a fighting vehicle; a motor vehicle with troops and machine-guns was as much a fighting vehicle as a tank or an armoured car.

Paragraph 4, as amended by the French delegation, was adopted.

Paragraph 5 was adopted without discussion.

M. LOUNATCHARSKI (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Soviet delegation was unable to approve the questionnaire, but that it would not oppose its adoption. The document appeared to him remarkably complicated, as was evident from the amount of discussion it had required.

The questionnaire to be submitted to the Committee of Experts was adopted in the following form:

“(1) What are the general characteristics of:

“(a) Tanks;
“(b) Armoured cars of all kinds;
“(c) Mobile armoured cupolas;
“(d) Armoured trains?

“(2) What is the effectiveness of the various categories of the above against permanent fortifications?

Is there any type of these appliances incapable of breaking through the latter?

“(3) What is the effectiveness of the various categories of the above against entrenchments, field-works and other objectives of the battlefield?

Is there any type of these appliances incapable of breaking through the elements of national defence referred to above?

“(4) Are there any characteristics of armoured fighting vehicles which make them specially menacing:

“(a) To the civil population;
“(b) To military objectives outside the zone of the battlefield properly so-called?

“(5) To what extent and in what time can any vehicle be converted into:

“(a) A tank,
“(b) An armoured car,
“(c) An armoured train?”
FIFTEENTH MEETING

Held on Tuesday, May 31st, 1932, at 4 p.m.

President: M. BUERO.

20. APPLICATION TO ARMOURED FIGHTING VEHICLES OF THE RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL COMMISSION ON APRIL 22ND, 1932: REPLY OF THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS.

The President opened the general discussion on the reply of the Committee of Experts (document Conf. D./C.T.34) to the Land Commission's questionnaire concerning tanks, armoured cars, etc. That reply would serve as a basis for conclusions which the Land Commission would submit to the General Commission in conformity with the resolution of April 22nd; the experts' document would be annexed to the Land Commission's report to the General Commission.

General TEMPERLEY (United Kingdom) stated that the United Kingdom delegation wished to add its name to those of the German and Finnish delegations as supporting Note 2 to the reply to Question 2, as follows:

"While the destruction and neutralisation of the fortified works and artillery of the defence are the task of the heavy and super-heavy artillery, it is for tanks to assist the infantry in attacking troops and other objectives distributed in front of the fortifications and between them.

"This being so, as regards the attack of permanent fortifications also tanks take on a character menacing to national defence, which increases in proportion to their weight and capabilities."

Baron VAN VOORST TOT VOORST (Netherlands) said that the Netherlands delegation also supported Note 2 to the reply to Question 2.

General DE NÁNÁSY-MÉGAY (Hungary) acceded on behalf of the Hungarian delegation to Note 2, as well as to Note 3 appended by the Netherlands delegation to the same reply, as follows:

"The Netherlands delegation is of opinion that the preparation of a complete system of artificial obstacles, as here described, against attack by tanks would, in a number of cases, be impossible in a line of permanent fortifications situated in cultivated country. In such cases, even a modern system of fortifications would, at the beginning of a war, be very vulnerable to attack by tanks.

"Furthermore, the addition to a system of permanent fortifications of artificial obstacles to attack by tanks would involve supplementary expenditure which would often be very considerable."

General NYGREN (Sweden) stated that the Swedish delegation supported the note submitted by the German and Finnish delegations (Note 2).

General TARBUK (Austria) acceded on behalf of the Austrian delegation to Notes 2 and 3.

General BONOVI (Italy) stated that the Italian delegation supported the views expressed by the German, Hungarian and United Kingdom delegations.

Mr. WILSON (United States of America) observed that the reply of the Committee of Experts failed to give a clear definition of tanks, having tied up the definition of tanks with that of armoured cars in such a way that the General Commission would be unable to distinguish between them and to adopt a separate regime, if it so desired, for the two arms. He felt that the very purpose which had led the Land Commission to request the Committee of Experts for elucidation was nullified by the assumption, on the part of that technical body, of political considerations.

Instead of answering a technical question, the experts had become involved in political theses, and, in attempting to amalgamate tanks and armoured cars, they had brought a technical report into discredit.

The man in the street would have no patience with the inability of some forty technicians to distinguish between two objects, which a child could tell apart, probably by
their appearance and certainly by their performance. The tank was fully armoured and armed and capable of transit over the roughest terrain and over obstacles. The armoured car, while armed and lightly armoured, must confine itself to roads or very smooth going across country, and its chief military use was for scouting. In American experience, the armoured car was little used in military operations, and the United States Army possessed less than a score of such vehicles, the remainder of those existing being used for police purposes and for the transport of gold.

Both tanks and armoured cars were comparatively new instruments of warfare. New things required new definitions, and the use of a word in a general treaty or its acceptance by an international gathering such as the Disarmament Conference would establish for all time a definition on which the future use of the word might be based.

The Committee of Experts, instead of clarifying the General Commission’s task, had allowed itself to confuse the issue and endanger the very possibilities of qualitative disarmament. Should the Commission decide to accept the experts’ reply, with its confession of failure to differentiate between types which all the budgets of the world found it expedient to tell apart, the United States delegation would make a reservation defining the difference between the two types on the basis of their purpose and their performance.

Lord STANHOPE (United Kingdom) stated that the United Kingdom delegation had been much struck by the divergence of opinion that existed, not only as to the actual capabilities of armoured fighting vehicles, but even as to their nomenclature. Tanks had only emerged during the later stages of the great war, when they were largely experimental; they had evolved since then, and differing experiences and differing problems made it difficult for the Commission to arrive at any agreement upon which particular type was most efficacious against national defences.

The Committee of Experts had succeeded in reaching agreement on several important points. It would be best, however, where wide differences existed on matters of principle, to draft a report stating frankly the view of each group of delegations. The Land Commission would greatly facilitate the work of the General Commission if it refrained from obscuring the real issue by trying to arrive at a common text in terms vague enough to cover up real differences of opinion. He proposed shortly to submit, in the name of the United Kingdom delegation, a draft reply embodying its views; such portions of that reply as differed from the views of important groups of other delegations could be embodied intact in the Commission’s final report.

The United Kingdom delegation had supported throughout the principle of limiting the power of the aggressor and was prepared to make its contribution in that respect in the matter of armoured fighting vehicles. The danger of such vehicles to national defence lay in their power to carry out a surprise attack, with the intention of delivering a rapid knock-out blow. They possessed, in a varying degree (according to their types), high speed, wide radius of action, capacity to cross and overcome obstacles, heavy armour and ability to carry powerful weapons. Those qualities affected the weight, and weight was the determining factor by which, in the United Kingdom delegation’s view, an armoured fighting vehicle must be judged; the heavier the tank, the more it might possess the qualities upon which its offensive power depended. That issue had been obscured in the Technical Committee by the assertion that even the lightest tanks had virtually the same capacity to cross obstacles on an organised battlefield, when such obstacles had been sufficiently damaged by shell-fire; that would mean that all tanks, and even armoured cars, were approximately equal in offensive capacity, except that the bigger ones carried heavier armament. The heavy tank alone, however, could cross undamaged trenches without preliminary bombardment and thus effect the surprise attack necessary for a rapid knock-out blow.

Surprise must not be imputed solely to armoured fighting vehicles; it was possible so to armour a commercial vehicle as to afford some measure of protection to its occupants and enable it, while carrying troops armed with rifles and machine-guns, to pierce far into an enemy country. Surprise, formerly the role of cavalry, had to some extent passed to the internal-combustion engine and might be successfully undertaken by vehicles which could not be described as armoured fighting vehicles.

While, therefore, a rigid classification of armoured fighting vehicles might not be possible, experience had proved that the varying types might be grouped in three main categories, namely, (a) heavy tanks from about 25 tons upwards, heavily armed and armoured, with considerable capacity for crushing obstacles and a power of crossing wide trenches which increased in proportion to their size; (b) medium tanks from about 20 to 10 tons, less heavily armed and comparatively lightly armoured and with a considerably restricted capacity to cross trenches; their range and speed rendered them of great value as a mobile reserve and in counter-attacks against troops which had pierced a defensive position.
(e) light tanks below 10 tons — with which might be included armoured cars — constituting lightly armed and armoured scouting vehicles essentially designed for reconnaissance. It was difficult to draw an accurate technical distinction between light tanks and armoured cars. The former might be said to possess a higher degree of power to move across country, due particularly to the use of tracks, while the latter were not specially designed for utilisation on an organised battlefield.

The third criterion in the General Commission’s resolution — the degree of menace to the civilian population — depended primarily upon whether the action of the weapon was discriminating or indiscriminating in its effects, and that again depended substantially upon the intention of the individuals handling the weapons. Provided that the rules of war were adhered to, the United Kingdom delegation did not consider that any type of armoured fighting vehicle was a special menace to the civil population.

The United Kingdom delegate desired to preface the definite proposals of his delegation by two general observations. First, the question of armoured fighting vehicles could not be taken as standing by itself. Certain nations had large effectives; if, by the substitution of machines for man-power, certain other nations had reduced substantially the number of their effectives, the abolition of all such vehicles must involve a corresponding increase in their forces in terms of man-power. That applied specially to nations with great responsibilities in colonial and mandated territories, where the lighter type of tank and armoured car had permitted of economies in man-power and in money. Secondly, modern armies were dependent for their mobility upon transport obtainable from commercial sources, and the dependence of armies upon mechanical and tracked vehicles became greater as time went on.

The United Kingdom delegation proposed that the Land Commission should recommend to the General Commission that the armoured fighting vehicles possessing the most definitely offensive characteristics were those from approximately 25 tons upwards. Below that tonnage (about 20 tons), their characteristics became markedly less offensive, and armies should be allowed to retain such weapons as a means of economising in man-power and expenditure. The United Kingdom delegation believed that the elimination from the battlefield of the future of the specially destructive type of weapon referred to would substantially strengthen the defences in relation to the attack and constitute a substantial contribution to the cause of disarmament.

In conclusion, Lord Stanhope proposed the following draft reply to the General Commission:

"The Land Commission, having examined the qualities and characteristics of the various types of armoured fighting vehicles in the light of the criteria established by the resolution of April 22nd, 1932, offers the following recommendations for the consideration of the General Commission:

1. With regard to tanks and armoured cars. — Having regard to the first and second criteria, which may be considered together, the Land Commission is of the opinion that the greatest danger of armoured fighting vehicles to the national defence lies in their power to carry out a surprise attack, with the intention of delivering a rapid knock-out blow. For this purpose, they possess, in varying degree according to their respective types, the characteristics of speed and radius of action, capacity to cross or to overcome obstacles, armour and ability to carry weapons. These qualities each materially affect the weight of a vehicle, which is the principal standard by which the capacity of an armoured fighting vehicle can therefore accurately be gauged. In other words, the heavier the tank, the more it may possess those characteristics upon which its offensive power depends.

While it is not possible to distinguish by precise technical definitions between the various classes of armoured fighting vehicles, it may be said that those vehicles fall, for purposes of general classification, into three main categories:

(a) Heavy tanks of a weight from about 25 tons upwards. These are heavily armed and armoured vehicles of sufficient weight and solidity to give them great powers of crushing obstacles and with comparatively wide trench-crossing capacity, which increases in proportion to their size.

(b) Medium tanks of a weight between about 20 tons and about 10 tons. These are less heavily armed and comparatively lightly armoured vehicles with considerably restricted trench-crossing capacity and limited crushing power. Their special characteristics of range and speed render them of great value as a mobile reserve and in counter-attack against troops which have pierced a defensive position."
“(c) Light tanks (below 10 tons in weight), with which may be included armoured cars. These are lightly armed and armoured scouting vehicles essentially designed for reconnaissance. While it is difficult to draw an accurate technical distinction, which would be generally acceptable, between light tanks and armoured cars, it may be said that the former possess a higher degree of power of moving across country and of crossing trenches, due particularly to the use of tracks, whilst the latter are not specially designed with a view to their utilisation on an organised battlefield. Some armoured cars are, in fact, largely confined to movement on roads, although others of a different type may be capable of moving across country.

The nature of defensive organisations likely to be encountered on the modern battlefield must also be considered, as well as the frontier defences, which vary greatly in strength as between different States. Having regard to these as well as to the qualities of armoured fighting vehicles referred to above, the Land Commission is of opinion that the heaviest category — namely, tanks of a weight of from approximately 20 to 25 tons upwards — possess offensive qualities to a degree which should render them liable to qualitative disarmament within the meaning of the resolution of April 22nd.

For the reasons stated, armoured fighting vehicles of the lighter categories are definitely less offensive in character. Moreover, it would in any case be useless to attempt to apply the restrictions of qualitative disarmament to the lighter types of tanks or to armoured cars, in view of the ease with which vehicles possessing the essential qualities of tanks and armoured cars can be improvised in a very short space of time by the conversion of commercial, agricultural or other civil vehicles in general use in many countries. Indeed, it would be possible in a few hours so to armour a motor omnibus or other vehicle as to accord a considerable measure of protection to its occupants. Such a vehicle could transport infantry armed with rifles and machine-guns far into an enemy country, and be no less specifically offensive than a light tank or an armoured car. Yet it could by no means be described as either one or other of these vehicles.

As regards the third criterion in the resolution, the Land Commission considers that the degree of menace of any particular weapon to the civil population depends primarily upon whether the action of that weapon is discriminating or undiscriminating in its effect. The short range of their weapons and the fact that these will normally be employed only against visible targets render the action of armoured fighting vehicles essentially discriminating. Thus armoured fighting vehicles can be employed to attack military objectives, even outside the zone of the battlefield, with the minimum of accidental risk to the civil population. For this reason, notwithstanding the special faculty which armoured fighting vehicles admittedly possess, in common with other forms of mechanical transport, to effect surprise and to penetrate the territory of an opposing country, the Land Commission does not consider that these vehicles can be held to constitute a special menace to the civil population or that they should be subject to qualitative disarmament upon that ground.

2. With regard to mobile armoured cupolas and armoured trains. The offensive capacity of mobile armoured cupolas and of armoured trains, and the efficacy of these weapons against the national defence and their menace to the civil population, depend entirely upon the range and the power of the artillery or other weapons with which they are armed. They do not therefore appear to come within the scope of qualitative disarmament as defined by the resolution of April 22nd, in virtue of any inherent characteristic which they possess.”

M. LOUWATCHARKI (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) recalled that the Soviet delegation had disapproved of the adoption of a questionnaire as a basis for the experts' work, on the grounds that a resolution on the concrete subject entrusted to the Land Commission by the General Commission did not necessitate a detailed discussion. The experts' reply only confirmed the Soviet view that no unity of opinion existed in regard to tanks. Every chapter had been liberally amended by various delegations, and the whole document gave the impression that the authors had been endeavouring to prevent the inclusion of armoured vehicles in the list of weapons to be made subject to qualitative disarmament.

The Soviet delegation had already proposed the abolition of all tanks. Every new model of that weapon showed an improvement in its characteristic properties in particular horse-power, weight, armament, mobility, radius of action and armour. A further point was the immense increase in the number of armoured vehicles and the fact that tanks were now included in modern infantry units. Tanks constituted the essentially offensive feature of modern armies. The experts' reply, however, instead of bringing out clearly the
fighting and offensive properties of armoured vehicles, was marked from beginning to end by a tone of reticence designed to cast doubt on their offensive character. Certain experts, indeed, anxious to avert the danger of disarmament in that sphere, had raised the alarm in regard to agricultural tractors which, they maintained, might constitute a far greater menace than those little toy tanks of varying dimensions, weight, speed and armed capacity. Wheeled agricultural tractors capable of 6 kilometres an hour were the danger! What was the latest Renault tank? What could be done with the Skoda combined wheeled and tracked tanks? What were all the other tanks compared with agricultural tractors? Agriculture, not disarmament, was what the delegations were at Geneva to talk about!

The Polish delegation had done useful propaganda in favour of the Soviet Five-Year Plan. The 140 tractors a day turned out by the Stalingrad works were a real conquest, but the Soviet delegate would never have thought of comparing phenomena of that order with the intensive import of armoured vehicles of every kind that was going on in certain countries bordering on the Union. Most of the Soviet-manufactured agricultural tractors were wheeled tractors of the "International" 16 horse-power type, capable of 5 to 6 kilometres an hour. Could they be compared with the latest types of tanks in certain countries? Could they be converted into really useful tanks? Not that the Soviet Union, if its frontiers were violated, would hesitate to employ those industrial implements. The Soviet delegation protested energetically against the system which consisted in the avoidance of the main issue. The question under discussion was tanks and not tractors, and the General Commission had asked the Land Commission whether tanks were or were not offensive weapons. The Soviet delegation insisted that the Land Commission, instead of repeating the Committee of Experts' vague conclusions, should say "Yes" or "No" to that very simple question. It desired to have put to the vote a resolution which would constitute a direct reply to the General Commission. That resolution was as follows:

"Having taken cognisance of the replies given by the Committee of Experts, the Land Commission affirms that all armoured vehicles (tanks, armoured cars and armoured trains) are weapons specifically offensive and threatening to the national defence."

The President said that the vote on the Soviet proposal would be held over until the conclusion of the general discussion.

General Galet (Belgium) stated that he had two observations to offer on the experts' reply. The first concerned the definition given in answer to the first question. The Belgian delegation had itself submitted a simple definition of tanks and armoured cars, the former weapon being, in its view, by far the more important. It supported the observations of the United States delegate, feeling, as it did, that the experts' reply must inevitably tend to complicate the General Commission's task. The experts would have done better to keep to the main terms of the definition, without going into all the possible secondary uses to which tanks and armoured cars might be put.

The second observation concerned surprise attacks. The questionnaire had envisaged the action of tanks and other armoured vehicles against permanent fortifications, field works and objectives beyond the zone of the battlefield properly so-called. But one point — already emphasised by the United Kingdom delegation — had not been brought out sufficiently clearly — namely, the question of surprise attacks immediately after the declaration of war, when no battlefield existed and the forces were not yet in position. At that stage, the use of armoured vehicles was a great menace, especially to small countries, whose defences might be completely annihilated. The Belgian delegation endorsed the view expressed by the United Kingdom delegation and proposed that the Land Commission make a specific statement on the subject of surprise attacks, in the form of an amendment to the draft reply to the General Commission proposed by the United Kingdom delegation, as follows:

"Insert in the second paragraph, after the first sentence ending 'knock-out blow':

"In particular, they give to a surprise attack at the outset of an aggressive war, wherever there are no permanent manned fortification, nor organised battlefield, an effectiveness, a depth of penetration and considerably increased chances of success."

"The beginning of the next sentence should read:

"For the purpose of a surprise attack, they possess . . . .""

General Benitez (Spain), commenting on the United States delegate's very strong criticism of the experts' reply, observed that the Committee had made a praiseworthy effort to obtain unanimity. The experts were capable of distinguishing between a tank and an armoured car, but had tried to go further and to establish a definite line of demarcation. Their efforts had revealed the difficulty of achieving unanimity on any but a somewhat
colourless text. One example—noted by the Soviet delegate—would illustrate his point: from the results achieved by tanks in the last war, those weapons would seem to be essentially offensive; but the fact remained that they were not capable of effective action against fortifications. That illustration alone showed how difficult it was to define the situation in a few words.

M. Aubert (France) said that his delegation was anxious that all possible consideration should be given to the report of the experts, whose competence it appreciated. It could not accordingly associate itself with the criticisms formulated by the United States delegation. The distinction between tanks and armoured motor-cars was not, in its opinion, so easy as the United States delegate had argued. Both tanks and motor-cars could be armoured and travel across country, and it was not possible to make a distinction between them on the basis of weight. Only the use made of them might differ.

In France, armoured motor-cars were regarded as the real reconnaissance arm of the future, and as being bound to replace cavalry. The divergence of views to which Lord Stanhope had drawn attention would be accentuated still further if an attempt were made to define the limits between light tanks, medium-weight tanks and heavy tanks. There could be no technical reason for saying that a twenty-five-ton tank was a defensive weapon, but that a thirty-ton tank was “specifically offensive”. Such a distinction would be purely arbitrary.

With regard to the use of armoured vehicles for surprise attacks, the remarks which applied to attack held good for surprise tactics as well. Just as troops on the defensive had to make use of the counter-attack and consequently needed the arms required for the attack, so the defender, no less than the aggressor, was obliged to attempt surprises.

A tactical surprise must not be confused with the initial strategical surprise carried out by an aggressor. Tanks were weapons of tactical surprise. They could not carry out a strategical surprise any more than any other machine for the speedy conveyance and concentration of troops or fighting material.

Further, armoured vehicles were unquestionably a sign of progress, because they economised personnel and rendered the combatants less vulnerable. When so much was heard of the humanisation of war, when there was so strong an opposition to the organisation of peace by concerted action against aggression, it was paradoxical to attempt to restrict the use of a weapon which might make it possible to economise human life in battle. France certainly would not hesitate to concentrate on measures which were really capable of ensuring peace rather than seek arbitrarily to find “specifically offensive” characteristics in machine-guns and armoured field-guns which were moved from place to place with their armour, whereas the same weapons, if not armoured, would be “specifically defensive”.

M. Aubert read the French delegation’s draft reply to the General Commission:

“The following recommendations, based upon the conclusions (document D./C.T.34) contained in the replies of the Committee of Experts to the questionnaire addressed to it by the Land Commission (document D./C.T.33), 1 are submitted to the General Commission for consideration:

A. No armoured fighting vehicle of the nature of those contemplated for armies in the field is capable of assaulting a modern fortified work of even medium strength. Only tanks specially designed for this purpose and of a minimum weight of 70 tons could be effective against permanent fortifications. The same applies to armoured trains carrying artillery capable of similar effective action — i.e., of a calibre exceeding 250 mm.

B. Apart from tanks and armoured trains possessing the above defined characteristics, there is no technical reason for stating that armoured fighting vehicles are more specifically offensive, more efficacious against national defence or more threatening to civilians than any other means of warfare.

1. As regards efficaciousness against national defence, armoured fighting vehicles are used not only by an aggressor desiring to invade the territory of another State and penetrating more or less far into that territory according to the mobility, speed and radius of action of the said vehicles, but also in counter-offensive operations conducted by a defender on the front, flanks or rear of an aggressor who has penetrated into his territory and entrenched himself there. The characteristics as regards armament, armour, mobility, the power of crossing obstacles and the radius of action of these vehicles, most of which are primarily intended to accompany the infantry and to save it from losses, correspond to the prevalent conditions in both cases.

The use of armoured vehicles, particularly tanks in the course of a defensive action, is, moreover, tending to become more and more important:

(a) In order to support a counter-attack when it is difficult to provide artillery support owing to ignorance of the exact position of the assailant and the point of departure of the infantry making the counter-attack;

1 See Minutes of the fourteenth meeting.
"(b) Because the anti-tank weapons which are being perfected can easily, in an organised position, be arranged so as to provide a complete and effective system of defence, whereas it is much more difficult for them to accompany an offensive, so that troops which are attacking are more vulnerable to the armoured vehicles of the defenders than troops established in a defensive position are to the tanks of the attackers;

"(c) In the defence of a permanent system of fortification, to act as mobile fortresses capable, thanks to prepared routes, of advancing to any points which are particularly threatened or of stopping any breach which may be made by the assailant in the defensive arrangements.

"The fact that the last-mentioned use is strictly defensive, requiring heavily armed and armoured tanks, which are consequently very heavy and can with difficulty be moved away from the area prepared for their action, suffices to show that any discrimination between armoured vehicles according to weight, designed to prove that the heaviest tanks are most offensive, would not be technically justified. It is, moreover, impossible to make distinctions based upon the question of weight, as it is well known that very light tanks have been able to exercise effective action against important battlefield constructions. On the other hand, if tanks are exposed to the action of anti-tank weapons or enemy tanks, it may be necessary for their own protection, whether passive (armoured) or active (armament), that their weight should be considerably increased if they are to be usefully employed on the field of battle, without reference to the offensive or defensive character of such employment.

"Finally, armoured cars, which are more and more designed so as to be able to move across country and which, from the standpoint of technical characteristics, are tending to become assimilated to tanks, are useful in reconnaissance operations, in delaying an aggressor and in maintaining order in overseas territories where it is necessary to economise the use of effectives.

"Armoured fighting vehicles of less than 70 tons in weight and with armaments of a calibre inferior to 250 mm. cannot therefore be regarded as being offensive rather than defensive in purpose, and cannot be included among the weapons most menacing to national defence.

"Moreover, it would in any case be useless to endeavour to apply the restrictions of qualitative disarmament to the above-mentioned armoured fighting vehicles, owing to the ease with which vehicles possessing their characteristics can be improvised in a very short period by the transformation of commercial vehicles, especially if such transformation has been contemplated when the said vehicles were constructed. If the armoured fighting vehicles under consideration were to be subjected to measures of qualitative disarmament, it would confer an advantage upon States possessing a powerful metallurgical industry and incite them to encourage the construction, by their private industries, of tractors and lorries possessing characteristics which would be represented as corresponding to technical progress for non-military purposes, but which, in fact, would enable them to be effectively and speedily transformed into fighting machines.

"2. As regards the characteristic of being threatening to civilians, armoured vehicles, with the exception of armoured trains, as to which the reply must depend upon the artillery which they carry, should be regarded as among the weapons least menacing to civilian populations. The small range of their guns and the fact that they are normally only employed against visible military objectives enable them to concentrate entirely on the objective, with the least risk of accident for the neighbouring civilian population."

General Nygren (Sweden) agreed that the most powerful tanks were the most specifically offensive, but thought that, owing to their great value in the attack, all tanks should be regarded as specifically offensive and particularly threatening to national defence. The unchallengeable fact that these arms could also serve for the national defence in a counter-attack was not a strong enough argument for their maintenance.

He recognised that certain civil vehicles could be converted, within a comparatively short time, into tanks and armoured cars, particularly if at the time of manufacture provision had been made for conversion. Such vehicles, however, were, generally speaking, less useful for military operations than real tanks. The possibility of conversion, therefore, should not prevent the abolition of tanks properly so-called, which the Swedish delegation had proposed in its memorandum (document Conf. D.110).

The Swedish delegation considered, on the other hand, that armoured motor-cars, equipped only with ordinary wheels, had only a very limited value for an attack upon military objectives not in the immediate vicinity of a road, and that they should not be regarded as being specifically offensive or threatening to national defence.
General BURHARDT-BUKACKI (Poland) said that, in principle, the Polish delegation was quite prepared to include tanks and armoured motor-cars among the arms which could be dealt with under the resolution of April 22nd. It thought, however, that this problem could not be considered apart from another — namely, the possibility of using certain civil vehicles, in particular agricultural tractors, as tanks and of utilising in time of war the factories where such tractors were made for the manufacture of armoured cars.

The Polish delegate, who had come to Geneva as his country's representative with a sincere desire to co-operate in the organisation of peace, was not referring, when he mentioned tractors, to low-powered tractors, but only to those equipped with an engine of 50 to 60 horse-power or more, mounted on tracks and capable of conversion into comparatively effective fighting vehicles.

The question of conversion would be less important if the supply of tractors and the degree of development of the industry manufacturing them were appreciably the same in the different countries. Unfortunately, that was not the case. In some countries where, like Poland, their production had not been encouraged, whether for economic or social or military reasons, the supply was insignificant. In others, among them some of Poland's immediate neighbours, the position was entirely different. In one of them, the annual output of tractors, which had been 44,500 units in 1930-31, represented something like three or four times that number at the present time.

There could be no doubt as to the possibilities inherent in that position in the case of war, and the Polish delegate had already referred to that matter in the Committee of Experts.

Further, the fact must not be overlooked that the countries in question had a large number of specialists who were accustomed to handling these machines.

The Polish delegate did not offer these observations in any spirit of criticism, but purely in order to show the Commission that the question of tanks differed in aspect in the different countries. He considered that, if qualitative disarmament were to be applied to tanks, the Commission should also take steps to prevent the conversion of tractors and tractor factories in war-time.

In conclusion, while some of the neighbours of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics were importing tanks, a larger quantity of those machines had been seen during the review of the troops at Moscow on May 1st than was possessed by all the countries adjacent to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Colonel DE CARVALHO (Brazil) said that, in the Committee of Experts, he had stated that a separate definition would have to be found for each of the two classes of armoured vehicles. That procedure would facilitate the decisions to be taken by the Land Commission and the General Commission for the purposes of qualitative reduction.

He had proposed that the definition suggested by the Belgian delegate should be taken as a basis of discussion. That proposal had not been adopted, and the Commission was now faced with difficulties which could, in Colonel de Carvalho's opinion, have been avoided.

The Brazilian delegation accordingly associated itself with the remarks of the United States and Belgian delegates.

M. von WEIZSÄCKER (Germany) said that the members of the Commission would remember that the German delegation had never been very strongly in favour of submitting the question of armoured vehicles to the Committee of Experts. He hoped that the fact that his delegation had taken part in the Committee's work had not been construed as meaning that Germany had dropped its proposal for the total abolition of tanks. The results of the experts' work were not very satisfactory and were not calculated to expedite the Commission's task. M. von Weizsaicker associated himself with the criticisms expressed by the United States delegate and M. Lounatcharski.

In the Treaty of Versailles, tanks, armoured cars, etc., were mentioned, but were not specially defined. He did not see why it had been necessary to devote a long discussion to finding a definition which had not been considered necessary in the Treaty of Versailles.

He drew attention to certain passages in the experts' report. The experts had said that very light tanks might be effective against strongly organised battlefields. The experience of the last war had shown that tanks were a particularly offensive weapon. Why was that fact contested now?

Certain delegations had stated that tanks, on an organised battlefield, and certain armoured cars, in the case of improvised or disconnected field-works, might be particularly effective against a defence which did not possess sufficient anti-tank weapons or tanks.

The experts' report further stated that even light tanks could cross trenches and make breaches in the barbed-wire defences on the battlefield. If that were so, tanks could operate against national defence objectives outside the battlefield, in the strict sense of the term, and become a danger to the civilian population. The German delegation considered that the civilian population could not be protected against tanks, and that these
weapons accordingly came not only within the first two criteria but within the third as well.

Again, the conversion of agricultural tractors into tanks was feasible given the necessary material, personnel and time, but the value of such converted vehicles was less than that of ordinary tanks.

The German delegation considered that tanks possessed the characteristics mentioned in the General Commission's question. It failed to understand why mention had been made of the "humanisation" of war in connection with tanks. The soldiers in the tank might perhaps benefit by such "humanisation", but that did not apply to the enemy forces.

In view of the divergencies of opinion, the German delegate considered that the only solution would be to say that all tanks were specifically offensive, and he maintained his delegation's proposal. He supported the Soviet delegation's remarks and, in particular, the Hungarian delegation's proposal.1

General Bonomi (Italy) said that his delegation could not accept either the proposal made by the United Kingdom delegation or the conclusion of the French delegate as to the use of armoured cars in the defensive. He had twice already made a reservation on that point and he renewed it now.

The Italian delegation pointed out that, if, by the use of armoured vehicles, it was possible to economise personnel, they offered, by that very fact, the possibility of increasing an army's striking force without adding to its effectives.

The Italian delegation reiterated the statements contained in its memorandum2 and in its proposal of May 7th, 1932—viz., that it considered it desirable "to include, among the arms that were most specifically offensive and most effective against national defence or against the civilian population, tanks and armoured motor-cars of all kinds". It desired to complete those statements by the addition of the following words: "even when such vehicles are procured by the conversion of other vehicles".

While it could accept the Soviet delegation's proposal, the Italian delegation supported the Hungarian proposal.1

General Nánassy-Megay (Hungary) recalled the lesson of the last war—that there was no possible defence against a successful surprise attack. Offensive strategy based on surprise was considerably strengthened by armoured vehicles, and the Hungarian delegation considered that tanks, armoured motor-cars and all similar machines capable of being used for fighting purposes were particularly powerful weapons for a surprise offensive.

The extraordinary fighting efficiency of these weapons enabled the aggressor to squash at one blow any attempt at defence on the part of the adversary.

Other arms—for instance, infantry transported in motor-cars, or cavalry—also took part, in surprise operations, but their fighting value could not compare with that of armoured fighting vehicles, since, although infantry could be relatively quickly

---

1 See below.
3 The document which the Italian delegation submitted on May 7th, 1932, read as follows:

"With reference to the General Commission's resolution of April 22nd, the Italian delegation considers it desirable to include, among the weapons which are most specifically offensive and are most efficacious against national defence or against civilians, tanks and armed and armoured cars of all kinds.

These weapons, which have great mobility and great power to attack and crush obstacles, are particularly suited for offensive purposes, for taking by surprise and destroying defences (barbed-wire entanglements, trenches, breastworks, etc.) constructed by the defender.

As the world war showed, these weapons were only employed against defences, and in all cases with the object of launching an attack.

Armoured and armed cars of all kinds are suited for surprise actions, which are particularly employed by an aggressor. In view of their wide range of action and their mobility, they may also be used for offensive raids into the interior of a country, and are thus particularly threatening to civilians. Consequently, they fulfill the first and third conditions laid down in the above-mentioned resolution.

On the other hand, tanks are particularly suited to shock actions and for crushing opposition with the object of opening the way for attacking troops and making conditions as favourable as possible for them as against the defending troops. Consequently, they fulfill the first and second conditions of the resolution.

In the Italian delegation's opinion, if the use of these categories of armaments in warfare were abolished, the offensive would be robbed of much of the probability of success, and the defence could be made more effective.

Moreover, tanks are particularly costly weapons and are constantly being improved, so that their abolition would considerably decrease military expenditure.

Accordingly, the Italian delegation, taking the above criteria as a basis, proposes the abolition of tanks and armed and armoured cars of all kinds."
transported in motor-cars, the fact that it could not then use its own arms, and was far more vulnerable than armoured vehicles to attack by any other arm, placed it in a definitely inferior situation as compared with the armoured vehicles. Again, cavalry could not move as fast, and the trooper and his horse were far more vulnerable than armoured fighting vehicles to attack by any other arm. It was therefore plain that armoured fighting vehicles were an essential part of any surprise operation.

In the Hungarian delegation's opinion, an exhaustive knowledge of the strategic importance of armoured fighting vehicles was sufficient in itself for such vehicles to be deemed to be covered by the General Commission's resolution of April 22nd.

Notwithstanding these facts, the Hungarian delegation was prepared to take part in a technical enquiry by the Land Commission regarding the importance of armoured fighting vehicles.

The first question was: Which armoured fighting vehicles were the most effective against national defence? The Hungarian delegation, basing its view on the opinion of the Committee of Experts, held that all tanks, and those categories of armoured motor-cars which were capable of effective action against battlefield entrenchments, were to be regarded as the most effective against national defence.

In the matter of the armoured fighting vehicles which were the most threatening to the civilian population, the Hungarian delegation again based its view on the experts' reply; while it recognised that the experts had also stated that the fire of tanks and armoured motor-cars was extremely precise, with a consequent reduction in the risk to the civilian population, it considered that the power of armoured vehicles, directly they appeared to create a new battlefield so rapidly that the civilian population was incapable of seeking refuge in time — that fact alone answered entirely to the criterion of a threat to the civilian population and hence that all very mobile tanks and armoured motor-cars and similar machines might be regarded as among the arms most threatening to the civilian population.

Those arms could therefore be regarded, not only as most efficacious against national defence, but also as most threatening to civilians.

The imminent danger of such arms, which was due mainly to their extraordinary suitability for surprise attack, obliged the countries threatened to maintain their frontier defences — even in time of peace — at a level sufficiently high for them to be in a position to repel an attack immediately and without previous mobilisation.

The very existence of those arms might force countries to adopt measures of security which would figure among the heaviest items of expenditure on national defence.

The fact that, at a later stage of the war, those arms might also be of great use to the defenders could not, in the Hungarian delegation's view, nullify and could, indeed, hardly attenuate the immense danger which they represented.

The Hungarian delegation submitted the following draft resolution for adoption by the Land Commission:

"Whereas the conduct of offensive war, based largely on the art of surprising the enemy, constitutes a considerable threat to national defence and to the civilian population;

"Whereas the conduct of such war is greatly facilitated by the armoured weapons enumerated below:

"The Land Commission considers that tanks, armoured cars, or any other similar appliances answer to the three characteristics laid down in the General Commission's resolution of April 22nd, and that, consequently, they should be inserted in the list of arms which are most specifically offensive, which are most efficacious against national defence and which are the most threatening to civilians."

The President thought that, to obviate any misunderstanding, it would be desirable to point out that the report by the Committee of Experts was intended to be used by the Commission only in so far as the latter found it helpful. If the majority of the members were not satisfied with its conclusions, the Commission was entirely free to adopt and submit other conclusions to the General Commission. This explanation had appeared necessary because certain delegations seemed to think that the experts' report was binding on the delegations, whereas, in fact, it was only submitted to the General Commission for its information.

M. Aubert (France) desired to reply to the German delegate's remark, with reference to the experts' report, that the tanks employed during the last war had been an offensive weapon. France could not agree that an arm which she had used for the defence of her territory against an enemy which had entrenched itself on her soil could be regarded as having an offensive character.

General Laidoner (Estonia) said that if the experts' report, against which certain criticisms had been made, indicated certain divergencies of opinion, he had been obliged to notice that there were even wider divergencies in the Land Commission.
M. VON WEIZSÄCKER (Germany) said that the Land Commission's task was purely technical, and that the question submitted to it should be discussed from that point of view alone. If speakers entered on the political field, the German delegate would have other observations to offer.

M. AUBERT (France) said that his observation was to be taken as purely technical. It was intended as an illustration of the argument he had advanced to the effect that tanks were a weapon for the purposes of counter-attack.

SIXTEENTH MEETING

Held on Wednesday, June 1st, 1932, at 10 a.m.

President: M. BUERO.

21. APPLICATION TO ARMORED FIGHTING VEHICLES OF THE RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL COMMISSION ON APRIL 22ND, 1932: CONSIDERATION OF THE REPLY TO BE SENT TO THE GENERAL COMMISSION.

The President observed that the divergence of views which had appeared in the Committee of Experts had been confirmed in the Land Commission, and that it seemed useless to try to reconcile the theses of the different delegations. He suggested that, on the conclusion of the general debate, the Commission should ask M. Bourquin, as Rapporteur, to prepare a report describing the situation. The delegations appeared to be divided into some five groups, and the Bureau had prepared a classification which would be submitted to the Land Commission later. The Rapporteur might be asked to state that unanimity had been found impossible and might then proceed to enumerate the main trends of opinion: some delegations were in favour of the abolition of tanks; a second group made a distinction between tanks and armoured cars; a third group wished to classify tanks; a fourth was in favour of maintaining all armoured cars, and a fifth had put forward a suggestion that a distinction be established according to whether the vehicles moved on four wheels or otherwise. A report on those lines would help the General Commission to take a decision as to which were the most offensive weapons. The Land Commission, however, must provide a definition of the terms "armoured car" and "tank", in order that the General Commission might have a clear basis for its decision.

General VAN TUINEN (Netherlands) stated that the Netherlands delegation on the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference had always been in favour of the abolition of tanks; that point had been stressed by the Netherlands delegate in a speech on April 9th, 1927, containing the following passage:

"In conclusion, I desire to support the suggestion submitted by the delegate for Sweden, that, if the direct limitation of all categories of armaments suggested in the German proposal is unacceptable, limitation should be applied to heavy guns and tanks. The latter, I might point out, constitute an essentially offensive form of armament. They constitute the real weapon of aggression, the real weapon of attack. By reason of their dimensions, their armour-plating and their suitability for mass attack, tanks form, as it were, the fighting squadron of the land army, and big tank units will constitute one of the chief means employed by the aggressor to break down enemy resistance. Since the war, competition in tank armaments has increased. Several States the nature of whose country would permit of the use of tanks are taking steps to procure them, and to increase their number or improve their quality. Other States are thus obliged to do the same. This is quite logical, for in future the tank alone will be a match for the enemy tank. Every effort is being made to prevent chemical and bacteriological warfare. It is surely essential to prevent, or at all events to limit, tank warfare, which is certainly easier to supervise than chemical warfare. One might ask why, if the limitation of capital ships was brought about at Washington, it should not be possible to bring about the reduction of armoured land-ships, and even to prohibit them entirely."

2 Minutes of the third session of the Preparatory Commission, page 219.