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1. RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE SIXTH ASSEMBLY (1925).

(a) ARBITRATION, SECURITY AND REDUCTION OF ARMAMENTS.

Resolution adopted by the Assembly on the Reports of the First and Third Committees, September 25th, 1925 (afternoon).

The Assembly,
Taking note of the declarations submitted to the Council and the Assembly of the League of Nations in respect of the Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes and of the fact that the said Protocol has not up to the present received the ratifications necessary for putting it into operation immediately;
Convinced that the most urgent need of the present time is the re-establishment of mutual confidence between nations;
Declaring afresh that a war of aggression should be regarded as an international crime;
Regarding favourably the effort made by certain nations to attain those objects by concluding arbitration conventions and treaties of mutual security conceived in the spirit of the Covenant of the League of Nations and in harmony with the principles of the Protocol (Arbitration, Security, Disarmament);
Records the fact that such agreements need not be restricted to a limited area but may be applied to the whole world;
Recommends that, after these conventions and treaties have been deposited with the League of Nations, the Council should examine them in order to report to the seventh Assembly on the progress in general security brought about by such agreements;
Undertakes again to work for the establishment of peace by the sure method of arbitration, security and disarmament;
And, in conformity with the spirit of Article 8 of the Covenant, requests the Council to make a preparatory study with a view to a Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments, in order that, as soon as satisfactory conditions have been assured from the point of view of general security as provided for in Resolution XIV of the third Assembly, the said Conference may be convened and a general reduction and limitation of armaments may be realised.

(b) COUNCIL ORGANISATION FOR WORK ON DISARMAMENT.

Resolution proposed by the Third Committee and adopted by the Assembly, September 25th, 1925 (afternoon).

The Assembly:
Takes note of the Council resolution dated October 3rd, 1924, establishing the Co-ordination Commission;
And invites the attention of the Council to the suggestions made during the proceedings of the Third Committee, as contained in the report (A. 99. 1925) submitted to the Assembly, with regard both to the designation and the composition of that Commission, and also to the necessity of determining its rules of procedure.

2. ARBITRATION, SECURITY AND REDUCTION OF ARMAMENTS

Report by M. Benes and Resolution, adopted by the Council on September 26th, 1925.

The Council has before it the reports adopted by the Assembly on the proposal of the First and Third Committees relating to the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes, Arbitration, Security and Reduction of Armaments, as well as the resolutions proposed by those Committees and adopted by the Assembly on the basis of the proposals presented by the delegations of Spain (including the amendment of the Hungarian delegation), of the Netherlands, of Sweden, of Japan, and of Belgium. I now propose to adjourn until our session in December the consideration of the resolutions contained more especially in the report of the First Committee, and shall therefore confine the remainder of my report to the consideration of that part of the question with which the Third Committee was primarily concerned, that is to say:

The last paragraph of the amended Spanish resolution;
The resolution concerning the Co-ordination Commission;
The report of the Third Committee.
Having, in my capacity as Rapporteur, been closely associated with the debates of the Assembly on this matter, I am in a position to assure the Council of the desire of the great majority of the delegations that the preparatory investigations required for dealing adequately with the question of the reduction and limitation of armaments should be undertaken as soon as possible, in order that, when the conditions of security have been established, the Council may call an international conference without further loss of time.

The decision as to the moment at which these investigations are to be instituted is of course left by the Assembly to the discretion of the Council. This will, moreover, be determined by the necessity of setting up the permanent organisation which is to undertake them.

The short interval which has elapsed since the resolutions were adopted by the Assembly and the little time remaining to us this session seems hardly sufficient to allow us to come to a definite decision in this matter, and yet I do not think that we should be acting in conformity with the spirit of the Assembly resolutions if we decided simply to adjourn our decision to our next session. In these circumstances, I wonder whether it would not be possible to find a middle course by taking advantage of the existence of the Committee of the Council which was established in accordance with the resolutions of the fifth Assembly, to undertake in our name the work connected with the carrying out of the Protocol.

My proposal in this matter might be summed up as follows:

I. The Committee of the Council would be instructed to undertake a general study, during the interval between the September and the December sessions of the Council, of the questions arising out of the Assembly resolutions, in order to submit definite proposals to the Council at its December meeting. The Committee of the Council would in particular:

(a) Examine the observations made in the course of the Assembly’s debates and recapitulated in the report of the Third Committee, relating to the organisation, working and name of the Co-ordination Commission, and as a result of this examination submit proposals to the Council on the following subjects:

1. The composition and the name of this Commission;
2. The respective status of its members;
3. Its procedure.

(b) Make the necessary studies for determining the questions which need to be submitted to a preparatory examination with a view to a possible Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments, and to draft definite proposals to be submitted to the Council on this subject.

II. The Council would, during its December session, examine the proposals presented in accordance with the programme by its Committee, and could then, with a full knowledge of the facts, take a well-considered decision. No time would be lost between the September and December sessions.

If the Council shares my views, it could immediately adopt the following resolution:

"The Council,

"In view of the report of the Third Committee to the sixth Assembly and of the resolutions adopted by the Assembly relating to arbitration, security and disarmament, dated September 25th, 1925;

"Decides to refer the report, resolutions and minutes of the Assembly, of the Third Committee and of the Sub-Committee of the Third Committee, to the Committee of the Council for examination, requesting it to meet as soon as possible during the interval between the September and December sessions in order:

(1) To examine the observations made during the sixth Assembly relating to the constitution and working of the Co-ordination Commission and to submit definite proposals to the Council on the following questions:

(a) The composition and name of the Co-ordination Commission;
(b) Status of its different members;
(c) Procedure.

(2) To make the necessary studies for determining the questions which need to be submitted to a preparatory examination with a view to a possible Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments, and to draft definite proposals to be submitted to the Council on this subject.

The Committee of the Council is requested to submit a report on this matter in time for examination by the Council at its session in December."
MINUTES
OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL
Held at Geneva, December 3rd-7th, 1925.

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MINUTES OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE
OF THE COUNCIL

Held at Geneva, December 3rd-7th, 1925.

FIRST MEETING

Held on Thursday, December 3rd, 1925, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: M. PAUL-BONCOUR.

Present: M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France), Chairman;
M. Louis de Brouckère (Belgium);
M. A. de Mello-Franco (Brazil);
Viscount Cecil of Chelwood (British Empire);
M. E. Cobian (Spain);
M. de Marinis (Italy);
M. Matsuda (Japan);
M. Hennings (Sweden);
M. Veverka (Czechoslovakia);
M. A. Guani (Uruguay).
M. de Madariaga, Secretary.

1. Composition and Name of the Co-ordination Commission: General Discussion.

The Chairman reminded the Committee of the Council of the importance of the task it had to perform. It depended on the steps taken by the Committee to carry it through successfully and to attain the end in view whether hopes would be realised or serious disappointment created. He therefore hoped that all the members alike would display a spirit of goodwill in endeavouring to determine the principles on which to base the work in preparation of a future Conference on the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments. The success or failure of this conference, which contemporary events were likely to bring nearer, would depend on this preliminary work. The last Assembly had fixed the main outlines of the procedure to be followed, and of the organisations responsible for doing the preliminary work. The Assembly of 1924 had created a Co-ordination Commission which had not had much to do and the drawbacks of which had been revealed by experience. Some of the criticisms which had been made at the first session of this Commission had been repeated at the 1925 Assembly, particularly in the Third Committee. Definite proposals had been submitted and the Assembly had adopted them. These proposals the Committee of the Council now had to consider.

The Council had always been definitely of the opinion that, in an undertaking which was so important, both from the technical and political points of view, it must always retain control of the work.

The Chairman invited his colleagues to submit any remarks they wished to make with regard to the body responsible for doing the preliminary work and with regard to the procedure to be followed. The first question to be examined was the title given to this body; the last Assembly had pronounced in favour of a more concrete and definite description than "Co-ordination Commission".

Viscount Cecil said he found himself in very close agreement with the Chairman's remarks. He quite agreed that this question would have to be approached very seriously and with a view to achieving positive results, not only for the reasons given by the Chairman but also because by treaty many Governments were absolutely bound to do so. In all the Treaties of Peace, the chapter dealing with the disarmament of the former enemy belligerent was preceded by the statement that this operation was to be carried out in order to make it possible to have a general disarmament, and his colleagues would remember that, on the eve of the signature of these treaties, correspondence was exchanged between the representatives of Germany and the Allied Powers, in which it was made perfectly clear that the disarmament of Germany was to be a prelude to a general scheme of disarmament to be undertaken by the League. This point was also clearly brought out at Locarno in the Protocol to the Agreements.

Viscount Cecil agreed with the Chairman that it would be a good plan to begin by considering the title and composition of the Preparatory Committee which the Committee of the Council was directed by the Assembly to set up. His Government suggested that this Committee should be called the "Preparatory Committee for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments".
As regards the composition of the Committee, Viscount Cecil traced the history of the bodies which had dealt with the subject previously, the most important of which were the Temporary Mixed Commission and the Co-ordination Commission. Experience had shown that there was the greatest possible difficulty in having a Committee which consisted partly of official and partly of unofficial members. Either they would be all equal, with the result that the official representatives of the Governments might be outvoted by the unofficial representatives, which would be a very unfortunate result, or the rights of the unofficial representatives would be restricted which would make their position very difficult. The British Government had therefore come to the conclusion that it would be better for the Committee to consist entirely of representatives of Governments. Naturally, the Governments represented on the Council would have representatives on the Committee, but, in view of what was said in the Third Committee of the last Assembly, and also of the requirements of the situation, the British Government felt that there ought to be added to these members five or six additional members representing other Governments. If Germany came into the League of Nations, as she had undertaken to do under the agreement just signed in London, she would no doubt become a Member of the Council, so that there would then be eleven members representing the Members of the Council; in order not to make the Committee too large, the British Government was therefore strongly of the opinion that there ought not to be more than six (and perhaps not more than five) other members. It also felt that the United States and Russia ought both to be asked to send representatives to the Committee. It would, of course, be a matter for consideration as to how the invitation should be sent. The future Committee would be far stronger and would do much more effective work if both these Powers were represented on it.

As regards the other members of the Committee, perhaps the Chairman would agree that this question should be discussed at a more private meeting, as it was evidently a matter of some delicacy.

The Preparatory Committee would work through sub-committees, or in any other way they wished, in order to obtain the necessary technical advice. Viscount Cecil thought that these sub-committees should have the right, without going to the Council, to ask for the assistance of any of the technical organisations of the League (including the Permanent Advisory Commission, the Financial Committee and the International Labour Office).

Probably in the formation of these sub-committees, which would be entrusted with particular enquiries, it would be desirable to bring in experts who would sit as advisers.

M. MATSUDA said he entirely associated himself with the views of the Chairman and of Viscount Cecil. The Japanese Government considered that the Committee which was to be organised with a view to the preparation for the Conference on the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments should be restricted both with regard to its composition and the number of members. Like the representative of the British Empire, he considered that this Committee should be composed of representatives of the Members of the Council, and possibly of the representatives of a certain number of other States. He too attached great importance to the participation of the United States and of Russia. The participation of the United States had been most valuable at the Conference on the Trade in Arms, and it was hoped that they would also take part in the Conference on the Private Manufacture of Arms and Munitions.

M. DE BROUCKERE said he need not emphasise the importance which Belgium attached to securing the reduction of armaments. If they did not reach a practical and positive result, i.e., not only a plan for the reduction of armaments but an actual reduction, the prestige of the League of Nations would receive a blow which would efface the favourable impression created by its successful intervention on a recent occasion.

With regard to the title of the body to be created, it might perhaps be well to make it clear from the name of the Committee that its purpose was not only the reduction and limitation of armaments but the preparation for a conference on this subject. Public opinion expected great things of this important conference.

As regards the composition of the Committee, the Belgian representative appreciated the importance of the observations which had been made regarding the necessity of this Committee retaining an official character. There could be no question of allowing individuals to vote against nations. He had, however, been particularly glad to hear the British representative’s suggestion with regard to reconciling this necessity with securing the co-operation of the existing organs of the League in the future work. The Preparatory Committee could not attempt to study by itself, all the weighty questions which would be submitted to it. It would examine the preparatory work done by the technical experts and specialists of the various organisations. At the debates of the organisations which the Preparatory Committee might create, the distinction between official delegates and private members would have less importance, and the Committee could avail itself of the results of the work of these various organisations.

The question as to which States would be represented on the Preparatory Committee was most delicate and required some reserve in dealing with it for the moment. It was, of course, important not to have too large a number of States represented on the Committee. According to the British representative, this number might be 26, 17 or 18. It must be realised, however, that the Committee of the Council would receive very pressing requests which would be difficult to resist. It was conceivable that a figure of 19 or 20 might be reached. It was most important, however, not to exceed this total, for, apart from very small States, which probably would not insist on being represented on the Preparatory Committee, the result would be that those States which were not members of the Committee would be the exception rather than the rule. Would it not be better to try to avoid this difficulty and to keep to the maximum figure which he had just indicated? Some kind of procedure might be devised allowing all States
having important interests to defend to appear before the Committee without being members, and to take part in the work, while restricting the plenary meetings of the Committee to a smaller number of members. If this procedure were adopted, it might have the result of making requests for membership less pressing.

M. VEVERKA said he was in entire agreement with the British representative. With regard to the name of the future Committee, he wished to make the same remark as the Belgian representative. The name selected should mention the Conference and make it quite clear that the preparation of this Conference was the Committee's aim.

With regard to the Committee's composition, the British representative suggested that it might include ten or eleven representatives of the Members of the Council and a number of representatives of other States, which, according to requirements, might be six or seven. This hypothesis, however, presupposed that the composition of the Council was constant, which was not the case. Perhaps it might be suggested in the resolution which was adopted that, each time the composition of the Council was changed, the latter should take into consideration the new circumstances and adapt the composition of the future Committee to that of the Council.

M. DE MARINIS associated himself with the Chairman's remarks with regard to the task entrusted to the Committee of the Council. On behalf of the Italian Government, he said that he would take part in this work inspired with a determination to reach practical and equitable results in circumstances such as to render them generally acceptable.

He shared the apprehensions of the British representative and of some of his other colleagues regarding the necessity of restricting the number of members of the future Committee. Personally, he was confirmed in this opinion by the experience he had acquired in sitting on several of the League's committees; he had noticed that, when they had been too large, their work had been delayed. Naturally, the countries represented on the Council should also be represented on the Committee. As regards the question of whether countries at present outside the League of Nations, such as the United States and Russia, should be asked to send representatives, it could be discussed later.

M. COBIAN, with regard to the name of the future Committee, thought it should indicate the latter's specific character, which was to prepare a Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments. Furthermore, this Committee would not be qualified to take resolutions; it would act as a purveyor of information and in an advisory capacity. Moreover, it would be purely temporary, but it was unnecessary to say so in its name if the latter indicated that its purpose was to prepare for a conference. In the Spanish representative's opinion, the Committee's name might be "Advisory Committee for the Preparation for the Conference on the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments."

As regards the composition of the future Committee, personally he would have no objection to its being enlarged. In view of the results which were aimed at, it would be an advantage to enlist the assistance of all the States Members of the League, but strong reasons had been adduced against this solution. In any case, it would be well to give some of the States which were not represented on the Council a share in the Committee's work. Accordingly, there was no reason why the number of the members of this Committee should not be increased to 18 or 19. It would be necessary, however, to discuss the reasons for admitting any given State; its presence would be desirable according to its utility in the work which had to be accomplished.

The Czechoslovak representative had made a very opportune suggestion. Nevertheless, it would be a good thing to avoid all ambiguity. What was meant by the expression "States Members of the Council"? Did this mean only its permanent members, or all the States at present composing it? He would express no personal opinion on this point and would confine himself to raising the question. When the moment came to modify the Council's composition, it was not certain whether the ten present members would continue to sit on the Preparatory Committee or not. It was worth considering, however, whether the unity and continuity of its work were compatible with a modification in the Committee's composition.

M. DE MELLO-FRANCO said he associated himself with the observations made by the Chairman, Viscount Cecil and his various colleagues. He was glad to see from the agenda that the Brazilian delegation's suggestion, to the effect that the problem to be considered was not only the reduction of armaments but their limitation, had been accepted. In this connection the Committee was bound by the provisions of Article 8 of the Covenant. There were obviously countries at present which were over-armed, and others whose armaments were not yet sufficient to guarantee them the national safety which was contemplated in the said Article. The Brazilian representative hoped that the Committee would never lose sight of the fact that the question at issue was not only the reduction of armaments but their limitation. States which had not yet sufficient armaments for their own safety could not be asked to make a fresh reduction.

With regard to the Committee's organisation, the Brazilian representative thought that the Council's decision made it incumbent upon the Committee of the Council to draw up the programme of the future conference. He personally had had occasion to point out that the Committee's task was analogous to that of the Committee for the Codification of International Law. The Committee of the Council had been instructed by the Council to draw up the programme of the Conference, but the acceptance of the programme would in the last resort lie with the Council itself.

The Brazilian representative was also of the opinion that the participation of some States which were not yet Members of the League, and chiefly that of the United States and Russia, should be assured. Their co-operation would be most important and would contribute both
to giving satisfaction to public opinion and to attaining the aims defined in the Covenant. Never-
theless, it was important to consider the procedure which would be followed, in order to obviate
the difficulties which had been encountered in respect of the Co-ordination Commission.
These difficulties were not the fault of the members but of the composition of that Commis-
sion. As the British representative had pointed out, it was difficult to determine what rules
should govern discussions between representatives responsible to their Governments and members
who could not take part in the voting. The French representative, who had been one of the mem-
bers of the Co-ordination Commission, would remember the difficulties which had had to be over-
come in this connection. If States not represented on the Council were introduced into the
future Committee, and if they were not given the right to vote, difficulties of the same kind would
be encountered.
Nevertheless, even if these States were not to have the right to vote, they must not be left
out of the discussion, as the preparatory work would be carried out with a view to a conference
in which all the States concerned would take part. The Belgian representative’s suggestion
might perhaps be based on the provisions of the fifth paragraph of Article 4 of the Covenant,
which read as follows:

“Any Member of the League not represented on the Council shall be invited to send
a representative to sit as a member at any meeting of the Council during the consideration
of matters specially affecting the interests of that Member of the League.”

The question was whether such representatives had the right to take part in the debates
and also to vote. If they had not the right to vote, the same difficulties would arise as in the
case of the old Co-ordination Commission.
The Czechoslovak representative had spoken of a possible change in the composition of the
Council. This was certainly a question to be considered, particularly since the 1925 Assembly,
when the majority of the delegates, in support of the Venezuelan delegate, had, at the meeting
at which the non-permanent Members of the Council were elected, emphasised the Assembly’s
wish to reconstitute the Council. The Committee would perhaps be of the opinion that, in the
interests of the unity of the work which it had to accomplish, and in the event of the work lasting
more than one year, those members who had sat during a whole year and who were familiar
with the work of their colleagues and the various opinions expressed should continue to form
part of the Preparatory Committee. Nevertheless, he very much hoped that the Committee’s
work would not last more than a year, and that its task would be accomplished before December
31st of next year, on which date the term of office of the present non-permanent Members of the
Council would expire. The possibility of this difficulty would therefore be avoided if the Com-
mittee was expeditious in performing its work.
M. HENNINGS said that he endorsed the remarks of the Chairman and Viscount Cecil on
behalf of his Government. He wished, however, to make a small remark.
With regard to the composition of the future Commission, the British representative had
suggested that it should include five or six members apart from the Council’s representatives.
Would it not be preferable to postpone entirely the discussion of the number of members of the
Preparatory Committee until the question as to which would be the States represented on the
Committee was discussed? He wished to point out that his Government entirely realised the
importance of the question of the Committee’s composition. It was very anxious that it should
be composed in such a way as to represent all the different opinions which might be put forward
with regard to the difficult problems at stake.
M. GUANI said he had listened with the greatest interest to the observations made with
regard to the importance of the task to be accomplished. As the representative of a South-
American State, he wished to point out that for his country the problem of disarmament and the
way in which it should be carried out was not so urgent as for other countries. Nevertheless,
in view of the willing co-operation which his country had always given to the work of the League,
the Uruguayan representative declared, on behalf of his Government, that he would associate
himself warmly with the resolutions which his colleagues might adopt under the principle of
Article 8 of the Covenant.
The CHAIRMAN asked his colleagues to consider carefully the records of the present meeting,
which would be distributed to them in order that the various questions considered might be fully
discussed at the following meeting.
The British representative had made very interesting suggestions and had submitted a
complete plan with regard to the Preparatory Committee’s work. If he had understood his
colleague aright, he completely gave up the idea of anything in the nature of last year’s Co-ordina-
tion Commission, i.e., of one commission consisting of delegates of States and of technical experts
or representatives of the various technical organisations of the League.
Viscount Cecil thought that the Preparatory Committee itself should be composed exclusively
of the representatives of Governments. It would be impossible to have experts of technical
organisations sitting along with members of the Preparatory Committee, because they would
not be on a footing of equality. On the other hand, he considered it of great importance that
the sub-committees should have the assistance of technical experts.
The CHAIRMAN asked the British representative to define his conception of the part to be
played by these sub-committees and of their relations with the technical organisations of the
League.
Viscount Cecil considered that it would not be possible to lay down precisely the manner
in which the Preparatory Committee would desire to be assisted by the expert advisers. Several
alternatives could be considered. On a purely technical military question, the opinion of the
Permanent Advisory Commission as a whole, or of certain of its members, might be desirable.
But, on a question which involved military and political points of view, it might be desirable to
have the opinion of a representative of this body or some of its members and the Labour Office,
for example. Further, they might wish to have the special opinion of a particular individual.
For those reasons, he would not like to tie the hands of the Preparatory Committee, which should
have full liberty to obtain advice and assistance from any quarter if desired in view of the extra-
ordinary difficulty and complexity of its task. As regards the sub-committees, they could use
either the existing technical organisations of the League, or experts from outside, or, in certain
cases, both the technical organisations and outside experts.

If the sub-committees considered that a certain expert had a special opinion of great import-
ance regarding a particular question, they ought to be allowed to ask him to be present at their
meetings.

The CHAIRMAN observed that the British representative did not consider that sub-committees
alone should have the right to hear experts; the Preparatory Committee would also have this
right.

M. DE BROUCKÈRE entirely concurred in the British representative’s observations, and was
of the opinion that the Committee of the Council might adopt a resolution to this effect. According
to him, however, it would perhaps be better to make this association between the Preparatory
Committee and the technical organisations more complete. When the Committee came to dis-
cuss the programme of future work, it would have to see if certain questions could not be referred
to these bodies, who would report not to the Council but to the Preparatory Committee. In this
way, the sub-committees would therefore shape the work of the Preparatory Committee.

Viscount CECIL reminded M. de Brouckère that the Committee of the Council had only to create
the Preparatory Committee, which would have to investigate various questions. However, he
considered it would be rash at the present time to dictate to the Preparatory Committee exactly
how its work should be done, even to the extent of referring a question to a sub-committee. It
must be left a free hand from the very first day of its creation.

The CHAIRMAN considered that the question to be decided was very important in itself. Up
to now the Committee of the Council—which ought rather to be called the Council in Committee
—had directed the work of a Co-ordination Commission composed both of representatives of the Members of the Council and representatives of the various technical organisations of the League.
The Committee of the Council transmitted proposals to the Council itself. The British representa-
tive’s suggestion was entirely different: there would no longer be any Co-ordination Commiss-
ion; the Committee of the Council, with the addition of representatives of certain States, would
become the Preparatory Committee of the Conference. He recommended his colleagues to reflect
most carefully on this important question, so as to be able eventually to take a decision with full
knowledge of the facts. If the proposed solution were adopted, the Co-ordination Commission
would give place to a political committee, composed of representatives of the Council and certain
other members, thus constituting the Preparatory Committee of the Conference. Like any parlia-
mentary committee, it would adopt such procedure as it considered desirable, in order to examine
particular questions or hear particular persons.

The question of the title of the future committee need not, he thought, give rise to serious
difficulties. In the Third Committee of the last Assembly, it had been proposed to call it a “Com-
mittee of Enquiry for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments”. The British representative
had proposed to add the word “preparatory”. The Czechoslovak representative desired to call it
the “Preparatory Committee of the Conference”.

Viscount CECIL thought that the term “Preparatory Committee” would be preferable to “Consultative Committee”, the latter being too vague to indicate the functions of the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN observed that there was another question of the greatest importance which the Committee of the Council would consider in secret session, namely, that of the participation of States. He understood that his colleagues were unanimous in desiring to add to the Members of the Council a certain number of other States. The Committee was, moreover, bound in this matter by the recommendation which had been expressed by the Third Committee of the Assembly. Did his colleagues wish in the first place to discuss the question of what States would be represented on the Committee, or would they prefer first of all to settle the procedure to be adopted?

Viscount CECIL thought that, before submitting actual names, it would be well to draw up a programme of work which would give them an indication of the people who should be asked to assist the Committee in its work.

The CHAIRMAN explained that, to a certain extent, the procedure itself could vary according to
the States whose assistance the Committee decided to invite, provided that certain of these States accepted the invitation. The acceptance of such an invitation by some particular State which was not a Member of the League might perhaps lead the Committee to take another view of its work.

Viscount CECIL shared this opinion. The functions of the Committee, however, were those of a Preparatory Committee, and the final decision would lie with a conference of all the States concerned. He suggested that, in drawing up the plan of the conference, it should be considered whether there was any reason for modifying the number of States which should be asked to attend.
The CHAIRMAN said that, according to the British representative, the Committee had first
to determine what instrument it should employ for its work. It would then decide as to the
question of States. At the same time, the aspect of the Preparatory Committee would depend
very much on the greater or less number of States which were asked to appoint representatives.
If the Committee, for example, were to have more than 15 to 17 members, could its work be
regarded in the same light?

M. COBIAN pointed out that, in the case of States which were not Members of the League,
they could only be invited to sit on the Committee. In other words, the Committee of the Council
could not draw up a list of members of the Preparatory Committee and include in it States which
were not Members of the League.

Viscount CECIL did not agree with M. Cobian that it would be undesirable to fix the number
of the members of the Preparatory Committee.

As regards the remarks of M. de Brouckère, he understood them to mean that there should
be a kind of double organisation, namely, a large organisation and a small organisation within
it. What precisely would be the functions of those two organisations?

M. DE BROUCKÈRE said that he did not propose to establish a double organisation. He was
very anxious that the number of members should be limited to 16, 17 or 18. That would, however,
be obviously very difficult, as the Committee of the Council would no doubt receive many requests
of a very legitimate character, which it would be hard or unjust to refuse. In order to avoid that
difficulty, they might, as the Brazilian representative had suggested, base their system on the
Covenant itself; any nation which had no seat on the Preparatory Committee might be represented
when a question affecting itself was under discussion. By adopting such a system, the Committee
would feel less scruple in refusing requests.

The CHAIRMAN said that these suggestions would be discussed at the next meeting. On the
other hand, in view of the British representative's remarks, it appeared desirable, in the first
instance, to fix the approximate number of the members of the Preparatory Committee before
considering what States should be represented.

SECOND MEETING

 Held on Friday, December 4th, 1925, at 11 a.m.

Chairman: M. PAUL-BONCOUR.

2. Title and Composition of the Co-ordination Commission (continuation of the general
discussion).

After a discussion, in which the CHAIRMAN, M. DE BROUCKÈRE and Viscount CECIL took
part, the Committee adopted the following title and sub-title proposed by Viscount Cecil:

"Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference (being a Commission to prepare
for a Conference on the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments, in accordance with Article 8 of
the Covenant)."

The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to adopt one of the following alternatives: Should it
retain in a modified form the existing Co-ordination Commission? Or should it return to Vis-
count Cecil's proposal that the Preparatory Commission of the Disarmament Conference should
consist exclusively of delegates of States, that is to say, that it should be constituted as a Council
Committee and should add to its number any States, whether Members of the League or not,
which it thought should be represented? This political commission would be in charge of the
preparatory work. If the Committee agreed to establish such a commission, there remained the
question as to how far it should make use of the League's technical committees and the advice
of experts from outside the League.

M. DE BROUCKÈRE thought that, according to the terms of reference given by the Council, the
Co-ordination Commission should be retained in a modified form with different categories of mem-
bers. At the previous meeting the Committee had appeared to think that the votes of members
who did not represent States could not be added to the votes of those who did.

In any case, the Commission should utilise the services of the technical organisations, and
allow them to co-operate with it. It would be easier to see how, and to what extent, this co-opera-
tion could be carried out when the programme of work had been drawn up in detail; it was possible,
however, under their terms of reference, to prepare at once an outline of the programme and the
procedure to be followed. It was clearly the Council's intention only to receive suggestions from
an organ which was similar in composition to itself, and was, like itself, political in character.
This co-operation and this political responsibility could only be undertaken by an enlarged com-
mittee of the Council. It should, however, be given organic powers, and would, therefore, have
to be allowed to consult technical organisations and experts. Accordingly, he proposed that they
should adopt the following principle: in military matters the Committee would consult the
Permanent Advisory Commission, and in economic matters it should apply either to the Financial Committee, the Economic Committee, the Transit Committee or the International Labour Office. In practice, however, it would always be found that questions would concern more than one of these organisations and that a collective opinion was necessary. These organisations would therefore have to be linked up by means of an organisation similar to the old Co-ordination Commission, both the powers and responsibilities of such a body would remain clearly defined. The Committee of the Council would consult this organisation, would consider its opinion from a political point of view and would give an opinion to the Council on its own responsibility. This procedure would enable them to avoid all friction or disputes as to competence and would enable the various organs of the League to work together successfully.

Viscount Cecil also thought that it would be a great mistake not to make full use of the technical organisations of the League, but he very earnestly desired to remind his colleagues that, though they should certainly make suggestions and even sketch a skeleton procedure, they must leave the utmost freedom to the body that was going to make this great enquiry. The task was one of enormous difficulty and he would not like to say, for example, that the Preparatory Commission should be limited in economic questions to the advice of the technical organisations of the League. He would not like to deprive it of all assistance outside the technical organisations. Most of the members of the Committee would remember that, when the question of disarmament was considered, there had been great difficulty in arriving at a standard of comparison of land armaments. One suggestion for making the comparison had been that there should be a budgetary as well as a numerical comparison, but it had been pointed out that it would be extremely difficult to have a budgetary limit because of the difficulty and danger of camouflaged expenditure. On that point no one but a very great expert on the budgets of the countries concerned would be able to give an opinion really worth having. He did not think, in point of fact, that there were in the technical organisations of the League any experts of that particular kind, comparable to that of experts who had made a study of this particular question. In such a case as this, he thought the Preparatory Commission ought to be entitled to ask for special information on the subject. They might know of experts who had made a special study of the question and wish to ask these experts for special information. In that case he quite agreed that the matter should also be referred to the Financial and Economic Organisations of the League for their observations, before the Preparatory Commission arrived at any conclusions. He would urge his colleagues to leave the Preparatory Commission full discretion, for the difficulties of the enquiry were so great that any attempt to tie the Commission's hands in advance would be very unfortunate.

He wished to correct one of the remarks he had made at the previous meeting. He had suggested that it might sometimes be necessary to have a mixed committee of soldiers and economists. On thinking over this suggestion, he doubted very much whether it was a practicable one. He would not like to say that it was impossible, but from experience he was under the impression that such a committee would not work very well. He therefore hoped that the Preparatory Commission would only adopt this suggestion if they found themselves driven to it as a last resource.

Lastly, he thought it was a matter for consideration whether it should not be laid down that, if the technical organisations thought any point had been overlooked by the Preparatory Commission, they might on their own initiative make suggestions to that Commission without being asked.

M. de Brouckère said he recognised that the Preparatory Commission must retain the right to consult other experts in addition to its own legal advisers; but, in doing so, it assumed a certain responsibility. He supported the proposal to give the technical committees of the League a right of initiative.

He said he would submit his proposal in writing at the opening of the next meeting.

The Chairman pointed out that they were in agreement on this question, subject to the drafting of the proposal to be submitted by M. de Brouckère.

They had now to decide as to the composition of the Preparatory Commission. Would it consist solely of representatives of States represented on the Council or would it be necessary to admit representatives of certain other States as well? If they adopted the latter alternative, to which categories of States, having regard to given geographical and historical conditions, should the invitations be sent?

M. Cobian considered that it was important in the first place to prevent any confusion between the Committee of the Council and the Commission which they were to set up, which was a new and separate body. In this new Commission they would have to grant representation to States not represented on the Council on terms of equality with represented States.

M. Hennings considered that the selection of new members would raise very serious difficulties. There were two alternatives. Either the Commission would consist solely of members of the Committee on the Council and representatives of certain important States not members of the League of Nations—Russia, the United States of America and Germany—or the number of the States represented on the Commission would be increased. In the latter case, account would have to be taken of the disadvantages of too large a number of delegates. At the same time, it was obviously desirable that the greatest number of opinions should be expressed in order that they might be compared. This alternative accordingly deserved consideration.

M. de Marinis was of the opinion that it would be useful to bring together as many States as possible. The ideal arrangement would be to secure the views of all States Members of the League of Nations, and even of certain States non-members whose military strength gave them special importance. There would, however, obviously be serious practical difficulties in the way of this
procedure, and it had been agreed that the Preparatory Commission should not consist of more than 16 or 18 members. In addition to the States Members of the Council, at least three places would have to be provided for countries which did not belong to the League of Nations—Russia, the United States of America and Germany. There were accordingly only three or four places left. To allot these places was a singularly delicate task, and he did not feel sure that the advantages of hearing a larger number of opinions would not be outweighed by the dissatisfaction of the States which were excluded from this collaboration.

Moreover, it might happen that, on certain points, five or six members not represented on the Council might form a majority in the Preparatory Commission, whereas the minority would consist of members who, however, represented the majority on the Council.

All these difficulties might be removed if only countries represented on the Council were admitted, together with certain countries which, while not members of the Council, possessed special military importance.

The question would then arise as to safeguarding the interests of countries which were in a special position. For this purpose they might authorise all countries which were not represented on the Commission to send in to it memoranda explaining their situation. The Preparatory Commission would examine these various memoranda, would co-ordinate them, and then hear their authors. This obviously meant a great deal of work, but he considered it indispensable.

M. VEVERKA withdrew the suggestion he had made at the meeting the previous day, and gave his full support to M. Cobian’s view that the Preparatory Commission was an entirely new body. It was desirable to bring out this point clearly to prevent any discrimination being made between permanent Members of the Council, non-permanent Members, and representatives of States not members of the League of Nations.

M. DE MELLO-FRANCO considered that a fundamental question was involved. A number of States not members of the Council had to be invited, and consequently they had to define first of all the special conditions according to which the Committee would have to make its choice. This point immediately raised the question which would be found in the questionnaire submitted by Viscount Cecil (see Minutes of Fourth Meeting, No. 6): “Admitting that disarmament depends on security, to what extent is regional disarmament possible in return for regional security; or is any scheme of disarmament impossible unless it is general?” Accordingly, this preliminary question of the formation of the Preparatory Commission at once raised a vital problem.

Viscount Cecil said he would like to make a proposal of compromise between the two views which had been expressed. He was very much attracted by M. de Marinis’ view that any State ought to be entitled to sit in the Preparatory Commission if its interests were affected, which was in accordance with the principle of the Covenant. At the same time, he felt difficulty in reporting to the Council that it was considered that the Preparatory Commission should consist of the present members with the addition of representatives of three external States. In pursing the Minutes of the Third Committee of the last Assembly, he had found repeated suggestions made by a number of members that the new investigating body ought to include more Members of the League than merely those who were represented on the Council. Therefore, he would be reluctant not to increase the number of members of the Preparatory Commission to a certain extent. By combining the two proposals, there would be five or six places to allot. In recommending an increase in the number of members of the Preparatory Commission, it should be stated that all Members of the League would have a right of access to the Commission in order to explain any views that might have been submitted in writing, or to develop them orally. It would be obligatory upon the Preparatory Commission to admit such Members.

The CHAIRMAN thought that the Committee was already in agreement on the following points: In the first place, any State Member of the League which desired to be heard could not only submit a memorandum but could also send a representative to the Preparatory Commission. Even if it did not submit such a request, it would be for the Commission to invite it if it considered it desirable to hear that State’s views. By this means the legitimate requirements of the various States Members would to a large extent be satisfied and justifiable competition would probably be reduced.

He thought, however, that the fact that certain States were permanently represented would afford them a guarantee which they were entitled to claim in view of their special situation; for the very reason that it was desirable to have certain of the larger States not members of the League represented rendered it impossible to exclude the representatives of States which, on account of their special situation, were entitled to state their views.

When Germany and Russia were represented on the Preparatory Commission, the contiguous States would be entitled to be permanently represented by certain of these States.

He therefore thanked Viscount Cecil for having called attention to the principles laid down by the Third Committee of the Assembly. There were two ideas clearly expressed in strictly defined limits within which a number of States could be chosen in accordance with the Third Committee’s recommendation.

M. DE BROUCKÈRE pointed out that there still remained the question of defining the right of States which submitted a memorandum on any particular question which affected their own interests. In his view, the safest rule would be to give the Preparatory Commission the power to summon these States and to accord them not only the right to submit a memorandum but also to send a representative to the meeting at which the memorandum was discussed. Their right
to state their views would cease when the discussion of the memorandum was terminated. At
the same time, the Preparatory Commission could recall the representative of the State in question
if it thought fit.

The CHAIRMAN summed up as follows the various views which had been submitted at the
meeting:

1. The Commission will consist of:
   (a) Representatives of States Members of the Council;
   (b) Representatives of countries which, by reason of their geographical situation,
       occupy a special position as regards the problem of disarmament and which
       are not otherwise represented on the Commission:

2. Any State not represented on the Commission shall be entitled:
   (a) To submit memoranda on matters in which it is specially interested;
   (b) To be heard in support of these memoranda.

3. Moreover, the Commission will always have the right, in the case of special questions,
to call in the assistance of any State which in the opinion of the Commission may be particularly
interested in these questions.

Viscount CECIL expressed his agreement; nevertheless, he thought there might be considera-
tions other than geographical which might lead the Preparatory Commission to decide that
a Member State should be summoned to attend. That was a matter which would have to be
carefully considered, and he thought it would be difficult to come to a final decision at the present
stage of the proceedings.

The CHAIRMAN said that on that point he had only reproduced the text adopted by the
Third Committee.

M. VEVERKA agreed, but with a reservation to which he attached special importance. He
referred to the case of a State Member of the League becoming a Member of the Council. Such
a State should become a member of the Preparatory Commission. If it were not possible to
embody this in the text proposed by the Chairman, he asked that the following should be added
to the points previously enumerated by the Chairman:

"In order to ensure the continuity of the work of the Commission, the Council shall alter
the composition of the Commission whenever that of the Council itself is altered."

This amendment was adopted.

THIRD MEETING

Held on Friday, December 4th, 1925, at 4.30 p.m.

Chairman: M. PAUL-BONCOUFR.


The Committee examined the following text, which summed up the agreements reached
at the preceding meeting, on the proposal of M. de Brouckère.

"Working of the Commission.

"The Political Commission will control and co-ordinate all the work to be carried out,
it will decide any question submitted to it and will be responsible for laying proposals before
the Council of the League of Nations. It will secure the co-operation of the competent
organisations of the League of Nations and seek their advice; the latter in their turn may
submit to it on their own initiative any suggestion which they feel called upon to make
with regard to the work in progress.

"This co-operation will be organised as follows:

"(a) With the Permanent Advisory Commission in the case of anything relating
to the military, naval or air aspect of the questions under consideration;
"(b) In respect of the economic aspect of these questions, with a Technical Com-
mission, constituted as follows:

"Two members each of the Economic, Financial and Transit Organisations, to be
appointed by the Council after consultation with the Chairman of the respec-
tive committees;
"Two members of the Employers' Group, and two members of the Workers' Group,
of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, appointed by
the Governing Body.
"The Commission may also appoint as temporary or permanent members of the Technical Commission other experts chosen by it for their special technical qualifications.

"The Commission may, in addition, appoint special committees composed, according to the nature and scope of the question under consideration, of experts chosen from among the technical organisations of the League of Nations enumerated above, or by any other method calculated to ensure the collaboration of qualified persons.

"The Commission may at any time summon and hear any person whose special qualifications are calculated, in its opinion, to facilitate its work on a given subject.

"In all cases in which the Commission adopts one or other of the methods of procedure referred to in the two preceding paragraphs, it will submit the opinions which it receives to whichever of the two Commissions (the Permanent Advisory Commission or the Technical Commission) deals more particularly with the question at issue."

The Committee adopted the first paragraph, with a certain number of drafting amendments.

The Committee adopted the second paragraph in the following form:

"The Joint Commission may call in other experts under the same conditions as provided in the case of the Permanent Advisory Commission."

The third paragraph was reserved, Viscount Cecil desiring to examine the desirability of submitting a new text for this paragraph at a later meeting.

Paragraph 4 was adopted.

The Committee was also of opinion that, according to the ordinary method of procedure, the Preparatory Commission could set up sub-commissions which, like the plenary Commission, could at any time summon and hear any person whose special qualifications were calculated to facilitate their work on a special subject.

Paragraph 5 was reserved.


The Committee decided to propose to the Council that the Chair of the Preparatory Commission should be taken by the representative of the Government to which at the moment of its meeting the Presidency of the Council was entrusted.

5. Publicity of the Meetings of the Preparatory Commission and of the Joint Commission.

The Committee decided to propose that the Council should leave it to the Preparatory Commission to decide at its first meeting the question of the publicity of its meetings.

Viscount Cecil expressed the view that, if the Preparatory Commission was to do useful work, it ought to hold its discussions in private. This would be the point of view which the representative of the British Government would put forward at the first meeting of the Preparatory Commission.

M. DE MARINIS agreed with Viscount Cecil. The Preparatory Commission, in the same way as all advisory commissions, ought to hold its discussions in private.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that in any case the meetings of the Joint Commission would of necessity have to be private, as in the case of the Permanent Advisory Commission.

The Committee agreed with the opinion of the Chairman.

FOURTH MEETING

Held on Saturday, December 5th, 1925, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: M. PAUL-BONCOUR.

6. Discussion of the Programme of the Preparatory Work for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments.

The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee should lay down the general lines of the programme of the investigation to be carried out by the technical organisations, taking as a basis on which to work the following questionnaire submitted by Viscount Cecil and the memorandum which the Chairman had himself submitted.

The text of these two documents is as follows:

"1. Questionnaire prepared by Viscount Cecil.

"(a) Is it practicable to limit the ultimate war strength of a country, or must any measures of disarmament be confined to the peace strength
"(b) By what standards is it possible to measure the armaments of one country against the armaments of another, e.g. numbers, period of service, equipment, expenditure, etc.?

"(c) On what principles would it be possible to draw up a scale of armaments permissible to the various countries, e.g. population, resources, geographical position, etc.?

"(d) Admitting that disarmament depends on security, to what extent is regional disarmament possible in return for regional security; or is any scheme of disarmament impossible unless it is general? If regional disarmament is practicable, would it promote or lead up to general disarmament?

"(e) Is there any, and if so what, device by which civil and military aircraft can be distinguished for purposes of disarmament? If this is not practicable, how can the value of civil aircraft be computed in estimating the air strength of any country?

"(f) It is possible or desirable to apply the conclusions arrived at in (e) above to parts of aircraft and aircraft engines?"

"2. Memorandum presented by M. Paul-Boncour.

"I. What is to be understood by the expression ‘armaments’?

"(a) Enquiry into the various factors, military, economic, geographical, etc., upon which the power of a country in time of war depends.

"(b) Enquiry into the various elements which constitute the armaments of a country in time of peace: the different forms of armaments, the methods of recruiting, training, etc., and their characteristics.

"II. What is to be understood by the expression ‘reduction of armaments’?

"The various forms which reduction may take in the case of land, sea and air forces: a critical examination of each form of reduction; the diminution of the larger peace-time units; the diminution of the forces composing them or of those available for military use; the diminution of the length of service; the diminution of the quantity of war material in use or in stock; the diminution of the expenditure on national defence, etc.

"III. For what defensive needs can the various armaments be used?

"Length of maritime communications, vulnerable frontiers and great ‘vital’ centres near the frontiers, etc.

"Can there be said to be ‘offensive’ and ‘defensive’ armaments?

"IV. Methods of estimating the effective strength in case of war of a country’s peace armaments of all kinds, taking into account the necessary delays in transforming such peace armaments into war armaments.

"The special case of States where there is a professional army.

"The special case of agricultural States, which do not manufacture war material.

"V. Consideration of the prospects—thanks to the previous establishment of plans of action and of economic and financial assistance, in pursuance of Article 16 of the Covenant—of re-establishing a relative equilibrium between the different countries, as regards their means of industrial and economic mobilisation and the rapidity of such mobilisation.

"VI. Examination of the principle according to which no Power should have the right to maintain armaments susceptible, in the event of its committing an act of aggression, of placing at its disposal forces superior to those which the State which was the victim of the aggression together with the League of Nations could unite in opposition to it, either by virtue of Article 16 of the Covenant or through the application of the regional agreements provided for in Article 21 of the Covenant."

Viscount Cecil entirely agreed with the French representative as to the limits of the functions of the Committee of the Council. The British Government, however, was exceedingly anxious that the Committee should achieve something practical with regard to disarmament. It had accordingly submitted a questionnaire which could be taken as a basis for any recommendations which might be used for the programme of the Preparatory Commission. The questions put by the British Government were on much the same lines as the proposals of the French Government.

The first question was what was to be the scope of disarmament, i.e. whether any attempt should be made to limit the ultimate armed strength of a country—which he considered to be an impossible task—or to limit and control the mobilisable strength of the country. By that he meant the forces which a country might be capable of putting into the field a few days after the outbreak of war in addition to its peace strength. This would be the first matter with which the Preparatory Commission would have to deal, and question (a) of the British questionnaire was in reality equivalent to the first two questions of the French scheme, due allowance being made for the difference between French and British mentality. He hoped that the Committee of the Council would find it possible to combine these two points of view in its final draft.

Question (b) of the British Government’s questionnaire raised a very serious point. By what standard was it possible to measure the armament of one country against that of another? The standard would chiefly concern the air and land forces of a country, because the naval forces were easily comparable and easily controlled, the only unit of armament being ships; if, therefore, the number of ships were controlled, the exact naval armament of a country was controlled and a reduction made, in the aggressive force of fleets. The Washington Conference, for instance, had achieved this by limiting the number of capital ships and had its provisions been extended to cover submarines, the limitation would have been complete.
The army of a country was a far more complicated matter, and the Preparatory Commission would have to decide whether a mere limitation of the number of men composing the armed forces of a country would be sufficient. It was, for instance, obvious that a vast horde of undisciplined troops had nothing like the same military value as a small but highly trained and highly equipped army possessing the latest pattern guns and tanks. The Commission would therefore have to investigate how much the strength of an army depended upon its equipment, and it would have to find a unit which would comprise both the numbers of an army and the material at its disposal. This was a fundamental and most difficult question. It would be necessary to define that unit so as to be able to compare the arms of one country with another, and such factors as the period of service, the material possessed, and the expenditure incurred by a country would have to be considered.

The third question was the most difficult and fundamental of all. Assuming that the unit of comparison had been defined, on what principle was the scale of armaments permissible to be allotted, that was to say, how would it be decided that country A should be of such and such a military strength and country B of a different military strength? Obviously, the Preparatory Commission would not be asked to make this allotment, but they would have to investigate the principles on which it should be made. There were various vital factors which would have to be taken into consideration—the geographical position of a country, its industrial and economic resources and its historic position, and a number of other circumstances.

The Preparatory Commission might, of course, find some means of obtaining a rough-and-ready solution of this problem without investigating those factors which were very complex. This, however, was the most difficult and essential portion of its task. He noted that the substance of Question (c) was to be found in the French proposals; in fact, points 5 and 6 of the French proposals appeared to him to be a slightly different way of stating the problem contained in Question (c) of the British proposal, and the fourth point of the French proposal was equivalent to Question (b) of the British questionnaire.

Question (d) raised another aspect which, so far as Viscount Cecil was aware, was not dealt with in the French proposal. It submitted that disarmament was the result of security, how far was it true that a measure of disarmament could be hoped for in return for regional security? Could regional disarmament with regional security be secured, or must the disarmament and the security be of a general nature? This was a point of practical importance which he thought the Preparatory Commission should investigate.

Questions (e) and (f) dealt with the special problem of the air. It was obvious that civilian aircraft could not be disregarded. It was admittedly true that civilian aircraft could be converted into military aircraft in about 24 hours, at any rate for bombing purposes. Any limitation, therefore, of air armaments would be incomplete if only military aircraft were limited and no account were taken of the civilian aircraft which a country might convert to war purposes. This was a very difficult question, but he hoped, and thought, that a solution would be found. In addition to aircraft as a whole, it would be necessary to investigate spare parts of aircraft and their engines, for aircraft were machines which could be put together with great rapidity. It might possibly arise that Viscount Cecil would find it necessary to make additions to the questionnaire which he had circulated to the Committee as a result of the discussion. One question would at any rate have to be added. The Preparatory Commission would have to enquire into the nature of the international supervision to be established if possible, in order to make sure that countries kept within the limits of the scale of armaments which had been fixed for them. It might prove impossible to establish such international supervision, and countries might have, as at present, to rely on their military attaches, but this was a matter which the Preparatory Commission should investigate.

Generally speaking, it would be seen that the questionnaire of the British Government raised points of a severely practical nature. Despite the numerous and grave difficulties, it believed that the various questions would be solved which would mean the disappearance of the problem of disarmament.

The British Government felt, too, that the questionnaire which it had put forward and the French proposals contained much that was in common, and Viscount Cecil hoped that it would prove possible to combine the most valuable points contained in both.

The CHAIRMAN, in his capacity of French delegate, desired to comment rapidly on the general lines of his memorandum. The first matter which he would like to bring to the notice of the Committee was the same as that to which Viscount Cecil had just referred, the fact that the memorandum which the French delegate had submitted to the Committee possessed certain points in common with the English memorandum. This fact would facilitate the task of the Committee. If the Committee and the Council agreed to the procedure which he proposed, it would be for the technical organisations to draw distinctions between the various suggestions contained in both documents, to collect together those points which were similar and, in cases where the different proposals disagreed, to draw up an alternative to be submitted to the choice of the Preparatory Commission. Though, however, there were a certain number of questions which the Preparatory Commission would at any rate have to direct their efforts. Recent events which had had the effect of increasing, in public opinion throughout the world, the sense of security only made this particular question more acute.

What was the essential difference between the two documents? The Chairman, without disregarding certain points of detail and certain differences of expression, maintained that the
essential difference lay in the fact that the British memorandum contained the view that a reduction of armaments, to be at once simple and practical, could only concern visible peace-time armaments. In addition, Viscount Cecil had added that, at the same time, all the strength of a State which was immediately mobilisable should be considered. The French memorandum in no way went counter to this view, but he would like to warn the Committee of the difficulty and injustice which might be encountered were the problem to be thus limited even with the addition made. He considered that the potential strength of a State in war-time should be taken into account: that is to say, the strength upon which a State could rely on the day on which it committed the aggression was now considered to be. To calculate this potential war strength, certain demographic, economic and social elements must be considered.

The Chairman wished at once to explain that, in emphasising this grave element of the problem, the French Government had no intention of demanding the setting on foot of a series of enquiries into the various countries, which would so increase the task and take up so much time that the final result would be an indefinite adjournment of the solution of the problem. The French Government viewed the problem in the following manner: The work to be undertaken could not be kept separate from Resolution No. XIV of the third Assembly, which was itself based on Article 8 of the Covenant, and of the Preamble to Part V of the Treaty of Versailles. Resolution No. XIV was, indeed, the foundation of the work. The various Assemblies had all repeated it in almost the same terms, and its final form was to be found in the Spanish resolution submitted to the last Assembly.

The Spanish resolution, however, as well as Resolution XIV, Article 8 of the Covenant and the Protocol of Geneva, made the possibility of disarmament depend on security. The motive for the desire to take account of the potential war strength of a State was precisely because it was necessary to ensure that armament should be kept down to the point and in such limited extent as was possible between the various States, and, by the very fact that this effort was made, an endeavour would be made to create a psychological sense of security without which everything else would be in vain.

It was therefore obvious that enquiries would be almost impossible and that the constant changes which would occur would mean the ceaseless revision of the precarious results which might be obtained by this means. Nevertheless, the French Government thought it its duty to take the greatest account possible of the question of the economic potential strength of a State for the two following practical reasons:

In the first place, it thought that the problem of disarmament ought not to be considered apart from the provisions of Article 16 of the Covenant, which laid down that States victims of aggression should be given economic assistance. This provision was of considerable importance, for a weak State would always fear that a neighbouring more powerful State might be able, despite the reduction of its armaments, to collect the necessary men and equipment in a short space of time. If, however, that weak State knew that, the day on which it was attacked, the economic assistance of other States would re-establish the economic balance which had just been upset, it would possess sufficient security to make it possible to contemplate the reduction of armaments.

In the second place, the French Government had considered the question of control. In the same way as enquiries were impossible, it would be difficult to estimate in figures the ease with which armed forces could be converted for purposes of war, and just in the same way each State would be compelled, without the right to accept the obligation of submitting to such control as was indispensable. If the limitation of armaments were not to have as a counterpart a general system of control, it would be equivalent to placing a premium on bad faith. If, however, only the visible disarmament in peace time were taken into account, this control could only be exercised over the actual troops in barracks and on the equipment in store. On the other hand, were account to be taken of the potential war strength, it would have to be admitted that the manufacture of equipment would have at the same time to be controlled, and that control should be particularly active and vigilant during the period when the procedure of conciliation and arbitration was being applied, which had just been defined by the recent agreements which contained valuable promises of security. Conciliation and arbitration were so essential and so much part of the spirit of the League of Nations that they were imbuing all international politics and were in themselves sufficient to justify the work of the League of Nations.

Nevertheless, they contained one grave danger in that they might put a premium on bad faith in allowing a State, during the period when the most anxious endeavours were being made to find a peaceful settlement, to use that period to transform its factories, machinery, etc., into machinery for war purposes. Control was clearly implied by that conception of the potential strength of a country.

The French Government thought, therefore, that the problem of disarmament could not be separated from the consideration of the potential war strength of the various nations.

M. DE MARINIS stated that he had found in both documents most opportune suggestions which he thought would be of a nature to direct the work of the Preparatory Commission. In his view, it would be useful to collect the points common to both memoranda, in order to extract from them material for making one single document on which the technical organisations of the League would be asked to give their opinion.

Nevertheless, the remarks to which he had just listened showed him that there were marked differences. According to Viscount Cecil, the investigations of the Commission ought to bear on the situation of armaments in peace time and on the immediate mobilisable power of a State. According to the French delegate, they ought to bear on the potential strength of each State. M. de Marinis entirely shared that opinion. It was obvious that, were the enquiry to be confined exclusively to peace armaments, it would be far easier to conduct, but undoubtedly it would have very unjust consequences.
The importance of the economic resources of a country, its richness in raw materials, the state of its industries, the state of its ways of communication and the possibilities which they offered for the movement and feeding of troops, etc., were all extremely important factors in calculating the total of its forces. Further, it would be necessary to take into consideration the situation of a country with regard to all its resources during the whole period of crisis constituted by a war, bearing in mind all needs which might arise and the possibility of satisfying them. This was a point of fundamental importance which it would be impossible to neglect. He wished to state that on this point the Italian Government had a very definite opinion which he felt was based on undeniable principles of equity. He added that even measures which might be taken in application of Article 16 of the Covenant would not be sufficient to pass over in silence the great importance of the economic, social, demographic, etc., position of the countries concerned.

With this reservation, M. de Marinis expressed his agreement with both documents.

M. Cobian thought that the Committee should congratulate the British and French representatives on the promising initial steps which they had taken. The problem of disarmament was a problem of relativity. It was necessary to determine the respective scales of armaments in each country. In order to solve the problem, M. Cobian desired to point out that it would be insufficient to summon a conference and to conclude a treaty. The problem of disarmament needed some form of permanent supervision. He had prepared a document on the question which he would like to submit to the Committee at the next meeting.

M. Matsuda thought that, before beginning the discussion of the two documents before the Committee, it should be clearly understood that the only object of the present discussion was to determine the lines which the Preparatory Commission should follow in its work. He had studied both documents with much interest. The memorandum presented by the Chairman was of particular interest to him and he had found in that proposed by Viscount Cecil certain explanations of great value. Each line of these documents, however, contained elements of a most complex kind, and M. Matsuda would welcome the adoption by the Committee of the suggestion of M. de Marinis to proceed to a comparative study, from both the French and British points of view, in order to include these points in a single document.

M. de Brouckère reminded the Committee that Viscount Cecil had explained the expression “peace armaments” by saying that this phrase did not mean forces on a peace footing, but forces capable of immediate mobilisation. Should account, however, only be taken of armed forces, or should not the total forces which could be mobilised during war be taken into account? Personally, he doubted whether it was possible to make so clear a distinction between such a definition of peace forces and the total forces of a nation mobilised in time of war. During the period of the Revolution and the Empire, mobilisation had begun from the moment when the volunteers had rushed towards the threatened frontiers and had only ended in 1815 with the farewell of Napoleon at Fontainebleau. In reality, during the whole of that period, an indefinite state of mobilisation reigned, very little affected by the Peace of Boulogne. It was not true to allege that the present situation was different. During the last war, the progressive transformation of peace forces into war forces was also noticed. Further, were the Conference to be concerned with the reduction and limitation of armaments, and only to contemplate total disarmament from a symbolic point of view, this would only be keeping within the terms of Article 8 of the Covenant, whereby the League of Nations did not demand total disarmament, for it recognised that every people needed to be assured of the minimum necessary for national defence. How, then, ought the means of defence of each people to be calculated? It was a question of providing the minimum which was indispensable for a people to defend itself until victorious, or until someone came to its rescue. It was for this reason that M. de Brouckère considered that point (a) of the British memorandum and point 5 of the French memorandum were very happily connected. What result, however, would be achieved by combining the two questionnaires in which numerous questions overlapped? Were an endeavour made to produce a draft containing the points common to both, the kernel would be kept but the shell discarded. The shell, however, was necessary, for the motives underlying both documents were inspired by distinctly different desires. Each Power should have the right to indicate the questions which were of concern to it in any terms it thought good.

In conclusion, M. de Brouckère thought that the two memoranda ought to be separately examined point by point. If it were found that a particular question had already received a partial reply, it would be sufficient to refer to it in passing. He thought that all the questions of the British and French delegations should be sent as soon as possible to the technical organisations so that, having received their advice, the Joint Commission could commence work as soon as possible.

M. Veverka thought that the differences of opinion between M. de Marinis and M. de Brouckère were concerned with a question of principle. Were the Committee to accept the proposal made by the Belgian delegate to refer the documents to the technical organisations, M. Veverka feared that the powers of the Preparatory Commission would be lessened, and also that the technical organisations would be required to enter into political considerations which were not within their competence.

Viscount Cecil said he agreed profoundly with M. Veverka. The Committee was now on the verge of a decision on which might depend the whole future of the disarmament question. If the Committee at this stage abdicated its responsibility in favour of the technical commissions, there was not the slightest hope of any result arising from the enquiry. The Committee had been instructed by the Council to present definite proposals to the Council, and he did not see why the Committee should have been appointed if it was proposed to do no more than forward to the Council any suggestions which might be presented by the Governments concerned. The
British Government had assumed that the Committee would undertake to draft a practical programme of enquiry, and the British Government had appointed technical experts in order to advise him with this end in view. It was the duty of the Committee to determine the subjects of enquiry, and the Committee could not delegate this duty to other bodies.

He fully appreciated what M. Paul-Boncour had said in regard to the French memorandum. If, however, this memorandum were forwarded to the Council without amendment, it would imply an investigation so extensive that nothing would in practice be achieved. It was proposed in the French memorandum that the enquiry should be made into the political and economic strength of every country concerned. Such an enquiry would be, for practical purposes, useless, in the French memorandum that the enquiry should be made into the political and economic strength of the country; but could only be directed to the amount of military strength which could be mobilised at the outbreak of war or for several weeks subsequent to the outbreak.

He would point out that the first question contained in the British memorandum enquired whether it was practicable to limit the ultimate war strength of a country, or whether it was necessary to confine any measures of disarmament to its strength in time of peace. Any scheme for the reduction of armaments could not, in his view, be a scheme for the reduction of the political strength of the country; but it was necessary to assume, in defining the scope of the enquiry, that the problem of security had been solved. The problem of security was different from the problem of the reduction of armaments, though it was admittedly very nearly related to that problem. The security of the States invited to disarm would be met by a mobilisation of the resources of the Members of the League of Nations, which would come to the assistance of any State which might be attacked as soon as possible after the opening of hostilities.

In conclusion, he would again urge that, whatever programme was put forward, it was essential that the proposal should come from the Committee of the Council, and that the Committee should not transfer its responsibilities to the technical commissions. The Committee must itself retain the control and conduct of the investigations and must not delegate its powers. He would suggest as a practical method of procedure that a small drafting committee should be appointed to prepare a programme based on the French and British proposals and on the proposals which were to be presented by the Spanish representative.

M. DE MARINIS explained that he had meant that the two documents should be combined, but that at the same time he had emphasised the profound differences which they contained. Nevertheless, an endeavour should always be made to submit a single memorandum after having carried out a critical examination of the two documents and of the document which M. Cobian would submit to the Committee at the next meeting.

The CHAIRMAN thought that a certain confusion had obscured the course of the discussion. In the first place, he pointed out that the Committee of the Council was entrusted with the duty of submitting proposals to the Council, and could not, therefore, decide in advance on a procedure which the Council had not yet accepted, by submitting the two memoranda in question to the examination of the technical organisations.

In the second place, in what manner should the Council Committee forward its report? Obviously there were advantages in submitting a single programme, provided that that programme omitted nothing and summed up everything. It was not necessary, therefore, to repeat all the questions, but all the points in common should be extracted from the various documents. With regard to the other questions, it would merely be a matter of grouping them according to their nature. Could the Committee of the Council do without the opinion of the technical commissions? It was entrusted with the duty of defining the programme of a conference in which the very destinies of States would be at stake. When entrusted with a duty of such importance, the Committee could certainly not hand over this to technical organisations. It should, however, obtain their views.

Would it not be of use, in order to avoid loss of time, to submit the question immediately to the technical organisations in order to have at the next meeting their technical views, on which it might be possible to prepare a programme? Personally, he thought that this procedure should be followed. With, however, would be the object of the submission of these questions? Did it mean the conduct in the various countries of enquiries which had so justly resulted in those feelings of misgiving voiced by Viscount Cecil?

The CHAIRMAN wished to repeat quite definitely that the French memorandum, when it spoke of a series of problems into which the disarmament problem was divided and when it spoke of the investigations, did not in any sense mean the conduct of enquiries into the various countries. It simply meant that technical organisations, such as the Permanent Advisory Commission and the Joint Economic Commission, should draw up in their respective spheres a list of the elements composing the war strength of each country. It would thus be possible to obtain those military.
demographic and economic elements which could be held to constitute the war strength of each country. It was at this point that the difference between the English and French conception was apparent. A country could not be asked to go beyond that point of disarmament which it had reached in peace time, if it had no guarantee against aggression or means to resist it until someone came to its help. This assurance would first of all be the result of a control which would enable that country to know that another State could not prepare to transform its peace-time forces into war material in order to make war, and that help would come to it in a definite form and within a definite period.

In order that these various points should be precisely defined, technical work would be necessary. The League of Nations, however, possessed various organisations which, while being of a specialised kind, all received the same initial impulse, all worked in the same spirit and were all accustomed to co-ordinate their various points of view. The Chairman thought that it was to everyone's interest to avoid loss of time by submitting the study of this programme to the competent organisations.

In conclusion, in order to give effect to the suggestions of Viscount Cecil, which had been supported by M. de Marinis and M. Veverka, he proposed that the experts should draw up a list of the various questions which it was desired to submit to the Council.

Viscount Cecil doubted whether the technical experts would be able to assist the Committee to any very great extent in establishing the proposed draft. This work should, in his opinion, be done by a drafting committee. There were certain questions with which it would be a little difficult for the experts to deal without the guidance of the Committee.

After a brief exchange of views, in which M. de Brouckère, M. Cobian and M. Guani took part, the Committee decided that the Chairman and Viscount Cecil, together with M. Cobian, would meet to draft a memorandum containing the points in common for submission at the next meeting.

FIFTH MEETING

Held on Saturday, December 5th, 1925, at 4 p.m.

Chairman: M. Paul-Boncour.

7. Proposals relative to the Name, Composition and Procedure of the Permanent Organ of the Council for the Work of Disarmament.

The following document was read:

"I. Name.

"The Commission will be entitled 'Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference', being the Commission to prepare for a Conference on the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments in accordance with Article 8 of the Covenant.'

"II. Composition.

"1. The Commission will consist of:

"(a) Representatives of States Members of the Council;

"(b) Representatives of countries which, by reason of their geographical situation, occupy a special position as regards the problem of disarmament and which are not otherwise represented on the Commission.

"2. Any State not represented on the Commission shall be entitled:

"(a) To submit memoranda on matters on which it is specially interested;

"(b) To be heard in support of these memoranda.

"3. Moreover, the Commission will always have the right, in the case of special questions, to call in the assistance of any State which, in the opinion of the Commission, may be particularly interested in these questions.

"4. In order to ensure the continuity of the work of the Commission, the Council may alter the composition of the Commission whenever that of the Council itself is altered.

"III. Presidency.

"The Commission will be presided over by the representative of the Government which then holds the Presidency of the Council.

"IV. Working of the Commission.

"The Preparatory Commission will decide on the proposals to be submitted to the Council and will assure the control and co-ordination of the work preparatory to the Conference. For that purpose it will be empowered by the Council to obtain the co-operation and advice of the competent organisation of the League. The latter, in their turn, may submit to it on their own initiative any suggestion which they feel called upon to make with regard to the work in progress. This co-operation will be effected as follows:

"(a) With the Permanent Advisory Commission in the case of any questions relating to the military, naval or air aspect of the questions under consideration;"
"(b) In respect of the economic aspect of these questions, with a Joint Commission, constitution as follows:

"Two members each of the Economic, Financial and Transit Organisations, to be appointed by the Council after consultation with the Chairman of the respective Committees;

"Two members of the Employers' Group and two members of the Workers' Group of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office appointed by the Governing Body.

"The Joint Commission may call in other experts under the same conditions as provided in the case of the Permanent Advisory Commission.

"Under the standing authority of the President of the Council, the Chairman of the Preparatory Commission may request the Chairman of the Permanent Advisory Commission or the Joint Commission to assemble those Commissions on a given date.

"The Preparatory Commission may at any time summon and hear the Chairman and Rapporteur of the Permanent Advisory Commission and of the Joint Commission, as well as any persons whose special qualifications are calculated to facilitate its work on a given subject. The same authority is accorded to any sub-committees which it may establish within itself."

This text was adopted with various amendments.

The Committee decided to amend Heading II, paragraph 4 (Composition) as follows:

"If the constitution of the Council is altered during the proceedings of the Commission, the Council may change the composition of the Commission in order to ensure the continuity of its work."

Heading III (Presidency) was deleted in order that the Council might be left to choose between the various possible procedures (appointment of the Chairman by the Council or by the Preparatory Commission itself; the taking of the Chair in rotation, according to the rotation followed by the Members of the Council).

In regard to Heading IV (Working of the Commission), the Committee decided:

(a) To amend the first line as follows:

"The Preparatory Commission will decide on the proposals for the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments."

(b) To subdivide the final paragraph as follows:

"The Preparatory Commission may at any time summon and hear the Chairman and Rapporteur of the Permanent Advisory Commission and of the Joint Commission to explain the views of their respective Commissions. "It may also summon and hear any persons whose special qualifications", etc.


On the proposal of Viscount Cecil, M. Paul-Boncour, Chairman of the Committee, was appointed Rapporteur to the Council.


M. Cobian read his memorandum (see Annex I).

The Chairman thanked the representative of Spain for having submitted a document containing such interesting and philosophical views.

Viscount Cecil wished to associate himself with the congratulations expressed by the Chairman. He was particularly interested in the striking proposal contained in the document that the permanent international organisation should be established with the duty of preventing at any moment increases in national armaments above the amounts authorised.

M. Cobian thanked his colleagues for the welcome which they had accorded to his suggestions. He had summarised them in the form of a questionnaire which the Drafting Committee, sitting at that moment, could investigate at the same time as the draft French and British questionnaire, in order to be able to submit to the Committee in a few moments a document containing the points which they had in common.

He read his draft questionnaire (see Annex II).

10. Preparatory Work on the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments: Combined Table proposed by the Drafting Committee.

The Commission began an examination of the following combined table drawn up by the Drafting Committee as a result of the decision taken by the Committee at its preceding meeting.

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1 The report to the Council will state that the Commission will take into consideration the opinion of the Permanent Advisory Commission and Joint Commission on any views expressed by the persons specially qualified referred to above.
Question I.
What is to be understood by the expression “armaments”? 

(a) Definition of the various factors—military, economic, geographical, etc.—upon which the power of a country in time of war depends.

(b) Definition and special characteristics of the various factors which constitute the armaments of a country in time of peace; the different forms of armaments, the methods of recruiting, training, police organisations capable of immediate military employment, etc.

Question II.

(a) Is it practicable to limit the ultimate war strength of a country, or must any measures of disarmament be confined to the peace strength?

(b) What is to be understood by the expression “reduction or limitation of armaments”? The various forms which reduction or limitation may take in the case of land, sea and air forces; the relative advantages or disadvantages of each of the different forms or methods; for example, the diminution of the larger peace-time units and of the forces composing them or of any immediately mobilisable forces; the diminution of the length of active service; the diminution of the quantity of military equipment; the diminution of the expenditure on national defence, etc.

Question III.
By what standards is it possible to measure the armaments of one country against the armaments of another—e.g., numbers, period of service, equipment, expenditure, etc.

Question IV.
Can there be said to be “offensive” and “defensive” armaments?

Question V.

(a) On what principles would it be possible to draw up a scale of armaments permissible to the various countries—e.g., population, resources, geographical position, length and nature of maritime communications, vulnerable frontiers and great “vital” centres near the frontiers, etc.

(b) Methods of estimating the effective strength in case of war of a country’s peace armaments of all kinds, taking into account:
   - The special case of States where there is a professional army;
   - The special case of agricultural States which do not manufacture war material;
   - The necessary delays in transforming such peace armaments into war armaments.

   For instance:
   (i) Is there any, and if so what, device by which civil and military aircraft can be distinguished for purposes of disarmament? If this is not practicable, how can the value of civil aircraft be computed in estimating the air strength of any country?
   (ii) Is it possible or desirable to apply the conclusions arrived at in (i) above to parts of aircraft and aircraft engines?
   (iii) How is it possible to judge the military value of commercial fleets in estimating the military force of a country?

Question VI.
Admitting that disarmament depends on security, to what extent is regional disarmament possible in return for regional security; or is any scheme of disarmament impossible unless it is general? If regional disarmament is practicable, would it promote or lead up to general disarmament?

Question VII.
The previous establishment of plans of action and of economic and financial assistance, in pursuance of Article 16 of the Covenant, in such a way as to assure to a State attacked means at least equal to those of its aggressor as regards industrial and economic mobilisation and the rapidity of such mobilisation.

Question VIII.
Application of the principle according to which no Power should have the right to maintain armaments susceptible, in the event of its committing an act of aggression, of placing at its disposal forces superior to those which the State which was the victim of the aggression together with the League of Nations could unite in opposition to it, either by virtue of Article 16 of the Covenant or through the application of the regional agreements provided for in Article 21 of the Covenant.
Question I.

On the proposal of M. DE MARINIS, paragraph (b) of this question was amended as follows: “different categories of armaments (military, naval and air)”, instead of “different forms of armaments”.

On the proposal of Viscount Cecil, the word “police” was deleted in the expression “police organisations capable of being put to immediate military use”, as this expression contained a useless limitation.

Question II.

On the proposal of M. DE MARINIS, the words “and their equipments” were inserted after the words “of the forces composing them” in the second paragraph of paragraph (b).

The words “the reduction of the length of active service” were also inserted in the same paragraph after the words “or of any immediately mobilisable forces”.

Question V.

On the proposal of M. DE MELLO-FRANCO, the words “density and character of the railways” were inserted after the words “length and nature of maritime communications” in the first paragraph of this article.

Viscount Cecil criticised the second paragraph of this question:

“Methods of estimating the effective strength in case of war of a country’s peace-time armaments of all kinds, taking into account the necessary delays in transforming such peace-time armaments into war armaments.”

This appeared to him to be a question which would be very difficult to settle. It might perhaps be necessary to include it, but he did not immediately wish to inform the Council that this was an essential point of the programme. The question as raised in its present form appeared to him to enter into too great detail and to have too vague a character. Such a questionnaire, however, should, in his opinion, be formulated according to one or other of the following principles. The questions might either be put in very general terms or else every detail could be included, but in that case the questions formulated must be very precise.

The CHAIRMAN emphasised the necessity of pointing out that certain nations would have the right to maintain that, because of the lack of raw materials or of the insufficient nature of their factories, they were in an inferior situation as compared with their neighbours with regard to facilities for mobilisation. This was a point to be borne in mind.

M. DE BROUCKÈRE thought that he could interpret the doubts of Viscount Cecil. Viscount Cecil feared that the Preparatory Commission would have to undertake an enquiry to which there would be no end, were it to be asked, as in the present draft, what were the “methods of estimating the effective strength”, etc.

M. de Brouckère proposed, therefore, to draft Question V as follows, in order to admit of the deletion of the words “methods of estimating”:

“Question V.

On what principles would it be possible to draw up a scale of the armaments which might be allotted to each country, taking account, for example, of:

*Population;
*Resources;
*Geographical position;
*Length and nature of maritime communications;
*Density and character of the railways;
*Vulnerable frontiers and great vital centres near the frontiers;
*Effective strength in war-time of a country’s peace-time armaments of all kinds, taking into account the special case of States where there is a professional army, the special case of agricultural States which do not manufacture war material, the necessary delays in transforming such peace-time armaments into war armaments”, etc.

Viscount Cecil accepted the draft proposed in principle, while reserving his final approval until he had had time to study it more closely.

On the proposal of Viscount Cecil, the last paragraphs of Question V, from the words “for instance”, were removed from the question and put as two new questions, the words “for instance” being deleted.

Question VI was approved without comment.

Viscount Cecil thought that Questions VII and VIII should not be included in the programme for the reduction of armaments. They were, indeed, questions solely concerned with security. He did not understand the manner in which these questions had been drafted for they appeared to him to be incompatible with the provisions of Article 16 of the Covenant. It was not a question of assuring a State which had been attacked means of defence “equal” to the strength of its aggressor, in view of the fact that the aggressor ought to have against him the whole force of the League of Nations. The question, in its present form, therefore, seemed to him to provide an
inadequate test of disarmament and a false standard of security. He could understand that the following question might be put on the supposition that it was thought necessary to raise the question of security at all:

“What means should be used to render Article 16 of the Covenant and similar articles in the treaties effective?”

The Chairman reminded the Committee of the necessity of emphasising at the end of the programme that it was essential to carry out a real preparation and to prepare in advance the economic aid to be given to a State attacked, as provided for in Article 16 of the Covenant. The problem of disarmament under conditions of modern warfare was not the same as it would have been in former days. In days when the only armies were those composed of professional soldiers with but few armaments at their disposal, it had been easy to maintain that disarmament could be brought about by reducing the size of the armies of professional soldiers. To-day, however, even if it were possible to reduce to the minimum troops in barracks, industrial inequality were left untouched, weaker nations and nations with an insufficient industrial plant would be sacrificed. The Disarmament Conference was only possible were these nations to possess the definite assurance that in case of attack the inequality resulting from inferiority of plant would be counterbalanced by the effect of applying the definite economic assistance provided for in Article 16, and further that the inequality resulting from the fact that the aggressor had been able in the last months previous to war to prepare for it by transforming his industry would be also corrected. It was desirable to state frankly that certain countries could only attend the Conference on Disarmament if they had the positive assurance that the assistance provided for in Article 16 would be granted to them were they to become victims of an aggression.

Viscount Cecil entirely agreed with this point of view but did not think that the manner in which Questions VII and VIII had been drafted corresponded to the desire expressed by the Chairman. What was desired in reality was an assurance that Article 16 would prove effective. The question had, therefore, to be clearly stated and it was for this reason that he had proposed a text which was couched in as simple language as possible. That text might be the following:

“What means should be taken to render Article 16 of the Covenant effective against the aggressor?”

M. De Brouckère pointed out that the Committee was faced with a very grave question. Viscount Cecil would understand that the representatives of certain countries viewed the question with great anxiety. It was a question of assuring the greatest measure of disarmament possible as defined by Article 8 of the Covenant. The Preamble of the Covenant said that the associated nations desired to base their policy on just and honourable relations, and in this was to be found the explanation that Article 8 provided for a measure of disarmament compatible with the duties of nations towards the other nations of the League, and also towards themselves, in order to ensure their own defence.

Belgium impatiently awaited the moment when there would exist in Europe conditions of civilisation permitting all nations to live in peace. For nearly two centuries, save for about six exceptions, Belgium had every year suffered from war. Her representative had therefore the duty to declare firmly that if Belgium were not guaranteed she would be compelled to concentrate all the resources at her disposal on means for her defence. How should the measures of disarmament to be recommended to nations in positions similar to that of Belgium be determined? It was a question of allowing them to ensure their own defence in cases of aggression and to prevent the violation of their own territory. These nations hoped to find themselves in a civilised world, from which help would be forthcoming, but they would have to stand alone until the moment when that help proved effective. The Preparatory Commission must state quite clearly what was the nature and extent of the help on which those nations could count. Economic assistance as well as military assistance was necessary, for small countries must be in a position to purchase the munitions and material which they needed were they to be attacked, and from their point of view it was of great importance to know beforehand that they would find sister nations ready to place at their disposal the necessary financial means. The representative of the British Empire had proposed a general text for discussion in order to investigate the matter. This text covered the whole ground, but in such wide terms that M. de Brouckère was unable to conceal a certain uneasiness when he compared it with the text of certain other questions which had been drafted in as detailed a manner as possible. Did not one of the questions put go so far as to mention the spare parts of aeroplanes? Why, therefore, should in one case a very detailed question be inserted and in another question a very general formula, although certain countries anxiously desired a complete inquiry to be made and definite replies obtained? These countries needed to be informed how long they would have to wait before the protection of the League of Nations would be effective. They needed to know whether the aid would be sufficient.

Viscount Cecil had pointed out that the sum total of the nations would always be stronger than any possible single aggressor. M. de Brouckère was not quite certain that Viscount Cecil was right. What the small nations desired was that the state of affairs should be such that no one could victoriously oppose the League of Nations.

Further, did it not seem probable that were the Committee to adopt the proposal of Viscount Cecil it would create a remarkable situation? The Committee had decided that States not represented on the Preparatory Commission might submit to it memoranda on questions of interest to them, and it was obvious that these memoranda would not be merely generally discussed but would be very seriously examined. In these circumstances, how could the countries represented on the Preparatory Commission be refused permission to get their questions, which they considered of vital interest to them, examined by the Commission. Belgium supported the French proposal.
If her request were disregarded and the last two questions of the draft questionnaire were deleted, could she come before the Preparatory Commission just as any other State Member of the League of Nations and submit for examination a memorandum in which these questions would be found? He thought the reply was obvious, and it was for this reason that M. de Brouckère had maintained in a preceding meeting that any question which might be submitted by any nation ought to be included in the programme of the enquiry.

The work that was being undertaken would only succeed provided that unanimous decisions were achieved, and provided also that it was accepted by public opinion in the various countries. It would be quite impossible to obtain the acceptance of public opinion were the doubts and uncertainties of certain States omitted from the scope of the enquiry or not answered in a definite form.

General formula would never give satisfaction to a country such as Belgium, for whom the solution of the problem would bring security to her national life and even to the life of each individual citizen.

Viscount Cecil entirely agreed with M. de Brouckère. He repeated that the present draft of the last two questions could not, in his opinion, give satisfaction to the representative of Belgium. These questions contained a standard of protection inferior to that provided for by the Covenant, which stipulated that all nations should unite against the aggressor. In the questionnaire mention was made of equality between the aggressor and other nations. M. de Brouckère was concerned with the attitude of public opinion, and would not such a formula greatly disturb public opinion?

He proposed a general formula because a general formula was the best means of obtaining a detailed investigation. He was ready, however, to accept the suggestion that the words "economic and military" should be added to the text which he had proposed in order to state by name the kind of assistance provided for in the Covenant. Security must precede disarmament. The British Government thought that security was guaranteed by Article 16. The draft questionnaire, however, proposed a standard of security inferior to that provided in Article 16.

M. Veverka considered that the different points of view which had been expressed would soon be reconciled. The question could be so drafted as to leave out the formula (criticised by Viscount Cecil) providing for equality between the aggressor and the League of Nations. There was still a small difference in the fact that Question VII provided for the "previous establishment of plans of action and economic and financial assistance". Viscount Cecil might perhaps accept the proposal that these words be inserted in the formula which he had himself proposed.

M. de Brouckère said that it was not only a question of discovering what was the value of Article 16. It was also necessary to investigate the means by which military, economic and financial assistance could be assured to a State under the operation of the system provided for in Article 16.

Viscount Cecil thought the text which he had proposed would satisfy M. de Brouckère on this point.

The Chairman pointed out that Viscount Cecil might perhaps accept the text of Question VII if the word "superior" took the place of the words "at least equal". The phrase would read: "in such a way as to ensure to a State attacked means superior to those of its aggressor". Viscount Cecil repeated that he could not accept the present form. He reminded the Committee of the objections raised by a part of public opinion to the Geneva Protocol, and he thought that the present wording of the last questions would encounter strong criticism. Public opinion should not be allowed to think that an attempt was being made to revive certain parts of the Geneva Protocol under cover of providing for disarmament.

The Chairman said that certain nations had to be sure that the provisions of Article 16 would come into force as soon as mobilisation took place.

M. de Brouckère wished to point out to Viscount Cecil that it was not a question of knowing at the moment whether it would be possible to give certain States the assurance that the question which they wished to put would be solved. What they desired to be certain of was that it would be examined. Other nations would merely undertake not to put aside the question.

The Chairman pointed out that the French memorandum referred to "investigation of the means", etc. Viscount Cecil having pointed out that the French formula would diminish the force of Article 16, the Drafting Committee had substituted for it the formula "previous establishment of plans of action", etc. If Viscount Cecil thought that this last formula went too far, and if he preferred to return to the formula contained in the French memorandum, M. Paul-Boncour was ready to accept it.

Viscount Cecil replied that he could not accept the long and obscure form in which the last two questions were drafted. He had done his best to reconcile his own point of view with that of the representatives of Belgium and France, and he feared that if these representatives insisted on their proposal the Committee of the Council might come to a momentary standstill, not on a question of principle but on a question of drafting, which he thought would be a most regrettable occurrence.

M. de Brouckère hoped it was merely a question of drafting. In these circumstances, he preferred that the rest of the discussion be adjourned.

The Committee decided to adjourn the rest of the discussion so that the representatives of France, British Empire and Belgium might discuss between themselves the possibility of submitting a common formula.
SIXTH MEETING

Held on Monday, December 7th, 1925, at 9.30 a.m.

Chairman: M. Paul-Boncour.

II. Examination of the Draft Report to the Council.

M. Paul-Boncour’s draft report on the permanent organ of the Council for the work of disarmament was adopted with a single modification designed to make it clear that the Preparatory Commission would consult the technical organisations of the League of Nations. The Chairman, in submitting it, was to make an oral commentary on it. It would be the duty of the Council to appoint the Chairman of the Preparatory Commission.

The Draft Report on the Private Manufacture of Arms and Munitions was adopted.

M. Guani was appointed Rapporteur.

The Committee of Enquiry provided for in this document was to report to the Committee of the Council.

12. Questions to be Examined by the Preparatory Commission.

The Committee examined the following revised draft:

"Question I.

What is to be understood by the expression ‘armaments’?

(a) Definition of the various factors—military, economic, geographical, etc.—upon which the power of a country in time of war depends.

(b) Definition and special characteristics of the various factors which constitute the armaments of a country in time of peace: the different categories of armaments (military, naval and air), the methods of recruiting, training, organisations capable of immediate military employment, etc.

"Question II.

(a) Is it practicable to limit the ultimate war strength of a country, or must any measures of disarmament be confined to the peace strength?

(b) What is to be understood by the expression ‘reduction and limitation of armaments’?

The various forms which reduction or limitation may take in the case of land, sea and air forces; the relative advantages or disadvantages of each of the different forms or methods—for example, the diminution of the larger peace-time units and of the forces composing them and their equipment, or of any immediately mobilisable forces; the diminution of the length of active service; the diminution of the quantity of military equipment; the diminution of the expenditure on national defence, etc.

"Question III.

By what standards is it possible to measure the armaments of one country against the armaments of another—e.g., numbers, period of service, equipment, expenditure, etc.

"Question IV.

Can there be said to be ‘offensive’ and ‘defensive’ armaments?

"Question V.

On what principle will it be possible to draw up a scale of armaments permissible to the various countries, taking into account, for example:

"Population;

"Resources;

"Geographical situation;

"Length and nature of maritime communications;

"Density and character of the railways;

"Vulnerability of the frontiers and of the important vital centres near the frontiers;

"The effective strength in case of war of the country’s peace armaments of all kinds, taking into account:

"The special case of States where there is a professional army;

"The special case of agricultural States which do not manufacture war material.

"The necessary delays in transforming peace armaments into war armaments;
"Question VI.

(i) Is there any, and if so what, device by which civil and military aircraft can be distinguished for purposes of disarmament? If this is not practicable, how can the value of civil aircraft be computed in estimating the air strength of any country?

(ii) Is it possible or desirable to apply the conclusions arrived at in (i) above to parts of aircraft and aircraft engines?

"Question VII.

How is it possible to judge the military value of commercial fleets in estimating the military force of a country?

"Question VIII.

"Admitting that disarmament depends on security, to what extent is regional disarmament possible in return for regional security: or is any scheme of disarmament impossible unless it is general? If regional disarmament is practicable, would it promote or lead up to general disarmament?

"Question IX.

The previous establishment of plans of action and of economic and financial assistance, in pursuance of Article 16 of the Covenant, in such a way as to assure to a State attacked means superior to those of its aggressor as regards industrial and economic mobilisation and the rapidity of such mobilisation.

"Question X.

"Application of the principle according to which no Power should have the right to maintain armaments susceptible, in the event of its committing an act of aggression, of placing at its disposal forces superior to those which the State which was the victim of the aggression together with the League of Nations could unite in opposition to it, either by virtue of Article 16 of the Covenant or through the application of the regional agreements provided for in Article 21 of the Covenant."

Question I.
The Committee adopted Question I.

Question II.

M. DE MARINIS drew attention to paragraph (a) of this question:

"Is it practicable to limit the ultimate war strength of a country, or must any measures of disarmament be confined to the peace strength?"

His impression was that after the discussion and statements made by representatives of France, Spain, Belgium and Italy, a majority had agreed that there was no doubt regarding this question that measures of disarmament should apply to the peace-time armaments and to the potential war strength of a country.

Viscount CECIL observed that the Committee of the Council was not qualified to settle these questions but merely to state them; it was obvious that the potential war strength of a country could only with difficulty be reduced, and that it was not to the total force which a country could ultimately set on foot in time of war that any reduction should apply. In the event of war, it was obvious that no country would hesitate a second to transform all its peace industries into war industries. The whole resources of the country would be applied to the prosecution of the war—that was to say, that after a certain period of hostilities it was as vain to hope to reduce a country's war power as to modify its geographical form. However that might be, it was for the Preparatory Commission to settle divergencies of opinion.

M. DE MARINIS replied that that was an argument in favour of his proposal; all factories would, without any doubt, be employed for war purposes; that was why a country whose industry was not highly developed should be authorised in advance to possess in peace-time a proportionally larger equipment, seeing that it could not alter its factories or supply them with raw materials. Indeed, the measures proposed for aviation took this potential war capacity definitely into account.

M. DE BROUCKÈRE insisted that the question should be stated in the terms in which it was now being raised; it might be that the form of words was not perfect, but in so serious a matter it would be impossible to refuse to allow a Power to raise a question with regard to a point which was causing it anxiety.

Viscount CECIL agreed that all the questions must be taken into consideration. Questions III and V did establish this principle, but here they were faced by the preliminary question: To what is the reduction of armaments to apply? Personally, he thought that it should not be a
question of the total force which a country could set on foot in time of war. It would, however, be for the Preparatory Commission to decide upon the attitude to be adopted on this point.

The Chairman declared himself entirely in agreement with M. de Marinis, but he saw no disadvantage in this question being raised, for all the following questions favoured the view of his Italian colleague. Further, it seemed to him to be entirely to the good that all countries should express their points of view.

M. de Marinis accepted the proposed form of words, but thought that the debate which had just taken place was indispensable.

**Question II was adopted.**

**Questions III and IV.**

**Questions III and IV were adopted.**

**Question V.**

Viscount Cecil proposed to replace the last lines of this question from "the effective strength in case of war..." by the necessary time required, varying with the different States, to transform peace armaments into war armaments".

*This question, as amended, was adopted.*

**Questions VI, VII and VIII.**

**Questions VI, VII and VIII were adopted.**

**Questions IX and X.**

The Chairman declared that, in spite of the exchanges of views which had taken place since the last meeting, there remained fundamental divergencies on these questions.

M. de Brouckère thought that in the present state of their work the only thing to do was to take note of the situation. He felt obliged, on behalf of his country, to make the following declaration:

"Belgium cannot understand that a plan for the reduction and limitation of armaments should be drawn up without taking into account the nature, extent and promptitude of the aid which a State against which an act of aggression is committed might receive.

"If the investigation of this question is not included now in the scheme of preparatory work, Belgium formally reserves the right to demand its inclusion at a later date."

M. Veverka pointed out that the Committee of the Council was not competent to pronounce upon problems but only to decide what questions were to be submitted to the Preparatory Commission for investigation.

Consequently, as a member of the Committee of the Council, he asked that that question, which was of vital importance to his country, should be placed on the agenda of the Preparatory Commission, because if it was not actually decisive in determining the indispensable measure of security and consequently in estimating the armament which was indispensable, it was at least a factor of extreme importance in that respect.

Viscount Cecil had regarded the question as so important that he felt bound to consult the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The latter had taken exactly the same view; indeed, he had gone so far as to suggest that Viscount Cecil had not formulated his ideas with sufficient emphasis; he thought that it would be a serious mistake, disastrous in its effect on the international situation, to include all these guarantee questions when there already existed guarantees provided by the Covenant and by the recent agreements. He (Viscount Cecil) had accordingly received formal instructions that the agenda of the Preparatory Commission should not contain any clause of that kind.

Consequently, there were now two diametrically opposite views; the simplest way out would be to recognise the position and ask the Council itself to decide.

M. Hennings said that his Government did not think that questions relating to security should be included in the agenda of the Preparatory Commission in the text proposed by the French Government. He considered that it would have been better to concentrate the preparatory work on finding out to what extent the existing measures of security gave a prospect of disarmament. However, he would not object to the inclusion of a question which certain of his colleagues were anxious to include, but he thought that that question should be enunciated in wider and more general terms than the French text, and he therefore supported the text which Viscount Cecil had proposed at the previous meeting.

M. de Brouckère wished to make it clear that those who had framed the questions had no intention of asking for any change whatever in the conditions of security accorded to each country. Their sole object was, in accordance with the provisions of Article 8 of the Covenant, to obtain a decision as to the extent of which account should be taken of the special circumstances of each country, and more particularly of security.

M. Veverka agreed with this remark.
The CHAIRMAN observed that the debate had reached its close. The terms of reference of the Committee of the Council were, however, limited — namely, to submit to the Council proposals for the organisation, procedure and agenda of the Preparatory Commission.

The origin of the discussion had been this question: Was the Committee simply to transmit to the Council the British, Spanish and French memoranda, or was it to endeavour to facilitate the work by embodying them in a single document? The Committee had succeeded in drawing up an agreed programme on a whole series of questions, and the only difference of opinion concerned two definite points, highly important though they were. Under those circumstances, the most suitable procedure would be to transmit to the Council all the questions which had been adopted, mentioning the differences of opinion which had arisen as to the last two of them. In order to make the character of these differences perfectly clear, Viscount Cecil and he himself might each produce the original form of the text which he proposed to submit.

Viscount Cecil agreed. He proposed to say that the French Government made a particular proposal, while certain other Governments did not think it desirable to ask the Preparatory Commission to investigate these questions. It would be for the Council to decide whether those questions should or should not appear in the questionnaire, either in their original form or with amendments. Under these circumstances, he would revise the text which he had submitted at the previous meeting.

*Questions IX and X were reserved for the decision of the Council. It was decided that the Rapporteur should mention to the Council the different views which had been expressed during the discussion.*

M. Cobian submitted the following text, which he desired to be included in Question IV:

"Is there any method of ascertaining whether a certain force is organised for purely defensive purposes (no matter what use may be made of it in time of war) or whether, on the contrary, it is constituted in a spirit of aggression."

*This text was adopted.*

M. Cobian also submitted the following text to supersede Question V:

"Is there any method by which a country can at any moment fix an armament limit, greater or less, within which limit such country's armament might alternate without prejudice to the interest of other countries?"

Viscount Cecil thought that this text raised an extremely delicate question and that the fixing of minimum armaments might lead to very serious consequences.

M. Cobian thought that it would be desirable to provide for the case of a country's diminishing its armaments down to a point at which supervision became unnecessary. He would not, however, press his proposal if Viscount Cecil objected to it.

*The proposal was withdrawn.*

The CHAIRMAN said that he did not know if that would be the last meeting of the Committee of the Council on Disarmament and if the Council might not in the course of its session have to apply again to the Committee for further information. He desired, however, to thank his colleagues for their conciliatory efforts, which had brought about agreement on the majority of the points at issue. The problem before them was perhaps the gravest and most important which the League of Nations had attacked, and only a pessimist or a person with little knowledge of the world could be surprised that unanimity had not at once been attained.

Viscount Cecil, in his own name and on behalf of his colleagues, said that the Committee of the Council owed a debt of gratitude to its Chairman for the lofty impartiality, the wisdom and the ability with which he had conducted the work of that session. The happy results which had been achieved justified the hope that the Preparatory Commission would enter upon its task with every prospect of success.
Annex I.

MEMORANDUM BY M. COBIAN.

Geneva, December 5th, 1925.

I.

As the starting-point of our discussion, we must have as clear ideas as possible as to what is meant by the term "reduction of armaments". It is therefore necessary in the first place to define the word "armaments".

1. The following definition may be suggested:

By "armaments" is meant the material force which any given country possesses for the purpose of defending itself against other countries, or, if necessary, of imposing its will upon them.

The first feature of this definition is its relative character. The material strength sufficient to enable country A to defend itself against B, or to impose its will on that country, may be inadequate in the case of country C. Regarded from this point of view, the problem obviously assumes an aspect in which what may be called the military side of the question (intricate as this idea is in itself) is extended and complicated by political considerations which may even be more important. To this political relativity of the fundamental idea of armaments is due the essential difficulty of the problem of the reduction of armaments.

2. This being admitted, it follows that any measure for the reduction of armaments must first be based on a conception of what is meant by "a scale of armaments", or, perhaps more accurately, a "level of armaments". Until the level of armaments of a country has been determined, it is difficult to decide whether its armaments should or should not be reduced. We may go further and assert that it is difficult to say what is to be reduced in the country in question. The expression "reduction of armaments" is therefore equivalent to the expression "lowering of the level of armaments", and presumes the existence of precise conceptions as to what the armaments level of a given country is.

Returning to our definition of armaments given above and ignoring for the sake of simplicity, as was done in the definition, the moral forces entering into the question, the level of armaments would be a combination of two kinds of factors consisting of:

A. All armaments in the ordinary sense;
B. The geographical and economic conditions of the country.

These two series of factors would be combined in the armaments level in a somewhat intricate way. Obviously a certain quantity of material armaments would constitute a relatively lower level in a vast country with poor communications than in a compact country with good communications in an exposed country than in a country with strong natural defences. Generally speaking, it would even be possible to establish a ratio for the level of armaments represented by material armaments though naturally it would be impossible in view of the difficulty and intricacy of the problem to represent this relationship by means of figures.

Material Armaments.

This factor may be subdivided into:

(a) Existing armaments;
(b) Potential armaments.

The former class includes armaments which are ready to hand, if one may use the expression, i.e., armaments to which the country may resort immediately.

Potential armaments are those which the country is able to create from its own essential resources if given time and a provisional security which will enable it to make the necessary effort without losing any part of the national strength as a result of invasion.

(a) Existing armaments.

These consist of:

(i) The human element, further subdivided into numbers.

Here it is necessary to note the difficulty due to the fact that the aggregate number of soldiers in the various countries cannot strictly be compared. Account must be taken here of causes of difference, such as:

The different technical abilities of the soldiers in the different armies;
Duration of periods of training;
Length of military service;
The professional character of the army, i.e., whether militia or national army, etc.
One might perhaps take, with a view to obtaining a first approximation, an estimate of the numbers of each army on the basis of a "man-day" unit (m.d.), i.e., soldier and day of service, the maximum number of days' service taken being naturally 365. In this way a militia serving for two months would be equivalent to the sixth part of a national or regular army consisting of the same number of soldiers serving for a year.

Cadres;
Trained reserves;

On this subject the same may be said as in the case of numbers.

(ii) Material.

Account should be taken of the following factors:
Material in use;
Material in reserve;
Factories and repair works normally used by the war services of the country.

(iii) Funds for war.

That is to say, money and credits on which the country may reckon immediately to meet the financial requirements of the campaign.

(b) Potential Armaments.

Potential armaments include the same categories as existing armaments, but are capable of indefinite extension in accordance with the capacity of the country.

In this connection the following elements have very special importance:

(i) Raw material:
National production;
Possibilities of import.

(ii) Industrial equipment, including:
Machinery and plant;
Technical staff;
Industrial and commercial organisation.

(iii) Financial capacity:
Taxable wealth;
Internal credits;
Foreign credits.

Conclusions.

This summary analysis of the elements shows us that an extremely complex formula is required in order to arrive at a definition of the level of armaments. If we add the reservations made in paragraph 1 with regard to the political relativity of the problem, we come to the conclusion that the problem of the reduction of armaments is not capable of any general solution based on purely technical considerations. We must therefore resign ourselves to applying to it political and empirical criteria, particularly as the political factors which enter into the question and the technical elements analysed above are extremely variable. It may even be said that the problem presents itself in the form of a balance of natural forces which constantly vary, so that even if it may be taken for granted that it is the common wish of all countries to preserve this balance, constant effort will clearly have to be made to take account of the varying forces at play and to restore the balance at any moment. Accordingly, the problem of the reduction of armaments cannot be solved once for all, but is a permanent problem the solution of which is necessarily a continuous process.

II.

Now that we have defined the problem of the reduction of armaments as a permanent and complex problem with political as well as technical aspects, it follows that its solution demands the existence of a permanent international organisation.

This organisation will have to study the problem unceasingly and to apply a generally admitted principle by empirical methods.

This principle is to-day accepted not only within the League of Nations but by the whole of mankind. To-day a war of aggression is regarded as an international crime throughout the civilised world. It is therefore necessary to ensure that no country possesses an army which can be regarded as an instrument of aggression.

A distinction must first be made between aggressive and offensive warfare.

For the purpose of the present study, we will define aggression as an attack with a view to gaining complete victory over the country attacked.

An offensive, on the other hand, may quite well be regarded as an attack aiming at certain partial objectives of a nature to prevent a possible aggressor from delivering an aggressive attack.
An offensive may degenerate into aggression, but there is no a priori reason for its being such. This distinction is essential, for the problem of the reduction of armaments must be differently solved in the two cases.

I. A war of aggression.

The permanent organisation being assumed to exist, it will have to devote itself at the outset to studying the armies of the world both from the political and technical points of view in order to decide whether they are in a position to undertake a war of aggression. This examination must be both quantitative and qualitative.

Let us take the case of a country A surrounded by two countries B and C, the relation of their military power regarded as a whole being such that B is larger than A and A larger than C. It will be easy for A to justify a level of armaments considerably higher than that of C by reason of his inferior position with regard to B. The political and technical work of the permanent organisation will have to prove, however, that this argument is justified not only quantitatively but qualitatively, by showing that the organisation of the mobilisation services, of the defensive works, strategic communications and other factors is such that A's armaments constitute a shield against attacks from B and not a sword directed against C. In this way the permanent organisation must be able to determine whether there are armies capable of undertaking wars of aggression, and it will then be for the international community to solve this specific problem, namely, the abolition of any given measure which imparts to any given military organisation an aggressive character.

2. An offensive war.

We will suppose that the case of a military organisation apparently offensive, but in reality aggressive, has been disposed of by the application of the method dealt with in the previous paragraph. There still remains the possibility of military organisations giving rise to the following problem:

Two countries, A and B, living in a permanent state of mutual mistrust, are in a military relation to one another which may be summarised as follows:

A's actual armaments superior to B's actual armaments;
A's potential armaments inferior to B's potential armaments.

In this case it is easy to see that the military policy of A will consist in avoiding by all possible means an armed conflict between the two countries sufficiently prolonged to allow the development of B's potential armaments. For this purpose A will organise its army in such a way that, at the least sign of danger, it can launch an overwhelming offensive in order to seize economically strategic points which will prevent B from transforming its potential armaments into actual armaments.

In order to effect the reduction of armaments, the problem must be solved on empirical lines and by applying to each particular case the methods best suited to its solution. There are cases in which effort will have to be directed against the state of mistrust existing between the two countries in question. In other cases it will be possible to solve the question by a system of mutual guarantees giving such protection to country A as to remove all probability of danger. There may also be other solutions.

Generally it will perhaps be necessary to try all solutions at the same time. It would seem that this is one of the many cases in which a solution must be sought in a strict and general application of arbitration adequately backed if necessary by the moral and material forces of other States.

III.

Once we have removed aggressive armaments and armaments which we may call offensive-defensive, it would seem that the level of armaments remaining in each country is not of international importance. This level would probably be determined by a consideration of such various circumstances as the following:

(a) Reasons for maintaining armaments:

- international and colonial obligations;
- prestige and tradition;
- internal security;
- influence of military factors and internal policy.

(b) Reasons for reducing armaments:

- budget economy;
- public opinion;
- example of reductions effected in foreign countries, etc.
GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.

I. The problem of the reduction of armaments is of a politico-technical nature, it is complex and takes the form of seeking a balance at each particular moment between natural forces which constantly vary. Its solution is therefore a continual process.

2. Its solution implies the existence of an international organisation which has its hand at all times on levers capable of restoring this complex equilibrium at any moment.

3. The organisation must be political and technical.

4. Methods must be empirical.

5. The immediate duty of the international organisation must be to abolish armies with aggressive possibilities (understanding the word “aggression” in the sense defined above) and to take measures to prevent their re-establishment.

6. The second duty of the organisation must be to examine in each particular case, by methods suited to such cases, the reasons which explain the existence of offensive-defensive armies (as defined above) and the means by which these armies may be rendered useless.

7. Once these two objects have been attained, the level of armaments in each country may be left to the play of natural forces, which in all probability will tend to reduce them. The only duty of the international organisation will then be to prevent this level of armaments in each country from exceeding the limits beyond which they would assume offensive-defensive or even aggressive proportions.

Annex II.

LIST OF QUESTIONS ARISING OUT OF THE MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED BY M. COBIAN.

(a) What are “armaments”?

(b) What is a “level of armaments”?

(c) Has the idea “level of armaments” an absolute and general value, or merely a relative value depending on the conditions of the State concerned and on the general situation at the moment?

(d) Even if this relativity be not considered, is it possible to establish a formula which will take into consideration all the factors which influence the level of armaments of a State:

- including potential armaments?
- excluding potential armaments?

(e) If such a formula is not practicable, is it possible to solve the problem in an empirical fashion by a study of each case in the light of the principles of Article 8 of the Covenant?

(f) Is there a method by which a limit of armaments can be established for each country at each moment, such that below this limit the armaments of the said State are a matter of no international concern?

(g) Is there a method by which it is possible to ascertain that a given force is organised in a purely defensive spirit (in whatever way it may come to be used in time of war), or alternatively in a spirit of aggression?

4.

(a) REPORT BY M. PAUL-BONCOUR ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL RELATING TO THE PERMANENT ORGAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE WORK OF DISARMAMENT.

Geneva, December 7th, 1925.

The mandate which the Committee had received from the Council was defined in the following resolution adopted by the Council on September 26th, 1925:

“The Council,

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

“Decides to refer the report, resolutions and minutes of the Assembly, of the Third Committee and of the Sub-Committee of the Third Committee to the Committee of the
Council, for examination, requesting it to meet as soon as possible during the interval between
the September and December sessions in order:

1. To examine the observations made during the Sixth Assembly relating
to the constitution and working of the Co-ordination Commission and to submit definite
proposals to the Council on the following questions:

(a) The composition and name of the Co-ordination Commission;
(b) Status of its different members;
(c) Procedure.

2. The Committee of the Council is requested to submit a report on this matter in
time for examination by the Council at its session in December.

After examining the questions raised in the documents referred to it by the Council in accord-
ance with the above resolution, the Committee has thought fit to submit to the Council the
following proposals with regard to the name, composition and procedure of the Commission
which is to prepare for the Conference on the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments.

With regard to the working of this Commission, the Committee wishes to put on record that,
in its opinion, the Commission should take into consideration the opinion of the Permanent
Advisory Commission and Joint Commission on any views expressed by the persons specially
qualified referred to in paragraphs 4 and 5 under heading III below.

The Committee has done me the honour to entrust me with the duty of explaining to the
Council the spirit underlying these proposals and of supplying any information or explanations
which the Council might wish for.

PROPOSALS RELATIVE TO THE NAME, COMPOSITION AND PROCEDURE OF THE PERMANENT ORGAN
OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE WORK OF DISARMAMENT.

I. Name.

The Commission will be entitled “Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference,
being a Commission to prepare for a Conference on the Reduction and Limitation of Arma-
ments.”

II. Composition.

1. The Commission will consist of:

(a) Representatives of States Members of the Council;
(b) Representatives of countries chosen amongst countries which, by reason of their
geographical situation, occupy a special position as regards the problem of disarmament and
which are not otherwise represented on the Commission.

2. Any State not represented on the Commission shall be entitled:

(a) To submit memoranda on matters in which it is specially interested;
(b) To be heard in support of these memoranda.

3. Moreover, the Commission will always have the right, in the case of special questions,
to call in the assistance of any State which, in the opinion of the Commission, may be
particularly interested in these questions.

4. If the constitution of the Council is altered during the proceedings of the Commission,
the Council may change the composition of the Commission in order to ensure the continuity of
its work.

III. Working of the Commission.

1. The Preparatory Commission will decide on the proposals for the Conference on the
Reduction and Limitation of Armaments to be submitted to the Council and will assure the control
and co-ordination of the work preparatory to the Conference. For that purpose it will be
empowered by the Council to obtain the co-operation and advice of the competent organisations
of the League. The latter, in their turn, may submit to it on their own initiative any suggestion
which they feel called upon to make with regard to the work in progress. This co-operation
will be effected as follows:

(a) With the Permanent Advisory Commission in the case of any questions relating to
the military, naval or air aspect of the question under consideration; and
(b) In respect of the economic aspect of these questions, with a Joint Commission,
constituted as follows:

Two members each of the Economic, Financial and Transit Organisations, to be
appointed by the Council after consultation with the Chairman of the respective
Committees;

Two members of the Employers’ Group and two members of the Workers’ Group of
the Governing Body of the International Labour Office appointed by the Governing Body.

The Joint Commission may call in other experts under the same conditions as provided
in the case of the Permanent Advisory Commission.
2. Under the standing authority of the President of the Council, the Chairman of the Preparatory Commission may request the Chairman of the Permanent Advisory Commission or the Joint Commission to assemble these Commissions on a given date.

3. The Preparatory Commission may at any time summon and hear the Chairman and Rapporteur of the Permanent Advisory Commission and of the Joint Commission to explain the views of their respective Commissions.

4. It may also summon and hear any persons whose special qualifications are calculated to facilitate its work on a given subject.

5. The authority referred to in sub-paragraphs 3 and 4 above is accorded to any sub-committees which it may establish within itself.


(b) REPORT OF M. PAUL-BONCOUR ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL ON THE SUBJECT OF THE LIST OF QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION BY THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION FOR THE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE.

Geneva, December 7th, 1925.

Under the terms of the Council resolution dated September 26th, 1925, the Committee of the Council received a mandate as follows:

1. To make the necessary studies for determining the questions which need to be submitted to a preparatory examination with a view to a possible Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments, and to draft definite proposals to be submitted to the Council on this subject.

2. The Committee of the Council is requested to submit a report on this matter in time for examination by the Council at its session in December.

The Committee of the Council has been unable to draw up a complete list of the questions which should be submitted for examination by the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference. Some of these questions were adopted unanimously, while others are still under discussion.

* * *

The Committee of the Council had before it:

1. A list of questions proposed by the representative of the British Empire (Annex I);
2. A list of questions submitted by the delegate of France (Annex II);
3. A memorandum (Document C.D.C.15) submitted to the delegate of Spain from which a list of questions has been drawn up (Annex III).

In the opinion of the delegate of Belgium, as the Committee had the previous day decided to recommend to the Council that any Government not represented on the Preparatory Commission might request that questions particularly affecting it should be examined, the same right pertains to Governments having the right to be represented on the Commission, and the lists in question, submitted by the British, French and Spanish Governments, should therefore all be retained and submitted in their entirety to the Council for examination.

In this spirit, the delegate of France agreed to the British and Spanish lists being studied in the text in which they were actually submitted.

The opinion expressed by the delegate of Belgium gave rise, however, to two objections:

The first, submitted by the delegate of the British Empire, to the effect that Governments that are not represented on the Preparatory Commission would have no other right than that of submitting a memorandum and supporting it, and that this right does not imply that of enlarging the programme of the Preparatory Commission. Other delegates, without discussing this interpretation, pointed out that the Commission would not be fulfilling its task unless it submitted to the Council definite proposals based on an agreed text. In consequence, the Committee requested the representatives of France and Great Britain to frame the list.

A first list has been examined. In this list the various questions submitted were grouped one after the other while maintaining the original text. During the examination of this list, differences came to light, on the one hand, relating to the order in which the questions were submitted and, on the other hand, to the principle underlying certain questions proposed by the delegate of France. The experts were then requested to recast the agreed text in order to arrive at a new basis of discussion, and on this basis the following questions were finally unanimously adopted.
Questions on which Agreement has been reached.

Question I.

What is to be understood by the expression “armaments”?

(a) Definition of the various factors, military, economic, geographical, etc., upon which the power of a country in time of war depends.

(b) Definition and special characteristics of the various factors which constitute the armaments of a country in time of peace; the different categories of armaments (military, naval and air), the methods of recruiting, training, organisations capable of immediate military employment, etc.

Question II.

(a) Is it practicable to limit the ultimate war strength of a country, or must any measures of disarmament be confined to the peace strength?

(b) What is to be understood by the expression “reduction and limitation of armaments”? The various forms which reduction or limitation may take in the case of land, sea and air forces; the relative advantages or disadvantages of each of the different forms or methods: for example, the reduction of the larger peace-time units or of their establishment and their equipment or of any immediately mobilisable forces; the reduction of the length of active service; the reduction of the quantity of military equipment; the reduction of the expenditure on national defence, etc.

Question III.

By what standards is it possible to measure the armaments of one country against the armaments of another, e.g., numbers, period of service, equipment, expenditure, etc.?

Question IV.

Can there be said to be “offensive” and “defensive” armaments? Is there any method of ascertaining whether a certain force is organised for purely defensive purposes (no matter what use may be made of it in time of war), or whether, on the contrary, it is constituted in a spirit of aggression?

Question V.

On what principle will it be possible to draw up a scale of armaments permissible to the various countries, taking into account, for example:

- Population,
- Resources,
- Geographical situation,
- Length and nature of maritime communications,
- Density and character of the railways,
- Vulnerability of the frontiers and of the important vital centres near the frontiers,
- The necessary delays, varying with different States, to transform peace armaments into war armaments.

Question VI.

(a) Is there any and, if so, what device by which civil and military aircraft can be distinguished for purposes of disarmament? If this is not practicable, how can the value of civil aircraft be computed in estimating the air strength of any country?

(b) Is it possible or desirable to apply the conclusions arrived at in (a) above to parts of aircraft and aircraft engines?

Question VII.

How is it possible to judge the military value of commercial fleets in estimating the naval armaments of a country?

Question VIII.

Admitting that disarmament depends on security, to what extent is regional disarmament possible in return for regional security; or is any scheme of disarmament impossible unless it is general? If regional disarmament is practicable, would it promote or lead up to general disarmament?

As regards the last two points on the French list, no agreement could be arrived at in spite of the attempts at conciliation which were made.

These attempts passed through the following phases:

A. Initial Text.

"(a) Consideration of the prospects, thanks to the previous establishment of plans of action and of economic and financial assistance, in pursuance of Article 16 of the Covenant—"
of re-establishing a relative equilibrium between the different countries, as regards their means of industrial and economic mobilisation and the rapidity of such mobilisation.

"(b) Examination of the principle according to which no Power should have the right to maintain armaments susceptible, in the event of its committing an act of aggression, of placing at its disposal forces superior to those which the State which was the victim of the aggression together with the League of Nations could unite in opposition to it, either by virtue of Article 16 of the Covenant or through the application of the regional agreements provided for in Article 21 of the Covenant."

The representative of the British Empire having declared that these two questions stated in too tentative a form the problem of assistance for an attacked State, the principle of which had been laid down in the Covenant of the League of Nations itself, certain experts drew up by common agreement the following text:

B. "(a) The previous establishment of plans of action and of economic and financial assistance, in pursuance of Article 16 of the Covenant, in such a way as to assure to a State attacked means superior to those of its aggressor as regards industrial and economic mobilisation and the rapidity of such mobilisation.

"(b) Application of the principle according to which no Power should have the right to maintain armaments susceptible, in the event of its committing an act of aggression, of placing at its disposal forces superior to those which the State which was the victim of the aggression together with the League of Nations could unite in opposition to it, either by virtue of Article 16 of the Covenant or through the application of the regional agreements provided for in Article 21 of the Covenant."

The representative of the British Empire, supported by the representative of Sweden, raised serious objections to this text, and asked that it should in any case be drawn up in an interrogative form, and on much more general lines. He then put forward as a suggestion the following text:

C. "What measures should be taken to make Article 16 of the Covenant effective against the aggressor?"

This proposal was subsequently withdrawn by its author. In this connection, the Swedish delegate declared that he would have preferred that the question should not be raised, but that he would have accepted this text.

As agreement had still not been arrived at, the delegate of Belgium, in the course of semi-official negotiations with the delegate of the British Empire, proposed the following text:

D. "(a) With a view to enabling comparisons to be made between peace-time armaments, to what extent is it possible, under the regime of Article 16 of the Covenant, to supply a State which is the victim of aggression with the necessary economic and financial assistance to ensure its defence by making good the insufficiency of its resources in the face of an aggressor who is placed in a superior position by his economic equipment and by the fact that preparation has been made for the aggression?

"(b) How can reductions and limitations of armaments be calculated so that the reduction of a State's forces should be compensated for without any doubt by the aid of those which could, in the event of aggression, intervene rapidly either by virtue of Article 16 of the Covenant or by virtue of the regional agreements provided for in Article 21 of the Covenant?"

This text was not, however, acceptable to the delegate of the British Empire, to whom the delegates of Belgium and France eventually submitted the following proposal by way of compromise:

E. "In order to enable comparisons to be made between peace-time armaments, to what extent is it possible:

"(a) Under the regime of Article 16 of the Covenant, to supply a State which is the victim of an aggression with the economic and financial assistance necessary to ensure its defence?

"(b) Under the regime of Article 16 of the Covenant, or under that of the regional agreements provided for in Article 21, to supply it with the necessary military assistance for the same purpose?

"How will the effectiveness of this aid be taken into account in calculating reductions and limitation of armaments?"

As this last proposal was not accepted, the Committee of the Council could but transmit the question to the Council for examination, after the delegate of Belgium had read the following declaration, to which the delegates of France and Czechoslovakia adhered:

"Belgium cannot understand that a plan for the reduction and limitation of armaments should be drawn up without taking into account the nature, extent and promptitude of the aid which a State against which an act of aggression is committed might receive.

"If the investigation of this question is not included now in the scheme of preparatory work, Belgium formally reserves the right to demand its inclusion at a later date."