LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

DOCUMENTS

of the

PREPARATORY COMMISSION FOR THE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE

entrusted with the

PREPARATION FOR THE CONFERENCE FOR THE REDUCTION AND LIMITATION OF ARMAMENTS

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PART I.

WORK OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION
REPORT OF M. BENES, ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL ON SEPTEMBER 16TH, 1926.

COMPOSITION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION FOR THE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE.

As the Secretary-General has reminded us, the constitution of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference provides that the Council may change the composition of the Commission in the event of the composition of the Council itself changing. The Council may now wish to take account of the changes which have been introduced into the Council through the last election. The first change, which is automatic, is that the new Members will henceforward be represented on the Preparatory Commission. Among those Members there are some who are already members of the Commission. There is no need for the Council to take a special decision on this subject.

As far as Members are concerned which form part of the Commission in their capacity as Members of the Council, and which must be considered as outgoing members of the Commission, I am sure that I am interpreting the wishes of my colleagues in expressing the opinion that the co-operation of these States is necessary in order to assure the aims which the Council had in view in setting up the Preparatory Commission. The increase in the number of members of the Commission entailed by these proposals will amount to three.

In these circumstances, I propose that the Council should adopt the following resolution:

"The Council decides to request the following States: Brazil, Spain, Sweden and Uruguay, outgoing Members of the Council and of the Preparatory Commission, to continue to give their valuable co-operation to the Commission."
REPORT OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE TO THE ASSEMBLY.

Rapporteur: H.E. M. Paul-Boncour (France).

After taking note of the negotiations at that time in progress with a view to the conclusion of arbitration conventions and of treaties of mutual security, and anticipating the successful conclusion of these negotiations, the Assembly, at its sixth ordinary session, decided that it could ask the Council to proceed immediately to preparatory studies for the organisation of a conference on the reduction and limitation of armaments.

In taking this step on the proposal of its Third Committee, it fully realised that these studies would necessarily take a considerable time in view of the wide scope and the complicated nature of a problem which had hitherto never been approached.

It hoped that in this way, when political conditions permitted — the preparatory studies having already been carried out — a conference for the reduction and limitation of armaments could usefully be convened.

In the Third Committee's opinion, this step was a wise one and these hopes will not prove vain. After hearing the statement made by M. Loudon, the Chairman of the Preparatory Commission to which the Council entrusted the investigations called for by the sixth ordinary session of the Assembly, on the state of this Commission's work and also of that of its technical Sub-Commissions, and having regard also to the fact that the situation has become more favourable by the ratification of the Locarno Agreements and Germany's admission to the League of Nations, the Third Committee recognised that a conference on the limitation of armaments can and should be convened.

Differences of opinion, or, more exactly, apprehensions, have been manifested as to when the technical preparations will be complete and consequently as to when the Preparatory Commission can draw up the programme of the Conference and when the Conference itself can be convened.

Nevertheless, the work has been pursued with such energy and has reached such a stage of development that the Third Committee believes that it will be possible to draw up the programme of the Conference at the beginning of next year, and accordingly proposes that the Assembly should congratulate those who have taken part in this work.

It will then be for the Council to fix the date of convening the Conference. In this connection it should be pointed out that, while great progress has been made with regard to security, thanks to the Locarno Agreements, this progress only affects one part of the continent of Europe.

For this reason it appeared necessary to state that the limitation and reduction of armaments should “correspond to existing conditions in regard to regional and general security”. Furthermore, there can be no question of solving the problem of disarmament at the first attempt. As security increases, disarmament will increase. The Disarmament Conference will therefore only be the first of a series and, even apart from the importance of the reductions and limitations which it may bring about, it must in any case have the immense advantage of transforming into an international contract the degree of armament of the different States, and of thus putting a stop for a definite period to any possibility of competition in armaments.

In these circumstances there can be no objection in principle to contemplating the possibility of holding a conference before the eighth ordinary session of the Assembly. Several members of the Third Committee, however, have emphasised the grave disappointment which would be felt by public opinion if, after it had been announced for a definite date, it proved impossible to hold the Conference at the date in question. The Third Committee duly weighed this drawback and made allowance for it, to the extent of recommending that the Conference should be held before the eighth ordinary session of the Assembly, “unless material difficulties render this impossible”, and it emphasises the considerable importance of surmounting such difficulties and accelerating the work of the technical Commissions, which must first be completed before the Preparatory Commission can usefully meet. The Third Committee has therefore decided to propose to the Assembly the adoption of a resolution asking the Council to convene a first conference before the eighth ordinary session of the Assembly, unless material difficulties should render this impossible, in order to agree upon the first stage of the work of disarmament.

Resolution adopted by the Assembly on September 24th, 1926.

“The Assembly takes note of the report submitted to it by the Secretariat and the very full information furnished to the Third Committee by the President of the Preparatory Commission on the work of that Commission, its technical Sub-Commissions A and B, and the Joint Commission.
"It expresses its complete satisfaction with the work performed and thanks those who have contributed to it.

"Being desirous that the investigations, in regard to which the Assembly itself took the initiative in its resolution of September 25th, 1925, should be brought to a successful conclusion as soon as possible, it requests the Council to call upon the Preparatory Commission to take steps to hasten the completion of the technical work and thus be able to draw up, at the beginning of next year, the programme for a Conference on the limitation and reduction of armaments corresponding to existing conditions in regard to regional and general security, and it asks the Council to convene this conference before the eighth ordinary session of the Assembly, unless material difficulties render this impossible."
MINUTES OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION FOR THE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE

Held at Geneva, September 22nd and 27th, 1926.

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FIRST MEETING (PUBLIC).

Held at Geneva, Wednesday, September 22nd, 1926, at 10 a.m.

Chairman : M. Loudon (Netherlands).

Present :
M. F. Perez ............................ Argentine.
M. L. de Brouckère ............................ Belgium.
Brazil.
Viscount Cecil of Chelwood ............................ British Empire.
M. D. Bouroff ............................ Bulgaria.
M. E. Villegas ............................ Chile.
China.
M. Urrutia ............................ Colombia.
M. F. Veverka ............................ Czechoslovakia.
M. R. Holsti ............................ Finland.
M. Paul-Boncour ............................ France.
Count Bernstorff ............................ Germany.
General de Marinis ............................ Italy.
M. N. Sato ............................ Japan.
M. J. Loudon ............................ Netherlands.
M. Debski ............................ Poland.
M. P. Comnène ............................ Roumania.
M. Guerrero ............................ Salvador.
M. Fotitch ............................ Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.
M. Cobian ............................ Spain.
M. Hennings ............................ Sweden.
Mr. Hugh S. Gibson ............................ United States of America.
Uruguay.
1. Opening of the Session.

The Chairman: [Translation] The present session is to some extent an extraordinary session. It acts as a connecting link between that held in May and that which will be held after some months, when the reports of the Sub-Commissions will be presented.

You will probably have taken notice of the exposé which I made before the Third Committee of the Assembly (see P. V. 5 of the Third Committee). You understand the very considerable work done, particularly by Sub-Commission A. You realise that at its meetings everyone knows the absolute necessity of working as quickly as possible. It is a propitious moment, as has been repeated, and we all realise this. The events of Locarno — and I cannot say this without thinking of our great Protocol, which, though sleeping, is none the less alive — and, after Locarno, the entry of Germany into the League of Nations have produced an undoubted calm.

We are now fully aware of the need of working as quickly as possible, for we want to finish, and in the resolution which the Third Committee will present to the Assembly this will be very clearly emphasised. A sentence has been added to this resolution expressing the hope that the Disarmament Conference might meet before the eighth ordinary session of the Assembly, unless material difficulties rendered this impossible. It is evident that such difficulties may arise, but, even in such a case, public opinion would have no right to be aroused provided that we are decided to bring to an end the work which has been entrusted to us.

I should like to recall that, as a result of the recent vote of the Assembly, we have been enriched and we have in our midst three new members. I feel sure that I am expressing your feelings in welcoming the delegates of China, Colombia and Salvador. I am sure that these gentlemen will be ready to participate in our work with all the fervour that has characterised it hitherto. As they enter the Commission at a time when the work has already reached a certain stage, I hope that they will be prepared to begin to deal with the problem at the point where we have arrived.

We are happy in having the continued collaboration of the States which have left the Council. We have in our midst the representative of Sweden, and I am very happy to learn that he will continue to take part in the work of our Commission.

We have had a communication from Spain as follows:

"Your kind telegram received relative goodwill Council League of Nations. Spanish Government honoured to agree to continue its collaboration in the work of the Preparatory Commission Disarmament Conference."

We learn that M. Cobian is en route for Geneva.

I have a word of welcome to offer to M. Sato, who is replacing M. Matsuda, appointed Ambassador at Rome.

I have also the honour to inform you of the following telegram of the Brazilian Government to the Secretary-General:

"I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency’s telegram conveying the invitation to the States at present represented on the Preparatory Commission for Disarmament to continue to lend their aid to this Commission. Thanking you for this invitation in the name of my Government, I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that Brazil regrets its inability to participate in the work of the said Commission. I take this opportunity, ” etc.

M. Perez (Argentina): [Translation] I should like to state that Argentine in particular regrets the absence of its neighbour Brazil.


Mr. Gibson (United States of America): The American delegation welcomes the opportunity that is afforded by this plenary meeting of the Preparatory Commission to review the work thus far accomplished, and to consider what can be done to contribute to an early and successful conclusion of our task. Our immediate task is to consider how far we have progressed and what, in the light of experience, should be our future course. I venture to submit certain suggestions which, in the considered opinion of the American delegation, will, if accepted, contribute to the successful conclusion of our labours and to the achievement of definite results.

Recognising the complexity of the problems involved, the Preparatory Commission was set up to apply what might be called the laboratory method to a study of general principles.
upon which further steps could be taken toward disarmament. We are seeking merely to lay the foundation for actual agreements for the limitation and reduction of armaments. I think we are all agreed that one of the essential merits of this form of conference is that it is calculated to permit an unbiased objective examination of all phases of the disarmament problem uninfluenced by the necessity for safeguarding or reconciling special national interests. The American delegation has always assumed that our essential task was to draw up a clear statement of the problem and the methods of approaching it, leaving to a final conference or conferences to take into account the requirements of special national interests. This was clearly indicated in the resolution of the Assembly of the League of Nations adopted on September 25th, 1925, in which it was stated that the Assembly requested 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.”

Thus, it would seem that, from the very beginning, an effort was made to confine the work of the Preparatory Commission to exploring the problem of disarmament and to leave questions of national interests to be dealt with at a later Conference, when countries not here represented will have an equal opportunity to present their views.

In our last session we referred a number of questions to our technical Sub-Commissions, and it was laid down in the most definite manner that they were to report to us upon the purely technical aspects of those questions. The direction to the Sub-Commissions was as follows:

“The Commission refers to its technical Sub-Commissions the points stated below in order that it may be informed on the technical aspects of the questions submitted to it by the Council. The Commission is alone competent to deal with the political aspects of these questions in the same way that it has sole responsibility for the final answers to be given to these questions.”

I think it was generally believed at the time that this was sufficiently clear, but Sub-Commission A appears consistently to have approached questions both from the political and military points of view, and the American delegation cannot but feel that this has led to confusion and has detracted from the value of the Sub-Commission's work. This meeting affords a convenient opportunity for us to remedy the situation and I venture to submit for the consideration of the Commission two points calling for our attention. First: Sub-Commission A has considered the effects of political and economic factors on the questions referred to it for technical military, naval or air advice, although both economic and political factors are reserved for other bodies. Second: in the proceedings of Sub-Commission A there has been an effort to limit the views embodied in its reports to majority opinions and, in many instances, the views of a minority with the majority abstaining. There has been a consequent failure to record in the reports thus far drafted, or to prepare for presentation to this Commission, the divergent views which have developed. There can be no effective approach to disarmament until all possible methods have been carefully explored. If the Preparatory Commission is to act in the light of adequate information, the advantages and disadvantages of each method should be clearly stated, and, where no single method is unanimously accepted, the divergent views should be submitted in a report. This would obviate the present tendency to state merely those views which command the greatest number of votes and leave this Commission without knowledge of other views unless those holding them make minority reports.

The American delegation believes that this situation can be remedied and further progress facilitated by specific directions addressed to Sub-Commission A to the effect that this Commission desires to receive replies to the questions assigned to it by the Council on expert technical information without regard to political or economic considerations; that, if the views of the various delegations are divergent, we wish to receive all such views with adequate explanations. Unless some such directions are given, I feel apprehensive as to the value of the report which Sub-Commission A will eventually draw up, as it will not be a purely technical report. And only if we have at our disposal a sound technical report on the various questions which have been referred to Sub-Commission A shall we have a safe foundation for taking the next step of considering the various factors of the problem.

Therefore, the American delegation submits the following proposal:

“With regard to the questions or parts of questions which have not so far been answered by Sub-Commission A, the Preparatory Commission directs that the former Sub-Commission shall answer those questions on purely technical grounds, uninfluenced
by political or economic considerations, and that all divergent views on each question, accompanied by a clear statement of the relative advantages and disadvantages of each, shall be furnished to the Preparatory Commission in its report.

"With regard to the questions already dealt with by Sub-Commission A at first reading, the Preparatory Commission directs that the former Sub-Commission at second reading shall revise the answers to those questions in such a manner that these answers shall be prepared on purely technical grounds, uninfluenced by political or economic considerations, and that all divergent views on each question, accompanied by a clear statement of the relative advantages and disadvantages of each, shall be furnished to the Preparatory Commission in its report."

We are all of us anxious to achieve positive results. The American delegation has consistently kept in mind the practical objects for which we are all working, namely, actual agreements for the limitation of armaments. We are all of us in agreement that it is desirable to reach such actual agreements.

The American delegation believes that the acceptance of its proposals will not only tend greatly to expedite the satisfactory conclusions of our labours but will also give us an adequate foundation for the next phase of our work, and, finally, that it will render possible the calling of a further Conference or Conferences on the Limitation and Reduction of Armaments at a much earlier date than would otherwise be possible, but I believe we all realise that we cannot hope to reach such agreements until we have satisfactorily disposed of the task which has been entrusted to us.

General De Marinis (Italy): [Translation] The Preparatory Commission finds before it a decision adopted by the Third Committee, which will without doubt soon be ratified by the Assembly. In consequence of this decision, we have to hasten our work as much as possible, in order to reach such actual agreements for the limitation of armaments. We are all of us in agreement that it is desirable to reach such actual agreements.

In spite of this, and although this Sub-Commission has held a considerable number of meetings, it has much work to do in order to reach the presentation of its report.

I shall deal in particular with the work of Sub-Commission A. I must recall that, on many occasions in the course of discussions, I have intervened in order to shorten the work and to reach conclusions as soon as possible. I even proposed certain modifications of procedure, in order to have texts mutually agreed to before commencing certain discussions. In spite of this, and although this Sub-Commission has held a considerable number of meetings, it has much work to do in order to reach the presentation of its report.

I heard with very great interest the suggestion made by Mr. Gibson concerning the purely technical character necessary for the answers of Sub-Commission A. In this connection, I must state that many of the questions raised are essentially political ones. As a technical expert, I intervened on several occasions in the discussion in order to ask my colleagues not to refer certain questions to Sub-Commission A, and experience had proved that I was right. The technicians have frequently found themselves confronted by extremely difficult situations. Having the tendency to answers in a purely technical way on questions which were essentially political. Sub-Commission A, therefore, frequently wasted precious hours in debating on the question of which were the political parts and which were the technical in the questions before it. It would therefore be extremely dangerous to ask Sub-Commission A to make a division at second reading between the political and technical parts of the questions already studied. This would mean reopening the discussion, which would necessitate as much time as at the first reading. They should leave the report as it had been established by Sub-Commission A at first reading, exception being made, of course, as regards small formal amendments which might be added to it, it being clearly understood that every delegation had the right to add to each proposal in the report any reservations which it thought necessary. It is this point of view that I have always maintained in Sub-Commission A, but unfortunately my colleagues have not always agreed with me. In a spirit of conciliation, everyone made an effort to reach agreement. Many times I declared that agreement could not be reached, and I asked that the Preparatory Commission should be informed of the divergent opinions. I therefore proposed that Sub-Commission A be instructed that every delegation has the right to send to the Preparatory Commission its reserves or observations as to the decisions taken by the majority, but it should be understood that this does not authorise other delegations to put forward counter-reservations. One can doubtless understand the scruples of technicians to whom an extremely vast problem has been entrusted. Many questions on the Questionnaire produce differences of opinion on the General Staff of the same country. How much more noticeable must these differences be in a Commission where so many States are represented!

As regards certain observations of Mr. Gibson, I venture to recall to him that, if some delegations have at times not been able to make their point of view felt in the decision taken by a small majority, the Minutes of these discussions can serve as evidence of their points of view.

While quite optimistic as to the approximate date of the closure of the work of Sub-Commission A, I doubt whether it can be contemplated before the beginning of November.
As regards Sub-Commission B, I do not know whether it will be ready to present its report at that date. Moreover, we have to consider the point of view of the Secretariat of the League of Nations. We must take account of the fact that Governments must have the necessary time to consider the reports which will be transmitted to them, and to send their answers. The Secretariat might be able to give us certain information in this direction.

Finally, I am anxious that it should not be supposed that I am trying to raise difficulties. My Government is second to none in desiring the meeting of this Conference for the Reduction of Armaments, but that does not prevent me, as member of this Commission and as a military expert, from saying frankly what my opinion is, and to point out what must not be lost sight of before undertaking certain obligations which would be very difficult to carry out.

To sum up, I propose that the Preparatory Commission asks the new members of the Sub-Commissions to collaborate in the work at the point which it has now reached, without reopening the discussion upon decisions already taken; that it should ask the Sub-Commissions to allow delegations every opportunity to offer reservations; that it should ask the Secretariat of the League of Nations to give us information as to possible dates of the Conference in order that we may fix this date at any rate approximately.

Mr. Gibson (United States of America): I ask your indulgence for intervening once more in this discussion. I have listened with the greatest respect and attention to the remarks made by the honourable delegate for Italy, a respect which is due not only to the high authority he has always exercised to such good purpose in our Councils but also because I know that no one has made a greater or more consistent effort to expedite the progress of our work. I know that we have the same desire; we both are seeking to achieve the same end, but from a different point of view. The Secretary General of your delegation, General de Marinis, has always interpreted them as seeking to place upon Sub-commission A any measure of blame for the delay in our work, for nothing has been further from my thought. If we must apportion out blame, I wish the Sub-Commissions to confine themselves to their answers. The Secretariat might be able to give us certain information in this direction.

I question the desirability of one suggestion of General de Marinis, namely, to continue the work as it is now, because it would be fruitless and profitless for us to send back the questions to be examined in a new light, as each delegation would maintain its point of view, and we should get exactly the same report, which would only add to the delay. I am very reluctant to believe that there would be such a rigid attitude in examining these questions if we gave more precise directions to the Sub-Commission. I persist in looking upon our labours not as a contest but as a study, where all reasonable proposals and arguments will be listened to with respect; and if our Sub-Commission deals with purely technical questions only, I feel confident that it can reach agreement, and that the great obstacle to agreement is the fact that there are elements, political, economic and other, which do not come within their particular sphere and that it would greatly facilitate the reaching of agreement if we relieve them of this very confusing difficulty.

I do not expect we shall be able to achieve unanimity in our reports; in fact, one of the greatest conceivable values that our work can have is to bring out divergent points of view and show how they have developed and what needs they respond to. But I do think that, in view of the character of our study, it is better to have these different points of view presented on a footing of equality as commanding the same respectful consideration from the Preparatory Commission.

From a psychological point of view, there is something inferior in the presentation of a minority report or reservations, and we must obviate this by a joint presentation. It rests with the Preparatory Commission to accept or reject, but Sub-Commission A might very properly report on the advantages and disadvantages of the method of each point of view for us to consider. On fundamentals, I am entirely in agreement with General de Marinis, that what we are after is to facilitate our work and expedite it as much as is consistent with doing good work and producing something which can lead to results and to the realisation of the desire for an early Conference. For that reason, I trust that my colleagues will examine with friendly consideration the proposals I have made, with a view to seeing whether they would not really facilitate the conclusion of our task.

M. de Brouckère (Belgium): [Translation] We have all heard with the greatest interest the proposals of Mr. Gibson. We understand his wishes, and I think that we are unanimous in sharing them. When Mr. Gibson told us that the report would be incomplete if it merely gave the technical opinions of a majority, he was undoubtedly right, and we have to find means which will allow us to expose all the technical aspects of the problem otherwise than by the addition of minority reports to the principal report.
If I am right in my information, this is one of the very tasks which Sub-Commission A was asked to undertake, and Mr. Gibson would here have full satisfaction.

When he told us that the task of Sub-Commission A was technical and not at all political, we entirely agreed with him. We should be failing in a very definite duty if we abandoned any of our political responsibilities in favour of any sub-committee. These responsibilities are ours. If there would be a lapse from duty to delegate them, and we have no right to do it.

If the honourable representative of the United States wishes us once more to emphasise clearly what we have already emphasised at our last session, in my opinion clearly enough, I am perfectly ready to do it. I shall only ask that the resolution which we adopt and which will reaffirm our intention, already expressed, to keep our political responsibilities, should be drafted in such a way that it should not seem to imply an affirmation by us that Sub-Commission A has failed in the work which we had given it to do. As far as I know — and I should like to add, Mr. Chairmann, that I have had no official information, and that my colleagues are probably in the same state — Sub-Commission A has not only accomplished the mandate which we entrusted to it most seriously and conscientiously, but the military men who sat upon it have taken care to behave as military men, just as we politicians have to behave as politicians. If I am well informed, they have not shrunk from ground which was strange to them and on which ordinarily soldiers do not like to wander.

If it is feared that, in a part of their task which it appears is already accomplished, they have not followed our instructions sufficiently scrupulously; if it is feared that they have not sufficiently separated the political from the technical aspects, I think that, before passing judgment upon their work — of which, I repeat, we have no official cognisance — we must remember the circumstances. When we spoke of the technical aspect of the questions, we gave this expression a reasonable and not an absolute meaning. You know that there is a very old problem which arises in all sciences and in all intellectual exercises. It is the exact determination of the bounds of the subjects. In the more advanced sciences, when the work of the enlightened has produced thousands and thousands of discoveries, the problem of limits has always remained. If we were tempted to ask the military men to separate the technical aspect from the other aspects by a perfectly clean line, with the scrupulous attention to details which a chemist would have in preparing a substance in his laboratory, we ought to remember that, in the laboratories, chemists have succeeded in preparing substances very nearly pure but that perfection has not yet been realised.

If, therefore, we add to the many tasks which Sub-Commission A has accomplished that of determining with scrupulous care the difference between the technical and the political, I fear that we shall have given them something impossible. And, gentlemen, should we ever find a living expert sufficiently detached from the affaires of this world to be never influenced in his judgment by any political or national influence? Let us remember the debates at our last session. We had to choose at a given moment between two ways of conducting our technical work. We asked ourselves whether to have recourse to experts chosen outside Governments or experts designated by Governments. We accepted the second method as most of the delegations very strongly insisted on it. This method seemed to show that the work which we had to do even in the technical world, even in the scientific world, could not rest entirely apart from political contingencies, with which we should have to reckon ultimately.

Gentlemen, I should like to add two further observations. I entirely agree with General de Marinis when he told us not to ask Sub-Commission A to begin its work over again. If we ask it to do so, the same causes will produce the same effects and we should receive the same report; therefore we must not ask it to do so, for we are all equally anxious not to waste time. It would be truly disastrous if we were to say, after such long enquiries, that we had asked the questions badly, that the answers had been badly given and that everything must be recommenced. We should be giving the impression that the work to which we have been called was a sort of Penelope's web, which never attained completion.

One final consideration: a committee which has asked another to present a report, be it technical or not, has the right, if not satisfied with it, to send it back. But it must, in order to send it back, have already received it, but we have received nothing. We are debating on the value of work which has not been put before us. Under these circumstances, after having affirmed once more — as Mr. Gibson has suggested, and as it seems wise to me — the principles along which the work must be done, would not the simplest thing be to allow Sub-Commission A to continue the work it has begun so bravely and to await the results of its work?

M. Perez (Argentine): [Translation] Mr. Gibson's proposal appears to me, from a general point of view, to be acceptable. I believe that, as regards this proposal, one might recall the Latin proverb bis repetita placent. Certainly, we clearly specified at our first session that Sub-Commission A should deal solely with technical questions, and that the political side, as M. de Brückère has just said, was entirely for the Preparatory Commission.
However, I believe that the proposal of the representative of the United States can be accepted, with one modification. In my opinion, the first paragraph of this proposal could be kept as it is. The second does not appear to me capable of our consideration, as we have no report before us. I think that it is essential, in order to escape from the dilemma in which we are placed, to have some sort of report, though waiting for a perfect and complete report solving all the vast questions which have been put before the technical Sub-Commissions. Such a report would allow us to make our studies and our conclusions.

I therefore propose to amend the first paragraph of Mr. Gibson's proposal in the following manner:

"With regard to the answers to the questions submitted to Sub-Commission A, the Preparatory Commission directs that the former Sub-Commission shall answer."

I believe, moreover, that the second paragraph might be eliminated.

M. COMNENÉ (Roumania): [Translation] After having heard the suggestions made by our honourable colleague Mr. Gibson and by General de Marinis, I do not think that there is a very profound difference between their two opinions. It appears to me that the very important suggestion that it would be convenient to retain Mr. Gibson's proposal would not be such as to render the work like a Penelope's web, as the honourable M. de Brouckère recently suggested. We must, in my opinion, ask that, in the report submitted to us, mention should not only be made of the opinion of the majority, which will certainly be the basis of a discussion, but likewise the opinion of the minority. Thus the Preparatory Commission will be able to take exactly into account the work of Sub-Commission A and, when necessary, amend its proposals, taking ultimate account of the opinion of the minority.

Gentlemen, I should like to be allowed to state that I have been very impressed by hearing here, as in the Third Committee, words of recrimination on the subject of the work accomplished. We ought, on the contrary, to declare our satisfaction at the work accomplished. Some extent sifted the questions of a technical character and questions of a political character. It has been stated, but the fact of having stated it surely constitutes some progress. Do we not see the possibility of making progress in our work, since henceforth we have to some extent sifted the questions of a technical character and questions of a political character, some of them having to come back to us with the technical advice of experts, others being within our own competence? Consequently, gentlemen, I think that no scepticism need appear here. We ought, on the contrary, to declare our satisfaction at the work accomplished. Scepticism expressed by us might arm public opinion against our own institution, against the League of Nations.

Viscount Cecil of Chelwood (Great Britain): As the Commission is aware, we have been furnished with a very valuable report (Part I, Annex I, page 33) describing the position of affairs before the Sub-Commissions, and I think that, so far as this Commission is concerned, that is the really important document which should guide us in our deliberations. It will be seen from that document that both Sub-Commissions A and B have a good deal to do and, in the view of the author of the report, it is exceedingly doubtful whether either of them will be able to report before the beginning of November.

The report suggests that, if Sub-Commission B is able to refer the greater number of its questions to some technical sub-body, it might assist matters. It also suggests (which I hope is not the view of this Commission) that it will be necessary to wait for the conclusions of the Committee of the Council on the question of the construction of the Covenant, which adds another uncertainty to our programme of time. It is rather important that we should begin to consider what exactly is our programme, quite apart from what may have been said in the Third Committee of the Assembly or, indeed, in the Assembly itself, for this body cannot get rid of its independent responsibility and should be a body that is not, strictly speaking, dependent on the Council or the Assembly of the League of Nations. Therefore I shall have a practical suggestion to make at the end of my observations as to how that can best be done.

I heartily agree with what M. Comnène said as to the value of the work of Sub-Commission A. It has been extraordinarily good and devoted work and many of the conclusions it has reached will be of great assistance. But I agree with Mr. Gibson that it is of the utmost importance that all political consideration should be kept out of its deliberations. I am not sure that we should not do well to hear now, or at any rate as soon as possible, to withdraw such a question as Question VII from the Sub-Commission altogether; because it is perfectly evident that no answer can be furnished to the question of how far regional agreements will justify regional disarmament except by the consideration of very important political questions. I do not see how it is possible for a technical body to give at this stage any useful answer to that question.
I am heartily in agreement with the first paragraph of the American proposal. But I should like to go further and give a direction to Sub-Commission A not to take any divisions and votes at all. It is really of no assistance to us to know that seven States voted one way and five another way, and that there were ten abstentions. What we want to know is the opinions of the expert gentlemen who compose the Sub-Commission. If there is agreement, that is admirable; if there is divergence, we want to know who holds which opinion, and we can then judge of the value of the opinions when we come to make our final preparations for the Conference.

If I may say so, I think Sub-Commission A has a little mistaken its functions. It is merely there to give us technical advice. It is not a body of itself, like the Permanent Advisory Commission of the League of Nations, which, of course, is a body having a definite corporate unity. That is not the position of Sub-Commission A. It is merely there to help us on technical questions and we want all the assistance we can get from it. We do not want one section of the matter ignored; we do not want one section put aside. We want the whole of its opinions as far as it can give them to us. If it is unanimous, it can state it much more shortly and effectively. If it is not unanimous, let us have the different opinions. Let us impress on it the necessity of avoiding the rather long discussions which I have noticed in reading the Minutes — discussions not so much with a view to reaching an agreement as with the object of securing a voting victory. That is the only criticism I have to make regarding Sub-Commission A.

Very little has been said about Sub-Commission B; but, as an engineer would say, I rather think that Sub-Commission B is the governing gradient, and that Sub-Commission A is very likely to finish its work before Sub-Commission B, which does not appear to have started very much of its work. In order to estimate our future programme, which I hope we shall take steps towards doing this morning, we ought to consider Sub-Commission B very seriously. At the same time, I entirely agree with M. Comnène as to the vital importance of the work in which we are engaged and its enormous complexity and difficulty. We are doing a great thing. If we can secure disarmament, we shall have got a guarantee for peace. If we cannot secure disarmament, then the whole structure of peace and of the League of Nations will rest on very uncertain foundations; at least, that is my view. Therefore this is the most important work the League has yet been engaged upon and we must not expect unduly to hasten it.

Certainly, there should be no delay. Equally, there should be no undue haste. When this matter is debated to-morrow in the Assembly, I shall have to say that I think it very doubtful whether the Assembly will do well to attempt to fix any definite date for the final Conference. It is absolutely vital to the success of the Conference that the preparation should be complete before we go into it. Anyone with any experience of international conferences will agree when I say that conferences succeed in direct ratio to the preparations which have been made before they take place; and unless we have a really full preparation before we enter the Conference, we have no right to expect success from that Conference. Therefore, I shall be very strongly against any attempt to be unduly hasty.

We have already one example in our own procedure of the unfortunate result of undue haste. Had we taken a little more trouble and time in drafting the questions we submitted to Sub-Commission A, we might have lost a day or two in the operation of drafting those questions carefully, but we should have gained weeks in their consideration by Sub-Commission A.

Now I come to my practical proposal, which is that a very small sub-committee of this body should be appointed to co-ordinate and supervise the order of the work of this Commission and of its Sub-Commissions. It is quite impossible for this body to do any work of that kind. We are much too numerous. A body or over twenty members cannot possibly meet at short intervals, whenever it is necessary to deal with the actual practical work of co-ordinating the labours of the Sub-Commissions. I think that, before this body meets for its final session, it will turn out to be essential that some kind of agenda should be prepared by somebody for the consideration of this Commission, so that we shall have orderly work and not chaotic discussion. That, again, will require very careful preparation by some kind of sub-committee, and I think the time has come when we should appoint that sub-committee, M. de Brouckère, in his exceedingly interesting speech, said it was impossible to distinguish scientifically between political and technical questions. I entirely agree with him; but, there again, if there was a small body which could give indications from time to time as to what was the real point that we desired our technical advisers to devote their attention to, I am sure we should get on much more quickly.

Therefore I venture to say, as far as the American proposal is concerned, that I am in favour of the first paragraph. But I would ask Mr. Gibson to consider carefully whether the second paragraph would not add to the delay if we are going to ask Sub-Commission A to review its work and to divide that on which it has already reached conclusions into what is political and what is technical. I think we have to take them for what they are worth,
as they have been formulated. As to the first paragraph, as I say, I entirely agree, and I would like to add some words indicating that we do not want votes to be taken; but that what we want is opinion and advice. I should like to make the last sentence read:

"And that no vote should be taken on any question but that all divergent views on each question, accompanied by a clear statement of the relative advantages and disadvantages of each, should be furnished to the Preparatory Commission in its report."

I make this suggestion for Mr. Gibson’s consideration.

As for myself, I propose that a Committee of this Commission be appointed to co-ordinate and supervise the order of work of this Commission and its Sub-Commissions, that such Committee consist of not more than six members, with power to meet at any place convenient to its members. I attach the utmost importance to limiting the numbers to six; indeed, unless the Commission is prepared to do that, I would withdraw the proposal altogether. If they want a larger body than six, I am sure we should be wasting our time in appointing it, but if they are prepared to appoint a body of that kind, I am sure it would facilitate the work of this Commission, of the Sub-Commissions and of the ultimate Conference itself.

Mr. GIBSON (United States of America): I have listened with great interest to the debate, and I find myself in the presence of rather an embarrassment of riches. I do feel that this discussion has been of value, and I begin to see that there are possibilities of shortening our work and making it more effective.

If I may begin with the last speaker first, I should like to support the proposal made by Viscount Cecil to withdraw Question VII from Sub-Commission A for the reasons which he has given, which seem to me adequate and sound.

I think we might also very properly relieve that Commission of the consideration of the subject of control on the second reading, which, after all, is essentially a political problem and which might very properly be sent back to the Sub-Commissions for consideration of its technical aspects on the basis of whatever decision we reach in the Preparatory Commission.

Furthermore, I think there is a great deal of merit in the proposal of Viscount Cecil to appoint a small Committee to supervise and co-ordinate the work of our Sub-Commissions. I have been engaged in Geneva ever since we first met in the month of May and I have often felt that our work could have been facilitated if there had been a small group of representatives of this Commission in a position to indicate to the different Committees the general rules we have laid down, and what the general views of this Commission were. I am very glad to give the support of the American delegation to that proposal. I am particularly glad to do so because I think it affords an opportunity to simplify matters.

As to the proposal which I brought forward this morning, I feel that we are all in substantial accord as to the fundamental ideas behind that proposal. It is open to many objections; I recognise that. It was very quickly drafted in order to meet the necessities of the occasion, but I think that, if we discuss its wording and try to redraft it here, we may fall into the errors of some of the Sub-Commissions which have come in for criticism, of spending too much time on a small matter.

For that reason I think it might properly be withdrawn, and that we might ask the Chairman to appoint a Drafting Committee to meet and draw up a resolution which reflects truly the opinions of this whole Commission, which are in substantial accord. I have no pride of authorship in that resolution, and I do not hold tenaciously to the wording of it. Perhaps if we were decided to appoint the Committee of the Commission as proposed by Viscount Cecil, the resolution of this Commission this morning might be addressed to that Committee for its guidance, in order that it might be in a position to express the views of our Commission to the Sub-Commission. If the Chairman would appoint a Drafting Committee, I think we should take measures for the substantial advance and progress of our work.

M. DE BROUCKÈRE (Belgium): [Translation] I consider the suggestion just made by the representative of the United States a very happy one. We shall readily find agreement on the draft since we are practically agreed as to the substance.

I wish to speak upon two other questions which are perhaps such as to provoke long discussion. Viscount Cecil recently made the suggestion of eliminating Question VII from the Questionnaire. I fear that a discussion upon this proposal would give rise to a long debate. All the members present here know that it was not very easy to find agreement either on the terms of the questions or upon the Commissions to which they were to be referred or the terms of their reference. Viscount Cecil declared that, although considerable time had been spent on this subject, we should have done better to spend longer. I venture to think, under the circumstances, that we should no longer speak about the short session to which our Chairman alluded.

Viscount Cecil also proposes the nomination of a Committee of six members entrusted with the co-ordination of the work of the Commission and its Sub-Commissions. I am ready to support any proposal which has the aim and effect of saving time; if such would be the case as regards this organisation for co-ordination, I should only ask for the approval of its constitution, but what we have been asked for is in fact the delegation of our powers to a committee of six members. I venture to recall to you that, last year at the Assembly
of the League of Nations, which took the first steps towards this Conference, the proposal had been made to nominate a Committee of Disarmament representing the Council and certain Great Powers. The Assembly protested energetically, saying that it did not wish the business to be done by a few States, and asking that the Members of the Assembly also should be convened. This led to the nomination of a rather numerous body, but one which has done good work. If we appoint to-day a committee of six members — this is the number necessary in order that each of the Great Powers may be represented — we are acting contrary to the provisions of the Assembly. Instead of adding to the Council, we are depriving it of its elected Members. If it is a question of dealing with questions such as those which I mentioned recently, and which are unimportant, I doubt whether it is really worth while to disturb such Great Powers for such small results. And if it is a question of appointing a form of delegation which should in fact replace the Commission, which would be a directory, as the representative of a small Power which realises what a small place it has in the world but which realises that its ardour in favour of disarmament is equal to none, I venture to state my disapproval.

General de Marinis (Italy): [Translation] I wish to thank Mr. Gibson for his words. He has stated that there is no difference of opinion between himself and me. This is very natural, since in Sub-Commission A the United States and Italian delegation, being in the minority for some questions, the Italian delegation had the honour to be at the side of the United States in making the same reservations. With Mr. Gibson I share the wish that all the opinions should be put upon the same footing in the final report which will be presented to the Preparatory Commission. We are therefore fully in agreement.

I also agree with the proposal of the delegation of the United States that a Committee should be entrusted with the work of drafting a definite text, taking account of the observations presented at to-day's meeting. I have myself drafted a text which I will put before this Committee.

As regards the question of votes, I understand the wish of Viscount Cecil to be that they should not be mentioned in the final report. Without doubt we are in agreement on this point, but one must remember that the Commission has almost finished its work, that numerous votes have already taken place and have been put in the Minutes, to which delegations might refer if necessary.

As regards the creation of a Committee, of which Viscount Cecil has spoken, I am not in principle opposed to it, but I understand the just observations of M. de Brouckère, and I think also that some enlargement would have to be contemplated; a Committee of only six members would offer serious inconveniences. Where would it sit? In this connection, I venture to emphasise all the advantages which would accrue if this Committee were in direct contact with the Commission and the Secretariat, without having to resort to correspondence. It would therefore have to sit at Geneva.

M. Guerrero (Salvador): [Translation] I propose that continued discussion be adjourned to the next meeting.

I agree with M. Brouckère in thinking that the proposal of Viscount Cecil lends rather to replace the whole of the Preparatory Commission by a small Committee. I am unable to accept this.

The Chairman: [Translation] I propose to nominate now the Drafting Committee entrusted with the examination of Mr. Gibson's proposal. The text which it would elaborate might be submitted to us at our next meeting. I suggest the following names: Mr. Gibson (United States), Viscount Cecil of Chelwood (British Empire), M. Perez (Argentina), General de Marinis (Italy).

Viscount Cecil of Chelwood (British Empire): I think it would be better if you name someone else instead of myself. I am very busy, and I have no special competence to deal with this matter. I do not propose to proceed with my motion if there is serious opposition to it. I am quite sure that we shall have to come to something of that kind, but it is, after all, much better to be perfectly frank in this matter. Do we mean disarmament or do we not? If we mean disarmament, we shall never accomplish it by a body of this size. I am sure that a body of twenty-three will never be able to draft a satisfactory scheme unless they have some assistance from a small Committee to draw up a scheme for their consideration. I am sure you will have to come to that.

Let me add this: nobody has greater respect for the little Powers than I have; I have shown it in all my conduct in the League; but I am sure the little Powers cannot disarm the world. That must be done by the Great Powers, and therefore, though I do not wish to put the Great Powers in control of this matter, I am quite certain that, without their assent, you will not do anything. I am merely stating what are absolutely the unfortunate realities of the case. If it could be done by the little Powers, nobody would be better pleased
than 1, because I have in some respects more confidence in them than I have in some of the
Great Powers. That is the only reason why, in my judgment, you will have to have a small
body which will draw up a scheme. I do not say it should consist entirely of the Great Powers,
but I believe a considerable proportion must be those Powers which are mainly affected
and on whose assent any scheme of disarmament really depends.

The Chairman: [Translation] After the wish expressed by Viscount Cecil, I propose that
the Drafting Committee should be composed as follows: Mr. Gibson (United States), M. Perez
(Argentine), General de Marinis (Italy).

This proposal was carried.

On the proposal of the Chairman, Viscount Cecil's suggestion would be discussed at
the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 12.50 p.m.

SECOND MEETING (PUBLIC).

Held at Geneva on Monday, September 27th, 1926, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: M. Loudon (Netherlands).

3. Election of Chairmen of Sub-Commissions A and B.

The Chairman: [Translation] Since our last meeting you will know that the Assembly
adopted on September 24th, 1926, on the proposal of the Third Committee, a resolution of
which the third paragraph reads as follows:

"Being desirous that the investigations in regard to which the Assembly itself
took the initiative in its resolution of September 25th, 1925, should be brought to a successful
conclusion as soon as possible, it requests the Council to call upon the Preparatory
Commission to take steps to hasten the completion of the technical work and thus be
able to draw up at the beginning of next year the programme for a Conference on the
Limitation and Reduction of Armaments corresponding to existing conditions in regard
to regional and general security, and it asks the Council to convene this Conference
before the eighth ordinary session of the Assembly, unless material difficulties render
this impossible."

I do not think that anyone will wish to speak on this subject, for we all understand the
task which is ours.

Gentlemen, I am extremely happy to greet our Vice-Chairman, M. Cobian, who has
returned expressly and very quickly from Spain to attend our meetings. I feel sure that
I am voicing the feeling of everyone present in expressing our pleasure at seeing M. Cobian
among us and in expressing the wish that he should keep his position as Vice-Chairman of
the Preparatory Commission and, consequently, as Chairman of Sub-Commission A.

M. Cobian (Spain): [Translation] Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I am deeply moved at this
fresh expression of sympathy which you have been kind enough to show towards my country.

I must, first of all, excuse myself for having been unable to arrive at the beginning of
your work, but you will understand that I could not traverse in twenty-four hours the two
thousand kilometers which separated me from Geneva.

I regret even more that I was unable to be present at your last meeting, because Sub-
Commission A, over which I had the honour of presiding, had its work subjected to discussion
perhaps somewhat prematurely.

It would have been undoubtedly desirable that the work of Sub-Commission A
should have been confined to the purely objective study of all the problems which had been
put before it, but, as M. de Brouckère pointed out very aptly the other day, it was the Prepara-
tory Commission which had decided otherwise. As soon as we had decided that the members
of Sub-Commission A should sit as representatives of their Governments, it was logical
and inevitable that they should be influenced by the ideas and by the national interests of
their respective countries.

It is for this reason that, at times, in their deliberations and in their votes, the military
experts have entered the political field, but they have not done it by mistake; they did it
after reflection and in accordance with instructions given by their Governments.

The Minutes which you have at your disposal show likewise the very formidable work
accomplished by Sub-Commission A, which has been sitting, so to speak, permanently,
meeting in the morning in its plenary meeting and in the afternoon in its Committees. These
Minutes show also my wish to respect the sphere of the competence of the Preparatory
Commission.
I pointed out several times to the military experts the danger of a vote or of a declaration capable of hindering or disturbing the ideas and the opinions of the Government representatives at the Preparatory Commission. Several delegations replied to me, with reason, that they also represented their Governments. In order to put an end to these difficulties, which my experience has led me to remark on, I see only one method of working — a much closer liaison and closer co-operation between the representatives of the Governments at the Preparatory Commission and the experts of Sub-Commission A. Without this co-operation, it is probable that the remarkable work which we await from Sub-Commission A will not be such as we have hoped and wished for.

Having said this, I regret that I must make a statement to the Commission which I find very difficult after the kind words addressed to me by our Chairman.

When you did me the honour of nominating me first Vice-Chairman of the Preparatory Commission, my country was represented on the Council of the League of Nations. This fact undoubtedly influenced your decision. Spain is no longer on the Council, and I feel that the most elementary tact compels me to abandon this position of Vice-Chairman of the Commission, as well as that of Chairman of Sub-Commission A.

As regards my resignation from the Chairmanship of Sub-Commission A, I ask your permission to add to what I have just said certain personal reasons which make my decision irrevocable.

When I took up the work of Chairperson I doubted whether I should be able to accomplish the task which you had done me the honour to entrust to me, but I knew also that I should have to leave Geneva a few days later, not without the intention of taking up my work again later. You know what circumstances prevented me from realising my desires. Finally, on August 2nd I took up again the Chairmanship of Sub-Commission A and installed myself at Geneva, thinking that, at any rate by September, we should be able to finish our work.

But, on the one hand, the work could not be carried on during the Assembly, and, on the other, Sub-Commission A decided to meet in Committees. My presence at Geneva was useless, and I left, not expecting that there would be any meeting as early as that which was announced for this afternoon. Under these circumstances, I must ask the Sub-Commission, while thanking it for its demonstration of sympathy, to appoint the new Chairman which it will need in order to continue its work.

At the same time, I should like to assure the Preparatory Commission of my country's very keen collaboration, whoever represents it in the future, in the work of peace which is so important for the whole world, and which is being carried on at Geneva.

The CHAIRMAN: [Translation] Gentlemen, I am sure that I am expressing your feelings in conveying to M. Cobian the very deep regret which we feel from the communication which he has just made to us. We naturally respect his decision, but we regret it none the less.

Before putting the question to you as to how we can replace M. Cobian, I wish to let you know of a second communication, which will doubtless grieve you as much as myself.

I have received from M. Buero, second Vice-Chairman of the Commission and Chairman of Sub-Commission B, the following telegram sent from Bordeaux:

"In consequence of my Government's decision, and in considering the very kind invitation of the Council of the League of Nations as regards Uruguay's subsequent participation in the work of the Preparatory Commission, I deeply regret that I must submit my resignation from the position of Vice-Chairman of the said Commission, as well as from that of Chairman of Sub-Commission B.

"I take this opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to renew the expression of my deep gratitude for the evidence of good will which I have received from you, as well as from all the members of the Commission, and I ask you to convey my sentiments to all my colleagues on the Commission. Believe me that it is not without deep regret that I cease to take part in the difficult and arduous work which the Commission has embraced with such enthusiasm and good will."

Gentlemen, we greatly regret this decision, but here again we can only respect it. We must therefore proceed at the same time to the nomination of a new Vice-Chairman, who will also be Chairman of Sub-Commission B.

Before making proposals to you as to the nomination of these two Vice-Chairmen, who will take over the Chairmanship of the two Sub-Commissions, Viscount Cecil will address you.

Viscount Cecil of Chelwood (British Empire): Mr. Chairman, I was exceedingly glad that you expressed, on behalf of us all, our great regret at the decision at which M. Cobian and M. Buero have arrived in reference to this matter. I have not had the pleasure of sitting to any extent on the Sub-Commissions over which they presided; I did sit on Sub-Commission B once, but common report assures me that the conduct by those gentlemen of the work of those Sub-Commissions was past all praise, and we shall find it very difficult to replace
them by persons who will carry on successfully their tradition. I understand that their decision is absolutely unalterable, or otherwise I would ask M. Cobian to reconsider the matter. I cannot ask M. Buero, because he is not here; but I would like to. However, I am informed that that would be only a formality, because, for the reasons which he has given, it is impossible for him to go on. In these circumstances, I would make a proposition — at any rate with regard to Sub-Commission A and their Chairman — that is, that we should ask M. de Brouckère to accept the position of Chairman of that Sub-Commission. If he is able to do that, I think we should feel that we had at any rate a chance of having an adequate successor to M. Cobian.

Mr. Gibson (United States of America): Mr. Chairman, Viscount Cecil has very admirably expressed, on behalf of all of us, our regret at the withdrawal of our friend and colleague, M. Cobian, and he has also stated, in a way that I am sure will be acceptable to all of us, the reasons for making the excellent choice of M. de Brouckère as his successor. I will not endeavour to elaborate what Viscount Cecil has put so well on behalf of all of us, but I would like to have the privilege of supporting the proposal of the nomination of M. de Brouckère.

General de Marini (Italy): [Translation] I should like to associate myself with the deep regret felt by the whole Commission in seeing M. Cobian and M. Buero resign from their work as Vice-Chairmen of the Commission and Chairmen of the two Sub-Commissions.

As I belong to Sub-Commission A, which has been presided over both by M. Cobian and M. Buero, I can testify to the great impartiality and the perfect wisdom with which these two Chairmen directed the debates, and I therefore express my wholehearted agreement with the feelings expressed by Lord Cecil.

I strongly support the happy proposal which the delegate of the British Empire has just made. I am convinced that there is no one among us better qualified than M. de Brouckère to preside over the work of Sub-Commission A, since he is the author of the Questionnaire which is before this Sub-Commission, and it is he who will be best able to understand the spirit and the meaning of it. I should therefore be very happy to see the proposal of Viscount Cecil carried.

M. Sokal (Poland): [Translation] I should like to associate myself with the expressions of deep regret which have been made on the occasion of the departure of M. Cobian and M. Buero. I venture to support the proposal of Viscount Cecil and of Mr. Gibson, and, as regards the election of M. de Brouckère as Chairman of Sub-Commission A, I hope that the whole Commission will be glad to take this opportunity of showing its good will towards M. de Brouckère and towards the country he represents.

M. Paul-Boncour (France): [Translation] Though it appears to be somewhat superfluous, I feel that I should be failing in my duty of friendship and interest for the work of the Sub-Commission if I did not associate myself, in the name of France, with the feelings of my colleagues, particularly as expressed by Viscount Cecil.

I deeply regret the loss of M. Cobian, and no less deeply that of M. Buero. After the words just spoken by Viscount Cecil, I must say that I consider that we should have an unexpected piece of good fortune in seeing M. de Brouckère consent to preside over work which is extremely delicate, but which is well on the way to success. It will be particularly fortunate for the Sub-Commission to be presided over by one whose mind clarifies all that it touches, as Viscount Cecil has so happily pointed out.

In order to finish dealing with the questions which are preliminary to all discussion, it must not be forgotten that we have also to replace the Chairman of Sub-Commission B. Without having consulted him, and without knowing too well what is the value of the gift, I should like to ask M. Veverka if he would be disposed to direct the work of this Sub-Commission. He has long followed the work of disarmament, and he collaborated with the man who formulated it. Without wishing to interfere in personal matters, I might, however, remark that the fact that he resides at Berne might make his work slightly easier than that of M. de Brouckère's as Chairman of a Sub-Commission. Under the circumstances, I hope that M. Veverka will see his way to accept the Chairmanship of Sub-Commission B.

Count Bernstorff (Germany): [Translation] I have not been able to be present at the work of Sub-Commission A nor at that of Sub-Commission B, but nevertheless I am fulfilling the desire of my countrymen in expressing very deep regret that M. Cobian and M. Buero will not be able to continue the task which they had begun. I should like to take the opportunity to thank both of them very cordially for the good will and impartiality which they have shown. Since we now have to choose two Vice-Chairmen, I entirely associate myself with the proposal made by M. Paul-Boncour, and I share his feelings as regards the choice of M. de Brouckère and M. Veverka.

Viscount Cecil of Chelwood (British Empire): I heartily support the proposal of M. Veverka. I do not think a better choice could have been made.

M. Sato (Japan): [Translation] I feel that it is superfluous to express the very deep regret which I feel at the decisions of M. Cobian and M. Buero. I am a new-comer here, and I am perhaps less qualified than my colleagues to express my feelings at their departure.
In the name of my country, however, I should like to associate myself with the thanks which have been addressed to M. Cobian for his impartiality and for the zeal with which he has directed the work of Sub-Commission A. As to the proposals of Viscount Cecil and M. Paul-Boncour concerning the appointment of M. de Brouckère and M. Veverka as Chairmen of Sub-Commissions A and B, I can only record my hearty approval. In consequence, I express the very strong hope that M. de Brouckère and M. Veverka will be good enough to accept the positions offered to them.

M. Comnène (Roumanie) : [Translation] I too share the feelings of regret expressed by my colleagues as regards M. Cobian and M. Buero’s decisions. I have the greatest pleasure in supporting the suggestion made by Viscount Cecil and M. Paul-Boncour. I venture therefore to hope that M. de Brouckère and M. Veverka will each undertake the direction of the work of one Sub-Commission. We have seen them working in numerous Assemblies, and we appreciate their true value.

M. Cobian (Spain) : [Translation] I am sure that I shall not be betraying the feelings of my country and for myself, I can hardly refuse the offer which has been made to me. I accept it with regret, however, since it follows upon the loss of M. Cobian. We all know the immense services which he has rendered to us, and we all know the incomparable skill which he has shown in his delicate task. I may add that, at the moment when I am just about to take over the heavy task of directing the work of a Sub-Commission, I understand still better the merits of M. Cobian.

I will do my very best to keep up with circumstances. My country is one of those which ardently look forward to the realisation of disarmament. Since you, in your wisdom, consider that this duty should fall upon me, I accept this task on the understanding that we must make every sacrifice in order to find a solution of the problem before us.

M. de Brouckère (Belgium) : [Translation] After your kind expression of good will for my country and for myself, I can hardly refuse the offer which has been made to me. I accept it with regret, however, since it follows upon the loss of M. Cobian. We all know the immense services which he has rendered to us, and we all know the incomparable skill which he has shown in his delicate task. I may add that, at the moment when I am just about to take over the heavy task of directing the work of a Sub-Commission, I understand still better the merits of M. Cobian.

The Chairman : [Translation] After the words spoken by the various speakers, I think I may say that I am expressing the unanimous feeling in asking M. de Brouckère to accept the task of directing the work of Sub-Commission A.

M. Veverka (Czechoslovakia) : [Translation] I thank my honourable colleagues of the Commission for the great honour they have conferred on my country and on me, and I accept the task which they entrust to me. I can only promise to work to the best of my ability, and with the same keenness and devotion as has been shown by my predecessor, in the work which I am about to undertake.

General de Marinis, Rapporteur of the Drafting Committee will now speak.

General de Marinis (Italy), Rapporteur: [Translation] The Drafting Committee which you appointed has agreed upon the following text, which is so simple that it does not demand much comment or explanation:

"The Preparatory Commission highly appreciates the great pains which Sub-Commission A has taken in studying the questions referred to it, and hopes that this Sub-Commission will soon be able to terminate its labours, taking into account the fact that the Commission alone is competent to consider the political aspect of the questions which have been raised, as it is the sole body responsible for the final replies to be given.

"The Commission requests the Sub-Commission to arrange for the result of its deliberations to be embodied in a final report, containing, in respect of each question considered, the various technical replies to which it may be possible to reduce the opinions expressed during the discussions, and mentioning the delegations which were in favour of each of these replies and the arguments they brought forward in support of their views."

In the first part, discreet mention has been made of the purely technical task entrusted to Sub-Commission A, while expressing the desire that the work of this Sub-Commission should be terminated as soon as possible. This desire has been expressed in order to secure that the anxiety to contemplate the political and technical side of the various questions may not lead certain delegates of Sub-Commission A to reopen the discussion of questions already finished or to return to resolutions already taken or answers adopted at first reading.

In the second part of the resolution, account has been taken of the wish, put forward by the honourable representative of the United States in his first proposal, that the opinions of the minority on certain subjects should be presented on the same footing as those of the majority.

Account has also been taken of the wish expressed by Viscount Cecil that each opinion should be submitted by the technicians as completely as possible to the Preparatory Commission.

The Drafting Committee thinks that all the desires of the various speakers will thus be satisfied.

I said that the first part of the resolution was intended to point out to the technicians the keen desire of the Preparatory Commission to see the work done rapidly but, nevertheless, without compromising on this account the serenity of the study of Sub-Commission A.

At the last meeting, I made certain recommendations which I will venture to recall. I asked that the new members should not reopen the discussion upon points already taken, and that, if they desire explanations, they should address themselves to the Preparatory Commission.

I do not think it necessary to make a proposal in this direction, but I merely ask that this recommendation be recorded in the Minutes.

Elsewhere — not to prolong the discussion — I also recommended that, at the second reading, discussions should not be reopened which might degenerate into political debates. Here, again, I do not think it is necessary to make a definite proposal, especially as Sub-Commission A will be presided over by M. de Brouckère, who is the author of the Questionnaire, and who is more qualified than anyone to prevent the discussion wandering into the political field.

Finally, I proposed at the last meeting to ask the Secretariat to tell us something as to the programme of our work.

As regards Sub-Commission A, I shall tell you frankly the conclusion I have reached after having consulted its members. I may say that, even if it passes the bounds of possibility in shortening its discussions, Sub-Commission A does not appear to me to be able to terminate its work before the end of October or the beginning of November. I appeal to the experience of M. Cobian, and I ask him if the opinion I have just expressed is in conformity with the truth.

Finally, I would like to correct some previous statements of mine. I said several times that M. de Brouckère was the author of the Questionnaire. In reality, the original Questionnaire was constructed by Viscount Cecil and M. Paul-Boncour. It is none the less true that, in the course of the first session of the Preparatory Commission, M. de Brouckère was the Rapporteur of the Drafting Committee, and he contributed largely to the work of sharing out the different questions among the Sub-Commissions.

Mr. Gibson (United States of America): Before addressing myself to the subject of the resolution which has just been laid before you by General de Marinis, I should like to advert for a moment to the opening remarks of our late Vice-Chairman, M. Cobian, and his very sound and very accurate defence of Sub-Commission A. I should like to say that I do not think that Sub-Commission A is in any need of defence, and I hope that nothing that was said to the Preparatory Commission last Wednesday has given the impression that that
Sub-Commission was under criticism. I have followed its work very carefully from day to day ever since it first met last May, and perhaps no one of us is better qualified to appreciate all the zeal and industry that has gone into that work, to say nothing of the part that has been played by the Chairman in making that work effective.

M. Cobian brought out the fact that it was too much to expect that, in a discussion of that sort, the technical delegates should forget the interests of their own country. I do not think any of us want them to do that. The only thing we could do was to give a counsel of perfection and ask them to approximate to it as nearly as they could. If, therefore, a literal reading of what was suggested seems too exacting for poor human nature, I hope it will be remembered that this was to be tempered with the possibilities of human nature. I think M. Cobian put his finger very accurately on one of the great difficulties with which Sub-Commission A has had to contend, namely, the lack of constant contact with the full session of the Preparatory Commission so that it might have guidance on political and other matters. It has had to make up its own mind on many questions, and it has had to take responsibility, and I want to make it very clear that the American delegation appreciates highly the spirit and the manner in which all this has been done.

I cannot refrain from expressing to General de Marinis the gratitude of the American delegation for the admirable manner in which he has explained the scope and purpose of the proposal of the Drafting Committee now before you. This document, in its present form, expresses more clearly the purpose of the original American proposal submitted at our meeting on last Wednesday, and it was in the hope of finding an expression of our general views that the American delegation welcomed a re-drafting of its original proposal.

The purpose of the original American proposal, as I explained at the time, was very simple: to facilitate the early and effective conclusion of our task, to relieve our Sub-Committees of work which was more properly within the competence of this Commission, and to indicate the character of the reports, which would be of the greatest value to us in taking the next step in approaching the problem of the reduction and limitation of armaments. I feel that the document now before you not only expresses admirably the essential purpose of the American delegation, which I have just stated, but I trust that it also meets satisfactorily the views expressed by those delegates who joined in the discussion at the last meeting. For that reason, I hope that it will be given careful consideration by the Preparatory Commission.

The purpose of the American delegation in submitting its original proposal was so clearly explained, and appeared to be so clearly understood by the honourable delegates who participated in the discussion of last Wednesday, that it is difficult for me to understand some of the criticisms which have been made, in the Press and elsewhere, indicating that our purpose was rather to retard than to facilitate the conclusion of the work. I do not propose to reply to these misleading criticisms. Furthermore, I am confident that the Commission is not misled by them. However, they are calculated to confuse the situation in the minds of a larger audience and their effect cannot therefore be ignored. Under the circumstances, I feel that, in order that no room may be left for misunderstanding or misapprehension, I must take advantage of this opportunity briefly to restate in what I hope is a clear and lucid manner the attitude of the American delegation, which was originally stated at the beginning of these deliberations and which has been consistently maintained by the American delegation.

My Government has consistently been hopeful that our deliberations may result in preparing some concrete bases for accomplishment in the reduction and limitation of armaments. It hopes for the success of our work have been repeatedly expressed by the President and the Secretary of State; the latter, it will be recalled, made an important public address on the subject as recently as August 18th, wherein he reaffirmed our earnest hope for practical achievement.

You will remember that, during the first plenary session, I outlined the general views of the American Government in regard to the problems before the Preparatory Commission. The discussions of our Commission and its Sub-Commissions since that time have served to confirm my Government in the views I then expressed on its behalf, viz.:

1. That land armament is more susceptible of limitation by regional agreements;
2. That, since the Washington Naval Treaty did not cover all classes of vessels, further steps might well be taken to limit the competitive building of types of vessels not so covered;
3. That success in the limitation of armaments is to be achieved by isolation of as many concrete problems as possible and the treatment of these in a direct and practical way without awaiting the details of a set of abstract principles applicable to all armament problems.

The American delegation has constantly kept in mind the practical objective for which we are all working, namely, actual agreements for the limitation of armaments. It has endeavoured to face realities and to find formulas which gave promise of results in the near future. It has deplored any tendency to discuss exclusively the ideal scheme for universal disarmament which existing conditions throughout the world would appear to make most remote in any practical sense. Thus the American delegation has taken the position that limitation,
to be practicable, should be directed towards armaments which are in existence and are therefore tangible and limitable. The American delegation has consistently discouraged any effort to calculate the potential economic, financial and industrial resources of one country as against those of another, since it has felt that such elements are not susceptible of limitation, and fall outside any practical definition of armaments. In regard to the limitation of naval armaments, the American delegation has attempted to point out that the standard of tonnage by classes — a practical method of comparison and limitation of naval forces, which has clearly demonstrated, since its acceptance in the Washington Treaty, its utility and convenience as a standard — should be considered in any effort actually to bring about the limitation of navies.

Furthermore, the American delegation has opposed propositions to establish supervision and control of national armaments by an international agency, since it has felt that any limitation agreements must rest primarily upon international good faith and respect for treaties.

The American delegation has from the beginning taken the stand that the examination of the questions before Sub-Commission A should be in the nature of a general technical enquiry to bring out all reasonable points of view rather than a contest to present exclusively one single view on each subject. The American delegation has at all times accorded respectful consideration to the views of other delegations, and has advocated that the Sub-Commissions should present to the Preparatory Commission a statement of the divergent views developed in the course of our discussions in order that, when we come to consider each question in the light of the various factors which must be taken into account — military, political and economic — we may appraise each method at its true value in the light of all possible technical information. It must be remembered that any actual steps toward disarmament will be based not on votes in our Sub-Commissions but upon agreement reached among the Powers concerned; that if there is a failure to present any views to the Preparatory Commission, there is always a risk of delay in the fact that, in a final conference, the Powers which might exceed the technical competence of the Sub-Commission, these delegations replied to me, as I rightly said just now, that they were representing their Governments. I should not dare to constitute myself the defender of the Sub-Commission. These military men have no need to be defended by me, for I should indeed be a poor advocate.

The courtesy and friendship which I owe to General de Marinis demand that I should likewise reply to him.

I thank him for considering me a good judge and a good prophet as regards the length of the work of Sub-Commission A. This has taken a month and a half in discussing and solving a certain number of questions. There still remains Point (b) of the Commentary relating to Questions II (b) and III, one of the most important, and Questions VII and V remain, as well as that of gas warfare. I am sure that, if the experts work with the ardour and the effort they have already shown, they will be able to hasten their work.

Viscount Cecil of Chelwood (British Empire) : [Translation] I should like to state that, in the words that I spoke at the beginning, I merely gave quite mild and general explanations as to the work of Sub-Commission A. I confided myself to explaining that, when I drew the attention of several delegations to the meaning of certain votes or certain declarations which, in my opinion, might exceed the technical competence of the Sub-Commission, these delegations replied to me, as I rightly said just now, that they were representing their Governments. I should not dare to constitute myself the defender of the Sub-Commission. These military men have no need to be defended by me, for I should indeed be a poor advocate.

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the Press. After all, journalists have got to write something which is readable and something which is amusing, and some of them occasionally, in the pursuit of that course, find that fiction is more amusing than fact. For instance, I observe that my Government has been charged with a conspiracy with the American Government, in the first place, to retard the proceedings of this Commission, which is a very strange charge to be made against a Government which has made itself prominent, during many years past, both in the Assembly and the other organs of the League, in pressing forward the question of disarmament by every means in its power. Secondly, we have been charged — and, oddly enough, in the same article — with a conspiracy to unite with the Americans in order to destroy other friendly nations — perhaps a more astonishing charge even than the first. Indeed, I believe a third charge against us is that we are out to oppose the Americans in every way that we can. Now, these things are merely what are written to amuse the public, and they are probably written without any desire even on the part of their authors, that they should be believed.

I turn now to the actual text of the resolution. I had desired to see a rather more definite indication that we are not in favour of these Sub-Commissions treating themselves as parliamentary assemblies and arriving at their conclusions by voting. I still think that that is an undesirable method of procedure for an advisory technical commission. But I observe a phrase in the second paragraph about "the various technical replies to which it may be possible to reduce the opinions expressed during the discussions, and mentioning the delegations which were in favour of these replies and the arguments they brought forward in support of their views". It seems to me that that form of words gives ample power to the Chairman of the Sub-Commission, if he thinks it right, to urge the Sub-Commissions not to proceed to vote but to express their opinions, if he thinks that that is the proper way to assist, as I think it is, the Preparatory Commission in its work. I am prepared to leave the carrying out of that mandate to M. de Brouckère and M. Veverka, and I am quite sure that they will take care that the extremities to which a system of voting may reduce a Commission of that kind will not be repeated. As to the question of a time-table, which is not strictly raised by this resolution, I will repeat once again that, though I am very strongly in favour of speed, still more strongly am I against any waste of time. It is far more important to arrive at a satisfactory and successful conclusion than that we should arrive at a speedy conclusion. The matters are immensely difficult and immensely complex, and I do hope that our experience of this last Assembly has shown us the great danger of trying to fix a hard-and-fast date by which complicated discussions must be concluded. I am certain we are all anxious to bring this matter to as speedy a conclusion as possible; but I do hope that, in our anxiety for speed, we shall not be driven to what I believe our American friends call "hustle", which, I think, is distinctly out of place in an enquiry of this kind.

M. de Brouckère (Belgium): [Translation] We all rejoice that the agreement on principle which was realised last year should be produced here again in a text.

You were good enough to entrust me recently with an important mission, and I shall be one of those who will have to interpret this text. I should therefore be glad to make sure that there are no misunderstandings as to its meaning.

If I understand rightly what is expected of the technical Sub-Commissions, it is that they should make an objective study of the questions which have been referred to them, and that they should endeavour to find an agreement in their answers; that they should, so far as possible, make the necessary effort to push their enquiries until agreement should be reached; that, in all cases where an agreement cannot be reached, they should at least endeavour to group their opinions in a text or in a certain number of texts; and that then these texts themselves and the arguments put forward in favour of the solution should be indicated in the report, no distinction being made between the opinion of the majority and the opinion of a minority. I believe that this is well in conformity with your resolution. It is also understood that an indication should be given as to which delegations supported each text.

If I have demanded this explanation, it is because I wish to be sure of having rightly understood. There is, however, some analogy between this indication as to which delegations have pronounced themselves in favour of a particular solution, as the votes will naturally show, and the recording of the votes themselves. The difference is that there will be no formal indication whether a certain delegation belongs to the majority or not, and no exact numerical indication of the voting.

The Chairman: [Translation] I take it from the attitude of this Commission that the interpretation which has just been given by M. de Brouckère is accepted by the Commission.

M. Paul-Boncour (France): [Translation] I asked to speak after it had been understood that the interpretation given by M. de Brouckère was accepted, in order to formulate a very brief observation concerning this question of the method of the work of the Sub-Commission.

I am only speaking because the question of regional agreement was raised in the discussion. I think that in reality it is the duty of the Preparatory Commission itself to appreciate the advantages and the disadvantages of regional agreements. A serious question might even arise there, and it might be wise to postpone explanations of it. I do not wish it to be understood, however, by my silence that my Government entirely agrees beforehand that the general Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments should direct itself towards the establishment of regional agreements. I reserve the exact statement of the opinion of my Government on this subject.
If, by misfortune, the Conference were unable to reach a general limitation and reduction, I should prefer regional agreements to nothing at all, but I should still more gladly welcome a general reduction and limitation than regional agreements, and it is certain that these would undoubtedly show that the general Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments had met with a set-back.

It is also certain that regional agreements could not give, as regards reduction and limitation, as complete results as those attained by a general Conference, for we fully realise — we have unfortunately learnt it through the hard experiences of the last war — that there exists a general interdependence both in war and in peace, and that the League of Nations is not called worldwide by mere chance but because the League of Nations responds to the worldwide interdependence of all economic, military, naval and air interests.

I do not insist upon this point; I merely indicate my belief that, by directing ourselves in advance towards these regional agreements, we should give rise to the opinion that we were afraid. Such a situation we might well resign ourselves to in case of a set-back, but our self-confidence must not contemplate it now.

Viscount Cecil of Chelwood (Great Britain): I am in entire agreement with the observations of M. Paul-Boncour.

Mr. Gibson (United States of America): I rise merely to assure M. Paul-Boncour that I do not wish in any way to prejudice the consideration of this or any other question. It was merely a re-statement of the general view of my Government, and I can go so far as to say that I heartily agree with M. Paul-Boncour that a universal reduction and limitation of armaments is infinitely preferable to regional agreements. At the same time, I consider M. Paul-Boncour an incorrigible optimist. This is a matter which would have to be worked out in the Sub-Commissions; I do not wish in any way to prejudice it now by anything I have said.

M. Paul-Boncour (France): [Translation] I wish to reply to the distinguished representative of the great American Republic that I am not an incorrigible optimist. I perceive, on the other hand, very clearly the great difficulties which we have to overcome, but, since we have elected as Chairman of this Commission the representative of the Netherlands, I think we might take as a motto for our work what was said by a great Dutch prince: that it is not necessary to hope in order to undertake, nor to succeed in order to persevere.

The Chairman: [Translation] If no one else wishes to speak, I shall consider the proposal of Mr. Gibson as adopted.

The proposal was adopted.

5. Convocation of Sub-Commission B.

The Chairman: [Translation] Before passing to the discussion of the proposal which Viscount Cecil put forward at the last meeting, I should like to place a proposal before you concerning the words of General de Marinis as to the methods of work and possible dates. In my opinion, this proposal is intended to accelerate our work.

As you know, the Joint Commission meets on September 30th to approve the work of the three Committees which it has created.

The programme of Sub-Commission B is very full and, if it has to refer some of its questions to the Joint Commission, it will have to do so as soon as possible.

Under the circumstances, I think that the quickest plan would be for Sub-Commission B to meet to-day and examine the whole programme of its work, in order that the part of this work to be referred to the Joint Commission may be put on the agenda of the latter Commission for the session which is fixed for September 30th. The session of the Joint Commission would naturally be very long, and it is possible that it would not be able to reach the end of the agenda. In any case, the questions put would be ready for the Preparatory Commission when they had been put in order by Sub-Commission B and would be ready to be discussed by the beginning of December.

I ask M. Veverka if he agrees that Sub-Commission B should meet to-day at 3 p.m.

M. Veverka (Czechoslovakia): [Translation] I am at the disposal of the Commission.

The proposal was adopted.

6. Examination of Viscount Cecil of Chelwood’s Proposal relating to the Appointment of a Small Committee.

The Chairman: [Translation] The discussion on the following proposal submitted by Viscount Cecil is now open:

"That a Committee of this Commission be appointed to co-ordinate and supervise the order of work of this Commission and its Sub-Commissions.

"That such Committee consist of not more than six members, with power to meet at any place convenient to its members."
M. Beneš (Czechoslovakia): [Translation] I have examined Viscount Cecil’s proposal and have had conversations on this subject with a certain number of my colleagues. I should like to make a few brief remarks going to the heart of the question and I will then make a proposal.

Viscount Cecil’s proposal calls for certain objections in my opinion but it has, on the other hand, a sound idea behind it. There is no doubt that, in the course of discussion on questions of this nature, a point will be reached when it is absolutely necessary that a small Committee take up and set in order the work which has been done. We have had in the League of Nations striking examples of this necessity. I shall recall in this connection the typical case of the Protocol.

When the Assembly decided to establish a Preparatory Commission, it was admitted that the work should be hastened so far as possible. It had been agreed that all States could not be represented but there had been a very strong desire to see the most important factors represented—great Powers, States in special geographical situations, nations representing particular ideals. The Council itself dealt with this question. I myself several times presented reports on the subject. I recently submitted a proposal tending to augment to some extent the number of the members of the Preparatory Commission.

There is another side to the problem, which we must take into consideration. In various countries—and I confess quite frankly that my own is an example—the questions which are at present under consideration have their repercussion on the field of internal politics, rightly by reason of their great importance. These countries and their Governments have consequently a very great interest that their point of view should be expressed at certain stages in the debate, and this too has to be taken into consideration.

As regards myself, I believe that it is necessary at a certain time to propose the meeting of a small Committee, in order, as I have already said, to arrange the subjects for discussion. It appears to me, however, that we have still very important work to do and that we have not yet reached that moment. In conclusion, and in order not to keep you too long, I should like to express the idea that perhaps it is not wise to put the question at the moment.

Under these circumstances, I should like to ask Viscount Cecil if he would consider these arguments, especially the repercussion which quite serious questions have upon the internal politics in certain countries. I ask him if he does not think that one might adjourn the whole question, and whether he could see his way to withdrawing his proposal.

Such is the opinion which I wish to express, after taking a general view of the situation.

Viscount Cecil of Chelwood (British Empire): I am much obliged to M. Beneš for the very careful speech he has made. I naturally treat any suggestion coming from him, as Rapporteur of the Council on the question, with great respect. Also, having taken almost as great a part as the British delegation in the question of disarmament in the past, I naturally should attach very great importance to any suggestion he made.

Before, however, dealing with it, I want, if I may, in a very few words to explain the purpose of my proposal, which does not yet seem to have been understood. I am quite sure that a body of this size will not do useful work except in the presence of some definite proposition, not necessarily to be accepted, but to be discussed and considered, and either amended, rejected or approved. If you merely say to them: “Considered in the light of the replies of the technical Sub-Committees, what do you want to do about disarmament?” I do not think any useful result would follow. Therefore it seems to me that, at some stage or other, I most fully agree with M. Beneš, it will be necessary to constitute a smaller body, which will be able to draw up definite proposals for the consideration of the Preparatory Commission, just as the Preparatory Commission will have to draw up in the last resort definite propositions for the consideration of the International Conference. That is the only way in which you can proceed. If you come to think of it, it is the only way in which any Parliament proceeds.

You do not simply throw on the table of a Parliament a general idea of what you want to do; you charge a committee of that Parliament, i.e., the Government of the day, or, it may be, some smaller body or group of members or some individuals, to produce a definite scheme, and then it is for the Parliament to consider it. That is the only way any deliberative body of any considerable size can possibly work. It was really with the object of obtaining as soon as possible such definite proposals that I suggested the constitution of a small initial sub-committee of this body which could, as soon as the material was ready, co-ordinate it. That was the phrase I used, but I might have said, if you like, “which could draft proposals.” Whichever way you like to put it, the idea is the same, namely, to get the Parliament into such shape that it can properly consider it. It never was in my mind, and it would not have been practicable to suggest, that the authority of this Commission should be usurped by any smaller body, even by a smaller body of its own creation. The object was merely to make our debates practical and serious and not chaotic and academic. But I quite agree with M. Beneš that there are a considerable number of members of this Commission who are not apparently yet ready to take the step which I have indicated. They think that, if it is to be taken at all, it must be taken at a later stage. I have considered very carefully whether, in those circumstances, I should ask the Commission to come to a
vote on the subject and see whether the majority agree with me or with those who disagree. I have no idea at all which way the majority would be, but I know there is quite sufficient division of opinion to make the majority — if we are in the majority — not so overwhelming as to justify the adoption of the procedure I indicated over the heads of the minority.

Therefore, considering the matter as best I can, I am prepared to accept the proposition of M. Beneš. At the worst it means but a little more delay. It means that the inevitable step of appointing some smaller Drafting Committee will be postponed from this session of the Preparatory Commission to a later session. It may mean a little delay, but, as I have already said, although I am against delay, I think the satisfactory and successful achievement of our task is so very much more important than a little delay that I would not like to prejudice or, still less, to endanger the success of our operations by insisting, or trying to insist, upon a particular method of speeding up our work. I shall therefore accept M. Beneš' suggestion for the adjournment of this proposal, but I must warn the Preparatory Commission that I am quite convinced, as I believe most of us are in our hearts, that some procedure of this kind will sooner or later be absolutely necessary if we are to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion of our work.

The CHAIRMAN: [Translation] The discussion is closed and the session is ended. I am unable to fix the date of our next session, but I hope that it will be as early as possible in 1927.

The meeting closed at 1 p.m.
DELIBERATIONS OF THE COUNCIL ON THE REPORT AND RESOLUTION
SUBMITTED BY M. BENÉS ON DECEMBER 8th, 1926

EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF DECEMBER 8TH, 1926.

1836. Conference on Disarmament: Resolution adopted by the Assembly during its Seventh Ordinary Session.

M. Benéš, Rapporteur, read the following report and draft resolution:

"The Assembly resolution referred to in the Secretary-General's memorandum (Part I, Annex II, page 35) embodies the result of the Third Committee's discussions on the proceedings of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference. In this resolution, the Assembly expresses its desire that the work should be brought to a conclusion as soon as possible so as to enable the Council to convene an International Conference before the eighth ordinary session of the Assembly, unless material difficulties render this impossible.

"The Council will unquestionably endorse this point of view, as well as the opinion implied in the Assembly's resolution that the progress of the work of the Preparatory Commission itself should be regarded as a primary consideration in coming to any decision on the subject.

"Brief as it is, the Secretariat's memorandum gives signal proof of the heavy and persistent work of the Preparatory Commission and its technical organisations. The Council takes this opportunity of endorsing the satisfaction expressed in the Assembly's resolution with the work of the Commission and of its technical organisations, for which it tenders them its thanks.

"If my colleagues share my views, I will venture to submit the following resolution:

"The Council,

"Having regard to the resolution adopted by the Assembly on September 24th, 1926, relating to the work of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, and sharing the Assembly's desire to see the preparatory work result in a programme which will make it possible to summon an International Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments at the earliest possible moment, forwards the Assembly resolution to the Preparatory Commission and requests it to submit proposals with regard to the moment at which it would be possible to convene the Conference, due allowance being being made for the probable progress of its work, and to draw up the agenda of the Conference."

Sir Austen Chamberlain spoke as follows:

My Government takes a very particular interest in the work of the Preparatory Commission and in the Conference which is to be summoned when that work is completed. We attach great importance, as I think do all the Governments represented here, to the successful conclusion of these efforts with a view to securing a measure of disarmament which may lighten the charges borne by our people and help to render more secure our international relations. I need not say, therefore, that I heartily welcome the resolution in the terms proposed by the Rapporteur.

It is rather to others than to those round this table that I am speaking when I beg them not to be unduly impatient: if the Commission finds that, in order successfully to conclude its work, it requires more time than at present seems necessary, it should not be grudged all the time that may be required. It is much more important that the Conference, when it meets, should obtain practical results than that it should meet a little earlier and run the risk of failure for want of more complete preparation.

I am sure that those of us who, as members of the Council, follow in detail the proceedings of our Committees appreciate all the difficulties that lie in the path of this Commission, and that we shall be ready to give it the necessary time to complete its work. It is to the larger public outside these walls that I would make the appeal that they also should have patience and should not jeopardise ultimate success by pressing for the Conference before all the preliminary stages have been properly completed.

M. Paul-Boncour spoke as follows:

As representative of my Government, I should like to associate myself with the desires expressed by the representative of the British Empire, and, as member of the Preparatory Commission, to thank his Government for the attention with which it has followed the work of that Commission.
I think we are all agreed both on the necessity of complying with the desire of the Assembly, which was that this Conference should meet as soon as possible, and at the same time on the necessity of attacking the problem with a clearly settled programme of work and, if possible, even the broad outlines of the draft international convention which must be the outcome of the Conference.

I am in a position to inform Sir Austen Chamberlain that, in this respect, the Preparatory Commission, while pursuing its legitimate desire — which, I repeat, is in conformity with the wishes of the Assembly — to achieve success in the quickest possible time, has shown how much importance it attaches to the proper fulfilment of this preliminary work by the fact that it has allowed the technical Sub-Commissions a long time in which to complete their task.

These technical Sub-Commissions have held long and laborious meetings, and I am convinced that Sir Austen would wish them to share in the congratulations which he has addressed to the Preparatory Commission. Though these discussions may have appeared lengthy, that is due to the novelty and complexity of the problem which has been under consideration.

The members of these technical Sub-Commissions, who have worked devotedly for months on the investigation of this problem, have advanced its examination to an almost unhoped-for degree. An important step has been taken, and it is obvious — and here I speak as representative of France on the Preparatory Commission and in the name of the French Government, which is a Member of the Council — that at its next session the Preparatory Commission will take into account the preliminary technical work accomplished and will proceed on the understanding that a Conference will be convened as soon as possible. That Conference must, however, be supplied with a plan of work, a programme and a draft convention which shall assure its success, for I agree that the failure of the Conference would be worse than its postponement.

M. SCIALOJA spoke as follows:

I would like to associate myself with the remarks of our colleague, the representative of the British Empire. I think that it is very useful to appeal to the public, apart from the Council. Each of us is already aware, through long experience, that the most important Conferences have no hope of success unless they are preceded by a very full and complete preparation. What I say about the Disarmament Conference might also apply to the Economic Conference. These are the two most important Conferences which we have in mind at present.

Everything depends on the perfection of the programme, and, as far as the Disarmament Conference is concerned, on the political preparation. To achieve this it is necessary that the Preparatory Commission should work to some extent also in agreement with the Governments. The impression should not be gained that time is being lost. If the work of preparation is prolonged, it is rather in order to gain time in the end and, above all, to prevent the failure of this great Conference which is of importance for the whole world; the shipwreck of that undertaking would be a sad sight for all of us.

Anything which may serve as a safeguard against the risk of failure must be regarded as essential both by the Preparatory Commission and by all those who are called upon to take part in the preparation of this Conference.

M. BENEŠ spoke as follows:

I should like, Mr. President, to add something to what has just been said by the previous speakers. On the one hand, the necessity of making full preparation for the Conference has been emphasised so that failure may be prevented and, on the other hand, M. Paul-Boncour has emphasised the importance of the work already done.

I should like to express my sympathy with both aspects of this problem. It is quite obvious that there must be sufficient preparation if we are to achieve success. On the other hand, I would like to lay stress on the fact that for several years I have been in a position to follow, either as Rapporteur to the Council or as a member of Committees, the work undertaken with a view to preparing for the Disarmament Conference, and, as M. Paul-Boncour has pointed out, we have already succeeded in throwing a good deal of light on very complex questions.

It is clear that, at the beginning, we were faced with problems which had never yet been discussed as a whole or in such detail as we were called upon to do under the terms of the Covenant of the League, but we have now studied these problems for four years and important political questions have been settled. Progress regarding certain questions connected with the problem of disarmament (security, arbitration, etc.) has been made; we can undoubtedly congratulate ourselves, as M. Paul-Boncour has said, on the work already accomplished, and we should also be right in ascribing much of the merit to the various organisations of the League of Nations.

From this point of view I think that I can, as Rapporteur, once more emphasise what Sir Austen Chamberlain and M. Scialoja have said, and also associate myself with the tribute paid by M. Paul-Boncour to the various organisations for the work which they have already done.

I think that we have made such progress that the public may rightly have confidence in the sincere desire which the Council has to carry out the duties devolving upon it under Article 8 of the Covenant.

Sir Austen CHAMBERLAIN said that there was certainly no contradiction between what M. Paul-Boncour and he himself had said. He would appeal to the public not to grow impatient, for it did not know as well as the Council all the details of the problems raised and all the difficulties to be encountered.
The President noted that the members of the Council who had spoken were agreed on two points: (1) that it was desirable that the Conference should be convened as soon as possible; (2) that the Conference ought not to be convened hastily and without sufficient preparation.

Viscount Ishii considered that Sir Austen Chamberlain and M. Paul-Boncour had expressed exactly what was in the mind of all his colleagues on the Council. He personally entirely agreed with them and presumed that the Minutes of the discussion would be forwarded automatically to the Preparatory Commission; if this was not the case, he proposed that they should be so forwarded.

M. Scialoja noted that, in the text of the resolution proposed by the Rapporteur, the following words occurred: "the moment at which it would be possible to convene the Conference...". Since it was for the Council to fix the date of the Conference, and not for the Preparatory Commission, he would prefer a less definite form of words such as: "the period when it would be possible to convene the Conference".

M. Paul-Boncour agreed with M. Scialoja. It was obvious that the duties of the Preparatory Commission would be confined to informing the Council that its work would be ready by a certain time and that the Conference might then be convened. It was for the Council to choose the date, taking into account certain considerations and the convenience of Governments.

M. Beneš agreed with M. Scialoja's proposal.

The resolution was adopted, with the amendment proposed by M. Scialoja.
ANNEXES.

1. FIRST MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARIAT ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE WORK.

Geneva, September 6th, 1926.

I.

The two Sub-Commissions A and B set up by the Preparatory Commission at its meeting of May 18th, 1926, met on May 28th and May 26th, 1926, respectively, with a view to considering the questions submitted to them by the Preparatory Commission.

Since then Sub-Commission A has held two sessions, the first from May 28th to July 6th and the second from August 2nd to September 9th, 1926. In the course of these two sessions it adopted in first reading the reports on Question I, Question II (a), point (a) of the Commentary of the Preparatory Commission on Questions II (b) and III (point (b) of this Commentary is still under consideration), Question IV, Question VI and the Belgian delegate's proposal (supervision) with the exception of the question contained in point (b) of paragraph 2 B of the Preparatory Commission's report, which will be studied at the same time as the British delegate's proposal concerning chemical warfare.

During its meeting of May 26th, Sub-Commission B decided:

1. To refer to the Joint Commission for an opinion:
   (a) A question relating to Questions II (b) and III;
   (b) The Belgian delegate's proposal (supervision) and the proposal of the delegate of the British Empire on Chemical Warfare.

2. To wait until Sub-Commission A should have replied to the questions submitted to it by the Preparatory Commission in connection with Questions V and VII.

The Joint Commission met from June 28th to July 1st, and, after proceeding to a preliminary study of the three questions referred to it by Sub-Commission B, appointed three Committees to consider these questions in the light of certain principles which it laid down for their guidance.

These three Committees have met and have each prepared a report, which will be submitted to the Joint Commission at its next session.

II.

Sub-Commission A still has on its agenda:

Questions II (b) and III: Point (b) of the Commentary of the Preparatory Commission on these questions (now under consideration);

The whole of Question V (a);

The whole of Question VII;

Proposal by the Belgian delegate (supervision) contained in paragraph (b) of 2 of the Preparatory Commission's report, together with the question of the consequences from the military point of view of inserting in the Convention regarding the prohibition of certain forms of warfare provisions similar to those contained in the Statute of the International Labour Office (Articles 411-420 of the Treaty of Versailles).

The whole of the proposal of the delegate of the British Empire (chemical warfare).

Sub-Commission B still has to consider:

(a) Questions referred to the Joint Commission:

1. Questions II (b) and III (second paragraph of the note).
   Can a limitation of armed forces be effected by the reduction or limitation of expenditure on national defence, and, if so, what are the conditions on which the above method might be applied?
   Consideration of the Joint Commission's report on the question referred to it in this connection, namely:
   Can the magnitude of the armaments of the various States be compared by comparing their military expenditure, and, if so, what method should be followed?

2. Belgian Delegate's Proposal (Supervision).
   (1) What would be the consequences, from the economic point of view, of inserting in the Convention relative to disarmament, or in that regarding the prohibition of certain forms of warfare, provisions similar to those contained in the Statute of the International Labour Office (Articles 411-420 of the Treaty of Versailles)?
Does the supervision of disarmament offer any difficulties from the economic point of view, and, if so, what difficulties?

Consideration of the Joint Commission’s Report.


(a) Can factories normally and legitimately employed for chemical purposes, including dyeworks, be quickly adapted to manufacture poison gases?

(b) If the answer to the above is in the affirmative, how long would it take to effect the change?

(c) Can any proposals be made to prevent or hinder chemical factories from being used for the production of poisonous gases?

Consideration of the Joint Commission’s Report.

(b) Questions the Consideration of which by Sub-Commission A is awaited:

4. Question V (a).

5. Question VII.

(c) Questions submitted by Sub-Commission A:

6. Question I (a).

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

With a view to ascertaining the influence of the material resources of a country on its war strength, Sub-Commission A requests Sub-Commission B to be good enough to furnish:

(1) Its general observations on this question;
(2) A list — if possible in order of war importance — of raw materials, products and industries of every kind which may profitably be considered;
(3) A detailed statement of those essential material resources the absence or insufficiency of which may paralyse a country’s activities in time of war;
(4) Details regarding the financial elements on which the power of a country in time of war depends.

7. Questions II (b) and III.

Sub-Commission A stated that it was for Sub-Commission B to determine which exactly were the elements of a country’s power in time of war which might be accurately expressed in figures and could be found in public documents, such as population, annual output of coal, steel or petroleum, and what relative importance should be attached to them.

Sub-Commission A recommends that an enquiry should be made forthwith as to the most suitable means of placing the national defence budgets of the various countries on a comparable basis.

The Joint Commission will, after receiving the reports of its three Committees, have to study at its next session all the questions referred to it by Sub-Commission B, and will also have to consider the economic consequences of the supervision of disarmament.

III.

As regards the future:

Sub-Commission A will meet on September 27th. In all probability, its work will be concluded in the first fortnight of November.

The Joint Commission might meet on October 4th and conclude its present agenda about the 10th.

As regards the extent of the work as a whole, everything depends on the two following circumstances:

Sub-Commission B may decide either to conclude its agenda (see above) at a session which might be held during November or to refer a certain number of questions, for opinion, to the Joint Commission or other competent bodies. According to whether it adopts one or other of these alternatives, the total duration of its work will clearly be very different.

Furthermore, the Committee of the Council, which has been entrusted with the study of Questions V (a), 8, and V (b), may either deal with these questions itself or refer them, as indeed the French proposal suggests, to the Permanent Advisory Commission and to the Joint Commission. Moreover, it would seem that at any rate the Finnish memorandum will have to be referred to the Financial Committee. According to whether one or other of these methods is adopted, the duration of the work may vary considerably.

Assuming that Sub-Commission B should deal with all its agenda itself and that the Committee of the Council should refer none of the questions to other bodies, it may be presumed that, towards the beginning of December, the Preparatory Commission will have three reports before it, viz.:
1. The report of Sub-Commission A;
2. The report of Sub-Commission B, including the questions sent back by the Joint Commission;
3. The report of the Committee of the Council.

In this case, the Preparatory Commission might meet towards February. On the contrary supposition, it will probably meet about April.

2. SECOND MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE WORK.

Geneva, November 11th, 1926.

During its seventh ordinary session, the Assembly adopted the following resolution, on September 24th, 1926:

"The Assembly takes note of the report submitted to it by the Secretariat and the very full information furnished to the Third Committee by the President of the Preparatory Commission on the work of that Commission, its technical Sub-Commissions A and B, and the Joint Commission.

"It expresses its complete satisfaction with the work performed, and thanks those who have contributed to it.

"Being desirous that the investigations, in regard to which the Assembly itself took the initiative in its resolution of September 25th, 1925, should be brought to a successful conclusion as soon as possible, it requests the Council to call upon the Preparatory Commission to take steps to hasten the completion of the technical work and thus be able to draw up, at the beginning of next year, the programme for a Conference on the Limitation and Reduction of Armaments corresponding to existing conditions in regard to regional and general security, and it asks the Council to convene this Conference before the eighth ordinary session of the Assembly, unless material difficulties render this impossible."

The Council examined at its session of June last the first report of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference (document C.301.1926) prepared at its first session, held at Geneva from May 18th to 26th, 1926. This report consists of three parts: the first deals with certain questions of procedure; the second describes the work of classification and analysis performed by the Preparatory Commission for the guidance of its technical Sub-Commissions; and the third relates to a certain number of proposals put forward by the French, Polish and Finnish delegations, submitted by the Preparatory Commission for direct consideration by the Council itself, and referred by the Council to the Committee of the Council by a decision dated September 4th, 1926.

Since then, the Preparatory Commission has held a second session, on September 22nd and 27th, 1926, during which it examined the work done up to that date by its Sub-Commissions, and gave its directions for subsequent work.

In addition, the technical Sub-Commissions have met on the following dates:

Sub-Commission A (technical military matters) has held three sessions at Geneva: the first from May 28th to July 16th; the second from August 2nd to September 9th; and the third from September 27th to November 5th, on which date it concluded its work and adopted its final report on the different questions laid before it.

Sub-Commission B (non-military questions) has held two sessions at Geneva: the first on May 26th, and the second on September 27th. During these two sessions, after a general discussion, it referred to the Joint Commission all except one of the questions on its agenda. It is to meet again on November 29th for a third session in order to examine:

(a) The report by the Joint Commission on the questions referred by it to that Commission;
(b) Question VII of the Questionnaire of the Preparatory Commission, which it had reserved for its own consideration;
(c) The question relating to the economic consequences of the system of limitation of civil and military aviation as a whole, the study of which was recommended to it by Sub-Commission A.

The Joint Commission has held three sessions: the first at Geneva, from June 28th to July 1st; the second at Geneva, from September 30th to October 5th; and the third at Paris, from October 19th to 27th.

In studying the questions on its agenda, it enlisted the services of outside experts. It has concluded its work and adopted its report.

As a conclusion to all this work, Sub-Commissions A and B and the Joint Commission have prepared reports which altogether constitute a considerable volume amounting to at least 200 pages in each language. It is anticipated that, except as regards the question relating to the limitation of aviation, these reports will be circulated towards the end of December.
PART II.

PROPOSALS BY THE FRENCH, POLISH AND FINNISH DELEGATIONS TO THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION.
REPORT BY M. BENES AND RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL
ON SEPTEMBER 4TH, 1926.

The proposals made by the French, Polish and Finnish delegations to the Preparatory Commission, which were submitted by this Commission to the Council in its report of May 26th, 1926, and the examination of which was adjourned at our last session, have for their aim: to investigate the methods and regulations which would facilitate the meetings of the Council in case of war or threat of war, and which would enable the Council to take as expeditiously as possible such decisions as may be necessary to enforce the obligations of the Covenant; to investigate the procedure which would allow the rapid drafting of recommendations regarding the military assistance provided for in Article 16 of the Covenant, as well as the measures which should be taken in the event of a conflict in order to prevent the development of hostilities; and, finally, to study the measures which would enable the Council to give most rapidly to an attacked State such economic and financial help as might be necessary, as well as to determine the composition and procedure of any committees which the League might use to assist it for this purpose.

To these suggestions, which are embodied in the French proposal, must be added a Polish proposal to the effect that the Council should consider the question of regional assistance as well as a Finnish proposal, completed later by a memorandum which is before the Council (document C.P.D. 1 (a), page 126), and the purpose of which is to examine what special arrangements might be adopted in order to compensate for a reduction of armaments agreed to by certain States and so meet their requirements for security.

These proposals were submitted to the Preparatory Commission during the discussion on Question (Va) 8 and (Vb) of the Commission’s programme. The first of these questions deals with the degree of security considered as one of the elements affecting the estimate of the scale of armaments permissible to various countries. The other deals with the possibility of promoting the reduction of armaments by seeking some way of hastening the application of Article 16 of the Covenant.

The Preparatory Commission was of opinion that such questions were more especially connected with the working of the organs of the League of Nations and the application of the Covenant, and that therefore there was some difficulty in discussing them in a commission such as the Preparatory Commission, on which countries not Members of the League were represented.

The Council will no doubt share this opinion. It will consider that the importance of the questions raised by the French, Polish and Finnish delegations requires an immediate decision as to the procedure to be adopted, and that, in coming to this decision, due account should be taken of the fact that these questions fall strictly within the jurisdiction of the League of Nations. Fortunately, the Council has at its disposal a body which has already proved its worth, and which meets all the requirements. I refer to the Committee of the Council, composed of representatives of Governments and empowered to refer any questions on its agenda directly to the technical commissions which were constituted by the Council when the Preparatory Commission was created. I would therefore suggest to my colleagues that these proposals should be referred to the Committee of the Council. According to the procedure adopted by the Council itself, the Committee of the Council would be asked to invite representatives of the Polish and Finnish Governments to assist it when the proposals submitted by one or other of these Governments were being discussed. The Committee of the Council could, of course, count on the assistance of the Permanent Advisory Commission and of the Joint Commission and also of the other League Commissions.

If my colleagues are of this opinion, I would propose the adoption of the following resolution:

"The Council, having examined the French, Polish and Finnish proposals referred to it by the Preparatory Commission, as well as the memorandum submitted by the Finnish Government as an annex to its own proposal,

"Refers these three proposals and the Finnish memorandum to the Committee of the Council, which, after consultation, if necessary, with the Permanent Advisory Commission and with the Joint Commission or with any other League Commission, will report to the Council on the questions raised in these proposals.

"The Committee of the Council is asked to invite representatives of the Polish and Finnish Governments respectively to assist it in the discussion of their proposals."
MINUTES OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL.

Held at Geneva, September 18th and 27th, 1926.

FIRST MEETING (Saturday, September 18th, at 10 a.m.):


2. Question 1(a) of the French Proposal.

3. Question 1(b) of the French Proposal.

SECOND MEETING (Monday, September 27th, at 1 p.m.):

4. Adjournment of the Session.

FIRST MEETING.

Held on Saturday, September 18th, 1926, at 10 a.m.

President: M. VEVERKA (Czechoslovakia).

Present:

M. L. DE BROUCKÈRE Belgium
Viscount Cecil of Chelwood British Empire
M. E. Villegas Chile
M. Chao-Hsin Chu China
M. PAUL-BONCOUR France
M. VON SCHUBERT Germany
General de Marinis Italy
M. SATO Japan
M. DEBSKI Poland
M. LOUDON Netherlands
M. P. COMNÈNE Roumania
M. GUERRERO Salvador


The President read the resolution of the Council convening the Committee, and fixing its work:

"The Council, having examined the French, Polish and Finnish proposals referred to it by the Preparatory Commission, as well as the memorandum submitted by the Finnish Government as an annex to its own proposal,

"Refers these three proposals and the Finnish memorandum to the Committee of the Council, which, after consultation, if necessary, with the Permanent Advisory Commission and with the Joint Commission or with any other League Commission, will report to the Council on the questions raised in these proposals.

"The Committee of the Council is asked to invite representatives of the Polish and Finnish Governments respectively to assist it in the discussion of their proposals."

He proposed to begin with M. Paul-Boncour's proposal.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France) wished to define the exact meaning of his proposal, which he considered quite a limited one.

Considering that the Preparatory Commission had entrusted a certain number of questions to its technical Sub-Commissions, he had thought that these Sub-Commissions might at the same time examine those questions which arose out of the application of Articles 15 and 16 of the Covenant. He wished to insist that it was not the question of returning to a study of the conception and the operation of the Protocol, which substituted definite and predetermined stipulations for the general stipulations of the Covenant, which was advantageous for some but inconvenient for others. In the proposal before them it was no longer a question of binding themselves beforehand by stipulation, but it was merely to take the view that the decision of the Council aimed at giving more precision to the application of Articles 15 and 16.
If one considered the hypothetical case of a conflict between two countries where the Council decided who was the aggressor, one had to admit that there was in fact neither organ nor procedure to put into force the decision taken.

M. Paul-Boncour had not already decided upon the possibility of solving this problem. He had made his proposal in the first place for reasons of convenience, because the technical organisations were at the moment in session, and also it was a decision on principle. It was, he stated, indispensable for States which had to contemplate the reduction of their armaments to be able to value exactly the element of security in taking account of their position, and to know the value in relation to this security of the special agreements which they would have concluded and the general stipulations resulting from the Covenant.

It had been objected to his proposal that the Preparatory Commission, which included States non-Members, could not discuss the details of the Covenant. He had therefore agreed that the question should be sent to the Council, which had, in accordance with its usual procedure, referred it to the Committee of the Council.

He felt that the Committee should appeal to the technical organisations of the League of Nations, the Permanent Advisory Commission and the Joint Commission, to which they might refer such items of his proposal as the Committee of the Council thought fit to study.

Viscount Cecil of Chelwood (British Empire) was extremely anxious to satisfy as far as possible the wishes of M. Paul-Boncour, but he felt that good results would not be obtained by referring directly all or part of the proposal to the technical organisations. All these questions had a political aspect, and the result of discussing them in the technical organisations would be extremely doubtful. He proposed therefore to keep the question for the Committee of the Council, to study it point by point and only to refer to the experts difficulties of a technical order.

M. von Schubert (Germany) supported Viscount Cecil's proposal, which he considered extremely practicable.

M. Paul-Boncour (France) felt that there was a misunderstanding, for he did not see that the questions asked were of a political aspect, and he felt unable to say whether they could be answered technically. He insisted once more that they must not take their plans in advance and that the sole question was as follows: After a decision of the Council, was the League of Nations in a position to furnish the organisation and means necessary to apply it? Only the technical organisations could give an answer.

M. de Brouckère (Belgium) proposed that the Committee of the Council should endeavour to examine this subject. Such an examination would show what was the best procedure to adopt.

The Committee adopted this proposal.

2. Question 1(a) of the French Proposal.

The Commission proposes to suggest to the Council that methods or regulations should be investigated which would facilitate the meeting of the Council at very brief notice in case of war or threat of war.

Viscount Cecil of Chelwood (British Empire) proposed to ask the Secretariat what were the methods employed in analogous cases in the past. The Committee would then be able to judge as to whether any improvements were possible.

M. de Brouckère (Belgium) observed that it would be necessary to have very detailed information as to the historical examples.

M. Paul-Boncour (France) wished to point out that, as regards the first question, his anxiety was purely of a technical order. He had in mind the Greco-Bulgarian precedent. Experience had provided a solution in every case, and the method of working would be fixed by consulting the series of solutions. In the case mentioned, the machine had worked with a rapidity which had assured success; the report of the Committee of Enquiry had shown that, if there had been a delay of two hours in the transmission of the telegram, the conflict might have been aggravated into an outbreak of war. It was necessary to state that they had benefited in this case by a series of favourable circumstances; the President of the Council had been very quickly communicated with. The Members had very quickly responded to the call and the communications with the countries interested had been unbroken. But it was necessary to contemplate more serious cases. What would the machinery of the Secretariat do in cases where the situation was not so favourable?

Viscount Cecil of Chelwood (British Empire) thought that, instead of asking for a report that the Committee would have to examine, it would be better to obtain their information first-hand and to study it in Committee in order to take account of possible improvements. A long enquiry, ending in a lengthy report, would do nothing but retard the work.

M. Guerrero (Salvador) agreed with M. Paul-Boncour that they must foresee cases where unfavourable conditions presented themselves. The Secretariat-General should consult the Chairman of the Transit Committee, at present at Geneva, and should propose efficacious means without the necessity of asking for a report from the Transit Committee.

M. de Brouckère (Belgium) declared himself in agreement with Viscount Cecil that the Committee should in no way resign its political competence and confine itself to asking for