with the colours, and were holding over for later consideration the question whether limitation should be extended to other categories. I fear that, if any more general expression than "on service" is used, we shall complicate the whole of the rest of the discussion.

After all, what have we attempted to do? We were faced with a complex difficulty, and we have endeavored to split it up into its component parts. We are therefore confining our attention for the time being to forces with the colours, it being understood that we reserve our views as to whether this same limitation, or any other form of limitation, should later be extended to trained reserves, or even to other elements of the population.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I am sorry to be troublesome, but I am not sure that I understand, because if you turn to the commentary, where are to be found the questions which it is suggested should be specifically decided by the Commission, the question of what is to be meant by the phrase "on service" is raised in the first instance; that is to say, the very first question raised in the commentary is the question whether you are to include trained reserves or not, and then after that you begin to discuss the specific Points 1, 2, and so on. I do not know what the idea of the Bureau was, whether we were to discuss that first of all, or whether we were to take that when we came to Point 11, but if it is intended to be taken when we come to Point 11, then I do not see why it is put in the very forefront.

M. de Brouckère (Belgium). — I see the position as follows: We all seem to be agreed that the forces with the colours should be limited. We are not all agreed with regard to whether other forces must also be limited, and it has therefore been proposed that we should begin by discussing one method of being employed for limiting forces with the colours and other forces in the same category. Once we have agreed on this method, we can see whether it should be extended to the limitation of trained reserves.

In saying that he is ready to limit forces with the colours according to the methods stated in Points 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, Viscount Cecil or any other member naturally does not mean to say that he is not prepared to limit other forces; but as we are all agreed that these particular forces should be limited, why not remove a preliminary difficulty by beginning with the limitation of these forces? It is for this reason that the draft divides the question into two chapters: first, effectives with the colours and other forces in the same category; then, other effectives i.e., trained reserves and possibly other forces too.

The commentary has been drawn up to explain the reasons why this table has been adopted, but clearly, in settling the method of discussion, the Commission need only go by the table; the commentary is quite unofficial. In any case, I hope we shall all agree that, in approaching the discussion under the heading it has been given and in the form in which it is drawn up, no one pledges himself not to limit trained reserves; that question will be discussed under Point 11.

M. Hennings (Sweden). — I confess that I do not quite understand the commentary as regards this part of the table. The proposal is, I understand, to pronounce in turn on two questions: Is it expedient to limit the effectives on service with the colours, etc.? and secondly: Is there to be a direct or indirect limitation of trained reserves?

Now, with regard to trained reserves, I would like to emphasise the fact, if I have understood correctly, that we can limit them separately. The limitation of trained reserves must follow from the limitation of effectives. What I mean is that, in order to discuss the question of the limitation of effectives, we must examine the methods of achieving such limitation; and then, if I have understood aright, two methods can be adopted, (1) the period of service may be limited; in that case only the effectives serving with the colours will be reduced automatically; (2) the annual contingent may be limited, and the result will also be a limitation of effectives serving with the colours.

One of these methods, viz., the limitation of the annual contingent, leads indirectly to a limitation of trained reserves, while the other method, the limitation of the period of service, does not involve a limitation of trained reserves.

It therefore seems to me that one of the main points to be considered when we discuss the limitation of effectives is whether we are going to use the first method, limitation of the period of service, or the second method, limitation by reducing the annual contingent, which carries with it a limitation of trained reserves.

M. Paul-Boncour (France). — It seems to me that Viscount Cecil and M. Hennings are now engaged on a criticism of the method chosen by Viscount Cecil himself. Inevitably we shall always come down to the three or four essential ideas with which some of us are in agreement and others in disagreement, and which form the very foundation of our discussions. This much is perfectly clear. I therefore think that it would perhaps have been better first of all to discover whether we could reach an agreement on these essential points or not. However, another method has been chosen and we must abide by it. This method consists in examining the two drafts which have been submitted. With admirable lucidity and ingenuity, the Bureau and particularly M. de Brouckère have divided these two drafts into synoptic and comparative tables; that being so, we had better deal with this document. With regard to the first phrase of the synoptic table, we are undoubtedly all agreed, whatever system we may prefer, that the number of men on service must be limited. Whatever attitude may ultimately
be adopted, whatever our views of alternative methods which may lead to an indirect limitation of trained reserves — period of service or non-incorporation of the full contingents (an alternative which seems to haunt our discussions) — the question to be decided for the moment is.

Can you limit the number of men on service, men in uniform, and drawing rations? 

Undoubtedly we can. I think it is important that we should recognise this at once.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I merely wish to disabuse my friend M. Paul-Boncour. I was not quarrelling at all with the principle of this thing; it was only that I was anxious to be quite sure that the words “on service” did not limit us later on in the discussion. After M. de Brouckère’s explanations, I am quite satisfied.

M. Hennings (Sweden). — I am also in entire agreement and have nothing further to add.

Point 1 was therefore adopted.


“...their armed forces”.

Point 2 was adopted without observation.


“...or formations organised on a military basis.”

Count Bernstorff (Germany). — I venture to make a small observation with regard to this phrase. The experts of all the delegations represented on Sub-Commission A unanimously adopted a text, which runs as follows: “Organised on a military basis (police forces of all kinds, gendarmerie, Customs officers, and forest guards and any organisation which by its staff of officers, establishment, training, armament and equipment is such as to make it available without measures of mobilisation).”

In the French draft now before us this text has been modified to read: “By ‘formations organised on a military basis’ shall be understood police forces of all kinds, gendarmerie, Customs officials, forest guards, and, generally speaking, any organisation which, whatever its legal purpose, is capable by reason of its cadres...”

I presume that what we have here is merely an error of drafting and not a modification of a principle adopted unanimously by Sub-Commission A.

The President. — If Count Bernstorff has no objection, we might discuss the point when we come to Point 8.

Count Bernstorff (Germany). — I made this remark because I thought that we might have made a modification before coming to point 8.


British draft: French draft:

“...military.”

“...military, naval and air.”

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I venture to make a suggestion to the Commission, namely, that, without deciding one way or the other about “naval” and “air”, we should defer our discussion of these points until we come to the clauses which deal with the naval armaments and the air armaments. It would be personally convenient to me to do that rather than to discuss the broad question here, which cannot really be determined without considering rather closely the other methods of limitation which we propose for those services, and if I were to develop my arguments, for instance, on the naval question, I should have to point out that if you limit the ships you really limit the personnel, and things of that kind, which really come under the discussion of how you are going to limit your fleets. I do not say that, when we come finally to draft the Convention, it would not be proper to put these words in here if we decide to include them, but the discussion of them would be more convenient, I venture to think, separately, with regard to the naval personnel when we come to the navy proposals, and with regard to the air personnel when we come to the air proposals. Particularly with reference to the air proposals, I think it would be almost impracticable for me to develop my arguments at present without a consideration of the whole organisation of the air force and the differences in the organisation of the air forces of one country and those of another.

There is another example of the difficulty: for instance, I find that under Point 7 we shall be discussing whether it is possible to divide the forces of the different countries into home and colonial forces. Very different considerations apply to naval forces in that respect, and to air and land forces. I doubt whether under any circumstances it is possible to divide the fleet into home and colonial forces; at any rate, it is quite impossible in the case of my country, and therefore I think it would be much better to keep these things separate and to discuss them when we come to the separate subjects, reserving, of course, to the Commission the full power to deal with the whole matter in this clause if they should think fit later on.

M. Paul-Boncour (France). — I do not quite see how we could follow the method suggested by Viscount Cecil. We are agreed on the first three points: (1) to limit the number of men on service; (2) in their armed forces; (3) or formations organised on a military basis.
This is already a great advance. Now we must go on to enumerate these forces. We must say that the forces in question are military, naval, or air or all three categories together. It seems to me that here we have reached a question of principle, and one on which agreement was obtained in the technical Committees: that is to say, that the three forms of armaments are indissolubly connected. I cannot see how it would be possible to agree to limit one of them without agreeing to limit the others also. Our tables are to be the public record of these limitations, and will in some sort constitute their registration with the League of Nations. I do not think that one would avoid asserting in these tables — and we are concerned with an assertion, since the question of the tables and of their order will have to be examined later — that the limitation of effectives should apply to military, naval and air forces. The question of ships is one of material, and so is that of aircraft; but the question of effectives appears to me to be quite distinct, especially as it is impossible to argue, for instance, in regard to a navy, that the effectives can be deduced from the number of ships. Besides, the number of effectives on board vessels can vary greatly according to the systems of different navies, and according to the construction and importance of the vessels. Again, in naval matters, there is not only the question of crews but also of landing parties. And finally, gentlemen, it is always most disagreeable and painful to have to call up pictures or memories of war in a conference such as this; but after all, we ought to profit from experience, and we cannot help remembering that, to take ourselves as an example, during the first period of the war a whole sector of our line was held by sailors, who were thus fighting land forces.

I really do not see how it is possible, when we have just declared our decision to limit the number of men on service in the armed forces, not to add all the three words: "military, naval and air". For my part, I think it would be most unfortunate if we could not include this point among those which we can put aside as agreed on.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I am afraid I did not make myself clear to M. Paul-Boncour. I was not at all asking the Commission to decide the question of whether or not we should limit military, naval and air personnel. I did not wish to decide that at all, nor was I asking it to decide whether or not this was the proper place to put in the limitation. I think very likely it is the proper place, if we decide to limit it. It was merely a question of the convenience of discussion: whether it was really convenient to take the discussion of the naval and air personnel now or whether we had not better first settle the whole question of the land forces, then come to the sea forces, and then to the air forces. An observation of M. Paul-Boncour illustrated exactly what I have in my mind. He said that the fleet is a question of material and therefore it is different from the effectives. That is quite true; but it also shows, when we come to material, that all of us agree that you cannot discuss the army material, the navy material and the air material all together; you must discuss them separately. I venture to say the same is true of the personnel. It is quite true that the personnel consists of men, but they are very differently trained, they have very different duties, and very different considerations apply to their employment. It may be very proper, as a matter of drafting, to include them in one clause at the end, but, for the purpose of discussion, I venture very earnestly to appeal to the Commission not to put one of its members to a great deal of inconvenience, which it will do if it insists on discussing this question. I am not asking the members to decide anything against any of their views, but merely to postpone that particular discussion until a later stage, reserving all questions as to where and how we ought to deal with the personnel now or whether we had not better first settle the whole question of the land forces, the sea forces, and then to the air forces. I confess I shall feel a little hurt if the Commission insists on discussing that matter, which as I have informed it, it would be very inconvenient for me to discuss at this moment.

In Sub-Commission A we did discuss the personnel separately, though the Sub-Commission certainly accepted, as M. Paul-Boncour very properly points out, the theory that the whole of the armaments of a country must be considered as one. But they did discuss the personnel, as they discussed the material of the three branches, separately. Afterwards, no doubt, they would have combined them in a common Convention. Therefore, I am only asking that the Preparatory Commission should follow exactly the procedure which was adopted in Sub-Commission A.

M. DE BROUCKÈRE (Belgium). — I think we are all agreed on one point, that there is a problem of effectives, and that that problem is at once a military, naval and air problem.

If I understand Viscount Cecil aright, he considers that the examination of this problem of effectives — I purposely use the singular — will be easier if we begin by studying each of these questions separately and then afterwards take them as a whole. There is therefore no difference of principle between M. Paul-Boncour's view and Viscount Cecil's view, but only what I might call a difference of procedure. The question is whether we are going to embark on this discussion now or at some other time. I think it will be easy to agree on this point once the fact is well established that one problem of effectives exists.

M. Sato (Japan). — I think that we ought to postpone the discussion of this question to a later meeting.

I quite understand what M. Paul-Boncour has in mind. The interdependence of the three categories of armaments has always been the main contention of the French delegation. Nevertheless, I do not think that he is quite correct in stating that the principle of the interdependence of armaments with respect to the limitation of effectives was universally admitted in Sub-Commission A. The Sub-Commission agreed that it was necessary to study these
armaments “in combination”, but it did not agree on the possibility of making the limitation of effectives applicable to the three categories of armaments.

As regards, for example, the question of the limitation of naval effectives, I remember that my own delegation was unable to agree to the limitation of these effectives when the point was considered in Sub-Commission A.

I think that to discuss point 4 in the manner suggested by M. Paul-Boncour would make our work more complicated. I therefore support Viscount Cecil’s proposal.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France). — I can see no advantages in this method. If we do not begin by affirming the necessity of limiting the three forms of armament as regards effectives — we shall come to material later on — no discussion at all will be possible after Point 4. You say: “Let us put this aside and deal with the other points first”. Very well, but we might apply the same argument to every question. If we do not deal with the necessity of limiting effectives in the three forms of armament, how can we go on to discuss the question of trained reserves, which is awaiting us and which we cannot escape?

Another point, which I mention in passing to show the impossibility of limiting trained reserves, is that it is precisely in naval matters above all others that such limitation is impossible. As regards naval material, you have merchant-ships which are continually increasing their speed and therefore can be converted into auxiliary cruisers. You have a whole host of other vessels which can be converted into mine-sweepers or mine-layers. All these vessels, as you know, play an important part in modern warfare, and have crews — which brings us back to the question of effectives — who are perpetually trained, because they spend their lives doing the same work which they have to do on the day of mobilisation.

If there is one branch of armaments in which it is impossible to limit trained reserves, it is the navy, because here the reservist is a man who spends his life doing the work which he will have to do on the day of mobilisation. How can you expect me to consider the possibility of limiting the trained reserves of the army when it is impossible to limit the crews of the navy? And again, the striking power of which Viscount Cecil spoke does not depend on one single form of armament but on all armaments together. If we say simply: “military” and not “military, naval and air”, we cannot discuss to any purpose, for at every moment, while dealing with the limitation of land forces, I shall have to use arguments relating to armed naval and air forces. It is possible to accept provisional solutions, but I cannot think that method is a good one. Every moment you will be forced to see the truth of my contention that it is impossible to limit land effectives without limiting the effectives of the navy and the air force.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I really am very anxious to come to an agreement on every point I can with all the members of the Commission, but really the argument of M. Paul-Boncour does seem to me to show conclusively how difficult it is to deal with the two subjects of naval personnel and military personnel together. It is quite true that forces other than regular forces were used in the late war, and would not doubt be used in any future war, to man auxiliary cruisers and to some extent mine-sweepers; but they were not trained reserves at all — they were merchant seamen. They had nothing to do with trained reserves. I will not say that none of them had had training, but most of them had had no training at all. It is a different point altogether. The point is that, when you come to the sea, a sailor has an immense advantage over a landsman, whether he is a sailor on board a warship or whether he is a sailor on board a merchantman, and you can use men on board merchantmen for certain purposes which are of a hostile character; but it is quite a different question; it has no bearing on the question of whether you should include trained reserves in the striking force of a country, because there you take the man, you train him, you give him a special training as a soldier, and he becomes more or less efficient as a fighting unit and more or less comparable with the actual regular soldier. So that the two questions are really entirely distinct, and, if I may venture to remind M. Paul-Boncour of the fact, his delegation on Sub-Commission A felt that very strongly with regard not to the sea but to the air. It has been pointed out to me — what I had for the moment forgotten — that, when it came to the question of limiting the air force by limiting personnel, a very large number of delegations, including the delegation of France, were of opinion that that method was not acceptable unless you limited civil personnel as well as military personnel. Well, that shows that the question is entirely a distinct one — that is, technically distinct — when you come to deal with the three different arms.

It is really an entirely distinct question, and I should be placed in the very utmost difficulty if I were asked to discuss these three questions now together, whereas I should certainly discuss them all with the desire of reaching an agreement with my colleagues if I could take them separately and in connection with the arms to which they belong.

M. SOIKAL (Poland). — I need not remind you that the view which our experts expressed on this point in Sub-Commission A was to anticipate a limitation of all effectives, military, naval and air. This corresponds to the opinion just expressed by M. Paul-Boncour. Some of our colleagues have in the course of this debate shown such expert knowledge in technical and military questions that I do not think we have all been able to follow such a technical discussion. Accordingly, I do not want to touch on the main issue of the question.
In the circumstances, I think the discussion will be somewhat complicated and most important. I have closely followed the general lines of the two methods indicated by M. Paul-Boncour on the one side and by Viscount Cecil on the other. I wonder, however, if only from the point of view of procedure, whether the general questions that they have raised really apply to Point 4. Could we not adopt a somewhat different method? Do not forget that we are at the first reading. Could we not accept Point 4 on the first reading as it stands in the French draft, and if necessary later on, take into consideration for disarmament the military, naval and air effectives.

M. Paul-Boncour (France). — I am quite prepared to accept any method that is desired, but how are we going to proceed? I need hardly say that I accept M. Sokal's proposal, but obviously it is not likely to satisfy Viscount Cecil. I repeat that I accept any method and any procedure that you like. But we must not deceive ourselves: we should not press our point so strongly on both sides if principles did not underlie the question of method. We must say so clearly. I do not mind whether we first discuss questions of land, naval or of air forces: nevertheless, I must say here and now that whatever is discussed in the case of land forces could not be accepted by me unless the same principles were accepted in respect of naval forces. If this reservation is accepted, the Commission can do as it pleases.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — Of course, I accept that suggestion of M. Paul-Boncour with very great gratitude to him. He is, of course, entitled to say, and obviously entitled to say: "If I am not to have this point decided now, I must reserve my right to reconsider any subsequent decision you come to when that point is decided". I accept that without question.

The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — I have not often had occasion to rise and complain that our work was proceeding with such dizzy speed, but I confess that it is going a bit too fast for the complete comfort of the American delegation. I do not want to take issue with any of the points that have been raised this morning, but I would like to point out that, in view of the fact that we have taken up two draft Conventions, our work has taken on an entirely new aspect, and I have been obliged to refer the whole question back to my Government. I have sought to do this as thoroughly as possible by placing it in possession of the full views expressed by my colleagues in this Commission, in order that my Government may arrive at its conclusions on the basis of a very thorough and very friendly understanding of what all my colleagues are endeavouring to arrive at. But it has not yet been physically possible for me to receive an expression of these views, and I must also confess that my time has been so completely taken up with the effort to place my Government in possession of all the facts that I have not had time to give really adequate attention to these proposals brought before us. For instance, the one now before us reached me this morning about an hour before the meeting, and I confess that it is a bit difficult for me to come here on that much notice and commit my Government on a matter of such really great importance. Its views on this point which is under discussion have been made very clear in Sub-Commission A, but how far its views may be affected by the numerous statements which have been made by other delegations I am not yet in a position to say. It may be that this will afford some method of arriving at agreement. But, under the circumstances, I feel that I must reserve the right to raise this question again as soon as I am in receipt of instructions from my Government, and that the matter should not be considered closed until I am in receipt of those instructions.

The President. — May I point out to Mr. Gibson that there is no need for him to be anxious, since we are only on the first reading?

M. de Brouckère (Belgium). — Furthermore, this is not a new text but the same text differently presented.

The President. — In these circumstances, and taking account of the reservation made by M. Paul-Boncour (with which Viscount Cecil agrees), I think we might continue the discussion of land forces, it being understood that we can go back to this point later when we take naval and air forces. Therefore, if no one asks to speak, we might pass to Point 5.

Point 4 was adopted as regards military effectives and held over with regard to naval and air effectives.


**British draft:**

"... who could, within... of the outbreak of hostilities, be available for despatch to the fighting line."

**French draft:**

"... and who can be employed immediately without being mobilised."

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I see that my text happens to be printed first, so perhaps I had better say a word about it. I need not elaborate the argument, and indeed I hope that I will not be guilty in these discussions of making long speeches, but there is just one point I should like to make. In the very interesting and able speech which M. de Brouckère made the other day, he explained, if I may say so, two main difficulties that he felt with regard to the British proposition. One was that he did not quite know what the expression "available for despatch to the fighting line" meant. He said that it was a vague
phrase which did not have a sufficiently precise meaning to be proper to be put into a Convention of this sort, and he gave as an instance of the kind of difficulty he felt in the case of a machine-gun. He asked who were really the people in the fighting line in connection with a machine-gun — are they the actual crew of the gun, the two, three, four or five men who are in charge of the gun, or are they the people who are responsible for bringing up the ammunition, and so on, right back to the factory? I should have thought, with the greatest respect to M. de Brouckère, that the answer was quite plain — that it is the people who are in charge of the gun; they are the people who are in the fighting line. The others are no doubt an essential part of the military organisation, but the point is that if you limit the people who are in the fighting line you limit the aggressive power of a nation. It is quite true that you may limit it in other ways; there may be better ways, but one of the ways of limiting it is certainly to limit the number of men you can put into the fighting line, and all of us who have recollections of the late war know the anxiety which every Government felt as to how they were to find men to put into the fighting line, men sufficiently trained to withstand the shock and difficulties of the battle. The men which you put into the fighting line are not all capable of attack; you have to select men for the actual attack, you have to find your best and most highly trained men. There is therefore a real meaning for the expression, and, if it is not sufficiently defined, no doubt words can be found to make it still more clear.

I quite recognise, as I said the other day, that this is a matter which does not affect my own country very closely; it affects far more closely the Continental countries and countries which have the system of conscription. It is they who strongly object to any attempt at the limitation of trained reserves.

The proposition put forward by M. de Brouckère appears to me, if I may say so, to be far sounder. He asked: "How can you limit trained reserves? They exist." "The moment you have the system of conscription, once you pass a class through the regular army, through service with the colours, they become trained reserves *ipsa facto*, and you cannot limit them." That, I think, is a very powerful argument, once and which it may be, is conclusive.

All I can say is that it is not exactly what my proposition means. My proposition means: Is there any means of limiting, not the trained reserves expressly, but all the men who can be used in the fighting line? That will include no doubt some of the trained reserves, but I do not propose to limit them separately from the regular army but as part, for that purpose, of the regular army, and the real question undoubtedly is whether there is any means, in a conscriptionist country, of limiting the forces of that country except by limiting its total population. That really is what it comes to; that is the proposition.

The proposition on the other side is this: you cannot limit the annual contingent. That would be to interfere with the principle of equality. You cannot limit the trained reserves apart from the regular service; that is impracticable. Therefore you can only limit at all directly, it must depend entirely on the number of men who are in the country. That is the only limit. You do not know how many men are available to the population and, if the population is increasing and the population is small or decreasing, or not increasing rapidly, it will mean that the powers of the country become less. It may be that that is an inevitable conclusion, but I am not sure that it is a conclusion which all of those who sit round this table would welcome. I can only put forward my views to the Commission; I do not ask them to decide anything by a majority. The moment any substantial section of the Commission say that they are unable to accept a particular solution, in my view that solution becomes inadmissible and cannot be pressed. At the same time, I would ask my colleagues who disagree with me to consider very carefully where they are going, whether they really believe that the principle which they think is inevitable is one which can be safely accepted as a principle for the armaments of the world, because we must remember that what we are seeking to do now is quite a new thing; we are seeking to establish principles for the armaments of the world, principles which will no doubt be referred to in subsequent discussions as of great importance. I should like them seriously to consider that point, and I say it in the utmost friendship and with the greatest desire to find a solution which would be acceptable to us all.

I should have thought that the solution which I ventured to suggest is the right one, and the course we have to do is — whether it be even by limiting the number of the annual contingent — to limit the forces that can be used for sudden aggression, and the most direct and certain way or, to use an American expression, the most positive way of doing it is by actually cutting down the number of men you can put into the fighting line. Each country would, of course, have to say how it could best do that in conformity with its own constitution and with its own tradition, but I should have thought that was the proper principle to lay down and that any other principle was a dangerous one for us to accept. However, that is only my view, and I may be wrong.

I am quite aware that really there are two entirely distinct ideas of how we should approach this problem. I have tried to point out the danger, from one point of view, of the contention which is put forward by those who do not agree with me, but I should not be dealing fairly with the situation if I did not add what I take to be the fundamental conception at the bottom of their thought. They say you cannot limit the numbers; what you can do is to limit the training, and therefore you have, in Article 7 of the French draft, the proposal that the period of service shall not exceed certain agreed periods. It is evident that, if you make those periods sufficiently short, you do reduce the aggressive power of a modern army. To take an extreme case, your army which was only trained for two or three months would evidently be inefficient — a militia army — that is to say, an army designed for defensive purpose alone and not capable of aggression at all. If it is possible to reach that goal, that would be no doubt a very acceptable solution, from my point of view, of the whole difficulty,
and it may be that we ought to travel along that road and abandon all idea of limiting the numbers, simply going in for limiting training. The only thing I wish to say to my colleagues is that, if that is really the policy which they accept and desire — a very important policy, no doubt, if they do accept it — it will not make much difference at the present time. Indeed, it will not make any difference to the armed position as it exists at this moment. I think I am right in saying that the proposed French period of service is one year, and in one year you can undoubtedly train a soldier to be an exceeding efficient soldier. In some countries the period is longer and very few have shorter periods than a year. If you are going to say that your forces will still be thoroughly efficient fighting machines, you will not have done much in the direction of disarmament by that means alone. I am quite aware that there are proposals, which I am not going to deal with at this moment, for what is called indirect limitation, i.e., limitation by limiting the material and so making the men not so efficient or not so capable of attack, or, at any rate, limiting the numbers of those who are capable of attack. I will not deal with that point at this moment; if a really efficient system of that kind can be found, that would no doubt to some extent be an answer. I confess, however, that I have a preference, which goes rather deeply down into my convictions, for the idea that, if you wish to limit, if you wish to produce a result, the best thing is to do it directly and not indirectly. If you try indirect methods of achieving a result, you too often find that you do not achieve the result which you intended to achieve. That is all I wish to say at this stage. We are at the first reading; we are discussing the matter and not seeking to arrive at irrevocable decisions. I put this contention before my colleagues with the earnest desire that they will consider once again whether there is not some solution which will be more positive and more direct than that which they at present favour, and which will produce a result not in the dim and distant future but in a comparatively short time.

M. DE BROUCKERE (Belgium). — I need hardly say with what care and with what interest I have listened to Viscount Cecil’s speech. I hope you will excuse me if I do not answer immediately, both because I want to have time to think over what he has said and also for a reason connected with our Rules of Procedure. The question of limitation of trained reserves comes, I think, under Point II, and what we have to consider at the moment is rather the question whether, among the troops with the colours to which limitation will apply, we must include everyone, or only the men capable of being sent to the fighting line.

I understood the French draft as a limitation of the number of rations. We shall doubtless have official explanations later, but, pending such explanations, if I keep to the text that has been submitted, that is my understanding of it.

Viscount Cecil desires to limit the forces capable of being sent to the fighting line. I do not think that Viscount Cecil could strictly abide by the definition according to which, “among the men who directly or indirectly serve a machine-gun, only those actually handling the gun are regarded as being in the fighting line”. I know that these men form the first echelon. Anyone who knows how a machine-gun is supplied will understand that the men detailed for that service are not exactly shirkers. Furthermore, if you talk of limiting the fighting line to those who are firing in the front line, you will perhaps arrive at the strange result that all the artillery would be regarded as in the rear and not in the fighting line. Furthermore, as war develops, so will the depth of the fighting line increase. Without pressing this point, I think that it is extremely difficult even for a technical expert to determine where the fighting line ends, and it is even more difficult to say which are the troops capable of being sent into the line. Obviously, everyone knows which troops they would prefer to send there. First would come the regular army. But sometimes reserves, sometimes territorials and sometimes men who hardly know how to hold a rifle are sent into the line. Further, if you include factors as vague as this in a formula, I think that it would be difficult to use it as a basis for a Convention.

I have taken the liberty of making these remarks because I think that it is just such a formula that Viscount Cecil proposes to insert in the Convention. He has told us that the principle is a good one, but I would remind him that he has warned us against abstract conceptions. Except for these few words, I will not enter into a discussion of the main issue; I will reserve that for Point II. I would only like to say to Viscount Cecil that he is singularly mistaken if he thinks that it is my intention to let things go on without interference, without attempting any limitation, until the whole of civilian life is vitiated by preparations for war.

When Viscount Cecil tells us that he prefers direct to indirect methods, I cannot refrain from reminding him that we are discussing a Convention on disarmament, and that in such a Convention arms are the direct and men the indirect factor. I know of no legislation which forbids a person to know how to fire a revolver. On the other hand, I know of many legislations which forbid anyone to carry a revolver in his pocket. What would perhaps be disastrous would be for us to arrive at the establishment of a disarmament Convention which would speak of everything except arms. That would be in the nature of a gamble, and I do not think that the result we seek could be attained in that manner.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — The only thing I wanted to say was, in reference to the very just criticism addressed to me on the subject of principle, that I did say I thought it would be necessary to have a definition of effective, but that I had left it out from the present draft, because I wanted to hear further discussion of the idea first. I quite agree that it is a defect in the British draft.

The Commission rose at 1.5 p.m.
SEVENTH PUBLIC MEETING.

Held at Geneva on Monday, March 28th, 1927, at 10.30 a.m.

President: M. LOUDON (Netherlands).


The President. — Before continuing our discussions, I think it would be well if we came to an agreement with regard to our method of work, or rather with regard to the number of hours which we are going to devote to our work every day. Do you all agree with the Bureau that we should hold two meetings a day, except one or two afternoons per week?

I suggest, gentlemen, that these meetings should last about three hours. We might perhaps begin in the morning at 10 o'clock, and make it a rule to finish at 12.45 or 1 p.m. In the afternoon we might meet at 4 and finish at 7 p.m.

I propose that we have no meetings on Saturday afternoons. Personally, I should prefer us to meet every day, but, if you wish it, we might agree to have a second free afternoon on Wednesdays.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — So far as I am concerned I accept entirely all your proposals and I should be quite ready to sit on Saturday afternoons. But, accepting for the moment, in a spirit of compromise, the idea that we shall not sit on Saturday afternoon, because I think it is just as well to do the thing properly. There is, however, one suggestion I should like to make. I would rather sit at a quarter past 10 punctually than at 10 o'clock unpunctually, and I would rather sit at a quarter past 10 until a quarter past 1, if it is proposed to have three hours — I do not really mind — or if you like, from a quarter past 10 to 1, but I do suggest to you, sir, that it is rather hard on those who are punctual to find that the meeting does not commence until a quarter of an hour after they have arrived. It is better to begin and if people are late they are late, and they must take the consequences.

The President. — Since you are all agreed, it is understood that we shall commence in the mornings at 10.15 sharp. We shall sit until 1 o'clock, and we shall meet again from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. There will be no meetings on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons.


M. de BroUCKÈRE (Belgium). — I have no intention whatever of trying to reopen the general discussion, but I am very anxious to revert to the remarks which Viscount Cecil made at the end of the last meeting. They were very important and deserve the closest attention.

Viscount Cecil said that my arguments had not convinced him, and I am sure that I do not expect to be able to convince him; I harbour no such flattering illusions.

It is undeniable that there are serious differences between his general idea and my own. But I think that there are also a certain number of misunderstandings between us and these at least I should like to try to dispel. If we are to do work of any value, the first condition is that we must all understand each other perfectly.

What is the task we are trying to accomplish? Why are we here? Our object is to bring about the limitation, the reduction, of armaments, and, as our final goal, disarmament itself. We are beginning by trying to limit, to reduce, and finally to abolish the most dangerous forms of armament, and, by a fortunate coincidence, those forms of armament which are the most dangerous are also, I think, those which are most obvious and tangible.

What does “to disarm” mean? I do not know if the military sense is the same, but the normal sense of the word to disarm is to lay down one’s arms. When a man takes up his arms, he is armed: when he furbishes up his arms, he is preparing to arm; when he makes ready his arms, he is proceeding to arm. Take a savage sharpening his arrows and dipping their points in woorali preliminary to engaging in his barbarous method of warfare; he is arming. Take the professor in the silence of his laboratory searching for the formula of a new gas which will enable him to asphyxiate children in the cellars of bombarded cities; he is arming. When a country casts guns or manufactures rifles, surely it is arming! If we are to disarm in the true sense of the word, we must prevent the nations from taking up their arms at will, from making ready their arms at will, from preparing the mobilisation of their poison-gas factories, which is the most dangerous of all ways of arming.

Why is this? In the present state of military technique, a country with the effectives which it has at its disposition, after calling up its trained reserves, could hardly launch an offensive involving the employment of effectives on a large scale at once, during the first days. It would have to get its men together, to prepare them. They are prepared for defence; they are probably less fit for attack. If there is a sudden attack at all, what may we expect its nature to be? Such an offensive would probably be carried through by means of an enormous quantity of aircraft, asphyxiating gases, tanks and the like. Consequently, what constitutes
the real danger is surely the accumulation of these offensive weapons. Is not this the first point to be guarded against?

Here is the real and immediate danger of attack; but how far are we guarding against it? With regard to naval and air armaments, a number of proposals have been made, which we shall have to examine later. So far, no proposals have been made with regard to gas, and although there has been much talk about taking a first step, one is bound to admit that the first step which we are likely to make is a step backwards.

It looked as if everyone was agreed in condemning the use of gas. It looked as if all the great nations had declared again and again not that they were concluding a convention prohibiting the use of gas but that already-today the use of gas was contrary to international law as that law now stands. I am not certain that we have yet reached so much agreement, and I am afraid we have not made much progress in this matter.

What is the situation with respect to mass manufacture, which is also a danger? The British draft contains a proposal for partial publicity, while Article 8 of the Covenant already provides for full publicity. This does not seem to move us a step forward; it is a partial reaffirmation of something which appeared to be already sanctioned. In the French draft there is no limitation of expenditure. This is certainly an important proposal, and later on I shall have to speak of it to show how important it is. But it seems to me that this is not the only action which could be taken and that more far-reaching action is quite possible.

I know quite well what arguments we shall hear. We shall be told that the problem is, in many of its aspects, economic. We shall be told that we are fettered on every side by the present state of economic organisation. What we are faced with here is, above all, a problem of economic disarmament. This is quite true, and we may hope that the impending Economic Conference will take the first step for us, and will make it possible for us to take further steps. But I think that there is something which we could do at once, and that, if we were so fortunate as to have before us a ratified Convention on the International Traffic in Arms and a ratified Convention on the Private Manufacture of Arms, and also an assurance of publicity for State manufacture of arms, as laid down by Article 8 of the Covenant, I think then that we should be able to go much further.

I think, furthermore, that this Preparatory Commission ought not to cease its labours before it has ascertained quite certainly whether it is possible to go further or not. If it replies that it is not possible, at least it will have to say very precisely why it does not propose to go further. If we confine ourselves to the present proposals of the French draft, if we simply say that we will limit expenditure, then the first step which we have to take is indeed a real step forward, but a very uncertain step, the faltering step which confesses that humanity is not yet sure of the road which it shall follow. If we are to confine ourselves to the proposals on this subject contained in the British draft—the merits of which draft, in many other points, I fully recognise—I fear that in some points our first step will prove to be a false one. For what shall we have done to disarm the nations? We shall have told them that they have full liberty to develop their armaments. We shall have said to the world: disarmament gives you full liberty to equip yourselves with daggers and revolvers. Any country can have as many rifles, guns and tanks as it wishes; it can arm itself to the teeth in its factories. The only thing which is forbidden to it is to learn how to make use of the arms in its possession, to train its reserves.

Well, gentlemen, I think that this form of disarmament would be illusory and futile, and would not in any way stand the test of concrete reality. I shall try to prove what I say. I think that Viscount Cecil himself demonstrated this point very clearly in his last speech. M. Paul-Boncour had pointed out that in the case of the navy there are naval reserves ready, men without special training. Viscount Cecil answered: "Quite true. Merchant seamen can be used to a large degree, in large numbers, for purposes of war, but they are not trained reserves." In short, they have not been trained by their Governments; but they are able to serve.

What of air pilots? Will the fact that they have learned their trade in civil life prevent them from practising it in military life? Where will the vast numbers of mechanics which are needed not only in the formations behind the front, but where there is direct action of the weapons, not only in the workshops, but at the front itself have learned their trade? In civil life. And the telegraphists and the telephonists, the whole army of specialists? Take the infantry itself. Cannot an infantry-man learn to be an infantry-man except with the colours? Are there no men who can be considered as trained reservists although they have learned their trade of soldiering elsewhere than in a regular army?

I assure you, gentlemen, that I am not alluding in any way to the past history of any country. Neither do I want to confine myself to pure theory. But I ask you all, and Viscount Cecil in particular, to cast your minds round the world, and see what is happening in each of its five continents. In every one of them you will find many countries which, as a consequence of internal circumstances, of inter-party struggles, with their violent conflicts or their prepara-
tions for violent conflict, possess great numbers of men who are truly trained reservists. The Governments of those countries have not trained these men, but we must keep them in mind all the same if our labours are not to be purely theoretical. What of the future?

If, then, it is impossible to give an accurate definition of the term "trained reserves" if we actually do find men fit to be used in war, outside the regular trained reserves, is it a sufficient answer to our difficulties to tell us that this is not the same thing? Granted that the sailor trained on a merchant-vessel will not have received his training in exactly the same circumstances as the sailor trained on a vessel of war. He will not be utilised for war in exactly the same way. But the only really important point is this; that he can be utilised for war. He will not be borne on the same establishment as the other; his situation will be
different from the administrative point of view. But it will be identical as regards the concrete fact on which a State which proposes to attack must reckon, and on which a State which is seeking to defend itself must reckon; and we must remember that it is identical.

Besides this, how are we to limit trained reserves, and what are we to think of a system of disarmament of which the sole result would be no other — would be to limit trained reserves? I maintain that this would be the sole result, at least as regards land forces, of the plan put forward by the British representative only lays down a figure of limitation. It says: "The number of men who could be mobilised within such-and-such a time". This "number of men" consists primarily of the men who are with the colours in time of peace, and, secondly, those who could be further available during the first days of war.

Well, if one imposes a limitation on States by fixing a total figure for them, are they going to begin by limiting their peace-time effectives? The proposals for disarmament which they make are going to be bounded by the consideration for their security. Are they not going to attempt first of all to make sure of their security, by keeping up the numbers of their peace-time establishments? And, in that case, none of the countries which signed the Convention will have reduced their peace-time establishments. The only thing which you will have reduced, or which you will think that you have reduced, will be the trained reserves.

How are they to be limited? I put aside at once the idea of doing it by abolishing conscription and having nothing but professional soldiers. Perhaps you are going to try to divide nations into two classes: the old fallacy which forgets that differences of national characteristics are much less important than the essential characteristics which are the same for all nations. I must protest. The one thing that history shows us quite clearly — all history, ancient as well as modern — is that those democracies which have been exposed to invasion have always been the first to lift the ban on conscription, and that those which have been more happily situated and have thus had no need of armies except, as Viscount Cecil so happily put it, to defend distant interests, have never had conscription. If you are going to try to abolish conscription on the Continent of Europe, you must fulfil a preliminary condition: every State on the Continent must be given the same degree of security as that which other nations of Europe enjoy. There is no other way.

Then, if we retain conscription — and I am fully convinced that the abolition of conscription would be the least desirable form of disarmament; I might say that the experiments which have been made in this direction have afforded singularly illuminating lessons — there are only two other ways of limiting armed forces, or rather there is only a single way, if we are going only to limit trained reserves. That is to limit the proportion of the annual contingent which is called to the colours.

I do not wish to detain you; but I ask you, gentlemen, to bear with me a moment longer and to consider what it means to reduce the proportion of the contingent which is called to the colours. How are we going to do about it? Are we going to force every country to adopt the system of drawing lots? Are we going to force them to leave it to hazard to decide which men are to defend their country in time of war and which are to remain at the fireside? We might suggest it. I know of many countries which would refuse to reintroduce the system of lots; and their refusal would do them honour.

There is only one way left: to allow each State to select the effectives it wishes to call to the colours. Do you think that this is a way to limit the numbers of trained reserves? Allow me once again to quote the example of my own country. It is not that I wish to set it up as a model, but I know our own conditions. We have reduced the term of service and, in so doing, we have made a sacrifice in the cause of peace. We have reduced the contingent called to the colours by 15 per cent; in so doing, we have not reduced by one man the number of soldiers capable of being mobilised, because in every country there are a certain number of men who are able to support the strain of barrack life but who would hardly support the strain of active service, and would soon have to be sent to hospital, to office work or to factories. We said that since, in time of war, these men would be using a tool or a pen, it was useless to teach them in time of peace how to handle a rifle. We have effected a saving, but we have not reduced either our defensive force, or even — although no such thought entered our minds — our offensive force. If we have reduced the contingent called to the colours by 20 per cent instead of 15 per cent, we should have attained the same result. You may answer that the reduction was too small; we ought to make a reduction of 50 per cent, of 75 per cent, of 90 per cent.

I should be happy indeed if the result of our labours were to bring about a general simultaneous reduction of 15 per cent — merely a modest 15 per cent — of all the armaments in the world. But suppose that we succeed in reducing our contingent by 50 per cent, and only train one-half, one-third or one-quarter of our men: what will be the result? Our trained reserves will be reduced, this is true, but so also will be our peace-time establishments, which we have tried to reduce to the minimum compatible with our security. And in order to have the necessary number of men with the colours, what shall we do? We shall lengthen the term of service, or we shall have a considerable number of volunteers and revert to the type of the professional army — and I told you just now what really fundamental objections there are to armies of this type in the Continent, in the threatened countries.

Do you think that we shall be any nearer peace if we have a term of service of some years instead of some months? Do you think we shall have made a step forward? For my part, I think that we shall have made a step backward.

Further, by calling only a part of the contingent to the colours and reducing the trained reserves, you will be diminishing our protection in two ways — first, by reducing the number of men in barracks; secondly, by reducing the number of men quartered near the frontier who would form the first line of resistance to an invading enemy.
I know some countries — I have only to look out of the window to see one of them — which rely for their defence and their protection solely on the men who can be immediately mobilised on the frontier. If you tell such a country not to have these men any more, what would be the result? Surely you will force them to protect themselves by other methods. Would it not be ludicrous if our efforts at disarmament, in the case of Switzerland, took the shape of saying to her: "You must disarm, and therefore you must build barracks"?

I think that the case of Switzerland is significant. It is an extreme case, but something of the sort would happen in every country.

My conclusion is this: if you really reflect, you will find that, once the permanent elements of the problem are clearly stated; once we are agreed that, under present conditions, no State is prepared to abandon its protection and its peace-time army; once we are agreed that it is impossible to abandon the system of conscription, at least on the Continent you will find then that the real question before you is not that of ascertaining what formula of limitation should be fixed, but rather that of preparing to discriminate between fellow citizens of one country, allowing some to remain with the colours for long periods and others not to join them at all; or are we going to work for a reduction of the period of service? Personally, I think that reduction of the period of service is the most efficient form of disarmament so far as effectives are concerned. I do not say that soldiers who have served a short time only will be less good soldiers, either physically or morally, than the others. I do say that they will be less well trained for the offensive, while still remaining capable of forming the defensive force which every country must have. A short-service army will be essentially a defensive army, and therefore a pacific army.

Moreover, in questions which so closely affect whole nations, it might be well to listen to the voice of popular feeling. How does the problem of disarmament present itself to those who have not made a detailed study of the question, who see it as a whole? As the reduction of the term of service and reduction of military expenditure. If we base our methods in dealing with the problem of disarmament on these two conceptions, which are simple, clear and effective, we shall succeed. I fear that if we base our work on neither of these but on formulas the exact bearings of which it is difficult to calculate, we shall indeed, as I told you just now, have taken a step, but it will not be a step in the right direction.

M. Sato (Japan). — I apologise for rising. I do not usually speak, and the traditional attitude of the Japanese delegation has rather been to keep silence. It is particularly difficult for me to speak after the eloquent speech which has just been made by M. de Brouckère, because I wish to support the same cause and the same principle. I cannot, however, remain silent when the question of trained reserves is under discussion. This question touches the very foundation of my country's system of national defence, and for that reason I should like to explain to you my Government's attitude towards this question.

The British draft, where it deals with the limitation of effectives, contains proposals which were not put forward during the deliberations of Sub-Commission A. In determining what effectives were to be limited, the British draft has in view not only effectives with the colours and trained reserves but also persons who could, within a certain time after the outbreak of hostilities, "be available for despatch to the fighting line".

Any attempt to make this limitation real would at once encounter considerable difficulties, in the attempt to find an exact definition of terms such as "fighting line", etc.

Further, it is not easy to see how it would be possible to fix a uniform period during which it was admissible to despatch men to the fighting line for countries which differ so enormously in their respective geographical situations, the organisation of their national defence forces, etc.

These imponderables cannot be made the subject of exact calculation or strict limitation, as M. de Brouckère pointed out both clearly and eloquently in an earlier meeting and again to-day. Finally, if one pushed the proposals of the British draft to their extreme conclusions, one would end by having to apply these limitations even to the manner in which the universal rising of a people against foreign invasion was to be organised. We cannot go so far as this. Suppose, for example, the Japanese fleet has been sunk by some enemy force. The Japanese people will have then to rise as one man to defend their coasts. This is the absolutely legitimate right of any people. When I say "the people as one man", naturally the regular armies and trained reserves are included in this term. I am firmly convinced that, if the Convention which we are to conclude fixes the armed force of a country necessary to its defence, there will be no danger, even if the number of trained reserves is created in proportion.

Secondly, if one examines the British draft in the light of these considerations, one may say, without doing much injustice to its true scope, that its chief and principal aim is to achieve the limitation of trained reserves without, of course, neglecting effectives with the colours in time of peace.

Well, Sub-Commission A discussed the possibility of making the limitation applicable to trained reserves. During these deliberations our experts had occasion to set forth our arguments, and to explain why we do not believe it possible, consistently with justice, to achieve a limitation of these reserves. These arguments may be found on pages 126 et seq. of Sub-Commission A's report. I see no need to repeat them to you, since the Japanese delegation has not altered its view.

Finally, the moment a country possesses a permanent military organisation, there must necessarily exist trained reserves, the number of which will vary according to the system adopted by each country. The choice of a system of military organisation is dictated by the special
exigencies of each country as regards national defence. It is not easy to claim the right to modify a system, even if that system is one which necessarily involves the existence of trained reserves. Further, if we limit the number of effectives present with the colours in peace-time, we come quite naturally to limit the annual contingents, and, consequently, the trained reserves.

In our opinion, we ought to be content with this result, which is already appreciable. It will perhaps be interesting if I draw attention to a simple fact. There are twenty-three countries represented on the Preparatory Commission, and of these there are fifteen which have adopted the system of compulsory service, while eight have adopted the voluntary system. My country, for example, adopted the system of compulsory service sixty years ago, and it has given good results from the point of view of national defence. We should naturally find it difficult to change this system with the object of abolishing trained reserves.

For these various reasons I regret that I am unable to adopt the British view.

M. Paul-Boncour (France). — Although we have not yet reached the question of naval armaments, may I be permitted to mark the point that we have reached. We are now dealing with Point 5 of the Synoptic Analysis prepared by the Bureau. In reality, and this is inevitable, we are discussing at one and the same time Point 5 and what will later be Point II. I mention this in order that it may not be necessary to recommence this fairly lengthy discussion when we come to Point II. It is quite clear that, since we have reached the point where it has to be determined what is meant by the effectives to which limitation can apply, we are raising the whole body of questions mentioned in Point 5 and Point II. Hence the issues as regards these two formulas, namely, the British proposal that limitation should apply to the effectives which could be used in the fighting line within a period to be determined, and the French delegation's proposal that they should apply to all the peace-time effectives of the armed forces and of the formations organised on a military basis — these two formulas, I say, both necessitate a discussion of the very serious questions which have just been raised.

One of these questions was raised the other day by the Netherlands delegate, who pointed out very rightly that the formula in the French preliminary draft, the "armed forces or formations organised on a military basis which can be employed immediately without being mobilised", did not settle the exact moment as from when a man is available for service. The Netherlands delegate pointed out that if, in conformity with the formula laid down in the French draft, it was stated that limitation applied to the whole of the men composing the armed forces or formations organised on a military basis at any given moment, this would mean including a class of men who, owing to their lack of training or recent enrolment as members of military formations, cannot be employed. The fact that the French formula admits of this interpretation is not due to any mistake or oversight. It has been adopted with the object of presenting the issue in such a manner as to give the British delegate, and am indeed most grateful to him for his observation, that for the purposes of that formula it is sufficient to determine in order that it may be possible to determine exactly and methodically what forces might be available without measures of mobilisation, it would have been more expedient to decide after how many months of service a man can be regarded as available for service. This we did not do; we were deliberately guilty of this omission, this lack of accuracy if you will, because we are so fully imbued with the idea that the fundamental requirement of the preliminary draft Convention is simplicity and clearness. We must not try to do everything at once, but must endeavour to confine limitation to what it is both easy and possible to limit. If we had wished to achieve this highly desirable precision, there would inevitably have been differences of opinion between the different delegations; the question of the actual period of training was involved, and as regards this point no general rule can be laid down, since it varies with methods of recruiting, with the different nations, with geographical conditions, conditions of training and military traditions. We cannot go into this point; we already have enough difficult problems to settle without it.

M. de Bruïckère and M. Sato have spoken on the question of trained reserves. I wish to thank the Japanese delegate for reminding us of a method which it is essential that we should not forget if our work is to be successful and to command respect. We must remember that for months past discussions have been going on in the technical Committees. We need not be governed by their decisions, and there can be no question of securing a majority for any argument or of placing another argument in a minority by reason of the technical Committees' opinion, but we have to deal with work in which we have already taken certain decisions and we should be setting an undesirable example if, with regard to every single question, we referred to the technical Committees' opinion, and we must remember, in order to appreciate the figures I am about to bring to your notice, that there is a certain wastage, varying in the different countries, as a result of which part of the effectives cannot be regarded as an element of the striking power to which Viscount Cecil likes to refer.

Any attempt to arrive at this further degree of precision would run counter to the object which we have in view, namely, the establishment of a preliminary draft Convention which shall be both clear and easy to apply.

M. de Bruïckère and M. Sato have spoken on the question of trained reserves. I wish to thank the Japanese delegate for reminding us of a method which it is essential that we should not forget if our work is to be successful and to command respect. We must remember that for months past discussions have been going on in the technical Committees. We need not be governed by their decisions, and there can be no question of securing a majority for any argument or of placing another argument in a minority by reason of the technical Committees' opinion, but we have to deal with work in which we have already taken certain decisions and we should be setting an undesirable example if, with regard to every single question, we referred to the technical Committees' opinion, and we must remember, in order to appreciate the figures I am about to bring to your notice, that there is a certain wastage, varying in the different countries, as a result of which part of the effectives cannot be regarded as an element of the striking power to which Viscount Cecil likes to refer.

M. de Bruïckère's fine speech makes it unnecessary for me to embark upon most of the explanations that I intended to give.
Why should I attempt to justify a case which I stated fully during the general discussion and in support of which M. de Brouckère has so eloquently quoted those very arguments and those very psychological reasons which I would advance. To repeat his arguments would be to waste the time of the Preparatory Commission, while to summarise them would be to lessen their significance.

I shall not revert to them. I would simply venture to add an additional argument, which was touched upon the other day by M. de Brouckère concerning the question of trained reserves, an argument derived, if I may so phrase it, "from transient circumstances", in other words from the four years' war in which a large majority of the nations represented here participated. According to my estimate, these transient circumstances should last for fifteen to seventeen years; we shall have time before then to frame more than one treaty for the limitation and reduction of armaments. We have, then, the fact of the war, when, irrespective of the nature of the armies engaged, the belligerent countries employed almost the whole of their classes that were capable of mobilisation. In all the countries which took part in the war there exists a reserve supply of men consisting of from fifteen to seventeen classes, and this reserve will gradually be reduced during the course of a period which might, I think, be estimated at from fifteen to seventeen years. This reserve supply exists independently of any periods of training or direct or indirect limitations that may be imposed and will be available for service as the men composing it received a training undoubtedly superior to any peace-time training, having taken part in the war.

Moreover, in many countries, civilian training has supplied or is supplying an opportunity quite as efficacious as that provided by special periods of instruction. Hence, during the period for which we shall not only have to frame a Convention but in the course of which we shall probably have to renew that Convention, whatever measures we may take for the limitation of trained reserves, there will always be material obstacles. This argument I would mention in addition to those already advanced by M. de Brouckère.

Hence, without wishing in any way to prejudice the views of members of the Commission, I think that the question of trained reserves is, if not settled (this I have no right to say), at all events exhausted, if I might employ this term. The arguments to which I refer are so strong and so numerous that, if we are to have a perfectly clear Convention and to make a Conference at all possible, we must confine our attempts at limitation to what is visible and what demands of limitation and supervision, that is to forces existing in time of peace, forces which can be employed without measures of mobilisation, and which we shall presently have to define.

If, then, we adopt this conclusion (I have no desire to anticipate delegates, but this appears to me to be the view of the majority), if we declare now — for we are here to give a definition of terms — that limitation means what I have just indicated, does this imply that we are circumscribing the possible results of a future Conference? If we could reach this point, if we could draw up a clear and definite scheme in which a Conference could fill in the figures and which it could then adopt, I think that we should have performed a task which would fully justify the hopes placed in us by the different nations.

What we declare capable of limitation can easily be limited. This, as I said the other day in general discussion, constitutes the heaviest permanent burden that the nations have to bear and the one from which they are most anxious to be released; it is the item of budgetary expenditure and allocates to works of destruction and of death money all depend upon the peace-time arguments and the number of men actually serving with the number of men serving, the various means whereby reserves can be rapidly employed, inevitably reverting to the arguments submitted by M. de Brouckère to a very large extent upon the permanent peace-time effectives. And — I find myself inevitably reverting to the arguments submitted by M. de Brouckère — the period of service, the means of keeping the various means whereby reserves can be rapidly employed, all depend upon the peace-time arguments and the number of men actually serving with the colours when war breaks out.

Lastly, I must reply to M. de Brouckère, for I think that he is under some misapprehension as regards the French draft. While it is impossible to limit trained reserves directly, in view of the arguments already placed before us (I do not say that it is possible to limit them indirectly; the question should not be brought up, for, if we admitted that direct or indirect limitation was possible, many other questions of limitation, both direct and indirect, might arise in connection with naval or air forces), it is quite possible to limit the striking power very considerably by limiting the material available.

M. de Brouckère's statement in this connection was extremely clear and lucid. May I say that I fully agree with him as regards all these points? The French draft mentions only indirect limitation resulting from budgetary expenditure, and this for the following reasons: In the first place, the direct limitation of material involves supervision far beyond what we
can conceivably hope to see accepted, for this would involve researches and permanent enquiries.

Before participating in the debate on land armaments, I should like to make clear, in a brief way, the importance of the matter. I was because it was outside its scope. As regards this point, however, we have already given pledges. I agree with M. de Brouckère that, in addition to the limitation of budgetary expenditure, the Convention on the Traffic in Arms and a Convention on the private manufacture of arms would indirectly contribute towards the limitation of material.

Once we can prevent the accumulation of material — and this fits in absolutely with Viscount Cecil's view — we shall have prevented the employment of reserves. Men are of no use without arms. Modern warfare implies first and foremost the complicated and complex material which constitutes the equipment of an army. When once you have prevented the possible accumulation of material in preparation for an attack, you will have furnished the surest and most precious assistance in the cause of peace.

I quite agree with M. de Brouckère, and if the French draft makes no mention of the matter, it was because it was outside its scope. As regards this point, however, we have already given pledges. I agree with M. de Brouckère that, in addition to the limitation of budgetary expenditure, the Convention on the Traffic in Arms and a Convention on the private manufacture of arms would indirectly contribute towards the limitation of material.

I did not mention this for a very simple reason: it is that, in the matter of the traffic in arms, as I said, my country has already given pledges. It has ratified the Convention on the Traffic in Arms. As regards the private manufacture of arms, it is agreed that this question is closely connected with the work of our Preparatory Commission and that, either during the course of the proceedings or afterwards, the problem will be dealt with. I am thus in complete agreement with M. de Brouckère in the matter.

I have nothing further to add and if I have not repeated all the arguments it is because they have just been placed before you in terms such as to make it unnecessary to refer to them again. My explanations merely serve to supplement all the reasons that have just been given, and it is my earnest hope that the Preparatory Commission will make this important point the subject of what might be called our first really serious decision.

The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — As it is understood by the American delegation, we are now engaged in a consideration of those points of the co-ordinated British and French drafts that deal with effectives but which, in view of the action of our Bureau, which so ably made the Synoptic Analysis, actually deals with the subject of land armaments, because effectives of naval and air armaments may be considered separately. Before participating in the debate on land armaments, I should like to make clear, in a brief statement, the general attitude of my Government on this subject. I wish it clearly understood that, in presenting this statement, I am dealing with the questions involved purely from a technical standpoint.

It will be remembered that the United States has not only already reduced its land forces from a war strength of over 4,000,000 men, by successive steps, to an authorised enlisted peace strength of the regular army of about 280,000, but has also further limited that strength to an actual enlisted strength of about 118,000 men. When this latter figure is compared with that of the forces of other Powers, great and small, it will be clear that my country has already taken the lead in the reduction of its land forces.

It is the belief of my Government that the conditions prevailing in different regions of the world are so varied, and that the factors entering into the situation are so divergent, that constructive achievement in the matter of the limitation of land armaments appears to lie in regional agreements rather than in an effort to work out a general plan for the limitation of land armaments applicable to the whole world. The discussions bearing upon this point in our Sub-Commissions have only served to confirm the views of my Government on this point.

In considering the limitation of land armaments, it is recognised that it is impossible to deprive a nation of the strength which it may derive from the past military training of its inhabitants. However, it appears possible for nations to agree upon the number of men who will receive military training each year, the amount of such training, and the amount of reserve equipment which shall be maintained. In connection with the limitation and reduction of land armaments, it is believed that a statement of the military personnel, including forces serving with the colours and trained reserves available to each nation, would greatly facilitate an accurate estimate of the real strength of the military forces of the various countries and serve as a sound basis for the limitation of land armaments. It is the opinion of my Government that the practical approach to the question of the limitation of land armaments is through dealing with visible armaments. As to the principle of this I am in complete agreement with M. Paul-Boncour. We must deal with visible armaments. I quite realise that there is a radical difference in our interpretations of this principle, but I trust that the present discussion, carried on in so frank and reasonable a manner, will result in reconciling or bridging our divergent views. It must be borne in mind that upon the outbreak of war the military power of any nation, from the viewpoint of land armaments, is determined largely by two factors: first, the personnel factor, which includes the active army and the trained reserves;
and, second, the material factor, which includes matériel with the forces serving with the colours and the reserve equipment which is necessary to equip the trained reserves.

My Government is convinced of the soundness of views which have been expressed here that any attempt to limit the ultimate war strength of a nation would be futile, for the reason that no country could be expected to agree to curtail or limit its natural resources or its capacity to prepare for a national emergency.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I must apologise to the Commission for saying a few words more, but I am sure that M. de Brouckère will feel that I am only endeavouring to pay all respect to his argument if I venture to make some reply to the very elaborate and detailed exposition he made with regard to my own position. First of all, let me just clear — because I am not going to deal with it — the question of how far it is possible to proceed with a limitation of armaments, strictly so called, by a reduction of expenses. I am certainly not going to urge any argument against the reduction of budgetary expenditure, nor am I going to say for one moment that that is not a very useful thing to do. On the contrary, I am not going to say for one moment that that is not a very useful thing to do. On the contrary, the only difference between the project which I put forward and the French project is entirely a question of the best method by which that can be done. I am quite sure that it ought to be done; the only thing is how it should be done, and, when we come to discuss that, I shall give the reasons why I ventured to adopt one solution while the French project adopts another.

Now as to the main point, I do not think that the discussion has been of service in some respects. I think it was always true, but it is now perfectly clear, that both parties to this discussion, if I may put it in that way, agree that what we want to do is to reduce the aggressive forces of the country. I am extremely grateful to M. Paul-Boncour in particular for his definite adoption of the actual metaphorical phrase, or the actual descriptive phrase, I adopted, “the actual attacking or striking force of the country”. Secondly, I understand we are all agreed now that that striking force, that aggressive action, can only be taken by fully trained soldiers. That is, I understand, the main contention on which M. de Brouckère rests, and it is to a very large extent if not entirely accepted by M. Paul-Boncour. It is quite true, for reasons which M. Paul-Boncour has given, that he does not propose to define accurately and in so many words what is “a fully trained soldier”; he says the period of service necessary to manufacture a fully trained soldier may be different in different countries, and he proposes to leave that as a matter to be dealt with as one of the matters to be regulated by the different requirements of each country. We are agreed that the thing that matters, from the point of view of the aggressive force of the country, so far as effectiveness are concerned, is the number of fully trained reserves and that that is, therefore, the thing you have got to limit, and, if it may be so, reduce. Now, there are obviously two ways of doing it: you may limit the number of those fully trained soldiers or you may limit and reduce their training. It is quite plain that you may proceed by the two courses. I think, now that we have argued it out, it really comes down to this, that I propose to use both methods as far as possible. Those who take a different view say it is impossible to limit the number or difficult to limit the number, and that the best plan is therefore to limit the amount of training which is to be given. That really is, as I understand it, the bedrock of our difficulties, the difference of opinion which exists between us. Well, I cannot tell how much I should rejoice to see a Europe in which there was not a single soldier so highly trained as to be capable of aggressive attack. It would be the greatest thing that you could possibly imagine, only I am bound to say that I do not see that it is being done very much, or is even proposed to be done very much, at present. You may put the training of a fully trained soldier pretty high. In the late war I think we in England found that you could manufacture a fully trained private in four months; that was the figure that our experts put it at. I do not know whether that is too high or too low, but at any rate you certainly can do so in a year, and therefore, if you fix your period of service at a year, you are not reducing the efficiency of your fully trained soldier. It is quite true that we must proceed by steps. That is a step and a very important step. You are establishing the principle of limiting the period of service, which is a very important thing. I am the last to suppose that you can solve this problem by one treaty or even perhaps by a dozen treaties; it is going to be a long process. We must advance by degrees. It may be that that is all we can do, but do not let us think we are doing too much, that is all. Do not let us feel too sanguine about the results of our action. I should have preferred to proceed by a direct method of reducing the actual number of the fully trained soldiers, and here I wish to guard myself. I must say that, if I followed the argument of M. de Brouckère, he does not envisage any attempt to reduce the number, but only proposes to reduce the training. I am not quite sure that that is M. Paul-Boncour’s view; at any rate, I do not want to tie him down to that view.

M. de Brouckère (Belgium). — It is not my view at all.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — Then I am delighted: we are all agreed. Then it would be desirable to reduce the number of fully trained soldiers, but there seems to be, in the eyes of those who differ from me, insuperable difficulties, and the difficulties are these. Conscription is essential. I do not argue it; I accept it if I am told so on the authority of the statesmen who represent their countries here. You cannot limit the annual contingents. I do not feel quite so sure that that is true. You cannot limit them directly in so many words, but you can raise the qualifications so high as to make a very considerable reduction. I am told, and Count Bernstorff will correct me if I am wrong, that before the war the Germans did not enroll more than 60 per cent. Evidently, you could do something there; I do not say it is not practicable. But there is a third reason: M. de Brouckère says you cannot reduce
it as you must have the defensive troops necessary for the country; that is to say, you cannot reduce the number as you must have the numbers that exist. I remember that there is a very old and well-known story in my country about a mayor of a town who was asked why he did not ring the bells when a great personage came into his town. His reply was that there were various reasons, and the first was that there were not any bells to ring, to say nothing of the other reasons. Therefore, if you begin by saying that you cannot reduce the number of defensive troops, it is not worth while going on to labour it. But that is the position, and the hope that is held out to me is that something may be done by limitation of the actual army. Well, I am not going to discuss that, because I think it is better to keep the subjects apart. I hope we shall be able to do something in that direction. I have done my best and I have been a complete failure. I have not shaken even M. de Brouckère, whose open-mindedness we all know; I have not shaken M. Paul-Boncour, who has treated me with such courtesy and consideration all through; and I have not shaken even my friend M. Sato, who has expressed with his usual courtesy his great regret for differing from me. There it is; that is the end of it. As we cannot get a unanimous view in favour of the opinion I put forward, it is no good persisting, as these things must be done by unanimous views in all matters. I regret the position my friends take, but I shall not persist, having regard to their attitude.

The Commission rose at 1.5 p.m.

EIGHTH PUBLIC MEETING.

Held at Geneva on Monday, March 27th, 1927, at 4 p.m.

President: M. LOUDON (Netherlands).

17. Examination of the Synoptic Analysis. Effectives. Point 5 (continuation).

General DE MARINIS (Italy). — I should like to ask the Bureau for an explanation regarding the substance of the question we have so far been dealing with. We have started to discuss Point 5 of Chapter A, which is called “Effectives serving with the Colours and Effectives regarded as such” and Point 11 of Chapter B, which is headed “Other Effectives”. This morning’s speeches with regard to Point 11 referred to trained reserves. Why do these appear under the heading “Other Effectives”? M. DE BROUCKÈRE (Belgium). — I would ask the Italian representative to refer to the heading of Chapter A. By “Effectives serving with the Colours and Effectives regarded as such”, we mean effectives of the peace-time army and also the effectives of formations organised on a military basis. Chapter B deals with “Other Effectives”, that is to say, effectives which may be utilised in time of war — in other words, trained reserves. The reason why we did not specify trained reserves is that in varying degrees — it is a matter for discussion — it is at any rate theoretically possible to use men in war who do not belong to the trained reserves, for example, a volunteer with a certain amount of training who applies to be enlisted. In order to avoid prejudging the question, we therefore said “Other Effectives”.

M. DE BROUCKÈRE (Belgium). — I must thank M. de Brouckère for his explanations, but I still think that these other effectives should be specifically mentioned, possibly in brackets. I press for this mention because M. de Brouckère’s explanation does not clear up the matter from my point of view.

M. DE BROUCKÈRE (Belgium). — I hoped I had made myself clear. There are two kinds of effectives, those who are with the colours and those who are not. The honourable representative of Italy asks me to specify those who are not with the colours. I shall carefully avoid doing so, for we chose the expression “other effectives” precisely because it is a general term and includes all possible cases. But I must assure General de Marinis that we had no intention of surreptitiously inserting a distinction between effectives with the colours and effectives of formations organised on a military basis. He will satisfy himself of this if he will trouble to read the points preceding No. 11. No. 3 speaks of “formations organised on a military basis”; No. 7 enumerates the formations organised on a military basis; while the definition of “formations organised on a military basis” is found in No. 8.

General DE MARINIS (Italy). — I should like to thank M. de Brouckère for his explanations. At the same time, I feel bound to emphasise the necessity, in my opinion, of being as precise as possible and of avoiding vague definitions. Personally, I should much prefer that mention was made of the effectives which are intended. I pointed out at the first meeting that some of the formulas were too vague. Each of us interprets them as it suits him and later we find that there are differences. It would certainly be a great advantage to be as clear as possible.
Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I quite agree with General de Marinis that extreme accuracy is very necessary. I was going to make a suggestion, namely, that we should strike out the headings A and B, which do not seem to play any essential part; that would remove the ambiguity which I think General de Marinis feels.

M. DE BROUCKÈRE (Belgium). — If that proposal is generally accepted, I am prepared to support it.

M. RUTGERS (Netherlands). — Hitherto I have been of opinion, and I think, after the decision which has just been taken, that I may continue to be of that opinion, that Point 5 of the Synoptic Analysis includes the question of trained reserves.

This question arises owing to the differences in the two drafts submitted to us. The French draft speaks of forces which can be employed immediately and excludes forces which, in order to be employed, have to be mobilised. The British draft applies to forces which can be employed shortly after the outbreak of hostilities and does not exclude troops which require to be mobilised, that is to say, trained reserves.

The Netherlands delegation supports the British case, and it cannot agree with the arguments put forward in favour of the French draft. Before refuting these arguments, I have a few remarks to make on a third difference between the two texts. The French draft uses the word "utilisable", whereas the British draft says "who could be available for despatch to the fighting line".

In both texts we are dealing with a quality not of individuals but of troops, as the British draft says, or, to quote the French text, of "effectifs". In my opinion, both texts are equally lacking in clearness. Last week, I raised the question of the meaning of the word "utilisable" in order to ascertain whether this word comprised recruits whose period of training is not yet complete.

M. Paul-Boncour explained to us this morning, if I understood him aright, that, strictly speaking, the word "utilisable" does not include recruits, but that for practical reasons — of which I recognise the force — it would be better to include them in calculating the maximum number of effective to be included by each country in its tables. I should like to thank M. Paul-Boncour for his explanations as to the intention of the French draft.

I have only two further remarks to make on this point. The first is that it would be better to bring out clearly in the text itself the manner in which it is to be applied. We might, after the words "who can be employed immediately without being mobilised", add the words "including those whose military training is not yet complete". Secondly, M. Paul-Boncour recognises that, according to his method, the tables will furnish figures of only relative accuracy. He told us that there will be a certain amount of wastage with regard to these effective. It will be necessary, he says, to reduce the maximum effective in the various countries according to different scales. This sacrifice will have to be made for the sake of clearness. I have no objection, but I would point out that, in view of this wastage and these reductions, there is no longer any need to oppose the limitation of trained reserves on the ground that these reserves have not the same value, if they include men who have been released from the colours for twenty years as well as those who have only just received their training.

From the point of view of the homogeneity of the effective, neither system is open to criticism. If we are allowed to include young men whose military training has only just begun, there can be no reason why we should not count reserves who have been released for several years.

Another point which is, in my opinion, not very clear in the British text has, if I am not mistaken, led to an inaccuracy in the French translation. I rather hesitate to make this remark, for I have a profound respect for the translations we receive every day, but I wonder whether the English phrase "troops who could be available for despatch to the fighting line" is adequately translated by the words "des troupes qui seraient en état d'être envoyées sur le front de combat". Would not the word "available" be better translated by "disponibles"? If this is correct, the British definition contains a valuable element which has perhaps been more clearly expressed in the definition of "trained reserves" given by the delegations of seven Powers in Sub-Commission A, namely, "men who are under a legal liability to be recalled to the colours in case of mobilisation". The definition in the British draft would, in my opinion, be improved if it approached more nearly to the definition given by Sub-Commission A. I do not, however, wish to waste further time on questions of drafting, which can, if necessary, be dealt with at the second reading.

I now come to the question of trained reserves. We have been told that it is sufficient to limit effective with the colours in peace-time — the only form of armaments which can assume an aggressive character.

Is it a fact that, from this point of view, you can contrast effective with the colours in peace-time on the one hand and war potential, which includes not only trained reserves but all the forces of a country, on the other? Is there not rather a difference in degree, a scale, as it were, applying to all the elements in the military power of a country? Naturally, peace-time effective come first. But trained reserves which may be sent to the front within a week or two, with their armaments and everything necessary for their mobilisation prepared very carefully in advance, would also be available for attack if a Power entertained such an idea. They would be available to almost the same extent as the effective with the colours in peace-time.
From this point of view, the difference between men who have had no military training and the trained reserves is much greater than the difference between the trained reserves and the peace-time army. The peace-time army is available at any moment; the trained reserves within a week or two; the reserve of untrained men is only available after six months or a year. By the formation of trained reserves, a State increases not only its defensive power but also its power of aggression. The limitation and reduction of these reserves will serve to increase a nation’s feeling of security against sudden attack.

We shall see that only a strong army of peace-time effectives, well armed, well trained and well disciplined, can launch an overwhelming attack. It must, however, be recognised that the ideal of every army is those qualities of training and discipline which form good soldiers. As may be seen from the discussions in Sub-Commission A, it is, above all, the spirit in which armies are trained which gives to a fighting force its aggressive character.

Are we then to conclude that those other qualities of well-disciplined and well-trained soldiers suddenly disappear by the mere fact of mobilisation? The contrary is the case, for do we not find among mobilised armies that abundance and perfection of material which is nowadays attainable? If it is desired to limit effectives in an effectual manner, therefore, we cannot restrict ourselves to peace-time effectives.

To limit the instrument of war means limiting all the forces, whether they are present with the colours in peace-time or whether they are forces prepared for war. Hence, if limitation is desired, it is essential in the case of conscript armies to limit the number of men called to the colours in case of mobilisation, and the material which they require.

It has been argued that the limitation of trained reserves is impossible, since they in fact exist as the result of the late war. That is true, and, as a consequence, reduction can only be effected gradually. It is a minor problem calling for temporary regulation which will not involve any insuperable difficulties. But if we are told: “These trained reserves exist; what can we do about it?” I would reply: “What you can do is not to train, organise and arm, from year to year, fresh batches of trained reserves to replace those who leave the colours”.

Another argument is that the limitation of trained reserves is impossible because this category includes various classes of men who are, in point of fact, a reserve for the army, either owing to special technical training which they have received in their peace-time occupations or as the result of private military training.

This argument will not hold. It is based upon an interpretation of the words “trained reserves” which is not that of the advocates of the limitation of these reserves. We are not dealing here with some vague form of war material but with well-defined reserves of the fighting forces.

The British draft, as I have already said, refers to troops, that is to say, men forming part of a military organisation. The notion of trained reserves is not a vague economic notion, but one of the essential elements which enter into a country’s official preparations for war — the training and organisation of a large army.

I am not convinced by the argument taken from the limitation of war material. I do not wish for the moment, to discuss this limitation; the Netherlands delegation will be happy to co-operate in any practical measure to ensure such limitation. We shall have occasion to discuss this matter later. The limitation of trained reserves must not result in the failure to limit material in reserve.

Be that as it may, I do not think that it is fair to create a distinction between material in reserve and trained reserves on the grounds that it is the material which constitutes armament and not the training of the reserves. No doubt the original meaning of the word “armament” favours that interpretation, but the world in which we live is far too complex for us to stop at that. A nation’s armaments consist not only in the production and possession of war material but in the whole preparation of a people for war, of which one of the essential elements is the training and organisation of the first-line fighting forces.

There has been some reference to consequences. We are told that, once we have accepted the limitation of trained reserves, we all have to go on to consider the whole of war potential, which, as the Commission has already decided, is not suitable for any form of limitation or reduction.

It should be pointed out in this connection that the Preparatory Commission, taking the view that it is not at present possible to limit the ultimate war armaments of a country, nevertheless called upon Sub-Commission A to study the possibilities of a wider limitation. In so doing, the Commission proceeded on the understanding that limitation should be extended as far as is practicably possible. That being so, is it just or fair to oppose a limitation which is possible by referring to consequences which are manifestly impossible? Logic is all very well, but logic consists in dealing in the same way with situations which are the same, and not in applying a measure admittedly possible to situations to which it is not suited. There is a fundamental difference between trained reserves and war potential. In order to prove this, I will first ask what is to be understood by “trained reserves”. At the beginning of our discussion, our delegation was of opinion that it was easy to give a clear and definite reply because there was no doubt that this term covered men who had completed their military services with the colours — a period varying from six months to two years. These men, having returned to civilian life, remain under a legal liability to be recalled to the colours, if necessary, for as long as they remain fit for military service.

May I remind you that, in Sub-Commission A, seven delegations, those of Germany, Great Britain, Spain, the United States, Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden, adopted that point of view throughout and gave expression to it in their reply to Question I.

The Netherlands delegation does not wish to depart from that definition, which it considers to be just and equitable. Taken in that sense, the trained reserves are forces which
are administered and supervised absolutely by the State itself and which exist in peace-time for no other purpose than for military purposes and for the purpose of armaments. Trained reserves constitute armaments that may be limited and supervised, and for that reason they should not be confused with war potential, which is suitable neither for limitation nor for supervision. There are some, however, who maintain — and urge very strongly — that trained reserves are part of the ultimate war armaments of a country, namely, those which cannot be limited.

It was even pointed out that the workers in munitions factories constitute trained reserves, as well as the whole of the male, and even female, population which had received any training whatever enabling it to be utilised in time of war. If that view is taken, I admit that it will be very difficult to limit trained reserves.

The first question to decide is, therefore, whether modern mobilised armies, upon which the fate of the country depends at the beginning of a war, are organisations built up concurrently with the conversion of war potential into war armaments, or whether, on the contrary, modern armies are organisations ready to take the field within a short time after mobilisation has been decided upon. In the latter case, the other armies — those which depend mainly upon the utilisation of the war potential to build up both their reserve and their material — will be beaten by those who at the very beginning put into the field the flower of their trained reserves, equipped with the necessary material. I will ask you in all sincerity, gentlemen, which of the trained reserves are the more dangerous, which are really tangible? Those which belong to the fighting forces or those which constitute the non-combatant forces?

In our opinion, there can be no doubt of the reply, and the Netherlands delegation, which takes its stand on the British draft, considers that it is necessary to limit the effectives which would be available within a short time after the outbreak of hostilities. These effectives are created by the peace-time armies through the incorporation of the annual contingent. To limit the contingent therefore is equivalent to limiting both the peace-time effectives and the effectives of the mobilised army.

It has been pointed out that, in most countries, a reduction in the number of men annually incorporated can only be very slight, and that only after a very long period — some twenty years — can any appreciable reduction be effected in the total number of available trained reserves. Is that the case? A simple example will, I think, prove that it is not. If, in a given country, the whole of the available contingent fit for military service is annually called to the colours for one year — let us say, for example, 100,000 men, that country will have in twenty classes of reservists (not including losses from death, diseases, emigration or other causes) 2,000,000 trained reserves.

But if we reduce the proportion annually incorporated by 50 per cent, there will, at the end of the first year, be only 50,000 men in the reserve instead of 100,000. These reserves will therefore be annually reduced by 50,000 men, and at the end of ten years the trained reserves of that country would be reduced by half a million, or 25 per cent. That is a very substantial reduction.

It is urged against the limitation of these trained reserves that the principle of democratic equality renders it inadmissible to confine training to a part of an annual class only. Some of our colleagues are unwilling to accept the ballot system, and, as voluntary armies are not favoured, there would remain no other course but to train all young men who are capable of bearing arms.

I dare not accept this reasoning. I am not absolutely sure whether we are all agreed here as to the meaning of the word "democracy": if it means the same thing as good will, we are all democrats. But, according to the argument adduced, democracy inevitably leads to large armies. My country, which by a system of ballot limits the proportion annually incorporated to one-third of the class, will therefore be condemned. The only thing that it can do in this case is to revert as quickly as possible to the training of its whole class. As the period of service in Holland has already been reduced for the infantry to five and a-half months, M. Paul-Boncour's speech seems to me to imply a recommendation to the Netherlands to treble, or, taking account of exemptions, at any rate to double, the proportion of our contingent annually incorporated. This means doubling or trebling our peace-time army, since in peace-time, as may be seen from the Military Yearbook of the League of Nations, we have under arms only the contingent incorporated for five and a-half months, together with the officers, warrant officers and Sergeants for the instruction of the recruits.

Another argument against the limitation of trained reserves is that it is impossible to limit these reserves because, if we reduced the annual contingent, we should be compelled, in order to maintain the same peace-time effectives, to increase the period of service. The necessity of maintaining the peace-time effectives is advanced as an argument in defence of the French method of limitation, although this aims, in the first place, at the limitation and reduction of peace-time effectives. I confess that I am at a loss to understand this argument.

There is one argument against the limitation of trained reserves which, in my opinion, is decisive and that is that certain Powers are convinced that their security makes it impossible for them to limit their mobilisable forces. That argument is decisive for those countries, but it would, I think, be premature to consider it at this stage. The question whether a given country can accept a form of limitation or reduction, and, if so, what, will arise when the time comes to fill in the figures in the tables which will be annexed to the draft Convention we are attempting to frame. To-day, we are discussing the method and not the results. Countries which for their part are unable to accept any limitation of their war-time army cannot be compelled to do so. But why should we go to the length of opposing a method which, in its general aspects, may lead to exceeding by desirable results?
Finally, I should like to dispel a misunderstanding under which, I think, some of our colleagues are labouring. The system of the limitation of trained reserves does not in the least prejudice the right of States to bring all their forces into play if they are so unfortunate as to become engaged in a war. It is not intended to limit the employment of all the national forces if a nation is passing through a crisis such as has been described to us by the honourable delegate for Japan. We are concerned as far as possible to limit armaments, that is to say, preparations for war. The training and organisation of large armies are, I repeat, among the most important elements of these preparations.

Count Bernstorff (Germany). — After the speech to which we have just listened, I need hardly say more than that the German delegation is of the same opinion as the Netherlands delegation. There remain, however, certain points to be considered and, if you allow me, I will make a few remarks.

I am entirely in agreement with what was said by M. Sato and M. Paul-Boncour, namely, that our discussions are based upon those of Sub-Commission A. There should therefore be no need to repeat all that was said during the debates of that Sub-Commission, especially as it was not a commission of experts, strictly speaking, but a commission of highly competent military representatives, who were discussing the problems in accordance with instructions received from their Governments.

It is hardly necessary to say, therefore, that the German delegation could not consider an disarmament Convention which did not take account of trained reserves.

I have no more hope than Viscount Cecil of convincing my colleagues, since they, too, are bound by instructions. We are not here as military representatives, but as the political representatives of our Governments. We must arrive at a result by political means, for a result is necessary in order to re-establish friendship between peoples, which is the only real aim of the League of Nations.

I was greatly interested in the eloquent speech by M. de Brouckère, who viewed the problem from a high historical and philosophical plane. I was particularly interested to hear him speak of the unfortunate consequences of the abolition of conscription in certain European countries. I hope that M. de Brouckère will soon be able to convince everybody on this point. He said that it is impossible to abolish conscription in Continental countries. I fully sympathise with his view and I think that he is quite right in saying that, if we limited the period of service, we should not give sufficient military training to the soldiers and therefore that it would be the most effective way of solving the disarmament problem. However, we are still very far from such a situation, and military service for a year is fully sufficient for effective military training. The trained reserves, therefore, remain the pivot of nearly all Continental armies.

Mr. de Brouckère, gentlemen, that, when the war lords at Versailles were seeking to destroy the aggressive power, and the defensive power — in fact, the whole military power — of Germany, they presented us with a system the very object of which was to prevent us from forming reserves. This single example shows that at that time they fully recognised the importance of trained reserves.

We must regard as combatants not only the effective with the colours but also the trained reserves. The main idea of the British draft is to take account of trained reserves. That is also my own view. I therefore approve Viscount Cecil’s proposal and I am entirely in favour of its being out into effect. If later on — for example, when we consider Point 22, some other method of taking account of trained reserves were to be adopted by our Commission, I should be prepared to give it my support, on condition, of course, that the principle remained intact.

While it is true that in the countries in question there are still a number of ex-service men, it is undeniably a fact that in those countries the young classes of reservists, that is to say, the very men who in other countries make up what has been called the available manpower, have completely disappeared. By reason of their youth and the military training which they have recently received, these constitute the nucleus of the fighting forces. It must therefore be concluded that there do exist really effective means of limiting trained reserves.

I am well aware that it is not possible to eliminate the ex-service men of the late war or the reservists who have been trained since the end of the war. Our experts, however, have submitted to us more than one method of limiting trained reserves, of which the most important seems to me that which aims at limiting the annual contingent of a country’s conscripts, thus leading to a gradual reduction in the trained reserves.

If it is argued that it is incompatible with democratic ideas that, in countries with compulsory service, only some of the men fit for service should be called upon, I would reply that it is contrary to democratic principles that men fit for service should have the power of avoiding the summons by paying a sum of money, with the result that military service is imposed only on the poorer classes. There can, however, be no question of violating democratic principles if the men to be exempted are chosen by ballot. The result may be that a millionaire’s son has to do his service while the factory needy worker is exempted. It might also be possible to compel the surplus of fit men to work in Government factories or for the public service.

There are therefore practical methods of limiting trained reserves which seem to me to be wholly compatible with democratic principles.

I am aware that several of my colleagues would place trained reserves on the same footing as factors of war potential. We are, however, agreed that men who have received their full training in peace-time form the most important part of the human element which enters into play during the first months of a war, that is to say, at the time when aggression is possible.
Does anyone doubt the necessity of effecting a practical limitation of so important an element in armaments?

In conclusion, I consider that trained reserves to-day constitute the most important part of a modern army and that, unless means are found of limiting them, we shall have failed in our task.

M. HENNINGS (Sweden). — After the eloquent remarks of the previous speakers, I should like briefly to give the views of my Government on the question of limiting effectives — views which I have already expressed during the general discussion.

Before I do so, however, I should like to take the opportunity of stating that I fully agree with M. de Brouckère and M. Paul-Boncour when they so eloquently stress the importance and necessity of not confining limitation to the effectives of the different countries but of extending it also to material. I may add that the Swedish delegation will be glad to support any proposal involving an effective limitation of material.

Reverting to the question of effectives with the colours, I notice that the first question which arises is that of what is meant by the expression “effectives with the colours”. The French draft gives us some very valuable indications on this point. The effectives with the colours, according to the French draft, are the average daily effectives, i.e., the total number of days’ duty divided by the number of days in the budgetary year; in other words, what Sub-Commission A called the number of men-days per annum.

It would be desirable to examine more closely the composition of the average daily effectives or number of men-days per year.

I think it is obvious that the effectives thus defined depend on two factors: the period of service and the annual contingent trained. These two factors multiplied together give us the number of men-days per year. If, therefore, you wish to limit effectives, you must either limit the period of service or the number of men annually incorporated.

An examination of the French proposals shows that they are based on the methods of limiting the period of service and that, by adopting this method, they expect to obtain the limitation of effectives with the colours. This method has many advantages: it is simple, it does not reduce the power of a country for defence and it does not reduce the period of service below the minimum necessary for the efficient training of the troops. On the other hand, it has certain disadvantages: it leaves intact, or almost intact, the power of aggression of a country and it is, I think, too limited in its effects, for, if certain countries have already reduced the period of service to the minimum which is essential to enable them to train their troops efficiently, there is no further possibility of limitation under this system. In the case of such countries, if you wished to carry out a further reduction of effectives, it would be necessary to apply the second method, that is to say, the reduction of the annual contingent. These countries could not be expected to undertake any further reduction — which would only be feasible by reducing the annual contingent — unless this method were to be generally applied.

If it is desired to secure a complete Convention and at the same time to limit effectives, it would be well to use the two methods simultaneously, whilst recognising that the latter method has certain disadvantages. We must, however, also admit it has great advantages.

It is the only method which provides a just and equitable basis for drawing up new conventions with a view to a further reduction of effectives. If we suppose that all countries have reduced their period of service to the minimum consistent with efficient training, no further reduction can take place except by limiting the annual contingent. This method also allows of a reduction in what Viscount Cecil calls “the number of men available for despatch to the fighting line”, because that is the only way in which you can reduce the number of men trained and thus gradually reduce the power of aggression of a country by limiting its trained reserves.

I press this point with all respect to Viscount Cecil, who said that it was necessary to limit the number of men who could be sent to the fighting line. I should like to point out, however, that you cannot limit the number of a population of a country. You cannot limit the number of men who are of an age to be sent to the fighting line, but what you can limit is the number of men who have undergone military training. I think that, if we wish to achieve what Viscount Cecil has in view, that is to say, a reduction in the number of men who can be sent to the fighting line, it can only be by adopting the method of the annual contingent.

Therefore, the Swedish delegation wonders whether it would not be as well to insert in the Convention a clause providing for the application of the second method conjointly with the first, and stipulating that various States would undertake to exempt a certain percentage of the annual contingent from military training. Even if in this first Convention the percentage laid down were practically negligible, we should at any rate have the advantage of having laid the foundations for subsequent limitations and reductions of effectives.

It has been said that the second method would not be compatible with democratic ideals and with existing circumstances. This argument is not very convincing, in spite of the eloquent speech of M. de Brouckère. My country is very democratic, but, in spite of that, the limitation of effectives has already been carried out by adopting the second method, that of the annual contingent.
contingent. This limitation was not by means of the ballot, which might have raised objections, but by a more severe medical examination than had previously been in force. I may add that this action was taken on the motion of the Socialist Party and a considerable reduction was effected by that method alone.

I do not intend to make any concrete proposals. I only wanted to enquire rather more precisely into some of the points with which we are dealing, and I especially wished to say to Viscount Cecil that, if it is a question of limiting the number of men who can be sent to the fighting line, there is no other method available than that of the annual contingent.

Regarding the expression “immediately available” employed in the French draft, I listened very attentively this morning to the explanation given by the French delegate, but I cannot pretend that, in spite of his very eloquent and persuasive explanations, my doubts regarding the expression in question have been set at rest. Even if we are of opinion that only those men should be considered as immediately available who have undergone a certain amount of military training, I wonder whether it is possible for such a vague expression to be employed in a Convention as the one used in the French draft, and whether each country may be left to report the number of men who are effectives with the colours and whom it considers sufficiently trained to be limited; and secondly, the number of men who have not yet completed their military training, and are therefore considered as not being available. Inequalities would necessarily arise with regard to the application of this Convention. One State might argue that recruits require three months’ training before becoming available, and consequently it would only include men who had received training in excess of this period. Another State might claim that only recruits who had received more than six months’ training should be included, etc. It may even happen that certain States will maintain that they have limited the period of service to the minimum necessary for its soldiers to be available, and, consequently it has no effectives to limit, within the meaning of the Convention, although it might have such-and-such numbers with the colours.

I wonder whether we should not, in spite of the difficulties, try to fix a general limit, so that those who have received military training in excess of this limit may be considered as immediately available, and those who have been trained for a lesser period be regarded as not available. I fully understand the difficulties entailed by this procedure, and I wonder whether it would not be preferable to adopt the scheme recommended by M. de Brouckère, consisting in simply counting the number of rations and including among the effectives with the colours all men serving even though they have not completed their training. This was the method favoured by the Swedish delegation in Sub-Commission A.

M. Yovanovitch (Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes). — After the eloquent speeches of M. de Brouckère, M. Paul-Boncour, M. Sato and the especially interesting statement made by our American colleague from the United States, a statement which was awaited with great impatience because of the importance of that country, and after the words spoken by Viscount Cecil, I thought that we had more or less reached an agreement on the principle of reserves. But I find I was mistaken and that reservations are still being made with regard to this question.

I do not intend to repeat the excellent arguments put forward by the speakers mentioned; by doing so, I should merely be detracting from their value. I only wish to state the point of view of my own Government on this matter.

We are convinced that it is impossible to ascertain and check the exact number of reservists who could be employed within a given time: this depends on the training they have received since completing their period of military service. This training may be given in barracks or out of barracks — a matter beyond our control. M. Paul-Boncour explained this very well: it would be necessary to send commissioners into every village to supervise the training that was being given out of barracks. In a country like mine, which is very sparsely populated, it would be practically impossible to train men out of barracks, as is possible in densely populated countries.

Moreover, as long as there are a large number of men who underwent military service in the course of the war, they must be taken into consideration. M. de Brouckère stated this morning that we must reckon on a period of at least fifteen years, but our proposed Convention is only for a period of five years. We cannot limit these men; they already exist. Disarmament is closely connected with the question of security, and it would be impossible for a country like ours to limit its reserves as long as its security was not sufficiently guaranteed, and it would be obliged, if attacked, to put every available man into the field.

Some countries are in a particularly privileged position, which allows them in case of war to continue the training of their men. In my country that would not be possible. The reserves can only be employed after mobilisation has been in progress for some time. These reserves must be considered as a means of defence, but, as the League of Nations now exists, it will always have time to intervene in a conflict.

As naval and air reserves cannot be effectively limited, and in view of the fact that some countries have technical personnel and specialists available, countries, like my own, which have none will be in a position of grave inferiority in relation to countries which have.
As reference was made to the opinion expressed by the Sub-Commission, I should also like to refer to an opinion expressed by the Military Committee of Sub-Commission A. I consider that the work of our Sub-Committees is necessary if our task is to succeed; we could not do without it. A majority of the Military Committee passed this resolution:

"At the present time the limitation of trained reserves can only be contemplated in countries which, by reason of their special political or geographical situation, would have time in the event of an aggression to train their untrained reserves".

My country is not in that privileged position, which fact I very much regret. We can only call on trained reserves, and by reason of our geographical situation we are exposed to aggression. The President, in this opening speech, said that every country had a sacred duty to defend its national territory. I am entirely in agreement, but, in order to defend the national territory, means of defence are required, and in our view these are constituted by trained reserves.

There has been too much said about the striking power of a country and not enough about its powers of defence. In our opinion, reserves are simply a means of defence. That is why I support the arguments put forward by M. de Brouckère and M. Paul-Boncour, while still adhering to the principle that limitation should be confined to what can be limited and what can be supervised.

General de Marinis (Italy). — We have devoted two meetings, and perhaps more, to discussing the question of trained reserves. This question was also discussed at length in the technical Sub-Committees but it is worth the trouble of careful examination because it is of great importance. For some States it constitutes a fundamental part of the Convention that we have in view. After all the discussion that took place in the technical Sub-Committees and after hearing the interesting remarks made by the preceding speakers, I cannot contribute anything new to the debate, and I will be content with saying that I emphatically support the point of view put forward by the Italian delegate in Sub-Commission A. That is to say, I consider that limitation should be confined to forces with the colours and that it is not possible to limit trained reserves. Consequently, I am in agreement with the text proposed by the French delegation.

I should, however, like the texts to be made somewhat clearer. With regard to Points 5 and 8 of the document before us, and which relate, on the one hand, to men who can be employed immediately without being mobilised and, on the other hand, to the definition of "formations organised on a military basis". The Swedish delegate told us that he was not entirely satisfied with the explanations given of the meaning of the words "employed immediately". I must say I think this passage rather vague. I have not forgotten, however, the arguments put forward by the French representative. M. Paul-Boncour told us that he had drafted this passage in a sufficiently elastic manner to allow the States concerned to judge which of their effectives could be employed at a given time and to take account of this in fixing the number of effectives which they considered essential to their security. I was glad to note this statement, and it gives me great satisfaction.

I must add a word with regard to the period of service. For my part, I should have preferred that we should limit ourselves to a provision that budgetary effectives should be reported. In my opinion, this would be sufficient to allow the necessary precautions to be taken with a view to the proposed reductions, but I will not labour this point, for I do not wish to increase our difficulties at the moment; I will perhaps revert to this question later. At present, I must reserve my final adhesion, while declaring in principle in favour of the French delegate.

I would, however, request M. Paul-Boncour to alter a phrase included in Point 13. The words "shall remain in conformity with that fixed for each category of effectives" should be changed to "shall remain in conformity with what each State shall have fixed for each category of effectives". I think that this would ensure that no misunderstanding could arise regarding the text. Finally, it will naturally devolve on the Conference to fix the number of effectives; but they will base their decisions on the information supplied by each State.

I also wish to draw the attention of members to the question of the value we are placing on the commentary of the Analysis. Is it understood that the commentary is only intended to be explanatory but that, in point of fact, we are discussing the actual text?

As far as my country is concerned, I should not be able to accept certain statements which appear in the commentary. For instance, in Point 13 we read: "The fixing of the period of service at a constant figure combined with the limitation of the average effectives". Now, I consider that it is not possible to compel States to fix the period of service at an invariable figure. Some countries — mine in particular — have variable periods of service, for instance, three months, six months, eighteen months, etc. My friend M. Sato, I notice signifies assent; from which I understand that he, like myself, could not accept this part of the commentary.

M. de Brouckère (Belgium). — After the long speech which I made this morning, I must apologise to you, Mr. President, for rising again, and I should have refrained if it had not been for some words spoken by Count Bernstorff, which were addressed to me personally and which induce me to reply to him courteously and cordially but likewise personally.
I may say that I was particularly glad to note the considerable measure of agreement between the German delegate and myself. Count Bernstorff said that he advocated in principle the reduction of the period of service and — here he goes rather further than I do — the reduction of this period below the minimum compatible with efficient training; I shall never make it a reproach to him, however, that he goes further than I do on the road to disarmament.

I was also glad to note our close agreement on the question of conscription, but he will allow me to say that we cannot leave this very clearly defined subject of our discussion, nor can we examine any diplomatic instrument other than the Convention which we have in view. I will therefore be content to reply to him in a few words.

This morning, when I spoke about conscription, I did not say that conscription should be retained in all European continental countries; what I said was that it should be retained as long as these countries are subject to aggression — and while I was speaking, I heard Count Bernstorff interrupt me to say “Très bien”. I would remind him that, at the very beginning of our discussion during the first session, when he got up to speak for the first time and said: “Germany is not complaining of having been disarmed but of having been badly disarmed”, I then took the liberty to interrupt him in exactly the same way, and said “Très bien”.

What I now wish to see is that we should profit by experience and endeavour to disarm well. It gave me particular pleasure to note that the German delegate was not only desirous of reducing the period of service by a few weeks, but he wished to reduce it below the minimum compatible with efficiency, and that he further desired that only a portion of the annual contingent should be incorporated, which shows that he is agreeable to Germany’s carrying out a new and much more extensive disarmament than that to which she has already agreed. This was a very promising indication that the time was coming when we shall have taken the first step, and shall be on the way to taking a second one, on the road to disarmament.

Whilst I am on the subject, may I reply, in a few words, to M. Hennings? The Swedish delegate just now reproached me in a friendly way with saying, when speaking of the limitation of the annual contingent by ballot, that such limitation would be anti-democratic, and he remarked that in Sweden this had been done at the instigation of my Socialist friends. May I ask him to refer to the text of my speech? He will see that what struck me not as reprehensible — because I would not venture to make any criticism of what was happening in countries other than my own — but as unacceptable for my country was the reduction of the annual contingent by means of a ballot. As for the measure instigated in Sweden by my Socialist friends, I did not characterise it as anti-democratic, I merely considered it to be entirely ineffective, because it amounts to eliminating elements of little value and concentrating on the training of men who could be sent to the fighting line, and that is perhaps a method of disarming which Count Bernstorff would not approve.

In conclusion, I should like to ask what stage we have reached. We have heard many speeches, and I must apologise for having made several myself, but we are not yet in sight of an agreement. At any rate, no final text has been put before us. A certain number of speakers have intimated their willingness not to press their views, but they did not explain how we are to arrive at a common agreement. May I be allowed to outline such an agreement? There is one thing which stands out clearly, namely, that everyone has stated that it is necessary to reduce peace-time effective. Whatever the opinions with regard to trained reserves, everybody stated that one at least of the methods — and the most effective — was to reduce the period of service. Could we not record our agreement on this point? If we can agree on other things as well, so much the better. If we cannot do so, we shall have to fall back on Viscount Cecil’s wise remark to the effect that, when we cannot agree, we must abstain. Let us therefore record the measure of agreement reached, and let us try, if possible to extend our agreement, but the endeavour to produce an extended agreement must not prevent us from recording such results as have already been obtained.

I would add a few words with regard to an important point. Several speakers expressed different views about the exact meaning to be attributed to the French expression: “military, naval and air effectives who can be immediately employed without being mobilised”. My opinion, which seems to be confirmed by the explanation given by M. Paul-Boncour, is that it is a question of ration strength. But it might perhaps be more clearly put by saying “who are immediately at the disposal of the military authorities” or “who are with the colours without previous measures of mobilisation”. It would be better to entrust to technical experts the duty of finding the exact expression, but I believe that we should be more likely to arrive at a clear formula on these lines.

Count Bernstorff (Germany). — I cannot conceive a greater pleasure than a discussion with M. de Brouckère, and I know that he will allow me to reply in a few words.

If I understood him correctly, he said that we should not discuss any diplomatic instrument other than that which forms the subject of our discussions. I think he is mistaken on this point. We are here because the Treaty of Versailles and Article 8 of the Covenant provide for disarmament. It is therefore impossible not to mention the Treaty of Versailles, because it is the basis of the Disarmament Conference.

I said that, in my opinion, a system of short-service militia would be ideal, but I added that we were still very far from realising this idea, and in consequence we could not at present discuss this method of disarming and that it was therefore necessary to limit the annual contingent.
that we should arrive at an agreement on two propositions: first, that we agree that all effectiveness of the limitation of trained reserves, which are necessary for the maintenance of our independence, is incapable of helping us, we cannot shoulder the tremendous responsibility of agreeing to the French arguments, which are likewise ours, are capable of limitation and can also be supervised politically. M. Paul-Boncour defined the stages of a dispute between two great already advanced by these experts.

namely, that we cannot agree to the principle of limitation of trained reserves for the reasons you who are armed, begin disarming first! The country is attacked: its defences must be organised and all its forces come into play'.

Gentlemen, we are here assembled as Members of the League of Nations, which gives certain guarantees regarding the possibility of settling disputes. These guarantees of security cease to exist the moment that mobilisation is ordered. If this be the case, I really think that each of us should consider this important point, namely, what guarantees have we got in case of attack?

If we are all agreed that, at the time when mobilisation is ordered, the League of Nations is incapable of helping us, we cannot shoulder the tremendous responsibility of agreeing to the limitation of trained reserves, which are necessary for the maintenance of our independence, and we cannot accept a Convention providing for their limitation.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire).—I said I did not propose to go on with this discussion, and I do not, but as to the method of procedure, which is the only aspect on which I want to speak now—not the merits of the question at all—M. de Brouckère has made a proposal that we should arrive at an agreement on two propositions: first, that we agree that all effectiveness of the colours should at any rate be limited; and, secondly, that we agree that a method of limitation is by reducing the period of service. Well, merely on the practical point at the moment, I do not think, if I may say so, that that would be the best way of proceeding. I would like to take a text, and since I assume, for the moment, that we adopt the French thesis on this point, it would evidently be better to take the French text as the basis of our work. In that case, looking at the articles of the French draft, I do not think we can take Point 1 at this moment, because there are two questions at least outstanding in that article which we have not yet settled, namely, whether you are to include naval and air forces (which has been postponed), and, secondly, what exactly we are going to do about home and overseas forces; but I think we could take Point 2, which is the one which deals directly with this proposition. I think it would be really useful now to put into exact form Point 2 as far as it expresses the thesis for which the French delegation and others have contended here. There seem to me to be one or two drafting changes which might be made, but I do not propose to weary the Commission with considering those. There is the question of whether the words "who may be immediately employed" are the right words, or whether some clearer words could be used. That is a matter upon which we shall hope to hear the views of the French delegation to-morrow morning or this evening, and, subject to that, it seems to me that the first paragraph does express the view for which a number of the members of the Commission have contended, and it seems to me that the question which we ought to put now is whether, subject to that alteration of the words "who may be immediately employed", the Commission is prepared in First Reading, and reserving, of course, all the rights of members to modify their views on the Second Reading, to accept the first paragraph of Point 2. That seems to me to be the real way to bring the thing to a practical point. If we can get that established, we shall have made a definite advance, we shall have written something into the Convention, and we shall have got some way forward. If that question is put, so far as I am concerned, I shall say that I must reserve my final opinion, but I should not desire to oppose the adoption of it in First Reading at this stage.

As to the second paragraph, I do not think there is any dispute about it, except that in the English version we have certain drafting changes to propose which would in no way alter the sense of the paragraph. If we could get as far as that, we should in First Reading have adopted Paragraph 2 of the French text, subject, of course, to any small drafting changes which may be necessary when we have completed the Convention and assuming, of course, that no important change is made in the text on second Reading.

I may not have expressed everything that I desire to express, but I suggest that to the Commission, and particularly to the Bureau, as the best practical way of proceeding, and that
if we merely at this stage confined ourselves to accepting the thesis put forward by M. de Brouckère, we really should not have got very much further on. I am afraid we should only have accepted theses which we might almost have accepted at the beginning of our discussion. We should probably have said: "We must limit the troops with the colours. We quite admit that the reduction of the period of service is a desirable measure". I am not sure that I should use exactly the same words in expressing my assent to it as M. de Brouckère has used, but, of course, I assent to it as in itself a desirable measure.

I suggest that as a practical method, but I should be very glad if we could have a discussion on the practical way of registering the conclusions at which we have arrived. With reference to this latter point, I would draw your attention to the fact that agreement was not reached, and that we have not yet expressed our views.

In order to reduce, you must have some point of departure. The period of service, however, varies according to different countries and is even sometimes variable in the same country; in Italy, for example, in certain cases the period of service is eighteen months, in others six months, in others three months, and so on.

Sub-Commission A pointed out several drawbacks to this method in the reply which it submitted.

Whilst it is my earnest wish that we should reach an agreement, I must regretfully insist that we have not yet got so far.

M. DE BROUCKERE (Belgium). — At first I thought that we had agreed on two points, but, as General de Marinis points out that this is not the case, I withdraw my previous statement. If, however, I understood Viscount Cecil aright, we are now agreed with regard to Points 1, 2 and 3 of the Analysis; we reserve Point 4, and we continue the discussion regarding Article 2 of the French draft, that is to say, Point 5 of the Analysis. I think that this time we are entirely in agreement.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France). — I think that Viscount Cecil just now said that Point 5 was agreed, at any rate on the First Reading.

Viscount CECIL (British Empire). — What I want to convey is that I am not in any way abandoning my opinion. I am still hoping that the French delegation and the Belgian delegation before the Second Reading will have come round to my opinion. But for the moment I do not wish to keep up the debate. We must come to some conclusion and it seems to me that the best conclusion we can come to is provisionally to write this into our new Convention, subject, of course, to all rights which we reserve for the Second Reading.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France). — I take note of Viscount Cecil's remarks and will think the matter over. I extend the same invitation to him.

The Commission rose at 7 p.m.

NINTH PUBLIC MEETING.

Held at Geneva on Tuesday, March 29th, 1927, at 10.15 a.m.

President: M. LOUDON (Netherlands).

18. Examination of the Synoptic Analysis. Effectives. Point 5 (continuation).

The President. — In order to sum up in a few words the debate which took place yesterday, we can say that, as regards the important question of limiting or not limiting trained reserves, each party has maintained its contentions. At the same time, being animated as we are by a spirit of conciliation, and as this is only a First Reading, we might accept provisionally the form of drafting which appears in the right-hand column, i.e., the form of drafting which proposes the non-limitation of trained reserves. This in no way precludes the possibility of taking a different decision at the Second Reading; but the advantage of the course I propose is that our work will be greatly advanced. Accordingly, if no one wishes to speak, I propose that the debate should be closed.

The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — I had asked for an opportunity to speak yesterday afternoon as regards the subject of trained reserves but when my turn came the hour was so late that I felt that it would be an imposition upon the good nature of my colleagues if I spoke at that time. But, before the debate is closed on that subject, I should like to make a statement of the views of my Government, not only to take my full share in the discussions, but more particularly because I feel that somewhere in those views there is material which may commend itself to my colleagues when the time comes to take up the
subject for fresh discussion, and because, on the basis of those views, I should like to suggest a possible solution of the difficulty which separates us — a solution which might possibly be acceptable to all of us.

I do not want to prolong the debate by asking for a discussion of that solution at this time. Sometimes it is very useful, in shortening debates, to be in possession of an idea and to have a chance of thinking it over, and I think if we all have an opportunity to reflect upon this solution we may more profitably and more expeditiously discuss it when the question comes up for fresh discussion.

We have listened with the greatest interest and the greatest friendliness to the whole of the discussion on the subject of trained reserves — a very delicate, complicated and complex question, as we very well realise. We have tried to take into the fullest account the different problems which have been explained to us by our colleagues and, although I must confess we have had an immense amount of material to assimilate, as a result we are rather disposed to believe that there is not after all such a wide divergence between our point of view and that of other delegations as might appear on the surface of their remarks and ours. I cannot avoid the conclusion that our divergence is more apparent than real, and that it arises in a measure at least from the fact that we are not talking in the same terms, that if we could get to a basis of using the same terms we might more nearly approach agreement.

In the course of yesterday's discussion, I noticed particularly the statement made as to the difficulty of defining trained reserves, and the statement which said in effect that trained reserves comprised not only men who had received military training but also included those members of the population such as telephone operators, railway employees and others who have received some measure of technical or vocational equipment with, in my view, an adequate trained in some capacity in military forces in the event of war. To some of us the question of limiting trained reserves has involved limiting those people who, through their knowledge of operating telephones or telegraphs, could be usefully employed in the military forces in the event of war; others of us had in mind a much more restricted definition and, to make this clear, I cannot do better than draw attention to the fact that, during the sessions of Sub-Commission A, the delegation of the United States, in common with the delegations of the British Empire, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden, supported a definition to the effect that trained reserves are men who have received a military training with the colours or in organisations authorised officially to give such training and who are under a legal liability to be recalled to the colours in the case of mobilisation. These delegations opposed the acceptance of a definition of the type which was referred to yesterday, to the effect that trained reserves included not only men who had received military training in military units or in non-regimental institutions or organisations but also men (and conceivably women and children) who had received some sort of technical instruction which would render them useful for specialisation in employment without military training. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that, if we are to accept this idea, we accept the contention that civilians of no military training whatever should be included in the term "trained reserves". It should be noted that the acceptance of the definition just mentioned means in effect that either men or women who have received technical training, such as doctors, nurses, dentists, electrical, mechanical and civil engineers, as well as skilled labourers, such as motormen, telephone operators, etc., who, in spite of the fact that they have no military training and have no knowledge of military requirements, could nevertheless be classed as trained reservists. This idea is so at variance not only with our conception of trained reservists but so at variance with the ordinary average acceptance of the term, that I cannot help feeling that public opinion throughout the world would be puzzled and bewildered if a Conference composed of the most highly qualified technical experts that we have been able to furnish should adopt this new interpretation of trained reserves and attempt to incorporate it in an important Convention.

When we are dealing with the entire problem of land armaments — whether a country is employing the volunteer system in different degrees, or the conscript system — the question of trained reserves to be the crux of the whole problem. A nation which possesses an adequate trained reserve or the material necessary to equip it; a nation which does not possess an adequate trained reserve or the material necessary to equip it; but which must train its personnel and convert its reserves into arms and equipment, cannot be engaged in offensive battles for the minimum of one year, and this would mean the gravest danger of disaster and defeat. It seems clear to us that a nation which has trained reserves and the necessary equipment for their use in time of peace has a predominant advantage upon the outbreak of war, for, other things being equal, such a nation, if at war with a nation which has no trained reserves and no necessary material with which to equip men might easily win the war before the latter nation could take available steps to train its man-power and procure the material necessary for its equipment.

Apart from the foregoing considerations, it seems to me that the definition I have already given, which was adopted by the American delegation together with a number of others, is much fairer and covers clearly the sort of men who are obviously part of the armed forces of a country and who should be dealt with in a Convention. My remarks this morning are based upon this definition, and I trust this will be borne in mind in connection with what I am about to say. I quite realise that I am basing my remarks on a definition which has not been generally accepted; I am not trying to secure general acceptance of it, but to use it as a point of departure in order to make my point clear. I quite understand and recognise that this definition has been adopted only by part of the delegations here-represented, and it is not my wish in any way to be contentious. On the contrary, I am merely feeling my way towards some solution which I trust may be acceptable to all of us. The American delegation...
has examined the French draft in the most friendly spirit. I am quite prepared to recognise that this draft might be acceptable if all the parties to the proposed Convention employed the conscription system. That is the point I am emphasising. It must not be forgotten that the different countries represented here employ a variety of systems, ranging from conscription in its various forms to short-term and long-term volunteer armies. If we adopt a scheme for either limitation or reduction applicable to only one of these systems (whether it be the conscript or voluntary system), there is always the danger that we shall not take into account the special needs and requirements of the other two. Therefore, our problem is to find if possible the least common denominator of them all.

It seems to me that before we can profitably begin a discussion as to how to achieve measurement of limitation or reduction of trained reserves, it is essential that we have some clear picture of the actual armed strength of each country. We cannot intelligently discuss methods of limitation or reduction until we know what we are seeking to limit or reduce. It therefore seems to me that our immediate problem is to make a clear picture of the actual armed strength of each country and arrive at such measures as we may be able to agree upon.

What are we to put into this picture? We are all agreed that active arms are to be clearly stated; when we come to trained reserves, there is a second difficulty, but there is no difficulty on one point. We all agree that trained reserves have a decided military value, that value being more or less according to each country and each system, but in principle trained reserves are recognised as playing a very important part in the armed strength of a country — very often a preponderant part. Indeed, delegations represented in this Commission, when discussing this subject in Sub-Commission A, went so far as to say that their trained reserves constituted the bulk of their military strength, in some cases ranging as high as 90 per cent of their military strength. In cases where trained reserves represent 90 per cent, we cannot very well leave them out of the picture; otherwise we are not dealing with the whole subject.

As M. de Brouckère said in the course of the discussion the other day: "There they are; they cannot be untrained and they cannot be deported". Viscount Cecil referred to this as a very powerful argument. I quite agree, but it also seems to me a very powerful argument for putting them into the picture. There they are. Therefore, it seems to me that they should be put into the picture; then we can consider what we are seeking either to limit or reduce.

I am not arguing the point of actual limitation or reduction at this time, but merely a preliminary step calculated to facilitate the approach to the discussion of actual limitation or reduction. We must bear in mind that, if our Convention is to be of the greatest possible value, it must, above all things, be clear and simple. If the man in the street cannot understand it, it loses a great deal of its value. That is not an original statement; we have all said it one way or another in the course of our discussion.

Our immediate problem is how to put trained reserves into the picture in such a way as to be entirely fair both to countries with a conscript system and those with a volunteer system. It will be recognised that, if those countries that have a volunteer system put 90 per cent of their armed strength into this picture and those with a conscript system put only a very small percentage of their strength into the picture, the result will not really bear scrutiny even by those who are friendly to our efforts.

I can well understand the reluctance of a country with a conscript system to put into one lump sum the combined figures of their active army and their trained reserves, as this would frankly give a false impression of their military strength. It would look as though they had a totally disproportionate active military machine; and one thing above all that we want to avoid is creating a false impression, whether of too great strength or too little strength. On the other hand, if we leave out those reserves, our picture would give ground for criticism on other grounds and the picture would not be complete.

After studying this question, the American delegation ventures to submit for consideration, as a possible means of meeting the problem, that in the tables annexed to the Convention we might well have two columns: the first to contain the figures of the active armies and the second to indicate the strength of the trained reserves. By that means, of course, the trained reserves who have received a military training with the colours or any organisation authorised officially to give such training and who are under a legal liability to be recalled to the colours in case of mobilisation. I am coming back to the same definition that we used before in order to make as clear as possible the category of trained reserves who will be dealt with by the Convention and to limit them to those who are strictly of military value. This would leave out of consideration all the people who have had no military training but who might conceivably be useful to the military forces in times of war.

It seems to the American delegation that this clear differentiation between active armies and trained reserves gives the picture fairly and leaves every country free to give its own evaluation to the different categories of its own reserves. We hope that, in view of this, it will not appear objectionable; in fact, we hope it will prove acceptable. It would give the entire picture as accurately as possible, as fully as it can be given, without prejudice to such measures as it may be possible to devise in further discussion for actual measures of limitation and reduction, which after all, is an entirely separate problem. All that this suggestion is to afford us a starting point for an intelligent discussion. Far from making this suggestion in order to support any particular method, I am making it in the hope of finding a generally acceptable solution. I am making it purely on technical grounds because I believe that our common purpose can best be achieved by an accurate statement of the facts, by recognising the facts as they exist, stating the facts accurately and fairly, and then dealing with them according to the best of our ability, on the basis of perfectly frank and friendly discussion.

I noted, in the course of yesterday's discussion on the subject of trained reserves, that various delegates quoted with approval the position taken by their technical delegations in
Sub-Commission A and its military, naval and air sub-committees. In my turn, I wish to take this occasion of saying that the American Government, from the technical point of view likewise, unreservedly supports the position taken by its technical delegations in Sub-Commission A and its subordinate committees. In making my present suggestion, I am animated by a desire to find how a common meeting-ground can best be reached. Once we have found this basis, we can approach the subject of limitation and reduction much more profitably and with greater hope of agreement. I trust, therefore, that my colleagues will give this suggestion their careful consideration. I do not ask them to consider it now. In fact, all things being equal, I should prefer that they ponder upon it and be ready to discuss it when this subject comes up for fresh discussion.

I am reluctant to have prolonged the debate on this particular point, but I did wish to leave this thought with our colleagues before we passed on to the next step. I crave their indulgence for having taken up so much of their time.

M. Veverka (Czechoslovakia). — I have asked to speak less with the idea of making a formal statement than with that of submitting a few remarks before this discussion is closed.

I, too, have followed with the greatest attention the discussions which have become, as it were, the focus and the foundation-stone of our deliberations, and I have listened carefully to the arguments advanced by the delegates who have spoken on the two sides of the question.

But, strangely enough, the more arguments were put forward, the more the difference of view between the parties seemed to become accentuated, and the more I became convinced that the only difference between the two solutions rested in the time which will be required for their effects to make themselves felt. Once it is realised that there is no way of “untraining” the men who inevitably form the reserves, it seems to me evident that the only way of limiting the accumulation of reserves is to limit equitably their creation by means of the permanent units. This is the aim which the British draft has before it and which the French draft wishes to achieve in the course of a certain number of years. It is this comparatively short space of time which marks the whole difference between the two contentions. It does not seem to me that there can be fundamental divergence of opinion, particularly as there now seems to be some hope of an agreement regarding this question and also that of the limitation of expenditure, which will be a corrective to the accumulation of reserves.

Viscount Cecil, with his usual generosity, and to the great satisfaction of those who desire success, has withdrawn his opposition to Article 2 being taken as a hypothetical basis of further discussion.

I cannot help thinking and hoping that, after an exchange of views on the two chapters which have still to be examined, a satisfactory and final compromise will be reached on this hypothetical basis.

The President. — It now remains to decide whether the word “utilisables” will be kept in the French text.

M. Paul-Boncour (France). — After discussing this question with M. de Brouckère, we have come to the conclusion that the definition might be as follows: “Effectives on service within the meaning of the present Convention shall be understood to mean effectives with the colours or in units organised on a military basis and who may for that reason be immediately employed without having to be mobilised.”

The essential idea is the fact of mobilisation. The Governments are sole judges as regards the utilisation of the effectives and the time of their utilisation. The important point is that the effectives are with the colours or in military formations, that they are on the spot and in being.

M. de Brouckère (Belgium). — And that they are counted.

M. Paul-Boncour (France). — They are counted because they exist. Their values are unequal, but there are other inequalities — for example, in the military formations.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — The formula which has only just been put before me — and I do not at all know what my experts will say to it — at first sight seems an effort to meet the criticism which was made, and I should hope that it would turn out satisfactorily. I cannot say more than that until I have had it examined carefully.

M. Rutgers (Netherlands). — We make the same reservation as Viscount Cecil.

The text proposed by M. Paul-Boncour was accepted.


British draft:

"... to the effectives:

Points 6 and 7.

prescribed in Table I of Annex I."

French draft:

"... fixed in the tables:

1. Home forces;
2. Overseas forces and their reinforcements;
3. Formations organised on a military basis stationed in the home country;
4. Formations organised on a military basis stationed in overseas territories, annexed to the present Convention."

The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — I should like merely to call attention to the fact that the term “effectives” is rather indefinite and vague from the technical point of view. Neither the Military Committee nor Sub-Commission A was ever able to agree
M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France). — I will reply at once to Mr. Gibson. The value of the word “effectives” is determined by the explanations which follow. It is due to the synoptic arrangement adopted by the Bureau that we are discussing words which have no value in themselves and which are only explained by the definitions which follow them. But as a definition is even given of the manner of calculating effectives, of average daily effectives and of actual effectives, which are technical terms we will discuss in a moment, I think it can be said that the word “effectives” takes on some significance.

General DE MARINIS (Italy). — I do not know why we make a distinction between home forces and overseas forces. Have the latter different duties, a different use or a different aim from the former? It is not possible that they will be called upon to perform the same task? If it was not possible to have recourse to colonial troops for the defence of the home country, and, conversely, if the defence of the overseas territories could not be entrusted to the troops of these territories, it would, of course, be necessary to consider the home army and the colonial army separately. But as this is not always the case, owing to the employment of colonial armies in the home country and vice versa, as shown by the last war, the distinction made does not always appear to be justified. Moreover, it is unquestionable, in my opinion, that the fate of the overseas possessions of two countries which are at war is decided by the result of the war in which these countries are engaged. No one would expect a country having several overseas possessions and at war with another country to distribute the forces at its disposal among all its territories with a view to their defence. On the contrary, it would be to this country’s advantage to concentrate its military resources as far as possible in the territories in which the mother-country’s fate was to be decided, so as to secure superiority over its enemy. Once a country has lost a war, even if it has succeeded in gaining possession of its adversary's colonies, it will be unable to keep them.

It follows that the forces which a country maintains in its overseas territories are entrusted principally with the duty of maintaining order and acting as police in these territories, and they may also have a military function to perform in these territories if a war breaks out there. But if the mother-country is herself engaged in a conflict and her colonial forces are used to reinforce her home forces, the former play the same part as the home forces in providing for the security of the country.

On this point, however, I should like to anticipate an objection which might be put forward. It might be objected that colonial forces cannot be used in the same way as the home forces for offensive or defensive purposes because they are generally stationed at a distance and cannot be used in other continents without a certain delay. It might therefore be maintained that colonial forces should be considered as reinforcements which might be brought into play in the course of a war — in other words, that these forces should be considered as reserves or as a factor in the war potential. As, however, we must here consider only armaments which can be put to immediate use, it might be concluded that it would be fair, even if colonial forces were taken into account, to place them in a different category from home forces.

I admit the force of this objection, but it necessitates a distinction between the different overseas territories based on the distance separating these territories from the mother-country. The overseas territories, it must be admitted, are generally at a great distance from the mother-country and her neighbours. It is therefore comprehensible that colonial forces should be placed in a different category from the home forces.

But there are also overseas possessions which are quite close to the territory of the State to which they belong, or so near the home territory of other States that the forces stationed in these possessions might be conveyed to the said territories in the space of a few dozen hours.

A distinction therefore seems justified between the home forces and the colonial forces, but the latter must include only those which cannot be used by the side of the home forces until a considerable time has elapsed. On the other hand, the category of home forces should include the forces of the overseas territories which are quite close to the home country and are therefore in a position to come into action immediately by the side of the home forces and even in certain cases be employed before the latter. This means that home forces will have to include overseas forces which are stationed in a particular area and which can be brought into action practically simultaneously with the home forces.

This system would take into account the considerations which I have just outlined; I am prepared, however, to accept any other solution based on the same principle.

Thus you might divide the colonial forces into two categories on the basis of the distance of the colonies from the mother-country, or even include all the colonial forces in a single category, provided that the maximum forces which could be stationed in each colony were fixed separately.

In any case, I should like to ask my colleagues to consider that, in calculating the forces necessary for its security, a country cannot fail to take into account the existence of the overseas forces of other countries stationed in the vicinity of its home territory. In other words, I think I am not mistaken in saying that, in whatever category a country may place its overseas forces, if these forces are in the neighbourhood of the territory of another country, then that country, when calculating the armaments necessary for its security, is obliged to take...
into account the said forces on the same footing as home forces. I hope that the Commission will agree that this point is not without importance and is worthy of its attention.

I should also like to add one word more. To preclude the possibility of misunderstanding, I should like to explain that I am alluding to land forces stationed in the colonies and to air forces attached to colonial land bases (anti-aircraft batteries) or stationed in colonies which are very distant from the home country. As regards naval forces, and air forces in general, they do not enter into consideration and I do not think that the question can arise. I see no possibility of distinguishing between the colonial fleet and the home fleet and, in many cases, between home and colonial aviation. A navy, owing to its essentially mobile and independent character, can clearly only be considered as a whole, and, for the same reason, this also applies to an air force stationed in a district.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I have great sympathy with the object of this suggestion, namely, that, in making the return of the full fighting strength of the various countries, some distinction should be made between those forces that are normally stationed abroad (overseas) and those forces that are normally stationed at home, but I am afraid that the actual suggestion made by the French draft is, from the point of view of the organisation of the British forces, quite impossible. At the end of the first article in the French draft it is said that the parties undertake that their distribution of these forces shall conform to that laid down in the said tables, and if you refer to the tables you find the conception that the metropolitan forces shall be fixed as metropolitan forces and the overseas forces as overseas forces. There is a very slight modification of that providing that there may be a certain number of the metropolitan forces which may be earmarked as reinforcements for the overseas forces, but that is only a very slight modification. I am afraid that the system is really quite unworkable when you come to examine the necessary organisation of the British land forces. I am not going to argue at this moment about either the air or the sea, because, as far as the sea is concerned, I cannot imagine that there can possibly be any ground for distinguishing between one part of the fleet and another part of the fleet which is under the orders of the central Government. It must be considered as one unit; it is always so considered in our own navy.

But, leaving aside the fleet and the air force, because special circumstances may apply to the air force, I should like to give to the Commission a few figures showing how difficult any such solution — if it is to be rigid and inelastic — would be for the British Empire. I have asked for figures — although I do not say they are accurate to a thousand men or so — showing, broadly speaking, the manner of distribution of the British armed forces. I find that there are 109,000 (roughly) in Great Britain; there are 9,000 on the Rhine; there are 17,000 in Egypt. Those may be said to be strictly metropolitan, though it is understood that the troops in Egypt are, for purposes of internal defence, under the orders of the local authorities, though, of course, the British Government (which pays them) retains a considerable control over them. Then you have a body, the number of which I do not know, of local levies in the Crown Colonies and Protectorates, some in the Mandated Territories. As far as those are concerned, they are practically confined to the Mandated Territories, by international agreement, and do not come in. I agree they are separate and are paid for by the local people and are practically controlled by the local Government. There is also a small force in the Sudan which is in much the same position, and the very considerable forces of the British army in India (amounting to 61,000 or so British white troops and some 130,000 Indian regular army); these are
under the control of the Indian Government normally, though it is possible for the British, under the working of their constitution, to obtain the use of those troops, but under modern conditions only after consultation and (if possible) agreement with the Indian Government.

Then there are certain troops in the Dominions, over which the British Government has no control at all; that is to say, it neither pays them nor can give them orders. So that the Commission will see how very complicated the relations between the home forces and the overseas forces of the British Empire are, and to ask us to undertake that we would keep the actual forces exactly as they are for five years would be clearly and totally impossible. It could not be done. Moreover, in practice, the troops kept at home are really kept at home for the purpose of relieving the overseas garrisons, and there is a constant interchange every year and a constant variation every year in the exact number that is in England and the exact number that is abroad. Therefore it would be quite impossible, on behalf of the British Government, for me to assent to any such rigid proposal as is found in the French suggestion.

I should have much less difficulty with the suggestion made by the Italian delegate — that is to say, to have a total statement of the British forces with subheads saying that normally so many of them are at home and so many of them are abroad. I am afraid I could not go much further than that. For instance, if in some distant part of the Empire it was thought desirable to increase the force because of local trouble, to say we could not send a few thousand men there in order to do what is really police work is clearly impossible. But I should have no objection to making a general statement as to the normal distribution of the British army. Of course, it is quite obvious that I should have to consult the Indian Government before I could agree on their behalf, because India, from the point of view of the League of Nations, is a separate international entity. As far as the Dominions are concerned, they would have to say whether they accepted this or any part of it. I could not in any way bind them.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France). — I desire to reply as briefly and at the same time as completely as possible to the observations which have been made by the delegates of Italy, the United States and the British Empire.

General de Marinis has raised, if I may so put it, the question of principle, while the objections put forward by the delegates of the United States and the British Empire relate rather to the practical methods of applying the principle laid down in the French draft. General de Marinis has asked why, in the proposals regarding the limitation of effectives which will ultimately be laid before the Conference, a distinction should be made between home forces and overseas forces. There are three reasons for this.

The first and principal reason is that it is for the sake of clearness. This reason is connected with the idea — to which I must apologise for always reverting and which I am continually emphasising in the course of this discussion, for it is a fundamental one — that you can only limit what is capable of being supervised, whatever form supervision may ultimately take. In order to judge of the limitations which each nation will propose to the Conference, we must discriminate as far as possible between the various kinds of limitable effectives. That is why we also desire, in the interests of clearness and equity, that metropolitan and colonial effectives should be considered separately. The great French philosopher Descartes once said that, to solve a difficulty, the best way was to divide it into its component parts. Accordingly, to achieve the maximum of clearness with regard to limitations, it is desirable to differentiate them as far as possible.

The second reason why we have included this distinction is that it is indirectly related to another purpose of our work, which is, naturally enough, at present in the background but which will certainly come to the fore at the Conference, and that is the justification adduced for effectives. What we are dealing with here is only a blank draft. Although we are political delegates of our Governments, and although we commit them, it is none the less true that the properly political task of the Governments will be to fill in the blanks we have left in our draft Convention. This will be the task of the Conference. What we have to do is to lay the foundations on the basis of which the effectives will be proposed and the justifications adduced. In the same way, having established the principle — which I think was accepted, if not unanimously, very nearly unanimously, by our technical Committees — that the effectives necessary to ensure the security of a country were a function of the geographical situation, industrial power, historical responsibilities, length of maritime communications (in the case of the navy) and overseas possessions of the country in question, it would be strange, I say, that, after accepting this principle of colonial possessions in connection with the question of the naval armaments required to provide for the security of communications, its consequences should not also be accepted with regard to the effectives of the military forces required to defend them.

The third reason for including this distinction is connected with the idea which has been exercising Viscount Cecil's mind, that of limiting the striking force of a country. I would prefer myself to say the force of aggression because, as was rightly pointed out by the honourable delegate of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the striking forces may be expended in a counter-offensive in the case of a country being attacked. In that case, a country cannot be prevented from providing itself with the necessary resources to make it as powerful as possible. But the power of aggression, the possibility a country may have of hurling immediately against another country and without recourse to the League of Nations a combination of land and sea forces, constitutes one of our essential preoccupations.
Whatever may be the possibilities of rapidly utilising forces, there should, however, be no confusion between the home forces which are, if I may so put it, on the spot, and the overseas effective, whatever may be the distance of sea which separates them. The former are effective immediately available, with the colours, incorporated, ready to be off the mark at any moment, whereas the others have to be transported across the sea. And here it is that we again encounter the question of the inevitable interdependence of the three forms of armaments, for it must be recognised that the value of these forces depends on another great question, the freedom of the seas. No doubt overseas effective may be utilised for aggression like home effective, but with this difference — that they must cross the sea. This is, after all, somewhat more difficult than to start from their own frontiers to invade a neighbouring country, if such was the intention of the hypothetical country we are considering in our discussions.

For these three reasons, it is essential to establish a distinction. With your permission, we shall now consider whether it is possible to make such a differentiation.

The objections raised by the United States delegate were due to a confusion, which is natural but which should be guarded against, between that which we shall have to limit and that which would be available on mobilisation. General de Marinis rightly pointed out that, in case of mobilisation, there is no longer any distinction between home and overseas forces. The countries concerned then make use of whatever forces they have. If General de Marinis will allow me very respectfully to say so, I think that, in the event of a fresh war, the situation might be somewhat different from that of the last war and that the colonial effective might act wisely in staying in the colonies themselves, for it might not be possible to utilise them so easily. Indeed, this might perhaps prove the most vulnerable point of nations possessing colonies.

We must therefore agree that, in the event of mobilisation, an unknown factor arises and this is why, whenever you speak of the limitation of mobilisable forces, we reply that it is impossible. Mr. Gibson's objection disappears if we admit this fundamental distinction, i.e., if we admit that what we are limiting is permanent peace-time armaments.

Viscount Cecil raised objections of a practical nature relating particularly to the special position of the colonial and home forces of the British Empire. We agree with him that there are certain difficulties, but I do not think they are insuperable, for, when I open the Armaments Yearbook of the League, I find that Great Britain has given figures of her forces in the clearest possible manner on the basis of this distinction. It is true that the delegate of the British Empire has stated that he can accept no undertakings for the future with regard to what is indicated as being the existing situation, for his Government may be led to modify the distribution of forces. I am convinced, that, of whatever of our limitations — since the total figure cannot be changed without applying to the Council of the League, which is the very basis of an international Convention and its principal advantage — I am convinced, I repeat, that it will often be necessary to notify the League of Nations of modifications which have had to be made in the composition of the total figure. As the figures concerning the home armies and the colonial effective are only valuable as an indication, and as the contractual undertaking refers to the total figure, while the distribution is rather a matter of administration, such modifications in the Convention may perfectly well be permitted; and, at any rate, we shall at least have the advantage of having set out from a clear conception and not from a final general figure comprising factors differing in quality, origin, nature and position.

I should like to add that, whatever may be the Commission's opinion on this question, it will never be able to prevent a country, when indicating the effective it judges necessary for its security, from making this distinction, as it will be one of the factors of its justification for the forces claimed. But in order to bring our work to a practical conclusion, to draw up an effective type of draft Convention, to have a clear view of the situation and be able subsequently to verify what has been agreed upon, it will be advisable to adopt this distinction as far as may be possible and subject to modifications which may be notified when the Convention is in force, because this distinction undoubtedly corresponds to a reality in the case of all countries possessing colonies.

General de Marinis (Italy). — I should like to thank M. Paul-Boncour most cordially for the explanations he has given me and I hope we shall be able to reach an agreement.

I should also like to congratulate him on his observations regarding the possible use of colonial forces in a future war. But I remain of the opinion that countries possessing colonies in the neighbourhood of the metropolis will find it to their interest to use their colonial forces for the defence of their home territory.

I should like also to revert to the idea which seemed to me to be implied in M. Paul-Boncour's remarks, viz., that he understands the concern of certain countries which have colonial forces belonging to other countries in the vicinity of their home territory. I share this view. Countries placed in this situation are justified in taking into account the forces which exist in these colonies, which may be used as a striking force, or, if you prefer it, for aggression. It may even happen that the colonies may be nearer a given country than the home territory. I therefore note that M. Paul-Boncour seems to be in agreement with me on this point.

M. Paul-Boncour put forward two reasons in favour of the distinction he has proposed: (1) clearness — and he even quoted a great Frenchman to the effect that, to solve a difficulty
you should divide it into its component parts; (2) the justification of claims for effectives.

I myself have made three proposals and, with your permission, I shall repeat them.

The first is that home forces should also include overseas forces which are stationed in an area so defined that the majority of these overseas forces can come into action at the same time or practically the same time as the home forces.

This proposal is not very far removed from M. Paul-Boncour's views, but, as I have said, I am prepared to accept any other text based on the same principle.

My second proposal was to divide colonial forces into two categories according to the distance of the colonies from the home country.

I think that this proposal, too, may meet with M. Paul-Boncour's approval.

Lastly, my third proposal was to include in a single category — as the French draft proposes — all the colonial forces, but to fix separately the maximum forces to be stationed in each colony.

M. Paul-Boncour has invoked the need for clearness and of providing every facility for substantiating claims for effectives. By indicating the forces which each colony may possess, both these conditions will be fulfilled.

I hope that my proposal will be accepted by M. Paul-Boncour and I am even prepared to introduce a certain degree of elasticity into this system, i.e., to agree that each colony should be allowed to modify, within the limits to be laid down the effectives it requires, on condition that the maximum forces assigned to all the colonies should not be exceeded. Each country will have the right to modify these forces, while remaining within certain limits to be fixed by the Commission or by the Conference.

M. Rutgers (Netherlands). — The Netherlands delegation is in agreement with the draft of the French delegation which provides for the separate limitation of the maximum home forces and overseas forces.

The reasons given by the majority of countries to justify the maximum of their home forces and overseas forces will be entirely different. We therefore adhere to the opinion expressed by the Netherlands delegation in Sub-Commission A to the effect that these forces should be limited separately.

It must be recognised that Viscount Cecil's observations are partly justified. The Netherlands, for example, have a colonial army entirely separate from the home army; for various reasons and chiefly on account of the distance, our colonial army cannot draw upon the home army for reinforcements. Great Britain's position is different. The British home forces constitute a reservoir for the overseas territories, which regularly draw upon it for the reinforcements they require. In the case of our country, the total maximum of our forces is constituted by simply adding together the home forces and the colonial forces, which are not interchangeable. From what Viscount Cecil has just said, I gather that, in the case of Great Britain, the maximum of the colonial forces corresponds to the minimum of her home forces and vice versa.

This difficulty has, however, been already considered by Sub-Commission A, which unanimously recognised that it would be preferable to adopt the method of separate limitation. Sub-Commission A's report contains the following paragraph:

"While sufficiently detailed to be efficacious and to cover all the elements to which it is applicable, this method, provided it is applied in combination with the first, leaves the States perfectly free to organise their home military effectives, on the one hand, and their overseas effectives, on the other, as may best suit their requirements, the latter varying particularly in the case of States with the responsibility of territories not yet completely pacified."

Countries should be allowed to organise their forces as may best suit their requirements. This result will be achieved by combining separate limitation with the method of the limitation of total effectives.

I found some echo of this idea of a combined method in M. Paul-Boncour's speech, but there is no provision of the kind in the French draft. The latter confines itself to limiting separately the overseas and home forces and contains no clause making it allowable to reach the maximum of colonial forces while remaining below the maximum for the home forces.

If Viscount Cecil maintains his objections, it would be well to introduce a clause allowing States to exceed the maximum of colonial forces mentioned in the schedule while remaining at the same time and to the same extent below the maximum provided for the home forces. This, I think, is in accordance with the views of the French delegation and of Sub-Commission A.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I want, in the first place, to thank M. Paul-Boncour very much for his speech, which met to a very large extent, if not altogether, the difficulties which I felt about the proposal as it originally stood. As I understand it, his broad proposal is this: limitation of the total forces — home and overseas. Secondly, a statement of how much of those forces is required for home defence and how much for overseas defence. Thirdly, he has a proposition that, in some way or another, some notification should be given to the
League of Nations if there is a variation of it, an important variation between these two categories of home defence and overseas defence.

As to the first two proposals, I am entirely in accord with the limitation of the total forces and with the statement of what are required for home defence and what are required for overseas defence.

With regard to the third, the precautionary notification to the League of Nations, I should like personally, before expressing a final opinion as to the practicability of that, to see exactly how it could be done. I can conceive that it might not be a very wise thing, if you were sending additional forces to a disturbed country, really in the nature of a police force, to advertise to the world that you were doing so. It might indeed cause the very trouble that you were seeking to avoid. I have seen instances of that in the past. Therefore I should like to see exactly what it is that is proposed.

My practical suggestion was this, that, having got, as I think we have got, very near agreement, it would perhaps be better now to postpone the final stages of this discussion until we see the re-modelled proposals which the French delegation is prepared to make, when I hope we shall find that we are all in agreement.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France). — I have been asked certain very definite questions. It is my duty to reply to them. This is my excuse for once more asking to speak.

General de Marinis has asked me a somewhat delicate question. I understood from what my colleague said that, in his opinion, the existence in neighbouring colonies of forces of another country was a factor which should be taken into account and a justification of the forces which might be proposed.

I repeat, we are not now dealing with the strength of the armed forces; that is for the Conference. You ask my views. I think that, indeed, that is one of the factors that must be taken into account, along with many others. When nations comply with Article 8 by stating the figures in respect of armed forces, material and armaments which they regard as the minimum requirements of their national security, it is certain that a nation which is close to colonies in which more or less considerable forces might be stationed will take them into account. In the same way, a nation close to another country possessing extensive industrial plant which it lacked itself would obviously take account of the need for providing for its mobilisation. The same would apply to a nation exposed to attack from a naval power which might cut off all its supplies.

Due weight will be given to all these considerations.

But General de Marinis will perhaps allow me to point out that anxiety cannot be on one side only. Of course, we are talking in the abstract; we are taking a hypothetical case. There are two nations — and I shall not even say nations A and B because it might be thought that A was Germany (Allemagne) and B was Belgium. We are talking of any two nations X and Y. Nation X is very near Z and the latter has a colony in which there are armed forces. X is alarmed by this. I am right now in a position to take account of the fact when estimating its armed forces. But may I put it to you that nation X, at exactly the same distance from Z's colony as Z's colony is from X. Therefore, the point may be raised that armed forces sufficient to meet aggression should be kept in that colony.

Anxiety, therefore, cannot be on one side only. Account should be taken of both sides of these questions; we are agreed on that.

The second question was whether the French delegation would consider something much simpler than what you were asking, for you are going at once to extremes. In fact, whereas I only asked for a single general limitation on the one hand of home and on the other of colonial forces, you are asking me: "Would you allow limitation of armed forces separately in respect of each colony?" I do not ask as much as that. The clearer and more definite things are, the better I shall be pleased, but I nevertheless desired to remain within the bounds of practical possibility. I will explain the difficulty which arises. Why, in the case of certain nations, is it possible to distinguish between home and colonial forces? Because they are entirely distinct. I am in a position to state that, in the scheme for military reorganisation at present under discussion in my country, the two armies are to be regarded as entirely distinct, but this has not hitherto been the case. I am therefore in a position to make this distinction in an international undertaking. But can I, in the same international undertaking and for the whole duration of the Convention, make a limitation in respect of each colony separately? I do not think that any country which possesses colonies could reply sincerely in the affirmative.

I am prepared to accept Viscount Cecil's suggestion to examine, at the beginning of the afternoon meeting, a text which I think can be drawn up and on which we might agree. And, in so doing, I reply to the delegate of the Netherlands. The suggestion which he has brought forward is one which it is not for us to make in the tables which we lay before the Conference, for as I said just now, our armies are organised on entirely different systems. But we cannot impose a system of army organisation on any country because that system happens to be our own. If countries have another idea as to the most suitable system, it is natural that they should desire that this particular characteristic of their armies should be indicated in the Convention. For instance, if the Netherlands propose a more elastic system which would make it possible for armed forces to be transferred from one army to the other on condition that notice be given to the League of Nations or to any other permanent body entrusted with the task of supervising the application of the Convention, while the general maximum is maintained, I am quite ready to accept that. I accept anything on those lines which may bring about modifications or make the Convention less rigid.

In conclusion, I think that it is our duty to find a formula which is sufficiently elastic and which embodies an agreement which I believe has been practically achieved and which it will be well to put on record until such time as we are able to put forward a definite draft.
General de Marinis (Italy). — In order to give the various delegations who have just explained their point of view an opportunity of arriving at an agreement, I suggest that we should not meet this afternoon. The questions which have just been discussed are of quite special importance. The replies which each of us must give to them involve great responsibility, and we shall have to consult our experts.

The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — I agree with General de Marinis' proposal. We are now working at such a speed that I have found it impossible to consult with my experts or to give sufficient consideration to the opinions expressed by the various delegations.

The President. — Then this afternoon's plenary meeting will not take place, and delegations which attach special importance to the questions discussed this morning will meet at 4 p.m. to exchange opinions and prepare a text.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

TENTH PUBLIC MEETING.

Held at Geneva on Wednesday, March 30th, 1927, at 10.30 a.m.

President: M. Loudon (Netherlands).

20. Examination of the Synoptic Analysis. Effectives. Points 6 and 7 (continuation).

The President. — Yesterday we started to consider Point 7, and during the afternoon and this morning the delegates most nearly concerned in this question have been engaged in conversations which, although not yet concluded, are well advanced. I think the simplest thing would be to continue this conversation in the Commission.

General de Marinis (Italy). — I think that it would be easier to reach an agreement by continuing the discussion in a small committee, the result of this exchange of views being then submitted to the Commission. In this way we could gain time, particularly as we are approaching agreement.

M. de Brouckère (Belgium). — Everyone will naturally agree to any measures which may be necessary in order that the discussion may be brought to a rapid conclusion and may proceed under conditions most convenient and advantageous to all the delegates. I suggest, however, that our Commission cannot very well hand over this question until it has formed a sub-committee; so far, it has simply been decided that, in the intervals between meetings, a number of delegates should meet unofficially. If, therefore, it is desired that this question should not yet be publicly discussed, it will be necessary to appoint a sub-committee. This would be a delicate matter, and we should risk forming a rather large committee. I doubt whether our experience is such as to make this procedure the most speedy. From the explanations given at the public meetings and in private conversations, I think that, as General de Marinis has just said, we have very nearly reached an agreement. All that now remains is to remove a few slight misunderstandings. Experience has shown that, in the cordial atmosphere of this commission and in the presence of the public, which is an interested party, this agreement is generally fairly easily obtained. I therefore propose that we follow this happy tradition and continue the discussion with all possible frankness and friendliness.

Count Bernstorff (Germany). — If it is decided that the discussion is to be continued here in the Commission, I venture to suggest that we are told what agreement it is which is being discussed. My delegation is particularly anxious to know this, as it may have certain observations to make. It cannot make them at present, as it does not know what agreement is under discussion.

The President. — The text which has served as a basis of discussion is the following, which would be added to Article 1 of the French draft:

“Nevertheless, and subject to the reservation that the total of the forces in service in the home country and in the overseas territories shall not exceed the total effectives laid down in Table I and II, and that the total of such of these forces as may be stationed in the home country shall not exceed a maximum laid down in Table II a, each of the High Contracting Parties shall, if the conditions of its security so require, be entitled to modify the distribution of the said forces as between the home country and its overseas territories.

“Any modifications which may be made in this distribution will appear from the annual returns of information the institution of which has been provided for in Article 5 above.”

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I feel to some extent apologetic for bringing this matter again before the Preparatory Commission, because I really thought we were agreed as to the substance of it. I may have been mistaken, but I thought we were agreed. Personally, I should have no great difficulty in agreeing to almost any of the formulae proposed. I will
read to the Commission the points on which, as I understand it, we were agreed, and my colleagues will tell me whether I am right or wrong in that statement.

I thought we were agreed on five proposals:

1. That the total effectives (home and overseas) shall be stated and limited. That is to say, the total complete land forces of the country.

2. That the total effectives stationed in the home country shall also be limited. That is to say, you are not to take colonial troops out of the total limit and increase the number of existing forces in the home country, the object, of course, being, since the whole of our work is to limit the attacking forces of the high contracting parties, that you are not suddenly to increase the attacking strength of the home country by bringing back colonial forces and stationing them at home.

3. That the overseas troops shall not be limited. That was the point which I ventured to make in the Commission before. It is impossible in our Empire to have so rigid a system as to limit the number of troops you may have to send overseas in order to deal with local troubles.

4. That there shall be a statement distinguishing between the troops belonging to the home and colonial army stationed at home. That is not a point which affects the British Government at all, because there is no distinction in Great Britain between the home and colonial armies other than the distinction between the home and the Indian army, and no part of the Indian army is ever stationed at home. It is always stationed in India, and is only an Indian army as long as it is stationed in India.

5. That the question of the air and sea forces is postponed until we reach the parts of the Convention dealing with them. That was a previous decision of the Commission.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France). — I should like to call the attention of the Committee to the point of departure of this discussion.

We started with a text proposed by the French delegation for the limitation of effectives. That proposal was that limitation should be applied by means of two tables: Table I, Home Forces, and Table II, Colonial Forces.

What was the justification for this distinction?

I explained that yesterday and I will not repeat my arguments to-day, but I may sum them up briefly in an accessible form and one which I hope will be welcome to all my colleagues, as follows: In the matter of limitation, what we have to aim at is clearness and the means of ensuring that the limitation will be adhered to.

Another point which I mentioned yesterday was that, when it came to fixing effectives, the different States would have to substantiate their claims before the Conference, and it is desirable that the justification for their demands should appear in the arrangement of the tables proposed.

Among the various claims which will be put forward by States at the Conference in regard to their effectives, one will clearly be based, in the case of a few countries, upon the possession of colonies and therefore upon the need of defending them.

All States require forces for the defence of their territory. It is therefore important to distinguish those forces organised for the sole purpose of defending the home territory from all others, and thus we get Table I.

Some countries own colonies and for this reason will require effectives for their defence. Here, too, a distinction must undoubtedly be made between the two kinds of effectives; hence Table II.

At this point, the British and Italian delegates raised certain objections.

The British delegate's objection was that not all army organisations permit of so clear a distinction. I would reply to that objection that, as regards those countries, I am quite prepared to seek a formula sufficiently elastic to enable effectives to be transferred from one category to the other. I would emphasise, however, that no such request emanates from the French delegation. France is on the point of passing laws on military reorganisation the object of which is to establish a clear distinction between colonial forces and home forces. In order, however, to meet the objections of my colleagues and to take account of the special organisation of certain armies, I repeat that I am perfectly willing to seek an elastic formula such as is proposed in the text which was read to you this morning.

I will now turn to the preoccupations of the Italian delegate. He pointed out that, in Table II, you include among the troops intended for the defence of the colonies not only the troops stationed in those colonies but also the reinforcements intended for their relief — a particularly important factor in colonial forces. These reinforcements may be stationed in the home territory, but, if they are, the result is, as the Italian delegate added, that your home forces for the defence of the home territory (Table I) will be at all times increased by that part of the colonial army which is intended for reinforcements and which is stationed in the home country.

I am quite as willing to meet the wishes of the Italian delegate as I was just now to make a concession to the British delegate. A special Table II (a) could show what proportion of the colonial forces, shown in their entirety in Table II, is stationed in the home territory, a certain limit being set which must not be exceeded.

I imagine that these proposals will meet the difficulties of all members of the Commission.
General de MARINIS (Italy). — The points upon which we are agreed have been clearly stated by Lord Cecil, and I fully endorse what he has said. The arguments employed in the discussion have just been set forth by M. Paul-Boncour.

It was I who requested that the maximum forces which may be stationed in the home country should be fixed. The French delegate has supported my proposal and I am grateful to him.

I should now like to explain to the members of the Commission why I urged that the maximum number of troops to be stationed in the home country should be fixed. The reason seems to me obvious. When a country has troops in its home territory — whether these are home forces or forces intended to relieve the colonial army — it is obvious that, if necessary, that country will employ all these troops, and it is only right that a neighbouring country, when calculating the forces it requires for its defence, should take account of all the troops which are stationed in its neighbour’s territory.

If this maximum is fixed, it is understood that the home country may at any time send troops to the colonies to increase the latter’s forces, but that a country may not be allowed to send colonial troops to the home country when the maximum number of troops which may be stationed in the home country has been reached. That seems to me obvious, and it meets our reasonable objections, which, I gratefully repeat, were appreciated by my French colleague.

M. SATO (Japan). — I have not taken part in this discussion because there are certain points which I have not yet been able to settle with my Government. I must, therefore, Mr. President, reserve my right to discuss this matter again, if necessary, on the Second Reading, whatever conclusions may be reached as the result of the conversations between delegates yesterday and this morning.

Viscount CECEL (British Empire). — I think it is extremely natural that M. Paul-Boncour should look at this matter from the point of view of his original proposition and how it has been modified as the result of discussion. I am quite sure that, if I had been in his place, I should have done the same. But I am not sure that that is the best way of approaching the subject now; because, after all, it is not so much a question of what this or that delegation originally proposed as it is of what the Commission as a whole will decide to be the best way of dealing with the subject. I did not hear from M. Paul-Boncour any dispute as to the points I suggested were agreed, and I do not think there is any dispute.

Let us go back to the purpose for which we are engaged, namely, as we are now all agreed, the limitation of the power of aggression of the high contracting parties. Evidently the first prudent thing when you are dealing with the land forces is to limit their total effect. Secondly, it seems very desirable that the forces stationed actually in the home country, and which are therefore those which can become a threat to the neighbours of that country, should also be limited. Beyond that, when the country has a colonial or overseas possession, there are troops which are stationed in very distant parts of the world, some of which are near to the home country, but the greater part probably at some distance. For the reasons which I ventured to give the Commission before, it is very difficult to say with respect to those distant possessions whether you can limit and fix the number of troops which it may be necessary for local reasons to have in those countries. Therefore it does seem necessary to us that there should be a certain liberty with regard to those countries. Those three points I believe everyone, as far as I know, is agreed upon.

The real difference of opinion, if there is one, comes on the method of presentation in the Convention, because there are countries which have got a colonial army and a home army distinct, and there are countries which have not got any distinction between the two. The countries with a home army and a colonial army distinct are very anxious that, in presenting their case for the numbers which they claim to be allowed, they should be in a position to say: True, we have stationed at home so many hundred thousand men, or whatever it may be; but remember that a proportion of those are not stationed there for home purposes but are really reinforcements which can be moved, and are moved when necessary, to the colonies; they are not really part of the home defence force, and therefore, when you are considering what ought to be allowed to us, you must bear in mind that a proportion of the forces stationed in our country are colonial and a portion are stationed there for home defence. I think that’s a reasonable preoccupation. I am not certain whether it is really, strictly speaking, a part of this Convention and is not really part of the argument which will be put forward by the various countries in justification of the quota that they ask for and that they claim in the final Conference; but, as far as I am concerned, I am quite ready to meet that point of view too, and to have stated in some table not only the home forces (the forces stationed at home) but a division of those forces into those that belong to the home defence and those that really belong to colonial defence. I think that it is quite a reasonable demand that that should be stated.

It depends on how you look at it. I confess that to me the logical order of the thing is to have, first, a statement of the total force; secondly, of the force stationed at home. Those two would be limited, and then, to make the thing complete, you have a table saying the rest of the troops are stationed abroad. That would be the third thing. Then, if you like, you can add a fourth table, in which you say that the troops stationed at home are to be divided into the colonial troops and the metropolitan troops — that there are so many divisions which are really colonial troops and so many divisions which belong to the home defence. I am quite content for that to be done. To my mind, I am bound to say it makes very little difference how you present it, and I should be quite content to have the presentation made in the way which I understand the French delegation would prefer, or the way in which it would be made by the Italian delegation; but I do think it would be a very useful step.
as we have got to this point, if we could agree as to what has been agreed. Then I cannot
believe that reasonable persons will not easily arrive at a method of presentation of that
agreement, and that is why I ventured to write down on paper these four propositions which
I think are agreed, and I will again ask that they shall be read, and I venture to ask my
colleagues very respectfully whether we are really agreed upon those four propositions, because,
if so, there cannot be any great difficulty in presenting these propositions in the form of a draft.

I will read these proposals:

1. That the total effectives (home and overseas) shall be stated and limited;
2. That the total effectives stationed in the home country shall also be limited;
3. That the overseas forces shall not be limited;
4. That there shall be a statement distinguishing between the troops belonging
to the home and colonial army stationed at home.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France). — I am sorry to have to revert once more to my original
point of view. If Viscount Cecil's system is adopted, what supervision will be exercised by
the League of Nations?

Does Viscount Cecil accept that, if difficulties arose in the colonies, a colonial Power,
desiring to increase its forces, should approach the League by an extended application of
Article 8 and ask for such increase?

From our recent conversations I gathered that he did not accept that view, as I can very
well understand. Where, then, will be the supervision by the League?

If you start with a total figure including both troops intended for home defence and colo-
nial troops, it is only necessary for colonial difficulties to arise for you to increase that maximum
which it is the very object of the Convention to fix and which Article 8 of the Covenant is
designed to maintain.

That being so, I do not see why any opposition is made to the distinction asked for by
the French delegation, which, with the concession of three tables in place of two, will be no
obstacle to any State. In the first place, this distinction will enable countries concerned
for the interests of general security and mutual confidence between States Members of the
League to distinguish their forces for home defence from their colonial forces, and, in the second
place, it will ensure more effective supervision by the League of Nations.

I do not see why such a proposal should not be acceptable to all.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — May I ask M. Paul-Boncour which of these four
propositions he disagrees with?

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France). — Viscount Cecil asks what point we are not agreed on.
My reply is, on the main point, that is to say, the question of limitations; there is one missing
which, to my mind, is the most important one, namely, the limitation of the home forces.
It is essential in my opinion, because that is the one which affects the application of Article 8.

I will again read the text before us:

"It is agreed:
"1. That the total effectives (home and overseas) shall be stated and limited;
"2. That the total effectives stationed in the home country shall also be limited:
including both home forces and troops intended for overseas reinforcements;
"3. That the overseas forces shall not be limited;
"4. That there shall be a statement distinguishing between the troops belonging
to the home and colonial army stationed at home."

But is distinction equivalent to limitation? What I am concerned with is the effective
operation of Article 8. If you show in a table — which, to my mind, should be the first
table, because I consider it to be the most important one — the forces devoted by a country
to the defence of its territory and which are called home forces, when this country wishes to
increase its forces it will be obliged to apply to the League of Nations and justify its demand
for an increase by pointing to the armaments of another country or on some other ground.
If, on the other hand, you start by lumping together the troops intended for the defence of the
country and those intended for colonial reinforcements — as I read in your draft, Viscount
Cecil which, by the way, you confirmed verbally a few moments ago, that the increase in
colonial troops is not a matter for the League of Nations — then I say that Article 8 will no
longer be operative.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — It is evident that there is an extraordinary difficulty
in understanding this thing, but it seems to me so simple that I cannot understand the difficulty.
Of course, I agree with M. Paul-Boncour. I thought I was only stating in those propositions
what we were all agreed upon, and I entirely agree with him. Of course, you have got to
limit the metropolitan forces of the country, only there does seem to be a little distinction
between what we mean by metropolitan forces. I mean by metropolitan forces all those that
are stationed in the metropolitan country and can be used for the purposes of aggression from
that country. That is the only sensible meaning to it, I should have thought, and that is
the thing that ought to be limited, it seems to me. But you may perfectly well adopt that
and say the forces stationed in a metropolitan country and the forces that ought to be limited
in the interest of preventing aggression in fact consist partly of forces which are ultimately
destined for the colonies and only, so to speak, accidentally in the metropolitan country. I
think that is a perfectly legitimate thing to have stated, but the essential thing is to have the
forces actually stationed in the metropolitan country limited. Without that there is no
control by the League of Nations. That is the essential thing to control. I think it is desirable
to control in addition the total armed forces of the country, but that is, I agree, a secondary
matter from the point of view of preventing aggression. I do not attach any importance to
the order in which those propositions are stated. By all means state them in any order
you wish; put the fourth first and the second third, or anything you like. Those four
propositions seem to mean the propositions which are essential and on which we were agreed,
namely: limitation of total forces; limitation of forces stationed in the metropolitan country;
distinction, if you like, between the forces stationed in the metropolitan country — distinction
between those that are really organised for home defence and those organised for purposes
of colonial defence; and that is. Those are the three essential things. The troops destined
for the colonies, you may state again, but, of course, they result from subtracting those that
are stationed in the metropolitan country from the total strength of the country. That is
a smaller matter. I do not see what is the difference between us as to what that agreement was,
but the whole question is how you are to put it, and really I do not think
we ought to be delayed any length of time on a matter which is only a question of presentation.
So far as I am concerned, I agree to anything.

M. de BROUCKÈRE (Belgium). — I am somewhat embarrassed at intervening in this
discussion, which seems to me to turn on the very simplest of issues. To begin with, I must
say that, whatever solution is arrived at, it is a matter of indifference to my country. We have
a home army which by our constitution cannot serve abroad; we have an army of natives
which has never served and never will serve in Europe; we did not even employ it during
the war. So far as we are concerned, the question is as simple as it can be. On the one hand,
we have the home army, and on the other, the colonial army; and there is no possibility of
confusion.

For more important Powers the question seems more difficult. I have endeavoured to
follow the debate attentively and to ascertain the exact point on which agreement cannot be
reached. I must admit that I have not yet succeeded. Everyone seems to be agreed on the
fact that it is essential to limit the number of home forces — in the sense attributed to the
word by the French delegation — and also the number of colonial troops. Why is it necessary
to limit both these numbers? Because, administratively, it is easy, clear and simple,
and because the numbers reported by Governments are reflected in their budgets, and that side
of the question is extremely important from the point of view of clearness and publicity.

Viscount Cecil suggests that the total of these two figures should be given. If the
component parts are given separately, I imagine that the Intelligence Service of the General
Staffs is sufficiently well organised to be able to ascertain the total. If, however, as suggested
by Viscount Cecil, the total and one of the parts were given, the operation would be a little
more difficult, as it would be necessary to subtract, but the result could still be found.

There now remains a third factor, which is obviously of great importance. If a distinction
is necessary, when possible, between home forces and colonial forces, for reasons of accuracy
and administrative convenience, the maximum number of troops which may be collected in the
home territory should also be shown, because it is obvious that they are at the disposal of the
Government, and that it may make use of them all for defensive or aggressive operations.
Consequently, it is necessary that each country should know the total forces which it has
to take into account when preparing its counter-proposals.

But everyone is agreed on the necessity for stating this total. It seems therefore that
there only remain two points to be discussed, of which one is important: that is the objection
which Viscount Cecil raised to this twofold table showing the home forces and colonial forces
separately.

On this point I think that, whenever this twofold table can be compiled, it should be sent
in, to throw more light on the subject; but it cannot be denied that in some countries, espe-
cially in the British Empire, it is difficult to make this distinction. It may be a question of
finding the right formula. M. Paul-Boncour, however, has already said that he was willing
to seek such a formula, and I do not think that this will be an impossible difficulty. If a number of
Powers definitely state that they cannot show Tables I and II separately, they might be
authorised, in certain circumstances, to combine them in one table. This point would then
be settled.

There would then remain a second point which has already been discussed at some length.
Should the two tables for home forces and colonial forces be shown first, and followed by
a table called II (a) comprising the total forces which may be stationed in the home territory;
or should this latter figure be shown first and Tables I and II come afterwards? If anyone
else wishes to speak on this weighty matter, I will willingly give up my turn. I cannot see
that it is very important. If we are unable to agree, we might settle the point by drawing lots.