much whether such limitation is acceptable as whether it is practicable, I venture to submit a few technical comments from the German delegation as a contribution to the discussion.

The German delegation is of the opinion that, if the naval armaments of a country are to be limited, it is not sufficient to confine limitation to floating material. This view was expressed in Sub-Commission A by a number of delegations. If limitation did not include naval personnel, a country might be able to keep up an unlimited naval force in time of peace, in the form of marines, coastal artillery regiments, expeditionary forces, coastal defence regiments, etc. Moreover, given an unlimited marine personnel, a country would be able not only to equip, in time of peace, the full aggregate tonnage allotted to it, but further, as soon as war broke out, to man with "militarily" trained personnel all the auxiliary cruisers at its disposal, as well as small auxiliary craft. It should be noted that a country whose industry is highly developed can build a considerable number of submarines within three months, provided that the necessary preparations have been made in time of peace, whereas submarine crews would need at least a year's training.

Hence a country whose naval personnel was not limited would also be able to add considerably to its tonnage on the outbreak of war, provided that the necessary personnel were trained and ready in time of peace. The German delegation is fully aware that the limitation of floating material — that is, tonnage — constitutes the principal factor in the limitation of naval armaments. At the same time, every country needs a certain number of men in order to maintain in commission the tonnage allotted to it. The German delegation therefore supports the view expressed by the delegate for Sweden in his speech on March 24th, in which he expressed the opinion that, in order to maintain full aggregate tonnage, limitation of personnel is necessary as well. At the same time, every country needs a certain number of personnel to handle the ships, as well as to operate the machinery. It should be noted that a country whose industry is highly developed can build a considerable number of submarines within three months, provided that the necessary preparations have been made in time of peace, whereas submarine crews would need at least a year's training.

A country faced with special difficulties arising out of its climate and geographical situation would, of course, be entitled on these grounds to claim a personnel in excess of the numbers fixed on the ratio basis.

The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — I must apologise for rising again, but I think I have reason for believing that there may be no irreconcilable differences between the points of view of the French and American delegations. If I understand M. Paul-Boncour correctly, he is above all concerned to have some provision which will render impossible any wholesale deception by concealing under the cloak of unlimited naval personnel effectives which are really intended for use on land. I think we are in complete agreement on this point; but do not we meet this difficulty by providing full publicity for numbers of naval effectives? Once we have these numbers fully published, any Government could determine from the figures any such contemplated deception, because it is very clear, once you know the composition of the navy, what effectives are really necessary for its legitimate use for manning the combatant units. If the number of naval effectives is unduly large, it will be evident that they are intended for other purposes. But how do we detect this? We come right back to the question of ships. It is only on the basis of the actual fleets taken ship by ship that we can determine whether or not the personnel is excessive. It seems to me that this is the best possible evidence that ships are, after all, the most accurate test and the final test. Indeed, I do not see how you could estimate whether your effectives are or are not excessive until you know just what the composition of the given navy is and take it ship by ship. For instance, you cannot take so many hundred thousand tons and estimate how many men are necessary for it. You have got to take so many battleships, so many cruisers, so many destroyers, and so many submarines, because there is an entirely different ratio necessary for the manning of these different ships. As I understand it, for a battleship you need one man for approximately twenty-five tons. On a destroyer it is entirely different — you need about one man for every ten tons; and on a submarine you need one man to approximately every twelve tons. So that, in order to estimate what the legitimate needs of a navy are, you must have the ship-for-ship estimate of the fleet. But, after all, it seems to me that the thing M. Paul-Boncour is getting at is one that we all want to achieve, and that is to find out whether or not there is any wholesale intended deception. I think, perhaps, on the basis of publicity, we reach that.

M. Sato (Japan). — I see no objection to postponing the discussion of this matter until Lord Cecil has received instructions from his Government. Indeed, it would be impossible to continue the debate to any purpose so long as the representative of the British Empire is not in a position to state his point of view. But, before postponing our discussion, I should like to add a few words to the statement I made this morning. I am not going to offer any concrete suggestions, but simply desire to place before you certain considerations which I would ask you to be good enough to note.

If the French proposal were to be adopted, we should have to limit naval effectives, and the result would be as follows: the Governments would send representatives to the Conference and state what effectives they require for their navies, at the same time giving the grounds for their claims. The latter would be based on the full strength of all their vessels-of-war. I wonder whether the figures would be below those of the present effectives. Personally, I think they would be above.
The number of naval effectives is necessarily limited. Page 16 of Sub-Commission A's report contains the following passage:

"Naval armaments include units the nature of which is clearly defined and the value of which diminishes with time. They employ a small personnel a portion of which is highly specialised."

In my opinion, naval personnel, then, is necessarily limited. It includes the following elements:

1. Naval crews properly so called;
2. Crews replacing the latter when temporarily ashore (either for convenience in housing or for training);
3. Personnel for the upkeep of naval material;
4. Administration staff and high command.

The numbers of all these categories are very limited, and only in exceptional cases would there be a more or less considerable surplus.

In the course of his statement this morning, M. Paul-Boncour quoted a case, during the last war, of naval effectives being employed for land operations. This is quite conceivable, but it seems to me that the troops in question were probably not regulars but naval reserves. It would be impossible, in my opinion, to maintain any considerable surplus in peace-time to be used on the land front immediately upon the outbreak of war. I should add, however, that a country can use its naval effectives on the land front in exceptional cases. I cannot quote examples from the last war, for I am neither a specialist nor a member of the forces, but I can tell you what happened during the Russo-Japanese War. At the siege of Port Arthur the imperious necessities of the situation obliged us to employ naval formations in order to bombard the well-guarded forts. Such cases might recur and I, for my part, could not undertake not to employ naval effectives for land warfare.

This was in the time of war. We now have to deal with the limitation of naval armaments in peace-time, not under war conditions.

Finally, allow me to say that I do not know whether in any country naval formations exist which could be organised in peace-time with a view to land operations. Such formations do not, at all events, exist in Japan.

But, assuming the existence of such formations, so highly developed as to constitute a menace to a neighbouring country, a State which considered its security threatened would be justified in taking this circumstance into account and guarding against the danger by increasing its effectives with the land forces. I wonder whether such a possibility need be contemplated. Assuming the possibility of such a case, the country threatened would be entitled to lay before the Conference the scheme which it regards as necessary to meet this danger. I do not know whether, in the present state of affairs, such a solution could be contemplated.

Mr. Gibson said just now that it was desirable to publish the number of naval effectives. I am of the same opinion, and I think, further, that annual statements might be furnished showing the number of naval effectives ashore. If these were such as to constitute a menace to any country, it would obviously be necessary to allow for this fact, but, if provision is made for annual statements of these effectives, the danger might be averted in advance.

Finally, I should like to say that I quoted the siege of Port Arthur simply in order to make my meaning clear. I hope my reference will not be taken to mean that Japan is contemplating a war of aggression.

M. Rutgers (Netherlands). — I do not think that the delegate of the United States has quite appreciated my argument in support of the limitation of naval personnel. I do not think that the question of fraud or deception arises. There is no deception when infantry and artillery employed for coastal defence are included in naval effectives. The same applies to landing-parties. For great naval Powers landing-parties constitute one of the principal means of bringing a war to a successful conclusion and imposing their will on the enemy.

To quote an example from military history, I might mention the Vikings, who would undoubtedly have been justified in treating as naval effectives the troops with which they invaded a large part of Europe.

Thus, I do not think that there can be said to be any deception if naval effectives include a large number of troops intended for service ashore. At most, one could say that the limitation of land effectives would become inoperative.

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The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — I must thank the honourable delegate for the Netherlands for calling my attention to my omission to discuss that phase of the question. I had not overlooked it, but I had obviously confined myself to one small part of the problem, the sort of entirely legitimate force which will be required for full publicity. I was merely trying to focus our attention on one small phase of the problem.
The President. — This discussion cannot lead to any definite result since Lord Cecil, in the absence of instructions from his Government, cannot give us his opinion. I propose that the discussion be adjourned.

May I ask General de Marinis to let us have the text of his proposal, in order that the discussion may be resumed in a day or two.

The examination of Point 1 was adjourned.


The High Contracting Parties agree to limit to the figures laid down in Annex:

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<th>British draft.</th>
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<td>. . . the number and tonnage of all the ships in each class.</td>
<td>. . . the sum of the individual tonnage of all vessels capable of being employed as combatant units and regarded as vessels of war within the meaning of the present Treaty; each of the Contracting Powers shall be free to distribute and allocate this total tonnage as may be best for the purpose of security and the defence of its national interests.</td>
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Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I desire to offer a few observations in explanation of the system of naval limitation which the British Government has put forward. I remember that, when I had the honour of addressing this Commission on a military question — on the limitation of military effective — I explained that this was a matter which did not directly affect us, since our security was not bound up primarily with the strength of our land army. But of course, when you come to deal with naval questions, the matter is entirely different and there I cannot pretend to be disinterested in the matter. The whole existence of the British Empire depends upon the security of its communications and the freedom of its commerce, and those two considerations, apart from others, make it obvious that any question of fleet limitation is a matter of the highest possible importance to us, and when we try to put in force, as a Member of the League of Nations, the obligations to put forward schemes for the reduction of our naval armaments to the lowest possible consistent with national safety, we have, of course, to consider very carefully any propositions which deal with the limitation and reduction of the fleet. The object of these limitations and the object of our whole proceedings here is to seek to reduce the danger of a sudden aggression. That is the first and chief object, but we also seek to reduce the burden of the competition and the danger of the competition of armaments, and those objects are just as true with regard to reduction of navies as of armies. In both cases, we must keep before our minds those objects, the reduction of the power of sudden aggression and the reduction of the burden of the competition of armaments. In approaching this subject, we have to consider what is the best and most effective method by which this object can be achieved as far as the navy is concerned. Now, I observe that, in the discussion of this subject, and in the proposals that are before this Commission, there is, as on many other subjects in connection with the limitation and reduction of armaments, a very large measure of agreement. To begin with, we are all agreed that by far the most important method of limitation of fleets is the limitation of tonnage of the actual ships. There we are all agreed. Judging by the two schemes before this Commission, we are further agreed that, to some extent, the calibre of the large guns on these ships should be limited — that that is an essential element in the strength of the fleet. I am not sure whether we are agreed as to the limitation of the calibre of torpedoes, but it would seem that that is not an unfair deduction from the proposition that the guns ought to be limited. Further, we are agreed, in principle at any rate, that the size of individual ships should be limited, because even in the scheme put forward by the French Government there is a limitation both of the largest gun and of the largest ship, and in the scheme put forward by the British Government there is, of course, a much more drastic and complete limitation in both of those matters. But there is one point on which there is apparently at present a difference of opinion. The British scheme provides for the limitation of the number of war-ships. The French scheme does not, and yet, to our mind, the limitation of numbers is of the very greatest importance. Just as we thought that the limitation of numbers of aircraft was also of very great importance, so we are very clearly of opinion that you cannot get a satisfactory limitation of fleets unless you also take into consideration the question of numbers, and I think anyone will see that in a moment if they consider the point. Conceive the extreme case, which will illustrate what I mean, of two fleets, one consisting of one very large battleship and the other of ten much smaller craft. It is quite clear that the battleship could not resist an attack by the ten small vessels in all directions. They could evidently be in a great number of places, whereas the battleship could only be in one; therefore, there would be no parity of force between the two.

That is an extreme case, but it is equally true right through. Anyone who studies, I venture to say, any naval war of the past will agree that numbers is an essential element — not the only element, but an essential element — in the strength of a fleet, and this is particularly true from the point of view of one aspect of naval aggression — namely, aggression on the sea-borne commerce of a country. Evidently the numbers are of immense importance. A single war-ship of a small size would be able to destroy an immense number of merchant-vessels, and therefore the number of smaller war-ships might be of vital importance to a country whose very existence depends upon being able to maintain its overseas supplies. We cannot, therefore, accept a system which disregards numbers altogether, such as the total-tonnage system, and we have a further difficulty about accepting it in that in practice it
gives no limit either to the size of ships or to the calibre of the guns. It is quite true there is
the one superior limit — the largest ships should not exceed a certain size. I will take the
size recognised in the Washington Convention — 35,000 tons. Say that no ship is to be more
than 35,000 tons or to have guns of more than 16 inches in calibre; it is evident that this
merely of that kind is practically no limit at all, because the largest guns that are manufactured
are 16-inch guns, and if you merely limit to that extent you are not limiting in any practical
degree. It is probably on this ground that I speak under correction from the naval experts present
— that is to say, that there is no great practical object in increasing the size of ships to more than 35,000
tons, and therefore a superior limit of that kind is evidently no limit at all; particularly
is it no limit for those countries which do not think it necessary to have ships and guns of that
size. They are left absolutely free, without any limit at all, to have any kind of gun and any
kind of ship they like. That seems to us to leave the matter too much at large, and we feel
that it is quite essential that, in the first place, there should be some effective limitation of
numbers, and, in the second place, that there should be an effective limitation both of the size
of ships and of the size of guns.
If it is assumed that it is desirable to limit the numbers of the fleet — and I think it very
largely turns on the question of the limitation of numbers — I do not think that a mere
limitation of the total number would be a satisfactory solution, and it would be a very
difficult thing to do. Either you would put a very large figure, in which case the limitation
would not have any particular object (that is to say, you would say so many hundred thousand
tons and take the largest figure into which those two could be divided, including a fleet of
ships of not more than 1,000 tons), or if you take a smaller figure I think it would be very
obscure; you would not obtain any very great information from it and it is possible that,
in working it out, it would not be found to be a very fair or just system.
That brings me to the conclusion which the British Government hold very strongly —
that the only fair system, the only efficient and clear system is to have in some form or another
a limitation by classes, including, that is to say, the obvious limitation of the well-known
descriptions of ships. I think there are some eight or nine which are perfectly well
stood by all naval authorities, which are used in every book of naval statistics that is printed,
whether they be publications by the League authorities, by Government authorities or by
private statisticians. I will read a list of these descriptions: battleships, cruisers, aircraft-
carriers, destroyers, torpedo-boats, submarines, sloops, mine-sweepers and river gunboats.
I think that includes the classes to be found in all textbooks dealing with the subject, and the
British proposition is that you should have your fleet divided into these classes and that each
of those classes should be limited by numbers and by the size of the ships and of the guns which
those ships can carry. That does not give complete information (to give complete information
you would have to limit every single ship, and that would be administratively and practically
impossible), but it does give you a very complete picture of the size and effectiveness of
the fleets which are so limited. There cannot be any great variation or such variation as will
produce the element of surprise of one fleet for another, because the really important thing
is to give to each State full information — as full information as possible with due regard to
what is administratively practicable — of the kind of fleets which it has to take into consider-
ation when it complies with the provision of Article 8 of the Covenant of reducing its armaments
to the lowest point consistent with its national security. If it is to carry that out practically,
it must know what kind of fleets can be brought against it in the dire event of war. That is
the essential fact that it must know, otherwise it is not really able to make preparation for its
own security, nor is it able to avoid the great evil of competition, because, unless there is a
fair amount of certainty about the fleets you have to meet, you are bound to reintroduce
competition. It may not be absolutely free competition, but competition in quality and design
of a very serious and dangerous character.
I want to correct one misapprehension which appears to me to have underlain a good deal
of the discussion which took place in Sub-Commission A. It seems to have been assumed that,
if you limit by classes, that means that you are to have the same proportion in each class,
_i.e._, that if you have one Power which has a proportion of five battleships to one, you are to
have the same proportion in every other class. That is quite untrue and is not involved in
this system at all. On the contrary, there would be full liberty for the final Conference to
take into consideration the requirements of each country and to allot to it quite different pro-
portions in the different classes. Indeed, I think it would be a very reasonable contention for
countries to put forward that, if their security did not require them to have battleships, for
instance, that would give them all the greater claim to a larger proportion of numbers of
cruisers and smaller vessels. But it does largely eliminate the element of surprise, and that
is the important point. It is no longer a matter of anxiety to the naval advisers of the various
countries as to what there is on the sea already which they may conceivably have to meet.
Unless they know that they are bound to make provision for every conceivable combination
that you can imagine, and in that case it means within the limits of the total tonnage (which
is so wide and vague as to be almost equivalent to no limit at all), you are bound to have
a recrudescence of naval competition.
That really is the broad case which the British Government put forward on behalf of
their conception of naval limitation. I said that there were two objects of our proceedings
—one to prevent aggression, the other to prevent competition. There is, of course, a
third object, which is to promote that feeling of security without which peace can never be
established, and without which we cannot hope for further advances. I hope, whatever the
consequences of our labours on this occasion may be, that further advances towards a more
complete system of reduction and limitation of armaments will be possible, and, if you are to
promote a system of security, you really must get rid of the conception of surprise as one
of the legitimate elements in war-like preparations. I am quite aware that we have got a long way to go; I am quite aware that there is in many countries a kind of worship of this fetish of secrecy, which personally I deplore to the utmost. I would like to sweep it away, to have the whole thing open and public, and I believe, if you could do that and nothing else, you would have taken perhaps the greatest step towards universal disarmament that you can take. I am all for that, and I recognise the great wisdom of the last paragraph of Article 8 of the Covenant, which provides for a full exchange of information. Alas, it has been very far from fulfilled as yet amongst the nations which are Members of the League. But this, at any rate, is an issue definitely laid before the Commission. Are you in this matter prepared, at any rate, to take a step towards openness and publicity and the absence of secrecy and surprise? That is the main case I desire to put before you, and the proposal made by the British Government is clear and has been proved in actual practice to be practicable. It avoids secrecy, it limits competition, it gives to the nations of the world a clear view of the armaments of their neighbours and of the other countries, and I cannot conceal from you the fact that the British Government attaches the greatest possible importance to the adoption of a system of this kind for the limitation of naval armaments.

The Commission rose at 1:10 p.m.

NINETEENTH PUBLIC MEETING.

Held at Geneva on Tuesday, April 5th, 1927, at 4 p.m.

President: M. LOUDON (Netherlands).

49. Examination of the Synoptic Analysis. Naval Armaments. Point 2 (continued).

M. YOVANOVITCH (Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes). — Since my country also is interested in the question of the limitation of naval armaments, and having regard to the interdependence between different types of armament, I should like to explain my Government’s attitude.

During the general discussion I stated briefly that the Serb-Croat-Slovene delegation is of opinion that the best method of limiting naval forces is the method of limitation by total tonnage.

Apart from the arguments which have already been adduced in support of that method during the general discussion and in Sub-Commission A, I desire, as the representative of a young sea Power which has only had a coast-line since the end of the last war, to point out the advantages which this method of limitation offers to such countries as mine.

These countries are unable at the moment to define their programme of naval defence, and they cannot yet be sure what means they will adopt to defend their maritime frontiers. Their naval defence depends on the development of economic factors, and their naval defensive programme depends on the length of their coastal lines of communication, the selection and development of commercial harbours, the organisation of industries, and so forth; and the method of limitation by total tonnage is the very method which will enable such countries to distribute their total tonnage among units best suited to their purpose and best adapted to meet the needs of national defence. A further reason lies in the financial capacities of these young countries, which certainly will not have sufficient funds to build large units, and will have to restrict their shipbuilding to vessels of small tonnage, clearly intended for defence — this being in harmony with the general peace policy of my country.

I have studied with great interest the arguments adduced by the advocates of limitation by classes; but, having in view the interests of our national defence and our special position, I find myself unable to agree with them. Such countries as mine would be most unfairly treated if a limitation by classes were imposed upon them which would allow them by way of compensation the empty privilege of possessing certain ships of large tonnage which in point of fact they could never dream of building.

I should like, however, to deal with one point raised by Lord Cecil, by which I was very much struck. Lord Cecil expressed the fear that limitation of total tonnage might involve an element of surprise, and in some sense lead to a fresh competition in armaments. I think that this fear could be readily dispelled if the future high contracting parties were obliged to state the exact number and types of ships which they possess within the limits of their total tonnage allotment. For the Members of the League there is a definite obligation under Article 8 of the Covenant, which states that: “the Members of the League undertake to interchange full and frank information as to the scale of their armaments, their military, naval and air programmes, and the condition of such of their industries as are adaptable to war-like purposes”.

To show the unequal results which might be produced by the adoption of total tonnage as a standard of limitation, Lord Cecil gave us an example. He said that if we had, on the one hand, one large ship and, on the other, ten small ships amounting to the same tonnage, then those ten small ships would have an advantage over the one large ship. In my opinion, this shows that the method of limitation by total tonnage has a certain elasticity which enables the parties to select the ships most suitable for their defensive needs. Moreover, it cannot be denied that the large ship will have a definite advantage owing to the long range of its guns and its radius of action.
The outcome of all this is that some countries will elect to build large ships, while others, such as my own, will prefer to build small ships, because the only point with which my country is concerned is its own security and defence.

M. PEREZ (Argentina). — The Argentine delegation has the honour to state that it accepts, with regard to the reduction and limitation of naval material, the definite views of its experts. It considers, therefore, that reduction and limitation can best be effected by the system of limitation of tonnage by classes. It agrees in this respect with the views put forward in Sub-Commission A by the experts of Great Britain, the United States, Japan and Chile.

The Argentine delegation will be very glad to submit for the consideration of its Government any compromise text by which its views could be reconciled with the views of those delegations who consider that the total-tonnage method would be the simplest means of securing the desired result.

M. COMNEN (Roumania). — I should like to thank Lord Cecil for bringing back into the discussion this idea of security, which has so far, it seems to me, been somewhat lost to sight.

It is not without deep anxiety that I venture to place before this Commission the special position of certain countries which have only quite recently obtained access to the sea, and which, owing to the vicissitudes of their history and to their financial circumstances, have not yet been able to make provision against a possible attack by sea. For such countries, any talk of reducing naval armaments might seem somewhat ironical; since their naval armaments are very small, it would amount to reducing something which is already equivalent to nil.

These countries are at the present moment preparing a minimum programme of naval armaments for the sole purpose — I would emphasise the word “sole” — of guaranteeing their security. The most that could be done in a spirit of compromise would be to suggest that they should submit to a limitation of total tonnage. You could not possibly go further, because — to be perfectly frank — if you did would you be more or less asking them to be kind enough to commit suicide.

Our experts have already explained our attitude in Sub-Commission A. After careful consideration, we have concluded that the only standard which would be acceptable is the total-tonnage method: first, because it is easy to define; secondly, because it enables the figures for different countries to be compared; and thirdly, because in our opinion it is simple, practical and equitable.

I would add that the method of limitation by total tonnage seems to us to allow of greater elasticity from our point of view. It would enable us to secure the minimum naval forces which are indispensable for our safety as we require them, as our financial position allows, and as shipping prices in the great countries where war-ships are built happen to be most advantageous.

In conclusion, gentlemen, I trust that the special position of certain countries, which I have just outlined, will receive your attention, and that no decision will be taken which would put us in the painful position of being unable, when a Convention came to be signed, to accept texts which did not harmonise with our interests.

M. ERICH (Finland). — I should like to explain briefly the view of the Finnish delegation with regard to the question of the limitation of the number and tonnage of war-ships.

In view of the special position of my country, which can only gradually form that nucleus of naval forces which is absolutely essential for its security, I shall base my argument not on the special interests of any one country but on the general interest of the States Members of the League, all of which will profit by the advantages of any limitation and reduction of armaments.

It is clear from the report of Sub-Commission A that only by appreciable concessions will the Preparatory Commission be able to overcome the differences which still subsist between different opinions and methods. Compromise is the only way to succeed. We are faced with one of the numerous questions in which important political interests are at stake, and in which compromise is highly desirable and, indeed, essential. I feel sure that the principal Powers will see the problem in the same light.

The limitation of naval armaments as regards the number and tonnage of vessels involves an important point which, being essentially political, was not dealt with by Sub-Commission A. I refer to the naval measures which would be taken under the Covenant if common action in the widest sense of the term were required, having regard to various degrees and ways in which such action could be taken under the Covenant.

It should be pointed out that Article 8 of the Covenant, by laying stress on the minimum with regard to armaments, raises not merely the question of national security but also that of the discharge of international obligations which would be imposed upon the States Members if common action were required. Now, it will be generally agreed that, in accordance with this rule, the naval forces placed at the disposal of the League would from the essential basis of any common action taken as contemplated by the Covenant. It will be remembered that the report of the Committee known as the Committee of Three, which deals with Article XX of the Covenant and has been adopted by the Council, recommends naval demonstrations as one of the measures of warning to be taken against recalcitrant States.

The importance of naval forces as a means for taking common action will be perfectly clear in the case of a Member of the League of Nations resorting to war under the conditions
laid down in Article 16 of the Covenant, or of a non-Member resorting to war against a Member in the case contemplated under Article 17. The carrying out of a blockade and the safeguarding of maritime routes and communications would be the work for which effective naval forces would be required. An important point in this connection is that the right of passage through the territory of a State Member which is not strictly concerned in hostilities, though undoubtedly recognised by the Covenant, is, as a matter of practical politics, the subject of differences of opinion, and might lead to serious difficulties; on the other hand, granted the principle of freedom of the seas, assistance and intervention undertaken by means of naval forces would not be to the same extent subject to the vicissitudes of chance and accident.

It is, of course, clearly understood that the interests of small countries demand the reduction of naval armaments as well as of other armaments. In the matter of naval forces in particular, which are extremely costly and are constantly being influenced by technical progress, these countries are generally quite unable to compete with the larger Powers, and this circumstance is calculated to aggravate the existing political and military inequality. Notwithstanding these important reasons, however, we should bear in mind the necessity of maintaining naval forces sufficient for the discharge, if required, of the obligations which are imposed by the Covenant. It is obvious that a naval demonstration in accordance with Article 11 of the Covenant, if it is to be effective — and, a fortiori, the application of the main sanctions of Article 16 — requires the employment of considerable naval forces such as only the great naval Powers can maintain.

While examining the technical views advanced by Sub-Commission A by which the best results in this direction can be obtained, the Preparatory Commission should take account of the special political and practical considerations which cannot be ignored in this connection, and which lead the small States, however fully convinced they may be of the necessity of reducing armaments, to consider the serious problem of naval armaments quite frankly and without prejudice.

M. SATO (Japan). — For the moment, I propose merely to lay before the Commission my Government's views as to the method of limiting war material. I have nothing new to say, for my Government upholds the views expressed by the Japanese experts in Sub-Commission A.

I should like, however, to outline briefly the technical, economic and political arguments on which our opinion is based.

I will begin with the French draft. That draft does not even draw a distinction between surface ships and submarines, which, from a military point of view, should be clearly distinguished. There is another disadvantage from the military point of view: aircraft-carriers are designed to carry aircraft and to be used as bases for air operations; if, therefore, a clear distinction were not made in the case of this class of ships, it would be impossible accurately to gauge the extent of the limitation undertaken in the air forces attached to the navy and distributed among its various branches. There would be a gain in clearness if a distinction were established between different classes of ships.

Furthermore, the cost per ton of constructing submarines is about double that of constructing surface ships. To deal in the same manner with ships of these two classes, which are so different, does not seem to us a very practical method from the economic point of view.

Finally, this system would allow of too much latitude in the distribution of tonnage, and would consequently lead to considerable instability, even during the currency of the Convention, as regards the naval forces of each contracting State.

From the political point of view, this system, by thus giving rise to a feeling of instability, would run counter to the purpose we have in view, which is to create a feeling of security throughout the world.

I will now turn to the British draft, with which, as everybody is aware, we are not agreed on all points. There is in particular one important point emphasised by Lord Cecil this morning to which we cannot agree. The British draft provides for limitation not only of the tonnage of ships by classes and by units but also of the total number of ships in each class. If the aim of the British draft is to arrive at a standardisation of all war-ships, it would be going too far in the direction of limitation, because it would not make sufficient allowance for the differences in the various navies. Furthermore, once the total tonnage of each unit is limited by classes, we necessarily arrive at a limitation of the number of ships.

Lastly, I would add that, if a country wished to increase the number of its ships, it could only do so at the expense of the power of each ship.

I say again that there is nothing new in these arguments; I am only putting them forward in a spirit of conciliation. Our method would be to base reduction on a limitation of the total tonnage of each class and a limitation of the maximum unit tonnage in each class, leaving every country free to decide how many ships it would have in each class.

The Japanese delegation adheres to the view it expressed in Sub-Commission A, but is willing to give sympathetic consideration to any proposals which may be put forward in the hope of achieving a compromise.

M. RUTGERS (Netherlands). — The Netherlands delegation listened with great interest to Lord Cecil's speech this morning on the limitation of naval material, and was greatly impressed by his remarks.

I am bound to say, however, that, to our regret, we cannot accept his arguments in support of the method of limitation by classes.
The Netherlands delegation continues to advocate limitation by total tonnage, which it regards as admirably calculated to achieve the pacific object in view.

In the words of the report of Sub-Commission A, this method, by limiting the ensemble of war-ships which enter into the composition of fleets, prevents the possibility of their increase, and thereby any competition in armaments. Moreover, it avoids naval competition since it fixes for each country a maximum fighting value corresponding to the best distribution of its tonnage from the point of view of number and type of vessels, and with due regard to its special conditions.

It is quite true that there will still be a certain degree of competition within the limit of total tonnage. That applies to any form of limitation; for it is a competition the aim of which is to achieve the highest military efficiency possible according to the special circumstances of each country. This competition would, however, be reduced to a minimum by the method of limitation of total tonnage.

The Netherlands delegation has serious objections to the method of limitation by classes. In its view, the total- tonnage method has the advantage of adaptability to new needs, which is not true of the method of limitation by classes.

If we support the total-tonnage method, it is not because we wish to pursue a policy of secrecy. We do not think that this method would in any way lessen the possibility of publicity, and our delegation at least would agree to any proposal in that direction. We fear that the method of limitation by classes, on the other hand might allow of a certain element of surprise - a matter which we perhaps regard from a somewhat different point of view from Lord Cecil's. We consider that any element of surprise there may be is most likely to arise from technical progress and consequent developments in naval strategy. It is possible that, owing to such developments in naval strategy, certain classes of ships might become less useful for defensive purposes. Suppose a country, having accepted limitation by classes, claims only ships of certain classes, and only a minimum of tonnage in those classes. If, owing to modern technical progress, one of these classes were to lose a great part of its value, the position of that country from the point of view of defence would be considerably impaired. May I refer once more to the report of Sub-Commission A? It states that limitation by total tonnage has the advantage of being suited to the conditions of security of all countries, since it allows that to replace the tonnage of their obsolete units by units corresponding to the requirements of security at the time, each State reserving the right, if it desires, to postpone its own new construction until it knows the direction taken by new construction in other countries - in other words, to adapt itself to the development of technical progress.

In the column devoted to the criticism of the advantages, it is stated that this circumstance may favour the country that waits. I think there is some truth in this; but can we say that it is a disadvantage, from the point of view of the limitation of armaments, to give an advantage to a country which waits to replace its units? I think that there would be a disadvantage in adopting a method which would place in a better position a country which hastened to replace its obsolete units.

I should like to add that, from the point of view of the limitation and reduction of armaments, we may expect more satisfactory results from the total-tonnage method than from the method of limitation by classes. In view of the uncertainty of future technical developments and developments in naval strategy, countries could only be induced to accept limitation by classes on condition that any such limitation left within each class a certain margin over and above the tonnage recognised at the time as indispensable. Consequently, by that method, the total tonnage - that is, the sum of the total tonnages in the various classes - would be in excess of the total tonnage that would be arrived at by the total-tonnage method, which latter method allows the tonnage to be distributed among the different classes in accordance with any needs that may arise.

The Netherlands delegation considers that the method of limitation by total tonnage is applicable to all navies, large or small. If certain groups of countries possessing navies which are more or less alike, and being placed in similar strategic, economic and political positions, wish to extend limitation to the different classes of which their fleets are composed, we are prepared to admit that, in such special cases, that system may give fair results. But even in such special cases none of the Powers concerned is prevented from adopting the total-tonnage method as a generally applicable rule. We have no objection to the limitation of the tonnage of individual units of the same type; but it may be better to hold this question over until we come to discuss Point 3 of the Synoptic Analysis.

I have one observation to make on the text of the French draft. This draft provides for the limitation of ships which fulfil two conditions: first, that they shall be capable of employment as competent units, and, secondly, that they are regarded as "vessels of war within the meaning of the present Treaty". I imagine that the French draft refers to the definition on page 80 of the Sub-Commission's report, which states that, "nevertheless, surface craft below a certain tonnage and calibre of guns may be considered as non-combatant for the purpose of reduction and limitation of armaments". There is also a note saying: "It is suggested that the ultimate Conference should fix the limits in question".

This proposal fits in admirably with what we are doing here. At the same time, I think it might be desirable to determine at once the limits referred to, because it is upon those limits
that the figures which the countries will bring forward at the Disarmament Conference will depend. It would be useful to know in advance below what limits ships will not be regarded as vessels of war.

M. HENNINGS (Sweden).—Since most of my colleagues have expressed their views on the limitation of tonnage, I would merely remind the Commission that the Swedish delegation has already stated its views on this subject in the course of the general discussion, and I would like to take the opportunity of reading the following declaration:

“The delegation considers that, in principle, the reduction and limitation of tonnage should be carried out on the basis of total tonnage. In our view, this method might be supplemented, in the case of navies possessing similar types of ships, by the method known as that of limitation by classes, and for all navies it might be supplemented by an obligation to publish in advance their programme of naval construction for a fixed period.”

There is nothing in the discussion, so far as it has gone, or in the arguments which have been advanced to induce us to reconsider that opinion. We continue to adhere to it, and we feel that the Swedish delegation’s proposal might perhaps form the basis of a compromise which everybody could accept.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France).—I think none of us can fail to realise that we have arrived at a critical point in our work.

No limitation of armaments is possible unless it covers the three categories of armaments—land, air and naval; further, no limitation of naval armaments is possible if there is a difference of opinion between the great naval Powers and the rest that cannot be overcome. I hope Lord Cecil will give me credit for weighing with great care—as I always do, but perhaps more particularly to-day—the arguments he has put forward. In the first place, I appreciate his having openly and very honestly stated the special position of his own country with regard to naval armaments, which for that country is a vital question. No Conference would be possible if each country could not state here quite openly the particular reasons compelling it to claim a given maximum in respect of land, air or naval armaments. Our duty here is to conceal none of the special needs of any one of us with regard either to land armaments or to naval armaments, or to both. And here I do not think we are concerned with figures; when the final decision is taken, whatever form of limitation is adopted, no one will dispute the fact that, given the special position of certain great maritime countries, these should retain in the figures allowed them a superiority which no one would think of denying them.

Lord Cecil asks more than this.

The Japanese delegate asks more than this.

They ask that, apart from any figure which, in their opinion, will ensure to their own countries an undoubted advantage, other nations which have fleets and need fleets should accept an additional limitation of each class of craft which they possess. Here we clearly have a fundamental difference of opinion.

No less frankly than the Japanese delegate and Lord Cecil have given the reasons which lead them to adopt this definite attitude with regard to tonnage and to tonnage limitation of naval armaments by classes, do I, taking my turn after those countries which have already expressed their views and before those which will no doubt express theirs later, wish to tell you why, although we are prepared for any limitations and do not seek to cancel by indirect means privileged maxima justified by geographical situations and vital necessities, we are nevertheless unable to accept this limitation by classes.

The basic reason is that a number of naval Powers have not come here completely free of obligations. The International Convention which we are discussing here cannot prejudice treaties concluded by other Powers. The French delegation has mentioned this in its draft. Even had it not done so, the situation would be the same. It is a fact with which we are faced and which we firmly accept: the Washington Agreements exist. By the Washington Agreements my country accepted a considerable reduction. There is the well-known ratio of 5 : 5 : 3 : 1.75. That means in figures that, if Great Britain and the United States have 500,000 tons, France will have 175,000. These figures alone show that discussions with regard to the limitation of naval armaments cannot be pursued independently of previous undertakings— that Governments called upon to discuss what further limitations they can accept cannot disregard the considerable reduction which they accepted at that time. Please note that this is no recrimination nor even a regret. We went to Washington firmly resolved, and we respect the motives for which we were invited, as we respect all the generous motives of the country that invited us; and that country will understand that, if other countries cannot, for the time being, enjoy the same privilege, it is for the very reasons that have brought us here. I wish to emphasise this particularly to-day.

However, there is the result. There can be no doubt that, when these Powers accepted so considerable a disproportion, such as will probably not be established at the Conference which we are preparing for land armaments, it was because they retained freedom to compensate for this considerable reduction of capital ships by developing small units, to which, rightly or wrongly—rightly, I think—they attribute a more strictly defensive character, the only one which in the present state of their finances, and also because they consider that it is the inevitable aftermath of the war, they can accept.
At Washington, France accepted this limitation to 1,75 as against 5, 5 and 3, just as she has reduced her army by half and is preparing to reduce it again by a third of that half. Still, while accepting this reduction resolutely, we must call a halt. We must wait until some more general measure is in prospect. That is the purpose of the Conference for which we are preparing.

At that Conference, when we are laying down figures, can we remain within the inevitably reduced area which we are applying to us— (for Washington binds us until 1936 and it cannot be maintained that we can make up with small units for the considerable difference represented by a tonnage which we have surrendered once and for all)— can we accept a further limitation? Quite frankly I answer: No; we cannot. It is now my turn to invoke the vital interests of the country in whose name I speak. And I ask the great naval Powers, whose undisputed greatness and supremacy have been confirmed and perpetuated by the Washington Agreements, to make an effort to put themselves in our place.

If you accept limitation by classes, whatever tonnage be allowed for each class—a question which is not at present under discussion—you inevitably stereotype your navy in a certain form and with a certain classification. The great naval Powers, to which a superior tonnage has been allotted in virtue of the Washington Agreements, can obviously contemplate with a light heart and an even mind the variations which may occur in technique or for any other reason. Their supremacy is assured by the capital ships at their disposal which Washington allows them and which they keep up. Their anxieties? The doubts which perplex some Powers do not exist for them. But for those Powers whose future is a blank, or nearly so; for those that deliberately, in the period immediately following the war, wished to effect the inevitable reductions which should follow, and which we are here to effect; for those countries that have only retained freedom of development in respect of small units; for them, any unexpected changes which may occur in naval technique, at a time when everything is in a state of flux, clearly involve a problem which they cannot solve in its entirety and for a given length of time.

I am fully aware, gentlemen, that the Convention will only remain in force for a given period— might make the problem less disturbing, particularly if we bear in mind that naval constructions cannot be carried out in a day, but require months at least, and sometimes years.

But, if the constructions undertaken can only be carried out within a certain period, the argument is no less true if, so long as the Convention remains in force, and in the event of a far-reaching change in naval technique, a country which is going through a period of reconstruction, of gestation—which is rebuilding, or, as some delegates said just now, building its navy—cannot begin in good time the constructions which if finds necessary as a result of changes in technique.

I am speaking of technical changes. But some of these may be immediate. Everyone is aware that submarines—which obviously constitute one of the principal classes for which a rigid and definite limitation is desired—may any day lose much of their importance as the result of some scientific discovery. There are other possible changes; and here I come to an argument which I have put forward on several occasions, and which to some extent governs the naval question. The part played by auxiliary cruisers, the importance of which came to light during the last war, gives rise to an ever-increasing apprehension on the part of certain Powers. Indeed, the development of merchant-ships as regards speed and tonnage and the very fact that, in some countries, such ships are being provided with the means of being speedily equipped with extremely effective guns lead to the result that, in a direction which will inevitably be excluded—and, I keep to my method, should be excluded—from the limitations imposed by the Conference, a country may, while the Convention is still in force, find itself faced with the necessity for altering completely the tonnage distribution which it had originally contemplated.

Further, gentlemen, some countries at least—and precisely those which being bound by the Washington Agreements, can only build small units—are faced with another important aspect of the question, namely, the financial aspect. Some of these countries would certainly be unable to say at present what exactly they will be able to do within a given period.

Finally, the last unknown cause, or, if you will, the last unknown quantity of this problem, which makes it impossible for some countries to stereotype—at any rate rigidly and during the whole period of the Convention—the distribution of their tonnage by classes: this unknown quantity which has been mentioned—and it was bound to be mentioned in the course of these debates—is the unknown quantity of security.

M. Comnene expressed his regret just now that this question of security seemed so far to have remained in the background of our minds. What a mistake! It is everywhere present in these debates. It will inevitably have to be considered when we are laying down figures. It seems to have been neglected simply because our object is to prove that it is possible to draw up the text of a Convention. When we have to lay down figures, all these apprehensions will have full play, you may be sure.

This morning Lord Cecil also, in a very weighty speech, the importance of which I have fully appreciated, spoke of security. He attached a rather different meaning to the word, and he will allow me to say that the meaning he gave it does not appear to me to correspond with the real state of things.

I have no anxieties with regard to the security of the fleets of the great naval Powers. Lord Cecil told us that, if the distribution of tonnage by classes was not determined, and if
it should happen to suit a great Power — after all, that will be its own business — to utilise all its tonnage for capital ships, the number of small units would be a menace to such a Power. I cannot believe that, in all this time, during which countries have been spending milliards on capital ships, this has not been done because such units are supposed to possess a fighting strength enabling them to destroy fairly quickly any small units which might attack them.

When I speak of security, I use the word in the sense given it just now by M. Connére and the Finnish delegate. Yes, I am convinced that, if we succeed in giving effect to the stipulations of Article 16, that is, in creating conditions under which the Covenant of the League of Nations may quickly and surely be applied, the apprehensions of certain Powers, which, while accepting in anticipation the tonnage limitations necessary for their security, do not feel able to stereotype this tonnage and fix its final proportions in respect of each class, would not exist.

It is a striking thing that, immediately we approached this matter, the question of security broke in on our discussion. I will not be like Orpheus — in the first place, I am not in Hades, far from the stimulation poured “Eurydice! Eurydice!” and cry “Protocol! Protocol!”; still, I cannot but remember that those nations that formed part of a trilogy which I have often heard repeated in this very room, and which in time, I was even able to recognise in English. I have not forgotten it: “arbitration; security; disarmament.” Some of my colleagues, even appear to think that we are beginning at the end. I do not think so. I think there is, at any rate to a limited extent, in certain parts of Europe a minimum of security that can be obtained within the framework of the Protocol, but this security is certainly not general. There can be no doubt whatsoever that, as regards naval matters — apart from the Washington Agreements, which apply mainly to another part of the world — in the Atlantic or in the Mediterranean, where so much competition may arise, there is no definite agreement providing security.

Should such an agreement ever come into being, I am convinced that this question, whether tonnage should be limited in the aggregate or by classes, would lose much of its importance, and I am not prepared to say that in whatever form such an experiment ever be made — that is the most important result to be obtained from our work here — when countries have been classified according to the total tonnage allowed them, and can see more clearly both into the possibilities of their situation and into the general state of things surrounding them — I am not prepared to say that we shall not then be prepared to consider the question. Allow me to recall a memory — I think there is nothing offensive in it. I remember that in this very room, in September 1924, we heard the representative of Great Britain make certain statements which allowed us to suppose that, once the aggressor and the party attacked were clearly specified, then, inevitably, under the Protocol, the great fleets of the naval Powers would come to the help of the victim. We suddenly felt that we had gained much, out of all proportion. It was not to be. But there is no doubt that, should security pacts on the lines of the Protocol operate as we wished and momentarily hoped they would operate, many nations which have just expressed their views would not feel the apprehension which I detect from some of their remarks.

I believe — and perhaps more firmly than they — that in the present state of the world we can make a start, but it is only a start. We have said it and repeated it time and again, when we were discussing land armaments, when we were discussing air armaments, and when we perceived that, owing to our present inability to internationalise civil aviation, we were leaving a serious gap in the limitation of air armaments.

With regard to the limitation of naval armaments, we are faced with the same problem. Let us make a start in respect of total tonnage. Is it indeed nothing to think that, apart from the stipulations of the Washington Agreements, it will not be possible to exceed a certain total tonnage? Will those nations that are concerned, and rightly so, to see that the naval supremacy necessary for their existence shall not be threatened, will those nations not secure a valuable guarantee should such a limitation of total tonnage be accepted?

Could we go further than this? Could we in any degree enter into the views expressed this morning by Lord Cecil? What is the chief argument of the great naval Powers that desire the limitation of tonnage by classes? They tell us: “We want to know what we are going to — we want to see our way.” Will they allow me to say that some countries which, while they already enjoy an undoubted advantage, cannot see their way so clearly as regards land armaments, might express the same wish? At no time has there ever been any question, as regards land armaments, of limiting anything but the aggregate number of troops stationed in the home or colonial territories, although the distribution of these troops, the material at their disposal, the question whether they are embodied in one formation or in another, the proportion of their artillery, the question whether they are organised on an offensive or defensive basis — all these questions, I can assure you, confront the Powers mainly interested in land armaments with as grave an uncertainty as any that can face the Powers enjoying naval supremacy.

Even now, and for this very reason, the great naval Powers are in a position of superiority which the land Powers do not enjoy. I will go no further. I feel the need for securing agreements.

This morning, the Japanese delegate, referring to naval effectives, and with an absence of logic which I took the liberty of criticising, said: “Do not let us limit naval effectives”, although we have just limited land effectives. And what did he propose? He proposed something called publicity. From the statements made just now by the Dutch and Swedish delegations, I retained the notion that it might still be possible to afford some satisfaction to the great naval Powers that desire the limitation of tonnage by classes. I think we might contemplate a compulsory measure of publicity with regard to naval programmes which
might — I do not refuse to discuss this point — even be stipulated in the Convention. All we request is that we should not be asked for something we cannot give, that is, to consider the naval programme, this distribution by classes, as absolutely rigid, as not capable of alteration; because the reasons which I have just given, and which prevent us from accepting tonnage by classes, obviously exclude the possibility of our accepting a programme which cannot be altered to some extent. The same reasons which prevent us from accepting tonnage by classes would rule out the possibility of the programme being inserted if this were to mean that the programme could not be altered. And what is the point? It is one of some importance. A naval programme is not altered every day. When certain constructions have been decided upon, their weight can only make itself felt after a long time: and the combined effect of the limitation of total tonnage and the insertion of a naval programme in the Convention itself, upon provision for immediate notification of any change to the organisations responsible for supervising the application of the Convention, should afford a very appreciable measure of satisfaction to the naval Powers; and in any case — may I be allowed to say so? it is my last word — a satisfaction which no Power interested in land armaments will secure.

The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — I should like to preface my remarks by saying that I am in complete agreement with what M. Paul-Boncour said — that we are not here to deal with actual figures or ratios. I agree that we are here to deal with the general aspects of the problem which is presented by seeking to agree upon some method of limitation, and I should like to have that borne clearly in mind in connection with what I am about to say — that my remarks are addressed entirely to the technical difficulties of finding a generally acceptable method of limitation without reference to figures or ratios, or to any given country or any group of countries.

In approaching any problem of this character — or indeed any problem — it is essential to have a very clear idea as to the objectives to be gained by its solution, in order that we may spend no unnecessary time or effort on details which do not bear directly on the main issue. The problem before us now is to find some method of effecting the limitation of naval armaments in the most direct and simple manner, and we believe that to be the most effective manner.

It seems to the American delegation that there are two objectives within which practically all other objectives are included, which may be briefly summed up in this way: first, the peace objective — limiting naval armaments in order that competition in the building up of such armaments shall cease, thereby lessening international mistrust and the feeling of insecurity, and thus removing one of the possible causes of war; and secondly, the economic objective — limiting to the greatest possible extent the burden of taxation incident to the building up and maintenance of armaments. In short, as Lord Cecil said this morning, we are seeking to promote peace and reduce the burden of taxation.

In our efforts to promote peace, there are two essential requirements which must be met: first, that competition in the building up of naval armaments shall cease; and, second, that international mistrust, suspicion and uneasiness shall be allayed so far as it is humanly possible to do so. Unless these two conditions are fulfilled, our labours will be in vain.

The American delegation has found no reason to change the views of its technical advisers as they were set forth in detail on pages 81 to 85 inclusive of the report of Sub-Commission A. This fully set forth our views as to the desirability of the method of limitation without reference to figures or ratios, or to any given country or any group of countries.

We feel that such an application would be in no sense consistent with the primary purpose of any Disarmament Conference as I have stated it. Such an application would not do away with the competition in naval armaments; on the contrary, it practically invites such competition by opening wide the door for it.

The provision allowing each country to be free to distribute and arrange the total tonnage allowed to it, without providing in the agreement for the allocation of such tonnage, contains the germ of eventual competition. Such an application would not lessen international suspicion, uneasiness and mistrust; indeed, it is hard to imagine any system which would tend to create suspicion and mistrust more than secret building programmes conceived and laid down under such loose conditions.

We grant that limitation by total tonnage may be effective in the case of small navies having only very limited categories of combatant craft, but even in such cases the application, as dealt with in the second clause of this article, is open to serious objection. It would be practicable if each State had to consider its own interests and only its own interests. This method undoubtedly appeals to the individual State in that it can best provide for its own security by being able to allocate all or any part of the tonnage to whatever class it deems best without previous agreement. At the same time, it would be unfair to the neighbouring States, which must compete to provide for their security, and which would therefore be constantly in a state of uneasiness and mistrust.

We believe that the maximum size of each category should be prescribed, also the maximum calibre of gun and the maximum diameter of torpedo-tube, because we are convinced that we cannot go wrong if we deal with tangible and visible characteristics rather than complicate the problem by dealing with characteristics that are not openly visible to all.
the world that cares to see. We believe in prescribing the maximum diameter of torpedo-tube in order to restrict as far as possible, competition in that destructive weapon. I think it is perfectly well known to all my colleagues that we believe in dealing only with the tonnages in various categories because it seems to us that, when a limitation is placed on the total tonnage of any ship, the effect of that limitation will be very much in proportion to the system under which we are working. It seems to me that, whatever system is prescribed, a sufficiently definite limitation upon that particular category of ship will be effected. However, we are ready to consider the possibility of a more definite limitation if one is presented which seems to attain the end desired in a practical and reasonable manner.

The desirability of any method of naval limitation does not lie solely in a general definition of that method. It reposes essentially on the detailed manner in which the method is to be applied. I confess that, the more clearly the implication emerges from the discussion that secrecy in a naval building programme is a distinct advantage, if not a necessity, the less such a system seems to me calculated to achieve the ends we seek by removing distrust and suspicion.

In conclusion, I should like to say that I have listened with the greatest respect to the speech of M. Paul-Boncour, and I cannot refrain from saying - indeed, I should be very ungracious if I refrained from saying - that he can rest assured that the American delegation has no desire to press any measures which are unjust to France or to any other country. We are here to agree, if we can, on measures of limitation, and it is our desire to deal with the problems indicated by M. Paul-Boncour in the most generous spirit. I can say that the spirit of his recent remarks gives me hope that we may find some common ground for agreement.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I do not propose to trouble the Commission with another speech, but I want to say a few words in order, mainly, to thank M. Paul-Boncour for the tone of his speech and for the evident desire he showed not only to appreciate the difficulties of other nations but to seek a conciliatory solution. My own belief is that, when two parties really wish to agree, they always find some method of agreement. I am grateful to him for his appreciation of the great naval strength of my country, but there is an aspect of it which I am sure he appreciates, because he has shown how much he does appreciate the difficulties of other countries. There is an aspect of our position which must never be lost sight of — and that is that the commerce, the sea-borne traffic of my country, is its life-blood. That is not in the least an exaggeration; it is literally true. If the sea were closed to my country it would starve within a few days, and, if you look at the whole of its industrial and mercantile life, it is the same. I need not elaborate it; it is a perfectly well-known fact. Undoubtedly, as we have had reason to know, this sea-borne traffic, in spite of great superiority at sea, is a weak point; it is a very vulnerable point. It has to be a matter of the gravest preoccupation to any ministers who are in charge of the naval affairs of my country. It is true, of course, of almost every island, but it is particularly true of a country highly industrialised like mine, where the population greatly exceeds the means of feeding it within the island itself, and that is a point that we have to consider. My country cannot afford to run the risk of a sudden development of even, it may be, not a very powerful navy, a sudden development directed entirely at this vulnerable spot in our system. M. Paul-Boncour said that these ships cannot be built in a moment; some take months and many take years. Quite true. But that is true of both sides. Though it may take some little time to prepare the ships which can be used for an attack on our commerce, it will also take a long time for us to prepare ships which can be used in order to defend our commerce. Therefore that does not help us very much. Of course, it is quite true, and I understand that there is a possibility, that there might be such a complete change in the technical aspects of this question that a whole class of vessels provided for in a programme would have to be abandoned and you would have to build entirely new vessels. Such a thing is physically possible. I am not aware that it has ever occurred in the history of naval affairs; there have been changes, but they have been extremely gradual changes, and, though it is conceivable that there might be an epoch-making invention which would make a catastrophic change, all I can say is that it seems to me and my advisers an extraordinarily unlikely event. I do not think it is very probable, but I quite agree that it is a thing which M. Paul-Boncour and others are perfectly right in bringing to the attention of the Commission and asking them to consider. There was another aspect of the matter, which was put forward very prominently by the delegate for the Netherlands, which was quite different. It was that other countries might build in such a way that a complete change would be required. Well, that is exactly the point, only I use it in exactly the opposite way. That is exactly what may happen and it is to avoid those sudden changes of building, which constitute a danger to any particular country, that it does seem to me that something is essential in order to prevent these elements of surprise in building which are really a danger against which we have to guard. I confess I did not quite follow M. Rutgers' point.

M. Rutgers (Netherlands) (intervening). — Will you allow me to explain in two words? If one of the categories should, as the consequence of a technical evolution, lose a great part of its strategical value, through the system of limitation by categories, the tonnage of this category could not be transferred to another category. That would not be so disastrous for a big country which keeps ships of every category as for a small country, which might have been induced to specialise on that category for its defence and security. The effect might be disastrous.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — That is the argument which I had already tried to deal with, only I attributed it to M. Paul-Boncour, who also used it. I thought M. Rutgers used another argument, namely, that there was a possibility of other people building in such a way as to make a change desirable. If he did not use that argument, I do not desire to dwell
on it any more. Now, that is the situation, and M. Paul-Boncour at the end of his speech threw out a suggestion which certainly I should desire to consider with the greatest care. I will not attempt to repeat it at this moment, except just to say this, that I see the obvious difficulty, which indeed he saw himself, that if the programme which he contemplated being put into the Convention is a mere expression of intention, and if that intention is capable of being changed at any moment, it does not appear to be any great improvement on the original proposal. I rather regret having said even as much as that, because my Government, of course, is ready to seek a solution of this grave question by every means in their power, and they do recognise, as everybody who comes to an international meeting must recognise, that you have got to take into consideration every difficulty and not confine yourself to the difficulties that threaten your own country. I venture very respectfully to commend that sentiment to some of those (certainly not M. Paul-Boncour) who have addressed the Commission this afternoon.

I think the proposal of M. Paul-Boncour is worthy of the most serious consideration. At the same time, I should like to have it quite precise and to know exactly what it is, and I am going to ask whether he would be so good as to put it in writing and let me see exactly what it is he proposes. Of course, it would be only a suggestion. We can treat it merely as a suggestion made, but, in order that I may know exactly where I am and may be able to consult fully my technical advisers, I should like to know exactly what the proposal amounts to. I hope M. Paul-Boncour will not think that in any way an ungracious request, but we are dealing with such very serious matters at this stage — at any rate, from my point of view — that I am bound to ask for every precision before I can even express an opinion.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France). — I should like to reply to Lord Cecil at once that I shall endeavour to afford him satisfaction as soon as possible.

General DE MARINIS (Italy). — I entirely support the remarks made by M. Paul-Boncour and I shall not go over them again lest they should lose some of their force after the clear, accurate and eloquent statement he made. I wish to say that I entirely agree with him and adopt all the arguments developed by him and by the other speakers who opposed the principle of limiting by classes but were in favour of limiting total tonnage, the only form of limitation which my country can accept.

I now come to an idea which I did not quite grasp in M. Paul-Boncour’s speech — the idea of inserting in the Convention programmes which would bind the Powers beforehand with regard to such constructions as they might effect within the limits of the tonnage allotted them.

The idea of knowing beforehand what constructions are to be effected has already been considered by Sub-Commission A, and here is the opinion expressed by eight delegations, of which my own was one:

"Though a large navy with a considerable margin in every class of vessel can obviously bind itself for a number of years as to the types of vessel it will build, this is not true of other navies, which, having no such margin, must be constantly endeavouring to adapt their armaments to the special needs of the moment."

The very arguments which have been given for not accepting the limitation by classes are equally applicable to the publication in advance of naval programmes which will hold good for a given period, since this would be tantamount to fixing for that period the distribution of new constructions by classes.

It has been argued that, in order to avoid competition in armaments and any possibility of surprise, it is essential that this programme be known for the period over which the Convention remains in force, but in this connection I would ask my colleagues to consider that, in practice, the renewal of a fleet takes about fifteen or twenty years; the yearly quota for new constructions therefore, averages one-fifteenth to one-twentieth of the total tonnage.

It follows that the element of surprise, which has been mentioned, would be very limited. In any case, it would be enough in order to overcome this difficulty — which I do not really think very serious — to enter into some undertaking similar to the Washington Agreement regarding building programmes for large units, that is, to give notice as soon as possible of the laying down and of the main characteristics of each unit in course of construction.

The PRESIDENT. — We shall receive in writing, then, the proposals of General de Marinis and M. Paul-Boncour.

The Commission rose at 7 p.m.

TWENTIETH PUBLIC MEETING.

 Held at Geneva on Wednesday, April 6th, 1927, at 10.15 a.m.

President : M. LOUDON (Netherlands).

50. Examination of the Synoptic Analysis. Naval Armaments. Point 2 (continuation).

The PRESIDENT. — This morning we will continue the discussion of Point 2. I declare the discussion open on the following proposal submitted by General de Marinis.
The High Contracting Parties undertake to publish as promptly as possible the following information for each vessel of war which they order to be constructed:

1. The names of the ships.
2. The date of the governmental authorisation of construction.
3. The date of laying the keel, together with the following data:
   - Standard displacement in metric tons;
   - The principal dimensions, namely, length of water-line, extreme beam at or below water-line, mean draft at standard displacement.
4. The date of completion, together with the same data as above, as well as the following information:
   - Number and calibre of guns;
   - Number and calibre of torpedo-tubes;
   - Number of bomb-throwers;
   - Number of machine-guns.

General de Marinis (Italy). — I have not much to add to the observations which I had the honour to submit to you yesterday concerning this amendment, which I, think, is calculated to meet the various requirements that were urged.

I see serious objection to the inclusion of a programme in the Convention. Obviously, if a country has to submit a programme, it will try to make it as full as possible, in order to provide against every unforeseen contingency, even if it does not definitely intend to carry out this programme in its entirety. It will act thus in order to be ready to meet any contingency. The result will be that that country's neighbours will do the same thing; they too will be led to extend their programmes. Thus this proposal will lead towards, rather than away, from large armaments.

On the other hand, a country giving an undertaking such as I have suggested in my amendment, which is in harmony with the Washington Treaty, gives its neighbours the full guarantee which they require, in order to be safe from any possibility of being taken by surprise.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I scarcely think that my friend General de Marinis imagines that this clause means in any way the case which I put forward. It is quite evident that it carries the thing not an inch further. What it provides is simply this — that, as soon as a vessel is authorised by the Government, the name and the power of the vessel shall be published; but in every parliamentary country the authorisation only takes place after Parliament has approved, and therefore the publication is made automatically. The proposal of General de Marinis really gives no kind of security whatever, and I am afraid I could not possibly even consider such a solution as that as a satisfactory solution.

General de Marinis makes a reference to the Washington Convention. I am quite prepared, as I have constantly said, to take the provisions of the Washington Convention; but then we must take them as a whole. That means tonnage by classes, and, if we take tonnage by classes, then by all means put in this if you like. It is really nothing but a form, but there is no harm in it. As a substitute for tonnage by classes, however, it is quite valueless, if I may say so very respectfully — absolutely valueless — and does not carry the proposal any further.

With regard to the question of programmes, that is quite a different matter. That is a serious proposal, and as for the criticism which General de Marinis made, he must forgive me for saying that, if he presses that kind of criticism to the fullest extent, it really is a criticism of the whole system of limitation of armaments. What he says is: "You must not have a limit in your programme of ships, because the result of that will be that the programme will be very high". Similarly, I suppose, he would say you must not have a limit in the total tonnage, because you would put the total tonnage very high. Similarly, you must not have a limit in the total of effectives, because you would put the total effectives very high. The same argument applies in every case. There may be instances in which such an argument is valuable; I think in certain subsidiary matters it may be valuable; but as a proposition generally, I am afraid I can only regard it as striking at the whole root of the system of limitation of armaments.

General de Marinis (Italy). — I must reply to Lord Cecil that the situation here is not the same as it is in the case of effectives or the other limitations which the Convention has to lay down.

Several speakers, myself included, pointed out yesterday that, in the case of naval programmes, we must provide for various unforeseen contingencies which do not arise in the case of military effectives. It is because they wish to be in a position to meet such contingencies — whether these are due to technical progress, or to economic or political factors which may have a great influence on the development of a country's navy — that States are apt to pitch their claims high in the case of their naval programmes. This situation does not result, for example, in the case of effectives. I do not think that the measure which I suggest could affect the whole substance of our Convention; it applies only to naval armaments. What I wanted was to point out the consequences which might be entailed by the excessive expansion of the naval programme of one country in comparison with other countries, and with countries signatories of the Convention as a whole.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I think it would be very unsatisfactory to deal with this amendment until we are in a position to deal with the amendment foreshadowed by M. Paul-Boncour, because it is evident that you could not put them both in. There would
not be any sense in putting them both in. M. Paul-Boncour has been good enough to indicate to me the kind of amendment he has in mind. I have not had more than a moment to look at it, but if we put in anything of that kind, as to which I express no opinion at the moment, it would not only be superfluous but almost contradictory to put in the other.

General de Marinis (Italy). — I have no objection to Lord Cecil's proposal. I was simply putting forward in writing what I said yesterday, as the President had asked me to do. If the Commission prefers to postpone the examination of my amendment, I do not insist that it should be taken immediately.

M. Paul-Boncour (France). — The situation is, I think, as follows: A discussion has been opened. The only texts before us at the moment are those which were laid before the Commission in the form of the Synoptic Analysis prepared by the Bureau. But, in view of the serious and fundamental difference of opinion which has arisen, and in view of Lord Cecil's remarks of yesterday, I do not want to see the Commission brought up against a difference which might — it is no use mincing words — wreck our whole labours, and so I made suggestions which I hoped would lead to a possible way out of the difficulty. Of course, this was only a suggestion made in debate — nothing more.

Lord Cecil thought that he could better appreciate my suggestions if he had them in writing. I wrote them out for him, at his request. Obviously, this is not a formal proposal laid before the Commission as a whole, for, in such a case, both duty and courtesy would have obliged me to submit the text to the whole Commission.

Putting all our cards on the table, I said to Lord Cecil: "If you think that the suggestions I made yesterday could be accepted by the British Government and could form a basis for negotiations towards an understanding, I undertake to get instructions which will allow me to convert them into a formal proposal".

That is my exact position. At the same time, I am obliged to take into account the needs voiced by certain small Powers which, as they have no naval programme and, for domestic reasons, will probably not be able to draw up one, may have objections to raise.

I have acted in this matter on my own responsibility. It is for Lord Cecil to say whether my suggestions are to become official.

That is the exact situation.

The President. — We have reached a point where it would be extremely useful to members to talk things over privately. Accordingly, although I always favour as much work as possible, I propose that we now rise and meet again this afternoon at 4 o'clock. If no agreement has been reached, we might turn to the examination of the chapter "Expenses" which is part of the agenda.

The Commission rose at 10.45 a.m.

TWENTY-FIRST PUBLIC MEETING.

Held at Geneva on Wednesday, April 6th, 1927, at 4 p.m.

President: M. Loudon (Netherlands).

51. Examination of the Synoptic Analysis. Expenses. Direct and Indirect Limitation of War Material.

The President. — As several delegations have expressed the wish that we should not continue the discussion of naval armaments this afternoon, we will now turn, with your permission, to the chapter on "Expenses".

Count Bernstorff (Germany). — As I have already said, I think we should, as far as possible, base our work on that of our Sub-Commissions.

With regard to the limitation of armaments by means of limitation of expenditure, I must point out that I share the opinion which the German delegation upheld in Sub-Commission A together with the delegations of the Argentine, the United States of America, Japan, the Netherlands and Sweden. These delegations declared their conviction that monetary expenditure for the creation and maintenance of armaments does not afford either a true measure of armaments or a fair basis for limitation of armaments. I will not repeat on this occasion the arguments put forward by these delegations in support of their point of view. I will only state that they expressed themselves firmly of the opinion "that the method of limitation of armaments based upon the limitation of budgetary expenditure is impracticable, inequitable and hence inadmissible".

This opinion finds confirmation in the following decision taken by Sub-Commission B.

"It would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to state even approximately what magnitude of armaments in a given country would correspond to a certain (say) reduced figure for defence expenditure".
A little later on, I read the following:

"It has often been advanced in favour of limitation of armaments by means of budgets alone that it would reserve to the various Governments freedom to employ, in the way they consider most effective, the sums allowed by the Convention, but that freedom might obviously be used to develop forms of armaments particularly harmful to another given country."

I may be allowed to quote yet another passage:

"For these reasons, limitation by expenditure only would be inadequate as the basis of a Convention."

Sub-Commission B was of opinion that limitation of expenditure is only a supplementary factor of other methods of limitation, subject, of course, to the condition that "the Contracting Parties agreed upon specific maximum figures for effectives and material."

From this point of view, I am particularly concerned with military material, for we have not yet dealt with the direct limitation of this material. Sub-Commission B rightly declared that the budget appropriations "are not always an exact measure even of war material."

The Commission also alluded to material in reserve, and said that "the possible solution will depend partly upon whether or not the plan for the reduction or limitation of armaments in the future Convention provides for the enumeration in an initial list of the material each State possesses (or has been permitted to retain)."

Finally, I should like to quote one more opinion expressed by Sub-Commission B which is exactly in accord with the German point of view:

"The Commission considers that defence expenditure cannot serve as a criterion in determining the armament quotas to be allowed to the various States when the Convention is being prepared . . . ."

"On the other hand, the Commission believes that the figures of defence expenditure will be specially useful in maintaining armaments within the limits set by the Convention."

Accordingly, I consider that, first of all, and before turning to the limitation of expenditure, we should examine whether it is possible to effect a direct limitation of military material. Upon the reply to this question will depend the limitation of material by the limitation of expenditure. I have submitted a proposal on this matter, and I would suggest that it should be discussed before the Commission examines point 6 of the Synoptic Analysis regarding expenses. I am sorry that I could not submit my proposal sooner, but I did not know that we should be taking the question of expenses to-day.

M. de Bröuckère (Belgium). — I too, should like to say, before we start the discussion on budgetary limitation, how necessary I consider the limitation of material — an indirect limitation by means of the budget and, if possible, direct limitation. If I have not yet been able to submit a draft, as Count Bernstorff has done, it is because I am somewhat doubtful as to the best method to be adopted. Count Bernstorff thinks it possible to limit material in reserve. I am open to conviction, but I still have my doubts. All the same, I believe in the direct limitation of the material acquired each year. I will explain in a few words the reason of this difference of opinion.

I think, as has so often been said, that our Convention will only be valuable if it is concluded under perfectly clear conditions, that is, if the declarations made by Governments are no more than confirmations of facts which can be verified.

Now, I am not sure that it will be possible to verify material in reserve. Once again I desire to adopt an objective attitude towards this matter, but, to the best of my knowledge, previous experience shows that such verification would not be easy. At the same time, it is possible to verify acquisitions under certain conditions, and these have been defined by the League of Nations itself.

The first condition may be said to be the ratification of the Convention on the Trade in Arms. That Convention has been concluded and signed. It is of particular value not only because it provides for publicity in the trade but because it also prohibits chemical warfare. It has been signed but, alas, not yet ratified — except by one country — and it seems that it cannot be ratified unless the producing countries can agree to ratify it together. In any case, it has not yet obtained a sufficient number of ratifications to be put into force. This Convention, however, is not alone sufficient. Its authors have clearly stated that it would only have its full effect when it was found possible to regulate private manufacture and to obtain publicity for Government manufactures. By regulating private manufacture and publishing facts regarding Government manufactures we should, after all, merely be applying two provisions in the Covenant of the League of Nations.

Gentlemen, this question is being dealt with. The Preparatory Commission of the Conference has met, and a Drafting Committee has been appointed, which is patiently awaiting the replies from Governments. With an optimism which I refuse to abandon, I have hopes that the replies will be received in time to record the first result during the course of our present work.

If this result is obtained, I think we shall have a basis for the inclusion of a clause in the Convention which shall provide for direct limitation. If, however, I cannot get direct
limitation, I will not, like Count Bernstorff, throw in my hand and renounce indirect limitation. Because I cannot obtain everything, I shall not decide that it is no good doing anything. I consider that indirect limitation, budgetary limitation, is exceedingly important. I shall not discuss it at the moment, but reserve the right to revert to the matter as soon as I have heard the opinions of my colleagues.

The President. — After these two preliminary statements, I think the Commission will be agreed that we should not pursue the discussion of this point at present.

Count Bernstorff (Germany). — I have asked that the discussion be opened when we examine Point 6.

52. Examination of the Synoptic Analysis. Expenses. Point 1.

Each of the High Contracting Parties will communicate to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, in the form set out in the Annex, a statement of the amount proposed to be expended on its land, naval and air armaments in the current financial year.

The President. — Point 1 of the chapter “Expenses” in the Synoptic Analysis is common to both the British and French drafts.

The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — The position of my Government in the matter of the consideration of budgetary expenditures or the inclusion of limitations on budgetary expenditures in a Convention for the Limitation and Reduction of Armaments was clearly and unequivocally stated before Sub-Commission A last year. The position of my Government on this question has not changed. My Government is strongly of the opinion that monetary expenditure for the creation and maintenance of armaments does not afford a true measure of armaments or a fair basis for the limitation of armaments. It holds this opinion for the following reasons.

First, the direct and indirect costs of personnel under the conscription and voluntary systems are so variable in different countries and in their overseas possessions, and are influenced by so many different factors, that these costs are practically impossible of simple and equitable conversion to a common basis.

Second, due to differences in rates of pay, in production costs, in maintenance charges, in costs of labour and material; due also to varying standards of living and to variations in rates of exchange and to lack of uniformity in the preparation of budgets, any attempt to apply this method of limitation would, in our opinion, be unfair and inequitable.

Third, the method of limitation of expenditure is an indirect method of obtaining a limitation or reduction of armaments. My Government is of the opinion that armaments may be limited effectively by direct methods, and, in consequence, the application of an indirect method seems highly undesirable as a means of accomplishing what might better be accomplished by direct methods.

For these reasons, my Government is firmly of the opinion that any method of limitation of armaments based upon the limitation of budgetary expenditure is impracticable, inequitable and hence inadmissible.

General de Marinis (Italy). — I am somewhat unprepared for this discussion. The agenda has only just been distributed to us, and I was unaware that we were going to discuss the question of expenses.

I will take this opportunity of saying that we are going rather too quickly to work. The questions with which we are dealing and our responsibilities in the matter are so serious that I really do not understand why we should trouble ourselves about having to remain here a few more days. We must have time to read the Minutes; it is very important to do so, for it is only by reading what our colleagues say that we are able to get a clear idea of their views. I know that my opinion is shared by others, and I hope that it may be taken into account.

The last time we met, or, rather, in the first session, we drew up a programme for the Technical Commissions and we have since found that it might have been better drafted by devoting a little more time to it. I believe that this will be in the best interests of the work of the Commission.

In deference to our President, however, I will first take Point 1. Mention is made of a statement, which we have not yet got, and in respect of which we cannot give an undertaking, because it is not known to us. I am therefore not prepared to start discussing Point 1 of the chapter “Expenses”.

The President. — I would like to point out to General de Marinis that it is the principle with which we are concerned. The experts may not have finished their work for some months, and in that case we should be unable to discuss Point 1 at all.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I have great sympathy with the view expressed by General de Marinis, and, no doubt, owing to the difficulties which arose over naval questions, this question of budgetary expenditure has come on more quickly than many of us thought probable. I do not know that any of us can say that we have had no notice of it, as it was very elaborately discussed in Sub-Commission A and Sub-Commission B, and it forms part, in different degrees, of both of the draft Conventions submitted to the Commission. It was evidently a matter we should have to discuss and it was quite evident that it was going to come on after the naval discussions, because there was nothing else that we could discuss, and as many of us, I think, felt it very probable that the naval discussions would have to be
adjourned, I think we have not a great right to complain that it has been brought on to-day. But it may be for the convenience of some members of the Commission — if it is not, I apologise — that I should state quite shortly how the matter comes before us. It was originally, if I remember aright, due to a resolution of the Preparatory Commission itself last May, which desired the question of budgetary expenditure to be considered by Sub-Commission B. The exact form of the reference to Sub-Commission B is of some great importance. Sub-Commission B thereupon did consider it and unanimously reported that it thought that, as a preliminary for any use of budgetary expenditure in the way of limitation, it would be desirable to get some kind of model statement drawn up which all the countries would make use of for their armament expenditure and could be returned to the League, not in substitution for their budgetary system but in addition to it. Thereupon the Sub-Committee of Experts was appointed, on the suggestion of Sub-Commission B, and a very valuable report (see document C.P.D. 40) was presented by them, which we have all read. It is really in reference to that report that the model statement comes in. The position of affairs is this: The experts have said that, in their opinion, such a model statement can be drawn up; they have indeed drawn up a preliminary draft of such a model statement. But when they had drawn it up they came to the conclusion that it was so complicated and so long that it would be desirable to see again whether it could not be greatly shortened and simplified, as they believed it could. I am wrong in saying that they were unanimous, because there was one member of the Committee who did not agree, but by a large majority they took that view. It is quite true that we cannot tell exactly what the model statement which they recommend will be and it may be that it will be necessary for this Commission at some time to have another meeting, when the final report of the experts and the model statement are presented. But I do think that in this report we have sufficient material to know what is the nature of the model statement contemplated and whether, therefore, we can honestly recommend that the high contracting parties should make such a return in the model statement, and the only point on which we can set: is: Shall we agree that the high contracting parties shall make a return of their expenditure in the form of limiting agreements, instead of in the form which will bring out clearly the main features of the expenditure? What is to be done about the expenditure is unavailable. But I think there is quite a different way in which it may be used, namely, to see what each country is doing, and not to compare one country with another, but to compare each country with itself; that is to say, to take the budgetary expenditure of one country as a comparison with the expenditure of another country, because the conditions in each country are so diverse, the cost of things is so different and the system of armaments is so divergent that it would be most misleading to us. Because one country spent so many million pounds on its armaments and another country spent twice that amount, the second country was twice as well armed as the first — to say that would be in defiance of all the facts. Therefore, as a matter of comparison between countries, I agree most fully that budgetary expenditure is unavailable. But I think there is quite a different way in which it may be used, namely, to see what each country is doing, and not to compare one country with another, but to compare each country with itself; that is to say, to take the budgetary expenditure of 1926 and see how it compares with the budgetary expenditure of the same country in 1927. There you do get the possibility of a comparison, and if you can get a statement drawn up in an intelligent form, not loaded with all the technical details which most of our budgets contain, thereby making them almost unintelligible to anybody who does not live in the country and, instead of getting very large amount of very inaccurate and incomplete and very unhelpful information then I do think that is a very important item in our knowledge which we ought not to disregard in any attempt at producing a limitation of armaments. Therefore, I personally hope that the Commission will adopt Point 1 of this Synopsis.


The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — I do not wish to offer any obstacle to continuing this discussion, but I do wish to express my very thorough agreement with what has been said by General de Marinis about the methods of our work. I do not for a moment maintain that we have been taken unawares, for I quite realise the special conditions which have arisen, but, none the less, this method does involve a considerable inconvenience for a good many of the delegations. We had a very clear understanding that we were to take up matters which really arose on the agenda twenty-four hours ahead, and in that way we have been able to confine ourselves to the preparation of a very limited number of questions. There are so many complex questions to the whole number of which is too large. It would be difficult for us to propose for the immediate discussion of any one of them, and we have confined ourselves to the questions on the agenda. That is all we could do justice to at the time. This morning, we had an adjournment for a very special purpose — in order that we might devote ourselves to the consideration of the very important naval proposal which was the subject of discussion among us — and the entire time between this morning's meeting and this afternoon's meeting has been devoted to this question, in consultation with the technical members of my own delegation, with members of other delegations, and in the preparation of telegrams laying this matter before my Government for its consideration, with the result that I have not had a clear ten minutes' preparation for this very complex question of budgetary limitation.

I do feel that we should bear in mind that constantly passing with abruptness from one question to another places a very heavy burden on the technical personnel of the different delegations, and it also places us in danger of adopting very unsatisfactory and inaccurate
conclusions. I do not think there is any delegation that is more anxious to finish our work quickly and expeditiously than the American delegation, but we do feel very strongly that we shall make better progress if we work somewhat more slowly and by a more orderly method. It is highly important that we should have time to discuss matters with our colleagues in order to get at the substance and the reasons for their point of view and seek to take this point of view into account, because we are never going to reach agreement unless we can find some ground for compromise and concession. This would not be the case if we were here merely to win points, but we are not here to win points; we are here to find grounds for agreements. The human race has been waiting now for one thousand nine hundred and twenty-seven years to find a solution for this problem, and I cannot but feel that we could well spend a few days more if that would help us to arrive at a somewhat better solution than we have reached so far. It does seem to me a very important matter of procedure, and I should like to hear the views of some of our other colleagues, because I assume that, as in all matters of procedure, the views of the majority of the delegations will be given the weight to which they are entitled.

The PRESIDENT. — I really must defend myself against the twofold attack to which I have been subjected by the American and Italian delegates. I proposed to you this morning that, if we could not resume the question of naval armaments, we should proceed this afternoon to study the point in our programme dealing with budgetary expenditure. No objection was raised at the time.

M. HENNINGS (Sweden). — General de Marinis said that several of his colleagues shared his view. As I am one of those who do so, I think it my duty to say so here. Considering the heavy responsibility which the members of this Commission have to carry, and the heavy responsibility which also falls on the Governments whose representatives we are, I agree with General de Marinis and Mr. Gibson that it would be preferable to leave more time at our disposition for studying a new subject. We broach one question; then we leave it to start on another, and leave that again; we begin discussing a third subject and leave that too. In these circumstances, it is quite impossible for many delegates, including myself, to follow the debates and to profit by them as we ought. I think that it would be to the advantage of the final result if we went a little less quickly. I agree with Mr. Gibson that, after having waited for several centuries, the world might easily manage to wait another week or two for our work to reach such a final form as can stand the criticism which will undoubtedly be directed against the draft Convention we are preparing.

M. de BROUCKÈRE (Belgium). — I am sure that we are all most anxious to keep step with one another, and that we are, therefore, very ready to regulate our pace, I will not say to the slowest, but to those of us who are in the most difficult situation and cannot, therefore, move so fast as the others. There is no question about this. If a certain number of our colleagues want time to consider matters, to complete their special preparations on some point or other, or to get instructions from their governments, we have only to bow and wait.

I should be sorry, however, to give the impression that some of us want to go fast simply to gain a few days. Mr. Gibson is perfectly right: the world has been waiting for peace for one thousand nine hundred and twenty-seven years, and, doubtless, much longer than that — war, my dear colleagues, is at least as old as humanity and perhaps older. Yet I cannot lose sight of the consideration that, for all that, the situation round us is grave; the world is in a critical state. It may not be very important to know whether we shall get our work done a week or two weeks earlier. Our preparatory work was very long. We began in an atmosphere of scepticism. If our work is to succeed, we must show that the task is a possible one; we shall not get it done at all. Our preparatory work was very long. We began in an atmosphere of scepticism. If our work is to succeed, we must show that the task is a possible one; we shall only do this if we succeed in setting a Convention afoot in the course of this session. I am one of those who have often urged the Commission to make an extra effort, and, believe me, I did not do so because I wanted to get home a little earlier. I have made up my mind to remain here as long as proves necessary. But we should incur a grave responsibility if we carried on our work in such a way that we could not get it done before separating. For, if we failed to prove that it could be done; if, after one thousand nine hundred and twenty-seven years or more, we were faced with another failure, the political and social consequences would be incalculable.

The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — I am in hearty accord with everything M. de Brouckère has said. I think a different method of work might be calculated to expedite our labours. I do not at all question the reasons that M. de Brouckère has given for wanting us to work long hours, but I do think perhaps we could work more effectively if we took time for discussion rather than proceeded to a subject which we are not prepared to discuss.

The PRESIDENT. — I am very glad to hear that from Mr. Gibson. If any delegation has any objections to raise as to our method of work, if anyone thinks that the discussion of some point ought to be postponed because it has not been sufficiently prepared, I ask them to say so. We can modify our procedure as required.

General DE MARINIS (Italy). — I am entirely in the hands of the Commission; but a propos of procedure, I consider that, when those delegations which have asked for a delay to examine the question of naval armaments come forward and explain to us the agreement which they have reached, the other delegations will in their turn need time to think, and possibly to ask their Governments for instructions. We must not assume that, as soon as these delegations have found a solution, all the others will be ready to adopt it at once.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I entirely agree with General de Marinis. I think it would be the height of arrogance for two or three delegations, having come to an agreement,
to expect the Preparatory Commission as a whole to accept their agreement without further discussion. On the contrary, it makes the beginning of a further discussion. I think it very reasonable indeed for General de Marinis to say that, as soon as those delegations have a joint project to submit to the Preparatory Commission, it would be very desirable that the Commission should have some opportunity of thinking it over, and that the delegates should have some opportunity of consulting their Governments. At the same time, I think it would be disastrous if the Commission did nothing all the time that that consideration was going on. I do not wish that could be understood by the public, and it would be a great waste of time. I believe it was my suggestion — I wish to take the responsibility for it if it was — that we should discuss budgetary expenditure this afternoon since we evidently could not discuss the naval question any longer. I think in principle it was right. It may be that the Commission would desire more notice; but in principle it was surely right that we should use the time that we could not use for the naval discussion for the discussion of something else. It surely is impossible for us to say we are going to take the naval discussion but, if any difficulty arises about concluding the naval discussion, that we will thereupon adjourn indefinitely until that difficulty is removed and then resume the other discussion, the greater number of the delegations during that time being unable to occupy themselves in any way. That surely is not a reasonable way of carrying on our work. I do not wish to press any of my colleagues to go on with this discussion if they say they really think it would mean nothing even by listening to the discussion which other delegates were more prepared to carry on. Everyone here is the representative of a sovereign State and they have a right to say exactly what they want done. As far as I am concerned, I would not press for any course which anyone disliked. But I do venture very respectfully to ask my colleagues whether it is really necessary to adjourn this discussion immediately. I think it is for that very reason that we are perhaps on the point of reaching an agreement which will, I am sure, be very happy, and would be welcomed by the Commission as an augury of success. But I think that it would be very unfortunate if we did not resume the discussion of this point as soon as possible but decided instead to study all the different questions first, and then went back to the naval problem afterwards.
The naval question was on our agenda. Our discussion, first on effectiveness and afterwards on material and vessels, showed that it might after all be possible to bring into harmony two points of view which had at first appeared irreconcilable. I myself suggested a ground on which they could meet, and I do not think that the time required to discuss my suggestion would be such that we need think it our duty to postpone the naval question till the end of our discussions. We are not grips with this question, as we are at grips with some of the air questions, and I do not think we ought to give it separate treatment by postponing it until the end of our discussions. I venture to think that it would be a mistake to adopt that procedure.

General de Marinis (Italy). — I beg to thank Lord Cecil for taking my suggestion into account in proposing a form of procedure. I think that there is a certain misunderstanding between M. Paul-Boncour and Lord Cecil himself. The point at issue is this: when the British and French delegates have reached that agreement which we all desire to see, the other delegations will have to be given time to think things over and, if necessary, ask their Governments for instructions. If I understand Lord Cecil aright, this was the reason why he proposed that we should go on with our work until the moment when all the delegations were ready to resume the discussion on naval armaments.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I am very much obliged to my colleagues M. Paul-Boncour and General de Marinis. I do not wish to impose my suggestion on the Commission; far from it. But I should like to know the opinion of this Commission on this variation of it — that we should go on with the budgetary discussion and, when the joint proposition on naval affairs is ready to be submitted to the Commission, it shall be then and there submitted to the Commission, and the Bureau or the President shall thereupon take the opinion of the Commission as to when it would wish to discuss that point. Personally, I should prefer to see the budgetary discussion concluded, if we once begin it, before we come back to the naval question. But that will be for the Commission to settle when it hears that the joint proposition is ready for its consideration. The thing I want very respectfully to press upon my colleagues is that we should have in our minds, to guide our own preliminary studies, the sequence of our discussions. That is why I venture to suggest that we first take up the budgetary discussion and that then, subject to the discussion of naval affairs — which will be inserted whenever the Commission desires — that we shall go on to the control discussion and finish that, and then take up the postponed air discussion. It can be taken up earlier if desired — only let us know now, subject to any unforeseen events, exactly what we do intend to do, so that those of our colleagues who are anxious to make profound studies of the various questions may know more or less when they will come to be considered. I make that suggestion merely with a view to the convenience of my colleagues and to the due rapidity of our work. I quite agree that we must not hurry things, but my experience in life is that work is not better done by being done unduly slowly than by being done as quickly as possible. I may very well find imperfect work done because too much time is taken over it as because too little time is taken over it. It is not because I wish to hurry them in the least, but I do wish them to recognise that we want to deal with this thing in a thoroughly business-like and practical way, and, not only to do so, but to give the impression to the world that we are doing so.

M. Paul-Boncour (France). — I have no objection to raise to the procedure suggested by Lord Cecil as such. If I ventured to rise, and if I now rise again, it is on a much more important question, a question of principle for the Commission — I might almost say a question of courtesy.

General de Marinis seems to think that conversations are carried on outside the Commission and that, as soon as these conversations have ended in an agreement, Governments will have to be asked for instructions respecting that agreement. Well, the merit, and at the same time to some extent the difficulty, of the methods which we have adopted in the Commission is this: there are no private conversations, there are no sub-committees, everything is done at the public discussions of the Commission. This may involve certain drawbacks, but at the same time it has great advantages, and I am sure that Lord Cecil is no more inclined than I am to dispense with this procedure.

There are no private conversations. I only pointed out yesterday, at the end of my speech, what I thought might be a possible way of harmonising two apparently irreconcilable points of view. Everyone has been informed of this, everyone can discuss it, everyone can get instructions from his Government about it. Lord Cecil asked me to put in writing what had been the oral, or oratorical, conclusion of a speech. I put one point in writing, and that is all. Whatever was said was said publicly, and any delegate can perfectly well take up an attitude on the question after having received instructions from his Government.

General de Marinis (Italy). — I am really a little surprised at what M. Paul-Boncour has just said, and, great as my personal liking for him is, I venture to tell him that he has attributed an idea to me which never entered my head, and in the most friendly manner I must protest. I never imagined that any part of the discussions were carried on secretly. What I alluded to was what has actually happened here: after a discussion, two or three delegations talk together; this always happens in a Commission. It is a perfectly natural procedure and it has always been employed hitherto.

I said just now that when these agreements are reached, as I earnestly hope they will be, and when we know their nature, each delegation will then be able to say whether he is or is not in a position to discuss them. But I never dreamt of speaking of agreements which are not reached in the most open way. I am therefore really surprised at what M. Paul-Boncour said just now.
The PRESIDENT. — I think that now we might stop. I beg Lord Cecil's pardon if I modify his proposal a little and suggest to you, as I did half an hour ago, that we take the chapter on expenditure to-morrow. We shall see then whether that agreement has been reached, as we sincerely hope it will be. If it is, the Bureau will consult the Commission.

I propose that we discuss the chapter on expenditure to-morrow and finish it before taking up another subject.

The Commission rose at 5.55 p.m.

TWENTY-SECOND PUBLIC MEETING.

Held in Geneva on Thursday, April 7th, 1927, at 10.15 a.m.

President: M. LOUDON (Netherlands).

54. Examination of the Synoptic Analysis. Expenses. Point 1 (continuation).

Each of the High Contracting Parties will communicate to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, in the form set out in the Annex, a statement of the amount proposed to be expended on its land, naval and air armaments in the current financial year.

The PRESIDENT.— In accordance with yesterday's decision, we will now reopen the discussion on Point 1 of the Synoptic Analysis which deals with expenses.

M. PAUL-BONcour (France). — I shall not speak on this point, for I think that we stand as follows: We are agreed, or at least more or less agreed, subject to a deeper study of the special arrangements in respect of safeguarding the details, on the question of publicity of expenses and exchange of information regarding budgets. As the question raised by Mr. Gibson is connected with limitation of expenses, I should prefer to make my statement when that point is considered.

General DE MARINIS (Italy). — I have no fundamental objections to the principle that each country should communicate annually to the League of Nations either a summary of the expenditure that it proposes to devote to armaments during the current financial year or a statement of the sums that it has actually spent on armaments during the preceding financial year. I think I can say that my country would have every interest in making such information public, since our military expenditure has been considerably reduced, as I stated at the very first meeting, if you take account of the requirements of our security and of our international obligations. But before accepting this principle of the statement of expenditure, I should like to know the purpose of such a document. As the Italian expert stated in his minority report, the Committee of Experts on Budgetary Questions refused to reply to our question before setting to work on this statement, and eventually a long catalogue of military expenditure was drawn up without the object of the same being previously made clear.

All appear to be agreed, both in the Committee of Experts and here, that there is no question of making a comparison between States but that we only desire to determine the means by which we shall study the development of armaments in every State. It seems obvious to me that the very fact of reading the statements automatically involves a comparison between the various forms of this development in the various States. The very form of these statements will lead everyone to make such comparisons whether or not they desire to do so, but these comparisons would be all the more disastrous if they were to be applied to a collection of factors both complex and confused.

Let us admit, however, that no comparison will be made between the various States. It has been asserted that the model statement should be used for the purpose of obtaining an estimate of the tendency to increase or decrease military expenditure in every country. But such a tendency will be a consequence of the Convention. As I have already had the honour to tell my colleagues, a Convention on Disarmament, if it is really going to render any service to the peace of the world, will have to lead to the disappearance of certain differences between military Powers, if differences of such a nature exist and are not justifiable. It follows that, in order to meet their obligations under the Convention, certain countries may be obliged to reduce their present armaments, whereas other countries may be recognised as having the right to increase the same unless considerable reductions are imposed on other countries to bring their armaments down to an acceptable level. Thus, the decrease or increase of expenditure in each of these countries will be the consequence of what has been fixed by the Convention. Public opinion would be singularly at fault in such a case: it was thought that the fact that country A had reduced its military expenditure led to the conclusion that that country was following a peaceful policy compared with country B, which, on its side, was increasing its military expenditure. Account must always be taken of the original position of these two countries and of their starting-point so far as their armaments are concerned. It is possible that country A, even when decreasing its expenditure, might retain a considerable military superiority as compared to country B, although the latter was increasing its expenditure. It would be a mistake to deduce therefrom that country A has a policy of peace and country B a warlike policy.
I will not press this point too far. I am quite prepared to admit that the curve of expenditure may give some guidance, but no more than that, in respect of the tendency of a country to increase or decrease its armaments. But for that it should be sufficient to take a model statement including certain categories of expenditure the particularly significant character of which has been recognised. Now, the Committee of Experts on Budgetary Questions has laid before us a draft model statement in which the items for each State amount to more than one thousand. There are some who assert that there are sixteen hundred items for each country. In spite of all my respect for these experts, whose skill and interesting work I much admire — I am of opinion that the document which they have prepared has a very great technical value — but I beg to question its usefulness from a political and practical point of view, and I doubt whether it is possible for a country to supply so great a number of figures. This system would lead States called upon to fill up so many columns in these statements to commit considerable errors even unintentionally; in fact, as the Italian expert has shown in his report, this system would oblige States to regroup and upset their own budgets, breaking up chapters and even items, when everybody knows that such a subdivision is very difficult and in some cases impossible. It is true that the experts have told us that this is only an experimental model statement, but it would appear difficult to reduce the thousand or more figures provided for in this scheme to an acceptable number, which, in my opinion, should be a few units only.

In my opinion, the model statement should only include a very small number of figures, recognised, as I said just now, as being particularly significant, since the more you increase the number of figures, the more you will be led to make comparisons and deductions which might not be altogether in accordance with the facts. This is far from being in accordance with the proposal made by the experts, but at the end of the report all (with one exception) told us that the model statement would be a means of watching over the effective observance of the provisions of the Convention. To watch over and to supervise are only euphemisms and they mean the same as control. It is quite obvious that, if we accepted the model statement as suggested by the experts, even if simplified, we should have to consider the setting up of an international organisation for the purpose of examining all these statements and establishing supervision over military expenditure.

You see, therefore, that the proposed acceptance of Point I would lead to very serious consequences, which we must bear in mind. Indeed, we are in danger of taking a decision now on the question of supervision, which has not yet been touched upon.

In order properly to understand the point on which we are called upon to give our opinion, I think, it is indispensable that we should be clear as to the scope and the importance of the model statement in question. It is all the more necessary since the only information that we as yet have with regard to the manner in which this statement will be made out is the experiment proposed by the experts, which, so far as I am concerned and for reasons which I have already stated, does not appear to me to be acceptable.

I am therefore of opinion that we should add the following note to Point I of the draft before us:

"The statement in question will only include a very limited number of figures, namely: only the ones which are considered the most significant in respect of the military expenditure of each country."

If it were decided not to specify the contents of the model statement, I should reluctantly be obliged to refuse to accept the proposal we are discussing.

Before closing, I would ask my colleagues not to lose sight of the fact that several of us said, at the beginning of our discussions, that at the very outset one must not ask too much, and that we must take account of the difficulties that certain countries would experience in accepting the Convention.

The proposals submitted by the experts on budgetary questions are so far removed from practical possibility that they should be regarded as an object to be attained in a somewhat distant future but not in a first Disarmament Convention. While certain delegates have expressed the opinion that we are not authorised to deal with expenses, we propose to include in the Convention from the very beginning a considerable number of tables and figures connected with such expenditure.

I repeat I am of opinion that, to begin with, we must confine ourselves to indicating a very small number of figures — two or three, for instance — in respect of each category of armaments. I think that, on such a basis, an agreement might be brought about which would not be the case if we ask for more.

M. de BRUCKER (Belgium). — I think that we will agree with General de Marinis that it will be difficult to ask States to bind themselves beforehand to a table the form of which has not yet been definitely fixed, and perhaps to supply a number of data as great as that of which the delegate of Italy is afraid.

But I should first like to reassure him somewhat by begging him once more to glance over the total, for he will then see that the number is not as great as he had thought at first sight. It is not sixteen hundred or even one thousand, for we cannot regard as new data those that are known, that is to say, the number of soldiers and officers. I repeat, you cannot class as new information that which merely represents the total of the data previously supplied. When a country has devoted fifty million to its army and fifty million to its navy, it will have no difficulty in adding that it has spent one hundred million on the army and navy put together. If we eliminate these figures — which, I repeat, do not supply any fresh information — there are only 392 heads left. The number is still large, but I hasten to point out that these 392 figures could be divided into two quite distinct categories. There are first, the summarised
tables, which contain eight figures in respect of land armaments, ten figures in respect of naval armaments and seven figures in respect of air. Well, we can agree that these last figures will be compulsory and that the others will only be given for information.

I think that most States will have no difficulty whatever in supplying these figures. Most States already communicate their budgets, which they often complete by giving special information, since all Members of the League of Nations have agreed “to interchange full and frank information as to the scale of their armaments”. All will thus desire to support the twenty-five figures, which I will call the principal items, by yet more detailed information. It is desirable that all States should be able to do so by a uniform method. Will they succeed in doing so? The majority of our experts reply in the affirmative. But they have not yet supported their assertion by a definite table. Could we not here and now agree to say that the States shall communicate twenty-five principal items and wait for the final table before going any further? This is really a detail connected with the actual carrying out of the scheme, which will be dealt with by the Conference and which need not be touched upon in this Preparatory Commission, since the task of this Commission is only to prepare a preliminary draft.

General de Marinis (Italy). — I would like to thank M. de Brouckère for the information that he has given us. As for the number of headings, I did not count them, but in the minority report signed by M. Zugaro, in whom I have the utmost confidence, I find the following words:

“The only impression which can be regarded as legitimate and ineffaceable is that to be derived from the enormous number of figures to be found in the trial statement (these figures amounting, when the number of columns is multiplied by the number of lines, to more than one thousand)”. M. de Brouckère himself has admitted that these figures are very numerous. He thinks he can reduce them in number. Attention has been drawn to the difficulties in the various methods of budgetary accountancy, each State having its own method. The technical difficulties are such that we cannot demand that the manner of setting out these figures should always be exactly the same. It is for this reason that, while I do not object to the principle that the most significant information with regard to expenses should be given, I should like, before I accept this article, that a note should be added to the effect that these figures must be of an extremely significant character and limited in number.

M. de Brouckère, has asked for twenty-five, but I am not sure that we can accept that figure of twenty-five. I have no special knowledge in this matter but, nevertheless, I think that the experts who have to deal with this question must receive very clear instructions from our Commission if the figures are to be as characteristic and limited as possible.

M. de Brouckère does not limit himself to giving twenty-five figures; he added that they would have to be completed by detailed information. What information? That is an eventuality which I cannot accept and which many delegations will not be able to accept. I fear that, if we proceed on these lines, we shall not arrive at an agreement at all.

In conclusion, I would repeat that the experts should confine themselves to submitting to us a clear and simple statement, leaving out all complications.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I sympathise with a great deal of what has fallen from General de Marinis. I agree with him most fully that we must be very careful in drafting this Convention, and that we must not try and run before we can walk, to use an ancient simile of my own country. I agree to that most fully, and General de Marinis will find that, in the later stages of the discussion on this subject, I shall be exceedingly prudent, in the policy which I am going to advocate. Further, I agree with him that it would be quite useless to use these figures as a method of comparison between country and country, and I recognise that there is already a certain danger, however much you assert that they are not to be so used, that interested and ignorant people will try and make them the basis of such a comparison; but ignorant and interested people already do that from the facts that are known: and the real way to defeat interested and ignorant people is to give the full facts in the clearest and most definite form. My Government are more likely to suffer from that particular evil than anyone, because the cost of the British army is notoriously, enormously high in view of its numbers — higher, I think, than any army except that of the United States, proportionately to its numbers, I mean. Therefore I quite recognise that it is a thing to be considered; but I do not think it very important, because it does not very much matter what ignorant and interested people say.

What is it, then, that we really seek? We seek to have these model statements prepared in order to have an indication of what is the military policy — using the word “military” in its widest sense — of the various countries, to show not only whether they are increasing their armaments but what they are doing in a broad, general way. If they are greatly developing the mechanical side of their army, for instance, that is a matter which is of great importance and great interest to all the other countries, and it is right that they should be in a position to know what is going on, and therefore I quite recognise that the experts were perfectly right in saying that, in order to give that information, it was no use trying to select key items or special items and say: “We will only deal with them”, because what may be a very important item for one army may not be a very important item for another army. You must have something like a general view of what is going on. Too great simplicity will only lead to mistakes. It is just as easy to give a wrong impression by a simple statement as by a complicated statement, and we must be careful not to be led into that error; but I entirely agree with General de Marinis that, subject to the necessity of giving a fair picture of the
development of the whole military policy of each country, you should make your statement as simple and as concise as possible.

General de Marinis considered that we should only accept a scheme if not more than two or three items were allotted to each army. I feel that that is too few in order to give a fair picture of what is really going on. I agree with him that we ought to put in some caution at this stage of our enquiry, and I should much prefer to emphasise the penultimate paragraph of the report itself. I should like to say, in adopting the general principle of a model statement, that we take note of the statement of the Committee that the final model statement might be drawn up in the form of a relatively simple schedule, with notes showing how the schedule should be filled in — that is, something which would be quite simple and easy for anybody to understand. I think we ought to take note of that and say that in accepting the idea of a model statement, it is on those lines that we desire to proceed. Again, I think we ought not to decide the thing absolutely finally now, because I observe that the trial model statement is headed "For the sole purpose of subsequent study". The Committee of Experts is to meet again, I believe, on June 7th, to complete its enquiries, and therefore I should propose that we add that, in accepting the idea of a model statement, it is subject to the possibility of having to reconsider the matter in the light of the final report of the experts. I think that in that way we should guard against the dangers that the General fears.

The General had one concluding observation which I thought very important. He said that it was evident that this idea of a model statement pointed to some central body of control. I do not know that I should agree with that, but what I should say quite definitely is this — that this and all other measures of publicity point to the establishment of the supervision of public opinion. It gives an opportunity, with such insistence as may be given by the Secretariat and so on, for public opinion really to understand what is going on and to exert itself in the cause of peace, because, unless we are right in believing that public opinion is on the side of peace, it is evident that our labours are not going to bear fruit. The real thing is to give public opinion the opportunity of acting. That is the whole foundation of nine-tenths of the Covenant of the League of Nations, and I do venture to say to my friend, General de Marinis, that, unless we are going to make the facts so clear that the public can really appreciate them, then indeed the only alternative is to have a very stringent measure of control by some expert body with very large powers which shall watch exactly what is going on. I think that would be a grave mistake, but I do think that, if we are not driven to the control of some international body of that kind, then the only alternative is to make our appeal to public opinion, and that can only be done by making the facts clear, open and obvious, even to the meanest intelligence.

Count Bernstorff (Germany). — I have only a few words to add to what Lord Cecil has said. I have read the document that has been submitted to us by the financial experts with great admiration, but, nevertheless, I think that we cannot accept certain points of it. I reserve the right to return to this question when we have the final draft before us.

M. Paul-Boncour (France). — Obviously, we are here to adopt texts or, if we think that we cannot accept them, to say so. Therefore, the question which arises at the beginning of this discussion on budgetary limitation is whether we shall accept — at least in the form of Point 1 or in a similar form — the necessity that States should exchange publications dealing with their budgetary expenditure. Unfortunately, I think that this has led to a certain confusion and that we are in a somewhat false position since this Point 1 refers to an annexed table which is not there or, at any rate, not in its final form.

But, apart from the table, there is the question of principle. Doubtless the final table will apply the principle. Nevertheless, as M. de Brouckère has said, we shall have to decide on the principle itself; and we might accept the text of Point 1, while making a reservation in respect of the reference to the attached table, which might be worded in a less definite manner, since in fact this table does not yet exist.

What are the objections?

There are no objections to the principle but only to the form of the provisional table proposed by the experts.

As M. de Brouckère has shown, this provisional table does not deserve the criticisms which General de Marinis has made. The total of the innumerable items under which the information with regard to budgets is divided is not as great as stated by the Italian expert in his minority report. In reality, the items were repeated in respect of each form of armaments. The number of items in which the proposals of the experts are summarised will have to be taken separately in respect of each form of armaments. Nevertheless, I agree with General de Marinis that his table is too complicated.

The experts have, however, left us a certain hope, and it will be sufficient to meet the views of General de Marinis and, without contradicting the experts, to put that hope on record, namely, to state that we desire that further study will lead to a reduction of the table in question. It would therefore be sufficient to instruct the experts to add that very thing, that is to condense these tables which have been submitted in a form which is somewhat too analytical. I think we might agree on that.

The second point on which we might agree is the statement of principle. This cannot be disputed. We shall soon have an important discussion on limitation of budgetary expenditure. This will be the central point of the discussion. But publicity of budgetary expenditure is the minimum that we can admit. As Lord Cecil, said, it is the very best means of dispelling misapprehensions. Certain misapprehensions do exist. The figures are known. They are shown in the newspapers, but they are not explained. It is most desirable that we should establish an accurate exchange of budgetary information which would make it possible
to justify the undoubted inequalities which exist in budgetary expenditure as in other fields. These differences are inevitable, but they are characteristic of our work, for, though they make our work difficult, it is from them that it derives its value, since what we are seeking is not to draw up impossible scales or common denominators to which superficial minds think the question of disarmament can be reduced. These differences will exist in every sphere of our work. But that is no reason for not establishing such differences once they are justified, and such justification will be the work of the Conference. It is not our work; we must confine ourselves to preparing a draft text, and for this part of our work there should be a first text asserting that it is necessary that nations should exchange budgetary information in a form to be settled later, that we hope the form will be as simple as possible and that we take note of the direction in which the experts are working. But we should at least assert the principle.

The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — I feel that M. Paul-Boncour did not fully understand the scope of the remarks which I made in regard to the question of the limitation of budgetary expenditure.

In view of my general statement on the subject of expenditures, it is obvious that my Government cannot accept the provisions for the limitations of expenditure appearing in Point 5 of the Synoptic Analysis. I do not wish to anticipate this — it is merely to bring out the point of my remarks.

The position of my Government, however, in regard to publicity similar to that contemplated in Point 1 and 3 of the Synoptic Analysis is well known. It will be remembered that, at the suggestion of the representatives of the United States at the Arms Traffic Conference in 1925, the treaty then drafted and signed embodied publicity features of a character which appear to serve well the purpose for which they were intended. No Government, so far as I am aware, publishes more detailed and better-arranged budgetary information than my own. I believe that similar action on the part of the Powers who may be signatory to the Convention which we are enacting, will fully serve the purposes apparently intended by the provision now under discussion. I therefore suggest, therefore, the inclusion in this Convention of provisions for full and complete publicity of expenditures for the creation and maintenance of armaments in the place of the suggested provisions for the limitation of budgetary expenditure.

My Government has always favoured and still favours the utmost publicity in matters concerning the limitation and reduction of armaments. This advocacy of publicity extends to details of budgetary expenditures for the creation and maintenance of armaments. I believe that the acceptance of provisions for complete publicity in regard to expenditures for the creation and maintenance of armaments will not only serve the ends apparently intended by the provision for the limitation of expenditures but will constitute a step on which we can all agree.

General De Marinis (Italy). — I thank Lord Cecil and M. Paul-Boncour for having been good enough to associate themselves with some of the arguments I have put forward and to support some of the criticisms I have made with regard to the model statement of expenses prepared by the budgetary experts.

Nevertheless, I do not think that all the difficulties I pointed out in connection with this model statement have been appreciated.

The information asked for in the model statement would, as I have said, compel some States to fill up the numerous columns of the tables and thus would lead to involuntary mistakes. If there is no homogeneity between the figures for the various chapters of the military budgets of States, these figures will not always signify the same for all countries. They must be interpreted and it may happen that false deductions will be made. To prevent this, less complicated rules must be laid down so that Governments will have to follow them when stating their figures. However, it seems to me to be very difficult to do.

I am not opposed to publicity, but I think the article submitted to us is, to some extent, useless. We undertook to supply all information in the most lucid and complete form possible when we accepted the Covenant of the League of Nations.

Nevertheless, with regard to publishing information, I should be prepared to accept the principle suggested by Mr. Gibson, namely, that countries should undertake to give in their official publications all information relating to military expenses. It would indeed be preferable to adopt this principle. In fact, it answers to the system carried out in all countries having the parliamentary system. Much inconvenience would arise if countries were compelled to supply homogeneous data. As I said just now, all countries have not the same methods of accounting. It was in order to overcome this difficulty that I proposed only supplying the Secretary-General of the League of Nations with information relating to clearly defined expenses.

Consequently, I should like the statement to be drawn up in the simplest form possible in order that it may be adapted to the accountancy of various countries.

I repeat that I do not object to publicity nor to supplying information. I would only point out that, when we accepted the Covenant, we all gave this undertaking.

Before I agree to Point 1, which is being discussed, I should like the Commission to draw up a recommendation for the budgetary experts on the lines suggested by my remarks, but, of course, I must make a reservation as regards accepting any model statement which may be submitted to us later, until I can examine it.

M. Rutgers (Netherlands). — The Government of the Netherlands has no objection to supplying financial information in as complete a form as possible.

At the same time, we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact that the statistics proposed might possibly involve dangerous consequences. A single statement will be prepared from
the various statements supplied by the Governments, and this fact might lead to the comparison
of items which are not comparable. Such a case has already arisen in respect of the publications
of the League of Nations concerning budgetary expenditure. These publications, however,
contain an introduction in which a special warning is given to the effect that the figures should
not be compared with each other. Nevertheless, they have been compared.

I think that, as Lord Cecil very properly pointed out, we should not be alarmed by the
possibility that the completest publicity may be misused and that we should have a certain
amount of confidence in the power of truth. Nevertheless, they have been compared.

With regard to the proposed statement, we can hardly discuss it at the moment, for we
have nothing before us but a draft which is only intended for further consideration. We shall
have an opportunity of examining it later after the month of June, when the Committee of
Experts meets again. We might note that the Committee of Experts would do useful work
if it also dealt with the question of the relation between expenditure in the home countries and
in colonies. In the draft model statement which we have before us at present, this question
is not considered, but before the Convention is complete and ready for signature the question
will have to be considered. There are certain difficulties connected with it, and the Committee
of Experts is really the proper body to solve them.

M. VEVERKA (Czechoslovakia). — We are now not thinking of adopting any given
model statement but of giving certain instructions to the experts, who will meet for the purpose
of preparing such a model statement. I note that General de Marinis agrees with the principle
of the widest possible publicity. This general acceptance will much assist the work of the experts.
I agree with General de Marinis with regard to the instructions to be given to these
experts, who should endeavour to make the model statement as simple as possible. With
regard to the final approval of the model statement, I see no reason why that should not be
left until the Conference, for such a procedure would much assist the progress of our work.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I think we are now so near an agreement that we
might try and formulate a text. As I understand it M. Paul-Boncour thought that some slight
modification in the wording of Point 1 ought to be made. I agree with him, and I suggest
for the consideration of the French delegation that it would be the following:

"Each of the High Contracting Parties will communicate to the Secretary General
of the League of Nations, in a model form, a statement of the amount proposed to be
expended on its land, naval and air armaments in the current financial year."

Then I would add, as a note to the article, at the bottom, something like this:

"In putting forward this article, the Preparatory Commission takes note of the fact
that the work of the Committee of Experts on Budgetary Questions is not complete,
and that they hope to produce a relatively simple schedule. The Preparatory Commission
is of opinion that the model statement should be as simple as possible consistently with
the achievement of its object"

That would be a note at the bottom of the page, not part of the Convention itself.

Count Bernstorff (Germany). — I support Lord Cecil's proposal, but the final words
"consistently with the achievement of its object" oblige me to make a reservation.
I support the proposal on condition that the model statement should be exclusively
used for the purpose of publishing expenditure on national defence and not for purposes of
comparison of limitation, as previously stated by the honourable delegate of the United States.

The President. — We note Count Bernstorff's reservation.

M. Comnene (Roumania). — I entirely agree with Lord Cecil's proposal, and I will take
the liberty of making a suggestion. As soon as the document in question reaches the Secret-
ariat of the League of Nations, the Secretariat might have it circulated to all Governments
in order that they might consider it and submit their observations with regard to it, which
might be circulated to the other delegations; thus, when the Conference met, delegations
would already know the opinion of each Government with regard to the model statement.

General de Marinis (Italy). — I should like to ask Lord Cecil whether he would accept
an addition to the text he proposes, in order that the experts may better understand what
we want to have.

To Lord Cecil's text: "The Preparatory Commission is of opinion that the model statement
should be as simple as possible, consistently with the achievement of its object," I would add
the words "and that it should be restricted to the most characteristic data in respect of each
category of armaments as shown by the budget of each country, allowance being made for
differences in methods of accounting."

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I hope very much that General de Marinis will not
insist on this proposal. I think, if he will just give it a moment's thought, he will see that it
would not really be right for us to express an opinion on a technical question of that kind.
The Committee of Budgetary Experts is there just for that purpose, to draw up such a model
statement as will carry out our general wishes, which will be expressed in the Convention.
I agree with Count Bernstorff, of course, that we shall have to express those very clearly later
on, and that we shall have to exclude, if we do not agree with it, the idea of limitation, and so
on; but surely we ought not to tie the body of experts down by saying. "You are bound to
do it in a particular way". That really is to try and substitute the authority of this Commission
(which is enormous, I have no doubt, from some points of view, but, from the point of view of
experts in budgetary matters, is not quite as great, I should have thought, as that of the Committee itself for the authority of that Committee. In those circumstances, I hope that, General de Marinis will not insist on his words. I do really venture to submit to him that when we have told them to make the thing as simple as possible, we have gone as far as we can really go without trying to usurp their functions.

M. DE BROUCKÈRE (Belgium). — Lord Cecil’s remarks appear to me quite conclusive. Undoubtedly, in a number of countries, the budgetary methods obtaining correspond to profound needs and can hardly be changed. Unless the experts establish a table which takes these customs into account and enables the States to furnish their statements without changing these budgetary methods, they will simply have failed in this task as regards this point. There are habits and methods, however, that do admit of modification, and I venture to hope that, as we are endeavouring to obtain a Convention for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments, the States will be prepared, in a matter of secondary importance such as this, to make certain sacrifices, in order to arrive at uniformity. If General de Marinis’s proposal were kept in its present form — which, I think, goes beyond the author’s real intention — it would be necessary to delete the previous sentence which says that the model statement should be as simple as possible, consistently with achievement of its object, for, if the text proposed by General de Marinis just now were admitted, this object could not be attained.

M. VEVERKA (Czechoslovakia). — I agree with Lord Cecil that the experts must be allowed a certain amount of latitude. I speak from my own experience. I think it is better to allow a certain amount of liberty as regards the choice of methods.

The budgetary experts broke up for the very purpose of examining the possibility of introducing the model-statement methods into the budgets of their respective countries. When they come to Geneva, they will have had some experience in the matter. Accordingly, it seems to me somewhat premature to bind them in the matter now, without knowing the results of their efforts.

General DE MARINIS (Italy). — I should be quite prepared to accept the suggestion that the experts should be told to confine themselves to the most characteristic data of each category of armaments, and to withdraw the second part of my proposal.

We have already had plenty of experience of what happens when technical Committees are not given sufficiently definite instructions. This is what happened in Sub-Commission A which we left absolutely free as regards the replies to our questionnaire.

It is perfectly true that, as regards theory and the actual matter with which they are dealing, the experts require no instructions from us, but they require to be given certain practical instructions, political instructions. We have no desire to limit their technical work, but we must say what we expect of them.

In view of the report now before us, I am anxious to make it clear that we want something very simple. This point is already mentioned in Lord Cecil’s proposal, but I should like to supplement his text by adding that the statement should be restricted to the most characteristic data for each category of armaments. I propose this addition in order that we may obtain a table acceptable to everyone. If this table is to come before us again, we can only hope that all the delegations will be able to support it and that we shall not have to refer it back to the experts. That is my idea in proposing this addition to Lord Cecil’s text. It is essential that the experts, who share the views of some of us here, should be given helpful instructions and should know what the wishes expressed here actually amount to.

I therefore propose the addition of the words “and that it should be restricted to the most characteristic data for each category of armaments”.

Viscount CECIL (British Empire). — I am afraid it will be quite impossible for me, at any rate, to accept the suggestion of General de Marinis in that form. We have been looking at the report and it certainly appears to be the opinion of all the experts except one — that is to say, ten out of the eleven — that you cannot select key items. Whether that is the exact meaning of General de Marinis’s suggestion or not I am not sure, but I venture to make this proposition to him — I do not know whether my colleagues will agree with it — that we should not limit any further the liberty of the Committee, but that we should send to the Committee specially the Minutes of this sitting, so that it may know all that has been suggested and take full account of all the suggestions made. I have no doubt that it will give great weight to the suggestion made by so important a delegation as the Italian delegation, but I suggest that we should not in any way tie its hands.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France). — I have nothing to add to Lord Cecil’s observations. General de Marinis’s suggestion appeared to me quite acceptable, after the deletion of the particular passage. What troubled me, in this proposal, was the thought that the experts were being asked to establish statements taking into account all the peculiarities of the budgets in the different States. Now that this passage has been deleted, however, I see no objection to the adoption of the Italian delegation’s proposal.

May I say, lastly, that I hope the experts will simplify their budgetary statements still further.

General DE MARINIS (Italy). — I accept Lord Cecil’s proposal that the Minutes of to-day’s meeting should be sent to the Committee of Experts, in order that it may take into consideration the opinions expressed during the course of our discussion. I, too, hope that the experts will simplify the model statements very considerably.
M. RUTGERS (Netherlands).—I would urge that the Committee of Experts should receive not only to-day's Minutes but also the Minutes of the meetings at which we discussed the question of colonial armaments. In its draft model statement the Committee of Experts established different tables for colonial expenditure — at all events, as regards land and air forces; there is still some doubt, however, whether by home forces is meant those employed in the defence of the country or those stationed in the home country.

General DE MARINIS (Italy).—Since we are agreed in the matter of principle, would it not be well to ask the Committee of Experts to meet as soon as possible, instead of waiting until June as arranged? We should then be able to have the new draft statement and to discuss it.

M. VEVERKA (Czechoslovakia).—This would hardly be possible, as the Governments were given until June 1st to submit their replies.

Point i and Lord Cecil's proposal were adopted.

55. Examination of the Synoptic Analysis. Expenses. Point 2.

British draft. French draft.

This communication shall be made not later than ... in each year. This communication will be made not later than three months after the entry into force of the legal provisions authorising the expenditure.

M. Sato (Japan).—I should be quite prepared to accept the British text, as it does not, for the moment, fix the time-limit for submitting the communication. I should prefer not to specify any time-limit for the communications from the States concerning expenditure. I cannot say, in any case, whether my Government will accept the period of three months laid down in the French text. It seems to me preferable to leave the Conference to fix the time-limit.

M. de BROUCKÈRE (Belgium).—I wish to direct your attention to a technical detail, apparently unimportant, but which may, notwithstanding, be of consequence. In certain States it may sometimes happen that the budget has not been passed by the date on which it should come into force, in which case provisional monthly estimates are adopted. We ought, surely, to take this fact into account, and, before we come to the Second Reading, frame a clause indicating that the States are not thereby exempted during one, two, four or six months, as the case may be, from the obligation of submitting their declarations, the latter being regarded in such cases as provisional declarations.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France).—I am not quite sure of the exact bearing of M. Sato's proposal. We are all agreed that the Conference must be left to fix the date for this communication. The point is to determine how this date is to be fixed. It would surely be better to decide upon a certain number of months — to be determined later — after the entry into force of the provisions authorising the expenditure, rather than any odd date in the year.

M. Sato (Japan).—I quite agree, but the number of months after the entry into force of these provisions should be fixed by the Conference.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France).—I accept this proposal.

Viscount CECIL (British Empire).—I think there is a great deal of force in what M. Paul-Boncour says, and it may be that it will be better to adopt his text. At the same time, there is also a good deal of force in what M. de Broockere said, and his point would be met by the British wording, because it would require a return to be made on a particular date in each year. It might be very late in the year, but you would at any rate get it on that date, whereas it sometimes happens in foreign countries (not in my own) that the budget is carried over from year to year and you would not get any return at all until the budget had actually been authorised, and that might raise considerable difficulty.

I should be quite content to adopt either text at a First Reading, because it is evidently a matter that would require expert consideration, and I should therefore like to know what other people think on the subject.

M. de BROUCKÈRE (Belgium).—There has been some suggestion of referring the question to the experts: I would urge that nothing of the sort should be done. These are political questions and I think that we shall have no difficulty in solving them.

Since we are discussing details, may I be allowed to say a few words? I see considerable objections to the proposal to be found in the left-hand column. Certain States, no matter what date was selected, would be obliged to give information which was already out of date, information which might be more than a year old. I think that, if we made a list of the dates on which the budgetary year begins in the different States, we should find very considerable variety. The soundest solution of the difficulty appears to me to be to accept the text in the right-hand column. The very fact that a State votes provisional monthly credits means that it authorises expenditure, and it will thus be obliged to forward due notification to this effect, so that if a State, instead of voting a single budget, votes two, three or four provisional credits, it will have to submit one, two, three or four declarations and will thus be in the same position as any other State.
M. RUTGERS (Netherlands). — I should like to ask a question. Will the States also undertake to communicate the budget amendments and supplementary credits which, for my country, for example, are sometimes voted after the close of the budgetary year? There would be no end to the procedure and the various statements might even become quite incomprehensible if a country began by voting provisional credits, these being followed by the main budget with modifications coming after.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I do not know what happens in other countries, but in my own country there is a system of supplementary estimates; that is to say, if it is found that the annual budget has not provided for everything — some unexpected expenditure has occurred — that is put into a supplementary estimate and is voted and becomes law quite separately. Under the strict reading of the text on the right, it would be necessary on every supplementary estimate to send a fresh statement to the League. That might be rather an inconvenient plan; I do not know; I would not like to say. I only desire to reserve a final opinion until the Second Reading because I should like to ask my experts whether there are practical difficulties in the way.

Point 2 was adopted as set out the right-hand column, leaving the number of months blank.

56. Examination of the Synoptic Analysis. Expenses. Point 3.

Each of the High Contracting Parties will communicate to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations a statement, in the form set out in the annex, showing the amount actually expended on its land, naval and air armaments during the preceding financial year.

The President. — We shall now examine Point 3, common to both British and French drafts.

The text might be brought into line with that of Point 1.

Point 3 was adopted.

57. Examination of the Synoptic Analysis. Expenses. Point 4.

British draft. French draft.

This communication shall be made not later than . . . in each year.

This communication shall be made before the expiry of the . . . month following the end of the budgetary year and the full budgetary period (exercice).

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I hope the French delegation will allow me to say that the expressions "end of the budgetary year" and "the full budgetary period" have no very definite meaning, as far as I know, from the British point of view. It is no doubt directed to their own particular system. I should have thought that in this case it would probably be better to have a fixed date because, after all, the expenditure must be made within the year. What we want to know is how much money is actually being spent within the year. It does not matter if it is made in accordance with the budget or not in accordance with the budget.

I should have thought in this case it would be better to have a fixed date, possibly the last day of the year in which the statement could be made.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France). — I am not so particular about the actual formula. My point is very simple: it is essential that too long a time should not elapse between the expenditure and the notification. There is obviously less risk of this period being too long if we fix a certain number of months after the expenditure. Lord Cecil tells me that the words do not bear the same meaning in his country as in mine, but the rule should certainly be the same; it is a question of terminology rather than substance.

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I quite agree. I should have thought that, since there probably is a little difference in the way we manage our budgets, it would be better to take so many months after the end of the year.

M. DE BROUCKÈRE (Belgium). — It would be better to say "so many months after the end of the budgetary year".

The President. — Does everyone approve of the following formula: "This communication shall be made before the expiry of so many months after the end of the budgetary year"?

M. RUTGERS (Netherlands). — As the experts are to study the model statement, and since none of us are budgetary experts, I suggest that this point should be held over. I do not know if it is possible for my Government to give exact figures after the close of the budgetary year, I doubt it and so I desire to submit the fullest reservations as regards this point.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France). — We must establish a distinction, as regards notification, between actual expenditure, which will be notified so many months after the end of the budgetary year, and the final accounts, as in some internal accountancy systems (for example, the "Cour des Comptes"), where certain expenditure for previous financial years may not be settled until twenty years after it has been incurred.

We must make it quite clear that this is not the kind of expenditure that is meant. Such expenditure is provisional in the strict sense of the word as used in accountancy, but what we have in view is not so much accountancy as notification. Expenditure incurred must be described exactly as is intended by the Convention.
Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — I think it is quite clear what we all mean. We all mean the same thing, which is a delightful circumstance; but what exact form of words ought to be employed to carry our meaning into effect does not seem quite clear. That is a matter which, if necessary, we can come back to later.

The President. — We may regard the point as provisionally adopted in the text which I read.

This was agreed to.


The President. — I have to inform you that a very important proposal has been laid before me. This is a request signed by twelve delegates urging that in future we should in principle have only one meeting a day at 10.15 a.m.

The discussion on this proposal is now open. I can give no opinion in the matter. If there is a majority in favour of limiting our hours, the Bureau will be prepared to accept this view.

M. de Brouckère (Belgium). — I have no intention whatsoever of opposing the proposal. I stated my opinion very frankly yesterday on a subject which I consider as anything but a proposal concerning procedure; however, I shall, of course, fall in with the wishes of the majority of my colleagues.

At the same time, I wonder whether it would not be possible to make a slight concession to those who wish our work to proceed more rapidly. My suggestion is that meetings should be held in the afternoon instead of in the morning. If we have one meeting a day at 10.15 a.m., allowing for starting late, that amounts to two and a-half hours' work or fifteen hours a week, which is really not very much, especially as we shall be having a few days' holiday. Such being the case, we can hardly arrive at an agreement before May 1st, the date upon which we may be obliged, in view of serious technical considerations, to consider whether it may not be necessary to suspend our work.

If we have longer meetings, there is some chance of achieving useful results.

M. Veverka (Czechoslovakia). — As a member of the Bureau, I should like to submit a proposal in the nature of a compromise. Could we not have two meetings a week in the afternoon, from 3 to 7 p.m., and a morning meeting on the other days?

Viscount Cecil (British Empire). — Of course, I shall accept and work loyally to any plan that my colleagues prefer, but I confess that I should rather regret it if we did not generally sit in the morning. To begin with, I think the work is best done in the morning. I doubt, moreover, the advantage of very long sittings without a break. I think that three hours is about as long at a time, on a subject of this kind, as we ought to sit if good work is to be done. On those points very likely my opinion is quite wrong. That is my own opinion. But there is another reason why I rather prefer the morning sitting, and it is this. I observe that the statement which we have before us uses the expression en principe, and I should very much like to emphasise those words. I accept the view of my colleagues that they do not want to sit, generally speaking, more than once a day, but I do hope that that does not mean that they will not be quite ready to sit in the afternoon if we have to finish a particular subject of discussion. For instance, suppose we had begun the question of limitation of expenses this morning, and had found that, although we had got a certain way with it, there was still an hour or so more to be spent in finally reaching an agreement, I think it would be a great pity then not to have a sitting in the afternoon in order to finish the discussion on which we were actually engaged. While accepting — as I am, of course, bound to accept, though I regret it — the wish of my colleagues only to sit as a general rule once a day, I hope that this means only as a general rule, and that we are quite prepared to sit when necessary in order to get to a conclusion, twice a day. If that is to be so, of course there is an advantage in having the sitting normally in the morning, because that gives us an opportunity of sitting in the afternoon, whereas if we only meet in the afternoon we have no opportunity of sitting a second time in a day if it is necessary to reach a conclusion. As I say, I put forward these views for the consideration of my colleagues, not, I need hardly say, with the least desire of saying that I will not work in any other way. I will work, of course, in any way they like.

M. Sokal (Poland). — I am only speaking in my personal capacity, but I do not think that the proposal of the delegate for Czechoslovakia is any more practical or in keeping with the views expressed yesterday than the proposal just submitted.

As regards M. de Brouckère's remarks, I might point out that our proposal amounts to a concession on the part of those who are anxious for the work to proceed more rapidly, for we are convinced that the rapidity of our labours is not necessarily proportionate to the hours of work. My experience in other fields of work, in which I am perhaps better informed, has shown me that workers' output is not proportionate to the hours they work. On these grounds, I would direct my colleagues' attention to the position of the secretaries, interpreters and typists of the League Secretariat who are co-operating with us. They are all working overtime. That is all very well for a short time, but our Commission has already been sitting for some weeks, so that this consideration must be taken into account.

I might say, in reply to Lord Cecil, that we used the words 'en principe' in order to allow for exceptional cases in which it might be necessary to hold a meeting in the afternoon. We did not mean that there should be a meeting in the afternoon on any or every occasion.
We have already decided that Wednesday and Saturday afternoons should be left free, but that is not enough. We think that, in the interests of the Commission’s work, we should have other days in the week for our work outside the meetings, for example, for consultations with the experts.

I think, then, that it would be best to adopt the proposal now before us; I am convinced that there is no danger of the consequences feared by M. de Brouckère.

If we had two meetings a day, it would be very difficult for the Press to follow our work satisfactorily. Their co-operation is of great value, so that I think we should take into account the technical possibilities of their work.

M. DE BROUCKÈRE (Belgium). — I do not wish to prolong this discussion, but M. Sokol has made so courteous an appeal to me that I feel I must reply. I am under no misapprehension as to the real feelings of my colleagues. I know that their action is due to the fact that they have remained more optimistic than I have. If I could believe, as they do, that we are not living in a world where war is actually raging at the present moment and the dangers of war are every day becoming more marked; if I thought that the political tendency during the last few years had been towards greater brotherhood between the nations, I should not have expressed the views to which I have just given utterance.

M. Sokol has reminded us of the necessity of shorter hours of work for ourselves and for others. I should obviously be in a very difficult position if my comrades had grounds for reproaching me with having jeopardised the eight-hour day to which they attach so much importance. I might say, however, that I have sometimes seen them working twenty-four hours a day themselves; that was when the miners sent out their appeal, when fires broke out in the galleries. Then there were lives to be saved, and I should hardly deserve a good reception from my comrades if I went back and told them that, on another occasion when there were lives to be saved, I was found wanting.

The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — I propose to be very brief because I realise that, if I prolong this discussion much longer, there is a danger that an afternoon session will have to be called to discuss whether we shall have an afternoon session. However, I do think it is important that we should make clear the one essential point that we are working for. M. de Brouckère and the rest of us are working for exactly the same thing, but he has spoken of the proposal with which I have had the honour to associate myself, with a number of other colleagues, as a proposal to have shorter hours of working. I think I must point out that this is not an entirely correct estimate of our intentions. We want to have shorter hours of sitting in order that we may have longer hours of work. We feel that we should reach our objective more clearly and more effectively if we could work longer and sit less.

M. VEVERKA (Czechoslovakia). — I am quite convinced by Lord Cecil’s arguments, and desire to withdraw my proposal.

General de Marinis (Italy). — I support the proposal that we should hold one meeting a day in the morning, save in exceptional cases.

I suggest that the meeting should begin promptly at 10 o’clock.

The President. — In future, then, we shall meet at 10 o’clock and sit until 1.15 if necessary. In exceptional cases, we can decide whether we wish to have an afternoon meeting.

The Commission rose at 1.10 p.m.

TWENTY-THIRD PUBLIC MEETING.

Held at Geneva on Friday, April 8th, 1927, at 10 a.m.

President : M. Loudon (Netherlands).

59. Examination of the Synoptic Analysis. Expenses. Point 5.

French draft.

In each of the Contracting States the total annual expenditure counted per budgetary year and allocated according to Tables . . . . . . . .

to land, sea and air armaments shall not exceed the figures approved by the several Contracting States in the present Treaty and mentioned in the said tables.

The President. — The discussion is now open on Point 5 of the chapter on Expenses.

M. Sato (Japan). — Limitation of armaments usually leads to a reduction of expenditure on national defence. I am convinced that everyone will make every possible effort to achieve this desirable result. Nevertheless, I am not sure whether the right way to get limitation of armaments is to limit budgetary expenditure.

Sub-Commissions A and B came to the conclusion that, in the present state of affairs, expenditure on national defence cannot afford a fair basis of comparison between the armaments
of different countries, for a number of reasons which I will not repeat to-day, as Mr. Gibson enumerated them yesterday. For these reasons, data concerning budgetary expenditure can only help in a comparison between the sums allotted to national defence by a specific country for one year and those set aside for the same purpose in other years. Politically, as Lord Cecil very justly remarked yesterday, this is of great importance, for it gives the public a chance to ascertain definitely whether there is an excessive increase in a country's military budget or not.

This very reasonable wish to examine the facts can be satisfied by applying the provisions contained in the articles which we have just adopted on First Reading, since they not only ensure publicity but also facilitate the examination of the budgets of foreign countries by means of the proposed model statement. This constitutes a sufficiently strong guarantee for public opinion, and if we can obtain this desirable result we ought to be satisfied. Personally, I could not support any proposal which attempted to go further.

A number of delegations say: "As regards expenditure, let us be content with indirect limitation". But, I ask you, what kind of indirect limitation? What have we limited so far? Have we limited effective? No. We all agree in saying that the number of military effectives must be limited, but a number of our colleagues are still doubtful whether the number of men wearing sailor's caps. We have not yet reached any limitation: we have not reached a limitation of air effectives and we have not reached a limitation of naval effectives. Have we limited expenditure? No. We all agree in saying that the number of military expenditure is not to set up a complicated, indirect system but to go straight for the goal and to say that not more than a certain amount shall be expended.

Obviously, if the obstacles to this limitation of expenditure proved insurmountable, we should have to attempt the inevitable; but the difficulties which have been pointed out do not seem to me such that we ought to abandon our convictions. What have the objections been? We have been told that limitation of expenditure is not a good system of comparison. I would reply that it is not a system of comparison at all; it is a system of limitation. We have set out to draw up a Convention for the limitation of armaments, not in any sense a Convention for the comparison of them. Every solution we have thought of so far we have tried to invest with this character of limitation, without worrying in the very least to find out how we were to establish comparisons between the legitimate armaments that each State may retain. That is a task for the future; it is the essential task that the Disarmament Conference itself will have to perform. Obviously, a country with a voluntary army will have much higher expenditure than a country with the conscription system. Where a soldier's pay is a halfpenny, expenditure will be lower than where it is a dollar, or several dollars. Nevertheless, it will be possible in the case of each country, given fixed figures for its number of soldiers and its purchases of material, to say what expenditure this involves, and consequently to lay down a maximum figure which may not be exceeded after a given date.

I do not want to waste your valuable time, but I must draw your attention to the following point. A number of delegations say: "As regards expenditure, let us be content with indirect limitation". But, I ask you, what kind of indirect limitation? What have we limited so far? Have we limited effective? No. We all agree in saying that the number of military effective must be limited, but a number of our colleagues are still doubtful whether the number of airmen and the number of seamen should also be limited. In short, though we agree in saying that each country shall not exceed a certain number of men under arms or wearing sailor's caps, we do not yet know whether we shall not be able to reinforce them by an indefinite number of men wearing sailor's caps. We have not yet reached any limitation: we have not reached a limitation of air effective and we have not reached a limitation of naval effective.

We have not yet reached a limitation of aircraft, because we do not yet know whether we must count all aircraft, or, if people take the precaution of putting some machines on board ships, such machines will not escape limitation. We have not yet, unfortunately, succeeded in limiting naval material. We have not limited anything at all.

We have succeeded in reaching an agreement on some fairly important points, but I am very much afraid that, if our work goes on on the lines on which it is proceeding now, we shall have to give our Convention a different name. It will be perhaps a Publicity Convention, a Convention laying down certain arrangements relative to armaments, but it will not be a Convention for limitation.

Before sitting down, I should like to indicate the downward steps by which, as I see it, we have proceeded.
We began with that celebrated trilogy, which has aroused such enthusiasm: Arbitration, Security and Disarmament. We then said: "We are not concerned with disarmament but with reduction". Then, in a subsequent stage of our work, it was pointed out to us that it would perhaps be too ambitious to attempt reduction, and that we should have to content ourselves with limitation. Well, we have now reached a point when we may have to erase even this last word.

I must say that I had hoped hitherto that we should at least succeed in limiting the most obvious aspect of armaments — expenditure — and by this means prevent a fresh competition in armaments and that accumulation of material which is the most dangerous form of preparation for war. I had hoped that, rich nations and poor nations alike, we should succeed in agreeing that a rich nation must not make ill use of its riches to arm itself to the teeth and accumulate material for crushing its neighbour.

If this feeling is not shared by us all, it is quite obvious that there is no use whatever continuing these discussions, and, as I said just now, when the speeches are over, there is nothing for me to do but resume my seat.

M. ERICH (Finland). — The Finnish delegation considers limitation of expenditure to be a most useful supplement to other methods of limiting armaments.

We have observed in the course of our deliberations that doubts have been expressed whether such-and-such a proposed method could really place any serious obstacle in the way of the competition in armaments.

In the opinion of the Finnish delegation, limitation of expenditure is a method that offers guarantees worth having in this respect. Technical progress leads to more and more costly forms of armament. Certain financial restrictions therefore are necessary to make it difficult to utilise technical improvements to an unlimited and arbitrary extent.

It is, however, obvious that budgetary limitations are only a supplementary method, and must be combined with direct limitation.

The differences between States, which originate in geographical situation, cost of living, habit, and social conditions, exercise nevertheless a considerable influence in this respect. For example, it is quite natural that for climatic reasons many countries should be obliged to furnish their armies with both summer and winter equipment.

Limitation of expenditure would be a means of smoothing out the inequalities and filling up the gaps left by the separate application of some particular form of limitation.

Viscount CECIL (British Empire). — I hope the Commission will not be unduly distressed by the somewhat melancholy oration which M. de Brouckère has made this morning. I think he looks at things too blackly. I have been in this movement to try to establish a new international system since the outset. I can assure M. de Brouckère that I have often felt as he feels, that we were not getting on at all. Very often during the discussion of the Covenant I felt a melancholy realisation of how little we were doing, and I comforted myself as far as I could with the old story, which is very well known, of the man who asked a statesman what were the qualities that were required for the conduct of public affairs, and he said that they were three. He was asked what was the first, and he said "Patience". He was asked what was the second, and he said "Patience". He was asked what was the third, and he said "Patience". I am afraid that that, though depressing, is true, and I think, if he will allow me to say so, that M. de Brouckère painted the picture in rather too dark colours. For instance, he said that there had been a steady deterioration in our objects, that we had begun with the idea of disarmament, that we had then retired to the position of limitation, and then gone on to the final resource of limitation, and that we are now abandoning that. Well, I do not think that is quite accurate. We began with the phrase in Article 8, "Reduction and Limitation", and when we talked of disarmament it was always understood that that was intended. There was never any suggestion that there was any prospect of a complete abandonment of the arms of all nations. I myself have not abandoned the hope that this Conference will result in a reduction of armaments. I am very confident that if it goes through, it will result, at any rate in some respects, in a reduction of armaments.

In spite of M. de Brouckère, I believe that we have already achieved a considerable stage towards a definite limitation. I take a more sanguine view of the limitation of the land forces. We have limited, very largely through M. de Brouckère's and M. Paul-Boncour's efforts, the period of service. That is something. I was told during the discussion that it was a very great deal. As you know, the British were anxious to extend the limitation to other fields besides the actual limitation of effective with the colours. Though I regret that we were not able to persuade the Commission to go to that length, I think we did a great deal in the limitation of land forces. But M. de Brouckère says: "Oh, you have done really nothing, because you have not limited, so far, the effective on the sea and in the air". Well, does he really think that is true, that you have left a complete liberty because you have not limited the effective of the sea and air? Surely not. Surely you have practically limited the effective in our air by limiting the number of fighting machines, and I have every hope that we shall limit in some way or another the ships of war, and, if you do so, you limit automatically the number of sailors. At least, that is our contention. As to the suggestion that you have not limited the aircraft because you have not directly limited the number of aircraft carried on ships, I think M. de Brouckère forgets that you have limited already the number of ships that can carry aircraft, and, since they cannot carry more than a certain number of aircraft,
you have limited the number of aircraft on the ships. Moreover, it is not really practical to suggest that a nation is going to carry the greater part, or even a considerable part, of its air armaments on ships; the greater part must be based on land. But I do not despair at all of arriving at an agreement as to the direct limitation of aircraft on ships. The matter is still open.

I venture to say to M. de Brouckère that I hope that he, of all men, will not be discouraged. The Commission owes a great deal to his inspiration and his ability and to the lucidity and force of his advocacy of the reduction and limitation of armaments. I should be indeed discouraged if I thought that those efforts were going to be in any way less vigorous in the future.

I am accused in my own country of being an unpractical idealist. Well, I believe that to be a false accusation. I have always endeavoured to recollect that, in dealing with human affairs you very often have to take the second best. You may wish for the best. You may wish for a false accusation. I have always endeavoured to recollect that, in dealing with human affairs you very often have to be content with what is second best, and the real thing you have got to try and find is a practical solution, a solution which will move you as much further forward as you can go, even if it only moves you a little further forward. For life is dynamic and not static; it is a question of which way you are going. If you are going forward, even if you are going slowly forward, that is all that in this world of sorrow and sin you can hope for.

I would not have wearied the Commission with this preface but for my fear that M. de Brouckère's observations might perhaps have been misunderstood outside and lead people to think that one of the chief advocates of disarmament - and I use the word in the popular sense - had lost courage and faith.

Now, the possibility of limiting expenses, personally I am very strongly convinced that a limitation of armament expenses is exceedingly desirable. I would not say it is absolutely necessary; I think it is a very important secondary method of limiting armaments. I think it is very likely the only way in which you can limit the actual weapons employed on land. I am very anxious that we should do it, but I am not convinced that the proposal to state a figure beyond which expenses shall not go is, at the present stage of the question, the most practically efficient way of accomplishing our object.

Let me examine, if I may, the proposal that is actually before us in that direction. It consists of two suggestions, a limitation of the total figures of expenditure on land, sea and air armaments, including, that is, not only the actual expenditure on weapons but the expenditure on personnel, on everything. If you examine the budgets of different countries you will find that the amount that is spent on the actual weapons is a comparatively small fraction, sometimes a very small fraction, of the total expenditure on armaments, and it is with the object of limiting the weapons that you want the limitation of expenditure, because, I think, we are attacking the limitation be used in many places. As to any rate on land, from a more direct point of view. If it be true that I think an examination of the figures will show that it is true that a comparatively small part of the total expenditure on land armaments is devoted to weapons, it is evident that a very small adjustment of the amount that you are spending on the total army will enable you to increase the amount you are spending on machines and weapons without seriously diminishing the effective force of your personnel. I, therefore, do arrive at the conclusion that a mere limitation of the total figure, particularly if it is extended not only to land but to land, sea and air as a total global figure, would really have next to no effect in limiting the total weapons of the country, and what you have to fear really is this - partly, no doubt, a general growth of the expenditure on armaments, and I do not think that is very likely to occur in the present financial condition of the world.

What is a danger, a conceivable danger and a formidable one, is this, that if you conceive a country having designs of carrying out a great policy of aggression at some time, what you have to fear is that at a given moment it will be able to concentrate a large amount of its resources in building up an overwhelming army. Well, I cannot see that any limitation of total expenditure is going to prevent that. To begin with, there is nothing to show that you will ask for and obtain this strict and rigid amount that it spends. It will probably ask for a little margin, saying, with some truth, that it must have a little margin for unforeseen emergencies. It is quite easy to save up that margin year by year, and have in your pocket a large resource which can be used at any moment to increase suddenly and overwhelmingly the armed force of the country.

That is to some extent true, though not equally true, even if you adopt the second proposal, namely, to limit the amount spent on actual war material. There is no definition of war material, and I think it will not be a very easy thing to define. But, assuming you get over that difficulty, assuming you can do it, what is the actual proposal? That you shall state a figure for each country of the amount that it will be allowed to expend in the whole five years on war material, that you shall then divide that by five and say that the annual amount to be spent on war material, which extends to the three services, is to be one-fifth of the total amount. But you are also to say that, if the whole of that amount is not spent in any one year, the surplus may be carried forward year after year and accumulated. Well, I must say I think that is a very dangerous provision. It seems to me that a provision of that kind opens the widest door to just the kind of possibility I have been suggesting - that, if there is such a great agressiveive power, here will be an opportunity for it, within the limitations of the Convention, in a manner to which nobody will have the slightest right to object, to build up gradually a great reserve which can be used at any moment in order to arm for the final method of aggression. I cannot think that that is a satisfactory provision, and yet I quite see why the authors of it put it in, because, particularly at this present moment, particularly in matters like the air and, to a very large extent, on land, we are in a period of transition. We are moving, too, towards greater mechanisation of all our services, military and civil, and you cannot undertake to say: This is the right amount to spend for each year for five years. You must leave a certain
elasticity in order to prevent, at any rate in our present stage of knowledge, inconveniences to
which no country in its present frame of mind would agree to submit. I am afraid that
if, as we now stand, we were to attempt to fix a hard-and-fast, rigid limit, we should do worse
than fail in our object; we should give the Powers the opportunity of preparing for
a great aggression within the limits of the Convention under conditions which it would
be impossible for any other Power, any threatened Power, to object to, because it would be
within the actual limits and rigid conditions which the Convention contained. Now, I do not
say for a moment that a position which will always persist. I think it is very likely
we shall get beyond that and be able to do a great deal more than we can do at the present
moment. But I cannot help feeling that, particularly in the face of the report of our budgetary
experts, it is very difficult to say that we are in a position now to know exactly what we ought
to do with regard to such a matter as that. The report, if anyone reads it carefully, is full
of statements which do honour to the prudence of the authors of them. I will read from page
13: 

"At the present stage, and subject to a more thorough enquiry into this matter, it
may be affirmed that States cannot in all cases extract from budget figures the total
amount of revenue paid into the Treasury."

Then it goes on to discuss the question of categories and points out the difficulty that at
present exists in forming any scheme that would be satisfactory in dealing with them. Well,
I cannot help feeling that in this matter we should do well to be satisfied with a smaller advance
than M. de Brouckère desires — and, for that matter, I desire. I think we are in the same position
as we were in Paris in 1919. We are trying an entirely new experiment, something which has never
been done before since the foundation of the world, so far as we know, and we have got to
proceed with great care and great caution, or otherwise we shall put on paper something
which looks very pretty and satisfying but will not in fact ever become an effective international
instrument. I should like to see the establishment of this system of model returns from
all nations. I think that is an immensely important advance on anything we have done.
I think, if that is accepted and carried through properly, it will bring before the world in a
way that has never yet been brought before it exactly what is happening with regard to military
expenditure. There will be a clear statement of the tendency of the military policy of each
country. I believe that would be an immense step forward. I would go further than that.
In the British draft we have included in the Preamble a statement "that the purpose of the
limitation of armaments by international agreement is to diminish the risk of aggressive
action by one State against another, and that all agreements for limitation of armaments
should be construed in the light of that purpose". I think that might be possibly put in more
precise and clearer language in some part of the Convention. The object of it is to enable
any Power to say: Notwithstanding the fact that there is no direct breach of this agreement,
yet the course of your expenditure is such as to lead us to believe that you are really making
preparations for aggressive action. That is a condition which must be brought before whatever
authority we think ought to have the power of dealing with such a matter as that. I should
hope that whenever we settle the complicated and difficult question of control, we shall not
in any way cut down the present activities of the Secretariat in watching the military
expenditure of the various countries. On the contrary, I should hope that, with the model
statement before them, they will be able to keep an even closer observation on everything
that is going on, and that the Council will be informed, and the Assembly will be annually
informed by their annual returns of expenditure, of exactly what is taking place. With that
kind of machinery, I am confident myself that you would get a very great diminution of the
danger of increased expenditure on armaments, and you would get a very great safeguard
against the possibility of transferring the race in armaments from the race in numbers to
a race in material, which I quite agree is a very serious danger. But in one of his early speeches
M. de Brouckère made another suggestion, namely, that we ought to be able to do a good
deal by perfecting the system which we began by the Traffic in Arms Convention by adding
to it not only a supervision of private manufacture but of State manufacture as well. With
that proposal I am in extreme sympathy, and, as M. de Brouckère is aware, I think, my Govern-
ment is prepared to accept a reform on those lines. It would not be proper to go into the
details of it now. It seems to me that, with that and with the gradual systematisation and
improved growth of publicity which we are providing, particularly with whatever control we
accept, we are going a very long way towards the goal which M. de Brouckère wishes to
reach. But I go a little further than that. I think we ought to agree that limitation of
expenditure is a desirable thing in itself. We ought to say to the world: We adopt this because we
think, for various reasons, some of which M. de Brouckère has already touched on, this is as
far as we can go for the moment. But it is only a step in what we want to do in the future. At the
end of five years we hope we can go further than that, and, with the system we shall have
then, with the model statements as to the actual expenditure of the various countries, we
shall then be able to establish, we hope, a more efficient system of limitation. I think we
should go a long way if we agreed in advance on those lines. Many people — many, if I may
say so very respectfully to M. de Brouckère, on the left in international thought, with whom
I have great sympathy — thought at the time that the Covenant was established that it was
so weak, so ineffective, that it was going to do no good and it was a fraud. I myself had to
argue with such people in my own country. There were attacks from both sides — the right,
which said that we were doing much too much, and the left, that we were doing so little that
it was quite useless. There was a great deal to be said for them. I remember a tremendous
attack on the necessity for unanimity — how you would never get a unanimous decision from
the Council or Assembly. I remember the scorn that was poured on the statement that
the mere publication provided for in Article 15 would ever be of service. I think experience
has shown that the critics were too depressed, and that the Covenant really did make a great advance — at least I hope so — in the international life of the world. I believe if we now, in dealing with this very difficult question of expenditure on armaments, are satisfied with a systematised form of publicity, together with, following the precedent of the Covenant, an international body which would keep an eye on any sinister movements in that expenditure, we should have gone a very long way towards limitation, and taken a step which would enable us to go still further at the end of five years from the present time.

M. PAUL-BONcour (France). — We all must feel that this morning’s debate, after M. de Brouckère’s grave words and Lord Cecil’s reply, goes far beyond the exact topic which was on the agenda. I do not complain of this. We are no longer dealing with the naval question. We shall, I trust, come back to it soon; the question remains, for all that, at the back of our minds as we speak. Sailors have a habit, and it is a good one, of making their reckoning. They do it, indeed, every day. M. de Brouckère has attempted to make his reckoning. He was right. It is well to know exactly where one is. Are his conclusions pessimistic? I do not know. Are they founded on fact? Certainly. We are fortunate in having as President of this Commission a representative of a country one of whose very great heroes made a remark which is one of the finest in history. He said: “To dare, one need not hope; to persevere, one need not succeed.” Our Commission might take these words as its motto. They apply to the rather gloomy statement of the situation made by M. de Brouckère, and they may serve also to rouse encouragement and strength not to abandon our task.

To dare, one need not hope! Undeniably, we are faced with difficulties; but a great number of these we could not hope to escape, and for that reason they should not discourage us. We undertook of our own free will a task which logically, according to the method repeatedly adopted by the Assemblies of the League of Nations, ought to have been preceded by another. Arbitration, Security, Disarmament! It is undeniable that a large part of our difficulties arises from the fact that, of our own free will — I myself was one of those responsible, and I do not in the least seek to deny it — we insisted on starting on the preparatory work for a reduction of armaments before the necessary organisation for international security had been set up. So long as this international organisation does not exist, or so long as local security pacts, based on the general spirit of the Covenant, covering the different regions of Europe and the world in general, have not been established in sufficient number, it is undeniable that a certain number of nations will not be able to come here with their minds so free and their hearts so determined as if they had come in different circumstances. Nevertheless, considering the technical difficulties of the task of disarmament — which is absolutely different from what over-simple or over-demagogic minds imagine it to be; which is complex; which is long; which, however, has never in history been attempted in concrete fashion — we are still doing a most valuable thing in pursuing this task if, at the same time, we pursue the policy of international security of which I spoke just now. What we have to do is the technical work; remember this, gentlemen, and do not be discouraged. We have to reply to the Council; to a questionnaire which it has put before us. We have to say whether a programme can be drawn up so definite as to take the definite form of a preliminary draft Convention. That is our task. Having reached the point at which we now stand, can we carry it through?

M. de Brouckère was right, in his dispassionate analysis of the situation — and Lord Cecil, in answering him, came to the same conclusion — in saying that, when all is said and done, in the positive conclusions which we have reached, in the definite texts which we shall be able to lay before the Council for a future Conference, all that we have really touched is the limitation of land effectives. Lord Cecil was right in saying that this is not to be despised — far from it. The limitation of land effectives, and — as a condition of this limitation, or, if you prefer it, as its result — the limitation of the period of service for land armies. But I cannot agree — if I did, I should be even more pessimistic than M. de Brouckère, who is not generally a pessimist — that we are dropping the limitation of air and naval effectives altogether, for to do so would be to compromise the limitation of land effectives. We must not forget that our Conference is one for general disarmament. This is the whole basis of our discussions. Arbitration, Security, Disarmament! It is undeniable that a large part of our difficulties arises from the fact that, of our own free will, and Lord

Why should this sort of general review of what we have done, this attempt to discover the precise point we have reached, arise when we are considering the limitation of budgetary expenditure? I quite understand M. de Brouckère’s train of thought, and I quite share it. It is not for any of us to attempt to bring pressure to bear on the delegations of great countries without whose adhesions the different points of the Convention cannot hope to succeed; it is not for us to try to induce them to adopt a point of view other than that which, from the explanations they have given in the names of their Governments, appears now to be theirs. But I also entirely agree with M. de Brouckère that we must not omit to point out the formidable gap which will be left in a Convention for the limitation of armaments if it does not include the limitation of expenditure on armaments. This is not only a gap but, if you will allow me to say so, it is an injustice. Yes, an injustice, for, after all, when I listened to-day and yesterday to the objections which were made, arising out of the difficulty of limiting budgetary expenditure, each word that fell on my ears, each argument brought forward, seemed to me equally applicable to the limitation of land effectives, and each difficulty that was pointed out in connection with the limitation of expenditure corresponded to difficulties of a very similar nature, and equally great, in the limitation of effectives.

Supposing, then, that nations that will be specially affected by the limitation of effectives and particularly by the limitation of land effectives — the only ones about which we have reached a definite decision in First Reading — should say to you: “This is a vital question...
and it is much easier to check, because it would be a question of examining budgets, and would be intended for the use of reserve forces. We have already dealt with the question of amounts that have been shown to exist. Is such a thing possible? Such a system of limitation, we believe that we are entering perfectly into the preoccupations of my friend M. de Brouckère. We are dealing with limitation of reserves. I do not say trained reserves, because we shall retain the right to train them all, but reserves immediately available; now, how is such limitation to be achieved?

It may be achieved in three ways. One would be inadmissible for Continental States; another does not appear to us to be practicable, unfortunately, in the present state of affairs; the third is practicable, possible and capable of immediate realisation.

The first method, inadmissible for Continental States, is the most direct and the most simple. It is certainly the only one that leaps at once to the mind of anyone considering the difficulty: namely, the method of embodying only part of the annual contingent. We have already given, and we will repeat in all sincerity, the reasons why, unless a general and international organisation is in existence, nations which are not protected by the strength of a powerful fleet capable of ensuring the defence of their coasts, cannot agree to the suggestion that, if no such organisation is in existence when they find themselves attacked, they should not have already trained and organised the whole of their able-bodied population to the suggestion that, if no such organisation is in existence, they may justify the somewhat despondent speech of my friend M. de Brouckère. We are dealing with limitation of reserves. I do not say trained reserves, because we shall retain the right to train them all, but reserves immediately available; now, how is such limitation to be achieved?

That day may come, and I hope it will; but I find myself going back to the familiar idea, which is an inseparable feature of all our work, that it will not come until the League of Nations has so increased in power — a state of things by no means existing as yet, as at this moment we are particularly aware — and is so strong, so powerful, so resolved to use its power at all times, that there will be no single dispute arising in any part of the world in which it will not intervene, having at its disposal, either of itself or by calling on forces belonging to all its Members, sufficient armed strength to ensure respect for its decisions. Then, when — in accordance with the idea of the Treaty of Mutual Assistance, the idea of the Protocol, and, what is more, the idea conceived by the late M. Léon Bourgeois when discussing the Covenant — the different nations were merely, so to speak, soldiers of the League; when they retained only such forces as the League decided were necessary so that they could come to its assistance; then, I think, there would not be the same prejudices and the same difficulties in investigating the state of their munitions, guns and reserve material.

This is a dream of the future. At one time I thought it was a dream of the present; and we must keep it in our minds if we do not wish the pessimistic atmosphere, which we sometimes inevitably feel, to prevail over us.

Now I come to actual possibilities. What have we got left? This idea is so clear and explicit that it cannot but occur to the minds of these whom the Council asked to draw up a draft Convention, and who are endeavouring to do so; I mean the idea that material which is intended for the use of reserve forces — which are a matter of concern to so many people — cannot be directly limited for the reasons I have just mentioned, but that it can be purchased with dollars, pounds or even francs. Well, then, let us limit this expenditure. In proposing such a system of limitation, we believe that we are entering perfectly into the preoccupations that have been shown to exist. Is such a thing possible?

It is every bit as possible as the limitation of effectives; it is just as tangible as effectives, and it is much easier to check, because it would be a question of examining budgets, and would be less likely to offend national susceptibilities than would sometimes be the question of fixing or exceeding the effective establishment. We have already dealt with the question of amounts voted and not spent, which might gradually accumulate and form some sort of war reserve
for a country with aggressive intentions. Expenditure allowed under the limitation scheme may only be carried forward from one year to the next; consequently this argument does not hold water.

Would there be inequality between different Powers? Undoubtedly there would, but the inconvenience caused to some of them when they conceived that, owing to the unlimited ideas which they had formed about the organisation of their armies and fleets, their expenditure appeared greater than that of other countries would be of a similar nature to the inconvenience felt by the countries which, for geographical or other reasons, require larger forces than others. These latter countries would feel a similar difficulty, in submitting estimates for forces which may appear very considerable, to the difficulty experienced by rich countries in submitting larger financial estimates than those which have to suffice for other nations.

Is this a question of comparison? Yes, it is.

But we already have such a comparison in the shape of the publication of budgetary expenditure, which you have approved. A portion of the inconvenience attributed to limitation is not due to limitation itself but to the publication of budgets. Lord Cecil considers that the introduction of this system of publicity is an important step forward. I am convinced that it is, and this system of comparison will bear its best—indeed its only—fruit if we have at Geneva some sort of international organisation able to follow the development of the different budgets or, in other words, to watch them. It is not usual to lay down a rule of international procedure without, at the same time, setting up an international organisation to see that it is carried out.

Is that enough?

Let us not play into the hands of those who do not take our work seriously and fail to realise the difficulties due to the present European and world-wide atmosphere of suspicion in which, by the irony of fate, we have been obliged to begin our work. The publication of budgetary expenditure is of great importance, but will it suffice?

To those of my colleagues who are opposed to limitation I would say: In the course of our discussions, we have dealt up to the present with the question of effective numbers, and in particular with the question of land effective numbers, which have taken up more of our time than the others, and about which we have reached a definite decision. If, in the case of these land forces, we had said: In any case it is of great importance to know what each army has at its disposal, and to exercise supervision over any successive increases which may take place in these armies during the currency of the Convention, I should be entirely in agreement with you that it is of great importance, but you did not decide that it would be sufficient. You adopted the system of limitation, and we gladly accepted it; we are not resigned to it, but resolved to carry it out. Why, I ask you, should the same system not be applied to dollars, pounds and francs?

M. Sokal (Poland).—I should like to explain briefly my Government's view regarding the publication of expenditure. We think that publicity would be extremely valuable, but that it would only constitute a small step forward because, in point of fact, it would only result in enlarging the Armaments Yearbook that is already published.

I think that, as M. de Brouckère pointed out this morning, the object of this Commission, namely, the limitation of armaments, will not be attained if the publicity method is the only one adopted. We must go further, and adopt some method which will provide a certain degree of security. M. Paul-Boncour stressed this point a few minutes ago.

If States are merely to be compelled to publish their expenditure, no steps being taken in the direction of limiting such expenditure, we shall not establish security. It will always be open to any Government to increase its expenditure as far as it may think fit, because no maximum figure will have been laid down, and without such a maximum it is obvious that there can be no security.

Security is essential, and we must insist on it. I therefore think that it is absolutely essential to go further than mere publicity, and to adopt the method of limiting expenditure.

A number of objections have been raised to this view. I do not wish to waste the Commission's time, but I want you to draw your attention to a point which seems to me somewhat significant. To revert to the argument used this morning by M. de Brouckère when he spoke about rich nations and poor nations, I want to emphasise the very marked difference between countries that have a large budget and those that have only a small budget. What will happen if we adopt the method of limiting expenditure? A State that can vote a large budget will not feel the result of limitation of expenditure to the same extent as a State having a small budget. I will give you an example: I will take two persons, one of whom enjoys a fairly large income, while the other has a limited income. When drawing up their budgets, these two persons allow a certain amount for medical attendance. What is the result? It is obvious that, for the man with the large income, the amount set aside for medical attendance will not be a very large item in his budget, and may be the means of warding off the results of a long illness. The other man, on the contrary, is differently placed, and will not be in a position to provide for any unforeseen emergencies.

This example can be applied to military expenditure. In the course of the last few years in particular, we have witnessed enormous technical developments in connection with aviation, artillery and munitions. A country with a large budget will be able to carry out all improvements that may be considered necessary, but a country which is differently placed will not be able to do so, and will therefore be left at a serious disadvantage.