The report of the Committee, together with the Minutes of the second session, will be communicated by the Secretary-General in sufficient time to allow of their discussion at the next Assembly.

It has been suggested to me that we should not adopt any decision at this meeting on the above resolution, but that the text should be approved at our next meeting. A draft will be circulated in the meanwhile. Nevertheless, I consider that the discussion is closed on the first item of the agenda.

5. Programme of Work.

The President. — I would remind you that yesterday we were requested to adjourn the discussion on the second item of the agenda until Monday as an act of courtesy to His Excellency Tewfik Rouchdi Bey, Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, who is coming in person from Angora. In these circumstances, if there is no objection, the next meeting will be held on Monday, March 19th, at 3.30 p.m.

THIRD MEETING (PUBLIC).

Held on Monday, March 19th, 1928, at 3.30 p.m.

President: M. Loudon (Netherlands).

6. Turkish Delegation Welcomed.

The President. — At our first meeting I had the great pleasure of welcoming the Turkish delegation, which, on the invitation of the Council, promised to take part in our discussions. It is to-day our great privilege to see at the head of this delegation His Excellency Tewfik Rouchdi Bey, the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs. I am very glad to extend a welcome to him at the beginning of this meeting, and to say how highly we shall value his co-operation.

7. Adoption of the Draft Resolution regarding the Work of the Committee on Arbitration and Security and Participation of Turkey in the Committee on Arbitration and Security.

"The Commission takes note of the progress made by the Committee on Arbitration and Security and of that Committee's decisions concerning its next session and the programme of work therefor.

"The Commission expresses its satisfaction with the results achieved and its approbation of the general spirit in which the Committee carried out the work.

"According to precedent, the report of the Committee on Arbitration and Security on the work of its second session, together with the Minutes of that session, will be communicated to all Governments. The Commission seconds the recommendation adopted by the Committee that these documents should be transmitted in sufficient time to allow of their discussion at the next session of the Assembly."

The President. — The draft resolution submitted to you by the Bureau represents the conclusions of our last week's discussion on the first point of our agenda. I believe you are all in agreement as to the formula. If, however, any delegate desires to speak again, I should be happy to call upon him.

G. Tewfik Rouchdi Bey (Turkey). — I desire, in the first place, to thank the President most warmly for having repeated his friendly welcome to the Turkish delegation. I also desire to convey my thanks to the Preparatory Commission for the courtesy shown to my country when it decided to postpone the discussion of the important questions on its agenda until to-day.

We have only been able to glance hurriedly at the remarkable reports prepared by the distinguished members of the Committee on Arbitration and Security.

I wish to say, at the outset, that the Government of the Turkish Republic highly appreciates the value of all pacific means for the settlement of international disputes.

I consider that, in the existing state of affairs, there are nevertheless certain questions which States cannot submit for arbitral decision. Accordingly, it is highly desirable that there should be a possibility of excluding certain questions from arbitration.

I also wish on this occasion to emphasise the advisability of attempting conciliation procedure before resorting to arbitration. The former possesses the great advantage of securing the consent of the parties and thus giving the solution arrived at a character of cordiality which is psychologically highly desirable and which cannot fail to increase the value and effectiveness of the procedure.

As regards the question of security, we are fully aware of the concern which it creates in many States in connection with the examination of the question of disarmament. We hold that it would be desirable, with a view to simplifying the consideration of this highly
complicated question, to draw a distinction between absolute ideal security and that relative security which is practically within our reach at the present time.

The ideal security for nations would certainly be that which, whenever it was in any way threatened, the appropriate means to restore it would be automatically set in motion. In this way, for example, an armed conflict between two countries would be arrested by some combined arrangement, precisely in the same way as a State prevents a contest between two of its provinces.

To establish such a degree of security in international relations would be possible only if a federation consisting of all civilised countries was created. While it would be too much to expect this advanced social and political situation to be achieved at present, we are justified, it appears to me, in being satisfied with a security which is necessarily relative.

We consider that the most appropriate means of attaining the maximum degree of relative security would be found in the conclusion of treaties of non-aggression which would at the same time involve neutrality. By such treaties we understand bilateral or multilateral undertakings not to commit any act of aggression, accompanied by an obligation never to take part in any combination designed to facilitate aggression by a third party against any one of the contracting parties.

From the moment that all States have declared their pacific intentions, the conclusion of such treaties would not, it appears, encounter any difficulty; nor would there be any objection to them on the part of States Members of the League of Nations on the ground that, as they involve the obligation of neutrality simultaneously with that of non-aggression, they would be running counter to the provisions of the Covenant, which prescribe in certain circumstances the application of measures decided on by the Council.

An undertaking of non-aggression accompanied by that of neutrality is indeed just as compatible with the Covenant as the undertaking of non-aggression itself, subject to the application of any Council decisions in regard to repressive measures.

It appears to me that there would be no question of applying the provisions of the Covenant in regard to aggressors to a non-Member State which had given evidence of its pacific aspirations by declaring its readiness to conclude treaties of non-aggression and neutrality with all countries without any distinction.

If we suppose that the State in question violated its undertaking of non-aggression, it follows as a matter of course that the undertaking of neutrality assumed in regard to it by other States, whether Members or non-Members, would become invalid immediately it became an aggressor and thus broke its pledge. From that moment States Members would resume their entire liberty of action and could fulfil their obligations arising out of the provisions of the Covenant.

For these reasons, the Turkish delegation holds that treaties of non-aggression which include a neutrality clause would serve to a great extent, and without imposing any positive contribution on the contracting parties, to banish war in the most effective manner possible at the present time.

The Turkish Republic, which has already concluded more than one treaty of this nature and which is at present negotiating a number of others with various Governments, feels bound to propose that the Preparatory Commission should examine this type of treaty.

It is convinced that if the measure of security, which is already necessarily of a relative character, is still further diminished by eliminating an element which, if it were allowed to play its part, would prevent any assistance being furnished to an aggressor, such action will certainly not serve the cause of peace.

The condemnation of the violation of such an engagement as being an international crime, followed by the penalty which consists in every other State breaking off all relations with the guilty State, would contribute effectively to outlawing war, an aim which is as fervently pursued by non-Member States as by the States which form the League.

In the present circumstances, I consider that it is in the direction I have indicated that the problem of security is most likely to find a practical solution.

Before concluding, I desire to add that the Turkish delegation reserves its right to follow up this declaration by submitting further documents and statements during the subsequent meetings of the Committee on Arbitration and Security and those of the Preparatory Commission.

The President. — I think that you will all agree with me that it is not necessary at present to discuss the declaration made by the Turkish representative. Naturally, his speech will be transmitted to the Committee on Arbitration and Security.

I am glad to note from what he has just said that Turkey desires to take part in the Committee on Arbitration and Security. I would remind you that, according to the terms of the resolution of September 26th, 1927, the Committee on Arbitration and Security consists of all States Members of the League of Nations which already belong to the Preparatory Commission, other States represented on the Commission being invited to become members if they so desire. I note that Turkey desires to become a member and I hereby invite her to join the Committee.

Tewfik Rouchedi Bey (Turkey). — Turkey will be happy to co-operate in the work of the Committee.

The President. — I believe that the members of the Commission agree to the draft resolution submitted by the Bureau.

The resolution was adopted.

8. **General Discussion of the Draft Convention of Immediate, Complete and General Disarmament** submitted by the Delegation of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics

M. Litvinoff (Union of Socialist Soviet Republics), — The Soviet draft Convention of Immediate, Complete and General Disarmament, sent by the delegation of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations a month ago, is entirely based upon the main theses presented by the Soviet delegation at the fourth session of the Preparatory Commission in November last.

I have the honour to draw the attention of this Commission to the fact that the draft Convention provides for land, naval and air forces in all States to be put into a condition, not later than one year from its coming into force, rendering it difficult to employ them for warlike purposes, thus considerably limiting the possibilities of armed conflicts even before the carrying out of complete disarmament.

I consider it unnecessary to dwell in detail on the separate points of our draft Convention, since the latter was accompanied by a special explanatory note, sent to all members of the Commission.

I venture to remind the Commission that no attempts to give serious consideration to the Soviet proposals were made at its fourth session. During the extremely brief discussion of this question, not a single serious argument against the Soviet proposal nor any practical criticism of it was put forward. The Soviet delegation is naturally unable to accept as criticism such remarks as have been heard, solely that the Soviet draft Convention is "too simple", or that, even if complete disarmament were accomplished, the peoples would all the same fight among themselves in disarmed and disorganised masses with sticks, penknives, fists, etc.

The cautious attitude and the refusal to discuss our proposals, at the fourth session of the Commission, displayed by the other delegations may partly be explained by the novelty and unexpectedness of the Soviet proposals, although attempts were made to cast doubts even upon the novelty of our proposal. M. Beneš, I seem to remember, referred to a Norwegian proposal similar to ours supposed to have been made to the League of Nations. Now, I took the trouble to verify this statement, but was unable to find any traces whatsoever among the material of the League of Nations, including those with which the Disarmament Section of the League was so kind as to furnish me at my special request, of any proposals for general and complete disarmament.

At the Third Committee of the Assembly of the League in 1924, the Norwegian delegation mentioned wishes expressed by the Inter-parliamentary Union regarding the reduction of war budgets by one-half in the course of ten years. Even this was qualified by the stipulation that war expenditure incurred by individual States under the Covenant of the League of Nations should not be included in war budgets subject to reduction. There was not a word as to the abolition of the other half of war budgets, nor anything whatsoever about the reduction of armed forces and materials for war. The Danish delegation, referring to the same Inter-parliamentary Union, expressed a desire for the reduction of land armed forces in all countries in accordance with the resolutions of the St. Germain Peace Treaty, i.e., allowing each State the right to keep an army of 5,000 per million inhabitants, and naval armaments in accordance with the Versailles Treaty, i.e., 2,000 or 4,000 metric tons per million inhabitants. According to these calculations, the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, for example, would be entitled to an army of almost 735,000 men, which would be an increase of 175,000 to its present standing army of 560,000 men and 200,000 metric tons to its navy, while China would be entitled to a standing army of something like two millions. Such have been the most drastic ideas with regard to disarmament so far expressed in the League of Nations. I say "ideas", for none of these have been crystallised in the form of proposals or resolutions or made the object of serious discussion. Lord Esher's plan, aspiring only to the reduction of land armed forces, had also nothing in common with the idea of complete general disarmament. It may therefore be considered irrefutable that the proposal for complete and general disarmament has been put in a definite form before the League of Nations, and indeed brought into the sphere of international relations, for the first time, and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics will always be proud to call this initiative its own. If, however, I dwell upon this point, it is from no motives of mere sentiment, but because it seems to me that, in certain League of Nations circles, an erroneous conception exists that the Soviet delegation is wasting the Preparatory Commission's time on proposals already discussed and rejected by the League. Such an erroneous conception, unless corrected, might react unfavourably on the further procedure with regard to our proposal.

The Soviet delegation, anxious as it was to speed up the consideration of its draft Convention and thus bring nearer the beginning of real disarmament, nevertheless agreed to the postponement of the consideration of its proposals until the fifth (current) session, bearing in mind their novelty and desirous to give an opportunity for all members of the Commission and their Governments to make themselves ready for their practical consideration. With this aim, the Soviet delegation provided the Secretary-General of the League of Nations with the draft Convention, accompanied by an explanatory note, a month before the beginning of the fifth session of the Preparatory Commission, for despatch to the respective Governments, and now considers itself entitled to ask for the practical consideration of its proposals without further delay.

The Soviet delegation considers it essential once more to emphasise the fact that nothing but the fulfilment of the Convention for Immediate, Complete and General Disarmament proposed by the Government of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics is capable of solving in a satisfactory manner the problem of general security and peace. This would also in itself solve a series of other vexed international problems, such as the freedom of the seas, and so
on. At the same time, the execution of the Soviet scheme would not come up against the difficulties inevitably connected with partial disarmament. By way of example, I would cite the matter of control, for it is perfectly obvious that it must be infinitely easier to control total than partial disarmament.

I would further emphasise the fact that the basis of disarmament as proposed by the Soviet delegation, being uniform and applicable to all States, is therefore the most equitable and the least likely to arouse opposition from individual States. It is precisely this, in my opinion, which constitutes the obvious simplicity of our proposal, although, strange to say, some of its opponents have endeavoured to make an added objection of this very simplicity.

The scheme offered for the consideration of the Preparatory Commission represents a single organic whole, which cannot be split up into separate parts. It is wholly penetrated by a single idea and therefore requires, first and foremost, consideration and acceptance of its underlying principles.

The Soviet delegation therefore considers it indispensable that general discussion should result in a reply—not merely theoretical but quite clear and definite—being given to the questions: Does the Preparatory Commission accept the principle of general disarmament during the period mentioned in the Convention? and, Does it accept the proposal as to that rate of disarmament which would make war impossible in a year's time? The Soviet delegation considers that all other delegations and their Governments have had time enough, if they cared to, to study both the underlying idea of the Soviet proposal and the draft Convention in its finished form.

During the three and a-half months which have elapsed since the fourth session of the Preparatory Commission, the Soviet delegation has had ample opportunity to convince itself that the idea of complete disarmament has been met and accepted with enthusiasm by the broadest masses of both hemispheres and by all progressive and peace-loving elements in human society. The innumerable addresses and resolutions of sympathy from labour parties and multifarious organisations, groups and societies from all parts of the world which I am still receiving testify, among other things, to this. I will not take up your time by enumerating all of them, but will venture to read only one—a collective address I received here a few days ago, signed by representatives in thirteen countries of a hundred and twenty-four organisations (chiefly women's) whose total membership runs into many millions. This document, showing as it does the lively response among women evoked by the Soviet proposals, derives special importance from the extension of women's political rights now proceeding in some countries.

Their declaration is as follows:

"On behalf of the growing world opinion, embodied in the organisations which we represent, we gratefully welcome the courageous proposals of the Soviet Government for complete and general disarmament, and note with satisfaction that they are to be discussed in detail by the Preparatory Disarmament Commission at its next meeting on March 15th.

"Being convinced that these proposals represent the will of the great mass of people in every country, who are determined to make an end of war, and that where the will exists practical means can be realised for giving it effect, we urge with all the strength in our command that the members of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission should examine the Russian proposals with the utmost care and with the determination to place before the International Disarmament Conference, when it meets, some concrete scheme for the complete disarmament of the world within a definite period of time."

This document bears one hundred and sixty-three signatures of the secretaries of the respective organisations (see Annex 3).

The Soviet delegation entertains not the slightest doubt as to the acceptability and desirability of its proposals for the broad masses of the population, who now look to the Governments and the bourgeois groups and classes supporting them to make the next move.

Mere theoretical discussions and arguments about disarmament no longer meet the case—it is time to take practical steps towards the realisation of disarmament. It seems to me there has been more than enough of discussion of disarmament. I shall venture to furnish members of the Commission with a few data (Annex 4) from which it will be seen that, as well as the general Assemblies of the League of Nations and the Council of the League, the thirty-eight different commissions and other League organs devoted over a hundred and twenty sessions—not sittings, mark you, but sessions—to this question of disarmament, no fewer than fourteen different commissions and other League organs devoted over a hundred and twenty sessions—not sittings, mark you, but sessions—to that question of disarmament, on which one hundred and eleven resolutions have been passed by general Assemblies of the League and the Council of the League alone. Turning to the results of this vast quantity of work, the documentation of which has taken reams of paper, we are forced to the conclusion that not a single step of real importance has been taken towards the realisation of disarmament. The Soviet delegation considers that an end should be put to a situation which may discredit the very idea of disarmament. It would be loath for its proposals to serve merely for the multiplication of commissions and sub-commissions or other organs, which would simply add to the existing resolutions with the same negligible results as those so far achieved. The Soviet Government has not sent its delegation to Geneva for this sort of work. Absorbed in the vast problem of rebuilding an enormous State, with a population of one hundred and fifty millions, on entirely new principles, and in the creation of a new social-economic structure in the face of the open opposition of the whole of the rest of the world and in the most unfavourable circumstances, it would never have turned aside from this work if its attitude to the problem of peace were not everything that is serious, practical and sincere and if this problem were not the keystone of its whole policy. In this connection, I may be permitted to mention, by way of illustration
of the Soviet Government's serious attitude to the questions under discussion here, the fact that, although it did not take part in the League of Nations Conference which passed the Protocol for the prohibition of the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases and of bacteriological methods of warfare, only adhering to the latter at the last session of the Preparatory Commission, it was one of the States (three in all) to ratify this Protocol, still unfortunately a deadletter owing to its non-ratification by other States, the majority of which are Members of the League.

We are aware that shallow persons and equally shallow Press organs pretend to see inconsistency between the peace-loving proposals of the Soviet Government and the maintenance and improvement of the Red Army. As a matter of fact, the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics already has a smaller army, not to mention its navy, than any other State in proportion to its population and the extent of its frontiers, while if we consider individual security—the favourite theme of this assembly—it must be admitted that the Soviet Union is in a less favourable position than any other State. It has almost the whole of the world against it in unceaseful hostility to the new State. A glance at the Press of any country on any day—full of attacks, invectives and libels on the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics—will serve to show the extent of this hostility. A number of countries have to this day not recognised the existence of the Soviet Government, already in its eleventh year, and non-recognition can only be construed as an act of hostility. But even those countries recognising the Soviet State not infrequently indulge, with a few exceptions, in hostile manifestations which are often grave tests of the patience and peaceableness of the Soviet Government. The new Soviet State has seen its territory invaded by foreign troops which caused detriment to the State, from the results of which it has not yet recovered. A part of the territory of the former Russian Empire the population of which unmistakably aspires towards the Soviet Union is still occupied by foreign troops, preventing it from exercising its right of self-determination. All this notwithstanding, the Red Army has remained during the ten years of its existence, and will continue to remain, exclusively a weapon of defence. The Union of Socialist Soviet Republics does not require an army or a navy for any other purposes, all aggressive or imperialist aims or ambitions being completely foreign to it.

In any case, the Soviet Government has declared, and still declares through its delegation in Geneva, that it is ready to abolish all the military forces of the Union in accordance with its draft Convention as soon as a similar decision is passed and simultaneously carried out by the other States. The Soviet Government declares once more that it is ready for this, and asks the other Governments represented here if they also are ready.

The Soviet Government expects a reply to this question at the present session of the Preparatory Commission at which all the more important States are represented. No sub-commissions or any other auxiliary organs—in fact, no body of a lesser composition and authority than the Preparatory Commission—can give an answer to this question. The Soviet delegation hopes that this answer will be given quite openly, publicly, in the full light of day and under the control of public opinion. This reply should, of course, be brought up for final sanction by the International Disarmament Conference, an early date for the convocation of which is urged by the Soviet delegation.

The proposals formulated by myself in two questions are so clear as neither to demand nor admit of preliminary diplomatic negotiations and conversations between different countries and groups of countries.

In conclusion, I will venture once more to repeat the two main questions underlying our proposals:

1. Does the Commission agree to base its further labours on the principle of complete and general disarmament during the periods proposed by us? and

2. Is it prepared so to carry out the first stage of disarmament as to make the conduct of war, if not an absolute impossibility, of extreme difficulty in a year's time?

Only when unequivocal and affirmative replies have been given to these questions will it be possible to enter upon the detailed consideration of the Soviet draft Convention.

The Soviet delegation considers itself entitled to count upon special support from the delegation of that Government which is now publicly making a proposal for the prohibition of war. The sincerity of this proposal could not be more convincingly confirmed than by the adherence of its authors to the Soviet draft Convention for complete disarmament, pursuing the ban not merely of these actual prohibition but also of the abolition of the possibility of war. Since armed forces have no other raison d'être but the conduct of war, and since the prohibition of war would make them quite superfluous, it would appear that consistency and logic must dictate to the Government concerned the support of our proposal.

The Soviet delegation is convinced that all delegations here present realise the responsibility and importance of solving this great question, and realise also its vast consequences for the fate of humanity, and that, therefore, no delegation will refrain from publicly expounding the point of view of its Government.
The most important passage of the Norwegian proposal in question reads as follows:

"The signatory States undertake to decrease the total sum mentioned in Article 2 in the proportion of 10 per cent from the first budgetary year beginning after December 31st, 1927. The said decrease of 10 per cent will be repeated from the first budgetary year beginning after December 31st, 1929, and so on every two years, the total sum mentioned in Article 2 being taken as a basis, until, after a period of ten years, the military, naval and aerial budgets show a total of not more than 50 per cent of the budgetary basis stated in Article 2."

I think it must be admitted that M. Benes was perfectly correct in stating that the Norwegian proposal was very similar to that of M. Litvinoff. I merely wished to make these remarks to remove any possible misunderstanding.

The proposal of the Soviet delegation provides for a disarmament which would be carried out by stages. That idea was also recommended at the third session of the Preparatory Commission. The point which appears to be particularly worthy of interest is that the proposal of M. Litvinoff endeavours to confine these stages within a fairly narrow time-limit. Without going into any discussion as to the length of the period proposed, I wish to emphasise one point which appears to me of essential importance. If you decide in favour of disarmament by successive stages, it appears to me essential that these stages should follow as closely as possible upon one another, and that the period provided for the effective reduction of armaments should be as short as possible. Do not let us forget, gentlemen, that we are dealing here, as stated in M. Litvinoff's proposal, with measures for the "safeguarding of the general peace", or, as it is stated in the Covenant, for the "maintenance of peace".

Moreover, the proposal which is before us shows the aim which has to be attained during the first stage, namely, "the limitation of the possibility of armed conflicts". That is indeed the decisive point. I have emphasised on various occasions the fact that I could not regard the first stage as an effective first step towards the goal of disarmament unless that first stage includes a genuine reduction of armaments and also the obligation to proceed to further stages which should follow as closely as possible upon one another. The aim of this first stage must be "to limit the possibility of armed conflicts". I entirely agree with the Soviet proposal, which aims at eliminating from the very first stage those military factors that can be used for purposes of aggression, and I note with particular satisfaction that the proposal also takes account of the suppression of means of warfare which are capable of being used against civil populations.

If it is proposed, as has been so clearly stated in the Preamble of the British Draft of last year, to diminish the risk of aggressive action by one State against another, we must begin with those factors that can be used for an aggressive war, because it is the apprehension of such a war which has given rise to the need for security; but the most effective security against a war of aggression consists in the elimination of all those military factors without which a war of aggression would be impossible.

Having regard to the fact that M. Litvinoff's proposal brings out this idea, and that it may, in consequence, contribute to its realisation, I consider that a detailed discussion of this proposal is necessary after the general discussion in the interests of our labours.
For the moment I will confine myself to these general remarks. As regards the details of the Soviet proposals, it would be desirable, in my view, to combine the discussion in regard to them with the second reading of the draft Convention, which we are called upon to draw up. I would remind you, if the President will allow me to touch on this point at this stage, that the second reading has to take place during our present session, as our President declared to us in the course of the last session with the unanimous assent of the Commission.

In the very interesting statements of M. Litvinoff, there is one point to which I wish to draw your very special attention. It refers to the convening of the Disarmament Conference. That idea corresponds entirely to my own point of view which I had the honour to express at the last session, and it is for that reason that I am perfectly prepared to support it at the present moment. It is, indeed, the case that the scope of the first stage of disarmament can only be fixed by the Conference itself. It is therefore only logical for M. Litvinoff and also myself to ask that the convening of the Conference should be fixed at the earliest possible date. I have still to submit a proposal in regard to that subject. I will therefore return to that question in a more detailed manner when we come to discuss the third item of the agenda.

Tewfik ROUCHDY Bey (Turkey). - The delegation of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, in making proposals of so wide a scope, have shown their attachment to the ideal of peace. It is true their proposals may appear very radical, but they added that they would, however, be prepared to discuss all measures of a practical nature which might conduce towards real disarmament. That fact is evidence of the importance which they attach to this ideal of disarmament.

I desire to congratulate the delegation of a neighbouring and friendly country upon the attitude which it has thus manifested in regard to the question of peace. It is hardly necessary to add that the aim of the Turkish Republic—as, indeed, of all other countries—is to obtain the entire abolition of the scourge of war.

As regards the question whether the Soviet proposal should be referred to a special committee or should be discussed by the Preparatory Commission, it may be argued that that is a question of procedure. Nevertheless, in view of the general interest which is felt by public opinion in regard to this question, I submit it is desirable that the proposal should be discussed by this Commission.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.
some countries which, owing to their wealth, the organisation of certain industries and the extent of their population, could—if at any moment they so decided—arm again much more easily and much more rapidly than other poorer, smaller countries not so well endowed from the industrial point of view. I wonder, in such a case, what degree of security this second class could really count on.

But, even setting aside this doubt, there is another aspect of the problem to be considered.

We have always spoken of security here in relation to disarmament; we have always regarded guarantees of peace from a strictly military point of view. But, gentlemen, if we are to have real guarantees of peace, we must provide the nations with another kind of security, with a wider and more comprehensive security: a guarantee that they will be allowed to live and develop in perfect liberty. There is such a thing as military security, but we must also have social and economic security, for, without it, complete, general and immediate disarmament would not ensure what I have just described as genuine peace—that is, peace founded upon justice.

Gentlemen, I have no intention at the moment of submitting any scheme which would provide for economic and social security. I have mentioned this point simply as leading up to the conclusion which I desire to place before you, namely, that I should be prepared to accept the Soviet delegation’s proposal if M. Litvinoff could supplement it in such a way as to satisfy these doubts.

Count Claouzel (France).—As General de Marinis has just said, the proposal of the Government of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics on which M. Litvinoff spoke yesterday is undoubtedly in keeping with the ideal which we all have in view, namely, the establishment of real peace with the least possible delay. M. Litvinoff has set before us a comprehensive scheme to be put into effect at once and we have studied it with all the care it deserves. It provides for stages to be completed within a period of four years.

As the representative of Italy very rightly pointed out, we cannot but ask at the outset whether the realisation of such a programme is actually consistent with the present world situation and more particularly with the geographical, economic and social aspects of security. And the Preparatory Commission is bound to raise this question, since it has to act in virtue of very precise instructions, namely, the resolutions passed by the Assembly of the League of Nations; these resolutions are perfectly explicit, referring as they do to an article of the Covenant of the League which has often been mentioned, that is Article 8, and laying down specifically in terms now familiar to us all the conditions under which the question of the reduction of armaments is to be examined.

Now that we are about to embark upon a discussion in response to M. Litvinoff’s invitation of yesterday, we are bound to consider the question before us with the closest attention and to deal with it within the compass of our terms of reference.

The question is not a new one; the principles set forth in the draft Convention communicated to the League a few weeks ago by the delegation of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics were announced at our last session. A number of replies were submitted on that occasion which M. Litvinoff has just criticised, perhaps with undue severity. I might mention an argument brought forward by M. Paul-Boncour, an argument imbued with the soundest common-sense, to the effect that it was a mistake to change horses while crossing the stream when intent on arriving at the point which all of us are equally desirous of reaching without delay.

There is another question, however, that we have to consider in view of the very explicit text now before us. The position to-day is different from what it was in November, when we were discussing a general proposal: we now have before us a text very different, it is true, from the texts discussed at such length here—the texts of the British and French delegations—which formed the subject of lengthy and exhaustive examination. It is a thousand pities that this new proposal could not have been discussed along with the others. In this connection, may I venture to express my regret—a feeling which must certainly be shared by all the other members of the Commission—that the delegation of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics should not have seen its way at the time to accept the invitation extended by the League of Nations and that its proposals could not be discussed at the outset under the same terms and on the same footing as the other proposals.

At the stage which we have now reached, however, we could hardly agree to abandon our prolonged and careful work, which was the fruit of so much mature deliberation and was at times carried on under conditions of almost painful intensity in view of the gravity of the problem confronting not only the Commission but world opinion. If the Commission were to immediately and categorically “yes” or “no” to the question put to us yesterday, would it not also be replying “yes” or “no” to the question of whether it has fulfilled its mandate or faithfully carried out the very specific task entrusted to it? That is the serious problem now before us. And, in view of this problem, the Commission might perhaps consider whether, instead of giving a radical reply such as this, it could not examine the new proposals submitted to it at the last minute, on the same footing as those already examined—that is to say, under privileged conditions due to the fact that they could not be studied from the same aspect at the very start.

I simply mention these points, but at the same time I would indicate the doubts which most of my colleagues must be feeling when they have to consider whether the immediate reply for which they have been asked can really be given at once and whether it does not raise a number of subsidiary questions, questions which I have just indicated, relating both to the earlier work of our Commission and to its terms of reference. We have very definite texts to work under, particularly Article 8 of the Covenant, to which I have already referred as forming the basis of all our deliberations.
Lord CUSHENDUN (British Empire). — I agree with what has just been said as to the necessity for examining these proposals in relation to the draft Convention on which we have hitherto been working.

I listened with great interest to the remarks of the honourable delegate for Italy and with a great deal of agreement with what he said, but in one particular I confess I am not entirely in agreement with what he said, though it concerns only a matter of procedure. He declared he thought it was unnecessary to examine the articles in this draft Convention in detail, and he appeared to me to accept the proposition of the honourable delegate of the Soviet Government that it was a question of either acceptance or rejection as a whole. He went on to indicate that, in his opinion, the proposition should be rejected as a whole for the reasons which he gave.

Well, I confess my own view is different. I think it is necessary to examine these articles in detail and I must say I was very much surprised, seeing what a complicated subject this draft Convention with its sixty-three articles is, that the honourable delegate for the Soviet Republics, who is responsible for it, did not think it necessary yesterday to give us any explanation of the proposals or any examination of the question as to how far these articles do in fact, in a satisfactory manner, give effect to his own principles.

Everyone who has had any experience of drafting legislation knows that there are a few things more difficult than to put into precise language general principles which it is desired to express, and therefore it appears to me to be essential, unless we are to reject these proposals at once, that in some way we should go through them carefully to see how far they give effect to the purpose for which they have been brought in view.

I must say I was also surprised that so experienced a man of affairs as Count Bernstorff, in speaking yesterday, did not appear to perceive the necessity for this examination. It is quite true that he told us—and I agree—that they must be taken in conjunction with the draft Conventions which are already before the Commission; but I do not think he indicated that in his view it was necessary to see how far these proposals actually in fact carry out the principles which M. Litvinoff said underlay them. The first of those two principles is one which I imagine everybody, not only in this room but everyone everywhere, would accept as a general principle—that is, as an ideal: Are we or are we not in favour of complete and immediate disarmament for all the world? As an ideal, is there anyone prepared to give a negative to that proposition? Complete and general disarmament has been the ideal of mankind since the dawn of history, and, as I say, as a general proposition I certainly am in favour of it. But if it comes to the question: Is it practicable? Can it be done now, in the existing condition of the world and having a view to realities?—then I am bound to express very profound doubt, and I say that that is a question which deserves and must have examination in detail.

The Soviet delegate said that there were only two questions which we had to decide. If I recollect rightly, those two questions were, first: Are we in favour of immediate disarmament? and, secondly: Are we prepared to take the first step within one year, as proposed in these articles, and the remaining steps at a later period? Well, with all due respect to the Soviet delegate, I entirely dissent from the view that those are the two questions which we have to decide. I think we have two very different questions to decide, and I will submit them to the Commission. The two questions that we have to decide, in my view, are these: first, Do these proposals prima facie offer a practicable scheme which makes it desirable for us to give them detailed examination? The second question is, if we answer that one in the affirmative: If we are to examine these articles in detail, how are we going to carry out that examination? As neither the author of these proposals nor the two delegates who gave them general support yesterday have made any observations on the articles themselves, I will ask the Commission to bear with me while I make some reference to one or two of these articles.

I would like to say, before I embark upon that part of my observations, that while I, of course, intend to observe the utmost personal courtesy to the honourable delegate of the Soviet Republic, I will ask him to be good enough to allow me to speak with perfect frankness and freedom, because unless we do that when matters of worldwide importance are before us—unless we can speak our minds quite freely and frankly—I submit that there is no use in our coming here at all, and I hope that M. Litvinoff will not imagine that I have any personal disagreement in what I am about to say.

Now, the first thing, very relevant to the discussion as a whole, to which I think we ought to direct our minds is the question. In what spirit have the Soviet Government sent a representative to take part in our proceedings? We must bear in mind how this whole world movement for disarmament arose, and how it has hitherto been sustained. It arose, as we all know, out of the horror which all mankind has conceived for the bloodshed and the abominations of war, which we learnt from the experience of the great conflict which ended ten years ago; and it was in order to make any recurrence of those horrors as nearly impossible as may be, to make it impossible, and, secondly, to express, and therefore it appears to me to be essential, unless we are to reject these proposals at once, that in some way we should go through them carefully to see how far they give effect to the purpose which they all of us, as I imagine everybody, do desire.

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because, of course, if we are to examine these very far-reaching and drastic proposals, it is surely not only our right but our duty to scrutinise the spirit in which they are put before us, so far as that is possible. Now, Mr. President, on this point some light is, I think, thrown by an article which appeared a few days ago in the official organ of the Soviet Government—the newspaper Izvestia, extracts from which I have seen in an English translation. This article appeared only last week, long after an invitation had been sent and accepted by the Soviet Government to be represented here. This article speaks with all the old scorn and contempt of the League of Nations; it speaks of what it calls the "absolute futility" of the discussions at Geneva, and it is only just to the Soviet delegate to recall that he used very language himself yesterday with regard to the futility of the discussions here. This article then goes on to tell us that the scorn which they express is shared by the Soviet delegates, and this is significant. It tells us that their purpose in coming here is to unmask the capitalist States. That, as we all know, means the whole civilised world outside their own frontiers. They have come here to unmask the capitalist States and—notice these words—"to disclose the avowed purpose of the secret proposals for disarmament which, I believe, no one can expect from these capitalist States. Now, Mr. President, I submit that that article amounts to the clearest possible intimation to us that the purpose of the Soviet delegates is not really to give us any genuine assistance in the work upon which we are engaged, but that, as this paper clearly shows, there is an ulterior motive, and I think we are entitled to know what that ulterior motive is.

So far as I am concerned, I am afraid I must in one respect disappoint the Soviet delegate, because I am not prepared to be a party to any sabotage of their proposals, and I do not myself believe that there is any delegate in this room who is prepared for any such conduct as that, and it is for that very reason (because I should resist, if it were necessary, any attempt at sabotage of these proposals) that I think they merit the most careful, laborious and detailed examination at our hands, and I am prepared to support them.

But there is another point that arises in this connection, and I think I shall be able to show the Commission in a moment that what I am saying is founded upon evidence. If there is any question of sabotage at all, it is sabotage of the League of Nations by the Soviet Government, and I intend to show the Commission that that appears in the articles themselves. That, among other reasons, is why I think it is my duty to say to the Soviet Government the plain truth that they have no right to ask the League of Nations to help them in a cause which they do not believe. We are an organ of, the League, and we are bound to consider any proposals brought before us in relation to the work of the League and to the constitution of the League. We should not be doing our duty if we passed over a consideration of that sort. If the Commission would have the patience to do so, I should like it to look at this draft Convention, and it will be found that, from the first word to the last, there is nowhere any mention of or even an allusion to the League of Nations in any way whatsoever. Its authors pointedly refuse even the most humble homage to the League, for they do not even suggest that the Convention, if signed and accepted, is to be registered with the League. It is an established European practice, and even more than European, that all countries which are Members of the League have undertaken that any agreements or treaties which they may make are to be registered with the League, and therefore, even though the Soviet Government is not itself a Member of the League, it might have been expected, when presenting these proposals to the Preparatory Commission, that they would at least pay that harmless homage to the League, knowing our practice, by inserting in these articles that registration should be with the League of Nations.

In the same way, there is no suggestion that the ratifications are to be deposited at Geneva. There seems to be a fixed purpose of avoiding or, if I may use an English slang word, of boy-cotting the League of Nations and Geneva and all its works.

I would ask the Commission to look at Article 63 of the draft Convention, and I submit that that article justifies the observations which I have just made. It would have been so simple, and would not have committed them to anything, to have said, knowing the position that Geneva as the seat of the League of Nations now holds, that the ratifications should be deposited there. Not at all! According to these proposals, "the instruments of ratification shall be drawn up in five copies and shall be deposited in the capital of one of the States in the five Continents". That is a proposal which shows imagination, but, as a practical proposal, what possible advantage can there be in having these ratifications in five copies and depositing them in some capital of some continent without specifying what they are to be? I say that it is not a matter which has anything whatsoever to do with the principles of these articles. It is not necessary to insult the League of Nations in that way or to neglect it in that way. It has no bearing whatever upon general disarmament. You get general disarmament just as well by sending your ratifications to Geneva as if you were to send them to Timbuctoo. I go on; let us look at Article 60. Now, Article 60 is one where one might very well expect that the functions of the Council of the League would be invoked. It says there: "All disputes between States shall be settled"—not by the Council of the League, as we have proposed in many other draft treaties—"all disputes between States shall be settled by the Permanent International Commission of Control". That is an entirely new body which it
is suggested shall be created by this Convention, in some respects similar functions to those now performed by the Council, and, at any rate as far as this article is concerned, I can see no purpose in giving to this new body the right and the power—if it can have any—of settling disputes. I can see no purpose in giving to it the right to repeal or amend the Covenant unless it is, as in the former article that I have cited, a resolve that under no circumstances shall any sort of recognition be given to the League of Nations. But even more significant than that is Article 58, and here I would very seriously call the attention of all members of the Commission to what it means. Article 58 lays it down that: "Within one year of the entry into force of the present Convention... all acts of national or international importance which are contrary to the above-mentioned clauses shall be repealed or amended". No one will deny that, under certain contingencies which are specified, military action is sanctioned and even enjoined by the Covenant of the League of Nations; therefore the Covenant of the League of Nations is contrary to the above-mentioned clauses in the Russian draft, from which it follows that, if this Article 58 were accepted, it would require within twelve months the repeal of the Covenant, on which I make this first observation, that anything which involves the repeal of the Covenant is beyond the competence of this Commission; the Covenant can only be repealed by the machinery which is contained in the Covenant itself, even if one could suppose for one moment that this Commission or any organ of the League would accept an international agreement, such as this clause involves, even recommending to the Council and the Assembly the repeal of the Covenant. I mention that because it is only one of many other matters which I propose to consider, details of that are a perfectly fair question to ask because—I am only speaking of things that are notorious to the world—for years past the whole basis of the world policy of the Soviet Government, as expressed both by their leading men and by their Government-owned newspapers, has been to produce, by some means or other, armed insurrection—which amounts to civil war—in every country where they can exercise any influence. If that is so, therefore, I think before we proceed much further, some assurance should be given us by the Soviet representative that in that respect there is to be a complete change of policy. We ought to add that it by no means follows that because this clause or other clauses are manifestly unacceptable, therefore the whole of this draft Convention is to be cast aside. That is where I differ from my honourable colleague, the delegate for Italy. I do not think, for the reasons I am endeavouring to give, that it is necessary to reject the whole of this Draft, because, so far as I am able to see, there are parts in it which at all events are worth discussing and which might possibly supply valuable suggestions for the work which still lies before us. Now, Mr. President, the honourable Soviet delegate yesterday indicated that he desired this Convention either to be accepted or rejected as a whole, and I think he went so far as to intimate that something of that sort must take place, and he indicated that we were not at liberty to take it to pieces and accept a part of it and reject other parts of it, but that it must be taken as a whole. Well, if that is the position which he takes up, it is contradictory to his own words, because, if the Commission will turn to the front page of this draft Convention, it will find there, over the signature of M. Litvinoff himself: "The documents mentioned..." that is to say, this document, the draft Convention and the Explanatory Memorandum: "The documents mentioned are intended to serve as a basis for the further discussion of the proposal of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to redraft the Covenant of the League of Nations in the fullest and absolute manner...". Therefore, when this Convention was put in our hands, it was with the most direct notice by its author, or at all events by the gentleman who is responsible for it before us, that it was only intended for a basis of discussion, and with that notice I submit it is perfectly impossible to maintain now the position that we are not to discuss it, that we must accept it or leave it, and I repeat that, in my humble judgment, it is very necessary that we should neither accept it nor reject it but submit it to careful examination.

I have another point to refer to with regard to the spirit in which these proposals come before us. I think the point I had in mind was alluded to at least by the honourable French delegate, and I think also by the Italian delegate. Admittedly our objective is to establish, if we can, the peace of the world on a sure basis, and I assume that the desire of the Soviet Government is also to establish peace. But, Mr. President, what kind of peace?

There are two kinds of war and where there are two kinds of war there are two kinds of peace. The two kinds of war are, of course, international war and civil war, and, of these, civil war is the more horrible. It is a fair question to ask, I think, whether the Soviet Government set their face against civil war as resolutely as against international war. I refer to civil war not only in their own country—where I am somewhat concerned—but in other countries of the world, and I am speaking of matters that are notorious to the world for years past. There is nothing generally recognized to ask because—I am only speaking of things that are notorious to the world—for years past the whole basis of the world policy of the Soviet Government, as expressed both by their leading men and by their Government-owned newspapers, has been to produce, by some means or other, armed insurrection—which amounts to civil war—in every country where they can exercise any influence. If that is so, therefore, I think before we proceed much further, some assurance should be given us by the Soviet representative that in that respect there is to be a complete change of policy. We ought to be told whether the Soviet Government have now decided, in contrast with their recent policy, no longer to interfere in the affairs of other nations and to leave to all other nations complete liberty to maintain and develop their own institutions in any way they like. Unless they are prepared to give us some such assurance as that, we are faced with the unpleasant fact that they themselves and their policy will be, as they have been recently, the largest obstacle to the carrying out of any such far-reaching proposals as they themselves have now put before us. I submit that is a very important point for the Commission to decide.

There is another point which is rather different from but still cognate to it. There are some nations, of whom my own country is one, which are in different parts of the world in close relations and contact with peoples which are not of the same race and the same language and who, as we have experienced, are sometimes very troublesome neighbours. Now, these people are not Members of the League of Nations; they are not amenable to any influence by the League of Nations; they will not under any circumstances be contracting parties to the Soviet draft Convention or any similar agreement, and, as I say, they are sometimes troublesome neighbours and might at any time, in the complete absence of any sort of armament,
be a danger to the good order and the lives of the people in adjoining countries which are either under the sovereignty of Great Britain or for which Great Britain is responsible as Mandatory under the League of Nations. There are other nations represented in this room which have similar responsibilities. I think they will agree with me that it requires the most careful consideration whether even the most enthusiastic and ardent lovers of disarmament would not be doing more harm than good by depriving themselves of any sort of control over those other peoples to which I have referred.

Now, there is a general proposition contained in this Draft which is very often assumed to be true, and which has very far-reaching importance in relation to these proposals, to which I should like to call the attention of the Commission. I find in the Preamble of the Russian Draft the statement: the signatories to this Draft “solemnly acknowledge that the only true method which can contribute to the safeguarding of peace is the general and complete abolition of all armed forces.” If that means—I am not quite certain that it does necessarily mean—it that the complete abolition of all armed forces would make war impossible, then I think it is a proposition which is very open to criticism. One of the two delegates who spoke before me—I do not remember at this moment which—very pertinently draw attention to what I believe would be the natural consequence of accepting that proposition. If we were to-morrow to abolish all the implements of war in the world and to disband all the trained forces, both on land and sea, as is proposed by these articles, one result would certainly be to give supreme power to those nations which could most quickly improvise armed forces and manufacture implements of war. The result of that would, of course, be that other States, and especially small States which were the neighbours of larger Powers with great industrial capacity, would more than ever before be at the complete mercy of those States which had the resources which they themselves lacked.

The Soviet delegate, as he must be, is evidently aware of this particular objection which can be raised, and in his Draft he attempts to deal with it by Articles 30 to 36. I think it is very doubtful whether those articles would really be effective for the purpose for which they are designed and do anything to remove the danger that might be caused to other States by the assumption that the mere absence of arms would make war impossible; but at any rate I call attention to that as a further reason for maintaining that we must give all these articles the most careful consideration.

A similar observation applies to those parts of the proposal which deal with local police, and which are contained in Chapter III under the heading of “Organisation of Protection.” I am not quite sure I fully understand how paragraph 2 of Article 38 would work out in practice. I understand from that paragraph that the strength of local police to be permitted should bear a ratio to the population of the country concerned. That, of course, is reasonable enough, and I do not raise any objection to it, but I do not quite see why it should be also related necessarily to the length of the means of communication. In a rough-and-ready way I do realise that, but if it is to bear any fixed proportion to the means of communication, I think it is open to the greatest objection, and I do not at all understand the meanness of our words that the local police shall be related also to the “existence of objects which are deemed by the State to require protection.” I do not know what sort of objects the draftsman had in view when he spoke of these “objects which are deemed by the State to require protection.” These clauses may be open, probably are open, to a perfectly reasonable explanation, but—and that is another reason for examining them—we cannot pass over and accept offhand articles like this which require not only examination but explanation as to the real meaning that underlies them. But what is clear, at all events, in these articles dealing with local police is this, that while, after four years, no armed forces of any sort or kind are to be allowed for national defence, yet local police, armed with rifles, are to be allowed in a strength in some way related to and dependent upon the length of communications in the country. How would that work out? There are very long communications from the Polish frontier to the Bering Sea! The result would be that a country of enormous area like Russia, while nominally abolishing all armed forces, would, under the title of local police, be in command of a very powerful army, whereas her neighbours of very much smaller area and very much smaller population would be dependent upon quite a small force really proportioned only to internal matters. In my country we have national police armed with rifles at all. These articles lay down that all the local police are to be armed with modern weapons. In my country there is no local police which has any sort of arms more lethal or more serious than a truncheon, and there is no local police force which is either recruited by or under the control of the Government at all. We do not want it. Our police force is quite sufficient for the duties it has to perform, and we have no need for an armed police force at all. Is it not rather anomalous that no account at all is taken of national conditions of that sort? I have not enough knowledge whether similar conditions obtain in any other country, but I would suggest that, if the local police is really desired only for the necessity of repressing crime and maintaining order, the Soviet delegate should consider an amendment to his proposals by which those in his own country and elsewhere who accept these articles would give up the idea of a local police with firearms in their hand, and accept instead the model of the British police! In a similar connection, may I call the attention of the Commission to Article 15? There we are told that revolvers as well as sporting guns are to be permitted under licence, and that the revolvers are intended for personal defence. Is not that rather a curious provision for a civilised country in the twentieth century? Bear in mind that there are to be no means of national defence. That would be a most sinful thing! That would be incompatible with the great ideal which is the principle underlying these proposals—no sort of defence of your country, but carry your revolver to protect your own life! Therefore it appears that even the local police, armed with rifles, are not sufficient to give protection to the citizen. I submit
that, whereas a provision of that sort may possibly be required in parts of the world where human life is not very adequately protected, it is wholly unnecessary in countries like those with which I am most familiar, where the citizen does every day go about his daily work in constant fear of his life. I think that in these days it is the duty of the State to protect the life of the citizen, and I must say I am surprised—among other causes of surprise—that the Soviet Government should come this provision of exaggerated individualism in which the defence of the private citizen, elsewhere committed to the State, should be placed in his own hands, and that he should be armed with revolvers at the very moment when all other sorts of armament are to be abolished.

There are many features, as I have endeavoured to point out, in these proposals which appear to me to be quite unsuitable for highly civilised countries; but the particular point I want to make in connection with them is that, whether they are desirable or not, they are not in any essential connection with a scheme of disarmament. You may have disarmament without having any of these clauses to which I have referred, and there are many alternative ways in which the same objects might be subserved; but there are some of these articles which are not merely objectionable on those grounds as being unsuitable for civilised countries, there are some of them which could not be accepted by any Government of a constitutional country. If you search through these articles you will find several places, among others Article 3 and Article 9, which provide that within a single year a certain whole category of legislation is to be repealed. No representative of a Government which has a parliamentary system can pledge a Parliament to repeal a quantity of Acts in advance. It is quite certain that, if any such proposal were made in Great Britain, Parliament would resist it extremely. I am sure that the same is true of any country under a constitutional system. You would probably find it highly resented by the representatives of the people that they had been pledged in advance in matters of this sort by the executive Government. Take, for instance, Article 10. Article 10, which has already been referred to, appears to me one of the most astonishing proposals that has ever been put before an assembly of this sort. Let me refer to its terms. "Immediately after the entry into force of the present Convention, the following shall be prohibited by law."

There again, I say that no member of the executive Government can give a pledge that anything shall be prohibited by law. Legal enactments in my country and in many others are the prerogative of a free Parliament; it would be idle to expect any of us to put our signature to proposals of this sort in which we declare that within a year we will make a number of prohibitions. Speaking for my own country alone, there is no liberty which the Parliament of Great Britain more tenaciously maintains than the freedom of the Press and the freedom of study of all sorts, and in this Article 10 we are actually asked to declare that, immediately after the entry into force of the Convention, we are to have prohibited by law scientific research and theoretical treatises. There is no definition of what sort of theoretical treatises or what branch of scientific research, and until that is explained, it is impossible to say that this would prohibit scientific research of practically all kinds. But not only that—there is to be prohibited by law works on military history. What would that mean? It would mean that it would be an offence against law to publish a new translation of Caesare Gallic War or Xenophon's *Anabasis*. It would be an offence against law and you would be liable to prosecution and penalty if you were to write and publish a new life of Frederick the Great or of Napoleon. It is all very well for the Commission to laugh, but I think it is a very serious matter. We have these proposals before us, as M. Litvinoff has told us, to accept or reject. There is no liberty to examine them, no liberty to take out that proposal dealing with military history and to maintain some other part of the Draft. It appears to me that we are bound to subject all these matters to the closest scrutiny, and I think that scrutiny should be the first place be by the Preparatory Commission in some form or other; I do not say by the whole Commission—it might be referred to some smaller body, but, at all events, the Preparatory Commission must make itself responsible for a close scrutiny of these proposals, and when it has done so I think it will be very necessary that the Governments which we represent should also be given an opportunity of expressing an opinion in detail, accepting some articles and rejecting others if they think fit.

Now, as a representative of a naval Power, I, of course, scrutinise particularly the articles dealing with naval armaments. I am not prepared summarily to reject them; some of them, I think, could obviously not be accepted in their present form, and to the full extent of the Russian proposals, but, without going so far as that, it is quite possible that these articles may be found to contain some valuable suggestions. For example, the British Government has already announced that it is quite prepared, in agreement with other Powers, to agree to the total abolition of submarines. That is one of the proposals in the Soviet Draft. We have declared already that we are quite prepared for that, and I think it is quite likely—though I cannot say definitely—that my Government might agree also to the total abolition of some of the categories of war material which are appended to Article 11.

It is surely very unfair, when the honourable delegate for the Soviet Republic comes here and speaks in the very scornful way that he has done of the work hitherto accomplished by the League, to leave out of account altogether the very considerable progress that has been made. I could not help asking myself, when I listened to his words yesterday, whether he has ever heard of the Agreement that was arrived at Washington very shortly after the war. I shall be borne out by representatives of other Powers which took part in that Conference that very considerable progress was made, falling short, of course, of what is now proposed by the Soviet Republics but still, as compared with previous conditions, gratifying progress in the direction of naval disarmament, and even more recently my Government has let it be known that they are quite prepared to carry the Agreement there come to a little further. The enormous ships of modern times known as "capital ships" were at Washington agreed to be
limited, or, at any rate, it was agreed to prevent a further growth of these enormous vessels. The British Government have said that they are quite prepared—in agreement, of course, and only in agreement with the other signatories of the Washington Conference—to take a further step in the direction of reducing the size of these enormously costly and powerful vessels, and also to increase the period which must elapse before they are replaced by new ships, and we are willing to do that at any time when the naval Powers concerned think that the time is opportune for such a move as that.

All those things may not be very rapid progress; it may very well be that ardent enthusiasts may get impatient because we do not go quicker and do more, but what we have already done and what we have intimated our willingness to do does represent—as I think, at any rate—a very important advance along the road to disarmament. The articles in this Draft under the heading “Protection at Sea” certainly have the merit of both originality and imagination, but to determine whether they are suitable for the purpose for which they are designed requires more technical knowledge than I have. The professed object of the maritime police mentioned in Article 40 is to deal with pirates and slave-traders on the high seas. I am speaking now from advice that has been given me on these proposals by competent naval officers. I am told that for that purpose, the very purpose for which they are designed—dealing with pirates and slave-traders—the police vessels must be capable (it is common sense to see that it must be so) of overhauling any vessel that can take the sea, and they must carry sufficient armament to force any such vessel to bring to if required. The naval advice I have received is to the effect that the type of vessel specified in Article 43 would be entirely unsuitable for this work, that it is impossible to build a vessel of the necessary sea-keeping qualities for work on the open ocean in all weathers within the tonnage limits laid down. If that is so—I only give that on advice which has been given to me—clearly that is a point which the Soviet delegate himself would desire to amend. It cannot be that he wants the clauses he has got in his Draft to nullify the intention which he has with regard to protection at sea. The same criticism applies still more obviously, I think, to Article 44, vessels intended for Customs supervision. I think the draftsman of this clause appears to be under the impression that territorial waters are always smooth waters, which is very far from being the case. It is difficult to understand why any officers and men who are to be employed on Customs duty should be condemned to take the sea in little boats of 100 tons without any armament capable of arresting high-speed vessels engaged in smuggling.

I apologise to the Commission for the length of the draft that I have made upon their patience, and I can only, by way of reparation, assure them that I shall not occupy their attention much longer, but there are one or two more salient features of this Draft Convention which I think it is necessary to keep in view. The Commission will have observed that there are a great many clauses in which the actual operation of the clause is deferred until we can arrive at a special convention. I hope that the criticism of these proposals which I have ventured to address to the Commission will justify what I set out by saying, that it is very necessary to give them examination. The criticism is, of course, very far from being exhaustive, but it has, I hope, been sufficient to show how numerous and complex are the questions which might very well be raised without in any way touching the principle of complete disarmament.
I wish now to say a word about the second question which I mentioned at the outset of my observations. The Commission may remember that I said the first question was whether any large proportion of this draft Convention would be found, when fully examined, to lie within the boundaries of practicable policy. But I can say with complete sincerity that I very much wish that the opposite were the truth. The planet upon which these Russian proposals could be put into practical operation would be a better and a happier world than that which we at present inhabit. I have already said that, almost from the dawn of history, mankind has held before its eyes the ideal future when swords would be beaten into plough-shares, when disarmament would be complete and when war would be no more. But through the long centuries until our own time no man has ever attempted in any real and practical way to grapple with that ideal, to make it a reality, and we may be thankful that upon us it has fallen to make the first step forward towards that ideal. To some it may appear that that step is feeble and hesitating. For myself, I think the very fact of this generation for the first time making practical proposals of any sort, or even taking them into consideration, is an immense progress towards that ideal. But, Mr. President, progress is the work of evolution, and I think there are probably other delegates in exactly the same position. I therefore have had no opportunity up to the present, no possibility, of consulting my Government as to their view of this Convention, and the Government of Great Britain have therefore had no opportunity, as is very essential, of taking the opinion of the various technical departments upon them, and I cannot understand the view that a month is ample for deciding a matter of this great difficulty and complexity. After all, let us realise that the proposals before us are a sudden attempt to realise an ideal that has long been before the world, making most far-reaching proposals affecting every department of the Government of every State, and I certainly should not have thought a few months, even six months, would have been an excessively long period for the Governments and their representatives for examining so complex a problem. I therefore dissent altogether from the idea that we can here and now at this session give a decisive answer one way or the other to this draft Convention. I repeat that, so far from being able to consult them—my view certainly is that these proposals should be given the most serious and careful examination, without which it is utterly unreasonable to expect any body of business men, representatives of a number of different States, to arrive at a decision either for rejection or for acceptance.

Mr. President, I should not be candid with the Commission if I professed to be sanguine that any large proportion of this draft Convention would be found, when fully examined, to lie within the boundaries of practicable policy. But I can say with complete sincerity that I very much wish that the opposite were the truth. The planet upon which these Russian proposals could be put into practical operation would be a better and a happier world than that which we at present inhabit. I have already said that, almost from the dawn of history, mankind has held before its eyes the ideal future when swords would be beaten into plough-shares, when disarmament would be complete and when war would be no more. But through the long centuries until our own time no man has ever attempted in any real and practical way to grapple with that ideal, to make it a reality, and we may be thankful that upon us it has fallen to make the first step forward towards that ideal. To some it may appear that that step is feeble and hesitating. For myself, I think the very fact of this generation for the first time making practical proposals of any sort, or even taking them into consideration, is an immense progress towards that ideal. But, Mr. President, progress is the work of evolution, and evolution is slow. I see no ground for pessimism; I see no ground for regarding our discussion on this question as contemptible futilities; I believe we have made great progress; but do not let us make the mistake of imagining that we can reach the goal more quickly or more easily or more effectively by taking wild leaps at intervening obstacles instead of setting to work with perseverance and patience to level them into a practical road before our feet.

M. SATO (Japan). — I should be failing in courtesy, both in my personal capacity and as representing the Japanese delegation, if I did not ask to be allowed to make some observations in regard to the draft Disarmament Convention submitted to us by the Soviet delegation. Without going into a detailed examination of that Draft, I should like to point out that the principle upon which it is based is the idea that general and complete disarmament would necessarily confer absolute security. That conception is contrary to the conception which the Japanese delegation has hitherto maintained. We have always considered that it is first of all necessary to have a certain measure of security, and that you can then proceed simultaneously if you like (I am willing to go as far as that), to a reduction of armaments, which must, however, go hand-in-hand with the increase of security. We have taken that point of view because that is the basis upon which the Covenant itself has placed the question. You will remember that the first paragraph of Article 8 of the Covenant lays down that:
The Members of the League recognise that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety.

That paragraph therefore recognises the justification of a minimum degree of armaments necessary to ensure the safety of any State Member of the League of Nations.

In this connection, I should like to offer a personal illustration in order to explain my own conception of security. I do not carry arms for my own defence, whether at Geneva, which I have visited on so many occasions during the past two years, or in Paris, where I enjoy the hospitality of the French Government. I have never felt any need to carry a weapon, for the simple reason that I have never been molested, and I feel the greatest confidence in the security which is provided for me by the excellent national police service. Three years ago it was my lot to visit Moscow, where I had the honour of being the first representative of my Government after the resumption of diplomatic relations between the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and Japan. My mission was a very brief one, as I was soon afterwards replaced by an Ambassador, but during my stay in Moscow I again felt no need to carry any weapon for my personal defence. I was not aware at that time that Article 15 of the draft Convention submitted by the Soviet delegation, the importance of which has just been emphasised by Lord Cusshendin, would one day see the light, but even had I known of the existence of that article, which authorises individuals to carry arms for their personal defence, I should not have carried arms, because I felt just as safe in Moscow as I have done in Paris, Geneva or other European countries.

But that was not the case with all my friends. I have known people who considered that it was advisable for them to move without weapons for their defence; in spite of the excellent order which was maintained in those towns, they did not get the sense of security. On the other hand, I myself, if I were to go to some tropical country overrun with wild beasts, should feel it necessary to carry a weapon, possibly a rifle.

I think this illustration shows that security is really subjective, and also shows the relation which exists between the sense of security and the question of disarmament. It is not sufficient to tell a person that he has no cause for fear. He must feel convinced that he is safe before he feels it necessary to carry a weapon, possibly a rifle.

As regards the practical point of view, any detailed discussion of the draft Convention submitted by the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics appears to me to involve the necessity of making a fresh start and doing all the work already undertaken by the League in connection with the reduction of armaments over again. I admit that this might, as an extreme case, be justified, but I confess to having grave doubts as to its advisability in the present case, and I remind you of what we said on the subject by M. Paul-Boncour and by M. Benes at our last session. At the meeting of November 30th, 1927, M. Paul-Boncour declared that the Soviet proposals "represented a conception of disarmament which the League of Nations had renounced on the very day it was founded ", and M. Benes spoke in the same sense.
For those reasons, I have grave doubts as to the expediency of submitting the proposals of the Soviet delegation to the Assembly, which long ago refused to accept such a conception of disarmament.

In conclusion, I desire to add that the States Members of the League of Nations, including my own country, have subscribed to the provisions of the Covenant, which imposes certain obligations and confers certain rights. It also lays down certain lines of conduct and certain methods of procedure from which the Member States cannot deviate. From that point of view, the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics is not in the same situation as States which are Members of the League, because Russia has not signed the Covenant. It is quite comprehensible, therefore, that the Soviet delegation should feel at liberty to draft a Convention which is not in harmony with the Covenant and perhaps to carry out disarmament by methods which differ from those which Members of the League have been attempting to carry out in the past.

While I am quite prepared to recognise that the attitude of the Soviet delegation is explained by the special situation of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics in regard to the rights and obligations arising out of the Covenant, I trust that that delegation will realise the special obligations and duties of States Members of the League of Nations.

If the point of view of the Soviet Government is not identical with that of the Members of the League at the present moment, I nevertheless cherish the hope that our co-operation will continue, so as to enable us one day to reach results which may be acceptable for all of us. The freedom of the situation which the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics enjoys in regard to the League of Nations allows it to make proposals which may prove to be a very useful contribution to our work, and I express the fervent hope that the Soviet delegation will continue its co-operation with the League and endeavour, with us, to smooth away the difficulties and to find some common ground for agreement.

Dr. Riddell (Canada).—Mr. President,—I am sure the Commission is greatly indebted to the honourable representative of the British Empire for his masterly analysis and criticism of the draft Convention submitted by the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, as well as to the honourable representative of Japan for his further amplification of this analysis. Their timely remarks, I believe, have shown how extremely necessary it is that we should make an exhaustive study of these proposals. The Canadian delegation has followed the present discussion with keen and sympathetic interest and agrees that the proposals of the Soviet delegation should be given full and careful consideration, which implies their careful and exhaustive study by the Government which we have the honour to represent. We cannot, therefore, quite understand how it could be expected that we should be prepared to discuss intricate and comprehensive proposals which have been circulated so recently as February 21st. The Canadian Government has not had time to examine them with that thoroughness demanded by their far-reaching importance, still less to transmit any instructions to its representative here. It will be evident, therefore, to the Commission that, however much we might desire it otherwise, it would be exceedingly difficult for us to consider these proposals at the present moment.

The meeting rose at 7.30 p.m.

FIFTH MEETING (PUBLIC).

Held on Wednesday, March 21st, 1928, at 10.30 a.m.

President: M. Loudon (Netherlands).


M. Rutgers (Netherlands).—When studying the draft Convention submitted by the delegation of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, I asked myself, as we all do when a proposal is submitted to us, how far I could agree with it. As regards the principle underlying this proposal, viz., total disarmament, I reached a conclusion not far removed from that of Lord Cushendun. When I try to conceive to myself an ideal human society and to conjure up the picture of that perfect human community, I see no armaments, no aggression, no defence, no police, no crimes and no correctional courts. Like Lord Cushendun, I believe that this is an ideal shared by the whole human race, whether we expect it to be realised through evolution leading to the gradual improvement of humanity, or whether we base our hopes upon divine promises which speak of a new heaven and a new earth where justice shall reign supreme. Total disarmament is one of the essential features of an ideal. So far, I am in agreement with the proposal before us, but when it comes to the realisation of this ideal I must part company with the authors of this proposal. We cannot expect it to-day from the men, nations and Governments making up the human community, whose imperfections, errors, mistakes, cupidities and rivalries, not to mention their hatreds, recur on every page of history and are experienced daily. The moment has not arrived when countries can lay down the arms they carry in the defence of justice. While there are many people in all countries with good intentions but blind to realities who applaud the proposals we are discussing, Governments have other responsibilities and cannot allow themselves to be deceived by a mirage.

Unless I am mistaken, two arguments are adduced in favour of total disarmament,
The first seeks to show that the armaments race contributes more than anything else towards increasing distrust between States, which is the real cause of wars. If armaments are removed, this distrust will disappear and with it wars also.

According to the second argument, the removal of armaments will make war a material impossibility and will thus solve the problem of general security and peace.

For the moment I will content myself with examining these two arguments, and I must apologise in advance for referring to elementary matters, but there are occasions when it is necessary to repeat elementary truths.

I will leave on one side the questions of detail, however important they may be—such, for example, as the practical value of a draft Convention which, according to its Article 61, will only enter into force “as from its ratification by all the States”, including neighbouring and sometimes turbulent States, of which Lord Cushendun spoke. I will say no more upon the question whether it is desirable to conclude a Convention containing no indication of its duration or possibilities of denouncing it—in other words, a Convention which is intended to be everlasting.

I will therefore revert to the two arguments adduced in favour of the principle of total disarmament. I think we are all agreed in admitting that the armaments race greatly contributes to the distrust existing between States, but the argument that armaments are the sole cause of this distrust and that it will disappear with the removal of armaments seems to me to belong to the realm of fancy, a realm which we all delight to visit from time to time, but which is not entitled to permanent representation on our Commission. The danger of the armaments race is a very real one and it is recognised by the Covenant of the League. The Netherlands Government is fully alive to it, as its delegation on our Commission has proved. We have given our support to a large number of proposals which aim at putting a check upon this disastrous race. I will not mention them individually. Moreover, the military policy of the Netherlands Government has also given proof of these intentions. Our Government, far from taking part in the armaments race, has carried out a limitation of armaments on a scale which very few countries have equalled.

The race for armaments is not the only cause of armed conflicts. The question before us is not as simple as that. A number of other causes may provoke armed conflicts and are all reasons why Governments must take measures for their defence. The Covenant of the League of Nations recognises this in Article 8, which lays down that:

> “The Members of the League recognise that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national security and the enforcement by common action of international obligations.”

Thus the Covenant recognises requirements of national security which make total disarmament impossible. The apparent contradiction in this article recurs on numerous occasions and it consists in the fact that, in the same article and in the very same paragraph, armaments are regarded, on the one hand, as being dangerous and requiring to be limited, and that, on the other hand, they cannot be reduced below a certain minimum and have their value. They are recognised as both dangerous and useful, both bad and good. It is this tragic paradox which has so far led to the failure of so many attempts. We find this same apparent contradiction in the Treaty of Versailles, which, while disarming Germany, left her an army intended to belong to the realm of fancy, a realm which we all delight to visit from time to time, but which is not entitled to permanent representation on our Commission. The danger of the armaments race is a very real one and it is recognised by the Covenant of the League. The Netherlands Government is fully alive to it, as its delegation on our Commission has proved. We have given our support to a large number of proposals which aim at putting a check upon this disastrous race. I will not mention them individually. Moreover, the military policy of the Netherlands Government has also given proof of these intentions. Our Government, far from taking part in the armaments race, has carried out a limitation of armaments on a scale which very few countries have equalled.

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The same apparent contradiction occurs in the Russian Draft itself, which, when proposing total disarmament, nevertheless leaves us guns and armed forces up to a number which is not mentioned. We shall have to revert to this point, but for the moment I will only point out that the Russian proposal arranges for the retaining of armaments which its authors think necessary.

This apparent contradiction is intelligible when we consider the various causes which may provoke armed conflicts and which are all reasons why Governments should maintain an armed force for the protection of law and order. I will only deal very briefly with these causes, but I will ask you to note that, even after the adoption of the Russian proposals—supposing for the moment that they are adopted—these clauses will still exist and will even to some extent be aggravated. Apart from ordinary crimes, which do not require military arms, there are organised brigandage and piracy. The suppression of these scourges has in the past called for very large forces, and recent experience in many countries shows—that both organised brigandage and piracy are still very real dangers. Any weakening of Governments involves the risk of encouraging the recrudescence of these evils.

Still more serious are the dangers of internal disorders, riot, insurrection and revolution. History furnishes us with examples on every page, but the menace to Governments is very much greater to-day because such movements are prepared more systematically and more scientifically. Then, again, they can be prepared beyond the frontiers of the country threatened. These preparations can be made with the permission and sometimes even with the co-operation of neighbouring or more distant States.

Again, there are the many sources of conflicts between States: different conceptions of right, misunderstandings, errors, cupidity. In the Committee on Arbitration and Security many of us have recently been studying methods which may lead to a pacific solution of disputes. The need of this examination is obvious, for disputes which are not solved by pacific means only too often result in a degree of tension which may even threaten war. I have not yet mentioned the case of a State breaking its word and committing an act of aggression against a neighbouring State with the object of seizing a part of its territory or for some other reason.
Need we add to the number of possible causes of armed conflicts? No doubt the Covenant of the League of Nations gives to States Members a considerable measure of security and there is no occasion to exaggerate the existing risks of war. We must be careful not to throw the world into a state of feverish alarm due to fear of the possible outbreak of wars. Everything must be done to increase mutual confidence between States, which is essential to total disarmament and which may result in an important limitation and reduction of armaments, but in all this we must also reject the superficial, mistaken and dangerous argument that total disarmament will remove distrust and the danger of war.

I pointed out that the Russian proposal itself to some extent recognises the possible value of armaments. I would add that these proposals only contemplate armaments as a protection against internal dangers. It does not speak of external dangers. Why is it silent on this point? I think I am accurately interpreting the ideas of the authors of these proposals when I say that, in their opinion, there is no need to provide protection against external aggression because if these proposals were applied war would be materially impossible. We thus arrive at a second argument which has been adduced in favour of total disarmament. According to this argument, total disarmament will make war a material impossibility.

If disarmament were to take place in the strict sense of the term, nations would return to the prehistoric state in which they were when military history began and when the first conflict led to the use of an organised force.

The proposals before us, however, are far from contemplating so total a measure of disarmament. I have already alluded to the paragraph referring to protection. It is obvious that the necessary organisation for internal police would be all the more important, since this internal police force would be the only armed force in existence. We are therefore bound to enquire what these police forces might be if the idea of total disarmament were accepted. We have some indications of this in the Treaty of Versailles. That Treaty leaves to Germany an army intended exclusively for the maintenance of order in the country and for the policing of frontiers. This army includes 100,000 men armed with guns and machine-guns. I do not feel, however, that the experience of Germany has shown that this force for the maintenance of internal order is too large. I do not myself believe that it is. It should also be added that, side by side with this army of 100,000 men, there is the "Schutzpolizei", which contains 150,000 men armed with rifles and equipped with armoured cars. What importance would this police force have if the Russian proposal were accepted? As Lord Cusshendun reminded us, this proposal contains no figures. All we have is some indication of the method by which effectives would be calculated. This indication too is very vague and, after mention of necessary elements, such as size of the population, length of communications, objects requiring to be protected, development of forestry, we find the words "et cetera". Now, these words may include anything. It may even be thought—and it would be difficult to deny the justification for this supposition—that these words mean that the force intended for the maintenance of internal order should vary inversely in size with the support which a Government will find among the population. Governments thus situated may require a larger police force than others, and those Governments whose position is more or less shaky—history supplies us with many examples—sometimes have recourse to war in order to find a way out of their internal difficulties.

Even if we confine ourselves to size of population, we must realise that, if a country of 5,000,000 inhabitants were to be left a police force of 20,000 men, a country with a population of 50,000,000 would have 200,000 men, and if a country of 5,000,000 inhabitants were left a force of 40,000 men—which does not seem excessive—50,000,000 inhabitants would require a force of 400,000 men. All these would be armed forces organised and disciplined.

The delegate of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics allowed himself a few pleasantries with regard to what was said at our November session, namely, that war would still be possible with fists and penknives. But it would be no war of fists and penknives that would be waged by organised armed forces, numbering perhaps hundreds of thousands of men. These forces would be better armed than the barbarians who destroyed the Roman Empire; both in numbers and armaments, they would be superior to the armies of Charles XII and Gustavus Adolphus, to those of Frederick the Great and to Napoleon's armies at Waterloo. They would have behind them the whole of civil aviation. They could make use of explosives (for explosives are necessary not only for purposes of war but also in industry); they would have at their back the whole of that war potential so often mentioned in this Commission. Really total disarmament would place nations at the mercy of brigands, pirates, adventurers and revolutionaries. If we do not wish to plunge into chaos but, on the contrary, to maintain a defensive force, we must realise that, by resisting the dangers to which I refer, we thereby create an armed force which will without doubt make it possible to resort to war, and therefore the argument that the so-called total disarmament proposed to us will make war impossible is devoid of all foundation.

While the arguments adduced in favour of the Soviet proposals succumb to criticism, we must nevertheless take account of the consequences which would arise from their adoption.

I would add the following observations to what I have just said. One of the most obvious results of adopting these proposals would be to disturb the present balance of power. The Netherlands delegation is in no sense of the opinion that this balance is in itself worthy of admiration. The right of the strongest finds no mention in the Preamble of the Covenant,
which enumerates principles which must henceforth inspire the policy of States adhering to
the noble idea of the League of Nations. At the same time, there is no denying that the
world of to-day rests largely upon the existing balance of power, and this balance would be
upset by the proposals now before us. States which to-day do not count among the strongest
would suddenly become formidable Powers owing either to the size of the police force which
they would be allowed to maintain, or to the resources of every kind at their disposal. Even
though we do not admire the system—perhaps it would be better to say, the fact—of the
balance of power, we are not necessarily led to the conclusion that it should be replaced by
another equilibrium, or rather by a disequilibrium. The disturbance of the present balance
would upset things as they are now: an element of stability would disappear and be replaced
by forces threatening stability and peace. I am not defending the existing state of affairs,
nor am I questioning it, but I am opposed to upsetting it while we have no assurance at all
that its collapse will be followed by better conditions, or that its only result may not be to
create a state of general uncertainty and instability.

The proposal was submitted to us as forming an organic whole. I cannot acknowledge
this description as correct. An organic whole possesses all the organs necessary for life and
growth. The proposal before us, on the other hand, is as incomplete as possible. It contains
no pledge of non-aggression, no pledge for the mutual respect of frontiers and of the existing
forms of government and Governments, nothing on the peaceful settlement of disputes.
Perhaps a small observation is called for here. The third paragraph of Article 60 says: "All
disputes between States shall be settled by the Permanent International Commission of Control'.
It may be said that this provides a complete system of compulsory arbitration; but I do not
think I am misinterpreting this text in saying that it applies to the case mentioned in the
first paragraph, i.e., to a direct breach of the present Convention and to this case only. This
being so, I think I am justified in saying that the proposal contains nothing on the peaceful
settlement of disputes. It does not form an organic whole, but is rather a detached limb of
an organic whole—one might say a truncated head. And what the honourable delegate of
the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics said, after informing us that the proposal formed an
organic whole, is, in my opinion, much more correct. He said that the whole proposal was
permeated by a single idea. This is just what is wrong with it, because, if you set out from
a single idea, you will not achieve satisfactory results, since in this world things are complicated.

The proposal before us tends to promote instability; it tends to provoke adventures and
revolutions; it tends to place a premium on bad faith; it will not establish security; it will
not ensure peace; it will not protect justice.

What, then, are we to do with this proposal? From what I have said, it will be understood
that the Netherlands delegation will be unable to concur in the adoption of this proposal;
and to the first question put to us by the delegate of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics:
Does the Commission agree to base its further labours on the principle of complete disarmament
during the periods proposed by us? The Commission must, in my opinion, reply in the
negative. Perhaps at the end of this discussion it will be possible to conclude with certainty
that the proposal has not been adopted, and that it is no use discussing it at a second reading,
which would only provide a repetition of the arguments already submitted.

I think that, before forming a definite opinion, we must all wait and hear what the
delagation which submitted the proposal has to say. I should not be surprised if the Soviet
delagation came to the conclusion that, after this first discussion, it was no use going on. This
would not surprise me, in view of this delegation's severe criticism of the number of pages
already filled by the discussions of the organs of the League on disarmament, and of the barren-
ness of these debates. We shall then be able to resume our work where we left it, and we
shall be able to resume it with the co-operation promised us in advance by the Soviet delegation.
for, at the meeting of November 30th last, this delegation said that, " whilst insisting upon
the views just stated, the delegation of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics is nevertheless
[which seems to me to mean if its views are not shared] ready to participate in any and every
discussion of the question of the limitation of armaments whenever practical measures really
leading to disarmament are proposed."

In the draft Convention which we drew up last year, we endeavoured to embody
measures of this kind in accordance with the meaning given to the word " disarmament " in our
Commission's title, viz., " the reduction and limitation of armaments "

For my part, I cannot entertain the proposal which we are discussing to-day.

M. HENNINGS (Sweden). — May I venture to explain in a few words my own views and
those of my Government in regard to the scheme for immediate, complete and general disarmament
submitted by the Soviet delegation?

In so doing, gentlemen, I feel it my duty to speak perfectly frankly, especially as I represent
a small country whose policy for over a century has been so essentially pacific and whose
armaments are so exclusively defensive in character that not a shadow of doubt can exist as
to the sincerity of her desire to see these international efforts for the consolidation of peace,
on a basis of justice to the exclusion of force, crowned with early and complete success.

In the first place, I should like to point out that, during the discussions which have taken
place these last few years, both in this Commission and in the Committee on Arbitration and
Security and in the different sessions of the Assembly of the League with its various Committees,
the interdependence of disarmament and security has been found to occupy a foremost place.
Divergent opinions have, it is true, been expressed as regards the extent to which the solution of these two problems is and should be influenced by their interdependence.

Some have maintained that the present position as regards security is not sufficiently stable to admit of any measures of disarmament and that consequently the first step must be to strengthen the international system of security.

Others, including the Government which I have the honour to represent, have held that the first step in reducing the international standard of armaments and the national burdens resulting therefrom could be taken on the basis of existing security, which in its turn would thereby be strengthened and might be still further strengthened by the gradual development of the pacific settlement of international disputes.

Now, although there may be differences of opinion as regards the nature of the interdependence which exists between disarmament and security and the conclusions to be drawn from it, when we consider the practical steps for the solution of these problems everybody is agreed, so far as I have been able to ascertain, in recognising that this interdependence does exist. It seems, indeed, just as impossible to find any final solution for the problem of disarmament without at the same time taking into account the necessity for extending the system for the pacific settlement of international disputes as it is to arrive at a system of perfect security based upon principles of law and equity without taking into account the question of disarmament.

The scheme for complete disarmament submitted by the Government of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics represents an attempt to solve the problem of disarmament immediately and outright, independently of the mass of difficult and delicate questions connected with the pacific settlement of international disputes and the general security of States. In seeking to understand how this idea should have been submitted here in the concrete form of a draft general Convention, we need only recall all the difficulties which have invariably arisen in the course of our work whenever we have attempted to take even the smallest step forward in the direction of the international reduction of armaments, with reference at the same time to the problems of law and security. This scheme may perhaps have the effect of speeding up the work of the Preparatory Commission, and in this way exercise a useful influence upon disarmament in general.

However this may be, I am bound to say that, in the opinion of my Government, as stated most clearly and specifically by the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs in a speech on March 13th before one of the Swedish Chambers, the Soviet scheme does not at the moment enter into the domain of practical politics.

I shall confine myself to a few general observations, without examining the scheme in detail.

The scheme is evidently based upon the conception that military armaments constitute the sole danger that threatens the peace of the world and international understanding. This conception, I fear, is not in accordance with realities. Certainly no one can deny that military armaments, if carried beyond a reasonable limit, imply a very formidable menace, and consequently the idea which appears to have inspired the authors of the Russian scheme contains a truth deserving of attention. But, on the other hand, it must not be forgotten that disarmament in itself is not sufficient to eliminate the causes and sources of international disputes. Even in a world completely disarmed, it is not only possible but, unfortunately, extremely probable that serious disputes may arise between the nations. In face of such a contingency, it seems only natural that States should not feel able to dispense with even the relative security afforded by the national means of defence adapted to the peculiar circumstances of each one of them until such time as they are absolutely certain that any disputes arising between them will be submitted to some form of objective and impartial judicial settlement and that the awards given by such a tribunal will in all cases be accepted and scrupulously observed by the opposing party. It is very important that every State should be perfectly sure that the safety of its interests will not be decided in certain circumstances to take the defence of its interests into its own hands.

However great the importance we attach to disarmament as an element of peace, we always come back, as it were, to our starting-point, that is, to the conclusion that in the existing circumstances disarmament requires as an indispensable complement a perfect and infallible system for the pacific settlement of all international disputes. It is true that the authors of the Russian scheme considered that, in regard to this point, it is sufficient to rely upon the goodwill of the States. I am far from under-estimating the sincere desire of the Governments to maintain peace and to strengthen the good relations between the States, but I feel myself impelled to ask whether humanity has really arrived at such a state in the pacific settlement of international disputes that goodwill can replace an effective and perfected system of international jurisdiction.

But if I am right, and if the realisation of the Russian scheme in the present state of affairs seems hardly practicable, does it follow that we have come to a deadlock and that there is no way out? Is it absolutely impossible to move forward in the direction of a solution of these two problems which form such a vast and inextricable complex? In this connection,
I would venture to refer to the words spoken by M. Sandler, the representative of Sweden in the Third Committee of the last Assembly:

"If there could be no disarmament without security and no security without disarmament, how was it possible to escape from the vicious circle? In view of the complexity of the problem, it must be attacked from several sides at once, and, according to circumstances, the most practicable way must be followed in the conviction that each step forward in one direction would facilitate progress in another direction, and the most certain way of putting this idea into action was to take, in the first place, a firm, though perhaps modest, step forward along the path of disarmament."

This, gentlemen, is the gradual parallel scheme of advance with a view to the solution of the problems of security and disarmament which I would once more recommend on behalf of my Government, while stressing the fact that one of the essential conditions to enable us to take such a step is that the principal military and naval Powers, whose divergence of view in regard to certain questions of primary importance necessitated the adjournment of our work in April last, should consent to those mutual concessions without which any agreement in regard to disarmament appears quite impossible.

Needless to say, I confidently hope that in the work which awaits us we can rely on the collaboration and the assistance of the Soviet delegation.

The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — Mr. President,—A considerable number of delegates have already stated their views regarding the proposals now before us and have treated the subject more or less exhaustively. I do not propose to deal with the matter at length, but feel that it may be desirable for me to make a brief statement as to the views of the American delegation.

To begin with, I should like to touch upon one remark that was made in the course of the debate on Monday afternoon, to the effect that, in the opinion of one of the delegations, sincerity, consistency and logic should impel the country which had proposed a multilateral pact against war to support the proposals now before us for immediate and complete disarmament. Mr. President, I do not feel warranted in taking up the time of this Commission with a lengthy statement on this point. However, in order that there may be no possible room for misunderstanding, I venture to trespass on your time to the extent of saying that it is precisely on grounds of sincerity, consistency and logic that my Government supports the idea of a multilateral pact renouncing war as an instrument of national policy, and at the same time finds itself unable to support drastic proposals for immediate and complete disarmament which we do not believe are calculated to achieve their avowed purpose. Any other attitude on the part of my Government, Mr. President, would be lacking in sincerity, consistency and logic, for my Government believes in the one project and disbelieves in the other. We believe that the idea behind the proposal of a pact for renouncing war can be made effective as an articulate expression of an almost universal will for peace. We believe that such an expression is more effective at this time than any other scheme, however drastic, for doing away with weapons. We have also stated our conviction that, as we build up the will for peace and confidence in peaceful methods for settling international disputes, through regional agreements or otherwise, our need for armaments will automatically decrease. We have never believed that the converse was true and that the suppression of armaments would alone and by itself have the effect of creating that confidence which is essential to the successful conclusion of our task.

To turn now to the aspect of the problem which is more immediately before us, we have been told that one compelling reason for adopting the project for complete disarmament is that public opinion throughout the world is impatient of less drastic measures and insists upon immediate and comprehensive action. I submit, Mr. President, that if public opinion were as clamorous as we have been told for action upon drastic schemes such as the one now before us, it is inconceivable that this should not have become apparent to us and to our Governments. It is to be remembered that in most countries the expression of public opinion is free and unfettered, that Governments are responsive to the will of the people, and if the people were convinced of the effectiveness of such drastic schemes there is no doubt that they would make their wishes so clearly and unmistakably known that no Government could ignore those wishes and survive. In the course of the debate, a number of my colleagues have expressed the belief that we need more time for a careful analysis and consideration of the proposals now before the Commission. Inasmuch as the draft Convention was placed in our hands only about a month ago, I venture to point out in this connection that the essentials of the present scheme, of which the Convention is merely an elaboration, were placed before the Commission at its November session, and that we and our respective Governments have therefore had more than three months in which to consider them. To my mind, however, this is neither here nor there. So far as I can recollect, it has never been the practice of our Commission to assign committees to study proposals or to refer them back to Governments for examination if, in the first general discussion, it became evident that they were not acceptable in principle. I see no reason in the present instance for deviation from this sound and time-saving practice. For our present purposes, it would seem sufficient to point out that the proposals are not only a radical departure from the work we have been engaged on so far, but are totally irreconcilable with the Draft which is the basis of our discussion. We are engaged upon a study of how to effect a limitation and reduction of armaments by agreement,
We are now asked to scrap this work, which is the result of several years of negotiation, and to accept in its place the total and immediate abolition of armaments. I will confess that the American delegation is unable to see how the two can possibly be reconciled and discussed simultaneously. The question before us is whether we shall continue with the task entrusted to us according to the method approved by our various Governments, or whether we shall suddenly scrap what has been done and embark upon an entirely different enterprise on the basis of proposals of a type which has frequently been considered in the past and invariably rejected as unworkable. Incidentally, if it is felt that some of the points suggested in this draft Convention would be of assistance in the preparation of our final draft, certainly it is to be expected that the representative of any country will in the second reading introduce such amendments to the clauses as they now stand as they may see fit. However, it would certainly seem a cumbersome and unprecedented procedure to give further exhaustive study to the whole of an elaborate scheme presented by a single delegation in order to get the possible benefits of certain clauses therein. For the reasons I have stated, the American delegation would not feel justified in asking for a delay in order that these proposals might be given further detailed study.

So far as we are concerned, I think we have only one problem, and that is to find and to follow the path best calculated to lead us expeditiously to the conclusion of our labours. We are convinced that that path is to be found in the continuation of our previous endeavours, and that we are not justified in abandoning or unduly delaying our efforts in order to embark on another task which we honestly believe cannot facilitate the reduction and limitation of armaments.

M. Sokal (Poland). — After the very interesting speeches which have thrown such light on the subject under discussion, it may perhaps appear superfluous for me to embark upon any exhaustive discussion. I should be sorry, however, if, as the representative of Poland—which is a neighbour of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and is on good and friendly terms—my silence should be interpreted as a sign of indifference towards a question of the highest importance. I propose to confine myself to a few observations of a general character.

Disarmament, which is our common aim, is one of the essential conditions for the maintenance of peace. But disarmament in itself is not the whole object of the League of Nations, which has a more general purpose—the maintenance of universal peace. The maintenance of peace requires the limitation of armaments, but, at the same time, if it is to be in harmony with the spirit of the Covenant, involves the establishment of such conditions as will ensure international security. The three terms Arbitration, Security and Disarmament are indissolubly bound up with one another in the minds of all Members of the League of Nations. This is one of the most positive results already accomplished by the League; it is one of those fixed points of which we must never lose sight and it is only by working in this spirit that the different organs of the League have been able to achieve the remarkable results which it would be unfair not to estimate at their full value.

I should be sorry, however, if, as the representative of Poland, on the subject under discussion, it may perhaps appear superfluous for me to embark upon an entirely different enterprise on the basis of proposals of a type which has frequently been considered in the past and invariably rejected as unworkable. Incidentally, if it is felt that some of the points suggested in this draft Convention would be of assistance in the preparation of our final draft, certainly it is to be expected that the representative of any country will in the second reading introduce such amendments to the clauses as they now stand as they may see fit. However, it would certainly seem a cumbersome and unprecedented procedure to give further exhaustive study to the whole of an elaborate scheme presented by a single delegation in order to get the possible benefits of certain clauses therein. For the reasons I have stated, the American delegation would not feel justified in asking for a delay in order that these proposals might be given further detailed study.

M. Litvinoff himself does not deny the need for security, but he considers that complete and immediate disarmament constitutes in itself a sufficient guarantee of security.

When all our armies have been disbanded, when the ammunition depots have been destroyed, when the archives of the recruiting officers have been burned and the great fleets have been sent to the bottom of the sea, the Soviet delegation considers that peace will be guaranteed once and for all—for is it conceivable that the nations, fired by bellicose frenzy, would fall upon one another armed with kitchen knives or sporting guns, using light craft or pleasure boats to transport their troops? No doubt, viewed in this light, the Soviet delegation's idea may appear at first sight very attractive. Upon reflection, however, I do not think that it can be regarded as a correct view of the matter. If, by evil chance, war should break out, the peoples, especially those whose technical industries are highly developed, would have no difficulty, within a very short space of time, in replacing those inoffensive—I might say those domestic—weapons mentioned by M. Litvinoff and substituting for them the most highly perfected engines of modern warfare. Penknives, sticks and other weapons of this sort would soon be replaced by long-range guns, machine-guns and asphyxiating gases.

Disarmament, then, desirable as it may be, cannot take the place of a system of security based upon the principles which underlie the pacific settlement of all disputes in conjunction with obligations in regard to non-aggression and mutual assistance, as the representative for Sweden has just made so abundantly clear.

As regards the technical aspect of the matter, I would venture to point out that the Preparatory Commission has carried out exhaustive studies, that it had the assistance of the most able military and economic experts and that, after consulting them, it framed a preliminary draft Convention. Would it be expedient, gentlemen, to abandon the results of our past work and adopt as an exclusive basis for discussion a scheme of an entirely novel description which does not appear to take into account the work already accomplished.

Naturally, we do not claim that our work is perfect and the Commission doubtless does not intend to ignore what may be practicable and capable of realisation in the Soviet scheme. This might form the subject of our future deliberations after the Soviet Draft has been submitted to careful and exhaustive examination.
Personally, I am inclined to take from the Soviet proposition whatever can be amalgamated with the results of our past work, always provided, of course, that we continue on the lines which we have adopted hitherto and keep in mind simultaneously with the requirements of disarmament the claims of security.

Our Commission, in its anxiety to succeed in its purpose, has avoided attacking insoluble problems, realising that the most ambitious plans are not always the most practical. The Soviet delegation has not exhibited the same diffidence and has not hesitated to launch a radical and immediate claim for disarmament. In appearance, nothing could be simpler, but in actual fact, what could be more difficult? Here we have been working for several years surrounded by the most able technical advisers. Whatever the difficulties may be with which we are confronted, our determination to succeed prevents us from giving way to discouragement. Has anyone thought what would be the effect on public opinion of submitting so radical a scheme of disarmament, a scheme so incapable of realisation in the immediate future? Perhaps some ingenuous people, perhaps the man in the street, might be led away at first sight by the apparent simplicity of the plan, and, not realising the almost insurmountable difficulties which stand in the way of its immediate realisation, might hold the League of Nations responsible for its failure, and the League, we must remember, despite its shortcomings, is still the only guardian of the world's peace.

Does anyone wish this? We have the duty of frankness towards public opinion, and this duty, in the fulfilment of which we must never be found wanting, prevents us from holding out false hopes. The best way to achieve our object is not to put forward schemes which no one can deny are essentially radical in character but to continue with the more modest, but at the same time more fruitful, efforts on which we have decided. Above all, gentlemen, it is our duty to defend the League, in which our hopes are centred, against the resentment of which it could not fail to be the object, if, after having aroused such fair hopes, it were to prove incapable of realising them completely in the immediate future.

The Commission rose at 12.40 p.m.

SIXTH MEETING (PUBLIC).

_Held on Wednesday, March 21st, 1928, at 4 p.m._

President: M. LOUDON (Netherlands).


M. ROLIN JAEQUEMYNS (Belgium). — When I was instructed by my Government to take part in your work, I naturally took pains to acquaint myself as fully as possible with the voluminous documentation resulting from your labours.

In reading these documents, I was particularly struck by a statement by Viscount Cecil made at the meeting of September 22nd, 1926, during your second session. He said:

"The little Powers cannot disarm the world. That must be done by the Great Powers";

and he added:

"Though I do not wish to put the great Powers in control of this matter, I am quite certain that, without their assent, you will not do anything."

The impression I received from those words was that it was the first duty of the delegate of the Belgian Government to listen and keep silent. But I do not think that this passive attitude can be maintained indefinitely. After the speeches made by the delegates of the great Powers, my silence might surprise you and, in any case, I am sure that, unless I were to speak, I should not be interpreting public opinion in my country. It seems to me that Belgian opinion, especially after learning through the newspapers of the way in which an olive-branch, looking more like a cudgel, has been brandished in front of you or, as I may say, over our heads, would be exceedingly surprised if the Belgian delegate said nothing, since his silence might be interpreted as approval or acquiescence.

I could say a great deal on the principle of total disarmament and on the articles which make up the Draft, but you need have no fear; I will not abuse your patience, for I may declare at the outset that I am entirely in agreement not only with the arguments of the British delegate with regard to the meaning, tendencies and confusion of this Draft, but also with his conclusions. After carefully examining the articles in the Draft and bearing in mind what was said by the Netherlands delegate this morning, I believe, with Lord Cushendun, that this Draft is essentially an act of sabotage against our labours, our draft Convention, against the League of Nations and the work of peace which it is our duty to pursue.
I should have been less surprised if I could have believed that we were encountering a feeling which I have met often enough, and which may be described as scepticism. A certain scepticism still prevails among many well-intentioned persons in our midst, and as we progress we ought to be able in our wisdom to overcome this sentiment. In the case in point, however, all of you know what feelings have inspired this Draft, and the authors themselves would not deny it, for I cannot accuse them of any desire for concealment. The feeling with which they are inspired is, as they have said, hatred of our civilisation, hatred of our institutions. Therefore, gentlemen, we have before us a Draft framed by its authors under the influence of hatred of all that we love and of all that we represent. In the face of this evidence, which results from everything that our Soviet colleagues have said and from all the statements which we read in their newspapers, I naturally came here with feelings of profound mistrust. The Draft before us and the subsequent explanations have done nothing to diminish that feeling.

The conclusion I draw, therefore, is that at first sight I cannot recommend the Draft or wish for anything else but its rejection pure and simple, on the grounds that it is obviously dangerous to the work which we are pursuing, and contrary to the object we have in view.

We may reject the Soviet proposals at once, as the French delegate seemed to have indicated, by simply moving the previous question; another solution would be to declare that they are directly contrary to the aims we are pursuing and therefore reject them in principle without raising the previous question at all.

Lord Cushendun, however, in stating conclusions which I found exceedingly well argued, and which were supported by the delegate for Canada, declared that, in his opinion, there might—I might almost say by chance—be certain provisions in the Draft which we have yet had time to appreciate and which it might be well to retain.

That being so, I think that there is no objection to our referring the Draft to our Governments, which, after studying it, would furnish us with the necessary instructions with a view to a further session.

In this connection, I would point out to the Commission, and especially to the Bureau, that it might perhaps be well if Governments would give to those of their delegates who have not yet received them—and I think this applies to some—all the necessary instructions and information before the second reading.

I would like to go a little further still. In order not to waste too much time doing little or nothing, I would ask whether, pending final resolutions, it would not be possible to adopt certain provisional resolutions as soon as possible. I recommend this aspect of the question to our President and to the Bureau.

Major Whitmarsh (Cuba). — The draft Convention submitted by the delegation of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics reached me in its present form only a few days ago, so that my Government has not had time to study it and send me its instructions. I will therefore ask the honourable delegate of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics to be so kind as to postpone for two months his request that this problem should be decided in one sense or the other on the spot.

I also suggest that the Soviet proposals should be studied and discussed in all their details and in all their aspects, for the following reasons:

This draft Convention gives us the point of view of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and—naturally enough—approaches the question from the standpoint of the great Powers. I think, however, that there are other aspects to the question and other special considerations with which it is important to be made acquainted.

In my country, for example, the inhabitants of which are mainly agricultural and industrial, and where there are no frontier problems—Cuba's neighbours laying no claims to any part of our territory on historical, geographical or ethnical grounds—we have no need of a large army; accordingly, our military forces are reduced to the lowest possible figure. However, we have a rural guard to maintain order in country districts and it is part of our army. If we were to adopt the Soviet scheme in its entirety, we should be compelled to disband this force and substitute for it a non-military police force. This is a very delicate question, which might react unfavourably upon the situation in our sugar plantations, for a very small number of evilly-disposed persons could ruin them by setting fire to them during the dry season.

I will mention a second case peculiar to my country. During the second half of last century, the Cuban people, both peasants and landowners, fought for its independence. The most effective and the most deadly weapon employed was the machete, an implement used by the workers and peasants in agriculture. That weapon was our principal and almost our only arm in our Wars of Independence. It enabled us to hold in check the largest army which crossed the Atlantic before the great war. Even to-day, in a slightly modified form, it is part of the military armament of our cavalry and rural guard.

I think that these few observations show how important it is to study the Soviet proposals most carefully. I have made these remarks because I am sincerely anxious for effective peace at home and abroad—a peace which will allow the productive forces of a country to develop, and which will ensure to men of goodwill that prosperity which they are entitled to enjoy as the fruit of their labours.
It is not necessary for me to dwell on certain facts that are common property or to emphasise the feelings of gratitude and unswerving attachment which the Serb-Croat-Slovene people feel towards the great Russian nation, nor need I recall the precious support and assistance which Russia afforded Serbia in her struggle for independence. If the Belgrade Government has not yet found it possible to resume regular diplomatic relations with the Soviet Government, the sole responsibility for this state of affairs rests with the representatives of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. It is due to their general attitude, the methods which they employ in international relations, the new principles which they are endeavouring to introduce into international politics and their manifest intention of exercising an influence over social order in countries other than their own. These are the reasons which have dictated the attitude of the Belgrade Government.

Having submitted these preliminary observations, I now come to the main question before the Commission, namely, the consideration of the draft Convention submitted by the Soviet delegation. The Serb-Croat-Slovene delegation, true to the practice which it has always followed of examining with the most scrupulous care any suggestion calculated to ensure peace, has duly examined the scheme drawn up by the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. But I feel it my duty to say at once that, to my infinite regret, I have not found in that scheme any really practical element calculated to promote the cause of disarmament or of peace. On the contrary, I consider that the basis adopted by the Preparatory Commission, the basis on which it has hitherto been working, is far superior to the somewhat ingenuous basis proposed by the Soviet delegation. The Preparatory Commission views the problem as a whole and aims at organising international peace with due reference to all the factors on which it depends, whereas the Soviet scheme appears to confine itself to the abolition of the purely material elements of warfare. The Soviet scheme takes no account of the fact that armaments are simply a means of ensuring definite political objects, whereas the Soviet scheme appears to confine itself to the abolition of the purely material elements of warfare.

At the same time, as a country which is now completely disarmed, Bulgaria obviously desires that the other Powers should reduce their armaments in order to establish an equal level of security, and the reasons for this I will now set before you.

In 1925, as the result of a frontier dispute which admittedly was not provoked by Bulgaria, we were painfully surprised to find a part of our territory invaded by a whole army. I say painfully surprised, because on that occasion houses were burned to the ground and people were killed. It is true—and this I must gratefully acknowledge—that, thanks to the intervention of the League, no graver results ensued and the dispute was settled in the most impartial and equitable manner. But this affair still left us with an unsatisfactory feeling. We cannot help thinking in Bulgaria that, if there had not been so many armed forces arrayed on the other side of the frontier, this painful incident could never have occurred, and we feel that the inequality of armaments which at present exists between the different Powers exposes certain States to great humiliation, which must be avoided if we are to promote good understanding between the peoples.

We realise that general disarmament cannot be brought about outright. We do not ask the Commission to provide for measures incapable of application. All we desire is that a programme for the reduction of armaments should be drawn up without delay, with due reference to the political, geographical and economic situation of the different States and their internal and external security, and with the sincere intention of achieving practical results in the cause of peace; What we really desire is that the dream of perfect equality between the peoples should become a living reality, particularly as regards questions connected with the security of the States, as provided in Article 8 of the Covenant of the League, of which we are Members.

M. MARKOVITCH (Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes).—Mr. President and gentlemen,—After the discussion which has just taken place and which has thrown such light on the various problems before us, I will not abuse your patience but will endeavour, as briefly as possible, to explain the views of the Serb-Croat-Slovene delegation and to reply to the Russian delegation’s invitation to express an opinion on its proposals.

I should like first to revert to M. Litvinoff’s allusion to the States which have not yet recognised the Soviet Government, the Serb-Croat-Slovene State being among the number. M. Litvinoff declared that such an attitude represented an act of hostility or proof of animosity towards the Soviet Government. I feel it my duty to correct this view, so far as my own country is concerned.

Accordingly, in the opinion of the Serb-Croat-Slovene delegation, the Preparatory Commission should continue to work on the basis hitherto adopted and should adhere to its usual methods and examine every aspect of the problem of the international organisation of peace. I should be the last to deny that the work so far accomplished by our Commission is of very
modest dimensions. I might mention indeed that I have often had occasion to insist on the need for speeding up our work. But, while recognising the meagre results obtained, I would point out that the responsibility for this state of affairs devolves to some extent on the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, because the Soviet Government, which is not a Member of the League, has not shown the least desire to discredit and obstruct the League's work. The League decided, very rightly, that it was essential that the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics should be represented on the Preparatory Commission, and we have all hailed the Soviet delegation's arrival with the greatest satisfaction, for we hoped—and still hope—that the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics would tend in its external policy to come into line with the principles of the Covenant, the principles of collaboration and co-operation between the peoples, and that the Soviet Government's collaboration on these lines would produce useful and tangible results. If, then, as the British delegate wondered yesterday, the Soviet delegation has come to Geneva with a sincere desire to contribute towards the work of peace on which we are now engaged, and if its purpose is to arrive at disarmament by stages, it must at all events take into account the various elements which the Preparatory Commission, after exhaustive examination, has thought it necessary to employ as a basis for its work.

In conclusion, I would appeal to the Soviet delegation and urge it, if it does not wish its proposals to be rejected outright, to endeavour to adapt itself to the methods employed by the League organs and the Preparatory Commission, and to agree to its proposals being examined at the second reading in connection with the particular points to which they refer.

The Serb-Croat-Slovene delegation is of opinion that the Preparatory Commission should pursue its labours on the lines hitherto adopted, and hold over any examination of the special points embodied in the Soviet proposal until the second reading. I think that we shall be able to derive a number of practical features from this proposal which will contribute towards a solution of the problem of disarmament.

M. Holsti (Finland).—No State could be more devoted to the principles of peace, of international justice and of genuine equality between States than the country on whose behalf I have the honour to speak. Accordingly we regret most sincerely that, as regards any real and tangible limitation and reduction of armaments, there should have been no improvement in the situation since the last session of our Commission. But these very considerations impel me to declare that there could be no object in discussing the radical suppression of armaments or the absolute prohibition of armed forces; we must, on the contrary, take as our basis effective limitation and reduction, provided, of course, that we mean to obtain substantial and tangible results. By all means let delegates submit to us any proposal, no matter how radical, as regards measures relating to disarmament. But let us not forget either the conditions established under the provisions of the Covenant by which the majority of the States represented here are bound, or on the other hand, certain necessities which are inseparable from any organised community. No one, gentlemen, can guarantee that, even in a relatively perfect international community, the danger of contravention or rupture will be excluded in advance. Nor can anyone guarantee that the exclusion of a Member guilty of violating the Covenant, or the pacific blockade of that Member, would always prove a sufficient means of constraint or a means of imposing respect for the undertakings incumbent upon every Member of the community, whether it be a small State or a great Power. Besides, even as regards non-military measures of coercion, it will not always be possible to take joint action against the guilty State without having recourse to armed force of some sort, no matter how limited in extent and application.

It is from this point of view, in our opinion, that we have to consider whether and to what extent the existence and employment of an armed force or, if you prefer it, of an executive police force, is admissible in a League of Nations which has become universal or practically universal. When we have arrived at this stage of development, we shall have to consider seriously and without prejudice the possibility of consolidating and centralising the forces required to protect the activities of the whole community; then we can discuss the possibility of placing these socially authorised forces at the disposal of the organs of the international community. Now, the League of Nations in its present form—and my country is the first to recognise the need for it—is still defective in more than one respect. Such being the case, would it not be expedient first to consider the bases and conditions appropriate to a more perfect organisation before we raise the question as to whether every description of armed force shall be abolished—at all events on paper? Ought we not to examine exhaustively all possible forms of international solidarity and collaboration, the procedure to be followed in establishing new rules of law, the compulsory settlement of international disputes by pacific means, the execution of judgments and the possibility of joint action against a recalcitrant Member? Should we not come to some agreement in regard to these essential points before considering the categorical prohibition of all armed forces?

When we come to examine these great problems in the light of future universality, we shall find ourselves faced with the serious question of centralising the necessary executive forces and placing them at the disposal of the organs of the community of nations. Then disarmament will present itself in a new aspect. It is most important not to precipitate the course of future developments; we must confine ourselves to what is really practicable. Accordingly, in our view, the only possible method is to pursue in perfect sincerity the efforts already begun with a view to the gradual but effective reduction of armaments.
Mr. Politis (Greece).—Mr. President and gentlemen,—I am not intervening in this discussion with any idea of undertaking a detailed examination of the draft Convention for Immediate, Complete and General Disarmament which is now before us. What has been said already by the great majority of the speakers is so entirely in conformity with my own views that there is nothing for me to add; indeed, I should risk weakening the force of their arguments.

My only intention is to take up one point which was raised yesterday, a point which is of special importance and with which I think deserves your further attention, since I regard it as being decisive in this discussion. Several speakers have asked whether the basic idea of the Draft—that is to say, the idea of complete and immediate disarmament—is in harmony with the principles of the League of Nations, or whether it is not, on the contrary, incompatible, with the provisions of the Covenant and, in particular, with Article 8.

This is a question that I desire to examine with all the objectivity that it deserves, and much more as a technical expert than as a politician.

You are all aware that, by Article 8, the Members of the League of Nations undertake, as a guarantee of peace, to effect a certain reduction in their armaments. This undertaking is limited in two ways: in the first place, in effecting the reductions, regard is to be paid to national security. The States Members of the League are authorised to retain a minimum of armed forces sufficient to safeguard that domestic peace of which Lord Cushendun spoke so eloquently yesterday, and to provide for national defence against aggression from without, from which the international organisation could not effectively protect them. The other limitation consists in the fact that the States Members are to be responsible for the enforcement of international obligations by common action. The States Members of the League are therefore bound to retain a minimum armament sufficient to ensure the success of any common action which the League might undertake.

Having pointed this out, I need only compare this essential basis of the League of Nations with the fundamental idea of the Soviet Draft to be certain that you will be convinced, like myself, that that idea is diametrically opposed to the twofold rule laid down in Article 8. The conclusion to which this leads is that our Preparatory Commission, set up for a specific purpose on the basis of Article 8, is not competent to examine this Draft unless its terms of reference are enlarged; and, as I shall show in a moment, no such enlargement is possible.

What would happen if, in a moment of enthusiasm, the States decide to accept the Soviet Draft, or if the national forces which the Members of the League now possess were abolished? The result would be that the application of the system of sanctions provided for in Article 16 of the Covenant, which is one of the essential foundations of the League organisation, would thus be rendered impossible.

It is useless for anybody to say that, if the Commission wants its terms of reference enlarged, it has only to wait for the next Assembly and ask for what it wants. It is useless to say that a demonstration of goodwill on the part of the Members of the League would suffice to bring about an amendment of Article 8 of the Covenant. That is not a mere question of form; it is an essential question, because it would not be sufficient to amend Article 8, but the entire system of the League would have to be changed, and the system of sanctions provided for in Article 16 would have to be replaced by some other method which would enable the League to render the services that its Members are entitled to expect.

At what point would this change take place? At the very moment when the abolition of national forces made it even more imperative for the League to provide that collective protection which its Members expect.

That is why this idea of complete and general disarmament is profoundly and essentially incompatible with the present system of the Covenant. In any organisation, however rudimentary—even if the existence of an organisation is not admitted—the need for sanctions is so plain that it has been felt by the authors of the Soviet Draft themselves. In Article 60 they have had to provide for the eventuality of the contracting States committing some direct breach—I suppose that was intended to mean "grave breach"—of the Convention; and they have realised the absolute necessity of providing against any such breach. Stopping half-way along the logical path, however, rather following their own species of logic, since the Draft is to abolish national forces, to preserve order and safeguard that domestic peace of which Lord Cushendun spoke so eloquently yesterday, and to provide for national defence against aggression from without, from which the international organisation could not effectively protect them.

The result would be that the application of the system of sanctions provided for in Article 16 of the Covenant, which is one of the essential foundations of the League organisation, would thus be rendered impossible.

When I turn to the conclusion of the memorandum accompanying the Soviet Draft, to see why military measures are thus excluded, I read, with astonishment, the following passage:

"The Draft Convention does not allow of any military pressure being brought to bear on anybody because such measures are apt to give rise to serious international conflicts, and it is hoped that most countries are so genuinely anxious to effect complete and general disarmament that other means will always be found to compel any country seeking to violate the obligations it has assumed to discharge them faithfully."
You will see, gentlemen, that the greatest optimism, the most profound faith in the efficacy of such a procedure, does not go beyond the stage of hoping. Now, I would ask you in all sincerity whether in such a matter, in a question of such vital importance to all countries, hope, and hope alone, is a firm enough foundation for such a radical reform. Undoubtedly it is not. If the authors of the Soviet Draft had been more logical, not with a desire to do something startling, but more logical in dealing with the inherent necessities of a difficult problem, they would have gone further than what they have actually proposed, and, realising that they were ruining and undermining the present organisation of the League, they would have found themselves forced to consider what other organisation they could put in its place. That other organisation, to be suited to the system they propose, would have had to be based on this profound and eternal true idea of Pascal's: "That justice and force when separated, are ineffectual and that they must be united in order that the just may be strong and that the strong may be just." In other words, in an association whose members are disarmed and deprived of all individual means of protection, they would have had to provide as a basis in the hands of the community instruments of justice more powerful than those we have at present—that is to say, compulsory arbitration, compulsory jurisdiction, in all cases, and sanctions much more imperative, much more automatic, much more effectual than those provided in Article 16—safeguards which would be exercised by international forces taking the place of the abolished forces of individual States. As long as the Soviet Government is not prepared to accept this scheme, and even if it does accept it, as long as all other countries are not prepared to accept it also, the Soviet Government will have to be content, as we are, with the programme laid down for us by Article 8 of the Covenant.

This programme is not the last stage on the road to the ideal towards which, long before this Draft was submitted to us, we began to advance in the hope of one day securing for humanity a true peace, which is a disarmed peace. Nevertheless, it is a first stage. It is the only programme at present practicable. Once it has been put wholly into effect, we shall then have to see whether we cannot climb another rung on the ladder to the ideal, but I repeat, and I cannot repeat it too often, that when the reduction of armaments provided for in this text has been genuinely and honestly effected by all countries, we shall be able to go no further unless we strengthen the international organisation both from the point of view of justice and from that of the sanctions by which it must be accompanied.

When will that time come? I think we should be deceiving the public and creating highly dangerous illusions if we ventured to suggest even an approximate date. We cannot have any date in mind, because the realisation of the programme laid down in Article 8, modest as it may seem to the impatient, involves the fulfilment of a whole series of conditions. It involves the extension of peaceful procedures, the strengthening of the moral and material guarantees of security, the development of good understanding and mutual confidence between peoples; it involves also economic stabilisation; it involves further the settlement of those grave problems to which my distinguished friend General de Marinis alluded yesterday—problems which seem for the present insoluble owing to the imperfections and deficiencies of international law. Yet again—and this is not the end of the list—there is another condition to be fulfilled: it is essential that within each country there should be brought about that pacification of opinion, that domestic peace, that cessation of systematic class warfare to which Lord Cushendun referred yesterday. Only when all these conditions are fulfilled can the programme of Article 8 be completely and effectively realised.

What we can say, however, and what we must say in the meantime, is that, although it is not for the moment humanly possible to foresee when these conditions will be fulfilled, the work that we have been engaged upon here for so many years is incontestably bringing that time nearer; for—and I say this with profound conviction to M. Litvinoff—it is taking a very incorrect and supremely unfair view of the situation to say and assert, as he has done, that, notwithstanding its immense volume, our work has not yet produced any useful results in connection with the preparation of disarmament, or rather of the reduction of armaments.

Gentlemen, there is no difficult problem, whether political or scientific, that does not call for protracted preliminary work and patient and detailed investigation. In the world of science that is a well-known fact. Nobody could quote countless examples of scientists carrying on the work of previous generations, growing paler year by year in their narrow laboratories, bending over their instruments of chemical analysis to tear some secret from nature and compound a remedy which will relieve mankind of one of the ills that torment it. Nobody to my knowledge has ever dared to laugh at these scientists because they have not yet obtained the expected results. Why should it be otherwise in political problems? Are they any simpler or any less complex than scientific problems? Who dare maintain it? I am sure M. Litvinoff, who realises the fact from the advances made in scientific knowledge by his country, would be the last to venture upon such an assertion.

The ignorant crowds that gather around the tents at a fair can easily believe in the efficacy of elixirs and magical remedies. But intelligent and experienced people know that if they are suffering from a chronic disease—and there is no more painful disease than war, and no heavier burden than that of armaments—it can only be cured by long, systematic and patient treatment.

It is a treatment of this very sort that we are seeking to elaborate here with all the good will and faith which we can command, and we are endeavouring progressively, as we arrive results, to apply them by all the means which the League of Nations has at its disposal.
This programme cannot be regarded as futile or as useless when we have reached the conclusion—which every thinking man must arrive at—that it is the path by which we must progress in order to attain the loftiest summits of our ideal.

Now, gentlemen, for the reasons which I have just pointed out, owing to the fundamental opposition between the governing idea of the Soviet scheme and the basic principles of the League of Nations, this scheme cannot be accepted as a basis for our discussions—for we should be neither wise nor true to ourselves if, at the very moment when, after so many labours, we are making a trial of a method and applying the treatment to which I referred just now, we were to proclaim the abandonment of this system and to dash off in pursuit of a chimerical solution which we know beforehand is unattainable and which is in the same category as those magical elixirs to which I referred just now. Nevertheless, although this scheme cannot, as I said, be adopted as such as a basis for our discussions, it does not appear to me impossible that certain of its provisions may furnish useful material for amendments to our own draft Convention when we proceed to its second reading.

It is for that reason that I entirely concur with the proposal which Lord Cushendun made yesterday to request the Governments of all countries to submit the Russian scheme to a detailed and careful analysis. Any Governments which, as a result of this examination, may discover any useful material for amendments will no doubt avail themselves of it and will assist us to do likewise when we come to the second reading of our own Draft.

I would, however, urge that, in order that this examination may be thoroughly carried out, we should allow the Governments ample time for the purpose. I venture to hope, nevertheless, that this examination may be completed before the next Assembly, because the Third Committee of the Assembly will be called on, as is usual, to review in detail the progress made by the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, and after this examination it will very probably have to give us further instructions for the future course of our work. It is therefore very desirable that, when this Committee meets, it should have before it either the replies of the Governments, or at any rate the representatives of those Governments equipped with precise instructions, as a result of the studies carried out in the interval.

In the same connection, since I am discussing our future procedure, I venture to urge—and I hope the Commission will share my view—that it will be expedient, I would even say prudent, not to fix an exact date at this moment for the next session of our Commission or for the second reading of our draft Convention. I think that we should leave our President to judge, having regard to the circumstances and acting in consultation, if he thinks fit, with the Chairman of the Committee on Arbitration and Security, what will be the most fitting date on which to convene this Commission for another session.

I hope that the Commission will accept this procedure unanimously, since it appears to me—even if it is not pleasing to some of my honourable colleagues—to be appropriate to the facts of the situation and to the sincere desire which we all have—and I beg my colleagues to believe that in any case it is my sincere desire—to bring our work to a successful conclusion.

Gentlemen, if we adopt the procedure which I have outlined and if, when the time comes, we enter on a discussion of our draft Convention at the second reading, having before us the conclusions reached by the Governments as a result of their detailed study of the Russian scheme, I venture to think that the Soviet delegation will be able to give us, and ought to give us, its fullest support, thus assisting us to arrive at practical results. We welcomed it when it arrived here with the same satisfaction as the United States and the Turkish delegations. We did so because one of the governing rules of our programme, a rule which appears at the head of the famous Resolution XIV, is that no scheme for the reduction of armaments in the sense of Article 8 can obtain complete fruition unless it is general. If the assistance of all the States Members of the League is necessary, the support of States which are not Members is no less essential if we are to attain to the realisation of the programme laid down in Article 8.

The Soviet delegation should, I think, be all the more willing to afford us its full and complete support because that will be, I will not say its best, but its only way of hastening the arrival of the time when its scheme, which now appears chimerical, may become practicable. If the Soviet delegation will assist us to complete our present labours, we shall be able, as I said just now, to pursue our upward path towards the ideal state of affairs. It can give us most valuable aid if it will co-operate with us.

In conclusion, may I be permitted, with the same sincerity which has inspired all that I have said, to outline the manner in which I conceive of this co-operation. It may assume manifold forms and may be afforded to us here as well as elsewhere. It may be afforded to us here by stimulating the legitimate impatience which desires to see Article 8 producing its first effects as early as possible, and also even more effectively, by a decision on the part of Russia to co-operate more completely, more wholly, with our efforts for peace by becoming itself a Member of the League of Nations.

This co-operation may also be apparent elsewhere if the Soviet Government will give those sincere and frank assurances—without having recourse to vain fictions of social pacification—which Lord Cushendun so earnestly appealed for yesterday; it can do so more specially if it will conclude with all its neighbours treaties or pacts of non-aggression and arbitration, thus effectively contributing to increase the practical and tangible guarantees of security.
12. Communication by General de Marinis with regard to the Protocol concerning Chemical and Bacteriological Warfare.

General de Marinis (Italy). — I have asked leave to make a short statement. The day before yesterday, M. Litvinoff, in referring to the Protocol concerning chemical warfare, stated that this Protocol had only been ratified by three countries. I am not finding fault with what was said by M. Litvinoff, because I think it is very natural that he should be unaware of facts which have taken place very recently, but I desire to inform him that one more country—my own—has now ratified the Protocol concerning chemical warfare. I have just received the news that the instruments of ratification were deposited a few days ago at Paris.

The meeting adjourned at 6.15 p.m.

SEVENTH MEETING (PUBLIC).

Held on Thursday, March 22nd, 1928, at 4 p.m.

President: M. LOUDON (Netherlands).


M. PEREZ (Argentine). — Mr. President, Gentlemen—I desire to associate myself with all my colleagues—and their number is legion—who have risen to oppose the scheme submitted by the Soviet delegation.

The Argentine delegation regards international disarmament as a political process the evolution of which is slow and comparable to that of those chronic diseases which progress slowly but surely towards recovery; it is a problem which is essentially complex, and not so much technical as moral in character, being based upon those sentiments of international security which ensure respect for treaties and the protection of the weak and exclude any claim to military intervention which might encroach upon the dignity or sovereignty of the nations. Technical and moral disarmament with the benefits they confer must pursue a parallel course and the first must never be allowed to proceed more quickly than the second. The trilogy of arbitration, security and disarmament remains unshaken—means that the mind must be disarmed before the hand which holds the weapon, and the weapon itself becomes a danger only when the mind which directs it is already dangerous. The Argentine delegation considers that to abolish war it is essential to bear in mind human realities and the geographical, economic, demographical, financial, social and cultural situation of the different countries, together with their very different political problems, the roots of which, particularly in the case of European nations, have struck so deeply into the soil of history. Mankind cannot be levelled like a high road. If we are to act effectively in the sphere of pacifism it is better to increase the peace potential by multiplying treaties of arbitration and conciliation rather than to reduce the war potential by acceding to conventions which are ideal and hence incapable of realisation, like the one just submitted by the Soviet delegation. Any attempt to alter the sequence of these three factors—arbitration, security and disarmament—would be to condemn ourselves of set purpose to failure and impotence; it would be to deny the world the benefits of lasting peace.

The Washington and Locarno Agreements and the masterly report of the Committee on Arbitration and Security have given a tremendous impetus to international peace and justify our optimistic outlook. This great fact we should accept loyally and in all sincerity. With this report in our hands, the Governments must act without delay, each within the measure of its powers, but all with the same desire to satisfy world opinion, which is so firmly attached to the cause of international peace.

The Argentine Republic will never refuse to accede to any scheme for disarmament that takes into account these fundamental premises which I have just put before you.

M. VALDES-MENDEVILLE (Chile). — Mr. President—It is not my intention to prolong this discussion by making detailed observations on the Draft before us. I desire, in the first place, to support the objective part of the important statement made by Lord Cushendun, the representative of the British Empire, and I also agree with what was said by the Japanese delegate and by M. Politis yesterday, more particularly with reference to the obligations assumed by all the Members of the League under the Covenant, obligations which are incompatible both with the principle and with the details of the scheme submitted by the delegation of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

In the second place, Chile cannot deviate from the principles which she has always advocated to the effect that limitation of armaments, must at least progress pari passu with security. As you already know, and as I have more than once had occasion to state, security, in our view, has to be considered, for certain countries like our own, under different aspects, and the chief solution must be by means of a system of treaties of arbitration and conciliation.
As M. Rutgers very rightly pointed out, there is no provision whatsoever in the Soviet scheme for such a system. I agree with M. Rutgers that the scheme itself cannot be regarded as an organic whole. Far from it. Further, it disregards one most important point, namely, that human beings are just as important a factor in warfare as rifles and guns.

I have no objection to the Soviet scheme being included in our documentation as part of the material bearing upon the question in general, so long as we adhere to the course which we have hitherto followed and take as our basis the Covenant and the specific mandate conferred on us by the Assembly and the Council.

M. LITVINOFF (Union of Socialist Soviet Republics). — I should like to begin by expressing my gratitude to those delegates who have responded to my appeal and expressed their attitude to the proposals presented by the Soviet delegation. I note with satisfaction that this was done by nineteen of the delegates present. Special gratitude is due from me to the honourable representative of the British Empire for giving the discussion such a wide scope and bringing forward a series of questions of the first importance in connection with our proposals. I welcome the frankness with which he spoke and shall endeavour, while observing the same courtesy and respect, to reply with equal frankness.

The honourable representative of the British Empire, however, introduced into the debate certain questions which I myself might have hesitated to bring up, fearing they might be regarded as irrelevant to the matter in hand. Since the initiative is his, however, I trust he will not take it ill if I express the point of view of the Soviet delegation and my Government with regard to these questions. Lord Cushendun was not content to investigate the draft Convention and our elucidation of it, but went out of his way to look for ulterior motives inspiring the Soviet Government to appear with dramatic suddenness before this Commission and present drastic proposals for disarmament. He also questioned the spirit in which the delegation came here, and why the Soviet Government has up till now taken no interest in or, as he preferred to put it, sabotaged the matter of disarmament. I will not ask the honourable delegate for the British Empire by what right he puts such questions to me, whether he recognises my own right to cross-examine him as to the sincerity of his Government, whether the British Government has sent its delegation here from sheer love of peace or for any other motives, what it has so far done for the cause of disarmament, and whether he would stigmatise as sabotage the fact that his and other Governments have so far done nothing to solve a series of questions and dissensions arising in the sphere of the Commission, thus making it impossible for it to proceed to a second reading of its own draft Convention and get on with its labours on the lines already laid down by the Commission itself. Such questions on my part would be perfectly in order by way of reciprocity, in view of the equal rights of the delegations represented here. I prefer, however, instead of indulging in idle questions, to satisfy his curiosity in reply to his questions.

The Soviet Government has interested itself in the problem of the establishment of peace and the banishment from national life of that scourge of human society, war, ever since it came into power. It was the first Government among the belligerent States to bring to an end the participation of its citizens in the great massacre, appealing to the other belligerent States to follow its example. When the Soviet State underwent a fresh attack from the then Allies, of which Great Britain was one, while continually making proposals for peace, it responded immediately to the invitation to go to the Prinkipo Islands to conclude a truce, being ready to make vast sacrifices for the sake of bringing to an end the fresh bloodshed imposed upon it. Quite independently of the League of Nations, on its own initiative, the Soviet Government suggested, as long ago as 1922, at the first International Conference at Genoa, in which it participated, that the first question discussed be that of general disarmament. Other States unfortunately considered it more important to spend time over the discussion of the question of restoring the private property of certain foreign firms suffering from the Russian Revolution. I do not intend to enumerate the other steps taken by the Soviet Government in regard to disarmament, as I have already mentioned them in this Commission at the November session. During the more than ten years of its existence, the Soviet Government has never attacked anybody of its neighbours, has declared no war upon anybody and has taken no part in the warlike adventures of other states. On the first invitation of the League of Nations, it agreed to take part in the labours of the latter with regard to disarmament, despite its well-known attitude to the League itself. Had it been a Member of the League of Nations, it would have been bound to do this by its own undertakings, whether it sincerely desired disarmament or not. The fact that the Soviet Government, having no obligations whatsoever towards the League, voluntarily co-operates with you in this Commission seems to me additional testimony to its sincerity and good faith. As I already pointed out at the November session, the responsibility for the non-participation of the Soviet Government in the first three sessions must be entirely laid at the door of the League of Nations. Arriving here, the Soviet delegation made up its mind to take the most active part in the labours of the Commission, showing initiative wherever it considered the initiative of others to be lacking or inadequate, and endeavouring, to the best of its ability, to speed up and stimulate work on disarmament and for the cause of general peace. The Soviet Government, in sending a delegation to the Preparatory Disarmament Commission, was inspired by no other motives than the desire to contribute to the freeing of the peoples from the heavy burden of militarism and the curse of war. In any case, the record of the Soviet Government in the sphere of peace is one qualifying it more than any other Government to come forward with proposals for disarmament.
Having voluntarily submitted to the cross-examination of the honourable representative of the British Empire, I am ready to reply also to his question as to whether our attitude to the League of Nations or, as he prefers to put it, our sabotage of the League of Nations justifies our participation in this Commission. The hon. Member for Great Britain has never attempted to conceal its attitude to the League of Nations, even mentioning this in its replies to invitations to take part in this Commission. The Soviet Government has frequently and publicly given the reasons for such an attitude to the League of Nations, pointing out all that it considers inequitable, unacceptable and reprehensible in the Covenant of the League of Nations, the Assemblies and the various decisions of the Council of the League. I hardly think the prestige of the League of Nations, by which Lord Cushendun is so careful, would be added to were I to recapitulate all this here. Suffice it to say that the Soviet Government sees no obstacle to its own participation in this Commission and the coming Disarmament Conference as the fact that the Commission is assisted by the League of Nations. This does not, of course, imply that the Soviet Government has undertaken to submit to any instructions and rulings emanating from the League or the Council of the League. It will only consider itself bound by acts drawn up by the Commission and the Convention which it may sign together with other Governments.

As, however, Lord Cushendun can scarcely fail to be aware, ours is not the only delegation from a Government not belonging to the League of Nations. An excellent illustration of the attitude of such delegations to the jurisdiction of the League is afforded by the declaration made to the third session of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission by the honourable representative of the Government of the United States at present among us, to the following effect:

"The fact that my Government is not a Member of the League imposes certain very definite limits as to the undertakings which it is in a position to give in connection with a Convention of this sort";

And further:

"Any Convention, in order to be acceptable to my Government, must take full account of the fact that it cannot accept the jurisdiction of the League of Nations."

I am unable to understand the exact purpose of Lord Cushendun's question about our sabotage of the League of Nations, for this question does not seem to imply that the Government of Great Britain would really like to see the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics a Member of the League of Nations. Indeed, such a desire would by no means be in accordance with the policy of the present Government of Great Britain with regard to the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. In my opinion, this question is about as effective as the incantations of negro necromancers against storm."

Lord Cushendun objected to an article quoted by himself from Izvestia, which he considered displayed a sceptical or ironical attitude to the work of Members of the League in the sphere of disarmament. This scepticism was expressed here by the Soviet delegation; the writer in Izvestia has perhaps merely put it more bluntly. I am, however, unable to understand why this article should worry the honourable representative of the British Empire and the Preparatory Disarmament Commission. It depends upon the Commission itself, by the results of its work, to give the paper the lie. The Soviet delegation would be the first to rejoice if this were done. But it is not only in Soviet circles that scepticism is shown with regard to the disarmament work of the League of Nations. I have before me a Paris paper, of an extremely reactionary tendency, for the 20th of this month. In it I read:

"The League of Nations could only be harmless if it admitted itself to be what it really is, an academy of pacifism, and if its priests admitted that their anti-war lectures are about as effective as the incantations of negro necromancers against storm."

In my opinion, this scepticism and irony might serve as a stimulus for the League and for our Commission, inciting them to do everything possible to show its undeservedness. The honourable representative of the British Empire tried to imply that the complete or partial solution of the problem of disarmament outside the League of Nations is most reprehensible—indeed, very little short of blasphemy. He went so far as to include among the achievements of the League of Nations the Washington Convention on the Reduction of Naval Armaments, appearing to forget that the League of Nations had nothing whatsoever to do with the Washington Convention. More: the so-called "Conference of Three" on naval disarmament, held in Geneva itself, was also not connected with the League of Nations and did not even avail itself of the organs of the League of Nations. If I am not mistaken, the negotiations still going on between the participants in this Conference are being held outside the orbit of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission. The honourable representative of the British Empire, in passing under survey our draft Convention, pointed indignantly to the lack in it of any reference whatsoever to the League of Nations, to the depositing of ratification papers in Geneva, or the registration of the Convention with the League of Nations. This, however, becomes quite comprehensible if it is borne in mind that the project emanates from a Government not formally recognising the League of Nations. Moreover, the reproaches of the honourable member for Great Britain will appear incomprehensible when I remind you that a series of international documents, in the drawing up of which Members of the League, including the British Empire, took part, have not been deposited with the League of Nations. To the best of my knowledge, the
Strait Convention, for example, drawn up not far from Geneva—in Lausanne, to be exact—was deposited, not at Geneva, but in Paris. Similarly, the acts of the Washington Naval Convention have not been deposited at Geneva. The Protocol of Poison Gases and Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, recently ratified by the Soviet Union and by Italy (but not as yet ratified by Great Britain), is also deposited, not at Geneva, but in Paris, despite the fact that the Protocol was passed at a Conference convened by the League of Nations. The same is true of the Convention on the question of the Trade in Arms, of which the League of Nations was the initiator. Moreover, with the exception of one article, all mention of the League of Nations was omitted from this Convention on the insistence of the United States, whose Government threatened to refrain from ratification unless this was done. In the note of this Government of September 12th, 1923, we find the words:

"The articles of the Convention which relate to the League of Nations are so closely interwoven with the Convention as a whole as to make it impossible for my Government to ratify the Convention."

I may also refer to Sir Austen Chamberlain's protest against the registration of the Anglo-Irish Treaty with the League of Nations, although both these States are Members of the League. If non-reference by the Soviet Government, not a Member of this League, is, in the opinion of the honourable representative of the British Empire, an insult to and neglect of the League, how much more ought this reproach to be made by Lord Cushendun to his own Government, participating in the acts I have enumerated which ignore the League of Nations.

In his endeavour to discover specific features in the Soviet Government which might disqualify it from taking part in the work of disarmament, the honourable representative of the British Empire asks the Soviet delegation what is its attitude to civil war—does it condemn it or admit it to be legitimate? It I were to follow the example of the honourable representative of the British Empire and seek out the ulterior motive of this question, I might assume it to have been put with a view to provoking the Soviet delegation to make an open defence here of civil war and revolution, in order the next day to accuse it of propaganda. I am, however, far from imputing such motives. It is nevertheless an entirely superfluous question, since the most cursory acquaintance with our draft Convention (and Lord Cushendun has shown us that he has studied it) would convince anyone that it refers only to international war. It never before occurred to us, and we had no grounds for believing, that the League of Nations intended to include under the questions of disarmament and security the prevention of civil war and the class struggle. I may say without the slightest hesitation that the Soviet Government would never have agreed to participate with the British or any other Government here represented in the working out of questions regarding the class war or the struggle against revolution. Indeed, it would be naïve to expect such work from a Government which owes its being to one of the greatest revolutions in history and was called into being to protect the achievements of this revolution. The Governments represented here will apparently have to set their internal social conflicts without our participation. I confess my entire inability to see the connection of this question with our project for total disarmament. Did Lord Cushendun wish to imply by this question that armies are required not only for national defence but also for the putting down of possible revolutions? Such an argument against our project would be quite inconclusive from any point of view, since it has become common knowledge that both the March and November revolutions took place with the active participations of vast armies, brought up to war-time pitch. In any case, if the honourable representative of the British Empire and other delegates touching upon this point attribute great importance to the question of social security, they will probably, when the time comes, develop their point of view more fully. I apologise to the Commission for touching upon this theme, which it may consider irrelevant, but I would remind it that it was the honourable representative of the British Empire, and not I, who broached the subject.

The honourable representative of the British Empire not only faces us with questions, but also imposes upon us preliminary conditions, and desires to get from us some sort of assurances before he agrees to consider our draft Convention. The Soviet Government is called upon to assure him that it will refrain from provoking armed risings in other countries. The honourable representative of the British Empire asked the same time to imply that this was irrefutably the established practice and policy of the Soviet Government. The honourable representative of the British Empire saw fit to use the question of disarmament publicly to accuse the Soviet Government once more (as his own Government has already done times without number) of so-called propaganda. Lord Cushendun apparently does not realise the unreasonableness of persisting in the use of a weapon long rendered innocuous by the exposure in so many countries of scores of offices and bureaux, largely staffed by Russian émigrés, for the specific purpose of drawing up forged documents for foreign Governments, proving alleged propaganda by the Soviet Government or its agents in foreign countries. One of these documents has already received the historic nickname of the "Zinovieff letter", and references have been made to it in the House of Commons even during the last few days. The fraudulence of this document has long ago been established, not only by the fact that the British Government at the time refused the demand of the Soviet Government to have it investigated by any arbitration court. A demand for the investigation of this document made a few days ago by one hundred and thirty-two British Members of Parliament has been rejected by their Government.
A former Prime Minister of Great Britain referred to this document on Monday last as follows:

"This letter was the subject of what was generally admitted now to be a political fraud, a fraud perhaps unmatched in its cool calculation and preparation in our political history."

Such are the documents on which the British Government bases its accusations of propaganda and internal interference. With regard to interference in internal affairs, I fear the Soviet and the British Governments have not yet found a common language to work out what precisely may be considered as interference. The British Government is inclined to consider a speech uttered or an article printed in Moscow regarding the policy or internal affairs of another country as interference, while not admitting as interference the arbitrary stationing of naval squadrons in foreign ports (Shanghai), the firing on foreign ports and towns with all the consequences thereof (Khartoum 1927), the demand that the Government of an independent country cease operations against another subject (Sir Percy Lawrence's ultimatum to the Persian Government, 1924), and the demand for his legal reinstatement (note to the Persian Government, 1927), the limitation of the army of this country (note to the Persian Government, 1921), etc. The Soviet Government cannot, of course, agree to such a conception of what constitutes interference in the affairs of others. But, gentlemen, you will ask me what has this ancient Soviet-British dispute got to do with disarmament? I am forced to reply that it has nothing to do with it. It was not I who brought it up, but the representative of the British Government, and I should consider it a mark of disrespect and discourtesy to him to ignore any of his questions.

The delegates of the British, Japanese, French, Netherlands and other Governments wondered if our project for complete disarmament was in conformity with the Covenant of the League of Nations, and, if not, if they had the right or ought to spend the time on its consideration. To this question all these delegates apparently give a negative reply, corroborated by no less an authority than M. Politis. If this, however, is so indisputable, and if complete disarmament is contradictory to the principles and aspirations of the League of Nations, we are unable to understand why the Preparatory Commission did not reject our proposals at the November session, why it decided to investigate them and why it is now spending time over this question. Apparently, however, the delegates I have mentioned are far from sure of the correctness of their replies, from a political point of view, if not juridically speaking. And indeed, we have always been told that the League of Nations was created mainly, if not exclusively, for the purpose of ensuring general peace. Although Article 8 of the League of Nations Covenant only mentions the limitation of armaments, it appears to us that merely minimum obligations were intended and this article should by no means be allowed to serve as an obstacle to further and complete disarmament should this be desired by Members of the League. It seems to me that a better means for discrediting the League of Nations could scarcely be found than the assertion that it is a barrier to total disarmament. Man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath for man. You are rendering your League a poor service, gentlemen, if you make a fetish of it, and subject it to the entire will of your Governments. The Covenant of the League of Nations is not a law for all time. The League itself, by the way, has several times considered altering its Covenant. It will suffice to refer to the fact that, on the confirmation by the Assembly of the League of Nations at its fifth ordinary session, on October 2nd, 1924, of the Geneva Protocol, the Assembly decided to invite the Council to nominate without delay a Committee for the preparation of the revision of the alterations to the Covenant demanded by this Protocol. If you agree to the principle of total disarmament and appreciate as they deserve all the blessings it would entail, or, let us rather say, the sum total of the ills it would abolish, you will agree, of course, to sacrifice this or that article of the Covenant. Those who say that our project infringes the Covenant of the League inasmuch as, by abolishing armaments, it deprives the League of the power to apply military sanctions forget that these sanctions imply armed attacks by one State on another, which the abolition of armaments would make impossible, so that the article on sanctions would itself become an anachronism. I do not mention the fact that the obligation for individual Members of the League to participate in military sanctions is disputed by Members of the League themselves. The Soviet delegation does not consider itself bound by the Covenant, or any rulings of the League, and therefore did not consider it necessary to take them into consideration in its draft Convention. If I venture to comment upon the Covenant of the League or any of its decisions, it is because I am anxious to understand your position and to prove the acceptability of our draft Convention even from the point of view of Members of the League. As for the competence of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission, we are here not as technical experts, and not only as members of the Commission, but also as members and responsible representatives of our Governments. If the Commission is called upon to seek out methods of partial disarmament, and if its members appear before those whom they represent with a declaration that they have found a way for total disarmament, there will hardly be found anyone to censure them for this, the more so as the decisions of this Commission are mere recommendations to the Governments.

My opponents, with the possible exception of the honourable representative of the British Empire, criticised our disarmament project less for what it contained than for what it did not contain. "Our scheme, we are told, affords neither economic nor social security; it does not guarantee a just peace, does not destroy international distrust, does not point the way to the solution of international disputes—is, in fact, not a panacea. These reproaches would be just
if we had undertaken to provide a universal remedy against all the ills and defects of human society and to turn this vale of tears into an earthly paradise. We cannot recommend you any such panacea, for we know you would not entertain it for a moment. We are trying to find a means of abolishing one evil—one of the greatest, it is true—the Moloch of war, and we want to try and find a common language with yourselves in so far as you say that you also are endeavouring to rid humanity of this ill. Within these limits—broad, but not infinite—our proposals, in our opinion, meet the purpose for which they were framed.

The gist of the arguments repeated here against the general idea of our project is that either the peoples will "rage furiously together", both without arms or with primitive weapons, or that the more industrially developed countries will be able very rapidly to substitute for the destroyed armaments new ones, and, in infringement of the Convention, enslave the weaker countries. It seems to me, by the way, that our opponents have already dropped the first of these arguments. I should like to call attention to the fact that the country which I represent has at its frontiers States numerically stronger than itself, such as China and India, with their hundreds of millions of inhabitants, and yet we have no fear of invasion by the organised masses of these countries. Other nations have still less reason than we for this fear. The second argument will also not hold water, for as it is, the weaker States, while obliged to maintain armed forces and resist possible attack by stronger States, are at the same time in complete dependence on the latter for their military supplies, besides being weak both technically and as regards their human resources. Articles 30 to 36 of the Soviet draft Convention propose the abolition of military industry and all elements of military production. The experience of the world war has shown that, even in countries with a powerful industry, like the United States, it required from twelve to twenty months to organise war industry (declaration of the United States delegation to the Sub-Commission on Disarmament). Fresh equipment for armies cannot be created at a moment's notice. Granted the time taken, this cannot go unnoticed, especially if the international and local control provided for in our draft Convention functions well. We know, for example, that the limitation of war industry was carried out as a result of the Versailles Treaty, and that fairly thoroughly, even in the case of a highly developed industrial country such as Germany, while in this instance what was aimed at was rendering innocuous a conquered country. How much easier it would be to control war industry given the complete abolition of the corresponding means of production!

The last-named objections seem to be rooted in profound international distrust, distrust of the mutual readiness to observe international conventions. It can be employed, and with even greater force, against the reduction of armaments, for what would be the good of an International Disarmament Commission, even along the lines of a draft Convention worked out by a preliminary Commission, establishing limits for armed forces and war supplies in every country, if we suspect that this Convention will not be observed and the equilibrium established arbitrarily upset? Here would be real grounds for your fears for the security of individual countries.

The honourable representative of Italy spoke, among other things, of the necessity not only of peace but of a just peace. I must admit I do not quite understand what he means by this. Does he mean that the present peace is not just and should be altered? But peace can only be altered by one of two ways: by war, or by revising the existing peace and other international treaties. As I am quite sure he did not intend to point to the necessity of a violent alteration of the present peace, I should like to tell him that our project by no means excludes the revision of the Peace Treaties, and that he could raise this question in the League of Nations, of which Italy is a Member, or at another international conference equally well after the realisation of our project. If he is not thinking of the violent alteration of the peace, he obviously does not require the preservation of armaments for the revision of the Treaties.

I will now turn to the remarks with regard to individual articles of our draft Convention, returning for a moment to the speech of the honourable representative of the British Empire. He found a multiplicity of technical and other defects in our draft Convention; he found that several articles do not even answer the purposes of its authors, that it is not written in language suitable to a legislative act, and that many of its articles, which he was good enough to enumerate, are open to serious criticism. He asked with astonishment how I could think of imposing such a faulty Draft on the Disarmament Commission, stipulating at the same time for its acceptance wholesale without consideration, or its rejection. Lord Cusshendun would have saved himself much time and labour and considerably shortened his speech if he had not built up all his arguments on false premises. I do not know why he made up his mind that the Soviet delegation had decided to present the Commission with something like an ultimatum. The Soviet Government has itself received ultimatums, but, so far, has not sent any to anyone. The Soviet delegation had decided to present the Commission with an ultimatum. The Soviet Government has itself received ultimatums, but, so far, has not sent any to anyone. Lord Cusshendun himself justly mentioned my covering letter to the League of Nations Secretariat, in which I proposed that our draft Convention be accepted as a basis for discussion. In the speech introducing the draft Convention I referred not less than three times to the conditions in which I considered its study and consideration expedient. It follows that I did not exclude for a moment the consideration
of the Draft as a whole and in detail. I simply insisted that the draft Convention should not be examined until and if the Commission accepted the principles underlying it. After all, what would be the good of discussing the question as to the type of ships to be preserved for coast defence if we had not decided the question of the complete destruction of other military vessels? What would be the good of our discussing the question of the international division of the zones before we had decided what individual naval forces in the various countries were to be destroyed? The examination and consideration of the draft Convention without having established any ruling principles would indeed be an unworthy waste of our time. Valuing the time of the Commission, and anxious to save it from the discredit of fruitless work that could not lead to anything, I warned it against wasting time over the draft Convention before we had agreed upon a working basis. Furthermore, as the honourable representative of Italy remarked, all the articles of our draft Convention were subordinated by us to the basic idea of the complete destruction of armaments. Take away this fundamental idea and the individual articles of the draft Convention lose all value for us. This is why I called the draft a single whole incapable of disintegration. We, of course, claim no copyright for the Draft, and any of its articles may be adopted by anybody for any scheme of disarmament, but this will not be the Soviet scheme, and the Soviet delegation and Government cannot undertake responsibility for any such. The Draft may be found to contain articles answering to the interests of or that State. Great Britain may consider, for instance, that the article on the destruction of submarines accords with her interests; other States may find articles suitable for themselves, and as a result disputes may arise with which, gentlemen, you are already familiar from the history of the first reading of your own draft Convention. Once, however, we all agree to use complete disarmament as a basic principle, disputes about individual points can have no serious significance. I am quite ready to admit that our draft Convention is not perfect and that, pursuing the common aim of complete disarmament, we might collectively considerably amend and improve it. All those articles which evoked the astonishment and criticism (shall I say derision?) of the honourable representative of the British Empire are not essential and allow of disputation and compromise.

Lord Cushendun aimed most of the slings and arrows of his criticism at Chapter III of the Draft, entitled "The Organisation of Police". I can assure you, Mr. President, that, in drawing up this chapter, the specific interests of our own country were the last things to influence us. On the contrary, we should rather have ignored entirely the question of police defence. It is not, however, in vain that I am already participating for the second time at a session of the Preparatory Commission, and I am sufficiently imbued with your practical spirit and what you call a sense of reality. I knew the enormous significance attached by the countries you represent to the question of internal safety, the protection of property, etc., and therefore it was with a view to the interests of your countries and their possible desires that I ordered the drawing up of a special article on protection. I have no doubt whatsoever that, if I had omitted to do this, I should have been still more severely criticised, perhaps by none other than the honourable representative of the British Empire himself, for forgetting such an important body as the police. Lord Cushendun concentrated on the question of the arming of the police. He implied that our draft Convention was specially adapted to the conditions of life in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, where the police would appear to be better armed than in other countries. As a matter of fact, the militia in the Soviet Union are armed with revolvers precisely as are the police in most European countries. I have an idea that the police in the country in which we are at present are also provided with fire-arms. Lord Cushendun assures us, and I do not for a moment doubt him, that the police in his country are armed only with truncheons, but I do not doubt either that in cases of necessity the troops might be called upon to employ firearms. Lord Cushendun was also amused at the point concerning the protection of means of communication. The British delegate, of course, has no doubt of the importance of the police defence. It is not, however, in vain that I am already participating for the second time in the work of the Commission, and I am sufficiently imbued with your practical spirit and what you call a sense of reality. I knew the enormous significance attached by the countries you represent to the question of internal safety, the protection of property, etc., and therefore it was with a view to the interests of your countries and their possible desires that I ordered the drawing up of a special article on protection. I have no doubt whatsoever that, if I had omitted to do this, I should have been still more severely criticised, perhaps by none other than the honourable representative of the British Empire himself, for forgetting such an important body as the police. Lord Cushendun concentrated on the question of the arming of the police. He implied that our draft Convention was specially adapted to the conditions of life in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, where the police would appear to be better armed than in other countries. As a matter of fact, the militia in the Soviet Union are armed with revolvers precisely as are the police in most European countries. I have an idea that the police in the country in which we are at present are also provided with fire-arms. Lord Cushendun assures us, and I do not for a moment doubt him, that the police in his country are armed only with truncheons, but I do not doubt either that in cases of necessity the troops might be called upon to assist. Moreover, in the Manchester Guardian for the 19th of this month, I read, for instance, the following communication from Belfast: "In connection with the demonstration at Moy, a large force of police was concentrated in the district to prevent a repetition of an outrage perpetrated in August last when a group of nationalists marching in procession along the main street in order to take part in a similar demonstration were dispersed by shots. The principal roads were lined with police, while Crossley tenders full of armed constables were always on the move."

Thus we see that in Ulster, which is a part of the British Empire, the police constabulary are armed. Further, the following information was communicated by Reuter's Agency on February 3rd last from Bombay: "The armed police suffered an attack by the demonstrators and were obliged to open fire"; and I have before me a telegram from Madras to the effect that, "as a result of the firing by the police upon the insurgents...", etc. Lord Cushendun will thus see that the police are not armed only in the Soviet Union, and that at least in parts of the Empire represented by him the police are actually forced not only to carry but to employ fire-arms. I trust he will agree that my precautions regarding the police were not superfluous from his own point of view. Lord Cushendun was also amused at the point concerning the protection of means of communication. The British delegate, of course, has no doubt of the necessity to protect sea communications and even control by his Government of countries situated on marine routes. I venture, however, to inform him that, while protection of means of communication may not be required where the railways system is highly developed, in countries with no towns or even large villages within a distance of 100 miles from each other, the presence at railway-stations of only a single police officer, if only in case of crimes being committed in trains, would scarcely be considered by him superfluous. The objects requiring protection mentioned in the Draft are intended to cover such institutions as State Banks,
Treasuries and Mints, requiring, of course, special protection. If, in examining our draft Convention, the honourable representative of the British Empire would like to propose still more drastic reduction of armaments for protection and for the police, the Soviet delegation will do its utmost to meet him on this point.

In this connection, a very legitimate question was put by the honourable representative of the Netherlands, expressing the fear that, in arming the police in proportion to the population the bigger countries might be in possession of a considerably greater armed force than the smaller, which might be used for warlike purposes. The Soviet Government intends to defend the interests of weaker States in the most energetic manner, and the Soviet delegation is therefore ready to change the proportion in the interests of the weakest States. If the Soviet delegation were to present any scheme for partial disarmament whatsoever, it would propose this very principle of a higher degree of disarmament for the bigger countries, including the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, than for weaker States. I should add that the provision in our draft Convention for forms of protection should not bear the character of military organisation and that, as far as the police are concerned, they should be subjected to local authorities and not concentrated under a central administration, still less command. With regard to the types of weapons for protection forces, this is a technical question to be decided by the experts, since in some cases, such as combating contrabandism, rifles might be required, in others revolvers, and yet others side-arms, as the honourable representative of Cuba points out. The honourable representative of the British Empire did not ignore the question of personal defence revolvers, and yet others side-arms, as the honourable representative of Cuba points out. The honourable representative of the British Empire did not ignore the question of personal defence. I make so bold as to declare that the citizen lives inadequately, stand in need of such defence. I make so bold as to declare that the citizen honourable representative of Cuba points out. The honourable representative of the British Empire did not ignore the question of personal defence revolvers, and yet others side-arms, as the honourable representative of Cuba points out. The honourable representative of the British Empire did not ignore the question of personal defence.

The honourable representative of the British Empire proposes total prohibition of the carrying of arms by private citizens, but implied that only those in my own country, where the State safeguards their lives inadequately, stand in need of such defence. I make so bold as to declare that the citizen of the Soviet Union does not carry arms on his person, and does not need them, for crime statistics there are no higher, if not lower, than in other countries. Lord Cushendun must, however, be well aware that shops trading in arms exist in all countries, and that these arms are bought for some purpose or other by private citizens also. The honourable representative of Japan has told us that it was dangerous to go out unarmed in certain tropical countries. Other dangers exist in other countries. Representatives of the Government of the Soviet Union have been attacked and killed in extremely civilised countries. A Soviet courier has been called upon to defend the diplomatic mail, arms in hand, outside the frontiers of our Union, in European countries some of which were Members of the League of Nations. If, however, the representative of the British Empire proposes total prohibition of the carrying of arms by private citizens, including even sporting rifles, the Soviet delegation will not quarrel with him on this point. Our draft Convention provides for a series of legislative measures on the part of every State. Lord Cushendun asked how free legislative assemblies could be forced to submit to the rulings of the Convention. It is now my turn to express astonishment. It cannot be that the honourable representative of the British Empire is not aware that an international convention ratified by the corresponding legislative assembly is law for the given country and that the legislative assembly ratifying the convention by so doing undertakes to carry out the necessary legislative acts provided in such a convention.

All these questions could have been given tranquil and all-round consideration and our delegation would naturally have been happy to have given all the explanations necessary, but, since Lord Cushendun has already broached all the questions and made critical remarks on them, I was unable to leave them unanswered.

I would once more point out that the question of the types of vessels provided under Articles 43 and 44 present no obstacle whatsoever for agreement. I would mention by the way that I am informed by my naval experts that the vessels of the tonnage mentioned in the draft Convention are fully capable of coping with their tasks in the various countries. For example, I have a list of some vessels belonging to Great Britain:

Mersey type trawlers, 665 tons; 11 knots; rated as fishery protection gunboats.
Arleux, Arras, Givenchy, 136 tons net; 10 knots; fishery protection; Atlantic and Pacific; Canadian Government.

In the United States of America there are:

Eagle boats, 500 tons; 18 knots; some of them transferred Coastguard.
1st Class cruising cutters (new construction), 2,075 tons; 16 knots.
Cruising cutters (Haida, Modoc and others), 1,780 tons; 16 knots.
25 Coastguard destroyers; 1,090 to 1,110 tons; 29.5 knots.
Ex-submarine chasers, 75 tons; 11 knots.

All these vessels function in the same way as provided by our draft Convention.

I cannot refrain from pointing out one remark on the part of the honourable representative of the British Empire with regard to Article 10, of which he himself would doubtless admit the unfairness. In mentioning the proposed prohibition of scientific research and theoretical treatises, he did not think it necessary to mention that the reference was to specifically military
publications and not to general scientific ones. He found the article concerning military schoolbooks extremely humorous. I do not know if he is equally derisive of the proposal brought before the Assembly of the League on September 16th, 1925, to the effect that:

"The League of Nations would propose that its Members take measures, with a view to moral disarmament, for the revision of school histories in such a way as to gradually diminish the number of pages devoted to military events, especially in the case of those pages in which wars of conquest, etc., are glorified."

The other articles attracting the attention of the honourable representative of the British Empire, such as those concerning the number of copies of ratification papers, the place for their preservation, the place for the meeting of this International Control Commission, etc., are scarcely likely to provoke serious dissension. On detailed consideration of our draft plan, Lord Cushendun would have the opportunity also of suggesting other wishes and offering proposals with regard to such questions as how to deal with those troublesome neighbours to whom he referred with such feeling. Before, however, going into these comparatively unimportant articles, I should like to know if he accepts in principle the first thirty-six which embody the principle of complete disarmament. On this point he was unfortunately a little evasive. He spoke of complete disarmament as the ideal to which the whole of humanity aspires and for which it has longed since the very dawn of history. We have not, however, met together here to discuss our remote ideals, but to decide which of these ideals, to which humanity has apparently been aspiring for several thousand years, can now be put into practice, and which must be given another thousand years to mature.

The honourable representative of the Netherlands asks if I consider the further discussion of our proposal of any use. Of course, if the majority or a considerable number of the delegations present consider the principle of complete disarmament unacceptable for their Governments, then all further discussion is superfluous. Unfortunately, not all the speakers gave a quite clear answer to this question, and, while criticising our disarmament scheme severely, many speakers nevertheless qualified this by remarks as to the usefulness of its further discussion. Our delegation attributes such vast importance to the idea of general disarmament that it will always be ready to give further elucidation and participate in further discussion of our proposals, but, I repeat, such discussion is desirable and expedient only if the Commission declares its acceptance of the principle of total disarmament. In that case, I shall propose proceeding to the point-by-point reading of our draft Convention. In the case of the rejection of this fundamental principle, I shall not only not insist upon consideration of the Draft, but myself oppose it as a complete waste of time. It is now for the Commission to let me have its decision.

Mr. President, I am aware that, in asking for a decision, I am making a request which, while it is essential, is purely formal, and I cherish no illusions whatsoever as to its outcome. The speeches which have been pronounced here on the subject of disarmament have done nothing to increase our optimism. This time we really did begin our work in the Commission with some degree of optimism. We know that one of the biggest States had come forward with a proposal for the prohibition of war, and, having our own conception of logic and consistency, considered ourselves entitled to reckon on the support of this Government for our proposal, but the representative of this Government did not consider it necessary to lay his point of view before us, unless we are to consider convincing his declaration here that he believed in one scheme and not in another. On the one hand, the criticism of our draft Convention was based on profound international distrust, on the assumption that a solemnly accepted international convention is bound to be infringed, while, on the other, we are assured that when two neighbours, armed to the teeth, give a solemn promise not to attack each other, only then can the preservation of peace be hoped for. But when these neighbours supplement their solemn promise by undertaking to disarm and by actually disarming, we are told that not only will this not increase for them both the existing security, but it will actually decrease it. Thus, we learn, disarmed nations are still more dangerous to each other than armed! Credo quia absurdum! Of course, this can be believed, since nothing is too strange to be true, but it is a little difficult to grasp.

I was a little surprised to hear the honourable representative of Poland say that our idea could only be seductive for the average man, the man in the street. But it is this very man in the street, the average man, of whom the honourable representative of Poland spoke so contemptuously, on whom the burden of militarism lies and who is called upon to offer sacrifices to the Moloch of war. We, the Soviet delegation, do not claim to represent the so-called upper circles of society; we are here to represent the workers and peasants, whose interests we understand and value. No manner of doubt exists for our Government that these interests demand the radical solution of the question of disarmament and war. I think I can assure the honourable representative of Poland that the fears he expressed of the advocates of peace placing exaggerated hopes in the present session of the Preparatory Commission are, to say the least, exaggerated.

Whatever may be the fate of our draft Convention in the present session of the Preparatory Commission, we still believe that general and immediate disarmament is the only effective guarantee of peace, corresponding not only to the remote ideals but to the urgent daily needs of humanity.

If at the present moment the indubitable fact that the sympathy of the broad popular masses is entirely on the side of the idea of total disarmament is questioned, we are nevertheless
profundely convinced that the time is not far distant when this sympathy will penetrate to the consciousness of all the Governments represented here and cause them to take up a very different attitude to our proposals.

Count Clauzel (France). — When I had the honour of speaking last Tuesday at the opening of this discussion, I thought it better to confine myself to a few essential questions, not preliminary questions, but questions of principle, to which it seemed to me necessary that a reply should be given for the sake of clearness. Nor was I disappointed in my hopes, for nineteen replies were given by members of the Commission, and a very full and carefully documented answer has now been furnished by the representative of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

These replies, for which M. Litvinoff has had the courtesy to express his gratification and thanks, were, I think, clearer than he seems to suppose. The representative of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics had placed a ballot-box before the members of the Commission and he had, in effect, asked for voting-papers. Of the nineteen replies, it would seem that eighteen were “Noes” and that their impressive unanimity was not disturbed by a single “Aye”.

Only one doubtful paper, to use a parliamentary term, was placed in the box. I must apologize to Count Bernstorff if I have misunderstood the exact meaning of his observations; he is, of course, perfectly free to correct me, and his corrections will — still employing parliamentary language — appear in the Minutes.

I found in all these replies, to which I listened with the interest and attention they deserve, most of the objections which M. Paul-Boncour expressed last November. M. Litvinoff dealt with them a few days ago very summarily and did not seem to attach much importance to them. I am sure that his intention was to stimulate the zeal of his opponents. Like all apostles, M. Litvinoff is not content with his apostleship but rather aspires towards martyrdom. He is like some Polybeucte, some St. Sebastian who urges his enemies — as he said just now in speaking to Lord Cusshendun — to choose their sharpest arrows so that they may more certainly strike the very visible and obvious target which he offers to us in this hall. I may add that this target is connected up with every listening-post in the civilised world.

We may, however, congratulate ourselves on, and even thank M. Litvinoff for, this, for we were in great need of enlightenment, and this propaganda was particularly necessary at this moment in order that there should no longer be any doubt, especially among the working classes, as to the work which we are undertaking, the genuineness of our efforts, the nature of our discussions, and our desire to study proposals all of which are no doubt submitted to us with the same sincerity.

I will not deal in detail with all the points which have been raised, but I must express regret that certain questions, which I might describe as personal, have been introduced in reply to questions of principle. These personal questions do not come within our terms of reference and, if M. Litvinoff will allow me to say so, this is perhaps hardly the place for levelling accusations against a great country represented amongst us, or at a country whose hospitality we are enjoying.

I am not at all sure that the explanations which have been given will convince the editors of the Izvestia any more than they will convince the very subtle and very witty Ulysses quoted by M. Litvinoff, and who is not a compatriot of M. Politis, who would no doubt be very astonished to find himself in such company. However, they will certainly do us the honour of reading the reports of our discussions and they will, at any rate, be compelled to acknowledge their sincerity.

Lord Cusshendun felt himself called upon to examine the Soviet Draft point by point, chapter by chapter and article by article, and M. Litvinoff followed suit by replying point by point to most of his objections. I do not think that the time is yet ripe to resume this discussion and, in any case, others are better qualified to do so than I am. I do not think, however, that it is M. Litvinoff’s wish, and I will therefore confine myself to two or three points of especial importance in regard to which public opinion should be left in no doubt.

The discussion gave rise to one painful question amongst others, namely, that of civil war, which, it is true, does not come within our terms of reference. It arose out of examination of some of the provisions in the Soviet Draft to which the Soviet Government had not attached the importance that Lord Cusshendun and M. Rutgers subsequently attributed to them. If we take away from soldiers their rifles and send them back to their homes, where, as M. Paul-Boncour pointed out last November, they will still remain soldiers even though disarmed, and if we give their rifles to policemen, who are not only local police but may include frontier or forest guards and may represent in very large countries a force of considerable size; if, finally, we arm citizens with revolvers with the last possible intention of securing their personal safety (although they may also be tempted to turn them against their fellow-citizens), we shall thereby be creating very serious problems; for there is no denying that action of this kind is calculated to encourage civil war. But when we declare war against wars — and M. Litvinoff will allow me to inform him that we did not await his all-too-long-deferred arrival at Geneva before inscribing this formula on the facepiece of our preparatory work for limitation of armaments — we were