The United States delegation made a general reservation "on the failure to include provisions for the limitation of material both in the hands of forces serving with the colours and reserve material of land and air forces".

The Japanese and Italian delegations have made a general reservation in regard to the German draft.

The Soviet delegation has just submitted a new proposal, which differs completely from the French draft and which, while following the main lines of the German proposal up to a certain point, submits a more detailed table and further introduces a new article. The text is as follows:

**Soviet Delegation's Proposal.**

1. Article TB:

   "For the armaments of land forces the existing patterns shown in the tables at January 1st, 1929, shall be retained."

2. The table in Article TA of the German draft shall be replaced by the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Rifles, carbines and pistols:</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Quantity of ammunition</th>
<th>Quantity of various kinds of spare parts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Automatic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Non-automatic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Machine-guns:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Heavy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Light</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Artillery:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Light field guns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Heavy field-guns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Heavy, of a calibre up to 204 mm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Heavy, of a calibre above 204 mm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Of very long range of all calibres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Mortars of all kinds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) Guns accompanying infantry:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(aa) Guns and howitzers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(bb) Mine-throwers, grenade-throwers and bomb-throwers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tanks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Armoured-cars</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Grenades, hand and rifle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Armes blanches</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 This heading includes guns of a calibre not exceeding 107 mm. and howitzers up to 152 mm.

The Commission will perhaps desire to proceed to a general discussion of the problem dealt with in these drafts and to examine them in turn, beginning with the Soviet draft.

It should be noted that the Commission, when discussing Chapter II, Section III, Material of Air Armaments, had before it a German proposal providing for an extension of the limitation of the material of air armaments to material in reserve and in store, and also for a limitation of the number of machine-guns for aeroplanes or dirigibles and a limitation of the total weight of bombs for the air forces. You will remember that these various proposals were held over for discussion with Article TA.

A similar decision was adopted in regard to the Soviet proposal to add to paragraph 4 of Article AA, after "in commission", the words "and in reserve or in stock, the total number not to exceed 25 per cent of the aeroplanes and dirigibles on an active footing".

I thought it well to remind the Commission of the situation as regards material, with a view to facilitating the discussion which is now beginning.

The Hon. Hugh. Gibson (United States of America). — At the head of Chapter II there is a reservation which I will read:

"The delegation of the United States of America makes a general reservation on the failure to include provisions for the limitation of material both in the hands of forces serving with the colours and reserve material of land and air forces."

Mr. President, the analogy between material in reserve and trained reserves is so close that I shall only take one moment to explain our position. Throughout the earlier debates the American delegation endeavoured to persuade the other delegations that materials in reserve should be limited on the grounds, firstly, that it actually exists in time of peace; secondly, that it confers a decided advantage upon its possessor should war happen to break out; and, thirdly, that it is impossible, as a practical matter, to make a clear distinction between material in store and material in service.
I now desire to declare that in this, as in the matter of trained reserves, the American delegation stands ready, although its convictions have not altered, to defer to the conviction of the majority of those Powers whose defence is primarily military.

M. Litvinoff (Union of Socialist Soviet Republics). — The schedule in our proposal regarding Article TA does not differ in principle from the schedule in the German draft. It follows the same lines, but we have included some details in regard to heavy artillery of a calibre up to and above 204 mm., long-range artillery, and tanks, etc. We did it because, as we have mentioned already on another occasion here, the Soviet delegation will propose at the Disarmament Conference the total abolition of certain weapons of war, particularly those of an aggressive character.

It has been pointed out to us that this Commission cannot occupy itself with the question of the total abolition of armaments, that it cannot even bind itself to any principles with regard to the reduction of armaments. It is dealing now only with the limitation of armaments. We cannot therefore make now radical proposals for the abolition of this long-range artillery, tanks, etc., and feel bound to specify these weapons in the schedule with a view to proposing in the Conference itself “zero” in the corresponding columns.

I shall speak on Article TB after the acceptance of Article TA. These two articles are not necessarily connected. Article TB could be proposed in regard to any draft, even to the French draft with regard to land armaments. With your permission, therefore, Mr. President, I shall defer the discussion of Article TB for the present.

Count Bernstorff (Germany). — As I have already said, I desire to assist the Commission in its work as far as possible. I am therefore prepared to accept the tables proposed by the Soviet delegation in place of those given in our proposal.

I should also like to receive a reply from Mr. Gibson. He stated a moment ago that he was prepared to withdraw his reservation in regard to material in store. What I want to know is whether the United States delegation is also withdrawing its reservation as to material in service. This question is important for our subsequent discussions.

The Hon. Hugh. Gibson (United States of America). — Count Bernstorff is entirely accurate in the distinction he has made. I have withdrawn our general reservation as regards material in store, but I am sorry that I am not able to give a precise answer to his enquiry as to our position in regard to material in service. Our position on that point will be, to a large extent if not entirely, determined by the provisions which commend themselves to the Commission for dealing with that phase of the subject. As soon as the general discussion reveals the trend of opinion, I shall be prepared to state the position we shall take.

The President. — In view of the statement made by Count Bernstorff, who supports the Soviet draft regarding the tables, we have before us two important systems: one submitted by the Soviet delegation, containing a table with more or less numerous particulars regarding the categories of weapons, and the other submitted by the French delegation, which is based on the limitation of the expenditure on the upkeep, purchase and manufacture of war material.

M. Sato (Japan). — I should like to state quite clearly the attitude of my delegation in regard to these two systems. The Japanese delegation has always held the view in the past that land armaments should be reduced only by reducing the effectives, seeing that a reduction in material cannot, owing to the diversity in the situation of the individual countries, be carried out in a simple and equitable way. At the first reading of our draft Convention we accordingly thought it necessary to make a general reservation on Article TA, which is at present under discussion. However, I now desire, in a spirit of concession, to state that I am ready to accept the principle of the limitation of material in the hope that in this way I shall facilitate agreement in our Commission.

As regards the actual methods by which the limitation of war material will be effected, our delegation is of opinion that the best means would be that of indirect budgetary limitation, as indicated in the French draft of Article TA. This method has, in the first place, the great advantage of applying to the whole of the land material, and not only to certain categories. It possesses, in addition, the valuable qualities of simplicity and fairness, which will greatly facilitate agreement between the largest possible number of countries.

On the other hand, should the Commission desire to undertake a direct limitation of land material by specifying figures, it would be liable to raise serious difficulties. In the first place, this system indirectly restricts the freedom of internal organisation in regard to the armies of individual countries from the point of view of the allocation of effectives between the various arms.

Secondly, the system of direct limitation would inevitably raise the delicate question of control, which gives rise to immense practical difficulties. These objections and difficulties do not arise, at least to the same extent, in the method of limiting land material by the
indirect method of limiting budgets. Moreover, once the High Contracting Parties are bound to publish every year the total expenditure on the upkeep, purchase and manufacture of land material, we shall be in possession of a very valuable element of control. The Japanese delegation is accordingly glad to give its assent to the method of indirect limitation of land material by the limitation of budgetary expenditure.

On the occasion of previous discussions on the limitation of material, reference was frequently made to the material in store, and certain delegations expressed their earnest desire to see this material included in the limitation. I readily understand their anxiety. I would like, however, to point out that the position in this respect is not the same for all countries, but that the requirements of national defence necessarily vary in different States. For these reasons my own country, for example, would find it impossible to accept a direct limitation of material in store, because this system would have serious disadvantages from the point of view of the organisation of the national defence.

On various occasions, and quite rightly, it was pointed out that such a limitation is intimately connected with the question of war potential. We have always maintained that, in the question of the reduction of armaments, the idea of war potential necessarily plays an important part. That view was shared by a great number of other delegations, as may readily be seen by reference to the report of Sub-Commission A. This war potential is certainly not capable of direct limitation, but it nevertheless requires to be taken into consideration. A moment's reflection on the actual position will suffice to make it clear that, in countries with abundant natural resources and a highly developed industry, the necessary armament can be rapidly completed, whereas a country which has poor natural resources and is undeveloped industrially will feel the need of compensating for this inferiority, and will be led to form stores of material with a view to re-establishing, in some measure, its situation as compared with the other countries.

I would also venture to state that the direct limitation of material in store raises very distinctly the delicate problem of control, to which I referred a moment ago.

Under these circumstances, it would perhaps be wiser to content ourselves with an indirect limitation of land material by budgetary means, a method which would undoubtedly receive the assent of all countries. This method would also have the great advantage of giving satisfaction to those States which desire a limitation of material in store, since this would necessarily be effected, to a greater or less extent, by limiting expenditure. For these reasons I hope that, as a result of mutual concessions, we may reach general agreement on the adoption of the indirect limitation of land war material which I have just explained.

In conclusion, allow me to add that the concession I have agreed to make in regard to the limitation of the material of land armaments would not be possible for me in regard to naval and air armaments, for reasons which I shall have an opportunity of explaining when we come to the discussion of these armaments.

M. Markovitch (Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes). — I think it desirable that the discussion should be confined to the proposals of the German and Soviet delegations, and that the French delegation's proposal should be put on one side for the moment. The two systems and the two points of view are entirely different. I shall therefore deal only with the Soviet proposal, which has been accepted by the German delegation.

I do not wish to reopen the discussions which took place at previous sessions, and more particularly in Sub-Commission A. I have no desire to repeat the arguments strongly urged against a system which, while theoretically perfect, is, from a practical and political point of view, incapable of realisation.

In the interests of the work of the present session, I would simply say that the majority of the members present are apparently at one in thinking that the Commission should concentrate all its efforts on the limitation and reduction of effectives. If we achieve practical results and limit and reduce effectives, this will be the first step towards the goal we have in view.

I very much doubt the advantage of endeavouring, by a limitation of material in store, to achieve the object which we have not been able to attain in connection with the limitation and reduction of trained reserves. I think that we should continue on the lines we adopted for the chapter on effectives.

As regards material in store, I do not wish to dwell on all the general arguments which make any real limitation impossible. I would merely point out that even military experts disagree as to the utility and real value of stocks of war material.

I would, however, specially emphasise the argument which was used just now by the Japanese delegate in regard to the question of control, a point which I raised during the earlier discussion on air material. This question of control would force us to abandon decisions previously taken, whenever we came to discuss the possibilities of such international control.

I now come to the main argument for our rejection of the Soviet delegation's proposal. We had the honour to set out this argument at length during the earlier discussions. The decision to limit material in store would operate unfairly against the smaller countries which have no military industries and which are compelled to buy war material from industrial countries, to pay a high price for it, and to keep it in store at the risk of its becoming obsolete after a few years.
It would, indeed, be a remarkable result if, by actually limiting stocks of war material, we force these smaller countries to create war industries for themselves. Being unable to keep military material in store, they would be compelled to set up national war industries, and would have to spend much more to safeguard themselves against the danger of war.

I consider that this question of the limitation of material in store is logically dependent on the question of effectives. If we succeed in limiting and reducing effectives, we shall in that way reduce the stocks of war material. I cannot conceive any country spending enormous sums to no purpose on material which it would not require. On the other hand, I cannot imagine that any country would run the risk of going without the material required for the effectives which have been granted to it.

For these reasons I cannot accept either the German or the Soviet proposal.

General de Marinis (Italy). — It has been my good fortune in the long discussions we have had on this question to find myself always in agreement with the honourable Japanese delegate. The Japanese and Italian delegations have been in agreement not only on this particular question, but also on those related thereto, namely, the question of war potential and of control. I need hardly say, therefore, that I fully associate myself with M. Sato's conclusions. Hence, I need not trouble the Commission with a long speech in which I should only repeat what can already be found in the Minutes of the previous sessions, and particularly in those of Sub-Commission A, and the arguments just put forward by M. Sato and M. Markovitch. The latter has just adduced an argument of great importance concerning the situation in which small countries — and I may add certain large countries also — are placed in regard to this question of material.

The Italian delegation would have preferred to limit the reduction to effectives, as such a reduction would have a reaction on all the other branches of armaments. But, in a spirit of accommodation, it is prepared to accept a method of indirect limitation based on expenditure and applying to all material, whether in stock or in service. The Italian delegation recognises that this method is not perfect, particularly in view of the differences in the purchasing power of money in the various countries; but for want of a better method it is ready to accept this one in principle, on the understanding that it reserves the right to pronounce an opinion on the details of application.

In conclusion, I adhere in principle to the French proposal, while reserving the right to revert subsequently to the methods of application.

M. Fierlinger (Czecho-Slovakia). — I should like to define briefly the Czechoslovak delegation's attitude in this very important discussion.

The other day, when the Commission pronounced in favour of the system of the limitation of effectives on the lines of the draft Convention, and various delegations gained the impression that trained reserves were going to escape any form of supervision, it was made quite clear that the Italian delegation, for this, the Commission would consider the limitation of material. It seems to me that our Convention would be incomplete without this limitation, and that we should expose ourselves to the charge of not having foreseen the consequences of our decisions.

It has already been pointed out how far the system adopted by the Commission will also affect trained reserves. We were all in agreement regarding this system and we have also agreed that we must not confine ourselves to the limitation of personnel, but must also limit war material.

We are asked to adopt a direct method which will mainly have to take into account the position of States which have no war industry, and this is already a very difficult problem to solve. But who can foresee the progress which will be made by military technique while our Convention lasts? Who can draw up lists of the different armaments which may exist during the period of ten years for which our Convention will probably last, and who can presume to compare the value of a newly invented machine-gun with that of an obsolete one? I admit that the limitation of naval armaments can be based on an estimate of more stable values, but even in this case we have seen how difficult it is to find a fair basis and one satisfactory to all the delegations. But I think that, in regard to land armaments, no comparison is possible.

There is also another argument of a mainly economic nature. It is possible that, while the Convention is in force, a State may desire materially to reduce its effectives. It will be unable to do so without modernising its armaments and thus revision of the Convention will become necessary.

I will not repeat all the arguments which might be raised against the Soviet and German proposals. If I may be allowed to anticipate the discussion which is going to take place on the French proposal, I will only say that I have a great respect for our military experts and do not want to disparage them in any way. I fully recognise their willingness, but I doubt if they will really be able to make an absolutely just comparison of these lists of armaments over the period of our Convention. Their job is to provide for their country's defence; consequently, they will always try and prove that their armaments are empty or that a neighbouring country has more powerful and more modern armaments. This will, perhaps, provoke very difficult discussions and endless recriminations.

Furthermore, the question of supervision which has already been discussed at length and which, as experience has shown, is liable to give rise to unpleasant incidents, will once more have to be considered.
I therefore think that we ought to try and find new methods on the lines of the French proposal. I think that international supervision will have to be entrusted to our Parliaments, which, by examining the military budgets, frankly and loyally drawn up, of the different countries, will be in a position to judge the legitimate requirements of the armies and compare military expenditure in the different countries. But I think that, in the long run, it will be the taxpayer who will find an advantage in this system and who will make his influence more and more felt in every country in favour of gradual but increasingly effective disarmament.

M. Westman (Sweden). — The other day we rejected the limitation of reserves. A direct, or, at any rate, an indirect limitation of material in service and in stock therefore appears at the present moment to be the only way remaining of achieving the principal aim of the Convention, i.e., to reduce the aggressive force at a country’s disposal on the outbreak of war.

The Swedish delegation has always maintained, for reasons which were explained at length in Sub-Commission A and in the present Commission, that the direct method of limiting war material is the best. We have not changed this opinion.

I fully recognise all the difficulties which arise in considering the practical application of this method. But the whole problem of disarmament, as we have occasion to know, is extremely complicated, and the question of material is not more complicated than many other questions in this sphere.

The indirect method, that of budgetary limitation, seems to the Swedish delegation much the less satisfactory from several points of view. Above all, it contains the anomaly of not applying to material already in existence. It seems definitely less effective and less equitable than the direct method.

I am, therefore, in favour of direct limitation applied to all the branches of armament, whether by land, sea or air. For the moment we are only discussing the principle, but I should like to say that I prefer the table submitted by the German delegation, which is less complicated than that which the Soviet delegation has just submitted.

Count Bernstorff (Germany). — I should be the last to wish to prolong the discussion. As I have so often said, my chief desire is that the Disarmament Conference should be convened as soon as possible. If I now repeat several of the main arguments we have put forward in this Preparatory Commission (I emphasise the word "Preparatory", which defines the work we are doing), it is, because, in my opinion, we have to-day arrived at the most crucial point in the preparatory labours for the Disarmament Conference.

But before repeating these few arguments, I venture to refer, very briefly, to some considerations which have been advanced against the direct reduction of material.

It has been said that the direct reduction of material is impracticable. Nothing is impracticable which has already been done before. The direct reduction of material has been carried out in the case of Germany on the basis of the Treaties of Peace, and as a model for the execution of the Treaties of Peace. Therefore you cannot say that it is impracticable.

It has also been said that this method would be unfair to countries which have no arms industry. I cannot accept this argument either, because these tables in no way prevent countries without arms industries being allowed a quantity of material corresponding to their needs. These two arguments, therefore, appear to me to be easily refutable.

I must ask your indulgence if I repeat once more a few of my arguments. I said in my observations:

"The end in view would not be achieved by fixing the maximum figure of budgetary expenditure; firstly, because this method does not allow us to determine what material is in existence when the Convention comes into force, and, secondly, because it does not give us any information on the nature of the material—a question which is of great military importance. The tables of budgetary expenditure will only show us the commercial value of these stocks, and not their military value from the point of view of disarmament. In certain circumstances, a weapon which is less costly may be of far greater aggressive value than one which is more costly. A bombing aeroplane, for example, may in certain circumstances be much more effective and much more dangerous, while being less expensive than a gun which would cost much more. Moreover, the credits entered in the budgets will not be a satisfactory indication of the reduction of armaments, owing to the differences in time and space, in the purchasing power of gold and in the cost of acquisition or production of material."

"Why is direct limitation so imperative? Firstly, gentleman because each State must know the armaments in respect of material possessed by other States, which it must take into account in its estimates. Only in this way can it procure a basis on which to estimate the scale of its own material armaments. No one will question the fact that particulars relating only to expenditure will never afford an accurate idea of the armaments in material of any country; in particular, it will afford no idea of the stocks of arms and ammunition existing when the Disarmament Convention comes into force."

"In the second place, the direct limitation of material is essential, because we are all agreed that it is important to restrict the possibility of aggression. It is particularly in this connection that the limitation of material is a decisive factor. The reserves of material and the stocks of offensive weapons and especially of ammunition, determine the striking power of a country. No doubt material is useless without the man who wields the weapon."
The Hon. Hugo Gibson (United States of America). — In view of the trend of the debate, I feel that it may be opportune for me briefly to state the position of my Government on this question of budgetary limitation. I cannot do so more briefly than by reading from a statement — taking the good example of Count Bernstorff — which I made in the Preparatory Commission at the meeting of April 7th, 1927, when this subject was under discussion.

I must, therefore, state once more most emphatically that “I could not consider a Disarmament Convention as a satisfactory solution of the problem if it did not include by some simple method the main categories of material." I apologise for having repeated arguments which I had already put forward at our 1927 session.

After the observations made by my colleagues, I am led to the conclusion that the majority is ready to accept an illusory limitation effected by a reduction of budgets. If such a decision is taken, I shall have a further statement to make on the question of principle before the discussion is closed.

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

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

I am quite prepared to agree to the broadest and most comprehensive measures of publicity; however, after the exhaustive and sometimes exhausting debates on the subject of budgetary limitation, my Government still adheres to its conviction that such limitation would present no true picture. We feel that budgetary limitation does not afford a logical basis. In view of the great variations in the cost of material and labour, fluctuations of exchange, and various other factors, we feel that the picture presented would be a complete model, but no proper guide in estimating limitation. We feel that a picture arrived at in this way would be no true picture, that it would leave the door open to every sort of evasion, and that such a method is impracticable and ineffective. We therefore feel that such provisions have no proper place in our draft Convention, and so far as the United States Government is concerned, I am unable to accept any measures of budgetary limitation.

Of the two principles which the President has stated this morning, I prefer that of direct specific, tabulated limitation.

M. Rutgers (Netherlands). — After hearing Mr. Gibson’s speech, I should like to explain in a few words the attitude of the Netherlands delegation with regard to the direct or indirect limitation of armaments.
The honourable delegate of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, with his usual clearness and precision, has stated the reasons for which he preferred the indirect method. But it seemed to me that his speech was somewhat contradictory.

He took as his point of departure the reasons in favour of the direct method; but he said that to achieve a limitation of armaments he preferred the indirect method. In opposing the direct method, however, he gave us arguments which, in my opinion, were contrary to any limitation at all.

He spoke of the position of countries which have no war industry, compared with other nations with a higher war potential, which, for reasons of security, must have considerable armaments. This is an argument whose value I do not dispute for the moment, but it led our honourable colleague to say that, if material in stock could really be limited, countries which have no war industry would be obliged to create one. Accordingly, there could be no genuine limitation of material in stock.

Certain delegations, for reasons which I do not propose to go into, do not desire a limitation of material in stock. After having categorically opposed the limitation of material in stock, they express their willingness to accept indirect limitation. But, in that case, why consent to an indirect limitation if it is to produce a genuine limitation?

This is the contradiction which I note in the attitude of several delegations which, for reasons of national security, opposed the limitation of trained reserves. They want to have organised, enrolled and armed trained reserves, and consequently they cannot accept any real limitation of material in stock. It is for this reason that they desire to have indirect limitation.

This indirect limitation applies only to the annual increase of armaments. Budgetary limitation does not affect the present state of material. This is quite contrary to the system proposed by the Soviet delegation—the system of proportional reduction. In reality, budgetary limitation is not a reduction of the material existing at the present moment. The present state of armaments is taken as a starting-point.

For the reasons which I have just indicated, I think that indirect limitation should be opposed. This is the contradiction which seems to me to exist in the speech of the honourable delegate of Japan, M. Sato, spoke of budgetary publicity, which would form a valuable element of supervision. On this subject, as it has been brought up in the discussion. The honourable delegate of Japan, M. Sato, spoke of budgetary publicity, which would form a valuable element of supervision. But I think that this element would be too valuable for our honourable colleague. When the Netherlands delegation proposed publicity as regards armaments, the honourable Japanese delegate objected, saying that secrecy was essential in this matter. As in the case of limitation, I wonder whether budgetary publicity is not in some way incompatible with genuine publicity.

In these circumstances, the Netherlands delegation's preference is for the direct method.

M. Markovitch (Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes).—M. Rutgers was good enough to compliment me on the clearness of my statement. I regret that I am unable to accept the compliment, for my statement cannot have been sufficiently clear, since M. Rutgers did not rightly understand it.

In addition to other important arguments, I emphasised the rather curious fact that a country having no war industry and obliged to limit its stock of war material would be in a state of inferiority as compared with other Powers possessing industries capable of being converted into war industries. Thus, a little country would be obliged to create peace-time industries which could be converted into war industries. But I did not say anything about the creation of stocks of war material; I only spoke of the excessive expenditure which certain countries would have to incur in order to create industries.

Furthermore, I must protest against M. Rutgers' remarks in regard to what he considered the lack of goodwill displayed by our country as to the limitation of war stocks. I cannot recall that, either in the previous sessions or in the present session, our delegation has employed arguments which could give M. Rutgers any right to form such a judgment. I regret to say that, in my opinion, such arguments do not tend to facilitate the progress of our work.

M. Litvinoff (Union of Socialist Soviet Republics).—I am not going to repeat the arguments for the Soviet-German proposal because it has already been dealt with by Count Bernstorff from a practical and technical point of view. I would add only one argument. The representatives of certain Governments have stated here during the present session that their countries have already reduced their effectives to a certain extent, by a number of regiments, or other units; and that therefore it would not be fair to submit them to further reduction of armaments. These statements will probably be repeated at the Disarmament Conference. I submit that, unless the representatives of those Governments will state openly and publicly what is the actual level of their material, their statements with regard to the reduction of their armed forces will be quite valueless, because, in reducing effectives and at the same time increasing war material, they are not diminishing the fighting force of their armies, nor reducing their preparedness for war. Consequently, their statements will not be of much value to the Disarmament Conference unless they also support the proposals for the limitation of war material.

But I prefer to dwell upon the general aspect of the question. When we were discussing the problem of reducing trained reserves, I expressed the fear that, if we left trained reserves unreduced, this fact might be used as an argument for the non-reduction of material of war. I owe it to the honourable representative of the Serb-Croat-Slovene delegation that my statement has been
corroborated. He was quite logical in stating to-day that, if we leave trained reserves uncontrolled and unreduced, we must naturally provide for their adequate equipment, and therefore cannot reduce the material of war.

But, logically starting from the same point of view, we shall come to the impossibility of reducing even effective in service. As I stated, effective and cadres must correspond to the trained reserves. You will see that, following on this line of thought, we shall come to the impossibility of reducing either material of war or trained reserves or even effective in service. A further logical inference would be not to reduce military budgets, since, if all the elements of war are left untouched, we cannot diminish the budgets.

This path leads us to results which we might call nil; that is the line which has been followed by the Commission for the last few weeks. I have stated many times, gentlemen, that the path mapped out by the Commission leads to an impasse, to a blind alley, and that there are difficulties in the way which the Commission will be unable to surmount.

What has been going on in the Commission for the last few days, and, in fact, for the last few weeks, fully corroborates what I said at the beginning. We are not overcoming any difficulties which have shown themselves in the previous sessions of the Preparatory Commission. Certain divergencies of opinion have manifested themselves on certain proposals for disarmament, and the Commission is now simply withdrawing these proposals in order to obtain unanimity. We are practically deciding not to talk about disarmament at all. That is the easiest way of obtaining unanimity. We are practically disembowelling the draft Convention, leaving it an empty shell. In this way we shall be able to state that all reservations have been made to disappear and that there is unanimity. But there will be unanimity only on the heading of the draft Convention.

I know, gentlemen, that in arguing here for disarmament I am like "a voice crying in the wilderness", but still, at the eleventh hour, I make my last appeal to the Commission. Count Bernstorff has quite truly said that this is the decisive moment in our work. Those delegations which, at meeting after meeting, have opposed any proposals for the reduction of armaments have now the last chance to make some concessions to those who have submitted proposals for reducing armaments. Unless they make a concession on this point we are now discussing, we shall be unable to speak of mutual concessions. The concessions will be quite one-sided. They will be for the withdrawal of any proposals for disarmament. If we wish to leave in the draft Convention any content worth mentioning, we must at least leave the proposal for the reduction of material of war.

The Commission has decided not to reduce air armaments, not to reduce trained reserves. We have also rejected a number of other proposals tending in the same direction. If we now reject the Soviet-German proposal on war material, I venture to say that the draft Convention agreed upon by the Commission will not be worth the ink with which it is written.

MUNIR Bey (Turkey). — I should like to recall the general reservation which my delegation has already made with regard to the limitation of war material in stock. I should add that this reservation applies both to direct and to indirect limitation.

NINETEENTH MEETING (PUBLIC).

_Held at Geneva on Friday, May 3rd, 1929, at 10 a.m._

President : M. POLITIS (Greece).

60. Discussion on Chapter II, Material Section I, Land Armaments (continuation).

The President. — We will continue the discussion of this chapter. M. Cobian will address the meeting.

M. COBIAN (Spain). — I think we have reached a dangerous turning-point, and this is a very grave moment. We ought all to face our responsibilities and not seek to evade them, and I would refer particularly to those delegations on whom depends the possibility of reaching an agreement on the serious question we have been discussing since yesterday. Indeed, I think the holding of the Conference, which for the last few days we had been anticipating in the near future, is endangered.
Yesterday we broke up under a most painful impression. It seemed as though the hope we had been entertaining of coming to an agreement, thanks to the progress we have made — however small that progress may seem to certain delegations — had vanished. For that reason it is the duty of all of us to strive to avert this danger and endeavour, at the cost of any sacrifices, to reach an agreement.

Having settled — at all events in principle, though indeed with certain reservations — the question of effective controls, we find ourselves, when we come to the question of material, confronted with two proposals, which in my view are not absolutely antagonistic, since both start from the same point and aim at securing the reduction and limitation of armament material on the same principle. The difference lies in the method to be employed.

Yesterday at the last moment the United States delegation presented us with a third proposal, embodying a third method of securing reduction.

I should like to say that, of these three methods, the one which would present the greatest difficulty to my country is the indirect method; that is to say, limitation on the basis of the budget. The cost of production in Spain is very high and, if we were to accept this system, we might find ourselves appearing to have armaments which we did not really possess. As material is not renewed periodically, this method would be still more awkward, and it would be very difficult for my country to accept it.

Nevertheless, as M. Litvinoff pointed out a few days ago, we are here not merely to defend the interests of our respective countries, but also to achieve a common end, and to that end we must be prepared to make sacrifices, provided always that the vital interests of our countries are not endangered.

For that reason, notwithstanding its disadvantages, I shall not oppose the method advocated by the French delegation, especially because, in my opinion, budgetary reductions and a shortening of the term of military service would give the greatest satisfaction to the public.

The third method — that proposed by the United States delegation — consists solely in publicity. At the Conference on the Supervision of the Trade in Arms and Ammunition and in the special Commission on Private Manufacture the United States delegation demanded publicity, not only for private manufacture but also for State manufacture.

I realise that this problem of limiting war material is so intimately connected with the problem of the supervision of the trade in arms private manufacture that only provisional solutions can be reached until the Convention on the Trade in Arms is universally accepted and a Convention on Private Manufacture drawn up.

At the same time, we must face the fact that this proposal for publicity does not settle the question of the reduction of armaments. I quite realise that its authors think that, if publicity were given fairly and truly by all Governments, it would act as a mirror and would prevent any competition in armaments. Obviously, however, it would not for the moment bring about any reduction. I would therefore ask the United States delegation to think again. It has already shown great devotion to the cause we are here to serve, and we hope that it will make a further move.

There remains the method of direct limitation. At first sight, this seems the most natural, the most logical and the simplest method. I also think that it is practicable, as Count Bernstorff said yesterday.

It is all very well to refer to certain obligations taken up in quite exceptional circumstances. I think, however, it is beyond question that the direct method must be accompanied by some effective guarantee of control; and I doubt whether, in the present world situation, having regard to the suspicions that still prevail in spite of all the progress that has been made through treaties signed and ratified, all the Governments could be induced to undertake not to exceed certain quantities of material unless they had some guarantee that their neighbours and potential enemies would scrupulously adhere to the same obligations.

It is true that the system of indirect limitation may be open to the same objection regarding control, but it must not be forgotten that indirect limitation by the budgetary method is already subject to a certain measure of control by Parliaments and ultimately by public opinion, whereas public opinion could not exert itself in regard to the tables prepared under the direct method.

After the statements we have heard here, we can hardly hope that, at this early stage of disarmament, control would be accepted, and without such control it is very difficult for us to agree to the method of direct limitation.

But there is yet another consideration which appears to me decisive, viz., that three delegations — the British, the French and the Russian — have asked for a method of direct limitation, and they are the three Powers best equipped to apply this method. For that reason, notwithstanding its disadvantages, I shall not oppose the method advocated by the French delegation.

Moreover, we must not minimise the importance of our agreements and of the work we have done. Even if we are forced to recognise that there is no possible solution on this point, and that we are in the same situation as at the first reading, we must proclaim that we have nevertheless achieved great progress which will enable us to summon the Conference.

The summoning of the Conference is the outer harbour, the threshold which must be crossed before we can continue the work of disarmament.
There are always extremists and we must not complain of this. They do useful work by obliging the others to pursue the task of disarmament.

But, gentlemen, the path which we have to travel before we reach the Conference will be a hard one. It will be a difficult and steep ascent, but the Conference lies at the summit. After that the road will still be long, but it will be on more level ground.

We must not run the risk of compromising success by a display of impatience, however justified. It must be remembered that, by wanting too much you, often get nothing. In my country there is a proverb which says that however early you may get up, you won’t make the sun rise any earlier.

M. Massigli (France). — Mr. President, after the remarkable speech we have just heard it is almost unnecessary for me to add anything. But the discussion has assumed such ample proportions and reference has so often been made to the French proposal — much more often, indeed, than to the Soviet proposal — that I think the Commission will expect me to state our delegation’s point of view.

We were told yesterday that a Convention which only applied to effectives, without including any direct limitation of material, would not be a sufficient step towards disarmament. I am quite ready to admit that, if material could be directly limited, the Convention we are preparing would be more complete. But this is not the question.

The question is whether such a direct limitation is possible. I say that it is not.

Reference has been made to countries on which certain measures of disarmament were imposed as a result of the Treaties of Peace. I do not wish to ask myself whether it is reasonable to regard this disarmament as a model to be followed. That is not the question. I simply say that, if an appreciable result were obtained, it was, as we all know — and I venture to say that for special reasons I know it particularly well — only at the cost of a great expenditure of time and energy, and even then there was a large margin of imperfection. And yet this is adduced as a proof that direct disarmament by the scrapping of material is possible. It seems to me to be a proof of the exact contrary.

And yet this disarmament was carried out with the assistance of a machinery of international control, far beyond anything which is included in the proposals submitted by the French delegation at the first reading, which, as we now realise, are strongly opposed.

Besides, this control would be far from being always technically possible. How could you control, for example, the stocks of military aviation, which consist to a large extent of engines, and planes identical with the engines and planes of civil aviation? Such a control would be illusory.

The limitation, too, would be illusory. It could not extend to all the elements to which it ought to extend. Would you limit spare parts? How would you do so? Where would you stop? What is a spare part? At what stage does a partly wrought gun or machine-gun, for example, become a spare part of a gun or machine-gun? How would you settle the question of depots of material which is not war material because it is not completed, and which is yet so nearly completed that it would take hardly any time to finish it in the country itself or in a neighbouring country? Direct limitation is not possible, it is an illusion.

It may be argued that I am presuming bad faith on the part of the contracting States and that we are drawing up a Convention in good faith. No doubt, as I am the first to admit, good faith must be at the basis of our work. But it is no good proclaiming such principles without thinking of the inevitable contingencies of practical application. Gentlemen, in dealing with the disarmament problem, we are venturing upon very delicate and quite new ground, upon which it is easy to understand that countries must feel their way with great caution, otherwise, if they should prove to be mistaken in their confidence, Governments would expose themselves to the most bitter reproaches. We cannot rashly commit them blindly to courses which may prove to be dangerous.

It has also been argued that, if you do not directly limit material you will facilitate aggression.

Gentlemen, I wish to make myself quite clear on this point. I do not know what is meant by a weapon of aggression. I have already said this and I repeat it. I know what a weapon is, but it is aggressive or defensive according to the use to which it is put. A revolver in the hands of a passer-by who uses it to defend himself it is a defensive weapon. That is not the question.

Some of us who recognise the difficulty of directly limiting material in stock say, “At any rate, let us limit material in service”. Several speakers have already indicated the difficulties of such a solution. First of all, as has been said, it lacks elasticity. Then, again, it is extremely difficult to define material in service. Each country has its own definitions. In certain countries material in service includes spare parts; in others it also includes material for mobilisation of peace-time units. There are a thousand different shades which it is impossible to define. Moreover, how are we to determine, in a Convention which is to be general, the needs of the different countries in regard to material in service? No doubt, if you have machinery for control, it will be possible to define, in the case of a given country, the quantity of material which it needs for its particular type of army. But the problem we have to settle is quite a different one. We must find formulae applying generally and in the same conditions to all types of armies and to all military situations. If you endeavour to solve such a problem, you will soon find that it is insoluble.
Gentlemen, it is for these various reasons that the French delegation, at the first reading, advocated the system of indirect limitation by the budgetary method.

I am not blind to the difficulties in the way of this proposal, and I recognise that there is very strong opposition to our suggestions in some quarters. I hope, however, that you will allow me to say a few words in defence of the system.

It has been argued that limitation by the budgetary method is impossible, that it is impossible to compare from the budgetary point of view countries whose economic situation is often entirely different, and between whom the variety of army systems creates differences.

To that I would reply that there is no question of comparing, but only of fixing, a limit for each individual State. There is nothing to prevent an adjustment of the limit to the special conditions of each State; nothing prevents us from taking into account its general economic conditions or any special conditions, such as the standard of life or the cost of labour. Nor is there any reason why the situation of a country which would have, at the time of the conclusion of the Convention, obsolete or worn-out material, should not be taken into account. and also the reasons it may put forward in support of its claims to the Conference. The system is extremely elastic and admits of all sorts of combinations. It has also the immense advantage of being very clear and easy to understand. The progress of limitation can be followed with the help of public documents and by the production of extracts from the budgets. There would, therefore, be no difficulties as regards control.

I claim that this system is an effective one. At a time when the country, whose guests we are, furnished professional soldiers to all Europe, there was a proverb which said "no money, no Swiss". Gentlemen, Switzerland no longer supplies Europe with soldiers, but one fact remains certain: no money, no men; no money, no material. The budgetary problem is a definite problem. When Parliaments are asked for money for military purposes, you all know how they exercise their control.

However that may be, and whatever the value of arguments which, for my part, I consider weighty, but which others dispute, we are faced with a grave difficulty.

Mr. Gibson has told us very clearly his objections to the French proposal. I know that on this point the United States delegation is guided by general political considerations; and I also know that at bottom, like all the delegations here, it desires limitation. It is only as to methods that opinions differ.

We must recognise, however, that, if our Convention contains nothing with regard to the limitation of land material, it will, as M. Cobian said, contain a gap. That gap will not be as serious as some speakers would have us believe; the Convention will retain a great part of its value; but, nevertheless, the gap will be patent to all. This must be recognised; the publicity which is proposed in order to remedy this omission will do something; we must do what we can in the way of budgetary publicity; but, naturally, publicity will not have the same effect as limitation.

In these circumstances, what can we do, and in particular, what can be done by the French delegation, which took the initiative in the proposal at the first reading? When he encountered similar difficulties, M. Paul-Boncour said that France would not make budgetary limitations a sine qua non for her acceptance of the Convention. I desire to renew that declaration, as I am putting all my cards on the table. If it really proves impossible to reach general agreement on this principle, I shall give way.

But, gentlemen, I hope that, before finally rejecting the principle, you will think it over. The text which is submitted to you is not sacrosanct and is open to modification. It can be made more elastic. For my part, I think it would be very regrettable if the Commission were to decide forthwith that the limitation of material by the indirect budgetary methods is impracticable. I therefore ask you, gentlemen, not to pronounce any conclusion.

Whatever may be the decisions which we adopt as to our future work, one fact is certain, and that is that we shall not finish the second reading of our draft Convention this part of the present session. So why should we not leave the matter open, and think over this question of indirect limitation further? Why should we not go into the matter thoroughly with our Governments and try to arrive at some solution? Perhaps we shall not succeed. In that case we shall be no worse off, and at the next meeting each of us can say that his attitude remains unchanged and the matter will end there. But it is just possible that meanwhile some of us may have found means to enlighten our Governments on all the points of the problem. I am sure, for example, that Mr. Gibson, who has always brought such an open and liberal mind to these discussions, will do all that he can in this direction. On our side, we shall also see if we cannot devise other solutions for this problem and will let you know the result of our investigations at the next meeting.

Baron Rolin Jaequemyns (Belgium). — Gentlemen, the Belgian delegation, for which I have the honour to speak, did not intend to take part in this discussion. As I have already pointed out at another session, we regard this question of disarmament as one which should be discussed more particularly between the great military Powers ; the solution would depend on the agreement of the great Powers, and, in principle, the smaller Powers like Belgium would be glad to accept the terms of such an agreement.

As, however, most of the delegations have already indicated their views, I have felt it opportune to state the Belgian point of view.
I would say that, in principle, any kind of reduction in material, even a specific reduction, such as that suggested -- apart from points of detail -- in the Soviet and German proposals, would be sympathetically received by us.

I say "in principle" advisedly, because, when we come to look at the matter more closely, we are bound to recognise that this specific reduction would not prove effective without some form of control. Again, the establishment of control would undoubtedly be viewed by us with great distrust, for, as the French representative has very clearly shown, we are apprehensive that supervision might give rise to friction without yielding the results which we all desire to obtain.

On the other hand, specific limitation without any control would, in practice, prove ineffective.

Under these circumstances it was our intention to support the French amendment and the French proposal for indirect reduction and limitation, i.e., budgetary limitation. If this proposal were submitted, we should, for the reasons clearly put forward by M. Massigli, be very glad to accept it. Should it be desired, however, as the French representative has also suggested, to hold over this proposal for consideration by the Conference, we should also agree to that course.

At the same time, we do not wish in any way to minimise the importance of the proposal regarding publicity, on which the Honourable Mr. Gibson has laid stress. We consider that publicity would be an excellent first step towards combating excesses in the matter of armaments and military training. Even if our Commission merely arrived at a draft Convention which recognised, in addition to the reductions in effective on which we have been fortunate enough to agree, the principle of publicity in regard to material, we could affirm that we had made a serious step forward towards the consolidation of peace.

M. Sokal (Poland). — I have followed with the greatest attention the speeches which our honourable colleagues made yesterday and to-day on this very important question of war material. I have observed that, unfortunately, there are differences of opinion, and I have tried to ascertain the reason which prevents us from reaching a unanimous conclusion on so grave and weighty a matter.

It may be wrong, but I believe that this difference of opinion is due to the fact that certain delegates regard this question only from the technical point of view, whereas others look at it from the political point of view.

It would seem obvious that this question of war material cannot be settled solely by mathematical and strictly technical means. It is an eminently political question. What conclusion could we reach as a result of a purely technical analysis? Where would we arrive by following the purely mathematical arguments that have been put forward during this discussion? I have no desire to mention them all, but I should like to give one example.

An honourable colleague of ours stated that it is absolutely essential to determine the present position in regard to material. Why should this be essential? I would affirm that, in fact, the present position in regard to material is known to everyone. It is a secret, but an open secret. I do not understand why there is so insistent a desire to establish returns of material in the various countries. Our colleague’s reply to this question was that it was necessary to know the amount of material in neighbouring countries in order to ascertain what was required for purposes of self-defence.

That is a somewhat mathematical aspect of the question. It is true, but not always true. Take the case of a country A, with a large store of material. Do you believe that B, its neighbour, is compelled to have supplies which bear some relation to those of country A? That depends upon the relations between the two. If A and B are on terms of friendship, and if there is no dispute between them, the amount of material which A has in store will not lead B to increase its amount. This example will show that political reasons also influence the conclusions arrived at.

The amount of material in a country does not always lead to identical results in amounts of material for all neighbouring countries. You will find a very interesting statement on this point by Sub-Commission A. The latter noted that:

"The principal test whether a force is designed for purely defensive purposes or built up in a spirit of aggression, remains in any case the intention of the country concerned."

When reference is made to material in store, it is described as a danger, for it can constitute a means of aggression. That, however, is not always strictly true.

Let me take the case of two countries, one of which has a very large amount of material in store — 1,000 aeroplanes, 10,000 guns and 100,000 rifles. Its neighbour has only a tenth part of that material. One may be tempted to conclude, on seeing these figures in a table, that the former is much stronger in material, and that in the case of a conflict it will easily crush the other. But is that conclusion correct?

The answer will depend, in the first place, on the war industries in the two countries. The State first mentioned may have a great amount of material, but no military industries. I am not an expert in these questions, but I can well believe that, if the second country has a highly developed industry which is immediately adaptable for warlike purposes, it will be able at any time to prepare and manufacture everything which the other country at present possesses. In the case of a conflict, the chances of success would be completely reversed. The first country will not crush the other; it is the latter which will be victorious.

This example will show that the purely mathematical and technical method does not lead to the results expected.

There is a further very serious difficulty. Looking at the question of direct limitation, we shall find that there is also a difference between the armies. I mentioned figures for guns, machine-guns and rifles a moment ago, but the actual number does not mean very much. Military experts tell me, for example, that the difference between an old and a new pattern
of gun or machine-gun is so great that the new pattern must be regarded as possessing twenty
times the military value of the other. If figures for machine-guns are given in the tables,
without mentioning the pattern and other purely technical details, we can form no idea of the
strength of the various countries in regard to material.

It may be concluded from the example I have quoted, first of all, that the mathematical
method cannot be applied, and that the problem must be considered above all in its political
aspect. We are also forced to conclude that, as matters now stand, direct limitation is extremely
difficult, if not impossible. I do not wish to repeat the arguments which have already been put forward. In any case, direct limitation requires control as an indispensable corollary.

Certain speakers have already stated that we can have no hope of setting up a sufficiently
strict form of control which would enable us to supervise limitation by the direct method.
I will again state the point of view which we have always supported. The Polish delegation
has declared on more than one occasion — this was also the argument strongly upheld by
M. Paul-Boncour — that we cannot consider any limitations unless they can be controlled.
It is absolutely essential that every provision in the Convention should be such that it can
be controlled easily and rapidly.

If we find that direct limitation is impracticable, at least for the moment, we are forced
to return to indirect limitation, a method which has been supported by a large number of speakers.
In my opinion, we are all agreed that, if we wish to achieve our object, we must try to obtain
not only provisions which are theoretically the best, but also those which will enable us to
make a small step in advance, a step that will be unanimously agreed to and will justify the
hope that the draft Convention will be accepted by the Conference and strictly enforced by all
States ratifying the Convention.

We must therefore resolve to confine ourselves for the moment to an indirect limitation
of military material. Certain highly important statements made on this subject permit the
hope that the Commission, before it separates, may find a satisfactory formula. I think that
the possibilities will be found, in the first place, in the principle embodied in the French proposal,
with the very valuable addition which M. Massigli made to it a moment ago. We should
merely state that the Convention must provide for indirect limitation, the question of the means
of securing such limitation being left open.

If we take this declaration in conjunction with that which was made yesterday by the
honourable representative for the United States of America, I think that we may, perhaps,
find a formula which, if it does not satisfy the whole Commission, will at least meet the wishes
of the great majority of its members.

It is the earnest wish of Poland that agreement may be reached. In our desire for the success
of the Commission's work, I would state that we are prepared to accept the formula which
commends itself to the majority of the Commission.

M. AntoniaDE (Roumania). — In rising to take part in this interesting debate, I have
no desire to prolong the discussion. My only object is to state briefly the attitude of the
Roumanian delegation.

Most of the views we have heard have been expressed during earlier discussions, and
particularly at the Commission's session in 1927 and in Sub-Commission A. The arguments
we have just heard are, for the most part, comments on views already expressed.

The attitude of the Roumanian delegation on the problem of the limitation of the material
of land armaments was defined during these discussions. Our delegation at that time supported
the method of indirect limitation by budgetary means recommended by the French delegation,
a method which, though admittedly not an ideal one, is the only practical and effective
method.

After the clear explanations we have just heard from the representatives of the Japanese,
French and Polish delegations, I can only reaffirm our agreement with the arguments submitted
by these delegations, and for the present continue to give my support to this method, with
the observations which the Roumanian delegation submitted during the 1927 discussions.

We must not, however, conceal from ourselves the difficulties arising from the fact that
the method recommended apparently does not secure the support of all members of the
Commission. That does not mean that we must recognise the failure of our Commission to
deal with the present problem. In the interesting statements which he made, M. Massigli
said that, apparently, the time had not yet come to close the discussion, and that it will
be desirable to give further consideration to this grave problem in the hope of finding a solution.

Personally, I fully agree with his view. My delegation will be glad to accept any reasonable
and effective method which would not be of a nature to imperil our national defence.

Count Bernstorff (Germany). — I also have no desire to prolong this discussion on the
question of principle. I said yesterday that we regarded the direct limitation of material
as indispensable. I should like merely to reply in a word to an observation made by M. Massigli.

He criticised the model system of disarmament in Germany. I am not quite sure whether
exception was taken to the system or to the manner of its execution.

If he was criticising the system, I can only reply that we are in no way responsible for it,
seeing that it was devised by the statesmen at Versailles who, at a given moment, decided
the fate of Europe. On the other hand, if he was criticising the execution of this model system
in Germany, I desire to say that authorities more competent and higher than ourselves have
frequently discussed the matter already.
I will therefore merely say for my part that, if the disarmament of the other High Contracting Parties had functioned as well as that of Germany, we should not have found it necessary to discuss this question of disarmament here for the last three years.

Lord CUSHENDUN (British Empire). — Mr. President, I do not propose to follow Count Bernstorff and M. Massigli on to the rather delicate ground upon which they have planted their feet, because I do not think it is really necessary for our present purposes. I think everybody understands — or ought to understand — that the system which has been adopted for disarmament in Germany arose out of quite exceptional circumstances and cannot be a model for our guidance.

I noticed a little time ago that Baron Rolin Jaquemyns said, with reference to certain proposals that had been made here, that he sympathised with them in principle. I should like to point out that we are really not concerned here with principles at present. We are all agreed on the principle. The only principle at stake, as I understand it, is the greatest measure of international disarmament that we can accomplish by agreement.

The whole matter which we have to discuss is not principle but method. We have to arrive at some method by which we can carry out, to the largest possible extent, the disarmament we have in view. It is really not at all surprising that we should find this a very difficult task. Here we are, the representatives of between twenty and thirty nations, all with our own traditions, our own political system, our own military system, our own social institutions, all of which must point a direction which we are bound to support in a proposal of this kind.

I have been listening to this discussion mainly with a view to finding where the greatest agreement is to be found. At the beginning of our session I stated that, in regard to all these methods, I should be prepared to give my support, as far as possible, wherever I could find universal or general agreement. I am afraid I have not found it up to the present. There are many proposals that have been put forward but they all, in my judgment, deal with individual peculiarities, to take account of them as far as possible, and to produce in relation to them a clear-cut proposal which will apply equally to everybody and without regard to their own individual circumstances. That is a very easy thing to do, but it leaves out of account all the existing conditions and all the realities of the situation. Such proposals are based upon logic but not upon statesmanship. It is the part of statesmanship to adjust local, individual circumstances, to take account of them as far as possible, and to produce in relation to them some general proposition. That is our difficulty.

Take direct limitation. Quite evidently I think, in order to carry out limitation of war material direct limitation is the obvious method. It would do the work more effectually than anything else; it follows a logical plan, and it would be effective but for one thing. In proposing and in supporting direct limitation, you leave out of account altogether how you can carry it out, and it is a necessary part of our enquiry in relation to every point to ask, first, is it desirable, and, second, is it practicable. There are many desirable things which are not practicable, and the converse is also true. Supposing we were this morning, by universal agreement, to put direct limitation into our Convention. How are you going to carry it out? Are you going to have some system of international control and supervision, and if you are, have you ever thought how you are going to carry that out? Have you considered how you are going to send a commission of control or of supervision to all the different countries of Europe and America? I do not know what Mr. Gibson thinks about it. I understood him to support the method of direct limitation. Is he prepared to welcome a commission of supervision and control in every part of the United States? I venture to express very strong scepticism on that point, and I must confess that I would also express a good deal of scepticism as to the possibility of sending such a commission through Great Britain. I have no right to speak for any other nation. It may be that France, Spain, Italy, would all welcome this system of control, but as long as you cannot apply it — and I venture to say you could not apply it to Great Britain or to the United States, both of them very largely industrialised countries, with large powers of production — I say that the system of control is impracticable, and if it is impracticable, how are you going to have direct limitation?

Some people have suggested reliance upon good faith as an alternative to control. I am perfectly prepared to rely upon the good faith of all my colleagues in this room, but I would venture to suggest that, if you rely upon a system of good faith and nothing else for carrying out a great system of elaborate disarmament, one inevitable effect will be to increase international suspicion, and that means international ill-will. Imagine, perfect good faith maintained; no violation of this Convention anywhere. We have to reckon with public opinion, with rumour, and sometimes with ill-will in the expression of public opinion. Take the case where there is passing friction between two neighbouring States. Let us call them State A and State B. One of them starts a rumour. The rumour grows that State A is violating this Convention, that it is secretly manufacturing machine-guns and bombs and mines and all sorts of material. It runs like wild-fire through the Press of the other country, and the result is that an atmosphere, a state of mind, conducive to war is created. I say that that would be far too big a price to pay for any system of disarmament, and therefore I am reluctantly driven to the conclusion that, although I recognise direct limitation as the most logical, most effective in itself, and obvious way of carrying out what we want to do, it is impracticable for the reasons that I have given. We cannot do it.

Then the question arises, if that is impracticable, what can we do? We have before us the French proposal. I do not think it is ideal, but it does appear to me to offer at all events
a step in the direction which we want to take, and I regret that there is not greater agreement upon it. I think it would be very undesirable if we had to separate without coming to some sort of arrangement with regard to this limitation of material, and therefore, as I say, I want to support any proposal which finds general assent. I do not think there is general assent at the present moment. It may be that we shall have to fall back upon the system of publicity. Publicity would certainly not be an ideal system. It would not go so far as many of us would like to go in the direction of limitation, but at all events it would give some measure of limitation. I think also that budgetary limitation, as proposed by the French delegation, is hopeful as offering some measure of limitation. I notice that the honourable delegate for Spain laid stress upon the point that in his country munitions of war are produced at a heavy cost. That, I realise, is an objection to the system of budgetary limitation. It is a difficulty which many other countries will feel. Whenever you try to find a common denominator, in money or in anything else, you are up against these inequalities in the cost of material, which vitiate the system if it is to be regarded as giving a direct comparison between one nation and another. We all understand that when we are considering the publication and promulgation of these matters, we realise that we do not not want to have our case presented to the world as if we were supporting larger armaments than we really are. That is always liable to be the misunderstanding unless you have elaborate explanations regarding cost in the various countries. Whichever way you turn, you find difficulties. You find perfectly legitimate objections urged from one point of view or from the other. But I would urge my colleagues as strongly as I can not to lie down under those difficulties, not to despair of arriving at some solution of this matter because of the difficulties. We may explain them, though I think the best plan of all would be to form the habit of not regarding these things as matters for comparison between one nation and another, though it is very natural that comparisons should be made. These matters ought not to be comparative but absolute. They ought to show exactly the needs of each country and what each country is doing in the way of armaments, without involving any comparison with other people.

But we have not yet reached agreement, and the only thing that I can say is that I am inclined to favour the suggestion thrown out by the French delegate a short time ago - that, rather than admit inability to agree, we should give ourselves a little more time to consider the whole question and should not arrive, at all events, at a negative decision at the present session.

The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — Mr. President, there have been so many arguments advanced during the course of this morning's debate that I am sorely tempted to offer a running commentary on them all. However, I shall hope to deserve your approbation by resisting this temptation. I wish to refer to the suggestion made by Lord Cushendun at the conclusion of his very interesting speech, in which, parenthetically, I seriously envied him his ability to accept so many of the suggested methods for solving our difficulty. In concluding his speech, Lord Cushendun suggested that we might agree upon publicity as a step in the direction we desire to travel. That is a proposal which is entirely congenial to us, and one which I could very happily fall in with. I should be glad to accept a proposal along those lines, since it now appears impossible to achieve agreement upon more far-reaching measures for the limitation of material.

My chief purpose in rising was to say that I particularly welcomed the declaration of M. Massigli, that, while adhering with conviction to its opinion as to budgetary limitation, the French delegation will not make this provision a sine qua non of the Convention. It is in this spirit that I have made concessions upon what I consider fundamental points. That is to say, we still adhere to the views we have held in the past, but are unwilling to allow rigid adherence to our views on these specific questions to constitute an obstacle to an agreement.

M. Massigli has suggested that our Governments should be asked to examine the possibility of agreement upon measures of budgetary limitation. I have no objection, Mr. President, to this suggestion, but I feel that it is only fair and frank for me to say that, so far as I can see, such examination could not, for constitutional and other reasons which I have repeated here with tiresome iteration, lead to any concessions by my Government along the lines now desired by other Governments. That does not prejudice my Government to friendly examination of any other proposals with the same ends, which might be brought forward in future, and which are not open to the same objections as those now before us.

In this connection I should like to make it very clear that I am not withholding any concession on this or any other of the important questions before us. At the start, I placed all my concessions on the table. If I do not offer concessions on this present question and on some others, it is because, after very careful study and consideration of the whole scope of the draft Convention, my Government found insuperable obstacles, some of them of a constitutional nature, to making such concessions.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I should like to say that, if M. Massigli and I have not come to complete agreement on this subject, it has been due to no lack of effort and goodwill. His friendliness and good humour in discussion have made it a privilege to be in disagreement with him, and I hope, therefore, that the time may very soon come when I may have the still greater pleasure of finding him in complete agreement with me.

M. Massigli (France). — Mr. President, I beg permission to thank Mr. Gibson for what he has just said. I know his difficulties and he knows mine. He does not give me very
much hope, and I cannot give him much. If, when we meet again, he says that there is nothing to be done, I shall find it the easier to give way inasmuch as I am sure that he will have done all in his power to reach a solution.

M. Litvinoff (Union of Socialist Soviet Republics). — I do not venture to take up the time of the Commission by continuing the discussion on the question before us, because all the arguments for and against both systems for the limitation of war material have already been pronounced. I think it is superfluous to argue when you meet with a firm decision, expressed on behalf of Governments, that they could not in any case accept this or that proposal; it is only left to us to state this fact publicly, and to show which Governments are opposed to, and which in favour of, the limitation of war material. I rise, however, because one argument has been used against the Soviet-German proposal, which I think ought not to go unchallenged — that is, the reference to control.

The honourable delegate for Great Britain, if I rightly understood his speech, would be in favour of the direct limitation of war material if some system of control could be devised, but, as he anticipates the impossibility of control, he is apparently against any direct limitation.

It seems to me that this argument could be applied with equal force to the other chapters in the draft Convention, with the result that we should have to renounce disarmament for every other element of war.

We have had submitted to us by the bureau a number of texts which have already been agreed upon. We have Article A, which deals with land armaments. Table I is to include the maximum armed forces stationed in home countries, and I would ask the honourable delegate for Great Britain whether it would not be necessary to control these tables — which will be obligatory for all countries — or whether they are to be left to the good faith of the Governments.

The same would also apply to air armaments, with regard to which we have accepted a number of articles. Table A of Article AA is to include the maximum number and total horse-power of aeroplanes and maximum number, total horse-power and total volume of dirigibles in service in the armed forces of the High Contracting Parties. Are the figures to be given in the tables to be controlled, or will they be exempt from control? Will they be left entirely to the good faith of the Governments?

Similarly, with regard to Article AE, we have the following provisions:

"1. If the High Contracting Parties intervene in any capacity, whether directly or indirectly, wholly, or partially in civil aviation undertakings, they agree that the State organs dealing with the matter shall be quite separate from the organs dealing with military aviation . . . ."

"2. The High Contracting Parties shall refrain from prescribing the embodiment of military features in the build of civil aviation material, so that this material may be constructed for purely civil purposes, more particularly with a view to providing the greatest possible measure of security and the most economical return."

I think that all these articles presume some system of control. Are we going to renounce control altogether?

The honourable delegate for the United States, in one of his earlier speeches during the session on the question of naval armaments, alluded to the possibility of solving the problem by a method which would take account of other factors than tonnage alone. That would mean not only the number of ships but also the number of cannon, calibre, etc. These are elements which would evidently demand some control. How are we going to deal with all these questions if we do away with control altogether?

It would be logical from the point of view of the honourable delegate for Great Britain to propose to preface our work with a chapter dealing with control — to establish first of all whether we are going to have any control at all, and, if so, what the system shall be — and starting from that point to decide what factors should be limited and what should not be limited. That would be a logical procedure, but I would ask whether such a procedure would commend itself to us. I think not, for no sovereign State would welcome enquiries in its territory by an international body, for instance. But such reluctance is not absolute — it all depends upon the objects of the control. If, to refer to a phrase which has already been used here, only a very small mouse be born from the mountain, I do not think Governments will be willing to submit to control in such small matters as would result from our labours here; but if we were to establish a system of considerable reduction of armaments — a system which would be conducive to the elimination of war or to the mitigation of the possibilities of war, perhaps Governments would be willing to sacrifice some of their principles regarding the sovereignty of States, and be prepared to withdraw their opposition to some kind of international control. It all depends upon the objects we have in view. In small matters we should object to control, but in great things affecting such problems as war or peace many arguments would be found in favour of the admission of international control.

I therefore think that the system of making the question of the reduction of armaments dependent on the execution of control is not the right one. Let us try to obtain the largest possible reduction of armaments, let us achieve the widest result possible, and then see to what system of control the Governments are prepared to submit.

The President. — No further speakers being on my list, I ought now to declare the discussion closed.
I should like to remind you that you have heard sixteen speakers and twenty-six speeches. I think I may add that as much light as possible has been thrown on this difficult problem, and that the discussions may be summed up as follows:

The first point which appears indisputable is that the Commission is unanimous in expressing the desire that there should be a limitation and a reduction of war material.

Secondly, in order to achieve such limitation and reduction, several systems have been put forward. The two chief, which have been supported here, are that of direct limitation by fixing a maximum for the number of units in each category of material, and that of indirect limitation by fixing a maximum for budgetary expenditure.

Neither of these two systems commanded a substantial majority in this Commission, and, if there were no other proposal, we should be in the sad necessity of having to confess that we have arrived at no definite result.

Happily, a third system has been proposed which provides for limitation and reduction, so to speak by implication, as a result of giving publicity to budgetary expenditure on material. This system might be regarded as in some sort the maximum at present possible. Several delegations have announced their readiness to accept this method in default of any other. They hope that, when the Conference takes up this question again, and when the Governments, in the light of the present discussion, have had an opportunity of considering the matter further, it will be possible to go further and adopt a more practical method of arriving at the limitation and reduction of armaments.

I think that this debate should close with this conclusion, which is both a recognition of the facts of the case and the expression of a hope. I therefore think that, before we go on to discuss another subject, the Commission should adopt a resolution such as the following:

"The Commission:

"Having regard to the fact that the proposal for the reduction of war material by the indirect method of budgetary limitation has received the support of many delegations, but that several other delegations have declared their inability to accept it, and consider that they can consent only to the publication of expenditure so as to render it subject to the check of public opinion;

"Decides that it is desirable in any case to insert in the draft Convention a clause prescribing publicity of expenditure relating to material."

I am sure, gentlemen, that this text will not encounter any opposition, because it not only reflects the discussion which has just taken place, but is substantially in agreement with the text adopted at the first reading. I refer to the text which figures in our draft Convention, where after a preamble it stipulates in Article DA* that:

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

I therefore suggest that we should adopt our resolution in confirmation of this text, which was accepted at the first reading, and as the conclusion of this debate, in order to make it clear in the eyes of public opinion throughout the world that this Commission unanimously desires to achieve, by some means or other, the limitation and reduction of material.

Lord CUSHENDUN (British Empire). — I understand, Mr. President, that the resolution which you are proposing is confined to land armaments, and that it does not cover the whole ground covered by Article DA*. If that is so, I have no objection to it whatever.

The PRESIDENT. — My reply to Lord Cushendun is that this resolution was drafted as a conclusion to the debate which has just taken place. Now this debate has only dealt specifically with land armaments. I must point out, however, that, in certain texts which have been submitted to us since yesterday, no distinction has been made between the different kinds of war material. Hitherto, however, we have only discussed the question of land armaments.

Count BERNSTORFF (Germany). — I presume I am right in supposing that this draft resolution, like all the other proposals, will be circulated, discussed, and voted on to-morrow morning.

The PRESIDENT. — My reply to Count Bernstorff is that this procedure has to be followed if a member of the Commission asks for it. I had hoped, however, that, after twenty-six speeches and two days' discussion, we could adopt a conclusion on which it seems to me that we could agree without further discussion. But if anyone insists on the text of the draft resolution being circulated before the Commission pronounces on it, this will be done.

M. MASSIGLI (France). — I would remark that the discussion which has just taken place on material should, according to what was decided at the beginning of our work when the question of material in stock for air armaments was dealt with, refer at any rate to air material as well as to material for land armaments. The question has, therefore, been studied in at least two aspects. I should also like to point out that in the text of the French proposal, the three categories of armament were referred to. The conclusion to be drawn is self-evident.
M. Litvinoff (Union of Socialist Soviet Republics). — I think I have fully grasped the meaning of this resolution, and can express an opinion upon it immediately without waiting for the text to be circulated. The resolution seems to be both superfluous and inexpedient. It is superfluous because, as the President has already pointed out, there is already a clause (Article DA) which deals with the matter of publicity in a more extensive and comprehensive form, in a form applying to land, naval and air armaments. I do not see why we should anticipate the decision to be taken in regard to that article, or why we should limit its scope.

Further, I think the appeal made here that we should lay our cards upon the table should apply not only to individual delegations, but to the Commission as a whole. If we cannot achieve any result in regard to some particular question, the Commission should say so quite frankly and openly, without seeking cover.

After two days' discussion, we have to declare that we have been unable to reach any agreement on the question of the limitation of war material. Let us say so frankly; it would be more useful than trying to cover our retreat by a resolution which practically adds nothing to the labours of the Commission.

The resolution is inexpedient because the delegate for France has gone much further than the bureau. M. Massigli has proposed to leave the question open; that means that we shall revert to it and to the proposals of the French, Soviet and German delegations, whereas the resolution proposed by the bureau practically puts an end to the question. In my view, the question of publicity should be dealt with when we come to the relevant chapter, and not now.

The President. — I should like to make two observations on what M. Litvinoff has just said. The first is that I submitted this draft resolution in the hope that it would be unanimously accepted by the Commission. I see that this is not the case and I accordingly withdraw it.

Secondly, I desire to state that it would convey an entirely inaccurate impression of the discussion to say that, because we have not reached agreement on a method of limiting and reducing war material, we do not desire this result. On the contrary, I would state for the third time that, in my opinion, the Commission unanimously desires to provide for limitation and reduction of war material, but that, for reasons with which you are all familiar, there are profound differences as to the method to be adopted.

M. Fierlinger (Czechoslovakia). — I am in favour of maintaining the draft resolution submitted to us, because I think that it expresses very accurately the discussion which has taken place, and that it might serve for our future guidance in finding a solution of the question.

The President. — I must repeat that this resolution will serve no useful purpose unless it is unanimously adopted. If there is no prospect of unanimity, it is better to withdraw it and content ourselves with the statements which have been made. I believe that I have very accurately summarised the nature of yesterday's and to-day's discussion, and that public opinion will be able to see what has been done here, since there has been no attempt in any quarter to conceal the opinions held.

After this exchange of views on the results of our discussion, I must now draw the Commission's attention to the present position of certain amendments submitted by the German delegation and the Soviet delegation regarding the direct limitation of air armaments. The German amendment is that regarding the limitation of the number of aeroplanes in store and the number of machine-guns and bombs for aircraft. This amendment was examined during the discussion on Article AA. The Soviet amendment is as follows:

"In paragraph 4 of Article AA, after the words 'in commission' add:

"and in reserve or in stock, the total number not to exceed 25 per cent of the aeroplanes and dirigibles on an active footing'."

"The Soviet Delegation reserves the right to make further additions to Chapter II, Section III (Air Armaments), when the extent and nature of the reduction in the other classes of armament have been established."

After this discussion I think there will be no need to press for a vote on these amendments. In connection with the chapter we have just considered, we have before us a second Soviet proposal to insert a new article TB, which reads:

"For the armaments of land forces the existing patterns shown in the tables at January 1st, 1929, shall be retained."

I ask the Soviet delegation whether they desire to maintain this proposal and have it discussed.

M. Litvinoff (Union of Socialist Soviet Republics). — It seems to me that this proposal stands by itself, and has not been covered by the discussions during the last few days. This proposal could be retained, even if we accept the draft proposal of the French delegation with regard to material. I will therefore ask permission to give a few explanations in regard to this question to-morrow.
The President. — It is agreed that we shall discuss this question to-morrow.

Count Bernstorff (Germany). — Mr. President, the position would have been much clearer if your resolution had been circulated and voted upon to-morrow morning. As it has been withdrawn, I should like to know exactly how we stand and what is the result of our discussion on material.

If I may make a further remark, I will say that the situation appears to me to be clear: the only method which we recommend, the method of a direct reduction of material, has been rejected. For the rest I do not know what we are going to do.

The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — Mr. President, I should like to know if there is any objection, from the point of view of parliamentary procedure, to any delegation reviving a resolution presented by you and having it put to the vote so that the opinion of the Commission may be known.

The President. — There is no objection at all to this. It is the rule in all commissions that, when a proposal is withdrawn, any other delegation has the right to take it up again, either individually or with other delegations. I should also like to reply to Count Bernstorff. At present the position appears to be that the discussion is closed. I would say for the fourth time, and I have not been contradicted, that there is a unanimous desire on the part of the Commission to arrive at a limitation and reduction of war material. I further note that two systems have been proposed and that neither has secured a substantial majority. Under these circumstances, the question as to the method we shall finally adopt in the Convention to give effect to the Commission's unanimous desire remains open; it will therefore be discussed later.

Again, I must point out that, in any case, the chapter on Article DA* contains rules regarding publicity which, to a certain extent, provide for the system of limitation by implication which I mentioned a moment ago as being a complementary system.

That is the position to-day.

Before we adjourn the meeting, I should like to say a word as to the nature of our work to-morrow. If, as Mr. Gibson has hinted, the draft resolution put forward a short while ago is brought forward again, we shall begin by discussing it. We shall then consider the Soviet proposal for the addition of a new Article TB. We shall then pass to the French amendment to Article H. Thirdly, as I have been informed that the Japanese delegation is in a position to discuss the question, we shall take up the former paragraph 3 of Article H on air armaments.

Fourthly, we shall have to review the text which you asked the bureau to prepare for Article AE. Finally, if, as I hope, time will allow, we shall come to the material of naval armaments, on which there will probably be an exchange of views.

(The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.)

TWENTIETH MEETING (PUBLIC).

Held at Geneva, on Saturday, May 4th, 1929, at 10 a.m.

President : M. Politis (Greece).


The President. — Gentlemen, at the close of yesterday's meeting I was careful, when indicating the programme of our work for to-day, to mention the possibility of a draft resolution being submitted for the purpose of closing the discussion. What I foresaw yesterday has now occurred. You have before you a draft resolution submitted by the delegations of the United States of America and France. It reads as follows:

"The Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference:

"Having rejected the systems of direct limitation of material in service and in stock;

"Having noted that the system of indirect limitation (limitation of the expenditure on material) did not meet with general assent;

"Decides that the limitation and reduction of material must be sought by means of publicity of expenditure, which will be dealt with in examining Article DA* of the text adopted at the first reading."

"
Gentlemen, before calling on M. Massigli, who has asked to speak on this question, I should like to inform the Commission that the draft resolution just read is supported by the British, Belgian and Serb-Croat-Slovene delegations.

Further, in reply to a question put to me by a delegate, I should like to say that, when reference is made in this draft resolution to the publicity of expenditure, we do not mean to reject other forms of publicity; the whole question of publicity will be considered when we come to Chapter V.

M. Massigli (France). — Sir, the statements made at yesterday’s meeting have revealed the serious difficulties which lie in the way of the adoption of the system recommended by the French delegation. The conversations I had after the meeting have convinced me that there is little hope — indeed, that there is no hope at all — of the opinions which were then expressed being modified.

Under the circumstances, we consider that our main task is to arrive as soon as possible at a draft Convention for the limitation of armaments, which may perhaps only represent a minimum but, which will, at all events, be a draft Convention. The French delegation, in its desire to respond to the appeal made to it, has decided in a spirit of accommodation to withdraw its proposal. In that spirit I therefore agreed with Mr. Gibson to frame the draft resolution which is submitted to you.

The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — It is a very great satisfaction to me, and I am confident that it is an equal satisfaction to the entire Commission, to listen to the very short and direct declaration in which the honourable delegate for France has announced a very material concession — a very material contribution to the progress of our work.

I am pleased to have been able to reach agreement with M. Massigli on the text of the resolution now before the Commission. I need hardly go into all the arguments brought out in the course of our debates. But our divergence of opinion was so pronounced that I am sure that you, Mr. President, will appreciate the difficulty of finding a formula that would most nearly harmonise with the views of the different schools of thought.

After considerable study, M. Massigli and I were able to agree upon the text which is now before you. Its authors make for it no claims to perfection, but we hope that it may meet with your general approbation.

M. Litvinoff (Union of Socialist Soviet Republics). — It would seem that the Commission has found a new method of settling differences of opinion expressed in the course of its debates. With regard to the question of the limitation and reduction of material, two methods were proposed — some members of the Commission preferred the first, others the second. The authors of this resolution, however, seem to be unable to do better than to propose to give up reduction and limitation altogether.

The honourable delegate for France, in his first speech on the question of the limitation of war material, said that he would not insist on a vote being taken immediately on his proposal and that he was quite prepared to leave the question open. This statement left the hope that in the period between the present session and the next, or between this session and the Conference, new concessions might be made by delegations in order that unanimity might be reached on one or other of the methods proposed. Now we are going to reject both methods, and that is accepted as a considerable concession on the part of the French delegation! If I may, I would ask the French delegation for only one concession — that he should make no more concessions of this kind.

The resolution proposed undoubtedly constitutes a step backwards, for while yesterday we still hoped that, by accepting one or other of the methods suggested, we should reach a solution of the problem for the limitation and reduction of war material, this resolution takes away any such hope. What is proposed in this resolution? It is proposed that no method should be adopted at the moment, but that we should seek for limitation and reduction by means of publicity of expenditure. What does publicity mean? I understand that by publicity is meant an obligation to the Governments periodically to make public the state of their armaments. But the figures are to be quite arbitrary. Governments are not to be compelled to give figures prescribed by an International Convention — they are to be left free to decide themselves on the figures — there is to be no limitation of these figures. Governments may one year publish a certain series of figures and the next year may give other figures much higher than those of the preceding year. That is my understanding of publicity. But where does limitation and reduction come in? I fail to see that it comes in at all.

If by publicity it is meant that the figures should be fixed in the Commission or in the Conference, and that the figures arrived at should not be exceeded, that would not be publicity — it would be limitation. Therefore, why not deal with the question now when limitation and reduction are under consideration; why postpone the question until publicity comes under discussion? It seems to me that, in delegating this question to the chapter on publicity, we practically renounce the principle of the limitation and reduction of war material.

I can fully understand that the sponsors of this resolution feel somewhat disappointed at the barren results of their appeal for concessions, and that, in order to allay their uneasiness, they have proposed this resolution to cover the fact that, so far, no solution has been found for the reduction and limitation of war material. Such action may be acceptable to them; it may be psychologically or sentimentally necessary for them to do so, but it is not necessary for me.

As I stated yesterday, I prefer a frank and honest statement that methods have not been found, and that the methods proposed are to be discussed at a future date. I therefore prefer the
proposal made by the French delegate at the beginning of the discussion and before he started making concessions — that is, to leave the question of methods open for solution either at the next session or at the Conference itself. For my part, I am unable to adhere to the resolution now before the Commission.

Count Bernstorff (Germany). — If the last paragraph of this resolution remains as it stands, I shall be compelled to oppose it, because we adhere to our point of view on publicity which has frequently been stated here. If, however, the discussion on publicity is not to be prejudged, and if the interpretation of this paragraph given by the President is accepted by the Commission, I shall not oppose the adoption of the resolution, though I shall abstain from voting.

I ask the President to allow me, in pursuance of my Government’s instructions, to make a declaration of principle after the vote has been taken.

The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — I trust that I need assure nobody in this room that I yield to none in my desire to devise strict and rigorous measures for the reduction of material. However, after what we have heard in the debates which have been going on for some time, I challenge anybody to produce a suggestion for more far-reaching measures of limitation which can be assured of general acceptance. The question now before us is a very simple one: it is whether we shall agree upon the highest common denominator or whether we shall be capricious to the extent of refusing even the measures upon which we can agree, simply because at this time we cannot find something that is more satisfactory to individual delegations. There is a very general and reasonable desire for agreement, and I think we should come to it. Mr. President, I feel that we have by now exhausted this subject, and I suggest that unless some member of this Commission has something new to tell us, it would be advisable to take a vote by roll-call on this resolution.

The President. — I agree with Mr. Gibson. I consider that the discussion is exhausted and that the moment has come to finish with this question.

Before we take a vote I desire to repeat, in order to give satisfaction to Count Bernstorff, that it is understood that the adoption of this draft resolution does not prejudge the ultimate fate of the articles in the draft Convention, Chapter V, Section II.


The draft resolution submitted by the United States and French delegations was adopted by 22 votes to 2, one delegation abstaining from voting.

The following delegations:

Voted for the resolution:
Belgium.
British Empire.
Canada.
Chile.
Colombia.
Cuba.
Czechoslovakia.
Finland.
France.
Greece.
Italy.
Japan.

Voted against the resolution:
China.

Abstained from voting:
Germany.

Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

62. Declaration by the German Delegate with regard to the Work of the Commission.

Count Bernstorff (Germany). — The principle of the direct limitation of material having been rejected by this resolution, I should like to make a declaration of principle, by order, and on behalf of my Government.

Gentlemen, you probably all feel, like myself, that we have reached an important and perhaps decisive moment in our deliberations. You will therefore permit me to sum up the meaning of the situation with which we are faced.

The task devolving upon the Preparatory Disarmament Commission is to prepare a draft Convention on the basis of which the Disarmament Conference can make a first step. The Conference itself will have to decide on the extent of disarmament, a task which does not belong to the Commission. But it is the latter’s duty to consider, according to the provisions of the Treaties and of the Covenant, all possible eventualities permitting of an appreciable reduction of armaments, and to map out a course leading towards this goal.

What is the situation at the present time?
I recognise that, in regard to naval armaments, the Commission has made an encouraging beginning, in which the principle of the appreciable reduction of all the features of naval armaments appears to prevail.

It is quite otherwise as regards our discussion on the disarmament of land forces. In the last few days essential factors on the disarmament of land forces have been eliminated which cannot, however, be omitted from the Convention if the latter is to have any real effect.

The Commission has therefore lost sight of its task, at any rate so far as the disarmament of land forces is concerned.

For years past I have been co-operating with all my strength in the Commission's work and I have shared in all its responsibilities. But my Government has never left it for one moment in doubt — and in this connection I would remind you of the speech made by the Imperial Chancellor at the last Assembly and of my own statements in this Commission — that it could not accept, even as a first stage, a solution which did not include all forms of armaments, and which would not bring about an appreciable reduction in the excessive armaments of the present day. Such a solution would not correspond with the principles either of the Treaties or of the Covenant. I therefore find myself obliged to dissociate myself definitely from the programme which the majority of this Commission has just drawn up and to leave to it henceforth, as its course is being shaped at the present moment, the sole responsibility for the preparation of the Conference.

It is almost unnecessary to tell you once more how much I regret the turn which this Commission's debates have taken. My regrets and my criticisms would be even more keen if I did not remind myself that at present we are still only in the preparatory stage. It is not in this Commission, but at other discussions and especially those of the Disarmament Conference, that the final political decision on the whole problem will be taken. I refuse to believe that the position at present adopted by the majority of the Commission regarding the disarmament of land forces is really the last word of the Governments represented here, and of the Governments which have not taken part in our work, but which will send delegates to the Conference. In view of the gravity of the situation, I therefore appeal to all these Governments. Pending the opening of the Disarmament Conference, let them try and understand at last what is required by public opinion, and listen to the more and more urgent voice of the peoples of the world. Let them give their delegates other instructions than those which have inspired the work of this Commission, i.e., instructions in true conformity with the aim of the future Conference which is, we must not forget, to bring about an effective reduction of armaments.

The President. — I do not think that the Commission desires to engage in any further debate on the statements which have just been made. Of course, what Count Bernstorff has said will be recorded in the Minutes, but I should like to say on behalf of the Commission that it is perhaps rather early to pronounce on the value of the work which is being done here, and still less on the degree of limitation and reduction which will be the outcome of the Conference. It must not be forgotten that in Article A we have embodied an essential principle, whose practical effect will depend on the figures which the Conference will enter in the tables annexed to this article.

Count Bernstorff has said that he left to the majority of the Commission the responsibility for what it had decided. I think it would be more correct to say that each delegation bears the responsibility for its attitude, whatever that may be, in regard to each system proposed. The advantage of our discussions, which are public, is that they give public opinion an opportunity to judge ultimately of the views which are put forward here.

63. Discussion on Chapter II, Section I, Material of Land Armaments; Proposal by the Soviet Delegation.

The President. — We will now discuss Article TB proposed by the Soviet delegation, which reads as follows:

“For the armaments of land forces the existing patterns shown in the tables at January 1st, 1929, shall be retained.”

M. Litvinoff (Union of Socialist Soviet Republics). — If we mention in this amendment only land forces, it is not because we wish to restrict the proposal to such forces. I am taking into consideration that we are dealing now with Chapter I, Land Armaments, and therefore put in the words “land forces”. It does not follow that the same amendment shall not be applied to naval and air forces.

I shall be very brief in my explanation of this amendment. As you will see, Article TB is aimed at checking the feverish activity now displayed in the sphere of warlike inventions and their perfection. The Soviet delegation considers that the prevention of the substitution of existing types of material by newly invented types which are becoming more and more perfected, or in other words, more destructive, would, as time goes on, undoubtedly put a brake on warlike intentions. The Soviet delegation also believes that public opinion the world over would welcome with profound satisfaction any decision of the Powers not to equip their armies with new means of destruction as yet untried in warfare and still in the stage of laboratory
research. The latest achievements in the sphere of electrotechnique alone threaten hitherto undreamed-of possibilities of destruction.

I had better at once inform possible patrons of "civilisation and progress", who may regard our proposal as barbarism, that I cannot be put to shame on these grounds any more than I blushed when our original proposal for total disarmament was stigmatised as an attempt to put the clock back to the days when men fought with sticks and stones, instead of with machine-guns and poison gases.

Standing here for a country which is governed by workers and peasants, which makes the greatest possible sacrifices and shows the utmost interest in the furtherance and development of science, especially technical science, I have no compunction in declaring that mankind will not suffer one whit if the energies and inventive capacities of scientists are diverted from destructive into constructive channels. We do not consider the level of destructive armaments as a criterion of our civilisation. On the contrary, we consider it incompatible with a highly-developed civilisation that destructive armaments should be allowed to develop uncontrolled.

There will, I think, be few to contradict me, if I say that science has not appreciably profited from contributions in the field of destructive inventions, although the opposite is certainly true, and destructive technique has always been considerably enriched by the application of general scientific inventions. It is this abuse of science and this perverse application of it which we should like to see checked.

I am not sure whether the majority of the Commission here will consider that our proposal comes within the framework which has been gradually narrowed down during this session, and I fully recognise that it may be rejected on the same grounds as have a number of other Soviet proposals tending towards the same end. I wish, however, to place on record that, while the Soviet Government is prepared to go to any length in the direction of the elimination of war, it is also prepared, failing this, to take any steps that may constitute some mitigation, however slight, of the horrors of war.

The proposed Article TB is presented with this aim in view.

I wish to make it perfectly clear that we do not propose to leave to each State only those types of armaments which it possesses now. The acceptance of the Soviet proposal would leave to all States the free choice of armaments existing now in any country and the possibility of re-arming their forces. Our proposal will only limit the choice to types of armaments hitherto introduced into any army. Its restrictions apply only to the introduction of newly-invented types and variations not yet in use in any army.

The President. — If I have understood aright, M. Litvinoff proposes to stabilise the patterns of armaments for land forces. Would the effect of his proposal be to preclude any improvements in arms manufactured by civilian industry?

M. Litvinoff (Union of Socialist Soviet Republics). — We do not propose to limit the development of civil manufacture, but we want to restrict armaments for warlike purposes.

The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — As the Commission knows, I have already accepted this proposal.

M. Westman (Sweden). — I should like to support the French proposal very warmly, because it gives countries an opportunity of supplying information on a very important point,
viz., the extent of the training given to recruits. It would clearly be very useful to possess information of this kind for the different armies of the Powers adhering to the Convention. I hope that this proposal will be adopted by the Commission.

Count Bernstorff (Germany). — I have already made a statement in this connection, which will be found in the Minutes, and I reserve the right to speak on this question at the Disarmament Conference.

The French amendment to Article H was adopted.

65. Discussion on Chapter I, Effectives: Amendment by the French Delegation to the Third Paragraph of Article H.

The President. — As regards the former third paragraph of Article H concerning air armaments, we have a proposal by the Japanese delegation.

I may remind you that the Japanese delegation originally asked for the omission of the third paragraph of Article H. It reserved the right to ask for fresh instructions from its Government and to communicate them to the Commission.

The French delegation's proposal is to replace the third paragraph of Article H by the following:

"The tables relating to air armaments mentioned in Article A shall indicate, in the form of aggregate figures for officers, non-commissioned officers and men together, the maximum number of soldiers who may have completed more than \( x \) years of actual service with the colours."

"The number of men of the class mentioned in the preceding paragraph who are actually with the colours shall be shown every year for each High Contracting Party in the statements for the preparation of which provision is made in Article IA of Chapter V."

In the first paragraph of this proposal, the remark "\( x \) years" has the same meaning as previously in the second paragraph of Article H.

M. Sato (Japan). — Mr. President, the other day I asked the Commission to give me time to get into touch with my Government. The latter informs me that it does not very well understand the reasons which led the Commission not to accept its proposal for limiting the total effectives of the air forces; this proposal seemed to it to be quite reasonable and easily acceptable by every one. But not wishing to make any difficulties, it does not press this proposal, in the hope of achieving unanimity, and it authorises me to accept the amendment to the French delegation’s proposal.

M. Massigli (France). — Mr. President, I should like to thank M. Sato and his Government for their conciliatory spirit. I hope that in these circumstances we shall achieve unanimity and that the whole Commission will accept the French amendment.

The French delegation’s amended proposal to Article H was adopted.

66. Discussion on Chapter II, Section III, Material of Air Armaments, Article AE.

The President. — We now come to the text of Article AE, which the Commission instructed the bureau to prepare, taking into account the discussions held and the decisions adopted when this text was examined. You have before you the wording proposed by the bureau as follows:

"Article AE.

1. If the High Contracting Parties intervene in any capacity, whether directly or indirectly, wholly or partially, in civil aviation undertakings, they agree that the State organs dealing with the matter shall be quite separate from the organs dealing with military aviation. It is agreed that this undertaking does not prevent the union of civil and military aviation under a single Ministry provided that the two subjects are dealt with separately and independently.

2. The High Contracting Parties shall refrain from prescribing the embodiment of military features in the build of civil aviation material so that this material may be constructed for purely civil purposes, more particularly with a view to providing the greatest possible measure of security and the most economical return. No preparations shall be made in civil aircraft in time of peace for the installation of warlike armaments for the purpose of converting such aircraft into military aircraft.

3. The High Contracting Parties undertake not to require of civil aviation undertakings that they should employ personnel specially trained for military purposes. They undertake to authorise, only as a provisional and temporary measure, the seconding of personnel to, and the employment of military aviation material in, civil aviation undertakings.

4. The High Contracting Parties undertake not to subsidise, directly or indirectly, air lines principally established for military purposes, instead of being established for economic, administrative or social purposes.
"5. The High Contracting Parties undertake to encourage, as far as possible, the conclusion of economic agreements between civil aviation undertakings in the different countries."

General de Marinis (Italy). — The proposed text entirely satisfies me in the sense that it is in conformity with the ideas expressed when this article was discussed. Nevertheless, as regards paragraph 1 of this Article AE, I must say that I regard it as entirely redundant. The object of this paragraph is to prevent any relationship between the military air organisation and the civil air organisation. I do not, however, see how the military authorities can exercise any influence on the civil industry except in the way referred to in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4. In these circumstances, paragraph 1 would appear to serve no useful purpose.

Apart from this observation, I have no objection to the proposed text if the Commission thinks that it should be adopted.

The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — I am not sure that I entirely understand one phrase in paragraph 2.

I made it clear the other day that, while I was quite prepared to accept the obligation not to require the adaptation of civil aircraft to military purposes, and also the obligation not to require the employment of military personnel, I could not accept an obligation which means the preventing of these things being done. In the last sentence of paragraph 2 I find "no preparations shall be made in civil aircraft". That may be intended to mean merely that the Government shall not cause any preparations to be made. Or, on the other hand, it might be read to mean that under no circumstances should it allow any preparations to be made. That would seem to be in conflict with the language at the beginning of the paragraph.

At the beginning of paragraph 2 we have the words "the High Contracting Parties shall refrain from prescribing", and in paragraph 3 there are the words "the High Contracting Parties shall not require". I think perhaps the intent of the sentence in question is entirely in harmony with the words I have first cited, but it might be more accurate to say that the High Contracting Parties shall not require preparations to be made in civil aircraft. That would be entirely acceptable.

The President. — I would point out that the three last lines in paragraph 2 are merely an adaptation to air armaments of a provision which is found in the draft Convention under Article NH on naval armaments. This article NH was adopted at first reading by the Commission from Article 14 of the Washington Treaty. Obviously the Commission is not bound to transfer to air armaments a provision which it accepted at first reading for naval armaments. But I have thought it necessary to explain how these three lines came to be inserted in the draft.

I would further add that, when we were discussing this Article AE, and discussing it at great length, we had before us a proposal by the Soviet delegation to the effect that any adaptation of civil aviation material for the installation of armaments, or for use for military purposes, was forbidden. Owing to the opposition to this amendment, particularly on the part of the Belgian delegation, it was understood that we should merely insert — and if I remember rightly, M. Litvinoff himself made the proposal — a provision in Article AE, paragraph 2, similar to that contained in Article NH on naval armaments. We have therefore before us a decision previously adopted, which I think Mr. Gibson agreed to.

Baron Rolin Jaequeymyns (Belgium). — I should like to remind the Commission of the sense in which it voted the other day in regard to an addition to Article AE.

It was clearly understood that this addition implied no intention whatever, on the part of the majority of the Commission, that Governments should intervene in civil aviation, not even with a view to prevent preparations being made for its use in time of war. What was, and still is, understood is that Governments will not intervene, and, as the President pointed out, it was therefore decided to apply to civil aircraft the principle embodied in Article NH, at first reading, regarding merchant vessels. This article reads: "No preparations shall be made in merchant ships in time of peace . . . ." I do not think there was in this clause any intention to institute a control of the installations made in merchant ships. There is, therefore, no question of a similar provision with regard to civil aviation being construed as imposing on Governments the duty of controlling these installations, with a view to prohibiting those which might be utilised in time of war.

I have heard it said around me that, if the words are taken in their literal meaning, they nevertheless impose on Governments an obligation to supervise civil aviation from this point of view. I do not think so, as when interpreting a text you can never isolate from their context a number of words contained in a provision. This provision is an addition to Article AE, paragraph 2, which states: "The High Contracting Parties shall refrain from prescribing . . . ." The following is the addition based on the provision in Article NH regarding merchant ships: "No preparations shall be made in civil aircraft in time of peace"; etc. This amounts to stating that any such installations cannot be made by Governments at their instance or on their orders. Moreover, it was not I who inspired this addition to the text, and if it is desired to delete the additional sentence beginning with the words "No preparations", I shall raise no objection.
The President. — Does Mr. Gibson desire the last three lines of this paragraph 2 to be omitted?

The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — After the explanations that have been given, Mr. President, it is a matter of indifference.

The President. — I suppose the explanations given are sufficient for the Commission to be in a position to pronounce on the subject. I therefore propose that we should take the article paragraph by paragraph.

As regards paragraph 1, we have a proposal, or at any rate, a recommendation, by General de Marinis for the omission of this text as being useless. Does anyone want this paragraph to be maintained?

If there is no objection, I shall regard General de Marinis's proposal as accepted and paragraph 1 as suppressed.

Agreed.

Paragraph 2 will now become paragraph 1. I would remind you that Mr. Gibson has withdrawn his objection in view of the explanations furnished.

The division of this paragraph having been requested, I will put the first part of the paragraph to the vote. If there is no objection, I shall declare this first part adopted.

I will now put to the vote the second part, consisting of the three lines in question.

Baron Rolin Jaequemyns (Belgium).—Owing to the doubts expressed by the United States delegation with regard to the effect of this paragraph I think it had better be deleted. I do not want any possibility of error to exist, in the sense that a State would be obliged to intervene.

The President. — I would ask whether the doubts on which the proposal for the deletion of this paragraph is based have not been removed by the explanations given just now. Is the proposal to delete this paragraph maintained?

M. Litvinoff (Union of Socialist Soviet Republics). — I would remind the Commission that the proposal to insert this sentence was made in conformity with a similar clause adopted in connection with naval armaments. The same clause will also be found in the Washington Treaty, under Article 14.

No arguments have been advanced as to why these restrictions may be applied to naval armaments but not to other forces, and I would point out that, in the Minutes of the meeting on April 26th, when this matter was discussed, we find the following: "M. Litvinoff's proposal was adopted. Article AE was adopted subject to drafting amendments".

After what we have witnessed in the Commission during the last few days, I suppose that the suppression of these few lines would be quite in conformity with the procedure adopted by the Commission to omit anything which tends towards disarmament. It would therefore seem logical for the Commission to reject my proposal now.

The President. — I must again ask whether the proposal to delete this paragraph is maintained. I must ask the Commission to decide whether it desires to reverse a decision of principle previously taken by it.

Baron Rolin Jaequemyns (Belgium). — I do not press the proposal to reverse a decision already adopted in view of what you have just said, Mr. President, with regard to the meaning to be attached to this paragraph. Since it is understood that this paragraph does not apply to action taken against individuals but on the contrary consists of a restriction placed on the intervention of States, I do not press my proposal.

The President. — Thank you. The proposal for the deletion of this paragraph is withdrawn. I therefore put this text to the vote.

The text was adopted.

The President. — No objection has been submitted regarding the other paragraphs. If there is no objection, I shall declare them adopted.

Article AE was adopted.

We now come to Chapter II, Section II, "Material of Naval Armaments". At the request of several delegations I propose that the discussion on this Chapter should be adjourned until Monday morning.

Agreed.

(The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.)
TWENTY-FIRST MEETING (PUBLIC).

 Held at Geneva on Monday, May 6th, 1929, at 10 a.m.

 President: M. Politis (Greece).

 67. Adjournment of the Discussion on Chapter II, Section II, Material of Naval Armaments.

 The President. — I call upon M. Sato to speak.

 M. Sato (Japan). — At our meeting on April 22nd last, the honourable representative of the United States of America made a very important declaration on the question of naval disarmament. This declaration doubtless opens out a fresh path towards a final solution. But, in view of the complexity and importance of the problem, I think it would be extremely desirable if the Powers principally interested in this question could first of all take some steps to clear the ground. I suggest this method in the interests of the final solution of the problem. If we are agreed on this point, it would be quite natural for the Preparatory Commission to allow sufficient time for the Powers concerned carefully to examine this matter, in order that the question may be usefully discussed at a later date.

 I have the honour to represent on the Preparatory Commission a country which also has a special interest in the naval problem. My Government would therefore wish to be allowed sufficient time to consider the matter adequately in all its details. This will necessitate, besides considerable work, a fairly long time, particularly in view of the distance which separates us from my country.

 In these circumstances, I venture to propose to the Commission that it should adjourn examination of the naval question until the Governments concerned have had time to complete their consideration of the suggestion put forward by the United States representative. I should add that, as far as my country is concerned, as soon as the necessary studies have been completed, my Government will be quite prepared to send a representative to the Commission in order to discuss this matter in detail. I also wish to state that, although the Japanese Government proposes the temporary adjournment of the naval question, it is firmly resolved to do all in its power to obtain at the earliest possible moment that solution of the problem which we all desire.

 Immediately after Mr. Gibson's declaration, I stated that I would subsequently inform the Commission of my Government's attitude, if the latter thought it desirable for me to do so. I am now authorised by my Government to make the following declaration on its behalf:

 The Japanese Government deeply appreciates the declaration of the representative of the United States of America, which is of a nature to contribute considerably to the speeding-up of this important task the reduction of naval armaments. The Japanese Government wishes me to state most emphatically that it will always be prepared to give most careful consideration to any proposal made on an equitable and reasonable basis, and that in such circumstances you will always be able to count on its most loyal and sincere co-operation.

 In the declaration he made on April 22nd last, Mr. Gibson pointed out that the essential object of disarmament was not merely limitation, but, in every case, an effective reduction of armaments. The Japanese Government entirely shares this point of view. It has, indeed, on many occasions expressed a similar opinion. It feels, however, that the moment has not yet come to state its views on the problems that constitute the very basis of the question, such as that on which the arrangement in force for certain categories of vessels is founded, particularly as the new American proposal only concerns the method of estimating equivalent naval values.

 In any case, I desire to assure you that the Japanese Government is firmly resolved to consider the whole problem of naval disarmament, however complex that problem may be, in a spirit of good understanding and equitable conciliation, and that it will always be sincerely prepared to assist, in every way, in reaching an agreement.

 Lord Cushendun (British empire). — It seems to me that the course recommended by M. Sato is not only obviously the most sensible course for us to pursue under present circumstances but practically the only one that is open to us as a businesslike assembly. He has proposed that we adjourn the consideration of the naval question in order to give time for its proper examination.

 I remember that last year there was an inclination, in some quarters, to represent the naval question as the only one that presented any difficulty, and it was said that, if we could arrive at an agreement on naval disarmament, nothing else interfered with a rapid decision upon all other points in connection with this draft Convention. Our proceedings during the last three weeks have proved how false that idea was. We have had several points connected with disarmament in land and air forces which have raised very great difficulties and which we have discussed at considerable length. I think we may congratulate ourselves upon having made considerable progress with those points, and I should like to see before long a statement drawn up showing the amount of agreement which we have arrived at. But, however that may be, the naval difficulty has undoubtedly been one of the chief obstacles to complete agreement.
When we arrived here three weeks ago, I confess I was not very hopeful of our being able to arrive at an agreement. We appeared to be in very much the same position that we were in twelve months ago. You will remember that, twelve months ago, there was considerable doubt as to when we should reassemble, and it was ultimately decided that we should meet during the first quarter of the present year, and I do not think any of us can have been very hopeful that, when we came here, our difficulties would disappear. Now the situation has been entirely altered by the declaration that was made a short time ago by the representative of the United States. I should like to emphasise that that declaration contained no definite proposals for an agreement on the naval question, but what it did do — more useful than precise proposals at that moment — was to suggest a method by which we might arrive at an agreement.

Speaking immediately after Mr. Gibson, I ventured, without instructions and without having had an opportunity of communicating with my Government, to welcome most warmly the declaration made by the representative of the United States, and I said that I reciprocated the friendly and the helpful spirit in which that declaration appeared to have been made, and I pledged myself — so far as I could without instructions — that when those proposals which were foreshadowed should be put forward, my Government would examine them in the most friendly spirit and with the most anxious desire to arrive at an agreement.

To my great satisfaction, the very next day, in the House of Commons in London, the Foreign Secretary endorsed what I had said and repeated in almost identical language the desire of His Majesty's Government to approach the question in the hopeful and conciliatory spirit which had been foreshadowed by Mr. Gibson at Geneva, and a few days afterwards our Prime Minister, in a public speech, expressed himself to the same effect. Therefore, I can now say that it is not merely my own personal feeling, but that the Government of Great Britain — and I may add the Press of Great Britain — have also thoroughly endorsed my statement on that occasion.

But, as I have said, the statement made by Mr. Gibson did not involve, nor did it express, any precise proposals for dealing with the naval question. He has intimated that proposals may be forthcoming from the United States Government, if they are welcomed and sought for, as they have been. He has intimated the method by which we may, through careful study, arrive at a system of the valuation of ships which, if successful, will surmount one of our chief difficulties in dealing with this point. But, Mr. President, it is quite evident that that study and examination of what is in the mind of the United States Government cannot be done in an hour, a day or a week; I cannot, of course, suggest how long it may take for the various Powers concerned to arrive at a definite decision upon these proposals. We have not seen the proposals yet, but I have no doubt they will be communicated to the different Governments by the Government of the United States. Each Government will then have to examine them carefully, to see whether they offer a prospect of agreement. I have no doubt that thereafter there will have to be communications between the various Governments most interested in this question, and it is quite obvious that that is a process which may take some time. It may not take a very long time; on the other hand, it may take a considerable time. It depends a great deal upon the nature of the proposals to be made, the technicalities to be discussed and the opportunities for examining what they are.

At all events, we are now in a very hopeful spirit; we have reached a point where, instead of almost despairing of arriving at an agreement, we are in the most hopeful frame of mind of being able, at some future period which may not be very long delayed, to come here and register a complete agreement upon this great question. If that should prove to be the case, surely it will be an achievement upon which we shall not only warmly congratulate ourselves, but upon which the world will be able to congratulate itself and to rejoice in the work that we have done.

It appears to me that, in order to have the time and opportunity for this discussion, we must adopt the proposal just made by M. Sato. I cordially endorse it. I think it is a sensible course, I think it is the only possible course, and I earnestly hope that the Commission will not, through any motive of impatience or any desire to hurry matters — which might prove very mischievous and even disastrous — reject that proposal, but that it will agree to accept it and postpone the consideration of this question until we are in a position to arrive at an agreement.

M. MASSIGLI (France). — On April 22nd, when Mr. Gibson communicated to the Commission the broad lines of the proposal made by his Government, I took the opportunity of informing the Commission that it is not merely my own personal feeling, but that the Government of Great Britain — and, I may add the Press of Great Britain — have also thoroughly endorsed my statement on that occasion.

When M. Paul-Boncour decided, in April 1927, to submit a proposal for reaching a compromise without, however, abandoning in any way the principle of limitation of total tonnage, he made a very important concession. It is possible that his efforts were not fully and justly appreciated by everyone, and that the extent of the concession involved was not realised. Nevertheless, that very compromise proposal, modified and amended in some ways, appears now to be offering us an opportunity of meeting each other halfway.

It is quite obvious that Governments cannot give their opinion on suggestions which have not yet been submitted to them until they have had an opportunity of examining them very carefully, and for that reason I fully agree with the proposal, made by M. Sato and supported by Lord Cusshendun, that the further study of these questions should be adjourned. I think that adjournment should be granted, because several Governments have made this request. In any case, I desire to assure the Commission that the French Government will examine the United States suggestions with the firm desire of enabling the Commission to resume its work and carry it to a successful conclusion as quickly as possible, and also because it is anxious to support any arrangement which will conduce to a general solution of this problem, and which, without
compromising any vital interests, will take account of the special situations of the various countries. I have no doubt that the other Governments will examine this question in the same spirit.

I trust, therefore, that they will do so with sufficient rapidity to enable the naval question to be re-submitted to our Commission at the earliest possible date, so that it may be able to complete the task entrusted to it.

General de Marinis (Italy). — After the speeches to which we have just listened, I think I can content myself with a simple declaration. I entirely agree with the views expressed by the previous speakers, and fully associate myself with the proposal to adjourn the discussion of naval armaments until all the Governments concerned have been able to study the suggestions of the United States Government, to which Mr. Gibson referred in his speech.

The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — Mr. President, I made my general statement as to a possible method of approach to the naval problem early in our present session, chiefly in order to afford other delegations an opportunity to consider it from every aspect and to determine to what degree they were in a position to discuss it at the present time. After my statement, we learned that certain other Governments are making analogous studies which should, of course, be taken into account in any general discussion. To-day, we are told that certain Governments feel that, in order to deal with the matter effectively and expeditiously, they require time for careful exploration of the possibilities opened by the American suggestions.

In my opening statement, Mr. President, I said that I would be prepared to discuss the American proposals when we reached this chapter on our agenda, but obviously this readiness was entirely contingent upon the knowledge that other delegations felt prepared to enter upon the subject.

The solution of the naval problem is in essence simple, but in application complex. The technical considerations involved must be studied from many angles, and the American delegation recognises that our best hope of agreement upon a method lies in having each country come into the discussion prepared to speak on the basis of its own independent study and in possession of all the data that it desires.

In view of the considerations I have indicated, my Government feels that the course best calculated to lead to the successful conclusion of our labours lies in giving time for a careful study of this whole problem. It also feels that, in view of the other analogous studies which are being made, it would not be opportune to embark upon detailed discussion of our suggested method of approach at the present moment. Perhaps the best course is for me to restate what our suggestion is, in such a way as to afford a basis for the independent studies which I hope will be made by other interested Governments.

In substance, equivalent tonnage is an expression used to convey the idea, for comparative purposes, of the military value of individual ships, and hence of the total value of any number of such units in any given category, in which there may be wide divergences as to unit characteristics composing the category. In arriving at this equivalent of value, it would seem advisable to take into account only factors that are simple and obvious, easy to compute and easy to understand. We feel that the problem should not be complicated by the introduction of factors which may well be considered as really no more than elements of the prime factors. In my general statement on this subject, I indicated certain factors which include elements that enter into the design of effectiveness of individual units, that is, unit displacement, gun calibre and age, as well as speed and other factors.

My Government feels, Mr. President, that, in order not to prejudice such studies as may be pursued independently by other Governments, it is best to go no further than to outline our suggestion in this manner. It will be clear that the American proposal is no rigid plan to be accepted or rejected. It is a suggestion that a new method of approach based on naval equivalents be explored, and it is in order that there may be complete liberty for independent studies that we have decided not to make any more specific proposals at this stage of our work.

I have no doubt that the other Governments will examine this question in the same spirit.

The evidence of a popular desire in all countries to see us press on to our goal has been made abundantly clear. There could be nothing more favourable to the progress of our work than the present atmosphere of enthusiasm and goodwill. We must proceed just as fast as may be consistent with sound and effective handling of the very important and complex problem before us, and without jeopardising the successful conduct of the work through entering precipitantly upon discussions for which any of the interested Powers is not prepared.

For that reason, Mr. President, I fully concur in the proposal of the Japanese, British, French and Italian delegates to postpone consideration of the naval chapter until such time as the interested Powers have signified to you their readiness to embark upon a general discussion.
the four other delegations, to adjourn until a subsequent date our consideration of Chapter II, Section II, concerning the material of naval armaments.

M. Litvinoff (Union of Socialist Soviet Republics). — I am breaking my silence in order not to give the impression, either in this Commission or outside it, that I agree with this proposal, since I certainly do not consider it proper for the work of the Commission to be done outside. Since the Naval Powers have declared that they are unwilling to put their proposals before the Commission and to discuss them, there is nothing left to us but to register the fact. "Faute de combattants, nous, on ne peut, de course, gagner." The President. — In these circumstances I consider that the Commission accepts the proposal to adjourn the naval question.


The President. — According to the agenda we are called upon to discuss Chapter III (Budgetary Expenditure), and then Chapter V, (Miscellaneous Provisions). One question arises. Are we to examine the texts of these two chapters forthwith in second reading, or would it be preferable to adjourn our examination until a later date? The Commission is free to decide this point. I would, however, remind you that there are in these two chapters a fairly large number of articles, more or less connected with other questions which have been reserved. In the interests of our work it would seem that the examination in second reading of these articles should be adjourned. Does any delegate wish to speak on this previous question? As no one has asked to speak, I conclude that the Commission agrees with the bureau as to the advisability of adjourning the discussion of these two chapters until a later date.

The Commission agreed to this course.

69. Declaration by the French Delegation in regard to Control.

The President. — Before we proceed any further, I think that, although we have adjourned the detailed examination of these Chapters III and V of the draft Convention, it would be desirable to ask the delegations if they have any general declarations to make which might in the interval facilitate the study of this question by the Governments, with a view to the subsequent examination of these texts.

M. Massigli (France). — The draft submitted by the French delegation and examined in first reading included a very complete set of provisions concerning the supervision of the application of the Convention that it is our task to prepare. The important general discussion which took place on this point at the Commission's third session and the subsequent allusions made to this problem during the present session, have shown how wide the divergencies are which separate us in this matter. It is obvious that, if, when we meet again, the question has to be discussed on the basis of the present texts, the controversy may be greatly prolonged without any chance of our arriving at a conclusion. It is essential that, when our work is resumed, we should attain definite results in the shortest possible time.

So convinced are we of this, and so strong is our desire to discover a solution that will meet with general approval, that the French delegation has re-examined the question of supervision which is an essential element of M. Paul-Boncour's draft. We are still convinced that, if any sort of attempt is made to go beyond the general framework within which the future draft, it would seem, is to be maintained, the whole problem of supervision will arise afresh in all its aspects. In that case, we should certainly prefer to maintain the 1927 proposals as they stand, because they are founded on those principles to which the French Government still adheres. In the present state, however, of the texts we are preparing, it would seem to be possible to discover solutions which would provide the contracting States with those guarantees they are entitled to claim, without provoking any such opposition as was engendered by the French draft of 1927.

Before the Commission adjourns its work, I therefore wish to state that the French delegation has now decided to substitute, in place of its original proposals contained in the text of Chapter V as it left the first reading, certain simpler and more general proposals governing the essential points for which provision must be made in the draft Convention: exchange and centralisation of information, settlement of disputes concerning the interpretation and application of the Convention, steps to be taken in the case of any infringement of the same, having regard more particularly to the special position of States non-Members of the League — naturally without prejudice to the procedure which States Members may be bound to follow.

As this question is not under discussion, I merely wish to state these few general principles. I would add that, in order to make it possible for members of the Commission to examine this proposal at their leisure, the French delegation will transmit it to our President without waiting for our next meeting to be convened. Our proposals are conciliatory; I firmly hope that the other delegations here present will examine them in a similar spirit of conciliation and will find themselves able to accept them.

The Hon. Hugh Gibson (United States of America). — It is not an overstatement to say that, in all our previous discussions, it was the question of international supervision and control which divided us most fundamentally. It was a question that involved the delicate
subject of State sovereignty, and was something that many of us could not accept, not only because of our disbelief in its efficacy, but for many other reasons, which, happily, it is no longer necessary to enumerate.

The honourable delegate for France has now told us that his country is deferring to the views of a number of other delegations on this important question. Surely, Mr. President, there is no one in this room to-day who does not feel that we are appreciably nearer to our goal, which is, and which remains, the completion of a single text for the draft Convention which we have been discussing for the past two years. That agreement can be reached only by mutual concession, and that it can be reached only in this way has been clear for a long time. But I am the first to recognise that concession is not always easy. It often means the sacrifice, for the common benefit, of a principle held with conviction, and as such, I, for one, value the concession just made by M. Massigli, in its true light, and pay sincere tribute to the spirit which prompts it. We are, to-day, more optimistic of the eventual success than we have ever been, and I can assure M. Massigli that we all appreciate in what measure this is due to the contribution which he and his Government have just made.

The President. — M. Massigli's declaration will be noted in the Minutes, and, as soon as he has communicated his proposals to the bureau, these will be circulated by the Secretariat to the various delegations.

70. Declaration by the Soviet Delegation in regard to the Work of the Commission.

M. Litvinoff (Union of Socialist Soviet Republics). — The Soviet delegation did not attend the meetings of the Commission when Chapters III and V were discussed. Therefore, it must make a number of reservations with regard to them: but, as we are not now discussing those chapters, I must leave my reservations until a later date. I understand, however, that Chapter III is allied to the question of procedure as to the date to which the discussion of Chapters III and V should be adjourned, and that we are now going to decide that point.

It is on the question of procedure that I would like to make some reservations, because I question the wisdom of adjoining Chapters III and V to the next session of the Preparatory Commission; indeed, I question the wisdom of calling a new session. I think we should do better by having one or two more sittings of this session, to put the final technical touches to this draft Convention and then to pass it to the Disarmament Conference without having another session.

To make matters clear on this point, I shall have to make a brief summary of the state of the work of this Commission, as it appears to me, and of the prospects which a new session opens up.

The Soviet delegation, in its declaration of April 19th last, which was distributed to all the delegations (Annex 5), gave a summary of the previous work of the Preparatory Commission, and made certain prophecies as to the further activities of the Commission. I should be very glad to be able, in summing up to-day the work of the sixth session, to acknowledge that the prophecies of the Soviet delegation have not been fulfilled. I must, however, to my own great regret, assert that the results of the sixth session have justified the most gloomy prophecies which could possibly have been made beforehand. We were only wrong on one point: it seemed to us that, following a path blocked by many and unavoidable obstacles, the Commission would either be unable to overcome those obstacles and would simply mark time, or would only surmount them to come up against fresh ones. It is true that not one of the obstacles in the way has been overcome, but it would nevertheless be incorrect to accuse the Commission of having merely marked time during the sixth session. We did not foresee a third issue out of the situation — namely, the possibility of that backward movement which has marked the work of the sixth session. Previous sessions, merely marking time, may have produced neutral results: this session, which has at last made a move, but a move backwards, can claim results which are actually negative.

Indeed, the Commission, following the line of least resistance, has simply removed from the draft Convention all those more important clauses which formerly evoked controversy among the delegations. A list of disarmament proposals rejected and withdrawn would undoubtedly be longer than a list of the positive decisions taken by the sixth session. To show that I am not speaking without my book, I will enumerate the chief proposals rejected by the Commission, without reference to the most serious event of this session — the rejection of the Soviet draft Convention, with all the advantages it indubitably has over the draft Convention considered by the Commission. Within the limits of this last-named Convention, the Commission rejected one after another the amendments of the Soviet delegation on the prohibition of the preparation for chemical warfare and aerial bombardment. The Commission excluded from the Convention the clause on the limitation of military reserves, and the whole section on war material for land armaments. It rejected proposals with regard to limitation of stocks of aerial armaments. It refused to draw up a detailed list of warlike weapons to be limited, thus complicating the passing of a decision on the complete withdrawal from armies of those weapons which are particularly aggressive and fraught with special danger for the civil population. The Commission refused to draw up a detailed list of the various grades of land effective and aviation specialists, failing which effective limitation of the potential employment of military forces will be practically impossible. It rejected the proposal for the obligatory limitation of land and air forces separately in home countries and colonies. It turned down the Soviet proposal for the prohibition of employing newly-invented weapons...
of destruction. Finally, it did not consider the proposal of the Chinese delegation for the abolition of compulsory military service even worthy of consideration. This is, of course, by no means an exhaustive list of the negative decisions passed by the Commission. I consider, however, the refusal to adopt the principle of the reduction of any elements of armed forces whatsoever — the principle of disarmament — to be the turning point in the history, not only of the sixth session, but of the Preparatory Commission itself.

I would venture once more to remind you that, when the Soviet delegation, at the beginning of the sixth session, placed before the Commission three fundamental points which are too well known for me to enumerate, it was answered with a resolution which plainly acknowledged the task of the Commission to be the drawing-up of a scheme for the reduction — even the substantial reduction — of armaments. The significance of this decision was, however, finally annulled when, during the consideration of separate chapters of the draft Convention, the Commission turned down the Soviet proposal for the application to these chapters of the word “reduction” instead of “limitation”. More, when the Soviet delegation, in a spirit of concession and conciliation, agreed to the use of both these words, the Commission nevertheless decided to insist upon the original terminology of the draft Convention and to stick to the word “limitation” alone, thus emphasising its desire to confine the tasks of the coming Disarmament Conference merely to the limitation of armaments. If I were a stickler for the Covenant of the League of Nations, I should be entitled to accuse the Commission of a flagrant infringement of Article 8 of the Covenant, so frequently appealed to by delegations, which mentions reduction of armaments, while the Commission has completely eliminated the use of the word “reduction”. The reiterated rejection of the Soviet proposal for the drawing-up of a scheme of reduction, and not mere limitation of armaments, has been the most important feature of the session, which every sincere supporter and friend of disarmament cannot fail to notice.

What is, then, the positive balance of the work of the session? A few articles enumerating effective for land armaments survived the second reading; many of these, however, and the schedules themselves, have suffered considerable damage in their new revision. But does the Commission, however, really intend the reduction even of the elements of armed forces enumerated in these articles? I think an unequivocal reply to this question has been given by the determined refusal of the Commission to employ the words “reduction of armaments”. Moreover, some delegates have given us to understand, at this very session, that the countries they represent do not see their way to reducing their armies, some because they claim already to have reduced their armies voluntarily, others because they are in exceptional circumstances, and yet others because they consider themselves entitled to increase their armies.

In these circumstances, I may be pardoned for asking what is the point of the Preparatory Commission meeting yet again before the Conference? What questions will further sessions of the Preparatory Commission find to deal with? Naval armaments? But it was admitted at the third, fourth and fifth sessions, and confirmed at the present session, that the Preparatory Commission can do nothing at all with regard to this problem, which has been handed over to certain Sea Powers for settlement, and is to be left to their discretion, and, moreover, quite outside the Preparatory Commission. Even if these diplomatic negotiations between Powers give any results, the Preparatory Commission will confine itself to their mere registration. Could not the Conference carry out this registration equally well? The limitation of budgetary expenditure? But have not several delegates here told us that such limitation would be unacceptable to them? Publicity? But this is a mere side issue and of importance only in case of the actual reduction of armaments, which has not yet been decided upon. Perhaps the Commission intends to revise the chapters on the organisation of control. But have not delegates here told us that they cannot accept the principle of international control? There remain sundry questions of expiration of the Convention, its ratification, of depositing the instruments of ratification, etc. Is it really worth while to meet to consider questions of such secondary importance when nothing has yet been achieved on the fundamental questions? If the Conference is able to arrive at important results of any sort on the fundamental questions, it will then be much easier to decide questions of ratification, etc.

All the above considerations force me to the conclusion that there is no necessity to call the Commission again, and that it would be quite practicable to proceed direct to the convocation of the Disarmament Conference, in which case the document known as the draft Convention for Disarmament could be handed over to it in its present state, by way of material.

We must, of course, ask ourselves whether the Conference will be in a position to justify those hopes placed, so far with but little grounds, upon the Preparatory Commission. Far be it from me to lay the blame for the failure of the work of the Commission upon my colleagues. I am willing to concede that they have spoken here against proposals for disarmament with reluctance, against their own will. I would even say, sometimes against their personal convictions. In so doing they have been but fulfilling the instructions of their Governments. They themselves would probably be glad to fulfil instructions of an opposite nature. It may be asked whether we may expect these or any other representatives of these same Governments to take up a different stand at the Conference with regard to the reduction of armaments. Emphatically no. If, nevertheless, we still urge a speedy convocation of the Conference,
it is because we hope that the peoples of all countries, who are the principal motive power in the international campaign for disarmament and peace, learning of the fruitlessness of the work of the Preparatory Commission, will so increase their pressure on their Governments that the latter will be forced to take up, at the Conference itself, a position much more in correspondence with their desires and demands. In this case the Conference will be forced to reject the work of the Preparatory Commission, and it will start again from the beginning, perhaps setting up a new Convention under definite instructions quite different from those on which the work of our Preparatory Commission has been based. If, on the other hand, delegates come to the Conference with the same instructions which guided the Preparatory Commission, the Conference will, of course, come to grief. Even this would have the advantage of forcing the popular movement for peace and disarmament to strike out into new paths, to dig fresh channels, leading more surely to the aims it has at heart. In either case, the causes of peace and disarmament can only gain by speeding up the convocation of the Conference.

There is no need for me to declare, like Count Bernstorff, that my delegation cannot share the responsibility with the majority of the Commission for the results or, to be precise, the non-results of its work. The Soviet delegation has more than once, and long ago, declared this. The German delegation for a long time placed certain hopes on the second reading of the Commission’s draft Convention, energetically insisting upon this. The Soviet delegation never nourished any such hopes and for that reason expressed itself all along against this second reading, proposing its own draft, based upon other principles, much more difficult for the Governments to reject than are those proposals which have arisen out of the former work of the Commission. The Soviet delegation feels, therefore, no disappointment whatsoever. It does not regret its participation in the Commission, or the time which it would seem to have spent in vain. By its presence in the Commission and its proposals in the sphere of the utmost disarmament, it has nipped in the bud the legend which it was attempted to circulate here of the Soviet Union as an obstacle in the path of general disarmament. Of all the countries here represented, the Soviet Union lies under the greatest menace. It is the object of the hostility and unfriendliness of the whole bourgeois world. Its foes are legion and its friends are few. In case of attack it could count only upon its own armed forces, the Red Army and the Red Navy. Despite this, the Soviet delegation has not seen fit to refer here to the insufficient security of its country or the special conditions of its situation, has not demanded any exceptions, but has agreed to the most radical forms of disarmament, nay, has itself proposed them. We are forced to record that this example has found no imitators, even among States which are infinitely better placed as regards national security. Every time proposals for more effective means of disarmament, greater contraction of the scope of future wars, and the utmost mitigation of their horrors, were voted upon, the Soviet delegation has found itself in a minority, often a minority of one. The Soviet delegation is no whit abashed by this isolation—it is proud of it. It is willing, in the same spirit of readiness for sacrifices and real concessions for the sake of disarmament, and in the same spirit of peace, to come to the Disarmament Conference, the speediest convocation of which I now propose.

The President. — Gentlemen, it is not for me to pass any opinion on the statement which you have just heard. I must say, however, that it seems to me to contain a number of material errors. These may easily be pointed out when we examine the Minutes. I repeat, it is not for me to pass any opinion on the pessimism expressed regarding what we have done and what M. Litvinoff expects from the future Conference. He has uttered what is a veritable indictment of our work. He will at least allow — I am sure he will agree with us on this point — that we are working in a glasshouse, both in the literal and in the figurative sense. Opinions have been freely expressed here, and no one can deny — M. Litvinoff least of all — that absolute freedom of speech is allowed. The public has heard what every delegation has said, and it is the public whom we regard as sole judge of whether we have done well or ill.

However, I was very much gratified, and I think the Commission will agree with me, to hear M. Litvinoff’s closing words, in which he led us to hope that he also would make concessions in a spirit of international concord and peace, when the time comes for the Conference to draw up in final form the First Convention on the Limitation and Reduction of Armaments.


The President. — The decision you have taken to adjourn the continuation of the discussion of the second reading of the draft Convention raises two questions which the Commission must decide. The first is whether or not there will be a report on the work done in the course of this session. The second is at what approximate date does the Commission propose to meet again and continue the present session?

As regards the first question, I must point out that ordinarily no report is prepared until the closing of a session. This is not the case here. We have begun the sixth session and we have stopped halfway through the second reading of the draft Convention. The present session will not be closed until we have concluded the second reading. Moreover, there would be a certain disadvantage in drawing up a partial report on our work now. The document which gives the text of the draft Convention of 1927, together with a report on the work of the third session, shows that no report was prepared until the first reading was concluded. For
consistency's sake, therefore, we ought to wait until the end of the second reading before reporting on our work as a whole. If the Commission considers that the report should not be made now, it will have to be deferred until the conclusion of the second reading.

The Commission is aware, however, that what we have done here will receive all the necessary publicity not only because our Minutes will be published but because it has always been the custom since the beginning of the League for the Secretary-General to give the Assembly every year an account of the work of the various League organs. Accordingly, the Secretary-General's report will contain, as in the past, a chapter on the limitation and reduction of armaments.

I have given you no more than a few general indications. It is for the Commission to take a decision in the matter.

General DE MARINIS (Italy). - I share the views of our President. I think it would be impracticable and inadvisable for our Commission to report on part of the work of this session, which is not closed, and which is to be resumed as soon as possible. Moreover, it is usual for the Assembly to be informed as to the position of our work. If we do not meet again before the Assembly, this may very well be done by the Secretariat. The Commission might later make a full report on the progress of its work at the sixth session when that session is completed.

M. WESTMAN (Sweden). - It was the Swedish delegation which first raised the question whether the Commission should submit a report. I fully understand, at the present stage of our work, the formal reasons for the President's proposal. I have no doubt that the report prepared by the Secretary-General will be complete enough to provide the Assembly with full particulars as to the situations which was the aim of my suggestion.

The PRESIDENT. - As no one else has asked to speak on the question of the report, I take it as agreed that there will be no report until the end of the session.

Does the Commission desire the date on which it resumes its work to be fixed now, or does it prefer to leave it to its President, M. Loudon, to fix that date after being informed by the Governments of the principal Naval Powers as to the progress of the negotiations of which we have just learned from these Powers?

M. MARKOVITCH (Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes). - I am in favour of the second course.

Count BERNSTORFF (Germany). - I do not object to the convening of the next meeting being left to the President's discretion. I should like, however, to repeat what I have always said, that my Government wants the Conference to be held as soon as possible, and I hope that, if we leave the President full discretion in the matter, this will mean that the Conference will really be summoned at that earliest possible moment.

M. LITVINOFF (Union of Socialist Soviet Republics). - From my point of view, this is hardly a question of much importance, since we do not expect great things from the next session. However, it might speed up the Governments which are taking part in the negotiations if we fixed a definite date by which their representatives would have to come to the Commission with definite decisions. If we do not do so, we shall be leaving them free to make their decisions at their own leisure.

The PRESIDENT. - It seems to me very difficult to accept M. Litvinoff's view. We have heard the statements made by the representatives of the principal Naval Powers. We have heard them express a desire to reach an agreement as quickly as possible. Obviously, we ought to place full confidence in them in regard to this matter. The question whether a settlement is reached sooner or later thus depends upon the practical difficulties of this naval problem. We all trust that it will be reached as soon as possible. All we can ask of the Naval Powers is that they should do their best to lighten the difficult task of the President in choosing the most suitable moment for convening the next meeting. We are sure that the Governments of these Powers will inform M. Loudon of the progress of the negotiations in order that he may take a decision with a full knowledge of the facts.

I should like to record the Commission's desire that its work should be resumed at as early a date as possible.


The PRESIDENT. - We now come to the last item of our agenda: "The Progress of the Work of the Committee on Arbitration and Security." Since our last meeting, the Committee on Arbitration and Security has held a third session at Geneva from June 27th to July 4th, 1928. It drew up six Model Conventions for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes, namely, three Model General Conventions (A, B and C) and three Model Bilateral Conventions (a, b and c). As regards non-aggression and mutual assistance, the Committee adopted three Model Treaties, namely, a Model Collective Treaty of Non-Aggression and Mutual Assistance, a Model Collective Treaty of Non-Aggression, and a Model Bilateral Treaty of Non-Aggression. Lastly, it adopted a Model Treaty to strengthen the means for preventing war, a draft Resolution regarding Articles 10, 11 and 16 of the Covenant
and a draft Resolution to facilitate the accession of States to the Optional Clause of the Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice.

The results of the work of the Committee on Arbitration and Security were submitted to the ninth session of the Assembly, which, after making certain changes, adopted a number of resolutions relating to the submission and recommendation of these models and also to the good offices of the Council in this matter. The most important of the changes made by the Assembly was the amalgamation of the three Model General Conventions for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes (A, B and C) into a single General Act, to which States might adhere either as a whole or in part, such accession being made either unconditional or subject to certain reservations.

The Committee on Arbitration and Security, which was set up at our fourth session, has thus achieved a first very important and substantial result, having regard to the fact that the resolutions of the last Assembly placed at the disposal of the States a whole series of instruments capable of consolidating their mutual pacific relations. This result is particularly noteworthy, because the Model Treaties drawn up by the Committee on Arbitration and Security will serve admirably to complete the Anti-War Pact signed at Paris on August 27th, 1928.

The Commission will, I am sure, join me in addressing our sincere congratulations to the Committee on Arbitration and Security for the useful and fruitful work it has done up to the present under the enlightened and able presidency of M. Beneš, Foreign Minister of the Czechoslovak Republic.

The Committee will also be glad to note that the resolutions of the last Assembly relating to the work of the Committee on Arbitration and Security have already given rise to action on the part of a number of Governments and that this action is constantly developing. Certain countries have already announced their intention of acceding to the General Act, others have already concluded, or are now negotiating, bilateral treaties based on the models prepared by the Committee on Arbitration and Security.

The results obtained through the work of that Committee show that the solution of the problem of security is making substantial progress. The work of the Committee on Arbitration and Security meets a very real need. It has helped forward the accession of Governments to the General Act and the application of the Model Treaties drawn up by the Committee. We must now leave the time factor to do its work. We shall decide at a later date whether a fresh meeting of the Committee on Arbitration and Security is to be held and in what conditions it will continue the work entrusted to it.

I am sure that I am interpreting the feelings of the whole Commission in expressing to M. Beneš, the Chairman of the Committee on Arbitration and Security, our complete satisfaction with the work done by the Committee.

Baron Rolin Jaequemyns (Belgium). — Following on our President's survey of the work of the Committee on Arbitration and Security, I am glad to be able to inform you, on behalf of the Belgian Government, that the Belgian Senate and Chamber of Representatives have approved a Government Bill authorising the Government to accede to the General Act of September 26th last for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes. In these circumstances the notification of the Belgian Government's accession is only a matter of days. I think that this notification will therefore be the first to reach the Secretariat.

On behalf of our delegation, I venture to express the hope that this first accession will be followed by many others.

I think it is worth mentioning, moreover, that this accession will be subject only to the reservation provided in Article 39, Paragraph 2a), of the General Act, which excludes disputes arising before accession. In this connection, it should be pointed out that several members of the Belgian Parliament have expressed the opinion that this reservation might be omitted in the future.

I should add that Belgium's accession applies to the obligations of the General Act in their widest sense; that is to say, her accession implies an obligation to submit to the Permanent Court of International Justice, after previous optional recourse to conciliation, and other disputes to the procedure of conciliation, or, should conciliation fail, settlement by arbitration.

I am extremely glad to be able to furnish this information to a meeting presided over by M. Politis, the distinguished Rapporteur to the Assembly for the draft of the General Act. M. Politis devoted all his legal skill and diplomatic experience to the preparation of this document.

The President. — I heartily congratulate the Belgian Government on the good example it has given in the matter of international goodwill and the organisation of peace.

I thank Baron Rolin Jaequemyns for his very kind remarks concerning myself, and venture to question him on one point: did I understand that the accession of the Belgian Government referred to all the chapters of the General Act?

Baron Rolin Jaequemyns (Belgium). — That is so. The General Act included three models, A, B, and C, printed in a single document. Belgium has acceded to the whole Act.

M. Markovitch (Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes). — I wish to associate myself with the President's praise of the work of the Committee on Arbitration and Security. But...
I would ask for one explanation: does the fact of our noting the results obtained by the Committee on Arbitration and Security mean that we shall not, in the second part of our session, consider these results in greater detail, and that this question will not be included in the agenda?

I should observe that our delegation regards this as a very important question, inseparable from that of the reduction of armaments. If the Bureau does not intend to include this question in the agenda, I shall ask permission to make new proposals, if necessary, at our next session, particularly as regards the question of international and national security.

Also I did not clearly understand our President's last observation concerning the possible convening of a new session of the Committee on Arbitration and Security. I should be glad if he would give some further explanation on this point.

The President. — In stating that we would decide later concerning a new meeting of the Committee on Arbitration and Security, and the conditions in which the Committee should continue its work, I meant that this question of security would be included in the agenda of the second part of this session, in order that the Preparatory Commission might, by an exchange of views, indicate a line of conduct, and make it possible for the Chairman of the Committee on Arbitration and Security to convene the Committee in good time.

M. Westman (Sweden). — I desire to inform the Commission that the two Chambers of the Swedish Parliament have also approved Sweden's accession to the General Act. I hope that the formalities of Sweden's accession will be completed within the next few days.

M. Massigli (France). — I am not in so happy a position as my Belgian and Swedish colleagues, but I cannot nevertheless state that the French Parliament has had before it, since March 1st last, a Bill for France's accession to the three chapters of the General Act, subject only to the reservations provided in Article 39.

The President. — The Commission notes with great satisfaction the declarations which have just been made. It is now certain that before long the General Act will come into force, since only two accessions are necessary for this purpose.

As no other delegation wishes to speak on this item of the agenda, I declare the discussion on this question closed.

73. Closure of the First Part of the Sixth Session.

The President. — Gentlemen, on pronouncing the closure of the first part of this sixth session, I wish to express my great regret at being obliged to take the place of our revered President, M. Loudon.

You know that he is suffering from a serious attack of influenza, mainly the result of his self-sacrificing disregard of fatigue in carrying out his duties. Fortunately, the illness is following a normal course and there has even been a slight improvement. I know that from his sick-bed M. Loudon has attentively followed all that we have been doing in his absence. He has asked me to tell you how much he regrets his enforced absence during these last few days. I am sure you will all wish me to express on your behalf our sympathy and hopes for his speedy recovery.

In opening this session, M. Loudon definitely expressed his opinion that the moment had not yet come to draw up at a second reading the whole text of our draft Convention. He said that the Commission could only come to an agreement when the Powers concerned had themselves attained some measure of harmony on a number of questions of capital importance which had, up to then, been left in suspense. But he added — and he was thinking mainly of the problem of the limitation and reduction of naval armaments — that the Commission might perhaps discover a means whereby the longed-for settlement of these questions might be expedited.

In the atmosphere of scepticism which predominated at the beginning of this session, some may have thought that this hope was merely expressed as a polite formality. Happily, events have proved that M. Loudon's forecast was the right one. We are able to say to-day that we are much nearer than we were three weeks ago to the solution of the great problems on which the first International Convention for the Limitation and Reduction of Armaments depends.

This was the impression we immediately gathered on hearing the authoritative statements made in this Commission by the honourable delegates of the British Empire and the United States of America, respectively.

On April 19th, after referring to the Treaty of Washington, under which the leading Naval Powers greatly reduced and limited their naval armaments, Lord Cushendun declared that, if the other difficulties connected with naval disarmament had not yet been overcome, there was no doubt that they could be overcome in the near future.

Three days later, the distinguished representative of the United States of America made certain suggestions regarding our programme generally and the naval problem in particular, which were regarded by the representatives of the other Naval Powers as an important step towards the reopening of negotiations for the settlement of this problem. It was generally recognised that Mr. Gibson's declarations were of so far-reaching a nature that they must inevitably exert a very profound and happy influence on the whole situation.
This has, in fact, been the case. The spirit of confidence and conciliation has thus been vastly increased; many positions which were strongly defended at the first reading have been either modified or abandoned altogether and mutual concessions on various points of great importance have been made.

The Commission has thus been able to approach and solve a certain number of problems. After confirming the prohibition of chemical and bacteriological warfare, it proceeded to discuss the difficult and complex question of the limitation of land and air armaments, and in this connection it has adopted a whole series of texts at the second reading (Annex 11). It was unable to do more in this direction because several questions are, to a certain extent, connected with other questions left outstanding. For the same reason, the Commission has just decided that it would be better not to proceed further with the second reading of the draft Convention at the moment, but to adjourn it to a later date to be fixed by M. Loudon, its President.

The Commission has expressed the hope that the great Naval Powers will facilitate our President's task by keeping him informed of the progress of their negotiations, and it trusts that the next meeting, which will be the last before the convening of the Conference, will take place as soon as possible.

If we merely confined our attention to the actual text adopted at the second reading, I think that we should obtain a very inadequate idea of the value of the work accomplished. We must also take into account the discussions which have taken place, in the course of which certain points were very fully examined, and also the atmosphere which they have helped to create. Several of the proposals discussed were of a far-reaching character or were inspired by the highest ideals. They were not accepted by the Commission because most of the delegations considered that they could not be put into practice. Nevertheless, these proposals will be annexed to the final report on our work and it will be possible to re-examine them at the Conference. Moreover, the discussions regarding these suggestions have enabled many delegations to state the points of view of their Governments and have placed public opinion in a position to judge of the merits of the case. Even where no texts have resulted from those discussions, they have, nevertheless, thrown very valuable light on the currents of thought in various countries and on the present possibilities of solving the important problems in regard to which they are divided. The importance of this result can hardly be denied.

The chief impression which we shall carry away with us is that the question of the limitation and reduction of armaments has now ripened, both in the minds of peoples and of Governments. In my opinion, what has done more than anything else to accelerate progress has been the conclusion of the Paris Pact under which signatory States have renounced war as an instrument of national policy. This great instrument, by depriving war of its former legality and thereby making it more difficult, has shown the people of all nations that armaments are now of less importance than ever before. It has initiated a new conception of international relations in accordance with which it is no longer possible to contemplate excessive armaments.

If national security is not yet sufficient to make it possible to effect a very large reduction of armaments, nevertheless, after the League Covenant, after the various regional agreements, after the extensive system of treaties of conciliation, arbitration and judicial settlement, the Paris Pact has now introduced a new element, the value of which is enhanced by the fact that it can be added to later, while it also makes it possible for the first step towards the goal of disarmament to be taken immediately.

Whatever may be the scope of this first stage, it will assuredly constitute a very important advance. Bilateral or collective agreements providing for the general or particular limitation of armaments are already in existence, but our Convention will possess one essential characteristic which has never been obtained before, and that is, by reason of its scope and of the number of contracting States, it will be both general and universal.

For the first time in the history of the world, the problem of national armaments will have changed its character. It has hitherto been, and still is, an essentially domestic concern — a matter coming exclusively under the sovereign rights of each State. Henceforth it will become an international question, governed by laws which the States will have freely accepted.

The most vital thing is that we should enter on this path and take the first steps. The later stages will then prove infinitely easier. Let us never forget, gentlemen, the great truth contained in the old Greek proverb that the half is the beginning of the whole.

Lord CUSHENDUN (British Empire). — Mr. President, I am sure that the members of the Commission, one and all, will thoroughly endorse the words which you have so eloquently expressed with regard to M. Loudon, and that they will be anxious to convey to him their warm sympathy and earnest hope for his speedy recovery.

But there is one word which I must say. While it was a great misfortune to the Commission that the President should be struck down by illness in the middle of his labours, we may congratulate ourselves upon such an admirable substitute having been at hand. At a moment's notice, M. Politis assumed the difficult and exacting post of President. He has shown courtesy, patience, and a rigid efficiency in the regulation of our debates; therefore, while we send our sympathy to our President, we should couple with it our warm thanks to M. Politis for his admirable substitution and for the way in which he has conducted our business.

General de MARINIS (Italy). — The Italian delegation desires to associate itself whole-heartedly with the wishes just expressed for the rapid recovery of M. Loudon, our distinguished President, and with all that has been said in regard to M. Politis, who, in the office which he now occupies, has given the Commission further proof of the great interest which he takes
in the progress of our work, and of his customary lucidity, which he has displayed in presiding over it.

General van Tuinen (Netherlands). — I desire to express to M. Politis and the Commission the deep gratitude of the Netherlands delegation for the very cordial terms in which they have referred to M. Loudon. I feel sure that the kind wishes expressed for M. Loudon’s recovery will be deeply appreciated by M. and Mme. Loudon.

The President. — I desire to express my cordial thanks to the honourable delegate of the British Empire and to the honourable delegate of the Kingdom of Italy for the kind words which they have been good enough to use in regard to myself. I accept their compliments with modesty because the spirit of conciliation exhibited by the members of the Commission, when I was called upon to preside over its labours, greatly facilitated my task.

It is also my agreeable duty to state that my task as President of this Commission was greatly facilitated — as is always the case with Committees convened by the League of Nations — by the zeal and efficiency displayed by the Secretariat. In this connection our special thanks are due to the Director of the Disarmament Section. (Applause). It is to them that the success of our work is due, and I should like to assure them that we have the greatest pleasure in co-operating with them.

I declare the first part of the sixth session closed.

(The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.)
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LETTER FROM M. LITVINOFF TO M. LOUDON.

August 20th, 1928.

After the fifth session of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference had rejected the proposals of the Soviet delegation concerning general and total disarmament, the Soviet delegation submitted a draft Convention for partial disarmament. The Preparatory Commission, without assigning any reason, decided by a majority to adjourn consideration of this draft Convention until the next session of the Preparatory Commission. The date of the next session was not, however, fixed, but a resolution adopted by the Preparatory Commission expressed the hope that the “new session would be held at the earliest opportune date and, if possible, before the next session of the Assembly”. Although the Soviet delegation protested strongly against so vague a wording, and although in its anxiety to accelerate the work of real disarmament as much as possible it proposed at first to continue the meetings of the fifth session and, afterwards, to fix a definite date for the next session, the Soviet delegation, finding itself in a minority, did not succeed in obtaining satisfaction; it only remained for it therefore to await the notice convening the Commission in conformity with the decisions taken.

Since the fifth session, five months have elapsed, which is by no means a short time. During this period, events have occurred which continue to show how great is the danger of peace being disturbed, in Europe, the Far East, or in other parts of the world. Moreover, although the Assembly of the League of Nations is to meet on September 3rd, the Soviet delegation — probably like other members of the Commission — has not hitherto, to its profound regret, received any information concerning the convening of the next session of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference. All this is obviously at variance with the solemn statements made on the subject of disarmament by the authorised representatives of the Powers, and, in particular, those statements made at the meetings of the Commission itself.

One of the reasons given for the premature closing of the fifth session of the Preparatory Commission and the indefinite adjournment of the date of the next session was that serious disagreements on the subject of disarmament existed between two Powers and that it was thought necessary to wait until the negotiations begun between these Powers were satisfactorily concluded. The Foreign Minister of one of these great Powers — I mean Sir Austen Chamberlain, of Great Britain — recently declared officially and in public that agreement on the questions in dispute had been reached. Without entering into the substance of the agreement — that is to say, from the point of view of the present interests of peace — it should be pointed out that the mere fact that agreement has been reached disposes of the reason referred to for adjourning the work of the Commission.

Further, it should be pointed out that most of the delegations attending the fifth session of the Preparatory Commission were doubtless influenced by the proposal of the United States of America to outlaw war. This proposal was even opposed to that of the Soviet delegation for total disarmament, as being a means ostensibly more effective for safeguarding peace, creating security and enabling disarmament to be achieved. There is no need in the present letter to dwell on the significance, as a means of genuinely guaranteeing general peace, of what is known as the Kellogg Pact in its present form and with its accompanying amendments. But the public statements of the promoters of the Pact themselves should, in any case, be kept in mind; they declare that the Pact and disarmament are not in any way correlated, and accordingly there is also no correlation between the Pact and the question of security. These statements of the originators of the Pact in any case confirm the fact that the signature of this document can in no way solve the problems connected with disarmament, which, in reality, would in itself be capable of offering an effective guarantee of peace and security.

I would recommend the above suggestions to your attention and, in view of the formal decision taken at the fifth session of the Preparatory Commission, I venture, as a member of that body, to request you, Mr. President, to acquaint me with the reasons which made it impossible to summon the Preparatory Commission in accordance with the above-mentioned decision, before the approaching meeting of the Assembly of the League, and to indicate the obstacles at present in the way of the speedy convening of the Commission and the date on which it is proposed to convene it.

On more than one occasion the Soviet delegation expressed doubts in the Commission itself as to the possibility of obtaining any tangible results whatever in the matter of disarmament by working on the lines selected by the Preparatory Commission and employing the methods hitherto adopted by the latter. The Soviet delegation still entertains these doubts, which