Colonel RIAZI (Persia) said that, as the General Commission had decided to deal with European armaments in the first place, his delegation had thought it wiser to abstain from voting on the question of the military status of the European continent until the Conference examined that of the status of the other continents.

Accordingly, the Persian delegation would have preferred not to take part in the present discussion on pre-military training and the criteria relating thereto, but the questions had been framed rather vaguely, so that it was impossible to form a judgment unless it was known whether the present or the future was under discussion.

As regards the future, the Persian delegation believed that, when a country had accepted the status for its armaments determined by the Disarmament Convention, both in regard to stocks and in regard to effectives, it would be bound to refrain from taking any action whatsoever in regard to the development of military training, except in the case of such contingents as were authorised for it. Any breach of that rule would naturally arouse legitimate anxiety in the neighbouring countries and would finally lead either to the cancellation of the engagements undertaken or to clandestine re-armament. It would be the Permanent Disarmament Commission's duty to watch over the strict fulfilment by all countries of those undertakings.

This, of course, did not mean that a country should not watch over the physical or intellectual improvement of its citizens, and it was the development of this physical or moral culture which should serve as a basis for fixing the criterion for the period of military training, if such training were really adjusted in the direction of national defence to the exclusion of any idea of aggression.

As the Swiss militia had been taken as the example of a defensive army, he would like to state that the minimum period of training in that army was based precisely on the fact that every soldier had a certain degree of education at the time of his arrival at the barracks and that he continued his military training after his discharge. In Persia, this desire not to keep a man under arms, except for the limited period necessary for making a useful soldier, had been embodied in the recruiting law, under which the period of active service to be undergone by men possessing a high standard of education was one year, that for men with an average education eighteen months, and that for the masses who had had only little instruction or whose education left much to be desired, two years.

The Persian delegation thought that, for the other countries, it would be preferable, in order to take pre-military education into account, to vary the period of service with the colours according to whether the man concerned possessed a high standard of education or was one whose physical and intellectual education needed to be developed.

He had no need to cite many instances in support of his argument. While a man of average education learned how to serve a gun in a few months, an engineer would learn the same thing in a far shorter period. If the first could become a good gunner at the end of a year or two, the second could become a good artillery officer in a shorter time.

In conclusion, the Persian delegation considered that education itself was a form of pre-military instruction and that a soldier's period with the colours should vary in inverse ratio to his degree of education.

The PRESIDENT said that the Persian representative's statement would be forwarded to the Committee on Effectives for its consideration when it met to deal with the whole question.

In reply to M. di Soragna's request for a definition of pre-military training, the President suggested that one definition might be compulsory military training given to young men before incorporation in the army.

M. DI SORAGNA (Italy) did not think he could accept this formula, as it contained the word "compulsory". In speaking of pre-military training, or of any other subject with which the Conference had to deal, the idea of legal compulsion must be avoided. The Italian delegation wanted disarmament to be effective, to apply, not simply to what was provided by law, but also to what was done apart from the law.

If a country in which pre-military training was not compulsory but was, for example, undertaken either voluntarily or because social conventions induced them to do by 100,000 young men, were compared with a country in which pre-military training was compulsory and was received by a similar number of young men because it was imposed on them by law, it would be seen that in practice there was no difference between the two countries.

The idea of compulsion should therefore not enter into the definition of pre-military training. That was why the Italian delegation proposed the following definition:

"Pre-military training is compulsory, voluntary, or any other training of young men who have not reached the age of recruitment or voluntary enlistment in the armed forces of a State, for the purpose of subjecting them to a first rudimentary preparation of an essentially moral, physical and athletic character, with a view to predisposing them physically and mentally to military service."
That definition would show the General Commission exactly why the Italian delegation would reply in the negative to the question under discussion. The General Commission was at present studying military training, but it was obvious from the very fact that question 2 dealt with pre-military training that it was not a question of military training properly so-called. If the Commission began to consider in what conditions a civilian arrived at the barracks, there would be no end to its discussions. M. di Soragna would refer here to the observations of the Persian delegate. It was necessary to ascertain whether an engineer was steady and in good health, what was the state of his moral, what education he had received, and whether he was a good walker. So many considerations would arise that there would be no end to the discussion.

In conclusion, M. di Soragna stated that the Italian delegation would vote in the negative on the question whether pre-military training should be reckoned in the period of training.

M. Pierre Cot (France) hoped, by explaining his idea more clearly, and accepting part of M. di Soragna’s definition, to induce the Italian delegation to change its mind.

He would explain his idea by saying that he, like the Italian delegate, agreed with the Persian delegate. Indeed, as the latter had said, the time required to make a man fit for effective military service, fit to fight and mobilisable must certainly vary according to the training he had previously received. Generally speaking, that was true; that was to say, when general training, the general intellectual training, of the man was concerned. In particular, it was true that an engineer could perhaps be turned into a gunner more quickly than a peasant—though M. Pierre Cot was not altogether sure—but the proposition was equally true from the special point of view, and it was there that the French delegate desired to draw a distinction.

It was true from the general point of view, which meant that there were circumstances peculiar to each State that the Conference must take into account when saying that a particular State might introduce a longer or shorter period of military service. It was certain that the States which, in view of their historic development, were at the same stage of evolution could adopt identical military service, while the countries that had their future before them—and for that very reason had possibly a shorter past—the countries in which there were still a considerable number of illiterates, would require a longer period of service. Everyone agreed on that point; but, carrying the Persian delegate’s very judicious idea further, M. Pierre Cot observed that there was also that training which was no longer general but specifically military in character that might equally well be given to the peasant, the worker or the engineer. It was that training with which the Commission must now concern itself. It was, indeed, quite certain that a peasant, a worker, or an engineer would arrive at the barracks in such a psychological and intellectual condition that a longer or shorter period, according to his general education, would be required to turn him into a mobilisable man. But it was also quite certain—and M. Pierre Cot thought no one would deny it—that if this man, whether peasant, worker or engineer, had received, in addition to his general education, that special training represented by military training, if he had already taken part in military drill, he would have an additional training that would enable a specific country to save one or more months of effective service.

If, as the French delegate believed, the Italian delegate accepted the principle, it only remained for M. Pierre Cot to admit that he had probably been wrong to define pre-military training as training given compulsorily or provided by law. He was therefore prepared to make a concession and to adopt the following definition:

“By pre-military training is understood all training, including specifically military exercises, whether voluntary or compulsory, given to young men of at least 18 years of age, before their incorporation in the armed forces.”

No one could object to that definition, which simply laid down a primary truth. To allay the apprehensions of the Persian delegate and of all who shared them, M. Pierre Cot repeated that, if a country with a certain proportion of engineers, peasants and workers added military training properly so-called to these special conditions arising out of its intellectual development or its stage of advancement in the campaign against illiteracy, this must be taken into account. If, as the French delegate believed, the Italian delegate accepted the principle, it only remained for M. Pierre Cot to admit that he had probably been wrong to define pre-military training as training given compulsorily or provided by law. He was therefore prepared to make a concession and to adopt the following definition:

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To enable the Commission to grasp his idea, the French delegate assumed, by way of example, that, in a specific country, pre-military training was given by voluntary associations. He agreed on this point with the Italian delegate, and accepted with great satisfaction the very sound view that, if the Commission desired to succeed, it must deal not only with the legal but also with the de facto situation. There was no doubt that, if the young men of 18 to 21 years of age belonging a country that gave specifically pre-military training were incorporated in the class after receiving such training for three years, the position of that country would be such that it could not be compared with countries that did not employ the same system.

That was why M. Pierre Cot asked that the Committee on Effectives should continue this study. That Committee consisted of experts who might examine the problem, provided they did not prolong the discussion too much. He also asked the Commission to accept his definition, because it actually applied to all States, to France as to the other countries.
In proposing this new definition, M. Pierre Cot thought he had shown a spirit of conciliation. He had taken a step towards the Italian delegation, and was sure that, in return, it would take a step towards him, so that the Commission could at last record one of those unanimous votes that witnessed to the joint efforts of its members and to their desire to co-operate fully.

M. Motta (Switzerland) said that the Swiss delegation was always very glad when asked to give its support to any suggestion for conciliation. A few days previously, after an intricate and difficult discussion, the Swiss delegation had very gladly seconded a proposal from the Italian delegation which it had regarded as a conciliatory gesture, although it had realised that it would probably be in a minority.

The present position was appreciably different. M. Motta gladly admitted that. When examining the questionnaire, the Swiss delegation had come to the conclusion that, before pronouncing on paragraph (a), it would perhaps be wise to have an explanation of paragraph (b); that was to say, before saying whether, yes or no, pre-military training could be included in the period of service, it was necessary to have definite knowledge as to what pre-military training was, its nature and its limits.

He had noted with very great pleasure that from the beginning of the present meeting the French delegate had made a gesture with the object of outlining a definition which M. Motta would term provisional. M. Pierre Cot had not, indeed, claimed that he was laying down a final definition for this word or these words. M. Motta had thought that the provisional definition thus given, which laid the emphasis on compulsion on the one hand, and on age on the other hand, might perhaps give rise to some hesitation. He had not therefore been surprised that the Italian delegation had immediately raised the question of compulsion and had very properly said: "We must not have regard to legal compulsion; the point to be considered is, What are the facts in any given country? If the de facto situation in such and such a country is that it desires to have extensive pre-military training, that country must be handled according to the same criteria as another where pre-military service is compulsory by law."

M. Motta had therefore been very glad when M. Pierre Cot had consented to make a concession to the Italian delegation. He might say very humbly that, from the territorial point of view, Switzerland already served as a sort of connecting link between France and Italy. He would be extremely happy if, unanimity on this question at any rate having at last been achieved at the present meeting, the French delegation's proposal could be adopted. Although he had fully appreciated the various objections and had even formulated them in his own mind, he must nevertheless admit that in the matter of pre-military training—that was to say, training given to young men capable of being incorporated in the army and practised on a wide and general scale, including the handling of arms—and on the assumption, for that was the fundamental assumption upon which the discussion was based, that the types of army would be standardised—there was really no good reason for not regarding pre-military training, thus defined, as forming part of military service, and to a certain extent it would be proper that such training should be regarded by the Committee on Effectives, which would be asked for a definition, as being included in the period of service.

The General Commission was not attempting to lay down final definitions. That was not its task or function. It had to define certain ideas in a general way. M. Motta hoped that the Committee on Effectives, which was not only a committee of experts but also a body in which technical considerations must be blended with a potent dose of political considerations—and he laid particular stress on that point—would at last find a formula that would give general satisfaction.

M. di Soragna (Italy) thanked M. Pierre Cot for the goodwill he had shown and for the spirit in which he had submitted a new text. M. di Soragna was, of course, actuated by an earnest desire to find a formula acceptable to both delegations.

This formula was of very great importance, because it would contain a principle that would govern the Conference's entire work. He was somewhat embarrassed in pronouncing on a formula at once, on account of the difficulty of the subject. There were, for instance, forms of exercise which were specifically military, such as route-marching, certain movements, etc., but which were in no way warlike, whereas there were others—shooting and field sports, for instance—which had nothing military about them but were very dangerous. If it adopted a formula at once, there was a risk that the Commission would brand as military certain forms of exercise that were quite harmless, and overlook others that were dangerous. The formula would have to be studied calmly in a spirit of conciliation and with the hope that a conclusion could be reached.

The questionnaire said: "(a) Should pre-military training be reckoned in the period of training? (b) What are the criteria of such pre-military training?"

As M. Motta had pointed out, the cart had in this case, as in many others, been put before the horse. He thought that the Committee on Effectives, which could immediately set up a much smaller committee, might be instructed to supply the Commission with a formula. There was no question of side-tracking the issue, but only of finding something which really corresponded to the needs of the different countries. When the Commission was in possession of that formula it could vote, and, he hoped, in the affirmative. He would therefore ask that the question be held over for the moment.
The President said he certainly hoped the Commission would not accept the Italian delegate's advice. Questions could not be put off in that way. There had been a very fair discussion. The President had himself proposed a definition, which he gathered did not go far enough for the Italian delegate, and M. Pierre Cot had advanced towards him very considerably in his latest definition. It seemed, however, from M. di Soragna's last statement, that, whatever the definition, he was not at present in a position to do other than make his reservation. That was the proper position: if definitions could not vote, they should put in reservations. But to delay the matter by sending it to the Committee on Effectives after the discussion that afternoon would, in the President's opinion, be a great mistake.

He hoped the Commission would now be prepared to vote on question 2(a) in the light of the definition presented by the French delegation.

M. DI SORAGNA (Italy) would bow to the President's arguments. He could assure the President, and he hoped the latter would believe him, that the proposal he had made was not intended in any unduly dilatory sense. It was merely due to a prompting of M. di Soragna's conscience. He had been anxious to do something useful for which he could answer to everyone. As he had not been sure that he could do that at once, he had preferred to be frank and say so.

He added that it was not his intention that there should be any protracted postponement, but merely a delay of a few hours or one day which would enable the Commission to probe the position thoroughly.

M. di Soragna could not of course reply to the question in the affirmative for the moment or approve the French delegation's definition, but it must not be thought that he was in any way lacking in deference or gratitude to M. Pierre Cot for his effort to find a compromise. He would therefore abstain from voting. He hoped that it would be possible to come to an agreement in the Committee on Effectives.

The President then put questions 2(a) and (b) to the vote, together with the definition of pre-military training proposed by the French delegation.

The Commission was unanimously of opinion that question 2(a) should be answered in the affirmative.

The Commission was unanimously of opinion that the definition of pre-military training proposed by the French delegation should be referred to the Committee on Effectives together with question 2(b).

Question 3: "(a) Should military training received in any form elsewhere than in the army be reckoned in the period of training?"

"(b) What are the criteria of such military training?"

M. Pierre Cot (France) would merely say that he replied in the affirmative to this question for exactly the same reasons and while taking up exactly the same position.

He based his arguments more and more on the Italian delegate's declaration. It was necessary to take into account the actual facts. Consequently, if in one country or another specifically military training was given outside the service, M. Pierre Cot, for his part, saw no harm in that. He merely asked that it might be reckoned in the period of service. He would venture to draw a parallel with the decision taken by the Committee on Effectives in the case of reservists. When a reservist—that was to say, if he might so express himself, a man whose profession was to be a civilian and who did not carry on the profession of a soldier—came to the barracks for a certain period of days, this period was deducted from the number of days' military service. Again, if there were associations where specifically military instruction was given, it seemed that, for the same reasons, the same solution should be adopted, and in this matter, again, agreement could be most easily reached in the Committee on Effectives as regarded the details and the question what such specifically military service given outside the army actually was.

M. DI SORAGNA (Italy) said that, as he had previously held that pre-military training should not be reckoned in calculating the period of service, on the ground that it was not strictly military, it was only logical that in the present case, when genuinely military training was involved, he should consider that it should be included in the period of training. There could be no doubt on that point. As regards criteria, however, it was far easier to define military training than pre-military training, and he therefore thought that agreement would be easily found in the Committee on Effectives. Nevertheless, he would abstain from voting because, having been unable to define the one, he could not tell how the other should be defined.

The President thought the Commission might now vote on questions 3(a) and (b). The matter was simplified by the words "received in any form". That phrase seemed to him to be very wide and all-inclusive.

The Commission was unanimously of opinion that question 3(a) should be answered in the affirmative.

Question 3(b) was referred to the Committee on Effectives.
Question 4: "(a) Should the professional or long-service personnel (i.e., instructors, specialists, cadres, similar officials in military employment) be limited on common bases?

(b) What are the criteria of such personnel?"

The Commission was unanimously of opinion that question 4(a) should be answered in the affirmative.

Question 4(b) was referred to the Committee on Effectives.

Question 5: "(a) Should the efectives of police forces of a military character be limited on common bases?

(b) What are the criteria according to which a military character can be attributed to the police?

(c) Is the Commission of opinion that any excess in the efectives of police forces of a military character should be set off by an equivalent reduction of the efectives referred to in question 4 above?"

M. Pierre Cot (France) asked whether it was understood that the Commission would adopt the principle of the report prepared by the special Committee on Effectives and that the question would be referred to the Committee on Effectives for study.

M. Nadolny (Germany) desired, with regard to M. Pierre Cot’s observation, to point out that the German delegation had not been associated with the preparation of the report, and therefore could not regard it as binding upon it.

General Tanczos (Hungary) thought the report of the Committee on Effectives related to question 5(b), whereas the Commission was at present dealing with question 5(a).

Colonel Riazi (Persia) pointed out that something had just been said about dealing with the question on the basis of the report submitted by the Committee on Effectives. If that report related to the European continent, the Persian delegation had no objection, but, if it were intended to assimilate all States, Persia's situation would prevent him from adopting this point of view, as the Persian police forces were in a quite special situation, in view of the absence of communications in the interior of the country. Consequently, the Persian delegation was unable to accept the report of the Committee on Effectives.

The President said the Persian delegate could be assured that at present the Commission was trying to deal with the European continental armies.

He pointed out that, before taking a decision on question 5(b), the Commission should notice the report annexed to the list of questions.

The Commission was unanimously of opinion that question 5(a) should be answered in the affirmative.

The President said, with regard to M. Nadolny's observation on question 5(b), that, if this question were referred back to the Committee on Effectives, together with the report, he hoped the German delegation would attend the Committee and would put forward its point of view.

General Tanczos (Hungary) suggested that question 5(b), together with the report, be referred to the Committee on Effectives. He reserved the right to submit observations on the report.

General Tanczos' proposal was unanimously adopted.

The Commission was unanimously of opinion that question 5(c) should be answered in the affirmative.

Question 6: "Should the numerical limitation of efectives apply to the average daily efectives? If so:

(a) Should an absolute maximum also be fixed for the number present at any period of the year?

(b) Should the contingent under training—or in other words the number of trained reserves—also be limited?"

M. Motta (Switzerland) said that it was far from his desire to do anything that might disturb the possible unanimity of other States on question 6. He had no difficulty in stating that the Swiss delegation would reply to the first part of question 6 in the affirmative, but questions 6(a) and 6(b) compelled him to make a formal reservation, for the following reasons.

1 See annex to document Conf.D./C.G.41.

GENERAL COMMISSION 21.
The Swiss delegation had noted with satisfaction that there was a tendency in the Commission to draw near to the type of the Swiss army. M. Motta was particularly grateful to M. Pierre Cot for his observations on this matter a few days previously. At the same time, it was necessary to avoid creating any confusion involuntarily. Even if, as M. Motta himself hoped would be the case, types of armies were to some extent unified and standardised, at least in the European continent, they would still be very different from the type of the Swiss army, as Switzerland had no permanent army whatever. What distinguished the Swiss army from all others was that Switzerland had no permanent cadres of any kind whatsoever, with the sole exception of instructors, whose number was so small that there was no need to consider them or to allow for them. The Swiss officers worked at their military training, and even sometimes continued it in civilian life. They made, for their country, a sacrifice that M. Motta had always regarded as inestimable. There was nothing comparable to it, he thought, in other countries.

He would mention some of the consequences of that system. In Switzerland there were certain periods in the year when, in theory, not a single soldier was under arms. There might, in fact, be some tens or hundreds, but it could be said without distorting the truth that in theory, at certain times of the year, not a single soldier was with the colours. On the other hand, there were certain times in the year when suddenly, for purposes of military drill, relatively large numbers of soldiers were under arms—relatively, of course, because Switzerland was small and its population was not large.

If Switzerland adopted the system indicated under question 6(a), it might be unable to provide for certain training that formed part of the Swiss system and was to some extent implied in that system. The same applied to question 6(b). The constitutional and necessary basis of the very simple system adopted in Switzerland, which was the result of Swiss history and was based entirely on the idea of the citizen-soldier—the soldier who did not forget to be a citizen, the citizen who did not forget to be a soldier—was compulsory service for all Swiss who were able to serve. If the Swiss delegation unreservedly replied in the affirmative to question 6(b), a blow would be levelled at the system. A breach would be made in it, and it would be emptied of some of its contents.

In these circumstances, though it did not desire to disturb the unanimity that might exist among the other delegations, the Swiss delegation must, from the point of view M. Motta had just explained, make reservations.

M. Fotitch (Yugoslavia) wondered, in view of M. Motta's observations and the technical nature of questions 6(a) and (b), whether these two points should not be referred to the Committee on Effectives before the Commission discussed them.

General Burhardt-Bukacki (Poland) considered that questions 6(a) and (b) were of special importance and should preferably be discussed in the General Commission before being referred to the Committee on Effectives. They raised questions of principle of the greatest importance. It was true that the Swiss army constituted an exception, but it was a unique case in Europe and could not be fitted into the general framework. The General Commission must therefore decide questions 6(a) and (b) before referring them to the Committee on Effectives.

The President said that, in view of the important statements made with regard to paragraphs 6(a) and (b), he proposed to put question 6 to the vote, adjourning the discussion of paragraphs (a) and (b) to the next meeting.

The discussion on questions 6(a) and (b) was adjourned to the next meeting.

FORTY-FIRST MEETING

Held on Wednesday, March 1st, 1933, at 3 p.m.

President: The Right Honourable A. HENDERSON.


Question 6 (continuation): "(a) Should an absolute maximum be fixed for the number present at any period of the year?

(b) Should the contingent under training—or in other words the number of trained reservists—also be limited?"

General Burhardt-Bukacki (Poland) thought it essential, before a vote was taken, to define once more the position of his delegation with regard to point 6(a).

The Polish delegate did not place great importance on matters of procedure, and even thought that too much time was spent on such questions. If the majority of the Commission thought that questions relating to points 6 (a) and 6 (b) were too technical, the Polish delegate would have no objection to such a course. Nevertheless, he was anxious that his colleagues should realise the importance of the problem. His delegation might be prepared to accept a reservation on the part of a country which was in an entirely special position, as was the case with Switzerland —and it was to be hoped that none of those present would refuse such a right to a country which, in any case, could not possibly threaten the peace of the world—but, on the other hand, his delegation could not take the same line in the case of other countries. He thought that it would be a very dangerous course to make this reservation general, in view of the very serious position which would arise for neighbouring countries from the presence under the colours, at certain periods, of a large number of reservists, in some cases much in excess of the average daily effectives.

The methods for applying this principle could easily be worked out by the Committee on Effectives.

As regards point 6 (b), it would be sufficient, in the opinion of the Polish delegation, to refer to the actual terms of the French plan in submitting the matter to the Committee on Effectives.

M. Dumitresco (Roumania) said that the Roumanian delegation was in favour of fixing an absolute maximum of men present at every period of the year, that was to say, it would reply in the affirmative to the question asked in paragraph (a).

With regard to question 6 (b), the Roumanian delegation would also reply in the affirmative, in anticipation of the application of the actual provisions of the French plan whereby account would be taken of the special position of each State, of its recruiting resources, etc.

In common with other delegations, the Roumanian delegation was in favour of referring these two questions, from the technical point of view, to the Committee on Effectives. It hoped that those States which were not represented thereon might nevertheless be able to support and express their point of view on matters which were of particular interest to them.

Finally, the Roumanian delegation recognised the special position of Switzerland in regard to these two questions.

The President understood that the Polish delegation proposed to refer questions 6 (a) and (b) to the Committee on Effectives.

M. Rutgers (Netherlands) believed the Polish delegation would have no objection to an affirmative reply being given by the General Commission to these questions, before referring them to the Committee on Effectives. He himself was anxious for a decision rather than a discussion.

The President said that, in that case, M. Rutgers should put forward a definite proposal. Perhaps the Polish delegation would explain whether it desired the Commission to answer questions 6 (a) and (b) in the affirmative before sending them to the Committee on Effectives.

General Burhardt-Bukacki (Poland) said that the Polish delegation did not attach very great importance to questions of procedure. As, at the previous meeting, the first part of question 6 had been answered in the affirmative, the detailed application of the principle could perfectly well, he thought, be referred to the Committee on Effectives.

Questions 6 (a) and (b) were referred to the Committee on Effectives, in accordance with General Burhardt-Bukacki's proposal.

Question 7: "Should it be prohibited to maintain in the forces assigned for the defence of the home territory, units consisting of professional effectives or soldiers serving longer than the period fixed for the national army, apart from the specialised elements for common action?"

M. Pierre Cot (France) had asked permission to speak because this was a question of principle.

He would not like his explanations to involve the General Commission in details. It had very wisely been decided to refer all the measures of application and questions of detail to the Committee on Effectives, and his own wish was that this question, like all the others, should be decided in the same way and by the same method.

He would explain why the French delegation would reply in the affirmative to the question of principle and would ask the General Commission to follow its example.

Why had the French delegation asked for the various army systems, on the continent of Europe at any rate, to be standardised? For two reasons: first, in order to make the armies comparable and, in the second place, in order to choose, for all the European continental armies, the system which would seem most likely to favour the defence and discourage attack. If the various countries were allowed to have side by side an army standardised in accordance with the principles suggested, namely, limited effectives and short-term service, and units based on another system and consisting of professional soldiers, comparison would clearly become practically impossible.
The second reason was one which he had already mentioned in his previous remarks. The French delegation believed that, while short-term service and limited effectives were, for the reasons already explained, best suited to defensive and least suited to offensive action, the possible combination by any country of the two systems would have the effect of augmenting the drawbacks of the various military systems while eliminating the advantages.

Take, for instance, the case of a country which had both a short-term service army and an army consisting of volunteers and professional soldiers. What would be the result? Such an army, combining as it would the two systems of recruiting, would be particularly suitable for aggressive operations. The result would be to create the most formidable military system which could possibly exist; on the one hand, a professional army always ready for action, which could be secretly mobilised and unobtrusively transported without arousing general attention—which could therefore, in a night or in a few hours, put before the world a fait accompli. Current events showed how difficult it was, in face of an accomplished fact, to restore the status quo ante—he was going to say bellum—but a new expression would have to be found, since the custom was now not to declare war but merely to resort to violence.

There would therefore be, on the one hand, effectives always ready to "thump the table" as it were, to enter enemy territory and to put the nations face to face with an accomplished fact. And then, when a "shock" or a professional army had done its work, there would, on the other hand, be behind that army the trained forces supplied by the system of short-term service and the reserves, the militia or short-term reservists as the case might be which, as he had shown, were not suitable for the attack, but could occupy the conquered territory, settle in it, guard what the professional soldiers had won and so free the latter for any other duties which might be necessary.

That would be a serious matter, and he would ask delegations to reflect that the combination of these two systems would be particularly dangerous for the maintenance of peace. For that reason he would ask the General Commission to say that, in principle, short-term service armies and professional armies could not co-exist in one and the same country for the defence of one and the same territory.

As a compromise, however, he would ask the General Commission to amend the last words of question 7: "... apart from the specialised elements for common action". If that wording were kept, some of his colleagues would be justified in objecting that the General Commission had so far taken no decision, and perhaps would never take one, about these specialised elements for common action. The question had not yet been debated and was entirely in suspense. He could perfectly well understand also that, from motives of loyalty, some of his colleagues might refuse to reply to question 7 in the affirmative, precisely because such a reply might seem to imply that specialised elements were kept for common action. That was why, in his anxiety to have a clear pronouncement from the Commission on the question of principle and also to simplify the task of all its members, he would ask to replace the words: "... apart from the specialised elements from common action" by the words: "subject to any decision which may ultimately be taken regarding the specialised elements in common action". If the Commission adopted that amendment, it would reserve the whole question of specialised elements which the French delegation was not abandoning, but which had not yet been discussed or decided upon. The General Commission would then simply have to give its opinion on the question of the co-existence or non-co-existence of two armies for the defence of a single territory. To the question, thus amended with a view to conciliation and compromise, the French delegation would reply in the affirmative, trusting that the General Commission would do likewise.

The amendment proposed by M. Pierre Cot was adopted.

The Commission replied in the affirmative to question 7, as amended.

The President said he now proposed to ask the Chairman of the Committee on Effectives to convene the Committee for the following Monday, in order that it might begin its work on the first series of questions, in the light of the General Commission's replies.

81. Question of Effectives: Questionnaire drawn up by the Drafting Committee: Questions concerning Effectives in General.

The President asked M. Politis, Vice-President of the Commission and Chairman of the Drafting Committee, to explain why there was a second list of questions. 1

M. Politis (Greece), Chairman of the Drafting Committee, had already had occasion, when giving an account of the work of the Drafting Committee, 2 which had prepared the two lists, to explain why it had prepared two.

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2 See Minutes of the thirty-fifth meeting of the General Commission.
The first list was based on the French plan, and the second on the other proposals which had already been submitted to the Conference in regard to the limitation and reduction of effectives. The Drafting Committee had thought that the former list should be examined first, but that, even if the General Commission gave affirmative replies to the questions in that first list, the second would still retain its value.

That value was twofold. The first list, the examination of which had just been completed, related to the military organisation of certain countries only—countries of the continent of Europe—whereas all the countries represented at the Conference were faced with the problem of the limitation and reduction of armaments. That was one reason for the usefulness of the list which the General Commission was about to examine. There was, however, another reason—namely, that the first list related only to the organisation of armies and its objective was the uniform organisation of the armies of the continent of Europe. The second list was on a different plane. Its objective was to determine the method of calculation for reducing the effectives of the armies of the different countries.

Undoubtedly, as would be found in the course of the examination of the second list, there were certain questions in that list which no longer had any raison d'être. Thus question 6 no longer arose, because the Commission had already given an affirmative reply to question 5 of the first list. Similarly, there were other questions, which, having been accepted in principle by the General Commission, would have to be considered by the Committee on Effectives in conjunction with the replies of principle which the Commission had already given to individual questions on the first list.

The President said, with reference to M. Politis's observations, that it was very difficult for him to determine the relative importance of these questions. He therefore proposed to put each question separately, if the Commission had no objection.

Question 1: "Should a distinction be made between the effectives stationed in the home country and the effectives stationed in overseas territories?"

Tevfik Rüştü Bey (Turkey) thought it would facilitate the General Commission's task if the examination of this question were postponed until the discussion of the questionnaire regarding effectives stationed in overseas territories. If the Commission gave an affirmative reply to this question, the succeeding questions would lose their raison d'être. In the contrary case, the examination could be continued.

The proposal of the Turkish delegation was adopted.

Question 2: "Does the General Commission accept the principle of the division of effectives stationed in the home country into two components, one irreducible and one reducible?"

Mr. Wilson (United States of America) said that question 2 stated briefly the fundamental conception on which the American delegation's plan was based, namely, that each nation had the right and the duty to maintain armed forces sufficient for the maintenance of internal order, and that reduction should not apply to those forces. In other words, States should not be obliged to reduce their armed forces below the point necessary for the maintenance of order within their boundaries. Reduction should apply to that portion of the forces over and above that irreducible minimum.

In its resolution of July last, the General Commission had shown deep interest in the question, and had requested the Committee on Effectives to study it. That Committee had pursued its study and, in spite of the many criticisms levelled at its work, had made considerable progress in working out a plan. That plan might not be perfect, but the fact remained that it was the only plan for the reduction and limitation of effectives on which the Commission had been willing to go seriously to work. It would be a great pity if advantage were not taken of the progress already made, and Mr. Wilson therefore moved that question 2 be answered in the affirmative.

Mr. Wilson's proposal was adopted.

Question 3: "Is the General Commission of opinion that the proposal of a Special Committee on Effectives (annexed hereto) relating to the concrete factors on which the irreducible component depends should be adopted or amended?"

The President read the annex relating to this question, which was worded as follows:

"The Committee is of the opinion that, in order to obtain the basis of calculation, in accordance with the régime prescribed for the Powers whose forces are limited by the treaties of peace, for the strength of the irreducible component for home territories, it is necessary, in order to obtain a first approximation, to base it upon the figures of population. For this calculation, the rates may vary in an inverse ratio to the population."

1 See Minutes of the fortieth meeting of the General Commission.
The index figures thus obtained in terms of professional soldiers will be transformed in accordance with rules to be subsequently determined in order to take into account the character of forces of each country.

Corrections will subsequently be made, if necessary, empirically, in consideration of the special conditions of States in various geographic regions, by taking into account the following factors:

(a) Area;
(b) Length and nature of frontiers;
(c) Situation of vital centres in relation to frontiers.

M. NADOLNY (Germany) stated that the German delegation had taken no part in preparing this draft and had amendments to propose to it. If the General Commission decided, in view of the detailed nature of this question, to refer it to the Committee on Effectives, the German delegation would state its views before and submit its amendments to that Committee, whereas if the General Commission decided to examine the question itself, the German delegation would have to state its views immediately.

The President said the only answer he could give was that the question was at present before the General Commission.

M. NADOLNY (Germany) had understood that the General Commission could, according to the importance of the questions submitted to it, either examine those questions itself or refer them directly to the Committee on Effectives. He now submitted a proposal that this whole question should be referred to the Committee on Effectives.

Colonel RIAZI (Persia) stated that, if question 3 were discussed by the General Commission, the Persian delegation would have two amendments to submit.

In the first place, the third paragraph of the annex to that question stated that "Corrections will subsequently be made, if necessary . . ." In view of the situation of the various countries, it would be desirable to omit the words "if necessary"; in that way, the text would be clearer and the particular situation of each country could be taken into account.

In the second place, Part C of the questionnaire (document Conf.D./C.G.43), which was entitled: "Proposed instructions for the special Committee on Effectives", was drafted as follows:

"Does the Commission consider that the Special Committee on Effectives should be asked to furnish it with a table of the effectives of each country, as they would be if the principles approved by the General Commission were applied?"

The Persian delegate considered that that table should be furnished by agreement with the countries concerned. As Persia was not represented on the Committee on Effectives, he asked that the words "by agreement with the countries concerned" should be added to the text.

Mr. WILSON (United States of America) hoped M. Nadolny would allow him to disagree with the suggestion just made, for the following reasons. The Committee on Effectives had always been somewhat handicapped because the General Commission had never given it express orders as to the basis on which it should work. It had tried to carry on as best it could, but it had never been sure that its proposals would meet with the General Commission's approval.

He confessed that the annex did not give him entire satisfaction, but it was the result of a very long struggle to achieve a compromise and of many concessions. It would greatly facilitate the work of the Committee on Effectives and would make it much more efficacious if the General Commission would say: "Yes. Adopt that basis; go on with the work in that way". That would certainly not rule out amendments or discussion in the General Commission, but it would show that the latter approved of the direction in which the Committee was going. The Committee could not be sure of that unless it knew at least that the basis of population, which it considered fundamental, was approved.

With reference to the Persian delegate's suggestion to delete the words "if necessary" in the last paragraph of the annex, it would be remembered that, in the plan of the President of the United States, population was adopted as the fundamental basis for calculating the number of effectives a country was permitted to retain in its irreducible component. A great many charts—they had not been distributed, as their basis was purely arbitrary—had been drawn up in support of this view, and Mr. Wilson believed that it would prove satisfactory when the figures were available. That was the reason for the insertion of the words "if necessary". He would be among the first, if the figures were not satisfactory, to recognise that changes must be made, but he was anxious to demonstrate, in the first instance, that they would be satisfactory.

Colonel RIAZI (Persia), while recognising that population was important, pointed out that, in two given countries of the same area and population, the geographical situation played a considerable part. In view of the absence of means of communication in Persia, including railways, the Persian delegation could not agree that the only basis of calculation should be the population figure.
M. Nadolny (Germany) said that, far from intending to create difficulties, he had proposed that the question should be referred to the Committee on Effectives, with a view to accelerating the progress of the work. If the German delegation must reply to the question in the General Commission, it could only say that the proposal must be amended. However, as the discussion had begun and amendments had already been presented—inter alia, by the Persian delegation—M. Nadolny would explain the amendments proposed by the German delegation.

In conformity with the Hoover plan and the explanations of the United States delegation thereon, the irreducible component should include the armed forces which, in relation to the population figure, sufficed to maintain order within a State.

But if it were desired to make an attempt to fix this irreducible component for each State in accordance with its special conditions in a satisfactory and equitable manner, two considerations, in the sense of the fundamental conception of the Hoover plan, seemed to M. Nadolny to be of decisive importance: the density of population must be taken into account, and the number of inhabitants in the big towns must be considered in relation to the total population. The accumulation of a large mass of population in a small territory undoubtedly made it necessary to employ larger forces to maintain order than in a big territory with few inhabitants, so that the area of a State in relation to the population figure—that was to say, the density of population—was of capital importance in fixing the home component.

Consequently, a State with a large number of big towns having a very dense population needed more forces to maintain order than a State most of the population of which lived in the country or in small towns, or, again, than a State the development of which had not led to the accumulation of large masses of population in the big towns. There was no need to go further into these considerations, since all States were particularly anxious to maintain order in the large densely populated towns.

The German delegation was quite prepared also to study, with the necessary care, the other factors mentioned in the report of the Special Committee on Effectives. M. Nadolny was of opinion, however, that these factors did not altogether take the facts into account and thought that the two factors he had suggested were an even more positive basis of calculation than those mentioned in the report. The length and nature of frontiers, for instance, were not, in his view, of decisive importance in adapting the calculated coefficient of the component for the maintenance of internal order to the special conditions of the various States.

The German delegation therefore felt that, in adapting the calculated coefficient to the special conditions of the various States, account must be taken, in addition to the factors mentioned in the Special Committee's report—namely, area, length and nature of frontiers, situation of vital centres in relation to frontiers—of the density of population and the number of inhabitants in the large towns as compared with the population figure, or a combination of these two factors.

The German delegation proposed that the Committee on Effectives should be asked to examine the details of the application of these factors.

The President asked whether he understood correctly that M. Nadolny had withdrawn his first proposal that the matter be sent to the Committee on Effectives.

M. Nadolny (Germany) thought it would be very difficult to enter into a detailed discussion of all these points, but would be more practical to refer the question to the Committee on Effectives. Otherwise, the German delegation must reply to the question in the negative. Naturally, if the Commission immediately accepted the German amendments, M. Nadolny would have no objection. However, the discussion had in any event begun, and his first proposal that the question be referred to the Committee on Effectives was, of course, withdrawn.

Tevfik Rustü Bey (Turkey) desired to raise two points connected with the annex. In certain parts of Turkey, the population was very dense. For this reason, it was even necessary sometimes to transfer population from one area to another. In the eastern part of Turkey, near the Persian frontier, the density of the population was relatively low. In the large towns, for instance, the number of police was very considerable, and greater than elsewhere. However, even where the density of the population was low but the area great, the gendarmerie effectives were still of fundamental importance. In these circumstances, the Turkish delegation was unable to accept Mr. Wilson's point of view, and supported the Persian delegation.

Further, (b) in the last paragraph of the annex read: "length and nature of frontiers". Certain coasts, however, while not frontiers, were nevertheless of great importance from the point of view of police operations, especially with regard to smuggling. In these circumstances, the Turkish delegate proposed that (b) should read: "length and nature of frontiers and coasts".

M. Pierre Cot (France) was anxious as far as possible to give satisfaction to M. Nadolny, to the Committee on Effectives and to the General Commission as a whole.
He had been much impressed by the two arguments put forward by M. Nadolny; they contained serious considerations which could not be ignored. The best course, therefore, would be—in order to take into consideration also the remarks made by the Turkish delegate—to delete the last words of the proposal contained in the report of the Committee on Effectives, the final paragraph of which would then read as follows:

“Corrections will subsequently be made, if necessary, empirically, in consideration of the special conditions of States in various geographic regions”.

This would avoid any enumeration which might be taken as restrictive, and would make it possible to keep open all the points for discussion. It would therefore be possible to place on record—M. Pierre Cot was glad to note that the remarks of M. Nadolny referred only to this point—the agreement of the General Commission on the general principle, while M. Nadolny would, of course, still be free to express a point of view the importance of which M. Pierre Cot himself, and no doubt also all the delegations, recognised.

The French delegate hoped that the delegates of Persia and Turkey would agree to this compromise. He thought that the Persian delegate had perhaps not quite realised the scope of the text submitted to the General Commission which, in M. Pierre Cot’s opinion, gave him every satisfaction. It was clear—indeed it was stated expressly—that, when settling the irreducible component of effectives, population would not be the only factor to be borne in mind. There were other factors, and for that reason it was stated that corrections would subsequently be made, if necessary, empirically, in accordance with the special conditions of each State. The wording therefore left it open to the Persian delegate, and to all the States which M. Pierre Cot had in mind, and which were placed in special circumstances, to express their points of view to the Committee on Effectives.

The question might be raised why the words “if necessary, empirically” should be retained. The reason was that the delegations needed for their work some kind of guiding thread, some general rule, and the one which would apply to all the cases was clearly that of population. No doubt, in individual cases, the remarks which had been made by M. Nadolny, the observations contained in the report and the views of the Persian delegate must all be taken into account and, if necessary, empirically. M. Pierre Cot thought that, if the principle were admitted, the reference made therein entirely safeguarded the rights of Persia and also those of Turkey.

There was no doubt that, apart from frontiers, there were coasts which could not be frontiers and which needed policing—this was, indeed, a confirmation of the point of view which had often been defended by the French delegation and had been adopted yesterday as a general principle by the Commission, namely, that it was not possible to make an absolute distinction between police forces and armed forces in general.

If the General Commission adopted the report as far as the words “geographic regions”, it would meet the wishes of everybody and, the interests of each party thus being reserved, the matter of the special conditions, which were numerous, could be referred to the Committee on Effectives.

Colonel Riazi (Persia) thanked the French delegate for his clear explanations, which gave every satisfaction to the Persian delegation. He therefore withdrew his amendment and explained that he had regarded the word “if” in the phrase “if necessary” as expressing a certain doubt. He was now quite satisfied as this phrase was to be read as referring to the word “empirically”.

M. Nadolny (Germany) was glad to observe that M. Pierre Cot attached importance to the factors which the German delegation wished to add to the criteria for fixing the irreducible component on which a decision had already been taken.

In his view, this proposal tended to settle criteria which would allow the irreducible component to be calculated, and he thought that this had been the intention of the proposal put forward by Mr. Wilson. If the General Commission now accepted the proposal of M. Pierre Cot, the question would remain open, and it would be for the Committee on Effectives to consider the situation in each country. If this was its meaning, M. Nadolny had no objection to the proposal, and he was therefore glad to support the ideas put forward by M. Pierre Cot.

M. Bourquin (Belgium) supported the proposal of M. Pierre Cot, which in his opinion met all the requirements. All that was asked of the General Commission, and all that was essential at the moment, was that the General Commission should give to the Committee on Effectives such instructions as would enable it usefully and actively to continue its work. These instructions would remain even after the deletion of the words which M. Pierre Cot proposed to omit. There was no question at present—the text was explicit on the point—of making a restrictive enumeration. It was not stated that the only factors to be taken into consideration for correcting the application of the general rule would be the area, etc. It was stated that account must be taken of the following factors, among others. There were therefore other factors, and the Belgian delegation was convinced that this was the case. The enumeration, which was merely given for purposes of example in the present text, would not be of any particular value to the Committee on Effectives, as everybody agreed that, in addition to these three factors, there were others which had to be taken into consideration.
The Belgian delegate wished in his turn to submit a slight amendment to the amendment proposed by the French delegation. The sentence under discussion was worded as follows:

"Corrections will subsequently be made, if necessary, empirically, in consideration of the special conditions of States in different geographic regions."

M. Bourquin was not very clear as to the meaning of the words "various geographic regions". Moreover, he had noticed that the examples given—area, length and nature of frontiers, etc.—were in actual fact conditions special to the various States. He would therefore propose the following text: "... in consideration of the conditions special to the various States."

Mr. Wilson (United States of America) accepted M. Pierre Cot's amendment, and M. Bourquin's amendment thereto.

The Commission agreed that the last paragraph of the annex should read:

"Corrections will subsequently be made, if necessary, empirically, in consideration of the special conditions of the various States."

The President then put question 3 to the Commission in the following form:

"Is the General Commission of opinion that the proposals of the Special Committee on Effectives (annexed hereto) relating to the concrete factors on which the irreducible component depends should be adopted as amended?"

The Commission replied in the affirmative.

FORTY-SECOND MEETING

Held on Friday, March 3rd, 1933, at 3 p.m.

President: The Right Honourable A. Henderson.

82. DEATH OF M. ANTONIO JOSÉ RESTREPO, FIRST DELEGATE OF COLOMBIA.

The President read the following telegram from the Colombian Minister for Foreign Affairs in reply to the telegram of sympathy sent by the President on the previous day on the occasion of the death of M. Restrepo: 1

"On behalf of the Government of Colombia, I beg to thank you most cordially for your message of condolence on the regrettable death of Dr. Restrepo, member of the Disarmament Conference."

83. QUESTION OF EFFECTIVES: QUESTIONNAIRE DRAWN UP BY THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE: VOTING PROCEDURE.

M. di Soragna (Italy) recalled that the Commission had begun by voting on the different points in the questionnaire by show of hands. The President had then taken the vote simply by asking whether there were any objections. On behalf of the Italian and certain other delegations, he would ask him to be good enough to return to the first system. This was perhaps only a detail, and hitherto the voting had simply constituted an indication of the Commission's ideas, in order that the discussions in the Committee on Effectives might be limited. Nevertheless, M. di Soragna considered that these votes should give some idea as to the standpoint of certain delegations, and that, under the first system, at least some indication was given by the fact that a certain number of delegations refrained from voting or voted in the negative.

The President said he had done his best to interpret the Commission's opinion. When he had felt there was such unanimity that it would merely be waste of time to ask whether there was any opposition, he had not done so; he believed he had acted strictly in accordance with the Rules of Procedure.

1 See Minutes of the fifth meeting of the Political Commission.
No other delegation had raised the matter, either directly or indirectly; but, if there were others who desired M. di Soragna's suggestion to be followed, some arrangement could, perhaps, be made to take a vote, even when there was unanimity. If, at any time, any delegation felt that the method of ascertaining the Commission's opinion was not satisfactory, it could, of course, always demand a roll-call.

M. di Soragna (Italy) said he would be sorry if the President saw in his words any criticism whatsoever. M. di Soragna realised that the procedure followed by the President was quite legal and in accordance with the Rules of Procedure. The Italian delegation, as well as other delegations with whom M. di Soragna had had occasion to discuss the matter, though they had not asked him to speak officially on their behalf, simply thought that the first system was better adapted to the circumstances.

M. Nadolny (Germany) said he was not sufficiently familiar with parliamentary usage to judge whether the voting should be carried out in any particular manner. He did not know whether, in certain cases, his silence was considered as approval or abstention. He did not, however, attach great importance to these questions. The President had just said that, when a certain importance was attached to the vote, a request could be made for a vote by roll-call. It seemed to him that the most simple solution, one which would perhaps give satisfaction to the Italian delegate, would be to test the opposition, which had not always been done.

The President thought there was some misunderstanding on one point. After taking the affirmative vote at the previous meeting, he had repeatedly asked whether there was any opposition. As no such votes were recorded, he could only say that the decision was unanimous.

84. QUESTION OF EFFECTIVES: QUESTIONNAIRE DRAWN UP BY THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE: QUESTIONS CONCERNING EFFECTIVES IN GENERAL (continuation.)

Question 4: "Does the Commission think that the effectives of the countries whose armaments have been fixed by peace treaties should be taken as the basis for calculating the irreducible component?

Question 5: "(a) In order to establish the effectives referred to in question 4, should persons receiving military training elsewhere than in the army proper (e.g., in police forces and political formations) be added to the effectives fixed by the Peace Treaties? and (b) What are the criteria of military training?"

M. Lange (Norway) drew attention to the fact that certain delegations had asked, if not in public at least semi-officially, whether the average of the proportion of armaments fixed for certain States in the Peace Treaties would be taken as a basis, or whether a figure varying from country to country would be adopted. Everyone was aware that Germany’s proportion, for example, was much smaller than that of certain other countries. This was an important question on which the Commission should give precise instructions to the Committee on Effectives.

The President thought that, as this point was so technical, it might be wiser to leave it to the Committee on Effectives.

After an exchange of observations had taken place, M. Lange (Norway) noted that in a document discussed previously—namely, a statement by the Committee on Effectives—it had been specified that the proportion should vary from case to case, in an inverse ratio to population. He had not had this decision in mind when he spoke, and there was no longer any reason for his previous observation.

The President then asked the Commission to vote on whether question 4 should be referred to the Committee on Effectives, without any commitment on the part of the General Commission.

Twenty-one delegations voted in favour of this course and none against.

M. de Madariaga (Spain) said that he had some doubt as to the meaning of the vote just taken. Two questions had been discussed simultaneously. The first was that contained in question 4; the second was whether the average armaments fixed by treaty would be taken as a basis for calculating the irreducible component, or figures differing in inverse ratio to population. He had voted in the affirmative for the proposal that the second question should be referred to the Committee on Effectives. If, however, the vote had actually referred to the first point, he would ask that the name of his delegation be omitted from those who had voted in the affirmative. This was a political question to which the Commission itself must reply.

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2 See Annex to document Conf.D./C.G.43.
Mr. WILSON (United States of America) wondered whether M. de Madariaga’s preoccupation could not be met by putting two questions, as follows:

1. Shall the Commission reply in the affirmative to question 4?
2. Shall the point raised by M. Lange be referred to the Committee on Effectives for decision?

M. DE MADARIAGA (Spain) accepted this suggestion.

M. LANGE (Norway) observed that he had not asked for a vote, as he had withdrawn his observation, having noted that the point to which it related had already been settled by a previous vote. Other speakers had, however, raised the question.

The President asked M. de Madariaga whether he insisted on this point being put to the vote.

M. DE MADARIAGA (Spain) repeated that, in his view, this was a purely political question, which must be settled in the General Commission. He would vote against the proposal to refer it to the Committee on Effectives. Nevertheless, he insisted that it was for the General Commission to reply to question 4 in the affirmative or the negative.

M. BOURQUIN (Belgium) considered that the situation was extremely simple. One question arose, namely, question 4 of the questionnaire. M. Lange had made an observation on this matter but not a definite proposal. He had then withdrawn his observation. Consequently, there were not two questions, but one only. Should the General Commission reply in the affirmative or in the negative to question 4, or should it refer that question, without any commitment on its part, to the Committee on Effectives?

The Belgian delegate thought that there had been some misunderstanding when the vote was taken. M. Lange having made the observation just referred to, several delegations had doubtless thought the vote related to that suggestion. This had been M. Bourquin’s idea, and he had voted in favour of referring M. Lange’s point to the Committee on Effectives, to which point he had thought the vote alone referred. As to the principle underlying question 4, he would vote in the affirmative without referring the matter to the Committee on Effectives. He asked the President whether it would not be simpler to take a new vote, it being understood that only one question was before the Commission, no account being taken of M. Lange’s amendment.

Mr. WILSON (United States of America) said he was among those who had misunderstood the purpose of the original vote. He now desired to move that a vote be taken on the following question:

"Does the Committee agree to send this question to the Committee on Effectives with an affirmative response?"

M. MASSIGLI (France) said that the French delegation had just agreed that the question be referred to the Committee on Effectives. If it were now decided so to refer it after a vote had been taken, that vote should, in M. Massigli’s opinion, be subject to the decision taken on question 5, the object of which was to determine what effectives should be taken as a basis of calculation. A vote should therefore be taken on questions 4 and 5 together.

M. DE MADARIAGA (Spain) fully agreed that there was a direct connection between questions 4 and 5(a). He hoped that the French delegate would agree either that question 4 be put to the vote subject to the reply to be given to question 5(a), or that questions 4 and 5(a) be taken together, question 5(b) being referred direct to the Committee on Effectives.

M. MASSIGLI (France) approved this suggestion. Question 5(b) was purely technical, and must be settled by the Committee on Effectives.

M. FOTTITCH (Yugoslavia) was of opinion that the first vote should be maintained, the question being simply referred to the Committee on Effectives. If an affirmative reply were given immediately to question 4, the General Commission would greatly embarrass the Committee on Effectives, which would ask what effectives the Commission had had in mind: those of which the proportion had been fixed by the Treaty of Versailles, or by the Treaty of Neuilly, or, again, by the Treaty of Trianon? The proportion varied, as everyone was aware, from 2 per cent to 4.2 per cent. He therefore proposed that the question be referred to the Committee on Effectives. The latter could only settle it empirically; it would say that in one case one proportion and in another case another proportion should be applied.
Colonel RIAZI (Persia) said that, if the General Commission voted in favour of referring the question to the Committee on Effectives, it should be understood that the geographical situation of countries should be taken into consideration. Persia was not a party to the treaties, and the Persian delegation did not know on what basis effectives had been fixed for other Powers.

M. MASSIGLI (France) again urged that it would be difficult for many of the delegations to vote on question 4 unless they voted at the same time on question 5(a), these two questions being closely connected. The word "effectives" used in question 4 was defined by question 5(a). If the reply to question 5(a) were in the negative, the result would be that the basis of effectives would be that of the theoretical effectives of the treaties. In that event, many delegations—and in any case the French delegation—would be unable to vote on question 4. If the reply to question 5(a) were in the affirmative, however—namely, if it were agreed that by effectives should be understood persons receiving military training elsewhere than in the army properly so-called—the French delegation would vote in the affirmative to question 4.

M. DE MADARIAGA (Spain) suggested that, in order to settle the point raised by M. Massigli, question 5(a) might be considered as an addendum to question 4. In these circumstances, according to the Rules of Procedure, the amendment would be put to the vote before the text it was proposed to amend.

The President having asked for a formal proposal, M. MASSIGLI (France) moved that question 5(a) be regarded as an addendum to question 4.

M. TITULESCO (Roumania) supported the French proposal.

M. RUTGERS (Netherlands) noted that the Commission was at present discussing question 4, which raised the question of what should be taken as a basis of calculation of the irreducible component. This basis could be high or low. The lower it was, the further could the reduction of effectives be pushed. The higher the basis, the smaller would be the reduction in existing effectives. If question 5(a) were treated as an addendum to question 4 and the reply were in the affirmative, that would simply amount to fixing the irreducible component higher, a larger number of effectives, not in certain countries only, but in all countries, thereby escaping reduction. In these circumstances, M. Rutgers was opposed to the French amendment.

M. MASSIGLI (France) desired to reassure M. Rutgers. The reduction of armaments did not depend only on the basis adopted, but also on the coefficient of reduction applied. The whole question was whether theory or reality was being discussed. The General Commission had settled this problem on February 28th by two very clear votes.

Tevfik RÜSTÜ Bey (Turkey) considered that questions 4 and 5(a) were badly put. A country that had no treaty, like Turkey, wanted to know the coefficient of reduction. Question 5(a) was an amendment to question 4. In these circumstances, he suggested that the text be referred to the Drafting Committee, of which he was himself a member. That Committee would endeavour to put the problem more clearly.

The President asked Tevfik Rüştü Bey whether he really wished to press his suggestion. If so, he hoped it would not be carried.

Tevfik RÜSTÜ Bey (Turkey) said he would leave it to the President.

The President put to the vote M. Massigli’s motion that question 5(a) be regarded as an addendum to question 4.

Twenty-four delegations voted in favour of this motion and four against.

The President then invited the Commission to vote on whether question 4 with the addendum should be answered in the affirmative.

Twenty delegations voted in favour and none against.

The President put to the vote the proposal of M. Massigli and M. de Madariaga that question 5(b) be referred to the Committee on Effectives.

Twenty-five delegations voted in favour of and none against this proposal.

1 See Minutes of the fortieth meeting of the General Commission.
Question 6: "Is the General Commission of opinion that the report of the Special Committee on Effectives (see annex to document Conf.D./C.G.41) relating to police and similar formations should be adopted or amended?"

The President said he understood that this question was already settled by the answer to question 5(b) of the first questionnaire. Unless any opinion to the contrary was expressed, he would take it that that was the case.

Mr. Wilson (United States of America) said he did not wish to propose any amendment to this question, but thought it advisable to place one observation on record. The Commission’s work some days previously related specifically to European States, and the burning interest in this question of police and other organisations arose rather in the continent of Europe than elsewhere. Certain difficulties occurred with regard to the definition of these formations in extra-European States, as far as police were concerned, difficulties that would not, he thought, be found to be very important when they were considered in the Committee on Effectives. Mr. Wilson was bound to point out, however, that the proviso that arms other than individual were to be counted as one of the criteria of a police force would put America—and possibly a good many other extra-European States—in a very embarrassing position, because the municipal and State police were often equipped with machine-guns but had no military training. The American delegation therefore reserved the right, in the Committee on Effectives, to propose that more emphasis be laid on training and less on arms for overseas countries.

Question 6 was referred to the Committee on Effectives, in accordance with the decision taken on February 28th with regard to question 5(b) of the first questionnaire.

Question 7: “In calculating the irreducible component and establishing the existing effectives, are those effectives to be computed on the basis of average daily effectives, or must different coefficients of value be allotted to each of the various categories of personnel:

- Professional soldiers serving long terms or serving beyond the legal term;
- Conscripts;
- Recruits under instruction;
- Militiamen and reservists in course of training;
- Militiamen and reservists outside their periods of training;
- Similar officials in military employment;
- Definition of each of these categories.”

M. MASSIGLI (France) was under the impression that the question was wrongly worded. The text was as follows: “...are those effectives to be computed on the basis of average daily effectives or must different coefficients of value be allotted to each of the various categories of personnel?" The word “or” should be replaced, however, by “and”, as two different questions were involved. On the one hand, effectives were computed on the basis of the average daily effectives approved by the Preparatory Commission, and, on the other hand, account was taken in that computation of the categories fixed in accordance with a coefficient to be determined. What were those categories? The questionnaire listed six. M. Massigli did not know whether this number was justified and whether careful examination would not show that it could be reduced to four or five, but he did not desire to discuss this question in the General Commission, as it was an eminently technical problem. He therefore asked that it be referred to the Committee on Effectives and that the latter be left to fix the categories and coefficients.

M. DI SORAGNA (Italy) had intended to make almost the same observation as M. Massigli. In voting for question 7, he would be compelled to make reservations with regard to the list of categories, and particularly the fifth category. But if M. Massigli’s suggestion that this list should be regarded merely as an indication be accepted, the Committee on Effectives being left to change it, he would have nothing to add to M. Massigli’s observation.

M. Max Huber (Switzerland) said that the Swiss delegation had no objection to the proposal of M. Massigli and M. di Soragna. He desired, however, to make the following observation:

The Swiss Government had already pointed out, in its communication of October 27th, 1931, that a calculation on the basis of daily effectives did not meet the special conditions of the Swiss army, the daily effectives of which varied greatly during the year. Sometimes there were no daily effectives—for example, during December. The Swiss delegation was very well aware, however, of the difficulty of finding another generally acceptable basis of calculation, and recognised that, for most armies, the system adopted by the Preparatory Commission gave satisfaction. It also recognised that, from the practical point of view, it would be very difficult to determine the different coefficients for the categories to be set up. That was why the Swiss...
delegation would vote on the system of average daily effectives in the way it had already voted on question 6 of the first series of questions.

It considered, however, that a distinction should certainly be made between militiamen and the soldiers of a permanent army, and that it would be advisable to bear this difference in mind in applying a special regime, such as that laid down in question 8, to militia armies.

M. Lange (Norway) said that, as Norway was placed in the same situation as Switzerland in this connection, he fully concurred in M. Huber's observations.

M. Massigli (France) suggested that the last sentence should read: "Definition of such categories as are approved by the Committee on Effectives", as the General Commission was sending the list to that Committee by way of example. The latter would consider and define the categories it approved, and would fix the coefficients.

The President put question 7 to the vote as amended by M. Massigli—namely, "or" to be replaced by "and", "for instance" to be added after "categories of personnel", and the last sentence to read: "Definition of such categories as are approved by the Committee on Effectives".

The Commission decided by twenty-five votes to none to refer question 7, as amended, to the Committee on Effectives.

Question 8: "Should a special regime of limitation be provided for certain of the categories enumerated in the previous question?"

M. Max Huber (Switzerland) said that, as the General Commission was now examining question 8, the Swiss delegation would remind the Commission that it had, on June 15th of the previous year, submitted a proposal concerning the special regime of militia armies. This proposal—document Conf.D.125—was to the effect that militia armies should be subject to a regime which would take their special circumstances into account, and that the technical commissions should examine the details of this regime. This proposal was in substance identical with the contents of question 8. That was why the Swiss delegation suggested that the General Commission should reply in the affirmative to question 8 in the sense that, for certain categories enumerated in No. 7, in particular militia armies, a special regime of limitation should be provided. After that the Committee on Effectives would study ways and means.

It had been stated in the Commission more than once that, from the point of view of an essentially defensive army, the type represented by the Swiss army might be regarded as a model, some even said an ideal. The Swiss delegation thanked the delegations who had expressed this opinion—particularly, the delegates of France and the United Kingdom.

He quite understood that this type of militia organisation could not be adopted at the present time or in the near future by most armies. But the decisions regarding a short-term-service army with limited effectives were a step in that direction which the Swiss delegation warmly welcomed.

The type of militia army like the Swiss army had certain characteristics which were not to be found in other armies, they were not necessarily to be found even in short-term-service armies with limited effectives, and it was those characteristics which warranted the application of the special regime referred to in question 8.

M. Motta had already explained, at the meeting of February 28th, certain special features of the Swiss army as regards the very variable number of troops with the colours, a circumstance which had obliged Switzerland to make reservations with regard to No. 6 of the first series of questions.

He did not intend to take up the General Commission's time with an explanation of all the points, but would merely quote a passage from the statement of reasons of the Swiss proposal to which he had referred:

"The essential characteristic of a militia army, such as the Swiss army, lies in the fact that it possesses no units (companies, batteries, squadrons), formations (battalions, groups, regiments), commanding officers or staffs continuously on duty. The various units, formations and staffs are organised, but they only serve for a short period each year.

The distinctive feature of the militia army is not, then, as is frequently stated, the shortness of the period of service, but the fact that units, formations, commanding officers and staffs are not permanent.

The units not being permanent—and this is a second characteristic ensuing from the first—the training of the soldier is not carried out in the unit to which he will be posted, but at special training courses (schools for recruits) . . .

After passing through the school for recruits, the companies are dissolved and the men are assigned to the units of the army . . ."
This showed, he thought, that it was difficult, if not impossible, to compare an army like the Swiss army with a permanent army for the purpose of the calculation of effectives, and consequently for the limitation of effectives based on some definite method of calculation. Fair results would not be obtained if the same method of limitation were applied without distinction to an army of militiamen like the Swiss army—in which at certain times there was not a single man under arms—and a permanent army whose effectives were constantly or almost constantly under arms and were in any case constantly officered by a permanent staff of officers.

He requested the General Commission to be good enough to note and recognise in principle this difference by replying affirmatively to question 8 and instructing the Committee on Effectives to consider the methods by which this special regime could be applied.

The President put to the vote M. Huber's proposal that question 8 be answered in the affirmative and referred to the Committee on Effectives.

Twenty-six delegations voted in favour of this proposal and none against.

Question 9: "The reducible component will be obtained by subtracting the irreducible component from the total effectives. To establish the latter, what sort of effectives should be taken—real, budgetary, or legal effectives?"

Mr. Wilson (United States of America) thought an effort should be made to obtain reductions applicable to the actual armies in existence. The only way to do so would seem to be to take the number of soldiers actually bearing arms during the current year. With reference to legal effectives, he pointed out that a great many States had provision for normally stronger units than the Governments had been willing to make appropriations for, or their purses had been able to maintain. This question should therefore, he thought, be placed on the real basis, real effectives being taken as the basis of calculation.

Colonel Riazi (Persia) pointed out that, in the matter of real effectives, the situation of Persia was quite exceptional. Following on a change of regime, the Persian Government had dissolved all the elements of the army a few years ago. Persia had now begun to organise the army on the basis of an irreducible component. If, therefore, the Commission decided to take as a basis the actual effectives, the Persian irreducible component would be reduced to zero. Under these circumstances Persia could only accept the legal effective contemplated by the Government in its ten-year plan.

M. de Brouckère (Belgium), Chairman of the Committee on Effectives, requested the General Commission to choose one of the three systems and leave no doubt as to the system which it was desirable to follow. When the General Commission had taken a decision, the work of the Committee on Effectives would be to calculate what were the effectives of each country. That meant a great deal of work, long calculations and numerous questions which would have to be asked of each country. If the work was to be done once and for all, it might be carried through in a few months, within a reasonable time; but, if it had to be done first for real effectives, then for budgetary effectives, and finally for legal effectives, the Committee on Effectives would be involved in an enormous amount of administrative labour and its position when applying to Governments would be very difficult. Governments were already being inundated with questionnaires of every kind. On several occasions, Governments had very politely and very amicably, but very firmly, stated that replies to the Committee's questions would involve weeks of work and considerable expenditure on staff. If the Committee asked them to do this three times over, there might be some danger of their losing patience.

Without going into the substance of the question, he had ventured to say a word to show how fully he agreed with Mr. Wilson that actual effectives ought to be counted and not hoped-for effectives. He only asked the Commission, however, to select one single system, so that the Committee on Effectives might get to work as soon as possible.

M. di Soragna (Italy) thought it was unnecessary to repeat the reasons, which the Italian delegation had explained at considerable length in other Committees, for which that delegation favoured legal effectives as the basis of calculation. The Italian delegation did not at present see how it could alter its opinion, and would vote accordingly.

M. de Madariaga (Spain) had no special preference either for one system or another. The essential point was to realise, as M. de Brouckère had said, that there must be one single system, one single basis for calculations. It would really be better to ask the various delegations whether they had any definite objections against any particular system. Obviously, if one single system were to be taken as a basis, the General Commission would have to be unanimous.

In these circumstances, what would be the value of a vote? The Commission could only express its opinion as to whether a single basis was desirable—were it actual effectives, budgetary effectives or legal effectives. When once the Commission had agreed on that point, it would have to endeavour, either by conciliatory action, or by negotiations, to ascertain whether there was any basis on which unanimity could be reached.
M. MASSIGLI (France) said that M. de Brouckère and M. de Madariaga had stated the question in very clear terms. One system ought to be selected, and a decision must be taken. M. de Madariaga suggested consultation. M. Massigli did not know what result that would give, but, as in any case a vote would finally have to be taken, he desired to explain why he agreed with Mr. Wilson’s proposal.

He must say that he had hoped that his Italian colleague, who previously had taken up in this question a different position, would now have been prepared to agree to this proposal. A few days previously his Italian colleague had said—and M. Pierre Cot had entirely agreed with him—that on this point as on all others the concept of the legal obligation was entirely out of place and that disarmament must be effective. That meant that, in order that reduction should be real and substantial, it must be based on real effectives; if the starting-point of such reduction were legal effectives which, perhaps, had never existed, then disarmament would only take place on paper, and, if the starting-point were budgetary effectives, the way would be open for every sort of camouflage, mistake and confusion, whether voluntary or otherwise. The concept of actual effectives—that is to say, what actually existed—was the only solid concept which could be relied upon for purposes of disarmament.

M. de Madariaga had suggested that the question should be postponed, since it was not yet ripe for solution. Possibly he was right. But—and M. Massigli thought the Chairman of the Committee on Effectives would bear out his statement—if that Committee began to discuss the question before a definite decision had been taken in the General Commission, it would fail in its task. The Committee needed guidance on this point. Had the time come to give it such guidance, or should the Commission wait a few days longer? He did not know, and relied on the President’s wisdom in the matter. One fact, however, was certain: this political question could only be settled in the General Commission.

General TANČZOS (Hungary) shared M. de Madariaga’s view and, in that sense, supported the Italian delegation’s proposal. If total effectives were to be established, legal effectives must be taken as a basis, for those effectives seemed to be the most simple basis for accurate comparison.

M. DE MADARIAGA (Spain) wished to dispel a misunderstanding between M. Massigli and himself. He was still of the opinion that questions should be settled by the General Commission and as soon as possible. The present question should not be adjourned, nor should the vote in the General Commission be avoided. On that point, as the Commission was bound mainly by the necessity of having one single system, there would, he thought, be some difficulty in taking this decision by a majority vote. Nevertheless, if the Commission thought such a course possible, he would not raise any objection and declared in advance that he would always be with the majority.

Sir Philip SASSOON (United Kingdom) was glad M. de Madariaga had made it clear that, in his view, the point should at once be settled in the General Commission and not referred to the Committee on Effectives, or any other body. It was a question which, as M. Massigli said, could easily be settled immediately, and there was only one sound basis on which to settle it—namely, on the basis of real effectives. That was a point of view which everybody could understand and on which everybody could form an opinion, and Sir Philip Sassoon therefore hoped that that basis would be adopted.

M. TITULESCO (Roumania) said that, if the problem were to be solved immediately, he felt bound to explain his country’s views, which were the same as those of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. These three countries held that the effectives which should be taken into consideration were legal effectives. What was the difference between legal effectives and actual effectives? The difference depended upon budgetary possibilities. If a State were suffering from an economic crisis—as Roumania was at present—that was not a reason for transforming a de facto situation, due to the crisis, into a situation of law by fixing a limit which must not be exceeded. Moreover, actual effectives opened the door to false and misleading calculations which legal effectives precluded. What were legal effectives? They were shown by the number of births. That was a concrete, tangible fact. Actual effectives were those which depended on budgetary possibilities and therefore varied from year to year.

Consequently, if the Commission did not desire to adjourn the solution of the question, he stated, on behalf of the countries of the Little Entente, that their opinion was clear: they would vote for legal effectives.

General BURHARDT-BUKACKI (Poland) said that the attitude of the Polish delegation was based on the same considerations as those just expressed by the representative of the Little Entente. Poland thought that this question should be settled immediately and was in favour of legal effectives. Nevertheless, from a practical point of view, the Polish delegation believed that any practical solution reached in the Commission would not decrease the difficulties of the work of the Committee on Effectives, for, up to the present, all States had indicated the figures of their effectives on the basis of different principles, and, if the Commission now adopted a single basis, all States would have to supply additional information.
Tevfik Rüştü Bey (Turkey) said that the Turkish delegation thought that the best basis was legal effective. It had conferred with the Greek delegation, which shared this view.

On a vote being taken, sixteen delegations voted in favour of adopting real effective as the basis of calculation, none in favour of budgetary effective and seventeen in favour of legal effective.

The President then took a final vote on legal effective.

Seventeen delegations voted in favour of and eleven delegations against adopting legal effective as the basis of calculation.

Question 10: "In calculating the total effective, should account be taken of all persons receiving military training in any place or in any form whatever—e.g., in militarised police forces or similar formations, in formations organised on a military basis, and in political formations?"

The President explained that question 10 was similar to question 5(a), to which the Commission had replied in the affirmative. That reply might serve as a basis for a reply to question 10.

No objection was raised to this suggestion.

Question 11: "In calculating effective, should account be taken of persons receiving military training before their embodiment in the armed forces?"

"If so, should such persons be taken into account only from a certain age, and what age?"

The President reminded the Commission that question 11 bore a resemblance to question 3(a) of the first list of questions: "Should military training received in any form elsewhere than in the army be reckoned in the period of training?"

To question 3(a), the Commission had unanimously replied in the affirmative. Perhaps that answer should guide the Committee on Effective with regard to question 11.

Mr. Wilson (United States of America) was somewhat doubtful about the phraseology of this question. If it applied to conscript armies, it had no interest for the United States; but if, on the other hand, it had general application, it was of very decided interest, since, as framed, it might be construed to include all the boy scouts in a country.

M. Massigli (France) thought that the very reasonable apprehensions of Mr. Wilson had been satisfied by the vote on question 3(a), to which the President had referred. His impression was that the Commission had settled the question in the sense that no account should be taken of this kind of instruction until those who received it were old enough to be called up if required, or to become soldiers, that was to say, eighteen years of age.

The President pointed out, in reply to Mr. Wilson, that "pre-military training" was understood to mean "all training consisting of specifically military exercises, given either voluntarily or compulsorily to young men of at least 18 years of age". That would not, he thought, bring in the boy scouts.

Mr. Wilson (United States of America) suggested that the simplest course would be to make a reservation on this point, and to see what solution the Committee on Effective worked out.

The Commission decided to give the same answer to question 11 as to question 3(a) of the first questionnaire.

Question 12: "The reducible component being established, in what proportion should it be reduced?"

Colonel Riazi (Persia) thought that question 12 was somewhat premature, as the settlement of the reducible component and the irreducible component depended upon numerous factors.

In the opinion of the Persian delegate, nothing could be decided at the moment with regard to question 12. He pointed out, however, that the Conference was one for reduction and limitation of armaments, and therefore they should speak not merely of reduction, but also of limitation.

1 See Minutes of the fortieth meeting of the General Commission.
M. PAUL-BONCOUR (France) said that M. Massigli, who had followed closely all the work of the Committee on Effectives, had hitherto expressed the point of view held by the French delegation. The General Commission was now dealing, however, with question 12, which went far beyond the technical questions more particularly within the scope of the Committee on Effectives, and raised a political question of the first importance. It was closely connected with certain conceptions in the French plan, which it had been and still was his duty to defend before the General Commission.

M. Paul-Boncour stated frankly that it would be impossible for him at the present time to settle the coefficients of reduction before knowing the general scope of the measures of international security to be incorporated in the Convention. It was not possible to deal with question 12 until certain other questions had been settled, the first of which was the exact composition of the reducible effectives. The Commission, with a speed on which he congratulated it, had just agreed upon a certain number of points which would undoubtedly be of great assistance in making these calculations. Nevertheless, it was advisable that an exact table of the various existing forces should be drawn up, in order that it might be possible to form an opinion, to ascertain what reductions would be possible.

There was a second question which arose, precisely this question of international security, on which he hoped that some light would be shed by the discussion to be held on the following day in the Political Commission on the European Pact of Mutual Assistance. For the moment, both as regards the quantitative problem, which was now before the Commission, and the qualitative one which would be dealt with later, the French delegation, which was sincerely anxious for substantial and heavy reductions, and had with that object submitted the plan still under discussion by the Commission, reserved the right to give a definite reply in the light of the other definite replies which would be made on these various points.

Mr. WILSON (United States of America) pointed out that the plan put forward by the President of the United States proposed a 30 per cent reduction of the reducible component. Now, however, that the Commission had voted by a majority to take legal effectives as the basis, he feared that that proportion would have to be increased considerably in order to pass from paper effectives to real effectives.

M. TITULESCO (Roumania) supported, in the name of the three Governments of the Little Entente, the declaration which M. Paul-Boncour had just made in the name of France.

M. DOVGALEVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Soviet delegation had, on many occasions, taken the opportunity of expressing its opinion regarding the division of effectives into the two categories, reducible and irreducible. He did not, therefore, propose to say much on that point; he wished merely to state that his Government's point of view had undergone no change, and was still opposed to this principle.

As regards reduction itself, that was to say, the proportion in which effectives should be reduced, his Government was anxious that this reduction should be as large as possible. The Soviet delegation would therefore support any proposal on those lines.

General TANczos (Hungary) said that, having voted for the legal effectives, he was logically bound to support the declaration made by Mr. Wilson.

The President put to the vote the French proposal that no decision be taken on question 12 at the present moment.

Twenty delegations voted in favour of and three against this proposal.

M. NADOLNY (Germany) said that there was no need for him to point out that he had followed with great attention the discussion which had taken place regarding question 12. He had been glad to hear the explanations given by Mr. Wilson, General Tanczos and M. Dovgalevsky. Nevertheless, he must confess to a grave disappointment, arising from the fact that they had missed this important opportunity for at last taking, at this Disarmament Conference, a decision, in favour of a real measure of disarmament. To be perfectly frank, the truth—the very regrettable truth—appeared to be that the Conference, alongside of its anxiety to increase security agreements, was devoting itself with extreme zeal to general considerations on defensive and offensive weapons, on defensive and offensive army systems, on the dangers of civil aviation and on many other points, but was incapable, after more than a year's discussion, of deciding on action which would reduce the armies of the world by a single soldier, or its armaments by a single gun, tank, warship or military aeroplane.

It was true that figures were ostensibly at the basis of the arguments put forward by many delegations, but no figures appeared in any of the resolutions or decisions so far adopted. He wished to express his regret at this state of affairs, the result of which was that the Conference...
went further and further away from its goal, and the chances of a successful issue to its work were becoming more and more jeopardised. In this connection, he wished to refer to the first sentence in the Hoover plan of June 22nd of the past year, which ran as follows:

"The time has come when we should cut through the brush and adopt some broad and definite method of reducing the overwhelming burden of armaments which now lies upon the toilers of the world. This would be the most important world step that could be taken to expedite economic recovery."

M. Nadolny pointed out that nine months had passed since this message had been communicated to the Conference on behalf of the President of the United States, by their colleague Mr. Gibson, and the Conference had refused to accept the invitation of the President of the United States. He hoped he might be allowed to say that the delay in the achievement of any real disarmament caused him the very greatest anxiety. He had felt obliged on several recent occasions to make remarks regarding questions of procedure, but had not done this with any intention of hindering the progress of the work; he merely wished to express to the Conference the serious apprehension with which his delegation observed the Conference delaying to so serious an extent the performance of its duty, which was to bring about a real reduction in world armaments.

The President said he did not want to pass over in silence M. Nadolny’s very important, and even grave, statement; but he did not accept M. Nadolny’s interpretation of the Commission’s decision on question 12.

If he knew anything about the feelings of the delegations, there was not one of them that was not exceedingly anxious to get an agreed plan whereby there could be an international reduction of armaments, and the sooner they got that plan the more pleased would the majority of, if not all, the delegations be. But merely because the consideration of question 12 had been postponed, he could not conclude that the desire, the intention and the determination to achieve as speedily as possible an international Convention for the reduction and limitation of armaments had been abandoned.

There was, he knew, a tendency to, and a danger of, becoming a little restless and impatient. He himself was only human, and, on July 23rd last, he had quite sincerely stated that, had he thought the Conference was not going to do real business, he would not be disposed to come back to Geneva for another six months.

It was unnecessary for him to go into the question of the delays that had occurred since July 23rd. They were many and various; but he was not sure that there were many delegations who could throw the first stone and say that they were absolutely blameless.

He could say this the more freely because he had been able to observe all the Governments and the procedure, and if anyone might have been tempted to cease the untiring efforts to reach the goal for which the Conference set out on February 2nd, 1932, it might have been the President of the Conference.

But he was not going to give up in the despair by which M. Nadolny’s statement was characterised. He believed that all were working and, if he might say so, working better at present, notwithstanding the very troublesome task of answering this multiplicity of questions. It was a troublesome task, but, the sooner the Committee on Effectives could be got to work, the sooner would the point at which M. Nadolny and others were aiming be reached—namely, the discussion on material and the reductions to be made in land material especially.

As he had already said, the President was anxious that the General and Political Commissions should go forward on parallel lines: one dealing with political questions, such as non-resort to force and mutual assistance, and the other, once it had put the Committee on Effectives to work on the questionnaires now being discussed, trying to agree on those substantial reductions to which all the delegates were committed by the resolution of July 23rd, 1932.

As this statement would no doubt go to the Press, he hoped that what he had said would bring out another aspect of the case that would appeal to the general public and would encourage it not to give up in despair, but to support the Conference, as it had done since February 2nd, 1932. He believed that, before very long, the Conference would take practical decisions that would result in that substantial and comprehensive reduction of armaments to which all had agreed in the resolution of July 23rd, 1932.

M. Nadolny (Germany) wished to thank the President for his hopeful words and for the determination he had expressed to see the Conference achieve positive results. He shared wholeheartedly this wish and this determination, and hoped that, when the time came to take decisions on the subject of material, these decisions would not be such as had just been taken on point 12 of the questionnaire.

If the words of the President, and perhaps also his own words, had contributed in any way to strengthen the determination of the Conference to achieve real and positive results without delay, M. Nadolny would be only too pleased.

The continuation of the discussion was adjourned to the next meeting.

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1 See Minutes of the General Commission (Volume I), page 122.
FORTY-THIRD MEETING

Held on Monday, March 6th, 1933, at 3 p.m.

President: The Right Honourable A. HENDERSON.

85. QUESTION OF EFFECTIVES: QUESTIONNAIRE DRAWN UP BY THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE: QUESTIONS CONCERNING EFFECTIVES IN GENERAL

Question 13: "Should different coefficients have been allotted to the different categories of effectives, are the Governments left completely free to apply the necessary reduction to whatever categories they may choose—professional soldiers, conscripts, reservists, etc.—or will the categories to be reduced be specified?"

The President pointed out that, if the answer to the first part of the question was in the affirmative, the second part would fall.

The first part of this question was answered by eight delegations in the affirmative and by two in the negative.

Question 14: "In particular, should provision be made for a special reduction of trained reserves, persons required to undergo preparatory military training, or persons receiving military training elsewhere than in the armed forces?"

The President said that the Chairman of the Drafting Committee had just pointed out to him that, as the Commission had answered the first part of Question 13 in the affirmative, Question 14 was no longer necessary.

Question 15: "Should naval effectives employed in shore operations or coast defence be considered jointly with land effectives?"

The President called attention to the footnote reading:

"The special Committee on Effectives has adopted the following resolution on this subject:

"Without prejudice to a subsequent consideration of naval and air effectives in relation to naval tonnage and air material, the Committee will base its studies pertaining to effectives upon consideration of land effectives, taking into account, in its calculations, such naval effectives as are intended for use in land operations or in coast defence."

If the Commission accepted the footnote, it would thereby be providing the answer to Question 15. He would accordingly take a vote on the acceptance of the footnote to Question 15.

The Commission approved the footnote by seventeen votes to nil.

Question 16: "Should naval effectives be considered in relation to naval tonnage?"

This question was answered by fifteen delegations in the affirmative.

Question 17: "Should air effectives be considered in relation to air material?"

M. De Madariaga (Spain) said that the decision on this question must not in any way prejudge what might be done with regard to air effectives in consequence of votes taken in other commissions.

M. Nadolny (Germany) suggested that no decision be taken on this point until the Air Committee had reached a decision with regard to the principle of the total abolition of air effectives.

M. Nadolny's proposal was adopted by sixteen votes to nil.

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Question 1: "Should a distinction be made between the effectives stationed in the home country and the effectives stationed in oversea territories?" (Continuation.)

The President reminded the Commission that it had been decided to postpone this question until the last question in list A of the questionnaire had been settled.

M. Nadolny (Germany) pointed out that the German delegation had on several occasions expressed its views with regard to the treatment of overseas forces. He could only repeat, therefore, that Germany looked upon the armed forces stationed in a territory near the home country as an integral part of the home forces. He would, consequently, reply to Question 1 in the negative. He added that the German delegation approved of special treatment for colonies situated at a great distance from the home country.

M. Di Soragna (Italy) said that the Italian delegation had several times expressed its point of view on this matter. He could only associate himself, therefore, with M. Nadolny's observations.

M. de Madariaga (Spain) recalled that several days previously it had been pointed out by the Spanish delegation that this was a special question and that, at the point the Conference had reached, it was unduly prudent to continue to describe concrete problems in general terms. The time had come to define each situation by name and to try to arrive at definite solutions of these concrete problems.

To set an example of plain speaking, and to refer specifically to Morocco, M. de Madariaga would say that his delegation could certainly not agree that Spanish troops stationed in Morocco to perform definitely international functions should be treated as home forces. The Spanish delegation asked that these questions should be considered by the countries directly concerned and that, in order that the general progress of the Conference's work should not be hampered, the small group of States directly concerned in the question of colonial troops situated near the home country should meet together.

The President understood that M. de Madariaga was proposing that, instead of discussing this matter further in the General Commission the countries immediately concerned with such troops should get together and try to come to some arrangement.

Mr. Eden (United Kingdom) did not think he need add anything to what he had said previously on this subject. The United Kingdom army was virtually an overseas army; the troops stationed at home acted as a depot for those stationed abroad, and therefore his Government could not for a moment accept a short-term service which might be applicable to a Continental army. He fully appreciated that his German colleague had not asked that the United Kingdom should do that. M. Nadolny had drawn a distinction between the near-by and the distant colonies. Mr. Eden confessed that, while that was an interesting distinction, it was as yet an unintelligible one to himself. It would therefore perhaps be well to accept M. de Madariaga's suggestion for a sub-committee in which the countries interested could attempt to work out the problem to a satisfactory conclusion.

M. Sarraut (France) said the French delegation accepted the suggestion that a meeting of colonial Powers should be convened to study the questions now before the General Commission. In the meantime, M. Sarraut would explain France's position by stating that the French delegation replied in the affirmative to the first question. She considered that a distinction should be drawn between effectives intended for service in the home country, and for that purpose stationed in the home country, and effectives intended for service overseas and trained for and adapted to such special service, whether they were for the time being provisionally stationed in a particular overseas territory or not.

The French delegation pointed out that, by a vote taken on February 27th, the General Commission had specified that the transformation of short-term armies should not apply to overseas effectives, thus implicitly admitting that a distinction should be drawn between home and overseas forces. Moreover, overseas effectives did not meet the same needs as the home forces, and, if the Commission embarked upon a general discussion, the French delegation was prepared to prove it. There were, therefore, different reasons for their existence, and the same methods of reduction could not be applied to both. Each should be studied separately, as M. de Madariaga had suggested.

Moreover—and this was particularly important in the present discussion—what the Conference was seeking was a reduction in the power of aggression. But—and this, too, the French delegation was prepared to prove if a general discussion on these fundamental points were opened—whatever measures might be taken to call out and transport these land forces,

1 See Minutes of the forty-first meeting of the General Commission.
2 See Minutes of the thirty-ninth meeting of the General Commission.
troops scattered in more or less distant areas, separated by the sea and trained for overseas service, could not be utilised as rapidly as troops stationed in the home country, in Europe, and organised for home service. Such forces could not be prepared and transported secretly to the home country for the purpose of aggression. Moreover, once hostilities had broken out, there could be no possibility of using them on the European front, in view of the vulnerability of troop transports to bombing from the air, unless the sea and even the air were free.

That, moreover, was why the French memorandum did not recommend that the armies of extra-continental countries should be transformed into the standard type of short-term service army to be adopted by the nations of continental Europe. From this point of view, the overseas forces must be treated like the forces of extra-continental countries, and must for this purpose be distinguished from the home forces.

The French delegation's reply was therefore in the affirmative and it was prepared, if the matter were debated, to give any necessary explanations with regard to the considerations M. Sarraut had just summarised.

M. NADOLNY (Germany) said the German delegation had no objection to M. de Madariaga's proposal that the question be referred to a small committee of representatives of the countries concerned. He would like to know, however, which were the countries concerned. Were they the countries with overseas forces or those without overseas forces? In any event, M. Nadolny hoped Germany would be considered as interested in this question.

M. DE MADARIAGA (Spain) desired, as mover of the proposal, to reassure M. Nadolny, who was certainly sufficiently familiar with Geneva custom to know that in this case the word 'concerned' meant both those who were positively and those who were negatively concerned.

M. DI SORAGNA (Italy) said that, like M. Nadolny, he concurred in M. de Madariaga's proposal.

The PRESIDENT suggested that if M. de Madariaga's proposal were accepted, the special sub-committee should be composed as follows: Belgium, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, United States of America, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, with M. Politis, Vice-President of the General Commission, as Chairman.

M. SARRAUT (France) said the French delegation was glad that it had been proposed to set up a committee. It also welcomed Germany as a member, for France, contemplating not only the present, which was not the best way to prepare for a satisfactory and successful future, looked forward to the time when certain European nations possessing no colonies might be able to assist the colonising nations in their important task of developing immense continents like Africa, that were large enough to afford all European nations an opportunity to co-operate.

While fully approving the proposed membership of the Committee, M. Sarraut said it must be understood that the principle adopted by the General Commission on February 27th last—that was to say, that a distinction should be drawn between overseas effectives and the effectives of the home country—would be maintained.

M. NADOLNY (Germany) greatly appreciated M. Sarraut's friendly observations with regard to Germany's representation on the committee. He could assure the French delegation that the German delegation would do its utmost to give the committee positive assistance and, if possible, help it to reach a conclusion.

The proposals of M. de Madariaga and the President were adopted by twenty-six votes to nil.

86. QUESTION OF EFFECTIVES: QUESTIONNAIRE DRAWN UP BY THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE: QUESTIONS RELATING TO EFFECTIVES STATIONED IN OVERSEAS TERRITORIES. ¹

M. DE MADARIAGA (Spain) thought it would be better to refer all these questions to the Committee which had just been appointed.

The President said that M. de Madariaga's proposal was entirely in harmony with his own view.

The proposal of M. de Madariaga was adopted by twenty six votes.

87. QUESTION OF EFFECTIVES: QUESTIONNAIRE DRAWN UP BY THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE: PROPOSED INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON EFFECTIVES.

"Does the Commission consider that the Special Committee on Effectives should be asked to furnish it with a table of the effectives of each country, as they would be if the principles approved by the General Commission were applied?"

M. NADOLNY (Germany) said that the German delegation could reply to this question in the affirmative, subject to the reservation that account should be taken, in definitively fixing the effectives allowed to each State, of the national security of all States, in accordance with the principles of Article 8 of the Covenant.

Colonel RIAZI (Persia) asked that the words "in agreement with the countries concerned" be added after the words "furnish it".

M. LANGE (Norway) said that his delegation would vote "Yes" in answer to this question. He wished, however, to make a few general observations on the matter of effectives and on the relevant laws existing in the different countries.

There were two main systems of military service—universal compulsory service and voluntary service. Universal compulsory service was not a very ancient institution. It dated from the French Revolution and from the German War of Liberation in the time of Napoleon. As his colleagues were aware, this system, regarded as the application of a democratic principle in many countries, had recently been subjected to strong criticism from different quarters. In many countries, there were symptoms of a kind of spiritual revolt against this obligation. M. Lange personally must confess that he fully appreciated that revolt. He could not imagine any greater breach in the principle of the liberty of the individual and of the freedom of conscience—in addition to the fact that it was a denial of religious freedom—than the obligation on the young to come and be trained to kill their fellows.

Was there any means of mitigating the application of that principle? M. Lange was glad to be able to tell the General Commission that one existed. Certain countries had embodied it in their legislation, Norway among them, and Norway considered that she was in very good company in this respect, since Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands, along with her, possessed legislation stipulating that, for religious reasons or any other, young men might be authorised to carry out some civilian service instead of military service.

It was from motives of conscience that M. Lange had felt bound to call the attention of the various delegations to this point. He did not know whether the Committee on Effectives, when it came to study the method of limiting the annual contingent, would be able to find a formula recommending to the attention of the various countries the introduction of legislation on these lines. In any case, he was at the disposal of the Rapporteur, the Committee and its Chairman, and would submit a few copies of a short pamphlet reproducing the relevant legislative provisions existing in the four countries he had mentioned.

Mr. EDEN (United Kingdom) had no objection to the course proposed in this part of the questionnaire, but pointed out that the task which would thus fall to the Committee on Effectives was a very formidable one; it was likely to need a very considerable amount of time, and might, in certain eventualities, necessitate reference back to the Governments. Might it not therefore be wise to suggest to the Committee that when it had completed the rest of its task, it should not hold up its report in order to fulfil this rather lengthy piece of work? The Committee could submit its report to the General Commission and then continue with the necessary calculations while the Commission was studying the report.

M. DE MADARIAGA (Spain), with reference to the point raised by Mr. Eden, wished to put a question to the Chair. Was it possible to go to work on the lines suggested in this question, that was to say, if he were not mistaken, to provide the final table of effectives for each country in the form in which it would emerge from the application of the principles formulated by the General Commission—without having taken a decision concerning question 12 of the questionnaire relating to effectives in general, which read:

"The reducible component being established, in what proportion should it be reduced?"

Granted the assumption that the existing effectives were known, how could the future effectives be known unless the proportion of reduction were known? That was a small mathematical problem to which it would be useful to have a reply from the President of the General Commission before a vote was taken on the question now under discussion.

The question raised by M. Lange deserved, he thought, the General Commission's attention. It was a very old matter, far older than the laws which M. Lange had mentioned, and the latter, who was more conversant with international affairs than anyone else, knew, of course, that its modern legal origin was to be found in the writings of a Spaniard, Father Vittorio, who had...
taught at Salamanca in 1535. Father Vittorio had laid down two principles as the basis of all conscientious objection. The first was that the prince—that was to say, the State—had no right to demand that his subjects should go to war if he, the prince, and his advisers were not convinced that the war was a just one. The second was that, even if everyone believed that the war was just, but if a citizen did not share that conviction, it was not only his right but his duty not to go to war, since, in so far as he was concerned, any enemies he might kill in the war which he thought unjust would have been murdered by him.

These questions, if placed on the religious basis, would be difficult to universalise, since religion differed in modern times according to climate, race, habit and tradition. He believed, however, that a point had been reached in the universal development of law at which it would be possible to put this question also on a universal legal basis, and that the Disarmament Conference was not entitled to ignore this possibility.

In Spain, the question had been solved by embodying in the Constitution of the Republic certain conditions as to the declaration of war from which it followed that no Spanish citizen could fight in an unjust war without that war being unconstitutional. Consequently, under the Constitution, the State was not entitled to require Spaniards to fight in an unjust war, since Spain could not wage war except in the circumstances prescribed by the League Covenant and until all the procedures of Geneva had been exhausted.

There were one or two ways of carrying out these ideas. Either all the States Members of the Disarmament Conference might be asked to embody in their Constitutions laws similar to those of the Spanish Constitution, or a chapter could be included in the Constitution to prescribe that the citizens would be entitled to refuse to go to war when their country declared war in circumstances incompatible with the Covenant.

M. DE BROUCKÈRE (Belgium), Chairman of the Committee on Effectives, observed that the question under discussion was that of the terms of reference to be given to the Committee on Effectives. As Chairman of that Committee, he had a special concern in this matter, and he asked permission to indicate his opinion.

Unless he was mistaken, the effective which the Committee was to determine were not the effectives to be left to the different countries, but those they possessed at present. If that were so, it was manifest that the task incumbent upon the Committee was a heavy one, and that it would only be able to complete it by devoting much time to it. The National Defence Expenditure Commission had a very similar task. All delegates knew with what zeal it was working and it had been working for over a year. A certain number of conditions were necessary to enable the Committee on Effectives to complete its task properly. It must have clear instructions. The General Commission had, in the last few days, specified those instructions. He thought that, speaking generally, they were very clear, but, in actual fact, some doubts might perhaps arise, and he would ask to be allowed, in that event, to go to the President of the Conference and ask him to have made clear any points of detail by which the Committee was held up.

The Persian delegate had proposed an amendment to the effect that the table should be compiled in agreement with the countries concerned. M. de Brouckère would suggest the phrase "after consultation with the countries concerned", and for the following reason. The Committee's task obviously fell into two parts; in the first place the different countries would have to supply particulars, and then the Committee would have to undertake a critical study of those particulars. It was plain that if the second part of this work were suppressed, and if the Committee was required simply to act as a post office for the particulars it received, that would be a purely administrative task which might perhaps more suitably be left to the Secretariat, which was better equipped than the Committee for such work. The utility of the Committee's work resided precisely in this sort of critical examination, which would result, not in the fixing of an effective strength different from that fixed by the State itself, but in any observations which the Committee might think desirable to submit on the subject of effectives.

Finally, M. de Brouckère supported Mr. Eden's proposal. The task entrusted to the Committee on Effectives would be so long that, notwithstanding the magnitude of the General Commission's own work, it might very probably not be concluded by the time the Commission had completed its own studies. That being so, it might be advisable for the Committee on Effectives to submit, in the first place, a preliminary report in which it would reply to the various questions put to it and which might, if need be, contain any suggestions for abbreviated methods with the object of completing the determination of the various effectives with sufficient approximation to enable the work of the Conference itself to be continued.

The President asked the Persian delegate whether he would consent to alter his amendment, so as to read "after consultation with" instead of "in agreement with" the countries concerned.

Colonel Riazi (Persia) pointed out that the word "consultation" did not necessitate agreement. If the Committee on Effectives fixed an arbitrary figure and the country concerned did not agree, the question would not be settled unless that country were entitled to revert to the matter in the General Commission; but that would be impossible if the Committee were given a mandate to fix a figure.
The President said that in that case he would have to put the matter to the vote. The adoption of the wording suggested by the Persian delegate might hold up the Committee's work entirely. The Committee was empowered to hear what each country had to say, but it could not be held up by failure to reach agreement with any particular country. Such a country had the right to put in a reservation, if it wished to do so, at the right moment, but it could not be put into the position of being able to hold up the Committee's work entirely.

The amendment proposed by the Persian delegation was rejected, five delegations voting in favour and eight against.

The amendment proposed by M. de Brouckère was adopted by twenty-six votes to one.

The question as amended was answered by twenty-six delegations in the affirmative and by none in the negative.

M. de Madariaga (Spain) asked whether the Committee just appointed would sit in private or, as he would prefer, in public.

The President suggested that M. de Madariaga should prepare a motion on this question and submit it to the Committee which would settle the point itself.

FORTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held on Thursday, March 9th, 1933, at 3.30 p.m.

President: The Right Honourable A. Henderson.

88. LAND WAR MATERIAL: GENERAL DISCUSSION.

The President reminded the Commission that, at its last meeting, it had finished for the time being the discussion on effectives and had decided to send a questionnaire to the Committee on Effectives and to the special Committee on Overseas Effectives, together with the answers given by the General Commission. It had further agreed to take up at its next meeting the question of land war material.

In view of the importance of the subject, the President ventured to recall to the Commission, before it began its discussion, some of the decisions the Conference had already taken.

On April 19th, 1932, the General Commission adopted a resolution in which it declared that "the reduction of armaments as provided for in Article 8 of the Covenant of the League of Nations shall, after this Conference has taken the first decisive step of general reduction to the lowest possible level, be progressively achieved by means of successive revisions at appropriate intervals." That decision, as concerned both the first step to be taken by the present Conference and the system of subsequent reduction by successive revisions, seemed to bear directly upon the subject of land war material. So also did another resolution adopted by the General Commission on April 22nd, which stated:

"Without prejudice to other proposals which fall to be discussed under later heads of the agenda, the Conference declares its approval of the principle of qualitative disarmament—i.e., the selection of certain classes or descriptions of weapons the possession or use of which should be absolutely prohibited to all States, or internationalised by means of a general Convention."

As the Commission would remember, the application of qualitative disarmament was examined separately for land, naval and air forces, and, in the light of that examination, the General Commission adopted on July 23rd, 1932, a resolution from which it might be useful to quote the following sentences, which laid down the guiding principle for all the Commission's subsequent work:

"The Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments... Decides forthwith and unanimously, guided by the general principles underlying President Hoover's declaration:

(1) That a substantial reduction of world armaments shall be effected, to be applied by a general Convention alike to land, naval and air armaments;

(2) That a primary objective shall be to reduce the means of attack."

1 See Minutes of the General Commission, Volume I, page 81.
After this resolution was adopted on July 23rd, there followed a considerable period of time during which no progress could be made in applying these principles in actual measures of armament reduction. The reasons for that delay were familiar to the members of the Commission. They were removed by the Declaration agreed upon by the Five Powers, which was noted by the General Commission on December 14th last. 1 The President would venture to quote one paragraph from that declaration, which he thought was relevant to the subject before the Commission:

“One of the principles that should guide the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments should be the grant to Germany, and to the other Powers disarmed by Treaty, of equality of rights in a system which would provide security for all nations, and that this principle should find itself embodied in the Convention containing the conclusions of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments.”

That declaration implied that the rate of limitation of the armaments of all States should be included in the proposed disarmament Convention.

In the last few weeks, the Conference had for the first time begun the systematic and detailed examination of the various concrete problems for which it must find a practical solution. Thus, it had begun to consider the organisation of peace by effective means for preventing war. It had considered the application of qualitative disarmament to land effectives and the means by which land effectives could be reduced and limited. A special Committee was at present examining with great care the means by which military and naval aviation could be totally abolished. Similar discussions on land material were about to begin. There was no subject of greater importance with which the Conference had to deal. Indeed, the President would go so far as to say that on the result of the discussions about to begin must depend in a very definite sense the whole success of the Conference and its work. Many important proposals on this subject had been laid before the Conference; they were to be found in the French plan, the United States proposals put forward on June 22nd last year, the German and Italian proposals for qualitative disarmament, and many other proposals put forward by various delegations. Some of those proposals would, if they were adopted, go very far in securing the full application of qualitative disarmament and equality of status among the different signatories of the Convention the Conference was drafting.

The President had not referred in detail to these proposals because he wanted to confine himself to the decisions of general principle which the Conference had already taken. The resolutions to which he had referred showed how deeply the Conference was committed by its decisions to measures of real and substantial disarmament in every field. If, in one domain or another, the Conference were to fail to give effect to its own declarations, it would, he felt, most seriously stultify itself and would increase the growing anxiety that had been manifest in recent weeks both in the Press and among the general public.

When the delegations to the Conference accepted the resolutions quoted, they had been determined that the Conference should succeed. He believed that they were more than ever determined to press forward without delay and without intermission the task of reaching practical agreement. In the last resort, success or failure must depend upon the decisions which the Governments represented would take. Nothing could do so much to prove that the Governments wanted real results, nothing could so increase the confidence both of the delegations and of the public, and nothing, therefore, could so effectively prepare the way for final success as a general manifestation of goodwill in the important debate about to begin.

In conclusion, he suggested that it would be very helpful if the Commission were to occupy the present meeting with a general debate on every aspect of land war material, instead of immediately proceeding to take each point separately. There was need for a frank exchange of views on the whole question of land war material, and perhaps in another sitting the Commission would better be able to come to definite conclusions.

Mr. Eden (United Kingdom) said that earlier declarations by his delegation had made it quite clear that the United Kingdom had always been impressed with the desirability, in the interests of real disarmament, of depriving the armed forces of all countries of those heavier and more powerful weapons which the last war had brought to such perfection for the specific purpose of overcoming resistance by organised defences and thereby ensuring a success for direct attack. These more powerful weapons had been generally classified as those essential for the success of offensive warfare.

Sir John Simon, in his speech during the opening discussion of the Conference, had been the first to suggest that the Conference should devote itself to this aspect of the problem and

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1 See Minutes of the twenty-eighth meeting of the General Commission.
endavour for this purpose, as a first stage, at least to limit the size and power of these weapons. This view had, Mr. Eden thought, been generally accepted by a large number of delegations, and the discussions had resulted in the adoption last April of the following resolution:

"Without prejudice to other proposals which fall to be discussed under later heads of the agenda, the Conference declares its approval of the principle of qualitative disarmament—i.e., the selection of certain classes or descriptions of weapons the possession or use of which should be absolutely prohibited to all States or internationalised by means of a general Convention."

The Conference had therefore approved the principle of the prohibition of certain kinds of weapons, and it remained to be determined what kinds of weapons should come under this ban and what methods should be adopted for their disposal. Everyone would agree with the President that there was no task more important awaiting the Conference than that incumbent upon it under this head. The Conference had still to consider what kinds of weapons should be denied in future to all States which signed the forthcoming Convention.

In that connection he would refer to the declaration on November 17th last, in which Sir John Simon had dealt in some detail with the United Kingdom's policy in regard to qualitative reduction and limitation of these weapons. The United Kingdom Government hoped that discussion in the General Commission might result in agreement upon a list of arms which should henceforth not be at the disposal of individual Governments. That, Mr. Eden thought, was the objective of the General Commission.

How was that aim to be realised? It was in order to try to achieve that purpose, along with others, that the United Kingdom delegation had drawn up the proposals contained in its programme of work, in which it was suggested that the General Commission should carry out a certain number of definite tasks, beginning with fixing the maximum tonnage of tanks.

In compliance with the President's wish that the Commission should not enter into details of procedure at the present meeting, Mr. Eden would content himself with saying that, when each delegation had expressed its general point of view, the Commission might perhaps pass to the taking of decisions upon the basis of the programme of work which the United Kingdom Government had put before the Conference.

The only other matter which required consideration, and which did not figure in that form in the United Kingdom programme of work, was that of the disposal of such arms as the Conference might ultimately decide should not be at the disposal of individual Governments. It had to be decided whether, for instance, as submitted by the French Government in its plan of last November, these arms should be stocked under international supervision; if so, what rules and regulations should govern that procedure; if not, whether, as some countries might perhaps prefer, the forbidden weapons should be put out of existence altogether; lastly, if that were the decision, it would be necessary to consider the procedure and the regulations to be applied to that task.

M. NADOLNY (Germany) thought, if he had rightly understood the President, that the Commission should first consider in a general way the United Kingdom proposal and the German amendments.

It was hardly necessary, especially after the President's very striking explanations, once more to emphasis the importance which the German delegation attached, in connection with general and effective disarmament, as prescribed by Article 8 of the Covenant, to the question of material; for there was no doubt that the consolidation of world peace and the equality of security to which Germany was entitled depended to the greatest extent on whether the heavily armed States would proceed to a basic reduction of their war material.

M. Nadolny had been obliged, not very long ago, to express his deep disappointment that the debates on effectives had not resulted in any decision as to the reduction to be effected therein. He very much hoped that the Commission would not be content likewise, in discussing material, to fix criteria and definitions but to leave open the question of reduction and limitation.

The whole world would no longer be able to believe that the Conference seriously desired to bring about effective disarmament if it were again admitted that no decision could be taken immediately, because material depended on the problem of effectives or on the solution of some other question—such, for example, as the creation of new forms of contractual security. It might perhaps be admitted that the question of the quantitative limitation of material depended, to some extent, on the question of effectives, in so far as the figures to be fixed for the various States were concerned. But it could not possibly be maintained that there was a similar connection with qualitative disarmament—that was to say, with the abolition of specially offensive weapons. Everyone was aware that this question was ripe for decision.

As to the request that new guarantees of security should first be created apart from those conferred by disarmament itself, M. Nadolny was convinced that, in this matter, the world was on the side of the German delegation.
The real business of the Conference must be the reduction of the armaments of the armed States, and not the creation of new forms of security against the disarmed States. The duty before the Conference was disarmament. This duty could not be set on one side or placed behind other problems, or even made dependent upon the solution of those other problems.

In the same way, the nations would not understand why the Conference should again argue about a few millimetres of calibre or a particular tonnage: visible results must now be achieved. The weapons that gave a specifically offensive character to the armies and threatened, not only the combatants themselves, but also, to a very great extent, the civilian population, must be abolished. Nor could it be regarded, in this connection, as an advance in the consolidation of peace if stocks of the most destructive war material were constituted under international auspices instead of being destroyed. For the threat would then subsist that one day these weapons might possibly be employed in a way that had not been anticipated.

In the above explanations, M. Nadolny had already outlined the point of view underlying the German delegation’s amendment to the United Kingdom proposal. That amendment was based on the German proposal of June 14th, 1932, on qualitative disarmament, to which the President had just referred. As would be seen from the amendment, the German delegation was convinced that it was not enough to fix the maximum tonnage of tanks; it must first be decided whether this weapon, which should undoubtedly be regarded as an offensive weapon, should be abolished or not. Similarly, the German delegation was convinced that a similar decision should be taken with regard to the artillery above a certain calibre which would not be allowed. Finally, it was important to note that it would not suffice to adopt resolutions to be acted upon in a distant future. The German delegation thought, on the contrary, that prohibited war material should be destroyed immediately. In view of its own experience, it could not consider as justifiable any objections that might be raised against such a measure.

The programme of the United Kingdom delegation did not mention fixed artillery, and for that reason it was not mentioned in the German amendment. M. Nadolny would confine himself for the moment to pointing out that, unless that question were settled, there would be a gap in the work of material disarmament.

To sum up, as regards the German delegation’s general attitude concerning the extent of disarmament, M. Nadolny drew attention to the proposals submitted by his delegation on June 14th, 1932, to which he had already referred.

M. DI SORAGNA (Italy) said he had listened with great attention and real gratitude to the President’s opening remarks. The Italian delegation was convinced of the truth of one fact—that the Commission was now approaching what might be regarded as the central problem of the Disarmament Conference, and that, if the members of the Commission wanted to fulfil the desires of those who had sent them to Geneva, they must deal with this problem with the greatest goodwill and with the firm intention to achieve results.

M. di Soragna simply desired to point out that the Italian delegation had already made known its attitude with regard to this problem. Italy had undertaken to destroy all heavy artillery—that was to say, all artillery of a calibre exceeding about 100 mm.—and also to destroy all tanks and even all armoured cars. That was a definite position, though it could, of course, be modified in the light of other proposals. The Italian delegation made this statement, however, in order to show that Italy’s attitude was clear and straightforward.

From the practical point of view, he believed he was correctly interpreting the President’s idea in saying that, if it were to be efficacious, the discussion should be based on a short questionnaire, shorter, perhaps, than the questionnaire used as a guide in discussing effectives. This questionnaire might be based on the United Kingdom proposals, which contained a great many, though not all, of the necessary elements. M. di Soragna did not know whether such a questionnaire could be drawn up in the General Commission, or whether it would not be better to set up a small drafting committee which could finish its work in a few hours. Once the questionnaire was drawn up, it would be easy for the various delegations rapidly to explain their point of view, so that all could assume their responsibilities before the Conference.

M. MASSIGLI (France) said that, when this discussion had begun, he had been momentarily tempted to ask the President why he had not included among the documents on the agenda of to-day’s meeting those paragraphs of the French memorandum which concerned material. On reflection, however, he had realised that the President would probably reply that, in the French plan, the questions relating to material were bound up with a general plan, of which they formed one part, and that to-day a particular discussion was taking place on the particular item of land material.

This hypothetical question and answer explained the attitude which the French delegation would be obliged to adopt and also—at least, so it seemed to him—defined the terms of the problem itself.
The President, in his opening statement, had recapitulated the history of the question of material, so that it was unnecessary to revert to it. He had explained how the problem of qualitative disarmament had arisen, and how the conviction had gradually grown that the essential aim of the Conference should be to increase means of defence by decreasing powers of aggression. The President had preferred not to mention the difficulties which this principle, so readily agreed upon, had encountered in practice—difficulties of a technical, psychological and political nature.

Technical difficulties, because there was an undoubted divergence between the views of the various general staffs on this subject. Psychological difficulties, because, by a somewhat natural mental tendency, it had sometimes happened that each delegation had shown itself willing to scrap such material as was of least importance to it from the point of view of the technical or strategical problems which the forces of its country would have to solve. Political difficulties also; M. Buero, as Rapporteur, had often mentioned this aspect of the question and quite recently Mr. Eden had also alluded thereto when referring to the serious difficulty of what would happen to the prohibited material. Would it be destroyed? Would it be internationalised? These were fundamental questions which would determine the attitude of certain delegations which, although prepared to agree to internationalisation on a wide scale, were not always prepared to assent to immediate destruction.

It was because the experience of the first phase of the Conference had convinced the French Government of the inextricable interdependence of the problems raised that it had, in its memorandum of November 14th, 1932, endeavoured to work out a general plan.

M. Massigli had mentioned the French plan, even though the last vote of the Political Commission had shown that one of the essential ideas of this plan—the idea of mutual assistance—was meeting with determined opposition on the part of certain Governments, without whose help it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to establish a plan of general European assistance—because the plan for general security, although aimed at no one, required the co-operation of all—he had, he would repeat, mentioned the French plan because, the principle having been voted in spite of opposition that a draft treaty of mutual assistance ought to be drawn up, the French delegation continued to hope that, when the result of the work of the Technical Committee which had been appointed had been laid before the Political Commission, the Powers which had some time previously declared themselves opposed to the principle would hesitate to register a negative vote which would apparently mean that there could be no disarmament on a large scale. On that day everyone would have to shoulder his responsibility.

He reminded the Commission that M. Paul-Boncour had already explained how quantitative and qualitative reductions of material were regarded by the French delegation as being connected, on the one hand, with the general organisation of European security, and, on the other, with the unification of the types of European armies on the basis of a short-term service army with limited effectives.

So long as it was impossible to say whether those types of armies which, as M. Pierre Cot had shown, were best adapted in every way to be used for sudden attack would be maintained, how could many delegations say whether they were prepared to abandon all those arms which might become indispensable to meet the possible consequences of a sudden attack?

That was why he ventured to differ from his German colleague in maintaining that there was a connection between the qualitative reduction of materials and the qualitative reduction of effectives.

So long, moreover, as nobody knew whether the idea of European solidarity had made sufficient progress to inspire the certitude that in time of danger one State could count on the active assistance of the others; so long as nobody knew whether, in most cases, States would have to continue to count solely on themselves and whether, in spite of the League Covenant, the rule of conduct for nations was still to be "everyone for himself and God on my side"; so long as nobody knew whether equal duties would be the counterpart of equal rights, how could a large number of the delegations say whether in this Europe, where national passion and egoism still seemed to be unassuaged, they would be prepared to sacrifice a considerable part of their means of defence?

That was the problem, and that was why, as M. Paul-Boncour had said, the French delegation could not, at the present stage of the discussion, express any opinion on a given limitation of calibre or tonnage. It had always said and it said again: certain reductions are possible; but it did not and could not say at the present time what the maximum amount of reduction might be to which it would possibly be prepared to consent. Nor could it, for the same reason, say at present whether certain material could be abolished or whether provision should be made for stages, with particularly severe forms of international control.

M. Massigli would therefore merely remind the Commission of the general principles laid down in Chapter III of the French plan.

The first principle was that, in order to achieve equality of defensive status, the national armies left at the exclusive disposal of each State should at least be prohibited from possessing powerful mobile material. He stressed the words "at least", because they showed that, if the political and military provisions suggested in the French plan could be applied on a wide scale, the French Government would be prepared to go very far in the direction of reducing calibre and tonnage by parallel and synchronised stages. M. Paul-Boncour had said—and M. Massigli could only endorse his words—that the extent of the reductions in this direction must depend on the guarantees which the work of the Political Commission and of the Committee on Effectives might make it possible to obtain, in the general system proposed to the
Conference. The delegations were firmly convinced of the soundness of the idea of progressive stages put forward by Sir John Simon in his speech to the House of Commons when, in a passage which he had taken from the French memorandum, he said: "It will be necessary to proceed by stages, each of these stages being justified and naturally introduced by the experience gained in the previous ones."

The French plan also proposed that powerful material which national armies would not be allowed to possess, should be reserved for the exclusive use of a small number of specialised units which States would be allowed to maintain for the purpose of eventual mutual assistance. A further proposal was that this material should be placed in stock under as strict and as effective an international control as could be desired, in order to render any misuse of it impossible. In other words, the rest of the mobile material prohibited should be kept in depot in order that it might, when necessary, be placed at the disposal of a State which had been unjustly attacked.

The paradox of organising financial assistance, and making no provision to place immediately at the disposal of a State the material necessary for its protection, which it would otherwise have to construct at great cost, had already been pointed out.

The last proposal was that all the contracting parties should unify their war material, both that used by national defence armies and that to be employed by detachments detailed for joint action, through the internationalisation of the manufacture of arms in all the contracting States.

The French delegation felt that, with the necessary corollaries to this principle as regarded the joint Governmental and international supervision of the manufacture of arms, such unification might, in the matter of material, prove to be one of the most satisfactory achievements in the realm of equal military status.

Such were the main lines of the French programme.

If the Conference really desired to create the political and technical conditions which were indispensable, in order that, at so difficult a juncture, Governments might feel that they were not being asked to take a leap in the dark, if the Conference desired to create such conditions as would alone make it possible to agree to considerable, he would even say very considerable, reductions of material, both qualitative and quantitative, the French delegation believed that the system it proposed was a system—and probably the only system—which offered certain possibilities. It asked that those possibilities should be examined.

M. Fotitch (Yugoslavia) said that his delegation held the view that it was difficult, at the present stage in the Conference's work, to take up the question of material in a form which would enable it to come to any positive and final decisions in this matter.

Any such decisions could, in his delegation's view, be only of a more or less hypothetical nature at the present juncture, because it was difficult to imagine that the present discussion could be carried on to advantage until the Conference had unravelled the problems upon the solution of which would depend, to a very great extent, that to be adopted for the limitation of material.

The Yugoslav delegation's sincere desire for real disarmament and the necessity for clarity obliged it to say that its attitude in the question of material would be determined by the solutions adopted for the other problems, first and foremost those connected with the organisation of peace.

Its attitude would, for instance, change if, consequent upon the subsequent discussions which were to be held in the General Commission concerning the French plan, the delegations could agree in working out a system which would afford more substantial and real guarantees than those offered to-day by the international instruments in force. Its attitude would be determined by the final decision taken in regard to mutual assistance, to which the Yugoslav delegation attached special importance. It would be determined by the solution of the other question that was closely bound up with mutual assistance—viz., the organisation of the international forces which, under the French plan, were to be placed at the disposal of the League Council to put down an aggression.

It was obvious that, if a positive solution were found for these questions just mentioned, the material left in the possession of the national forces would be limited at a far lower level than would be the case if these questions were given only a partial or, perhaps, a negative solution.

Yugoslavia greatly hoped that a positive solution would be found for these problems, and she would be prepared to go a very long way in the direction of limitation. The same would be the case when she finally knew what were the types of army which were to use that material, and what would be the precise measures for supervising and ensuring the fulfilment of the pledges assumed by all.

Such were the general observations which the Yugoslav delegation, speaking at the same time in the name of the Roumanian and Czechoslovak delegations, desired to submit, while at the same time indicating the spirit in which they would take part in the present discussion.

They believed that their opinion was shared by part at any rate of world public opinion. Should the Commission be led to decide that this question might be dealt with separately from those he had briefly outlined, it was plain that, in their view, that method would preclude the possibility of arriving at precise and definite figures for the limitation of material. Those figures could only be finally established when the solution of the principal problems which were at the basis of the Conference's work was known.

Mr. Gibson (United States of America) wished briefly to point out only one matter which in his opinion was of great importance and which was applicable to all fields of armament.
The specific proposals made so far in regard to land armaments had dealt almost exclusively with qualitative disarmament and had not concerned, except in an incidental fashion, the more important field of quantitative disarmament. In the American delegation's opinion, qualitative limitation of armaments could serve a useful purpose only if taken as a supplement to adequate quantitative disarmament. Whatever qualitative measures were laid down must, so far as the United States was concerned, be considered in the light of adequate quantitative limitation before final acceptance could be given. Mr. Gibson's delegation was firmly of opinion that in regard to all questions of limitation and reduction of armaments there was an intimate relationship between qualitative and quantitative measures. The former without the latter were of limited value, but both taken together would constitute a real step in advance. Nevertheless, the greatest fact, both for purposes of genuine disarmament and for its psychological value, was quantitative limitation.

It was in the light of the foregoing observation that he would make further remarks when the subjects of tanks and mobile land artillery were considered.

General Burhardt-Bukački (Poland) said that his delegation reserved its right to define its attitude on the whole series of questions concerning the reduction of material until a later stage in the discussion. For the moment, it would confine itself to a few explanations regarding the special question which formed the subject of its proposal on the agenda. He owed it, he thought, to the General Commission to explain the reasons for which the Polish delegation had tabled its proposal at the time when the subject under discussion was the problem of war material.

In his opinion, the Conference could not achieve its aim if the problem raised by the progress of military technique were neglected, and he would venture to put a question in this connection. Would a convention limiting armaments be really effective if the Governments were left free to circumvent it, as they easily could do, by adding to their material by the acquisition of new arms not covered by the Convention or even of the arms mentioned in the Convention but transformed and improved? That was a gap which might make any Convention inoperative. This danger, moreover, had already been partially mentioned in the Conference by some Governments, and the result had been the adoption of the principle of qualitative reduction. The object of that measure was precisely to supplement quantitative limitation by fixing tonnage figures and maximum calibres, a fact which, as it was, placed a certain handicap on the substitution of quality for quantity.

Qualitative disarmament did not, however, solve the entire problem. To fix the tonnage of tanks or the calibre of guns represented an attempt to bar the road to military technique, but it was an incomplete solution and left the door half open. It was only necessary to cite the well-known example of the so-called pocket cruiser, which proved beyond question that clever engineers could get round qualitative disarmament, which was calculated rather to stimulate than to paralyse military engineering.

The Polish delegation had raised this problem and had come to the conclusion that, if the Conference really desired to make the reduction of armaments effective and to erect a really serious barrier on the road which the engineers and scientists entrusted with the development of military technique were sure to try and follow, if it desired to prevent the progress of science, of which modern man was so proud, being used for preparing for the work of destruction; if, in brief, it desired to guarantee peace by paralysing the development of military technique, it must inevitably take certain other steps to complete qualitative disarmament. Such was the reason for the Polish proposal, which might be summarised as follows:

1. There should be entrusted to a committee of experts the task of framing a list of the arms known or in use. This list would give the chief characteristics as completely as possible—for instance, for guns, not only the maximum calibre, but the weight, the efficacy, the rapidity of fire and the maximum range for each calibre specified.

2. When this list had been adopted, the States parties to the Convention would undertake not to have, not to manufacture, not to allow the manufacture of and not to import arms exceeding these characteristics. This obligation would form the subject of supervision by the Permanent Disarmament Commission.

In this way, no State would be able, not merely to complete its war material by the addition of new arms, but even to improve existing arms. The progress of military technique would be, if not arrested, at any rate very seriously hampered, because such progress could not be made except at the perilous cost of a flagrant breach of an international pledge.

The same idea, expressed in slightly different terms, was to be found in Article 6 of the draft Convention submitted by the Soviet delegation to the Preparatory Disarmament Commission in 1928.

3. The States should undertake not to issue patents for scientific discoveries for war purposes.

4. The national laws would be required to declare null and void, and immoral, all contracts relating to discoveries of such a nature.

It might be objected that the acceptance of the measures the Polish delegate had just advocated would place the States which possessed the most up-to-date material in a favourable position as compared with those whose armaments were not very up-to-date. That objection was, however, based on a misunderstanding. The Polish delegation had no intention whatever of preventing certain States from reaching the technical level already attained by other countries. It simply desired the list of weapons to include the most up-to-date models known or in use in any country. Qualitative competition in armaments would then be stopped at the stage it had already reached in those States which at present led the way in military technique.

The Polish delegation also desired to draw attention to one great advantage of accepting its proposal. Once the qualitative limits of weapons were fixed, the standardisation of war material would inevitably follow. International supervision would never be efficacious unless armaments were standardised, and thus made comparable, but that would be impossible so long as States were entirely free to improve their war equipment.

General Burhardt-Bukacki fully realised that some of the ideas and suggestions he had put forward were somewhat daring, but he was convinced that bold means were justified by the end in view. The Polish delegation attached the greatest importance to the study of the problem it had just outlined in a manner that was doubtless neither complete nor perfect. If this study made it possible for all States to give a common undertaking to put a stop to the development of military technique, the Conference would have rendered the greatest service to civilisation.

M. DE MADARIAGA (Spain) said that, in its own interest above all, his country desired the fullest, most rapid and most effective disarmament with regard to land material. The Republic had found in existence an army with an abundance of officers, but little material. The first task of the Republic had been to reduce the number of officers by two-thirds. It had then looked anxiously towards Geneva to see whether it ought to increase material by one and a half, and it was still in that position.

If the Conference were successful, Spain would be in the satisfactory position of being able to devote to schools and public works money which, in the event of failure at Geneva, would certainly be spent on warships, submarines, cruisers and other abominations.

This amounted to saying that the Spanish delegation desired that the minimum of conditions should be attached to the reduction of material, and that, on its side, no difficulties would arise. It sincerely believed that the results it desired and to which it attached hardly any condition, except reasonable reciprocity, were to be sought in a spirit of comprehension, of mutual conciliation as between opposing views. This discussion on war material was suffering, perhaps more than any of the other discussions on disarmament, from undue concentration on partial and special points of view, and what was wanting, in order to achieve success, was the capacity to take a comprehensive view, even though the delegates did not set out to convince one another, for if they waited until all were convinced, they would never reach agreement.

M. de Madariaga need only take as proof of this the definition of specially offensive or aggressive material. When Sir John Simon had so skilfully discussed before the Commission the question of aggressive material, he had himself drawn attention to this difficulty of definition, but had immediately said that its importance must not be exaggerated. He had told the Conference the story, well known in his own country, of the man who, on being asked to define an elephant, replied: "I cannot define an elephant, but if you showed me one I should recognise it." M. de Madariaga had attended the discussions of the Naval Commission shortly after that remarkable meeting, and had realised that that Commission might possibly be able to recognise an elephant, but would certainly not recognise a whale.

That was the problem. Everyone ought to be able to recognise, when he met it, the argument that disturbed him most, for everyone was quite capable of recognising the argument that most disturbed his neighbour.

In the second place, M. de Madariaga considered that this spirit of agreement and conciliation made it necessary to realise the interdependence of all the problems with which the Commission was dealing. With regard to material, the technical and political interdependence of material for land, air and water must be taken into account, as was shown, for example, by the obvious relationship, not perhaps as to identity, but certainly as to proportion, between the maximum calibre of the land guns to be retained and the maximum calibre of naval guns. That was a clear case of strictly technical interdependence, and it was also clearly justified in the political sphere, since, for reasons known to all, everyone always desired interdependence in politics.

There was an obvious interdependence, whether it be desired or not—and it was sufficient that one important delegation should desire it for it to exist—between the question of material and that of effective. And, indeed, in M. de Madariaga's opinion, the questions at issue were not objective matters but empirical matters which existed politically. That interdependence existed; it must be recognised. It would therefore be advisable to take account of it.

There was an obvious interdependence between material and assistance. M. Massigli's remarks had brought out that fact. The material that would remain would depend on the nature of the assistance. Even if the intrinsically interesting question whether certain material would be at the disposal of the international forces or of the defendant State...
were disregarded, it must be admitted that the material kept at its disposal by each of the European countries would depend, in a very large measure, on the question whether there would be mutual assistance or not.

Again, there was an obvious and manifest interdependence between the question of material and that of aggression. This interdependence was perhaps the most important of all, because there could be no doubt that, if war material could be reduced in such a way that the experts would say that, measured against the material still existing, the defensive had become invincible, an enormous stride would have been made towards security and that, in consequence, it was in this sphere of aggressive material—that was to say, the disappearance of aggressive material—that was to be found the most complete demonstration of the contention of those who claimed that disarmament was in itself a measure of security. That point was of particular importance, because it was on this road, and perhaps only on this road, that an objective solution could be arrived at in the technical field.

Having attended the discussions of the experts on disarmament, or armaments, for the past twelve years, M. de Madariaga had become somewhat sceptical of technical arguments, which were generally only political arguments in uniform. But in the present case, in the sphere of the control of aggression, he believed it would be possible for the experts to say with objective unanimity and in all sincerity what was the exact point in the abolition of aggressive material at which the defensive would become invincible. This, therefore, would provide an automatic definition for the material to be abolished.

Nevertheless, there immediately arose the question of the political conditions necessary for this result. There was first the need for ensuring that abolition was carried out. It was not sufficient for there to be a convention signed, ratified and put into force, under which certain specific material was to be abolished, for that abolition to become a fait accompli. Material, like personnel, possessed a sort of instinct of self-preservation. There must therefore be a very serious supervision of stocks.

That was one of the problems to which the Spanish delegation attached the greatest importance, for the Convention which it was hoped to prepare must contain a very effective and precise chapter on the supervision of stocks and the private and State manufacture of arms. He regarded this point as fundamental if it were desired to get the nations to agree to sacrifice their aggressive material to the limit technically defined as ensuring the invincibility of the defensive.

In this connection, he entirely accepted, on behalf of his country, the very valuable proposal of the Polish delegation, for what was wanted was disarmament in the spirit and not merely in the letter. It was plain that if, after scrapping their aggressive material, the States reserved the right to carry on secret work in laboratories for the purpose of constructing still more powerful material, the Conference would merely have shirked the difficulty and perpetuated the possibilities of aggression.

Such were the general observations which he desired to submit on behalf of the Spanish Government. In his view, every delegation would have to concede something of its most cherished conceptions in order that a general convention might be achieved on this extremely difficult question of material. The Spanish Republic would feel the greatest satisfaction at the disappearance of the great bulk of heavy material, because it was very expensive and, although it was not entirely without money, it could make much better use of it than in manufacturing war materials.

Mr. Riddell (Canada) thought it evident to all that the Conference had reached a crucial stage in the problem of disarmament. The Canadian Government believed that a reduction of armaments would do more than anything else to establish confidence and would be the best possible guarantee of peace. It believed that the primary purpose of the present Conference was not the humanising of war or the organisation of peace, but the reduction of armaments. It was necessary at the present time to stress the fact that the Conference was now faced with the real problem for which it had been convened.

It had been said that quantitative disarmament was very difficult to define. His military advisers had in the past repeatedly told him that, in their opinion, it was quite possible to define offensive weapons. Moreover, he had sat in the present Conference, and in the preparatory Commissions for five or six years, and nothing he had ever heard had made him believe that qualitative disarmament was not feasible because it was impossible to define offensive weapons.

It seemed to Mr. Riddell that the time had come when delegations should cease sparring for advantage. Security had undoubtedly increased during the past years, and therefore there was a basis for disarmament. It was, of course, perfectly true that there might be a great difference of opinion as to what measure of reduction in armaments the present situation warranted, but he thought that, if the Conference was to succeed, it was necessary for the advocates of greater security to state what reduction in armaments they were prepared to give, rather than continue merely to stipulate the further measures of security which they were demanding.

He had been very much struck with the Polish delegate's statements and he hoped that the Commission would have an opportunity of discussing them further at a later stage.
M. Stein (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) recalled that his delegation had frequently stated its views regarding qualitative disarmament. It had, in particular, intimated its ideas on qualitative disarmament in connection with land artillery and tanks and had declared its willingness to accept immediately in this sphere any decisions entailing the fixing of the lowest possible figures. It followed that it was ready to take part in a discussion of concrete proposals embodying precise figures.

The Polish delegation's proposal was extremely interesting in itself. He was grateful to the Polish delegate for having mentioned one of the paragraphs in the Soviet proposal presented in 1928 concerning a substantial reduction of armaments. The general trend of the Soviet proposal, however, had been to place an embargo on the technical development of war weapons after that substantial reduction had been brought about and on condition that it was brought about. He had no objection to the principle of the Polish proposal. He thought, however, that, at the present stage in the discussion on qualitative disarmament, it was premature to take the existing level of armaments as the point of departure, at any rate until all hope had been lost of reducing that level to the greatest possible extent.

The President observed that he had before him three sets of proposals: one by the United Kingdom delegation, included in its programme of work; the amendments presented in the name of the German delegation, and the proposal submitted by the Italian delegation at the present meeting.

There were two very definite principles in these three sets of proposals—that of prohibition and that of limitation. In the President's opinion, the best course to follow would be to appoint a committee to draft either proposals or a questionnaire, placing the big principles first, and obtaining a decision on them from the General Commission, which would then proceed, according to circumstances, to deal with any further details. The committee might be composed of representatives of the following States, with the Vice-President, M. Politis, as Chairman: Czechoslovakia, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Turkey, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United States of America, Uruguay. This committee would be asked to draft definite proposals or a questionnaire and to submit them to the General Commission in order to enable it to consider them and reach the necessary solutions.

The proposal of the President was adopted.

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FORTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held on Thursday, March 16th, 1933, at 3.30 p.m.

President: The Right Honourable A. Henderson.

89. Draft Convention Submitted by the United Kingdom Delegation 1:

Statement by Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, First Delegate of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Ramsay Macdonald (United Kingdom) hoped that the request made by the United Kingdom delegation for permission to make a statement at the present juncture would cause no inconvenience to the Conference. His delegation had felt that perhaps an intervention at the moment would rather speed up the Conference's business and facilitate its completion.

He wondered whether he did not express the opinion of most delegations that the Conference should now enter upon the last phase of its deliberations. He did not share the criticisms levelled against the slowness of those discussions. Had any conference ever held in the history of Europe been confronted with greater or more complicated issues, with issues which raised more sharply the questions of the life and the death of great States, at a time of the most critical importance, when men could almost hear the fabric of civilisation creaking about their ears? It was pardonable that people sitting at firesides, dreaming of things or writing pleasant essays upon problems which the members of the Conference had to face in fact, should show a little impatience; but if they were to sit in Geneva instead of at their own fireside, they would tell a very different story and, instead of expressing impatience, they would rather be grateful that so much progress had been made.

The Conference had been making a thorough survey of problem after problem, and group of problems after group of problems, in compartments. He wondered whether the members of the Conference agreed that it was very likely that that method of dealing with the problem had now yielded its maximum usefulness and that very little further progress could be made unless somebody, some delegation, some group of delegations, was bold enough to present a complete plan. What was happening? The delegations were faced with the

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problem of what to do in respect to this question, to that question and to the other question, but perfectly obviously, after they had faced the more superficial aspects of the separate questions, they wanted to know in relation to a complete plan what they were actually giving and what they were actually getting. Therefore, when the departmental, or compartmental, exploration had gone on to a certain extent, it could not be finished until somebody, co-ordinating all the different problems, and setting one statement and one declaration against another, had provided the complete scheme that the Conference could pass in order to give security, disarmament, and hope for the future. Until such a scheme had been placed before the Conference, it could not complete its examination of compartmental problems and questions.

No State that had anything at stake, no State with any great responsibilities could give an answer to compartmental questions unless it had before it a balance-sheet showing, on one side, what it was going to give, what risks it was going to run, and, on the other side, what it was going to get by way of security and by a diminution of the risks it was prepared to run. The United Kingdom delegation, therefore, had perhaps the courage—or some might say the temerity, or some even the folly—to propose to help the Conference by stating what it thought would be the general prospectus of such a comprehensive scheme.

The United Kingdom delegation had had to consider, and had considered very carefully, whether the present was the moment to submit any such scheme which met two requirements, first the requirement of disarmament and second the requirement that every nation asked to have its responsibilities and its gifts related to actual existing circumstances. Recent events and speeches had not been helpful to the Conference’s task, nor to Mr. MacDonald’s present task. He said that without criticising the motives of any State and without trying to estimate the value of the alleged justification.

The first attainment of every international conference that had the international spirit was to face the facts and not to squirm, not to object, when those facts were stated by people of goodwill and honest intentions, such as he thought he might claim to possess at the present moment. Only the other day a man whom he had always regarded as a great servant of international peace and in whom he had the greatest confidence as a colleague in the promotion of that peace, had used these very serious words: “Either Germany is given justice and freedom, or Europe will risk destruction”.

These words were of special weight and significance to every delegation at the Conference. But Germany as a pure receiver was putting itself in a false position. The gift must be given on the basis of contributions from both sides. The contributions were not the same. Some countries were armed; some had disarmed. The disarmed nation wanted justice and freedom. The armed nations must be prepared to make their contribution in disarmament. The disarmed nations must be prepared to make their contribution in helping to establish confidence, goodwill, security and mutual understanding. Nothing worth doing could be done unless both sides were ready to make their characteristic and different contributions.

He was justified in asking for that by a declaration1 made a few months ago at the Five-Power Conference that had met for the purpose of resolving the differences which had arisen between Germany and the present Disarmament Conference, and which had led, he was glad to say, only to the temporary withdrawal of the German delegation.

That declaration had been made because it was clearly understood that if what some might term a military concession, that was to say, a concession of equality, were given alone, it was essential to consider what would be the reaction upon the mind of Europe. Great words and phrases like justice and so on very often meant nothing and had serpents concealed within their folds. It had therefore been recognised by all the five Powers at the Conference in question that, while some had to make a contribution of a declaration of the principle of equality, their friends and colleagues at that Conference had also to make their contribution, the contribution of a declaration that they would never seek in order to attain political ends the force that was placed potentially in their hands by the former declaration. But the Five-Power Conference had not only declared for equality. It had declared for equality with the co-operation of those who had it in their power, stating that no nation in Europe, whether great or small, would, by granting the principle of equality and security, find its safety immediately endangered.

The two germane clauses of that declaration, with which the Disarmament Conference had subsequently associated itself, read as follows:

"The Governments of the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy are ready to join in a solemn re-affirmation to be made by all European States that they will not in any circumstances attempt to resolve any present or future differences between the signatories by resort to force. This shall be done without prejudice to a fuller discussion of the question of security."

"The five Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy declare that they are resolved to co-operate in the Conference with the other States there represented in seeking without delay to work out a Convention which shall effect a substantial reduction and a limitation of armaments with provision for revision with a view to further reduction."

1 See Minutes of the twenty-eighth meeting of the General Commission.
The effect therefore of the declaration was first, security, no resort to force, on account of the superior potential position given by a declaration of equality, and, secondly, the reaching of equality by stages.

As Chairman of the Five-Power Conference, he could say that the declaration, which had been devised in order to give tranquillity and security to the minds of the nations of Europe, and which had been made for its psychological effect, was inextricably tied up with and made part of the declaration that all the delegations were in favour of equality.

He had dwelt a little upon this point, not because he was disturbed—for he lived on an island, and sometimes it was a great benefit to live on an island—but because he deplored every movement, every statement, every event, every act that upset the mentality of Europe and made it difficult for his friends and himself to pursue a pacific policy that would be proclaimed to all the world by the symbolism of disarmament. He dwelt upon it because he was anxious that the Conference should have a great success, and because he realised that a great part of the practical problem of peace was psychological. Put fear and suspicion into the heart of man and man would revert to the old savage nature which he had been doing his best to tame.

The situation was serious. Confidence had been disturbed and trustfulness weakened. Who would deny it? A great and substantial advance towards disarmament, towards equality, could only be measured by the amount of confidence and trustfulness that existed.

Such were the circumstances in which the Conference had to complete its work. Upon his arrival at Geneva he had been met with a proposal that the changes to which he had referred were so great, and, if he might use somewhat exaggerated language, so fatal, that the only thing the Conference could do was to adjourn for a period. He had considered that suggestion.

The idea was that the sky was too cloudy for anything to be done, that it was necessary to wait until the clouds had passed away. But the clouds would not pass away unless the delegates present at the Conference created the atmosphere in which those clouds could not exist. Hence, an adjournment pure and simple would be the most heartbreaking confession of failure in which the Conference could indulge.

He therefore ventured, on behalf of the United Kingdom delegation, to make a suggestion in the form of a document covering the whole field of disarmament. If M. Nadolny wanted to know not only what he was expected to give but what he was going to get, he had the right to say: "Let me see it on the two sides of the ledger". If M. Daladier was asked to do anything by way of sacrifice, he had the right to say: "Let me see the other side of the ledger; I cannot sacrifice everything for nothing, but I will sacrifice military security if I can get another kind of security." That was the whole problem which the delegations had to face; they had to face the problem of a transfer of the nature of security, and therefore he regarded the document presented on behalf of the United Kingdom delegation far less as a proposal of the United Kingdom Government than as a service done to the Conference and to disarmament.

The document proceeded from the assumption of the final condition declared by the Five-Power Conference. There must be no mistake about that. How often had there been a gathering more representative than the present Conference, a gathering of States more varied in civilisation, history, origin, or mentality? But, irrespective of national differences, could it be said that any people, when striving for a great reform that went deep down into the substance of things, had obtained that reform within an hour, a day or a month? What was the great lesson of all revolutions? That when political revolutions had been completed they ended exactly at the point where they had begun, and that the constructive brains of the people who had been revolutionised had to begin to build, perhaps not at the foundation, but at any rate in the place where the foundations of the old order had been. And if the States were to begin a really new volume of the history of Europe since the last war, they must begin to adapt their method of conduct to the processes of nature itself.

The United Kingdom plan therefore assumed a transition period.

The representatives of the disarmed States could, of course, by holding up business, by threats and so on, obtain a certain superficial appearance of a victory. But there was no use in deceiving themselves, and there was no use in deceiving other people. They would have done very little if all they secured was something screwed out of a Conference like the present one.

On the other hand, those countries which were armed and those which were disarmed could find a common ground in trying to solve the practical problems of an abiding peace. They could do so by saying to each other: "There is going to be a transition period, during which we move from the state of 'is' into the state of 'is to be'; from the present with its experienced evil into the future with its anticipated good".

Let there be no mistake about the United Kingdom plan. It was not a shop-window affair. It was not a message from Mars; it was a message from Europe, from Geneva. It occupied a position neither to the right nor to the left, but in the middle. The delegations must criticise it; they must consider how it could be worked in the spirit in which it had been drafted, and not merely from the point of view of the hard details mentioned in one article or another.

In saying this, Mr. MacDonald wanted to warn the delegations that the plan was going to satisfy none of them. How could it? He was too old to believe that, wherever four or five were gathered together, to say nothing of sixty, to come to an agreement upon anything