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32.— REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL AND OF THE SECRETARIAT: CONTINUATION OF THE DISCUSSION.

The President:

Translation: The first item on the agenda is the continuation of the general discussion on the work of the Council, on the work of the Secretariat, and on the measures taken to execute the decisions of the Assembly.

Sir Edward Hilton Young, delegate of the British Empire, will address the Assembly.

Sir Edward Hilton Young (British Empire):

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen—Our discussion hitherto has been chiefly concerned with the widest aspects of the activities of the League. I should like, if I may, for a short time to focus the discussion upon one of the most important events of the past year—I refer to the Economic Conference. My purpose is to give on behalf of the delegation of the British Empire a most cordial welcome to the results of that Conference and to emphasise their profound importance from the point of view of those objects for which this great Assembly exists. So intimately related are the results of the Conference and the cause of the League, which is the cause of peace, that it is perhaps not inappropriate that those results should receive

some attention even at the outset of our deliberations.

We have been concerned with the important direct work on behalf of peace—the question of security. I should fail in the very few observations that I have to make if I did not say something to emphasise the fact that this indirect attack upon the economic problem may be of the same importance to the cause of peace as the direct enforcement of security. And here let me pause for the pleasant task of saying two words of personal congratulation.

I think on this occasion that one should certainly voice the unanimous opinion of the Assembly in congratulating the President of the Economic Conference, M. Theunis. The League has owed very much to him at various times, but never more than for his able pilotage of this most important of conferences. Surely also I shall be expressing the general feeling if on this occasion I speak a word of very hearty congratulation to him who, more than any other man, promoted the success of this vital Conference. I refer to our distinguished colleague, the representative of France—M. Loucheur. He, indeed, may well be proud of the outcome of that initiative which he took, and of the brilliant success which it has achieved: for, indeed, it has been no ordinary achievement.

There have been many Conferences at the League, each of them adding something to the joint stock of international comity, but in this particular Conference there was, I think, something different—something of more importance than anything which had transpired at any other Conference. We have learned from the work of the League, year by year, to understand how, in the realm of high ideas, the interests of humanity are joint and common. But there still remained perhaps some slight doubt as to whether that community of interests was so certain in the region of material things, in the economic sphere. Now our Conference has been held, the nations

have met together, the joint voice of the nations has been heard, and it appears that on this question of material interests also there can be unanimity.

It is a dramatic revelation that in the material sphere, as in the ideal sphere, there is not necessarily any conflict between the interests of nations. Of what great practical use may that not be for the future of the work of the League.

May I for a moment delay the Assembly with a personal experience? It has been my lot since the war to take a humble part in the work of financial reconstruction. I have sat, as it were, by the bedside of sick budgets in various parts of the world, in Europe, in Asia, and in Africa. I have even ventured on to that most difficult of scenes, the reconstruction of currencies. Now what, ladies and gentlemen, has been, to a humble worker in that sphere, of the most practical help? I say without hesitation that it has been the Brussels resolutions of the Brussels Conference concerning Currencies and Finance, in the first place because of the obvious reason that those resolutions were sound and right in substance. In the second place, and this is of greater importance, these Brussels resolutions have been the great instrument of reconstruction, not only because they were right but because they had behind them the authority of the League, expressing the highest opinion of the civilised world.

It was for this reason that they constituted so powerful an instrument for reform.

When we humble labourers in the sphere of economics, remembering the use that would be made of the Brussels resolutions, learned that this great Conference on economic matters was to be held, we lived in an atmosphere of the keenest expectation. We placed our hopes very high as regards the contribution that might thereby be made to help economic reconstruction. At the same time it was clear that a great deal was being risked in an open and free discussion of economic interests. Had it proved impossible to obtain any agreement, the world at large would have drawn the sad conclusion that there was an inherent conflict between the material interests of nations in the economic sphere. But the Conference was held, and we who were onlookers saw this miracle of a wider unanimity—a unanimity in a realm of ideas which was so much vaster, and which went so much deeper than even that touched upon at the Conference at Brussels. We saw also an achievement that provides workers for reconstruction with an instrument even more powerful than that provided by the Brussels Conference.

Ladies and gentlemen, the actual results achieved by the Economic Conference are too well known for me to repeat them in detail. In the first place it was resolved that it was in the interests of all alike that there should be greater liberty of trade between nations, a freer flow of capital, of goods and of labour. We are all very familiar with that inveterate, vexed and vexing controversy between the policies of free trade and protection; but what I would say upon this occasion is that this controversy is connected solely with domestic politics. It has no relation at all with a doctrine laid down by this Conference of the League—at least, so far as I understand it—which declares that, whatever may be good for this nation or for that, it is in the interests of the world at large and of all communities, taking them as a whole, that there should be a greater liberty of trade.

In the second place, useful advice was given as to the better organisation of production. I will not delay the Assembly with this question to-day. It is a matter of detail. I feel bound to say that it is a characteristic, a wholly beneficial

activity on the part of the League that it should thus put its resources (which are the resources of the greatest knowledge, the highest science in the world) at the disposal of all communities for the better organisation of production.

Thirdly, this Conference dealt with the question of agriculture. I feel that this could and should be left more properly to be dealt with by those whose interests are more directly and more vitally concerned with that great industry than our own. I would like, however, to refer in passing to the cordial welcome given to the pronouncement made by the Economic Conference, a pronouncement which to some of us must seem to penetrate directly to the roots of the present difficulties of agriculture in so many parts of the world—I refer to the statement that the difficulties of agriculture, the difficulties of falling and low prices, are an aspect of the difficulties of industry, and that to secure a return of prosperity to agriculture it is necessary, in the first place, to remedy industrial evils.

Let me return and confine myself to the question which is perhaps of most moment—that of the greater liberty of trade. I cannot wholly separate what I have to say upon this matter from the particular point of view which the members of my delegation hold. It would be idle for me to pretend to do so entirely. We cannot but see these things from a somewhat national aspect. It is impossible for me, in welcoming these resolutions, not to give a passing thought to the condition of the great industrial organisation which is the United Kingdom. A glance at that organisation is enough to convince anybody of the cordiality with which we must welcome any pronouncement in favour of greater liberty of trade. Our little island with its swollen population of forty-two millions, nurtured there under special conditions due to the position of that small territory, is a great workshop of the world.

Figures show that we export 25 per cent—that is to say, one-quarter—of everything that we make and that we take one-fifth of anything which any other country exports. Foreign trade is to us the breath of life. The food which we need for our people we cannot grow at home. We have vast interests which are dependent upon universal world connections, our mercantile marine and our great banking system. It is certain that the British Empire must give a cordial welcome to resolutions in favour of greater liberty of trading.

But one side of the picture has always its other side. In demonstrating a national interest we are always demonstrating a world interest too. A great industrial community such as my country, in serving its own interests, serves the interests of the world. The savings of a prosperous, healthy, thrifty people are at the disposal of the world for capital investment. Our markets, as I said, are at the disposal of the world to take one-fifth of all that it exports. We cannot lend, we cannot buy, unless we can also sell. Liberty of trade is beneficial; but the obverse to the medal is that what benefits us benefits all the world. So it ever must be with a great industrial community. It is natural, of course, to find that, such being the interest of the particular nation for which I speak, its policy is in accordance with that interest.

Let me refer to one or two other matters in order rather to show the invaluable and practical nature of the recommendations of the Economic Conference than in any way to blow the horn of my own nation.

As regards the recommendation against export duties, I would say that we have none, that we show no discrimination between States or their nationals,

that we prohibit no imports except those which affect public safety, public health and public morals, and that no import duties are levied as the result of war conditions.

I can at any rate flatter myself that I render no lip service to these great resolutions when I reflect that we tax, apart from revenue taxes which are countervailed by revenue duties, only between two and three per cent of our total imports, and we thus provide, I think, the largest and the freest market in the world. But this, as I have said, is but a proof of good faith as regards the words which I am about to speak; we welcome these resolutions not only because of the position and the policy of the British Empire, but we welcome and emphasise them here because they express the ideas which are fundamental in the League — the ideas of harmony between nations. They not only express those ideas; they give the most practical assistance in pointing out the path which will lead away from war.

It is not always the most direct path which leads straightest to one's given objective; neither is it the path that seems to be the straightest. This is well known to those who have rambled in the wonderful mountains which surround this charming city. In the high Alps it is not very often that the summit can be reached by walking in a straight line. Now, if the summit which the League has to reach is the achievement of our ideal of established peace, it sometimes seems, as at the present moment, that it cannot be most easily reached by proceeding straight ahead. The course of disarmament, of direct reduction of military armaments, seems to be crossed by some very difficult precipices; but there are skilled guides to show the way round. Is it not possible that the skilled guides of the Economic Conference are actually showing the path by which permanent and established peace will be achieved sooner and more directly than by any proceeding straight through difficult country? I know not. We do, however, know this — that the instincts of hostility which lead to war are the result of many different causes; and amongst them economic causes are not the least important.

The natural history of war is surely a most proper study for the League. We know from bitter experience what its ancestry is. It is the outcome of error and of fear. But those two evil spirits, unfortunately, are not single. There is no one error, and there is no one fear. Their name, like the evil spirit in the Bible, is legion, and amongst that hierarchy of devils economic error and economic fear are not the least.

The most prevalent of economic errors is the error that States can exist separately, independently of each other, without close mutual relations. The greatest of economic fears and the most foolish of them is the fear lest the prosperity of one nation should detract from the other, whereas the truth is that the prosperity of each nation increases that of every other one.

There appears to be a constant conflict not only in the minds of men but in the States, between the forces of individualism and nationality, which drive people into separate existence, and the social forces which join them together.

After the war, the separating forces were too powerful. They produced that state of affairs with which the Economic Conference has dealt, namely, too strenuous an effort on the part of most individual nations to live too widely separated from each other. They produced that strain which is the result of exaggerated tariffs, and surely we can be convinced that the League could have no higher, no more direct occupation, no aim, than to attempt to remove that economic

strain to which exaggerated tariffs so powerfully contribute and which is the direct outcome of the causeless fears that were left by the war.

Before I conclude, let me say but one word as to the future. The above results, if there is anything in what I have said, open a new era of activity for all the organs and resources of the League. They will lead a flank attack upon the forces of fear and error, which are the causes of war. There is, however, much to be done. All the practical work necessary to reap the harvest of these results still remains to be done. We have in the results so far obtained a powerful weapon, but that weapon is yet to be wielded.

One word more. We should be unworthy of the great opportunity which is afforded us by the work of the world experts at the Economic Conference if we were content with any small achievement as a result. We must not be content unless we take advantage of the impetus that has been given to the achievement of the utmost extension of the liberties of international trade of which the world is capable. On the other hand, we must realise that in this sphere it is certainly impossible to proceed by one large jump. The conquest must pass from position to position.

The first thing which needs the most careful attention, the most anxious provision, is the machinery by which the initial task of carrying forward the work initiated by the Conference should be undertaken. Let me say in this connection that, in the opinion of my delegation, the Economic Committee has proved itself, as indeed is clear to all of us, to be an organisation of the utmost value and efficiency, and it would be sacrificing a great good to a very speculative advantage if the Committee did not continue to perform the invaluable functions which it has performed for the League in the past. Modifications may be necessary in its constitution; that is a matter for the most careful scrutiny. It may in particular be desirable to put that Committee in some way more closely into touch with the practical organisations which are concerned in industry, commerce and finance. I am sure, however, that I shall be appealing to the practical sense of all those who are used to administration if I express the opinion that, as a rule, the smaller the number of members of a Committee to which work is entrusted the more efficiently and the more rapidly it is done.

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, it has been my intention on this occasion, on behalf of my delegation, to call attention to the fact that this year there has been a great step forward in that co-ordination of the nations which it is the task of the League, and that step forward has been achieved for us by the Economic Conference. There always seems to be a sort of vicious circle of economic fears and military fears. Nations attempt to live in too great a degree of separation economically, and they provide themselves with great armaments in order to maintain that separation. Fears are produced by the existence of great armaments, and under the influence of those fears the nation is impelled to attempt to maintain an impossible degree of economic self-sufficiency because of the possible perils of war. Against that vicious circle it is necessary to strike at various points.

Last year a great blow was struck against it in that dramatic scene of the admission of a new Member to the League, of which so many here were witnesses. I do not think I exaggerate if I say that, in receiving and accepting this declaration of existence of inherent peace in the economic interests of mankind, we strike this year a blow against that vicious circle which is at any rate of the same order of achievement as

that which was struck last year; and amongst the white-letter days which the nations of the future will mark in the calendar of the League, not the least important will be that on which it is recorded that for the first time the joint voices of the civilised world were heard to proclaim that in the material sphere, as in the moral sphere, men do ill to be enemies and do well to be friends.

The President :

Translation : Count Apponyi, first delegate of Hungary, will address the Assembly.

Count Apponyi (Hungary) :

Translation : Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen — The aim of this Assembly, as of all previous Assemblies, is to determine exactly how far we have progressed in the execution of the great aims for which the League was created and in the achievement of the objects which it has resolved to attain. These aims and objects are clearly set out in the Preamble to the Covenant. A consideration of their magnitude is sufficient to show that it is not humanly possible to realise them at one stroke, or even within a comparatively short time.

Those who know human nature, those who have studied history, however superficially, those who lived through the catastrophic happenings of the late war — God grant it may be the last — will realise that, human nature being what it is, progress towards the state of affairs when peace shall be assured by the reign of justice, when, in the words of the Preamble to the Covenant, open, just and honourable relations shall be established between nations on the basis of their mutual rights — such progress can only be achieved by a more or less slow and gradual process of evolution.

Hence the criticism levelled at the League on the grounds that these great ideals are far from being fulfilled is manifestly unjust.

What we have to determine is whether we are advancing towards these ends; exactly where we stand; whether we have not perhaps lost ground; and what stage we have reached in the march of progress, which, despite the slowness of its pace — because of the slowness of its pace — must be continuous and uninterrupted.

This I shall now try to determine, without undue optimism or pessimism, simply in the light of facts.

Some of us are perhaps too eager to declare, and do their best to prove, that all is for the best in the League. Such unqualified praise to my mind arouses suspicion and is not calculated to inspire confidence. Everyone knows that it is Governments on the point of collapse that publish daily bulletins to the effect that their position has never been stronger, while parties on the verge of disruption take pains to inform the world that never has such perfect unanimity been found as in their midst.

What reassures me in this present discussion is the absence of the customary overdose of mutual compliments, and the fact that the voice of criticism has been heard; for criticism — or rather the courage to criticise — is proof of self-confidence.

In the course of this discussion we have heard a number of remarkable speeches, and, without referring to them all, I should like to mention among others those of the Netherlands Foreign Minister when introducing his proposal — to which I shall have occasion to revert — of the first delegate of Sweden, the first delegate of Finland, the Estonian representative, the first delegate of Japan, and, to-day, the speeches delivered by the Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs and by M. Politis.

I may perhaps be allowed to touch upon the matter of some of these speeches.

It has been my privilege to speak almost immediately after M. Politis. This involves perhaps the drawback of comparison with him, but at the same time entails this advantage: that I can profit by the wealth of eloquence and wisdom which he pours forth, stimulating the flow of such illuminating ideas as each one of us, according to his lights, may have to contribute towards this discussion.

M. Politis counsels patience; in confirmation of what I said at the beginning of my speech, he shows us once again that immediate results are not to be expected, and — what rather astonishes me as coming from him — betrays more scepticism to-day on the subject of arbitration than he has ever before displayed in League discussions.

The first delegate of the Netherlands has submitted a proposal which falls into two distinct parts: the one which I think has met with general approval is to the effect that the Assembly should give an impulse to the work of the Committees engaged in preparatory studies for the reduction of armaments; the other represents, as it were, a reversion to the mentality that produced the famous Protocol of 1924. It is suggested that, without reviving the Protocol itself in all its details, a new document might be drawn up embodying certain of its principles.

My personal feelings in regard to the Protocol are known to all those with whom I had the honour to collaborate when it was being submitted to the Assembly. My Government had not at that time taken up a definite position with regard to that important document. While it was considering the question and deciding what attitude it ought to adopt, there occurred the famous difference of opinion between two great Powers which resulted in the abandonment of the Protocol. In the circumstances, my Government decided not to express its views, since, without the consent of those two Powers, and as long as their disagreement lasted, there was no practical use in considering the question at all. I see no reason to depart from the attitude of reserve adopted by my Government on that occasion.

I should like now to consider whether, when we come to take stock of these last few years, we can congratulate ourselves on having a credit balance or whether we have to record a deficit. This is a difficult question to decide, since it depends largely on the estimate of the relative importance of the results obtained and of the objects still to be achieved.

Our assets are very considerable. There is the success of the Economic Conference, which was convened by the League pursuant to a proposal submitted two years ago by a representative of France. The resolutions adopted by that remarkable Conference have not yet, it is true, been embodied in Government legislation. They have not yet been put into practice. But the Conference revealed such single-mindedness of purpose, such a definite and clear perception of the root evil of the present economic situation, and of the lines along which remedies might be applied, that I think I am justified in saying that it offered a very considerable contribution towards the cure of the present worldwide economic ills.

Another asset which I desire to mention here is the *rapprochement* embodied in the Locarno treaties. We are not concerned here with details or with this or that special agreement, but with the fact that a *rapprochement* is beginning to take shape between two great European nations, each of which possesses immense resources, great wealth and enormous intellectual and moral forces.

The absence of understanding between these two great nations, which resulted in the late war, was perhaps one of the greatest calamities that could ever have befallen humanity.

I was quite a young man at the time of the 1870 war, and since the peace which concluded that war was not calculated to bring about a reconciliation, and I saw in it — like many wiser than myself — the elements of permanent antagonism, I have from my youth up looked on the mortal conflict between those two great peoples as the greatest evil that could ever afflict the civilised world.

Those statesmen who are making courageous efforts to overcome this evil, who are ready to brave the effects of certain prejudices and feelings in their own country, who are endeavouring — already with partial success — to dissipate or attenuate the evil, deserve the gratitude not of their own people alone but of all mankind.

These, then, are our assets, not to mention the progress achieved in non-political spheres, such as health, intellectual co-operation and humanitarian questions — progress which would have been far less considerable without the League's authority.

As to the liabilities, I will be brief.

I must mention first, on the debit side, the lack of success attending the League's activities in regard to the protection of national minorities. This is due to the present system, which is, in my view, most unsatisfactory. Two years ago I submitted proposals with a view to its revision, but the Council, after due consideration, found itself unable to approve them.

I should like to remind you of a statement made on that occasion by the Brazilian representative, whose absence from this Assembly we all deplore. He made a statement defining the problem of national minorities in terms which I cannot accept in the sense that has generally been attributed to them. He said that the object of the treaties for the protection of minorities was not to preserve the heterogeneous minority elements composing the new States but to proceed by a slow process of absorption until, with due respect for the rights of the individual, a homogeneous whole could be obtained.

This statement requires explanation before it can be accepted. If by absorption — the word is perhaps ill-chosen, being somewhat ambiguous — is meant simply the strengthening of loyalty towards the State on the part of citizens of every race, I have no complaint to make, for every State is entitled to demand that its citizens, whatever their race or tongue, shall manifest their loyalty and obedience to the laws. But if by this term is meant the disappearance of racial and cultural characteristics, the substitution of an easy death for a violent one, I must protest most emphatically against any such interpretation. I feel inclined to think — I am even convinced — that the enlightened members of the Council have never understood the word "absorption" in this sense, but that they were thinking of political absorption or assimilation and the loyal accomplishment of a citizen's duties towards the State.

I am glad to see from signs of assent from a competent member of this Assembly that my interpretation is correct. It is essential, in view of the interests at stake, that the statement to which I have just referred should receive an authoritative interpretation to this effect.

The second and perhaps heavier liability is the extraordinary slowness with which the question of disarmament, or, to be more exact, of the general reduction of armaments, is proceeding.

Here I agree in principle that we cannot obtain immediate results without certain guarantees. But, I ask, are not the guarantees of security, stipulated as necessary conditions for a general reduction in armaments, already supplied by the agreements concluded by the Great Powers of Western Europe? All the conditions of security usually found in treaties appear to be forthcoming.

As regards the eastern part of Central Europe, the part to which I belong, only one country, in point of fact, is still in need of security guarantees, and that is my own, which is completely disarmed itself and has around it nations armed to the teeth.

Yet we ask for no pledges of security other than those provided by existing treaties, and those entailed by the loyal execution of Article 8 of the Covenant of the League, which holds out to us the promise of general disarmament, or of a progressive reduction of armaments, with due regard to the geographical situation of each individual State. We ask no more than this.

My own excepted, the only States in need of special guarantees of security are those which have a common frontier with Soviet Russia. I believe that under a system of complete general disarmament such guarantees will readily be given, subject to a further guarantee that these supplementary military forces shall not be used for purposes of aggression.

Is it not possible then to take a more decisive step towards the reduction of armaments? As to details, let me mention just one or two points in the history of this question.

When the Protocol was wrecked, when the trilogy — arbitration, security and disarmament — put forward by the then Prime Minister of France, M. Herriot, proved impossible of realisation, the question of disarmament seemed doomed to failure. The Assembly, however, did not wish to create the impression that it had set aside a question of such fundamental importance, and accepted a proposal submitted by the delegate of Spain and amended by myself. In this proposal the Council was invited to appoint a special Preparatory Commission to study the question so that a general Conference on disarmament might in due course be convened, which would have the necessary material at its disposal and be able to proceed rapidly with its work.

In the spirit of this proposal and of the resolution adopted on that occasion, the Preparatory Commission engaged upon its task under the auspices of the Council.

I have carefully read the Preparatory Commission's report, and I feel it my duty to tell you frankly the impression I gathered from it — for this report was circulated with the express idea of enabling members of the Assembly to voice their opinions and put forward suggestions for subsequent consideration by the Preparatory Commission.

Let me now say, in fulfilment of this duty, though without entering into details, that the impression which I have derived from the report is most unfavourable. First, on almost every important point the Commission has failed to agree on a single text, and there are sometimes as many as three texts on which no decision has been taken and which represent so many divergent points of view.

This situation prompts us to demand most urgently that there shall be no delay over the second reading, when we hope that these conflicting views may be reconciled. It would be deplorable if public opinion in Europe received the impression that the League is not prepared to take serious action in the matter.

M. Adatci, in his remarkable speech, pointed out that the League's prestige would be enormously enhanced if it could get something done in the matter of general disarmament. He is a diplomat, but I am not and never was one. I am an old parliamentarian, accustomed to employ speech not as a means of disguising or obscuring my thoughts but with the sole object of conveying them as clearly as possible; and I say that it would mean bankruptcy for the League if it proved unequal to the solution of this problem, which is one of the self-imposed tasks enumerated in the Covenant.

I have no intention of entering into details or of defining my views on all these controversial questions. I have formed my opinion on most of them, but it would serve no useful purpose to discuss them now in this Assembly. There is one point, however, to which I must call your attention, for, fraught as it is with danger, it is a source of deep concern to me.

I refer to the article which declares that the new Convention on the Reduction in Armaments would in no way affect countries which are already disarmed under existing treaties. This means that, as far as those countries are concerned, there is no hope of putting an end, within a measurable distance of time, to the truly deplorable situation in which they are placed, and which in my opinion is contrary to the spirit of the treaties themselves. For the inequality involved by a state of complete but one-sided disarmament was imposed upon us by a treaty the Preamble of which nevertheless declared that situation to be only provisional; and when the League has fulfilled the duty devolving upon it in virtue of Article 8 of the Covenant, when it has drawn up a scheme for the general reduction of armaments, the rules laid down in that scheme — which will take into account the political and geographical situation of the individual countries — must be identical for every nation. For it is inconceivable that the great principle which all nations, great and small, are equally concerned in defending and which France has so emphatically asserted in her proposed military reforms — that all possible measures shall be taken to prevent wars of aggression, while every country shall be left free to defend itself in case of attack — it is inconceivable that the application of this principle, which is inborn in every people and constitutes an integral part of its national honour and dignity, should permanently be denied to the nations which were vanquished in the great war. Such a policy may be adopted provisionally; it may be pursued for a time, long or short according to circumstances: but it cannot be regarded as final.

I remember a rather dramatic incident which took place during the discussions on the draft Protocol in the First Committee, of which I was a member. The Rapporteur, in the part of his report where he justly stigmatised a war of aggression as an international crime, declared that the right and the duty of every nation to defend itself when attacked were in no way prejudiced by that conclusion.

"It may and should . . . defend itself" — those were his very words. One of the other members of the Committee thereupon remarked that it was well to assert the right but not the duty of every nation to defend itself. The delegate of Belgium then rose and urged the retention of the words "and should", so that the assertion of the right of self-defence should remain in the text. In his eloquent address on that occasion, he declared that this right constituted an integral part of the national honour, that a nation which

could no longer defend itself, a nation compelled to appeal to foreign protection in order to repel an invasion, must forfeit every claim to consideration. He was perfectly right. I listened to him then in silence, but I now claim that what is true of every other nation is also true of ours.

Our honour is no different from that of other nations, great or small, nor do I think that it is consistent with the principle of honour to force dishonour upon another nation.

As a matter of general principle, it is in flagrant contradiction with the spirit of peace to uphold the disparities between nations laid down in the treaties of peace. • I repeat: these disparities are quite reasonable as transitional measures which cannot be avoided after a great war, and are explicable on psychological grounds. But the permanent establishment of a state of affairs, of a belligerent attitude towards certain countries, of discrimination between nations according to the side they took in the great war — this is nothing but the perpetuation of a state of war. I never lose an opportunity of proclaiming this truth, which requires no demonstration but does not nowadays receive due recognition: peace, true peace — that is moral disarmament, the allaying of social unrest and voluntary acceptance of the established legal order — such peace is impossible in this world so long as inequalities exist in the legal status of the nations.

That is what I wanted to say as regards the present position of disarmament, and I appeal to the members of the Preparatory Commission to bear this conception in mind. Above all, I appeal to those who, according to the classification still employed — I am speaking not of historical classification, which nothing can change, but of legal classification — belong to the victorious side, and who assert, undoubtedly in entire good faith, their desire for peace — that true peace which spells moral disarmament — I appeal to them not to press for the maintenance of this psychological obstacle. The root of most political evils is to be found in psychological errors. In this instance an attempt was made to force upon certain nations a system which may perhaps be accepted for a limited period but which there can be no question of admitting for ever.

There is another fallacy: the belief that, if we can define the premises, we can also determine the consequences. Make no mistake. The greatest power in the world cannot do more than define the premises. Once these are postulated the consequences follow a law of their own. They are determined by natural laws, by the inexorable laws of logic and of national psychology, which are as binding and as compelling as the laws that govern the physical world.

Only by adapting ourselves to those laws, by setting up institutions and creating situations in harmony with them, can we create a lasting work and lay the foundations of true disarmament. So long as the war mentality lasts and prevents the statesmen responsible for the destinies of the great nations from following this policy, we may talk of peace, we may employ palliatives — I do not deny their usefulness and have even helped to create them — but of this we may be sure: we shall never produce anything useful, anything of historical value, anything durable or real in the true sense of the term.

This brings me to the remarkable speech of M. Politis, who spoke of immanent justice and organised justice and showed, in his usual lucid and interesting manner, how slowly the idea of organised justice developed even in the internal affairs of a State, and how much slower still it was in making headway in international relations.

• What he said is perfectly true. He also brought out another equally sound theory: the difference between organised justice, or positive law, and immanent justice, the abstract idea to which it is the duty of positive law to give expression. The idea of immanent justice is gaining ground. Not that I support the theory of the relativity of morality and justice; the laws of morality and of justice are by their nature eternal, being part of the divine essence. But our knowledge of those laws is in process of evolution, and in order to ensure peace and respect for positive laws, both national and international, organised justice and positive law must be brought into harmony with the generally accepted notions of immanent justice and with the great national interests.

When a divergence exists and positive law no longer corresponds with the current and generally accepted idea of immanent justice, then there is a contradiction between the form and the content, and sooner or later the content destroys the form. What we call revolution in the life of a nation is called war in international life. The only conservative policy is that of constant evolution, the policy which keeps perpetually in view the relation between the positive law of the day and the prevailing conception of immanent justice.

It behoves the rulers of nations and, in a greater measure, those who rule the collectivity of nations and are concerned in international relations — it behoves them to bear in mind the possible divergencies that may arise between material

or positive law and the essential idea of justice.

I make bold to say that those pledges of security and permanent peace which we seek will only be forthcoming if we apply ourselves to a constant criticism of law, both national and international, judged by the criterion of immanent justice. Only when — the time has not yet come, since that evolution too must follow the laws of national psychology — only when the League has braced itself to the task of probing the depths of international law and judged it in the light of immanent justice and of the interests of individual nations — only then shall we have achieved a genuine, enduring and final work of peace.

I do not know if I shall live to see that day, but of this I am persuaded — only by its advent can we hope to arrive at mutual understanding between the nations and to eliminate war for ever. When we try to visualise that day the word with which M. Politis concluded his eloquent speech this morning comes instinctively to our lips: "Wait".

An impressive word, and yet inadequate for our whole purpose. To wait is to prepare oneself for some future evolution. But if there is no limit to our waiting it becomes a state of stupor or of despair. To wait, to hope: these are correlative and inseparable terms. Ladies and gentlemen, we can wait, for we still have courage to hope.

The Assembly rose at 7.30 p.m.