

[Communicated to the  
Council and the Members  
of the League.]

C. 15. M. 8. 1928. VIII. —  
[C.C.T. 331.] 4

Geneva, January 17th, 1928.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Advisory and Technical Committee  
for Communications and Transit

---

REPORT

OF THE

PERMANENT COMMITTEE ON  
ROAD TRAFFIC

REGARDING

ROAD SIGNALLING.

---

Publications of the League of Nations

VIII. TRANSIT ✓  
1928. VIII. 1.

## REPORT OF THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE ON ROAD TRAFFIC REGARDING ROAD SIGNALLING.

---

At its fourth session, held at Vienna in April 1927, the Permanent Committee on Road Traffic found, from the information it had received during its discussions, that it seemed highly desirable to bring about an international unification of the various signs and signals used for road traffic both in and outside urban areas. The Committee began the study of this question forthwith, found partial solutions and kept the problem on its agenda for the next session. International motor traffic is daily increasing, however, and the urgency of the question of the unification of signals is clear both from the correspondence of the members of the Committee and from the insistent requests for intervention received from external sources.

For this reason, the Committee, at its fifth session, held at Geneva in November 1927, re-studied the resolutions adopted at its previous session, and endeavoured to find a complete solution for the problem now before it. The present report contains the resolutions adopted, in which account has been taken of the opinion of great international organisations, such as the International Association of Recognised Automobile Clubs and of the International Union of Towns, etc.

The recommendations adopted by the Permanent Committee on Road Traffic with regard to the unification of signalling apply to the following signs and signals:

## A. SIGNS.

### I. DANGER SIGNS.

The Committee noted that the International Convention relating to Road Traffic, concluded at Paris in May 1926, provides (Article 9) for five different signs marking danger spots, namely, the signs for uneven road, sharp turn, cross-road, guarded level-crossing and unguarded level-crossing. According to the Convention, these signs should be displayed on *triangular plates* having sides at least 70 centimeters long. The Convention also prescribes the use of *hollow triangles* with sides at least 46 centimeters long in cases where weather conditions prevent the use of plain plates. In these cases, the design indicating the nature of the danger is not compulsory.

The Committee strongly recommends the general adoption of these signs (see Table I, Figs. 1 to 6).

The Committee thought it important that the triangle should always be kept for signalling danger spots and therefore urged competent authorities to use plates of a different shape for all other signs and notices, and to prohibit all those concerned from placing triangles on roads wherever they might be mistaken for danger signs.

The Committee also recommended the general application of Article 9 of the Convention, according to which the signs in question should be placed perpendicularly to the road and at a distance of not less than 150 meters or more than 250 meters from the place of danger, unless local conditions render this impossible, and that in such cases, when the distance between the sign and the place of danger is much less than 150 meters, special precautions should be taken to indicate the proximity of the danger.

The Committee thought that it was unnecessary at present to increase the number of international danger signs laid down by the Paris Convention of 1926.

As regards the colours to be used for danger signs, the Committee was informed that, while certain countries prefer white diagrams on a dark-blue ground, as being

more readily visible and more durable, and other countries, for similar reasons, prefer black diagrams on a white ground, it further learnt that experiments made in one particular country have led to the conclusion that the plates most readily visible against any background are those having a red border and black diagrams on a white ground. In these circumstances, the Committee considered that the choice of colours should depend largely on local conditions. It did not think it possible, therefore, to recommend any single combination of colours for international adoption.

It was unanimously of opinion, however, that, where a hollow triangle is used, it should be red in colour.

## II. SPEED-LIMIT SIGNS.

The Committee thought that, both in urban areas and on open country roads, the plates showing the speed-limit allowable at certain places should be rectangular in shape, the sides of the rectangle to be not less than 60 centimeters in length. The speed-limit would be indicated on these rectangular plates in figures at least 20 centimeters high.

As regards the colours to be used, the Committee thought it would be advisable that the speed-limit signs used in each country should be painted in the same colours as the danger signs (see Table II).

## III. SIGNS PROHIBITING PASSAGE.

(a) *All vehicles prohibited* (see Table III, Figs. 1 and 2): a red disc or, in countries where weather conditions render it necessary, a hollow red disc. This may be used both as a permanent sign where all vehicular traffic is permanently prohibited on a road, and as a temporary sign where, for example, a road is closed for repairs.

(b) *One or more specified types of vehicles prohibited* (see Table III, Figs. 3 to 12):

1. When a road is closed to a specified type of vehicle, the sign shall consist of a red disc with a design in white,

indicating the type of vehicle prohibited, or a hollow red disc over a white rectangular plate, indicating in black, preferably by a design or, if this is not possible, by a notice, the type of vehicle prohibited.

2. When two or more specified types of vehicle are prohibited, the sign shall consist of a hollow red disc over one or more white rectangular plates, indicating, preferably by designs or, if this is not possible, by notices, the types of vehicle prohibited.

(c) *One-way traffic in towns* (see Table IV, Figs. 1 and 2): a red disc inscribed in the centre with the words "No entry" in white letters, or marked with a white band.

#### IV. SIGNS DENOTING A COMPULSORY DIRECTION.

As regards the signs displayed at certain points on a public road to indicate the direction which all vehicles must take (*e.g.*, a gyratory movement, a compulsory turn, etc.), the Committee considered that such signs should always consist of an arrow — either alone or painted on a disc — pointing in the direction to be followed. If the arrow is painted on a disc, the colours recommended are blue for the background and white for the arrow (see Table IV, Fig. 3).

#### V. SIGN PROHIBITING WAITING BY VEHICLES.

The Committee was of opinion that there was no international need for a general sign prohibiting vehicles from waiting but that, where a municipality considered it necessary to place a sign prohibiting vehicles from waiting in certain places or streets, it would be desirable, in order as far as possible to secure uniformity and avoid confusion with signs prohibiting traffic, to recommend as the sign to be used a blue disc with a red border (see Table IV, Fig. 5).

#### VI. SIGN AUTHORISING PARKING.

Where the authorities consider that they should indicate by a sign either a space in which parking is authorised or the

boundaries of such a space, a blue disc with the letter P in white should be used for the purpose (see Table IV, Fig. 4).

## VII. OTHER ROAD TRAFFIC SIGNS.

Other road traffic signs not fixed above (*e.g.*, the limit of weight of vehicles allowed on a road, bridge, etc.) must consist of a *blue disc* over a white rectangular plate bearing the necessary notice in black letters. This category might include signs stating the limit of weight for certain classes of vehicles (see Table IV, Fig. 6).

\* \* \*

### *Dimensions of Discs.*

The Committee thought that the discs for the signs indicated in III, IV, V and VI should be at least 60 centimeters in diameter.

### *Night Signalling.*

While recognising the importance to road traffic of good night visibility of the various signs and, above all, of danger signs, the Committee nevertheless was of opinion that it would be too much to require in a general way that these signs should be lighted or be luminous at night, in view of the very heavy expenditure such measures would entail. The Committee felt, however, that it must draw attention to the advantages offered by the use of different types of reflectors placed on the signs themselves or close to them.

Nevertheless, the Committee thought it essential that every road on which all vehicular traffic is prohibited (*e.g.*, a road which has been closed) should be clearly marked at night either by a red reflector or by a red light.

Further, in towns, the signs necessary for safety or for orderly traffic should be easily visible at night, and, in any case, signs prohibiting passage should be replaced or supplemented at night by a red light.

*General Observations.*

The Committee felt bound to point out to the various authorities that it is essential in the interest of the safety of traffic to avoid the use of too many signs, as a multiplicity of different notices would, by distracting the attention of drivers, defeat the object in view and thus create a new danger.

With the same object, the Committee recommends that the competent authorities should take steps, so far as lies within their power, to prevent the display by the roadside of any signs or notices of any kind which might lead to confusion with the regular signs or render the latter more difficult to read.

B. SIGNALS.

I. SIGNALLING BY OFFICIALS DIRECTING TRAFFIC.

(See Table V.)

The Committee considered that the number of signals to be made by officials directing traffic should be very small, so that they may always be readily understood. It has restricted this number to five, three being stop signals and two direction signals.

(Table V, Fig. 1) *First Signal:*

Arm raised vertically, palm of the hand to the front =  
" Stop " for vehicles approaching the officer from in front.

(Table V, Fig. 2) *Second Signal:*

Starting from the position of the first signal, the palm of the hand is reversed and the fore-arm is moved to and fro several times = Signal to traffic to move forward.

(Table V, Fig. 3) , *Third Signal:*

Arm extended horizontally, palm of the hand to the front = "Stop" for vehicles approaching the officer from behind.

(Table V, Fig. 4) *Fourth Signal:*

Starting from the position of the third signal, the arm is moved horizontally across the body towards the opposite shoulder = "Road free" to vehicles behind the officer.

(Table V, Fig. 5) *Fifth Signal:*

Signals one and three made together = "Stop" for vehicles approaching both in front and from behind the officer.

This is the system in force in Great Britain, and is approved by the International Union of Towns.

## II. SIGNALS INTENDED AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR HAND SIGNALLING BY OFFICERS REGULATING TRAFFIC.

At certain crossings in towns, when one of the two thoroughfares is temporarily closed to traffic, the prohibition might be indicated by showing, in both directions of traffic, on the thoroughfare in question, a red disc or a suitably placed red light, the resumption of traffic being indicated either by removal of the disc or by extinction of the light.

## III. SIGNALLING BY DRIVERS OF ALL VEHICLES.

### (a) *To other Persons using the Road.*

On this subject the Committee adopted the following provisions: Any motor-driver wishing to turn, slacken speed or stop must signal either with his hand or with a



suitable mechanical device<sup>1</sup>. The mechanical device should be compulsory whenever the vehicle is so designed or so loaded as to render a hand signal impossible to give or difficult to see.

i. *Hands Signals* (see Table VI).

To give a warning signal, and in particular to indicate the intention to slacken speed or stop: *Move the arm up and down several times* (Figs. 1 and 2).

To indicate the intention of turning or bearing to the right (or to the left in countries where the traffic keeps to the left): *The previous signal is sufficient* (Figs. 1 and 2).

To signal the intention of turning or bearing to the left (or to the right in countries where the traffic keeps to the left): *Hold the arm out horizontally and keep it still* (Figs. 3 and 4).

To signal to an overtaking vehicle to pass: *Move the arm from behind forwards several times* (Figs. 5, 6 and 7).

2. *Signalling by Means of a Mechanical Device.*

The mechanical device referred to above must fulfil the following conditions:

It must signal a stop or change of direction in sufficient time and in a clear and unmistakable manner.

When a change of direction is to be made, it must be visible from both front and rear.

It must be visible by both day and night.

The driver must at all times be able to operate it from his seat.

(b) *To Police Officials directing Traffic.*

i. *Forearm and Hand Signals* (see Table VII).

To indicate the intention of proceeding straight ahead: With the palm of the hand at right angles to the wind-

---

<sup>1</sup> The term "mechanical device" covers any kind of mechanical, electrical or other device, as opposed to hand signals.

screen, *move the forearm forward in the direction to be taken* (Figs. 1, 2 and 3).

To indicate a turn to the right: With the palm of the hand parallel to the wind-screen, *move the forearm from a vertical position towards the right* (Figs. 4, 5, 6 and 7).

To indicate a turn to the left: With the palm of the hand parallel to the wind-screen, *move the forearm from a vertical position towards the left* (Figs. 8, 9, 10 and 11).

2. *Signalling by Means of a Mechanical Device.*

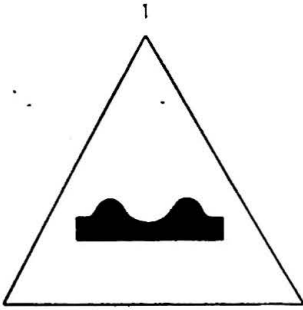
The rules applicable are the same as under (a) 2.

---

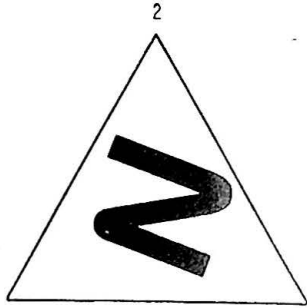
Tables I to VII .

Table I.

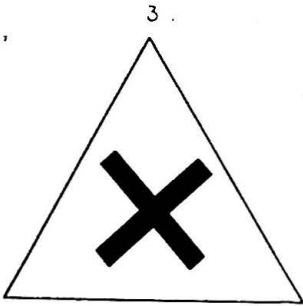
DANGER SIGNS.



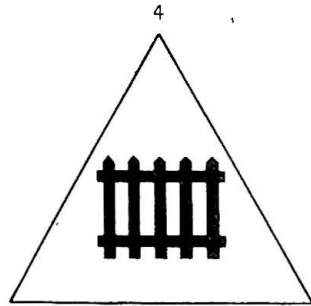
Uneven road.



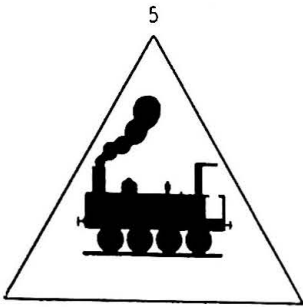
Sharp turn.



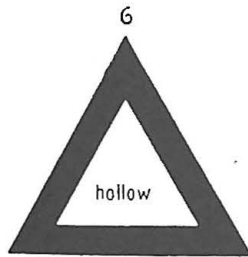
Cross-road.



Guarded level-crossing.



Unguarded level-crossing.

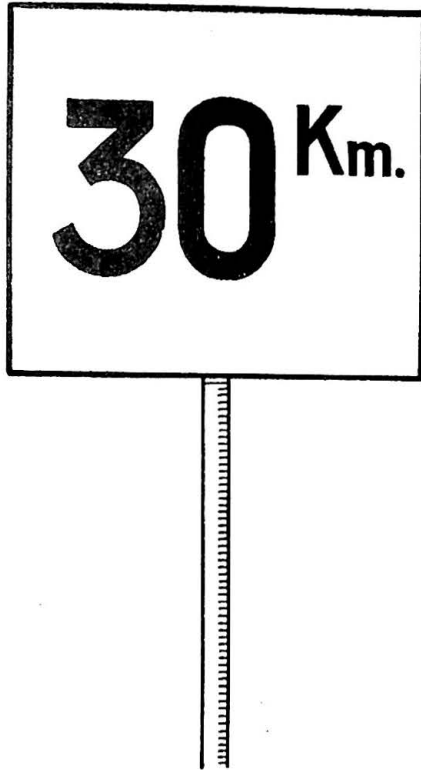


Alternative general danger sign.

Tables I to VII .

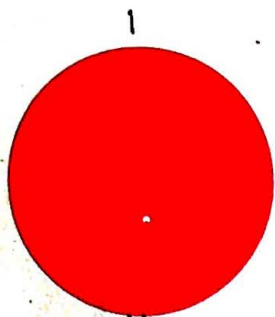
Table II.

SPEED-LIMIT SIGNS.



Tables I to VII .

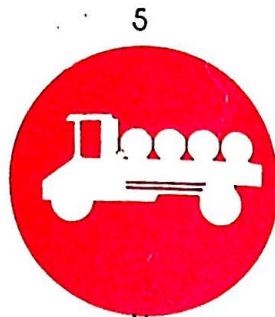
Table III.  
SIGNS PROHIBITING PASSAGE.



ALL VEHICLES  
PROHIBITED



MOTOR TRAFFIC  
PROHIBITED



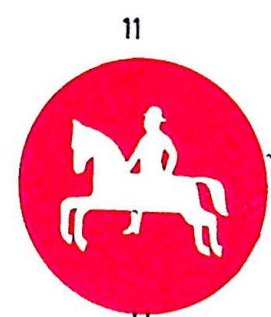
MOTOR LORRIES  
PROHIBITED



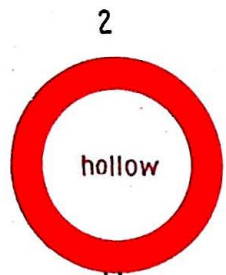
MOTORCYCLING  
PROHIBITED



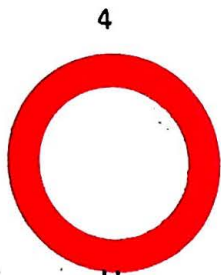
CYCLING  
PROHIBITED



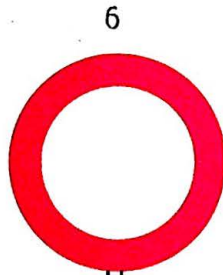
RIDING  
PROHIBITED



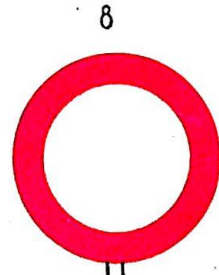
ALL VEHICLES  
PROHIBITED



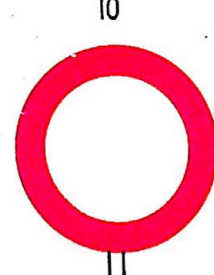
MOTOR TRAFFIC  
PROHIBITED



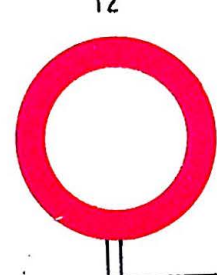
MOTOR LORRIES  
PROHIBITED



MOTORCYCLING  
PROHIBITED



CYCLING  
PROHIBITED



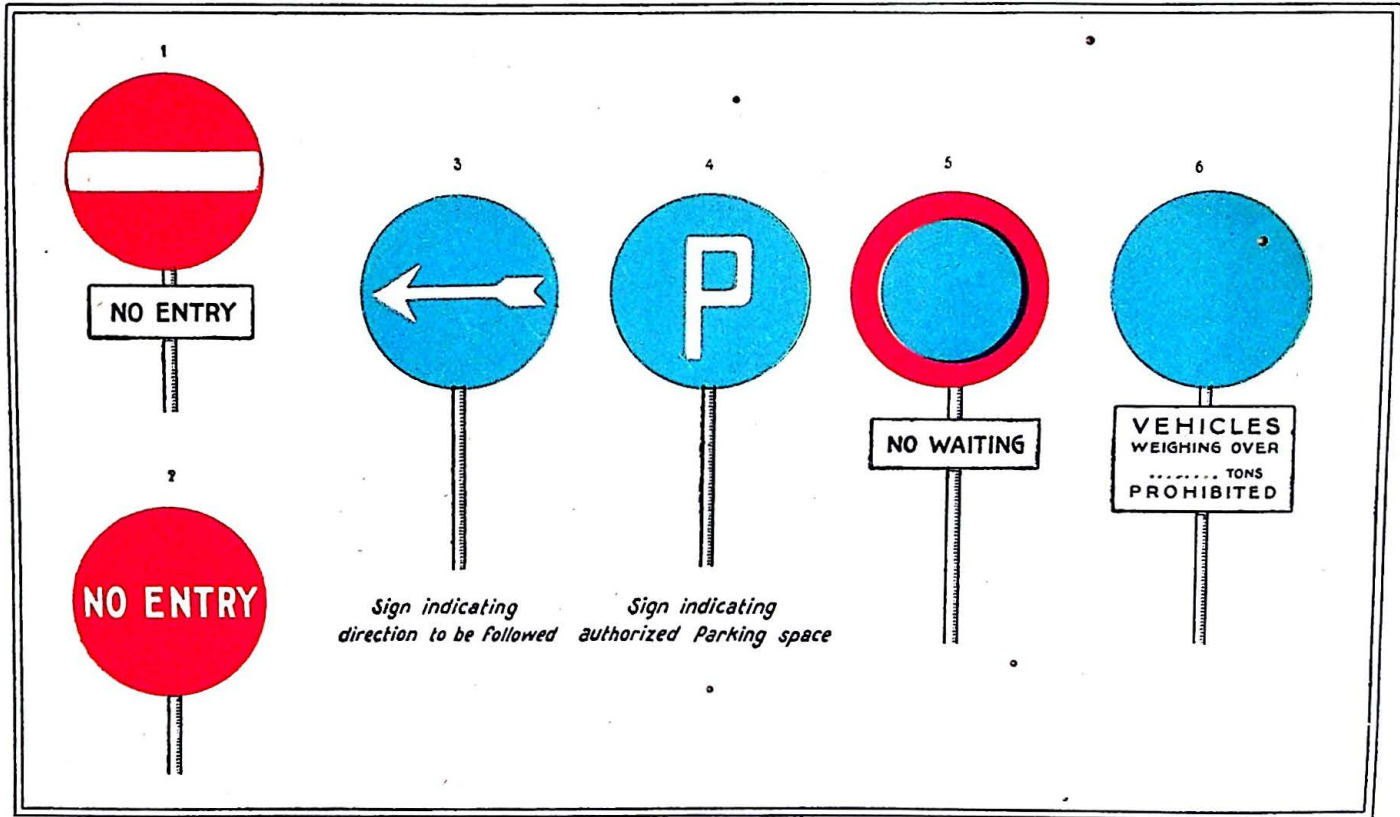
RIDING  
PROHIBITED



Tables I to VII .

Table IV.

SIGNS FOR: ONE-WAY STREET; COMPULSORY DIRECTION; PARKING;  
WAITING PROHIBITED; ETC.



Tables I to VII .

Table IV.

SIGNS FOR: ONE-WAY STREET; COMPULSORY DIRECTION; PARKING;  
WAITING PROHIBITED; ETC.

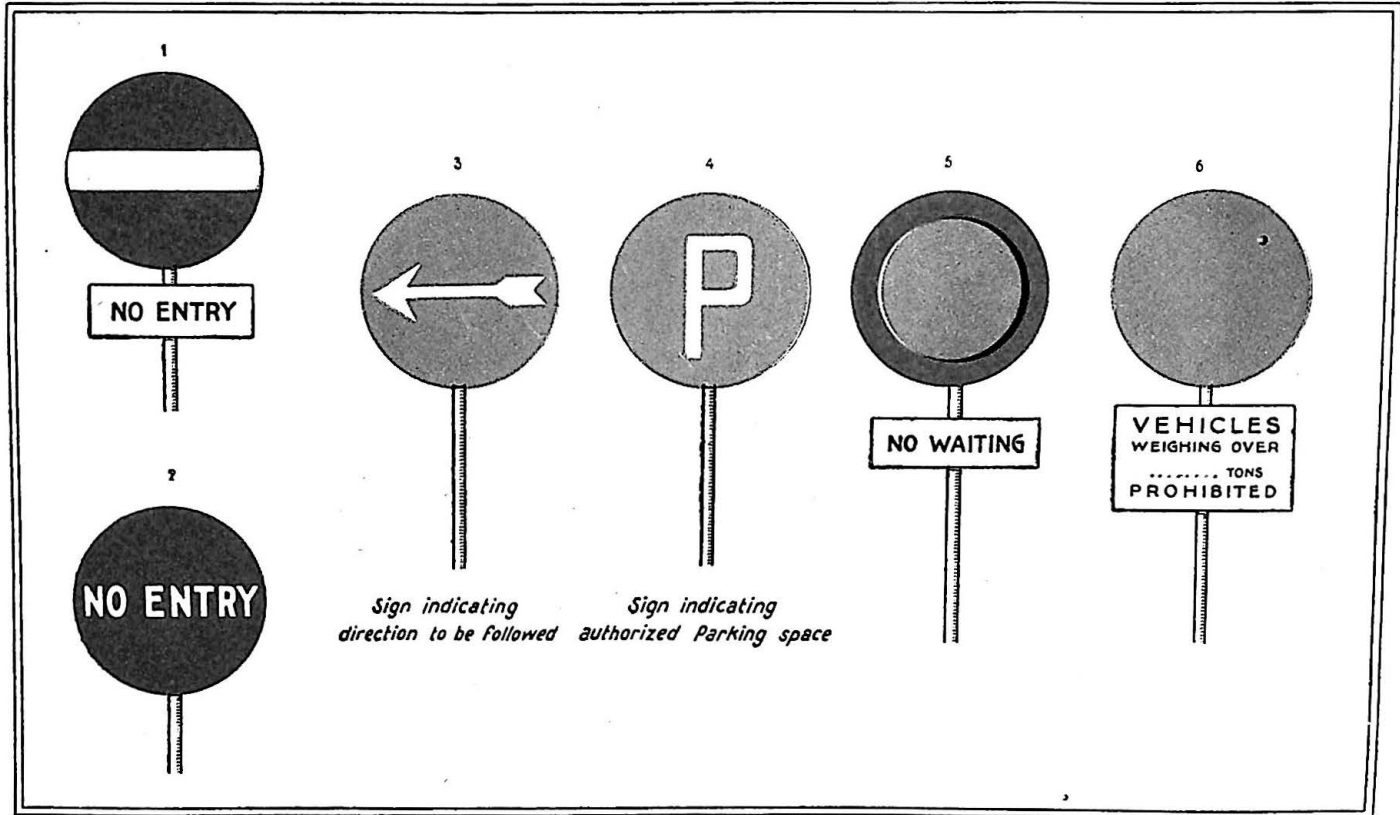
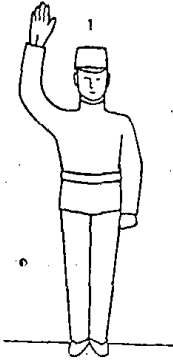
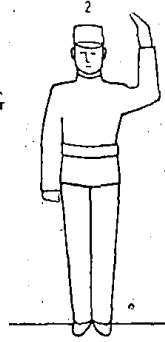


Table V.

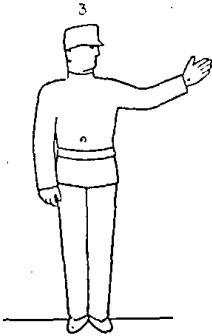
SIGNALLING BY  
OFFICIALS DIRECTING  
TRAFFIC



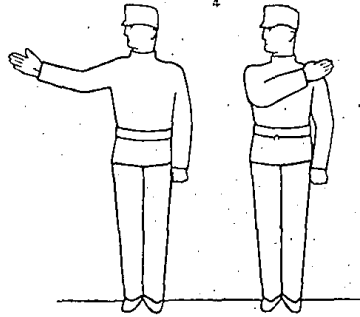
"Stop" for vehicles  
approaching the officer  
from in front.



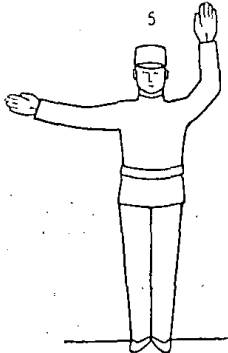
Signal to traffic  
to move forward.



"Stop" for vehicles  
approaching the officer  
from behind.



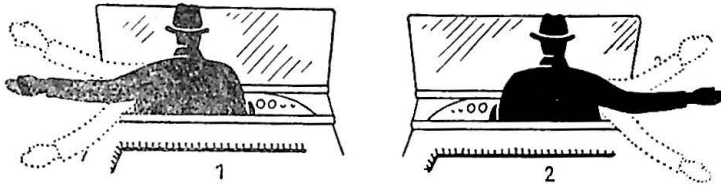
"Road free" to vehicles  
behind the officer.



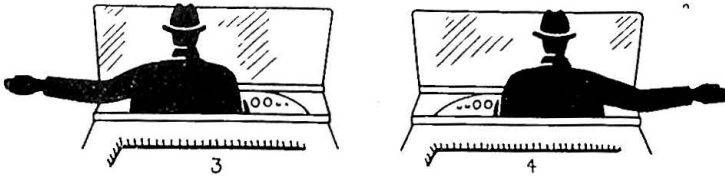
"Stop" for vehicles approaching both  
in front and from behind the officer.

Table VI.

SIGNALLING TO OTHER PERSONS USING  
THE ROAD



*"Warning"*  
and *"I am going to the right"*  
(to the left in countries where traffic keeps to the left).



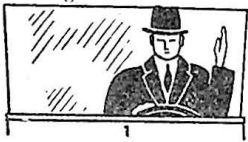
*"I am going to the left"*  
(to the right in countries where traffic keeps to the left).



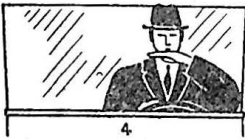
*"You may overtake me."*

Table VII.

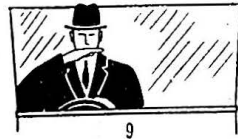
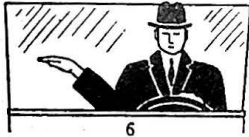
SIGNALLING TO POLICE OFFICIALS DIRECTING TRAFFIC.



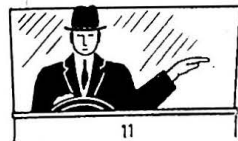
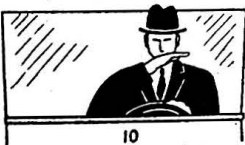
*"I am continuing straight on."*



*"I shall turn to the right."*

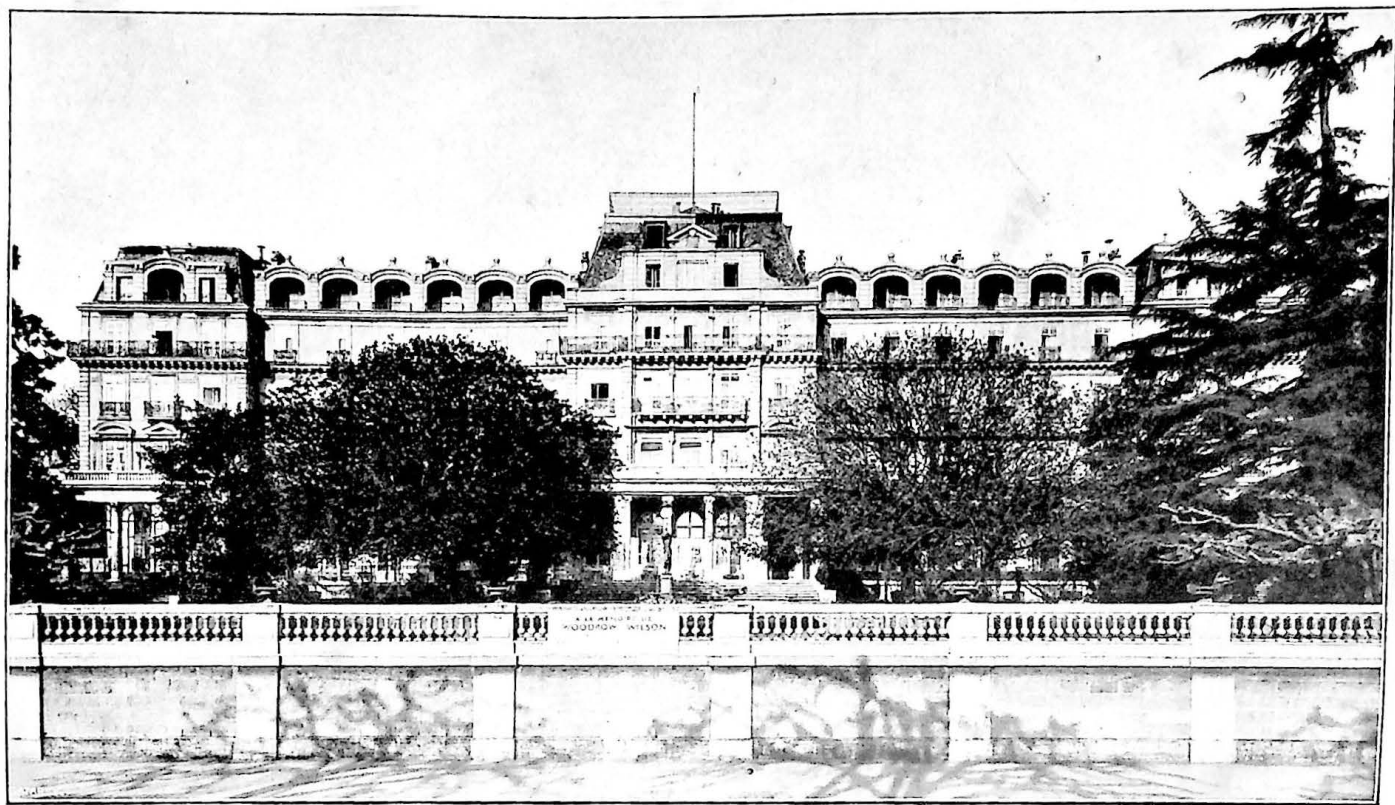


*"I shall turn to the left."*



THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS  
AND THE PRESS





The Secretariat of the League of Nations.