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# MINUTES

OF THE

## NAVAL COMMISSION

February 27th - July 20th, 1932

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This volume contains the Minutes of the Naval Commission, which was in session from February 27th to July 20th, 1932.

The Naval Commission was set up by the General Commission on February 25th, 1932, in consequence of the following resolution, adopted by the Conference on the 24th of the same month :

“ The Conference,

“ Approving the proposals of the Bureau on the action to be taken in regard to the plans and proposals which have been placed before it :

“ (1) Decides to transmit to the General Commission these plans and proposals, as well as the draft Convention (with annexes) prepared by the Preparatory Commission, which may serve as a framework for the work of the Conference ;

“ (2) Requests the General Commission to proceed to a preliminary study of, and to co-ordinate, the said plans and proposals and the draft Convention ;

“ (3) Decides that, without prejudice to the rules of procedure,<sup>1</sup> the General Commission shall be authorised to constitute, as and when the need arises, such commissions, sub-commissions or committees as it may consider desirable, and, in particular, the land, naval, air and national defence expenditure commissions.

“ Such commissions, sub-commissions or committees will report to the General Commission on the matters which it refers to them.”

The Naval Commission appointed the following officers :

*President*: M. E. COLBAN (Norway), succeeded by M. E. MORESCO (Netherlands) ;

*Vice-Presidents*: M. M. DUPRÉ (Canada) ; TEVFIK Bey (Turkey), succeeded by Cemal Hüsnü Bey (Turkey) ;

*Rapporteur*: M. K. I. WESTMAN (Sweden) ;

*Secretary*: Commander B. F. ADAMS, Secretary of the Naval Sub-Commission of the Permanent Advisory Commission for Military, Naval and Air Questions ; Member of the Disarmament Section of the League of Nations.

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<sup>1</sup> Part V of the Rules of Procedure reads as follows :

“ V. COMMISSIONS.

“ 1. The Conference shall have the right, according to the exigencies of the business on hand and convenience of work, to set up commissions on which all delegations may be represented by a delegate, who may be assisted by advisers, experts and secretaries. Committees may also be set up consisting of delegates of a limited number of countries.

“ 2. Each Commission shall appoint its Chairman and its Vice-Chairman or its Vice-Chairmen and shall, at the appropriate time, appoint one or more Rapporteurs.

“ 3. The Commissions may themselves set up sub-commissions.”

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## FIRST MEETING

*Held on Saturday, February 27th, 1932, at 11 a.m.*

---

The Right Honourable A. HENDERSON in the chair.

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### I. ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Naval Commission had met, in pursuance of the decision taken by the Bureau of the Conference on the previous day, to proceed, in accordance with Article 5, paragraph 2, of the Rules of Procedure, to elect a President, Vice-Presidents, and Rapporteurs. The Commission would therefore be invited to elect first a President by secret ballot in conformity with the Rules of Procedure, Article 13, unless it decided otherwise. One or more Vice-Presidents and Rapporteurs would then be appointed in the same way.

M. DE AGÜERO Y BETHANCOURT (Cuba) proposed that the Commission should elect only its President at the present meeting and that the appointment of the Vice-Presidents and Rapporteurs should be postponed until it was known who the members of the Commission were to be.

*Agreed.*

M. COLBAN (Norway) *was elected President by acclamation.*

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## SECOND MEETING

*Held on Wednesday, March 9th, 1932, at 4 p.m.*

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President: M. COLBAN.

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### 2. ELECTION OF VICE-PRESIDENTS AND RAPPORTEUR.

M. DUPRÉ (Canada) and TEVFIK Bey (Turkey) *were elected Vice-Presidents*, and M. WESTMAN (Sweden) *was elected Rapporteur, by acclamation.*

### 3. — EXAMINATION OF THE LIST OF QUESTIONS REFERRED BY THE GENERAL COMMISSION TO THE NAVAL COMMISSION (document Conf. D. 103).

The PRESIDENT read the following decision reached by the General Commission with regard to the organisation of the work (document Conf. D.101, No. 4).

“ 1. The General Commission should, as a rule, first discuss all questions from the point of view of the principles involved ;

“ 2. After this discussion, the questions should, if advisable, be referred at the appropriate point to the Special Commissions ;

“ 3. Questions which do not require preliminary discussion from the point of view of the principles involved may be referred immediately by the General Commission to the Special Commissions ;

“ 4. The Special Commissions should report to the General Commission on the matters dealt with. It is, of course, always open to the Special Commissions to lay before the General Commission any questions of principle which prevent progress and which they are not in a position to settle themselves.”

These, he said, were the principles which should guide the Naval Commission in deciding in what order it ought to examine the questions submitted to it.

The list of these questions (document Conf. D.103., pages. 4 and 5) was rather long, but they might be divided into three groups :

1. Questions such as Nos. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 24 and 25, which the Naval Commission could examine immediately.
2. As regards other questions, particularly that of personnel, the Naval Commission would be merely wasting its time if it were to begin to study them before it knew what decisions had been taken on the same subjects by the Land and Air Commissions.
3. With regard to definitions, submarines, aircraft carriers, capital ships, etc., certain decisions of principle would have first of all to be taken by the General Commission or the Political Commission.

Mr. SWANSON (United States of America) said that, in examining the list of questions, he had also noted that the Naval Commission would not be able to consider certain questions usefully until it knew what decisions had been taken in connection therewith by the Land and Air Commissions. For instance, the decisions with regard to aircraft carriers would depend on those reached by the Air Commission with regard to aircraft. Other questions, as the President had rightly pointed out, could not be considered by the Naval Commission until decisions in regard to principle had been reached by the General Commission and the Political Commission.

Consequently, it would be desirable to appoint a sub-committee to classify the questions submitted to the Naval Commission into three groups, and to prepare an agenda defining the order in which those questions should be considered. He made a formal proposal that the President should be authorised to appoint such a sub-committee, which would submit a duly substantiated report.

Vice-Admiral POUND (United Kingdom) communicated to the Commission a message from Sir Bolton Eyres Monsell, First Lord of the Admiralty, who expressed his regret at not being able for the present to participate in the work of the Commission, as he was detained in London by the discussion of the Naval Estimates in Parliament.

The United Kingdom delegation fully supported Mr. Swanson's proposal.

M. QUINTANA (Argentine) also agreed with the proposal of the United States delegate. He pointed out that certain questions could not very easily be fitted into the general programme prepared by M. Beneš. For instance, the Argentine had formally proposed that States non-signatories of the London Naval Convention should be invited to agree to refrain from building capital ships—*i.e.*, warships of over 10,000 tons. That was a question for the General Commission.

All the delegations, however, would be able to explain their views when the sub-committee's report came to be discussed.

M. DE AGÜERO Y BETHANCOURT (Cuba) also acceded to the suggestion of the United States delegate. The proposed sub-committee should consist of only a few members and should get into touch with the other Commissions through the President of the Naval Commission, who would thus ensure liaison.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) supported the proposal of the United States delegate.

M. Charles DUMONT (France) noted that the President, when examining the list of questions submitted to the Naval Commission, had immediately arrived at the same conclusion as that which had occasioned the proposal of the United States delegate—*i.e.*, the necessity of dividing these questions into three groups. Why then should the Bureau itself not be entrusted with the task of preparing this classification? All the delegations would thus be sure that their views would be taken into consideration, whereas if a sub-committee were appointed it would either have to include a representative of each delegation (in which case it would be the whole Naval Commission under another name) or else some dissatisfaction might be caused.

The PRESIDENT thought it would not be difficult to satisfy all the speakers. Obviously, in so important a question, the Bureau should consult all delegations which showed that they were particularly interested in the question. The Bureau was prepared to carry out the task defined by the United States delegate with the assistance of the representatives of the aforesaid delegations.

Admiral ACTON (Italy), M. QUINTANA (Argentine) and M. Charles DUMONT (France) supported the President's proposal.

Sir Thomas WILFORD (New Zealand) drew the Commission's attention to the desirability of defining the expression "effectives". This word had been interpreted in many different ways. It was indispensable that its exact meaning should be determined.

The PRESIDENT noted that the Bureau had been instructed to submit a report with explanations, classifying the questions submitted to the Naval Commission into three groups and defining the order of priority of those questions. The Bureau would get into touch semi-officially with the various delegations, in order that its report should reflect all the opinions expressed.

Whenever a question had to be examined by the Bureau, the delegations would, of course, always be entitled to submit their observations to it, either verbally or in writing.

M. DE AGÜERO Y BETHANCOURT (Cuba) emphasised the importance of Sir Thomas Wilford's remark, and proposed that, in order to avoid any confusion, the Bureau should be asked to elucidate terms which were not exactly defined.

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### THIRD MEETING

*Held on Monday, March 14th, 1932, at 10.30 a.m.*

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President : M. COLBAN.

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#### 4. ELECTION OF A VICE-PRESIDENT TO REPLACE TEVFIK BEY.

The PRESIDENT read the following communication from the Turkish delegation :

“ The Turkish delegation to the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments sincerely thanks the Naval Commission for having elected Tevfik Bey as Vice-President of the Commission, thus honouring Turkey herself.

“ It requests you to be good enough to inform the Commission that it deeply regrets that Tevfik Bey, being obliged to return to Turkey, is no longer a member of the delegation.”

Cemal HÜSNÜ Bey, Turkish Minister at Berne, *was elected Vice-President* in place of Tevfik Bey.

#### 5. NOTIFICATION OF NAMES OF EXPERTS TO BE PRESENT AT MEETINGS OF THE NAVAL COMMISSION.

The PRESIDENT asked the delegations to be good enough to communicate to the Secretariat the names of their experts who would ordinarily be present at the meetings of the Naval Commission.

#### 6. ADOPTION OF THE BUREAU'S REPORT AND THE ATTACHED DRAFT AGENDA (documents Conf. D./C.N. 2 and 3).

The PRESIDENT drew attention to the conclusion of the report, which was that the Commission would be able to deal immediately with a number of questions. In addition, there was the opinion expressed by the New Zealand delegation, supported by the Cuban delegation, that it would be impossible to discuss effectives until the term “ effectives ” had been defined. The Land Commission had appointed a Sub-Commission to consider that point. Accordingly, the Naval Commission would be able to deal with the matter when the Land Sub-Commission had reached a decision.

The Bureau had also agreed with the Argentine proposal that the question of limiting capital ships to 10,000 tons, being a question of principle, should not be discussed before it had been examined by the General Commission.

The Bureau also agreed with the Netherlands opinion that the question of “ mines on the high seas ” was one of principle which must first be discussed by the General Commission.

The Bureau fully intended to keep in touch with the Bureau of the General Commission, with a view to expressing its opinion on questions which would have to be examined by the General Commission before they were examined by the Naval Commission.

The Bureau had felt that the order of the items set out in the Beneš report should be adhered to. It might be asked why the definition of vessels should come at the end and not at the beginning of the discussion. One reason was that it was probably desirable to refrain from altering the order of the items in the report unless absolutely necessary. Secondly, it would be useful to discuss a number of technical questions before coming to the question of definitions. If, however, the Commission encountered any insuperable difficulty in technical matters, the discussion could be stopped and the question of definitions might be taken up.

The General Commission would be sitting in the afternoon and might possibly be in a position to solve certain questions of principle in the order set out in M. Beneš' report. Consequently, the Naval Commission itself might have a clearer vision of certain points in a few days' time.

M. QUINTANA (Argentine) said that the question of definitions was a matter of capital importance to the Argentine delegation. That was why he had asked that it might be discussed first. He admitted, however, that the discussion would probably be both long and complicated. Consequently, the Argentine delegation would agree to the discussion of technical questions first, but reserved the right to raise the point of "definitions" wherever necessary. It would seem that some questions could hardly be discussed without discussing definitions, even before the Commission came to consider Item 8 of the draft agenda.

*The provisional agenda was adopted.*

7. ITEM I OF THE AGENDA : ARTICLE 17 OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION.

*Article 17.*

"No vessel of war exceeding the limitations as to displacement or armament prescribed by the present Convention shall be acquired by, or constructed by, for or within the jurisdiction of any of the High Contracting Parties."

The PRESIDENT, after reading Article 17 of the draft Convention, reminded the Commission that certain proposals had been made by the Soviet delegation (document Conf. D.87). The German delegation had also submitted the following amendment :

"The High Contracting Parties agree not to acquire, nor to construct nor to have constructed war vessels of which the class, displacement or armament are not in conformity with the provisions of the present Treaty ;

"They similarly agree not to permit the construction of such war vessels within their jurisdiction."

M. VENTZOFF (Union of Socialist Soviet Republics) said that the Soviet proposal was, like the text of the draft Convention, divided into two parts. As regarded the first part, he thought the text of the German proposal was better and he could support it conditionally in view of the fact that the General Commission might decide to abolish certain categories of war vessels. With regard to the second part of the Soviet proposal, though the prohibition of the construction of vessels in foreign yards might be implicit in the existing text of Article 17, he thought it was preferable to state the fact explicitly.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) was aware that no final decision could be taken at the present stage, but it might be useful even now to discuss the possibility of making the wording fit every case. If the Conference or the Commission preferred to retain the text of the draft Convention, the German delegation would not raise any objection, but would reserve the right to revert to its proposal on the second reading when the decision of the General Commission was known regarding the suggested abolition of certain categories of vessels.

Vice-Admiral POUND (United Kingdom) observed that the wording of Article 17 was the same as the wording in the Washington and London Treaties. It had stood the test of time, and those who had had to apply this clause found it quite satisfactory. Of course, if a decision were taken to abolish certain categories of vessels, then the wording might have to be altered. That was not, however, a certainty ; so was it worth while discussing at length the possible alteration of an article which might never have to be altered ? He assumed that the idea of the German proposal was that it would be desirable to have a text ready if necessary. In reply to the Soviet delegation, he suggested that the words "shall be acquired by . . ." were of so wide a meaning that they covered all possible ways of acquiring ships. Surely therefore, no alteration was necessary.

Mr. SWANSON (United States of America) concurred with the views of the United Kingdom delegate. The United States were not in favour of modifying the wording of the Washington or London Treaties unless it was absolutely necessary. As the German delegation had suggested, the Commission could always reconsider this point at the second reading. Any discussion at present must necessarily be long and complicated. The point should therefore be reserved.

Vice-Admiral SURIE (Netherlands) also agreed that the original text of the draft Convention should be maintained. The German proposal could be held in reserve to be utilised if the General Commission decided to abolish certain classes of ships.

Admiral ACTON (Italy) agreed that the wording of Article 17, which was the wording used in the Washington and London Treaties, should not be altered at present.

Captain FERRAZ E CASTRO (Brazil) thought that the wording should be maintained, as it applied to all cases, even if alterations were made regarding ships and armaments in other parts of the Convention.

M. Charles DUMONT (France) urged that the original text should be retained in all cases, unless there were some absolutely imperative reason for change. France spoke in this matter as a signatory to the Washington Treaty and to that part of the London Treaty in which the wording of Article 17 occurred.

M. SAWADA (Japan) supported the proposal to maintain the text.

The PRESIDENT noted that most delegations were in favour of maintaining the present text. If, later, a decision were reached to abolish certain categories of ships, the Commission would have an opportunity of reconsidering this matter. He really thought that the wording was sufficiently far-reaching to allay the doubts felt by the Soviet delegation. Leaving aside the question as to how the text might best be embodied in the whole Convention, could not the Commission now decide to adopt this wording unanimously?

M. VENTZOFF (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Soviet delegation had no objection to the adoption of this wording provided it were definitely placed on record that, in the opinion of the majority of the delegations, the words "acquired by . . ." covered the building of warships in foreign yards.

#### 8. ITEM 2 OF THE AGENDA : ARTICLE 18 AND ANNEX IV TO CHAPTER B OF PART II OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION.

##### *Article 18.*

"In regard to the replacement of the vessels of war limited by the present Convention, the High Contracting Parties will comply with the rules set out in Annex IV to this Chapter."

The PRESIDENT remarked that there would be no difficulty in discussing this Article, except that the Article itself was entirely dependent upon Annex IV of the draft Convention. The Soviet delegation had proposed certain amendments (document Conf. D.87). The German delegation had also made the following proposal:

"2. A vessel shall be deemed to be 'over-age' when the following number of years have elapsed since the date of its completion:

"(a) Capital ships and cruisers: 20 years.

"(b) Destroyers: 16 years."

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT (Spain) wondered whether the discussion of this item would not be premature. Certain delegations had asked for the abolition of certain categories of vessels. If a quantitative limit were adopted, altering the question of tonnage, that in turn would alter the limits of age.

M. CHOUMENKOVITCH (Yugoslavia) agreed with the Spanish delegate. There was also another point—the historical clause. It must be remembered that certain countries had as yet practically no navy. If only replacements were allowed, these countries could not build any ships, for, having no vessels, they would have nothing to replace. That, however, was the point of the Soviet proposal. If it were decided not to enter into the substance of the question, the Naval Commission could not take up this proposal, which raised a question of principle.

Admiral ACTON (Italy) suggested that the text of Article 18 might be left as it stood, and the discussion regarding Annex IV might be postponed until the question of definitions had been disposed of.

Vice-Admiral SURIE (Netherlands) thought that the two questions—Article 18 and Annex IV—might be kept apart. The Commission might discuss Article 18 in its general bearings. He agreed with the Italian delegation that the text of Article 18 should be maintained.

Captain FERRAZ E CASTRO (Brazil) agreed with the Italian delegation. He thought the Soviet proposal tended to carry the discussion from a special to a general problem. Countries which had not yet completed their problem of naval construction would be placed at a great disadvantage if it were decided that countries might only replace what they already possessed.

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Commission should not enter into fundamentals. For the present, it had only to decide a point of procedure—namely, should it discuss Annex IV now, or later?

M. Charles DUMONT (France) pointed out that the Commission could not accept the wording of Article 18 and reserve its opinion regarding Annex IV. If it formally adopted Article 18, it would also be formally adopting Annex IV, since the two matters were bound up together. It would be possible, however, to discuss Annex IV in general terms, leaving each delegation free to maintain its own opinion. Each country would be entitled to put forward its claims on another occasion. Such an occasion would arise when Part II was examined. Moreover, there were various provisions relating to transitional measures. Consequently, the rights of all countries would be safeguarded. The only question which arose was, if this clause were adopted, at what age should vessels be scrapped?

It was possible to contemplate certain general hypotheses. In any case, it was desirable to have a full discussion. He was in favour of discussing Article 18 and Annex IV (relating to questions which were essentially technical and therefore within the province of the Commission), subject to any decisions that might be reached later. If, however, the Commission were to take into consideration all the points which delegations might wish to raise elsewhere, then discussion would become impossible.

General TANCZOS (Hungary) was in favour of deferring the discussion of Annex IV until a decision had been taken concerning definitions. If the Commission decided to discuss Annex IV immediately, the Hungarian delegation must reserve the right to revert to this item (Annex IV) later.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT (Spain) agreed with the Italian delegation. He doubted whether it would be advisable to take a provisional decision. The age-limit must necessarily vary in relation to the decisions taken with regard to capital ships, and their definition. Consequently, no useful purpose would be served in discussing this item now.

The PRESIDENT observed that a very interesting and important point had been raised which the Commission would doubtless encounter frequently in the course of its discussions—namely, was it useful to discuss certain articles of the draft Convention at the present juncture? He trusted that the Commission would not be tempted to exaggerate difficulties, but, if it decided that the discussion of certain matters were impossible at present, it could always adjourn the discussion of the item in question and proceed with another item.

Vice-Admiral POUND (United Kingdom) agreed with the French delegate. Annex IV was no more controversial than the other parts of the Convention, and the Commission should avoid postponing one by one the majority of the questions submitted to it—a procedure which would only delay the Conference's work.

Article 18 and Annex IV should be considered as soon as possible. If certain delegations were not ready to discuss the question at the moment, the Naval Commission could nevertheless consider it at a forthcoming meeting.

M. Charles DUMONT (France) supported his contention with a further argument. If the Commission decided to postpone the consideration of Article 18 until a decision had been reached on the subject of definitions, it must also await the General Commission's decision on Articles 14, 15 and 16 of the draft Convention, which had been referred back to it by the Naval Commission. He pointed out that the French delegation was only too anxious to expedite the Commission's work, but understood that the rights of the various delegations were fully reserved.

Captain FERRAZ E CASTRO (Brazil) considered that Article 18 presented two different questions. The first, a question of principle regarding the replacement of vessels which had reached the age-limit—a question which the Naval Commission could there and then accept or reject; the second, as to the rules by which this age-limit should be fixed. Where the second question was concerned, he agreed with the Italian delegate that it would be well to await a decision on the question of definitions.

M. CHOUMENKOVITCH (Yugoslavia) shared the French delegate's views and saw no objection to the Naval Commission's immediately beginning to examine Article 18 and Annex IV.

His only objection was to the draft amendment submitted by the Soviet delegation, the result of which would be to fix the armaments of the various countries definitively at their present level. In any case it was a question of principle, which lay within the competence of the General Commission.

The PRESIDENT thought that the Soviet draft amendment raised a question of principle which lay outside the scope of Annex IV. If, however, the amendment were accepted, it would necessarily produce certain effects on the Annex.

He proposed that the Naval Commission should examine Article 18 and Annex IV, the Soviet amendment being for the present reserved.

Admiral ACTON (Italy) said that, subject to any decisions which might be taken subsequently, he would not press his proposal and would be prepared to discuss Article 18 and Annex IV at the next meeting of the Commission.

M. VENTZOFF (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), in reply to the delegate of Yugoslavia, stated that, in the Soviet delegation's view, the question was now one of disarmament, and the texts of the Washington and London Treaties were therefore inadequate. The Soviet delegation would press for a substantial reduction of tonnage, and in these circumstances the construction of new ships should only be authorised to replace those which had reached their "age-limit".

The Soviet delegation, however, recognised that it would be difficult to consider Annex IV immediately. It had advocated the necessity of discussing questions of definitions beforehand. Consequently, it proposed that the Naval Commission should in the first place agree, at the present meeting, on the definition of certain categories of ships.

The PRESIDENT thought that, in view of the differences of opinion which had become manifest in the Commission on this question of procedure, it would be useless to commence the examination of Article 18 and Annex IV. He proposed that their examination should be deferred until the next meeting.

The discussion had not been by any means useless: it had proved the close interdependence of the various points to be examined.

If the Naval Commission saw no objection, he would, at the beginning of the next meeting, ask the Commission to decide by vote whether Article 18 and Annex IV should be discussed immediately, and whether the definitions should be considered first.

#### 9. ITEM 3 OF THE AGENDA : ARTICLE 20 OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION.

##### *Article 20.*

"In the event of a High Contracting Party's being engaged in war, such Party shall not use as a vessel of war any vessel of war which may be under construction within its jurisdiction for any other Power, or which may have been constructed within its jurisdiction for another Power and not delivered."

The PRESIDENT noted that no amendment to this article had been proposed.

Vice-Admiral POUND (United Kingdom) pointed out that a similar clause was to be found in the Washington Treaty. The present case, however, was rather extraordinary. Article 20 was the only naval article in the draft Convention which laid down certain obligations for the signatories after hostilities had commenced.

In drawing up provisions, account should be taken of human nature. The provisions of Article 20 would expose a country fighting for its very existence to too great a temptation. It was not certain that public opinion in such a country would admit that ships which had been built for another country should remain unutilised, still less that they should be handed over to a foreign Power.

He realised that his proposal was rather revolutionary, and that the delegations would wish to have time to examine it. He would repeat, however, that it was not very desirable to include in the Convention an article which would be the only one referring to a state of war.

Consequently, the British delegation proposed the omission of Article 20 of the draft Convention.

Naturally, Great Britain would continue to be bound by the similar provision in the Treaty of Washington, but his country did not desire to see this clause repeated in the future Convention.

The PRESIDENT pointed out that the Preparatory Commission itself, which had taken the same line as that followed in various proposals pending before the Conference, introduced into the Convention a whole series of rules to be observed in case of war, particularly as regarded chemical warfare, the manufacture of certain arms and even the training of personnel to use those arms. It could not be said that Article 20 of the draft Convention was the only one of its kind or that it went beyond the general framework of the Convention.

Mr. SWANSON (United States of America) could not agree with the delegate of Great Britain. Article 20 was a very important clause. It was essential to avoid, as far as possible, all grounds for suspicion between the various countries. If Article 20 were to be omitted, all certainty regarding the proportion established between the arms of the various countries would disappear. There might be surprises; certain countries might suddenly be found to be much stronger in war-time than they had been prior to the outbreak of hostilities. United States opinion regarded this clause as indispensable and the United States delegation was opposed to its omission.

M. SAWADA (Japan) shared the United States delegate's views. The provision of Article 20 was one of the most important which the Preparatory Commission had adopted. To omit this clause would be to shake the very basis of the Convention.

Consequently, the Japanese delegation was opposed to the omission of Article 20.

M. Charles DUMONT (France) said that France, which had signed the Washington and London Treaties, was anxious to adhere to the position she had adopted. Coming to the Disarmament Conference she desired that no advance already made in the cause of disarmament should again be brought into question. She hoped that the future Convention would constitute progress and would strengthen former treaties. The Convention would doubtless comprise other articles relating to war-time (gas warfare etc.).

The British delegate had mentioned the temptation to which certain countries might be exposed in war-time. In the first place, M. Charles Dumont thought that it would be for the *élite* of such countries, in conjunction with the *élite* of mankind, to see that these temptations were resisted. But again, if Article 20 were omitted, there would be a still stronger temptation in peace-time for every shipbuilding country to obtain, by budgetary expedients or other means, the greatest possible number of orders, so that it should, in the case of war, possess armaments far greater than those to which it was entitled under the Convention. That was a very serious matter, and he hoped that the British delegate would admit that the arguments put forward by the other delegates were justified.

France was also a shipbuilding country with a number of important clients. But she felt that, if hostilities ever broke out, she would be morally bound to leave all vessels under construction for other Powers in her shipyards in whatever state the outbreak of hostilities happened to find them.

Admiral ACTON (Italy) reminded the Commission that Articles 13 and 17 of the Treaty of Washington both referred to a state of war. Article 20 of the draft Convention ought to be maintained, and he asked the British delegate to be good enough to withdraw his proposal.

That equilibrium between the armaments of the various countries, which the Convention aimed at establishing, would be undermined if shipbuilding Powers were allowed to utilise in war-time the ships under construction for other Powers in their shipyards.

Vice-Admiral POUND (United Kingdom) noted that the Naval Commission had very definitely pronounced against his proposal. Consequently, he would withdraw it.

*Article 20 of the draft Convention was adopted without modification.*

#### 10. ITEM 4 OF THE AGENDA: ARTICLE 21 OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION.

##### *Article 21.*

"Each of the High Contracting Parties undertakes not to dispose, by gift, sale, or any mode of transfer, of any vessel of war in such a manner that such vessel may become a vessel of war in the navy of any foreign Power."

The PRESIDENT observed that the Naval Commission had before it an amendment submitted by the Soviet delegation (document Conf.D.87).

M. VENTZOFF (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he was not opposed to the maintenance of Article 21 as it stood.

M. HIITONEN (Finland) said that if, as he supposed, the whole Commission interpreted Article 21 as not in any way restricting the possible joint action provided for in the Covenant, it would be sufficient if this point were definitely stated in the Minutes. Otherwise, if Article 21 were likely to weaken the scope of the Covenant, the question would be one of principle which would have to be decided by the General Commission.

The PRESIDENT thought that no misunderstanding could be possible. The expression "Foreign Power" could obviously not include the League of Nations itself.

*Article 21 was adopted without modification.*

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FOURTH MEETING.

*Held on Tuesday, March 15th, 1932, at 10.30 a.m.*

President : M. COLBAN.

II. ITEM 8 OF THE AGENDA: ANNEX III TO CHAPTER B OF PART II OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION.

*“ Annex III.*

*“ DEFINITIONS.*

“ For the purposes of the present Convention, the following expressions are to be understood in the sense defined in this Annex :

*“ (a) Capital Ships.*

“ (i) Vessels of war, not aircraft carriers, whose displacement exceeds 10,000 tons (10,160 metric tons) standard displacement, or which carry a gun with a calibre exceeding 8 inches (203 mm.).

“ (ii) For Parties who do not possess any capital ship exceeding 8,000 tons (8,128 metric tons) standard displacement :

“ Vessels of war not exceeding 8,000 tons (8,128 metric tons) standard displacement and the calibre of whose guns exceeds 8 inches (203 mm.).

*“ (b) Aircraft-carriers.*

“ Surface vessels of war, whatever their displacement, designed for the specific and exclusive purpose of carrying aircraft and so constructed that aircraft can be launched therefrom and landed thereon.

*“ (c) Cruisers.*

“ Surface vessels of war, other than capital ships or aircraft carriers, the standard displacement of which exceeds 1,850 tons (1,880 metric tons) or with a gun above 5.1 inches (130 mm.) calibre.

“ The cruiser category is divided into two sub-categories as follows :

“ (i) Cruisers carrying a gun above 6.1 inches (155 mm.) calibre.

“ (ii) Cruisers not carrying a gun above 6.1 inches (155 mm.) calibre.

*“ (d) Destroyers.*

“ Surface vessels of war, the standard displacement of which does not exceed 1,850 tons (1,880 metric tons) and with a gun not above 5.1 inches (130 mm.) calibre.

*“ (cd) Light Surface Vessels.*

“ Surface vessels of war, other than aircraft carriers, the standard displacement of which does not exceed 10,000 tons (10,160 metric tons), and with guns not exceeding 8 inches (203 mm.) calibre.

“ The category of light surface vessels is divided into two categories, as follows :

“ (i) Vessels carrying a gun above 6.1 inches (155 mm.) calibre.

“ (ii) Vessels not carrying a gun above 6.1 inches (155 mm.) calibre.

*“ Standard Displacement.*

“ 1. The standard displacement of a surface vessel is the displacement of the vessel complete, fully manned, engined and equipped ready for sea, including all armament and ammunition, equipment, outfit, provisions and fresh water for crew, miscellaneous stores and implements of every description that are intended to be carried in war, but without fuel or reserve feed-water on board.

“ 2. The standard displacement of a submarine is the surface displacement of the vessel complete (exclusive of the water in non-watertight structure), fully manned, engined and equipped ready for sea, including all armament and ammunition, equipment, outfit provisions for crew, miscellaneous stores and implements of every description that are intended to be carried in war, but without fuel, lubricating oil, fresh water or ballast water of any kind on board.

“ 3. Each naval combatant vessel shall be rated at its displacement tonnage when in the standard condition.

“ The word ‘ tons ’, except in the expression ‘ metric tons ’, shall be understood to be the ton of 2,240 pounds (1,016 kilos).”

The PRESIDENT announced that the Bureau, having consulted the various delegations, had considered it desirable to proceed forthwith to discuss definitions—Item 8 on the Agenda, *i.e.* Annex III to Chapter B of Part II of the Draft Convention.

In this connection, the Soviet delegation’s proposals were contained in document Conf. D.87. There was also an amendment proposed by the German delegation, as follows :

“ For the purposes of the present Convention, the following expressions—except in the case of special vessels or exempt vessels—are to be understood in the sense defined in this Annex :

“ (a) *Capital Ships.*

“ (i) Vessels of war, not aircraft carriers, whose displacement exceeds 6,000 tons (6,096 metric tons) standard displacement or which carry a gun with a calibre exceeding 5.9 inches (150 mm.) :

“ (ii) For Parties who do not possess any capital ship exceeding 6,000 tons (6,096 metric tons) standard displacement :

“ Vessels of war not exceeding 6,000 tons (6,096 metric tons) standard displacement and the calibre of whose guns exceeds 5.9 inches (150 mm.).

“ (b) *Aircraft-carriers.*

“ Surface vessels of war, whatever their displacement, designed for the specific and exclusive purpose of carrying aircraft and so constructed that aircraft can be launched therefrom and landed thereon.

“ (c) *Cruisers.*

“ Surface vessels of war, other than capital ships or aircraft carriers, the standard displacement of which exceeds 800 tons (813 metric tons) or with a gun above 4.1 inches (105 mm.).

“ (d) *Destroyers.*

“ Surface vessels of war, the standard displacement of which does not exceed 800 tons (813 metric tons) and with a gun not above 4.1 inches (105 mm.) calibre.

“ (e) *Special Vessels.*

“ The definition ‘ special vessel ’ shall apply to vessels of war which, by reason of the special use to which they are put, do not come under definitions (a) to (d). Such special vessels shall be fixed nominally by the Conference for each of the High Contracting Parties.”

Further, the United Kingdom delegation proposed the replacement of paragraph (a) by the following :

“ (a) *Capital Ships.*

“ (1) Vessels of war, not aircraft carriers, whose displacement exceeds 10,000 tons (10,160 metric tons) standard displacement, or which carry a gun with a calibre exceeding 8 inches (203 mm.).

“ The capital ship category is divided into two sub-categories, as follows :

“ (i) Capital ships whose standard displacement exceeds 8,000 tons.

“ (ii) Capital ships whose standard displacement is 8,000 tons or below.”

The Spanish delegation proposed the addition of the following after the definitions of the classes :

“ NOTE. — The above definitions of the various classes of vessels apply to units actually in service. They are consequently of a purely provisional character, and will have to be revised and, if necessary, amended, if the General Commission should approve of qualitative limitations differing from those laid down in the Washington and London Treaties.”

The Argentine delegation proposed the addition of a note, as follows, at the end of paragraph (a) — Capital ships (i) :

“ NOTE. — Vessels completed before January 1st, 1910, which do not displace more than 8,000 tons (8,128 metric tons), even if they mount guns exceeding 8 inches (203 mm.), will be considered temporarily as being in category (c) Cruisers—sub-category i, and may only be replaced in this category.”

Lastly, the Hungarian delegation, considering that the naval strength of a Power does not depend solely on sea-floating material, but also on the floating material of river forces, and that those river forces may be of great importance, especially for countries having no sea-coasts, and suggesting that these restrictions be applicable only to States which have no oversea colonial interests, proposes the addition of a new definition, namely :

“(e) *River Gunboats, Monitors, Scouting Launches.*

“ Surface vessels of war, specially built for river work, whose standard displacement does not exceed 250 tons and the calibre of whose guns does not exceed 3.1 inches (80 mm.)”

Since the German proposal, containing as it did numerous references to figures, went farther than the British proposal (which amounted to little more than a re-draft), he proposed that the German amendment should be discussed first.

It was understood that no political issues were raised : the Commission's sole duty was to define the meaning of the terms employed.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) asked whether it would not be preferable, before examining the amendments, to have a short general discussion on the whole matter.

The PRESIDENT replied that the Bureau had no objection if no delegations objected.

M. Charles DUMONT (France) asked what was meant by a general discussion of definitions. All the Commission had to do was to see whether all the terms fulfilled their purpose, and whether any were mutually contradictory.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) observed that some of the suggestions referred to single items, while others referred to the Annex as a whole. Before, therefore, the former were examined, he would be glad if the Commission could discuss the questions touching on the whole Annex. Though he was aware that the matter of definitions was a delicate one, he agreed that the French delegation had been right in suggesting that they should start the discussion on definitions.

Two points should be borne in mind : (1) The definitions in the draft Convention to be discussed by the Commission would not involve decisions of principle—those decisions would be reached elsewhere. The German delegation, moreover, did not intend in the Naval Commission to make any reference at present to Article 53. (2) There must be no thought of using this discussion to secure armament in certain directions instead of disarmament. Nevertheless, he felt sure that disarmament could be achieved only if certain Articles of the Treaty of Versailles were taken into consideration.

In any case, the figures in the draft were only illustrative and not final, even if they reproduced what had already been laid down in the Washington and London Treaties. The German delegation, therefore, had also ventured to indicate certain figures in conformity with the method followed in the draft Convention. The aim of the Commission was, after all, to arrive at accurate and adequate definitions.

For instance, Annex III contained no reference to small torpedo craft. Under the Versailles Treaty, Germany had been limited to craft of 200 tons. In the London Treaty, the maximum limit of exempt ships was 600 tons. Obviously, the authors of the London Treaty considered that ships under 600 tons were of a purely defensive character. With that the German delegation agreed, and proposed for that reason that there should be no reference to vessels under 600 tons.

Again, though Germany was prohibited under the Treaty of Versailles from possessing aircraft, the German delegation had asked for a definition of aircraft carriers, seeing that the definition itself would not preclude the General Commission from deciding on their abolition.

There was no definition of submarines in the draft Convention. In the light of what was being discussed in the Air Commission, he wondered whether a definition of submarines should not be added to Annex III. Finally, he proposed that the subject-matter of Annexes II and III should be reversed—*i.e.*, Annex II should deal with "definitions" and Annex III with "special vessels".

M. VENTZOFF (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) observed that the Soviet delegation had made proposals concerning the whole range of definitions. This question of principle was perhaps the most important on the Naval Commission's agenda. The main aim of these definitions was to achieve a real and substantial reduction of navies. In recent years, the number of vessels in each category had increased, but the most important fact during this period had been qualitative development. Qualitative indexes were directly connected with the problem of definitions. For instance, the main tendency of recent years in the reconstruction of great navies had been to construct smaller vessels of greater fighting power. A French destroyer of the "Aigle" type could outrange, and almost equal in its weight of broadside, a British cruiser of the "Curaçao" type. Ships of the "Nelson" type, built in conformity with the rules of the Washington Treaty, afforded no point of comparison with war-time dreadnoughts. In the matter of the total weight of main broadside, speed and protection, a greater yield had been obtained in relation to tonnage. He could quote many other examples. It would, for instance, be extremely interesting to examine in this light the data concerning the new American cruisers of the "Washington" type and new submarine cruisers and the most recent destroyers. In any case, all this represented an enormous increase in the cost price of modern vessels, which was reflected in naval budgets.

The conclusion was that, if there were to be any serious attempt to reduce navies, not only total tonnage or tonnage by categories, but the qualitative indexes of the various classes of ships must be limited.

In this connection, the draft of the Preparatory Commission only repeated the rules of the Treaty of London. The Soviet delegation believed that this was totally inadequate. In its second draft Convention (document Conf. D.87), it had put forward the following proposals which it maintained:

- (1) To refrain from building war vessels over 10,000 tons. Not to mount anything greater than 12-in. guns.
- (2) To define as a capital ship every warship of 7,000 tons or more mounting 8-in. or greater calibre guns.
- (3) To define as a cruiser every surface warship of over 1,200 tons with guns of more than 4-in. calibre.
- (4) To define as a destroyer every surface vessel of 1,200 tons or less with 4-in. guns or less.
- (5) To establish for submarines a maximum tonnage of 600 tons.

The Soviet delegation did not propose any definition for aircraft-carriers, which, being of an entirely aggressive nature, ought to be abolished unconditionally.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT (Spain) thought that the German and Soviet proposals, though they contained many interesting points, ought not to be discussed immediately. The Commission should confine its attention to the matter of correct and adequate definitions. In drawing up the Washington Treaty, great difficulty had been experienced whenever an attempt had been made to provide qualitative definitions. Finally, resort had been had to purely conventional definitions, which led to the anomaly that a ship of 10,000 tons might be a cruiser, while a ship of 10,100 tons might be a capital ship. In the present case again, the definitions were conventional and all depended on tonnage. It should therefore be agreed that the present definitions were quite provisional, and would have to be revised after the General Commission had reached a decision on qualitative characteristics.

Vice-Admiral POUND (United Kingdom) said that, although the Soviet delegate's information concerning naval increases might be correct in general, the naval budget in the United Kingdom had been steadily decreasing each year.

With regard to definitions, he had understood that the Commission would discuss only the wording of the clauses, and that there would be no discussion that day regarding the figures. Almost every point concerning the abolition, limitation and reduction of categories of ships would be discussed by the General Commission. If a suggestion were being made to discuss figures immediately, he wished to propose that such a discussion be adjourned.

Certain delegations had put forward proposals which had not yet been circulated. These proposals were doubtless of great importance to the delegations which had submitted them, but he thought their discussion should be reserved, not merely until such time as the proposals had been circulated, but until the delegations had had leisure to examine them with all the care they merited.

This discussion afforded an opportunity of making clear to the Commission the attitude of the United Kingdom delegation in regard to the Naval clauses of the Convention which they were trying to evolve.

Sir John Simon, in his speech during the general discussion, had informed the Conference that it was the opinion of His Majesty's Government that the Washington and London Naval Treaties should be retained intact until December 31st, 1936.

These Treaties were arrived at after prolonged negotiations and represented, in fact, the only measure of international agreement that existed up to the present on the subject of disarmament. His Majesty's Government was impressed with the necessity of maintaining these Treaties and of doing nothing that might jeopardize what had already been achieved.

Anyone who had followed the negotiation of these Treaties would realise that the agreement which they represented depended upon a very carefully adjusted balance of needs and strengths. Any piecemeal alteration of details might upset that balance.

The United Kingdom delegation earnestly hoped that the Commission would bear these considerations in mind in connection with any suggested amendments to the draft Convention which might run counter to these Treaties to which the British Government was signatory.

This declaration was in no way intended to block discussion of qualitative limitation, provided such discussion did not prejudice the Treaties.

The PRESIDENT assured the United Kingdom delegation that there was no intention to discuss figures for the present. In that matter, the Naval Commission would be bound by the decision of the General Commission. It had been laid down in M. Beneš' report that a number of questions would be referred to the Naval Commission only "when the question of principle had been settled" by the competent body. He wondered whether the text of Annex III could not be adopted subject to the reservation that the figures were given as mere indications. On the other hand, the Commission need not perhaps be too strictly bound by this reservation. He would propose, therefore, that the Commission should examine the text of Annex III, disregarding the figures. It might, of course, be argued that it would be difficult to consider the question of capital ships without referring to the figures. He concurred; but nevertheless he thought that some measure of agreement might be reached concerning the general acceptability of the terms.

Captain MARONI (Italy) said that, subject to the action that would be taken on the proposals made by M. Grandi at the plenary meeting on February 10th with regard to qualitative limitation, the Italian delegation saw no reason why the discussion of Annex III should not be begun.

Vice-Admiral SURIE (Netherlands) thought it would be prudent simply to adopt Annex III as it stood, subject to such modifications as might be rendered necessary by the decisions reached by the General Commission, and subject to any new definitions which might have to be added, such as those of "river monitors" and other units of river fleets.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT (Spain) supported this proposal, which concurred entirely with his own. Even if the suggestion were that the Commission should discuss the general provisions of Annex III without discussing the figures, it could not do so until it was aware of the decisions taken by the General Commission. For instance, certain subdivisions in the Annex might be deleted.

The PRESIDENT observed that, if the Commission accepted the Netherlands proposal, it would still have to consider the draft amendment submitted by the United Kingdom delegation with regard to paragraph (a) of Annex III (capital ships).

He had stated at the beginning of the meeting that this amendment was merely a matter of drafting, but certain delegations had informed him that they attached a wider interpretation to it. That being so, it might perhaps be preferable not to discuss the amendment at present. The Commission might adopt the whole of Annex III, and come back to the United Kingdom amendment after the General Commission had communicated its decisions.

Vice-Admiral POUND (United Kingdom) stated that the amendment proposed by the British delegation was indeed merely a matter of drafting. The suggestion was that paragraph (ii) of Section (a) should be omitted. The paragraph was unnecessary, in that the ships it defined were, owing to the fact that their guns exceeded 8 inches (203 mm.), covered by the definition given in paragraph (i). Moreover, Table II annexed to Chapter B of Part II of the draft

Convention showed that the Preparatory Commission had desired to divide the category of capital vessels into two sub-categories. That was why the British delegation proposed to mention this division in the definition of capital ships.

If, however, certain delegations thought that the British amendment tended to introduce changes other than mere drafting changes, the British delegation would agree that its amendment should be examined later.

The PRESIDENT noted that the Commission agreed to adopt Annex III as a very valuable guide in the further conduct of its work.

It might, however, be desirable perhaps to examine the last part of Annex III concerning standard displacement. At the end of paragraph (2) of this Section, it was said that standard displacement was calculated "without fuel or reserve feed-water on board". On the other hand, in Article 16 of the draft Convention submitted in 1928 by the Soviet delegation (document Conf. D.87), it was specified that standard displacement should be calculated "including fuel and reserve feed-water for engines and boilers".

The wording of the Preparatory Commission's draft Convention was that of the Washington and London Treaties. The point was not, however, of capital importance, because the main question was to determine the outside tonnage for each category of ships; if it were decided to include fuel and reserve feed-water in this tonnage, it would be sufficient to increase the figures accordingly.

Did the Soviet delegation wish this amendment to be discussed immediately, or would it agree that its amendment be examined only after the General Commission had communicated its decisions?

M. VENTZOFF (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) observed that the Preparatory Commission had discussed this question in detail. The Soviet delegation saw no objection to the President's proposal that the discussion should be adjourned, but desired that this point should be discussed in connection with tonnage.

The PRESIDENT noted that Annex III, including the paragraph concerning standard displacement, was provisionally adopted by the Commission as a guide for the conduct of its work.

M. QUINTANA (Argentine) explained, in support of the Argentine delegation's amendment, that, under the definition given in paragraph (a) of Annex III, a number of old war-vessels belonging to the Argentine, Sweden and certain South American countries would be classed as capital ships because they carried one or two guns of a calibre exceeding 8 inches (203 mm.), in spite of the fact that, owing to the age and type of their guns, they were far from being able to compete, from a fighting point of view, with modern capital ships.

Nor should vessels such as monitors, coastguard vessels, etc., which responded to the needs of certain countries having a very indented coast-line and an extensive river system, be classed as capital ships. Sweden had persuaded the Preparatory Commission to accept an amendment concerning the definition of capital ships.

The advantage of the Argentine proposal was that it avoided all necessity for modifying an already accepted definition.

General TANCZOS (Hungary) explained, in support of the Hungarian proposal, that, as the Preparatory Commission had only considered sea-going vessels, the Hungarian delegation desired to supply an omission by proposing that a number of units of river navies should be defined. This question was of special interest to countries having no sea-coast.

The PRESIDENT said that the Hungarian proposal related to vessels the standard displacement of which did not exceed 250 tons, and which would normally therefore be included in the category of exempt vessels.

He noted that the discussion on Annex III was terminated.

## 12. ITEM 2 OF THE AGENDA: ANNEX IV TO CHAPTER B OF PART II OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION.

### " Annex IV.

#### " RULES FOR REPLACEMENT.

" 1. Except as provided in paragraph 4 of this Annex, no vessel limited by this Convention shall be replaced until it becomes 'over-age'.

" 2. A vessel shall be deemed to be 'over-age' when the following number of years have elapsed since the date of its completion:

" (a) Capital ships: 20<sup>1</sup> years, subject to special provision as may be necessary for the replacement of existing ships.

<sup>1</sup> Under the London Treaty, certain Powers agreed not to exercise their rights to lay down the keels of capital ship replacement tonnage during the years 1931 to 1936 inclusive, as provided in the Washington Treaty.

“(b) Aircraft-carriers : 20 years, subject to special provision as may be necessary for existing ships.

“(c) Surface vessels exceeding 3,000 tons (3,048 metric tons) but not exceeding 10,000 tons (10,160 metric tons) standard displacement :

“(i) If laid down before January 1st, 1920, 16 years ;

“(ii) If laid down after December 31st, 1919, 20 years.

“(d) Surface vessels not exceeding 3,000 tons (3,048 metric tons) standard displacement :

“(i) If laid down before January 1st, 1921, 12 years ;

“(ii) If laid down after December 31st, 1920, 16 years.

“(e) Submarines : 13 years.

“3. The keels of replacement tonnage shall not be laid down more than three years before the year in which the vessel to be replaced becomes ‘over-age’ : but this period is reduced to two years in the case of any replacement surface vessel not exceeding 3,000 tons (3,048 metric tons) standard displacement.

“The right of replacement is not lost by delay in laying down replacement tonnage.

“4. In the event of loss or accidental destruction, a vessel may be replaced immediately ; but such replacement tonnage shall be subject to the limits of displacement and to the other provisions of this Convention.”

The PRESIDENT reminded the Commission that it had begun the examination of Annex IV of the draft Convention, but had been held up by the question of definitions. The Commission had now adopted provisionally the definitions of Annex III, and could consequently continue its examination of Annex IV.

The discussion therefore was now open on Annex IV, which would be examined paragraph by paragraph. Unless any delegation insisted, he proposed that there should be no general discussion beforehand.

*Paragraph 1 of Annex IV was adopted without modification.*

The PRESIDENT then read paragraph 2, and reminded the Commission that several amendments had been submitted on this point :

(1) A Soviet proposal (Article 16 of the draft Convention submitted by the Soviet delegation in 1928, document Conf. D.87).

(2) A German proposal, as follows :

“2. A vessel shall be deemed to be ‘over-age’ when the following number of years have elapsed since the date of its completion :

“(a) Capital ships and cruisers : 20 years.

“(b) Destroyers : 16 years.”

(3) A British proposal, as follows :

Add a new paragraph 5 in the following sense ; with the object of linking up Annex IV with Annex V :

“5. Vessels replaced shall be disposed of in accordance with the provisions of Annex V to this chapter.”

(4) A Spanish proposal, as follows :

Replace paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) by the following :

“(a) Vessels exceeding 10,000 tons displacement : 24 years.

“(b) Surface vessels exceeding 3,000 tons but not exceeding 10,000 tons standard displacement : 20 years.

“(c) Surface vessels not exceeding 3,000 tons standard displacement : 16 years.

“(d) Submarines : 14 years.”

(5) A Hungarian proposal to add to paragraph 2 the following :

“River gunboats, monitors, scouting launches : 25 years.”

M. VENTZOFF (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thought that the Commission could not discuss the age-limit for the various categories of ships before it had ascertained the exact definition of these ships. Accordingly, he asked that age-limits should not be discussed. As, however, he did not desire to hold up the work of the Commission, he requested the Bureau to be good enough to ask the General Commission to discuss the definitions of ships and the rules for replacement as soon as possible.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) explained that the German delegation, having proposed the abolition of aircraft-carriers and submarines, was logically precluded from referring to these categories of ships in its amendment. The draft Convention proposed for destroyers an age-limit of sixteen years as from the date of their completion. In the Treaty of Versailles, the age was calculated as from the date of launching and the figure adopted was fifteen years. The German delegation was all in favour of introducing stricter rules in a general convention such as the one now under discussion.

Captain FERRAZ E CASTRO (Brazil) was of opinion that the Soviet delegation's proposal raised a principle which ought to be discussed by the General Commission.

The PRESIDENT reminded the Commission that there was a proposal to adjourn the examination of the question of age-limits until the General Commission had taken a decision regarding definitions. What was the opinion of the other delegations on this question of procedure?

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT (Spain) thought that, if the Commission were not going to discuss figures, it had better also adjourn this discussion on age-limits until the General Commission had reached a decision concerning definitions.

M. Charles DUMONT (France) thought that an effort should be made to push forward the work of the Conference. All the members of the Naval Commission were agreed that questions of principle should be reserved, but the Commission should examine all the technical questions and settle them, if possible. At its meeting on the previous day, the General Commission, to which the Air Commission had referred the whole of a certain problem, had felt bound to observe that the various Commissions ought to provide it with a number of technical data to enable it to discuss questions of principle.

No decisions which might be reached concerning the abolition of certain categories of ships, or prohibitions or limitations, would be likely to effect the determination of the age-limit of various types of vessels. That was a purely technical question, and the Commission was fully qualified to discuss the time-resisting capacity of the various types of vessels. The experts on the Commission could even now give an authorised opinion on the desirability of increasing or decreasing the various age-limits.

He therefore strongly urged that the Commission should not adjourn the examination of the whole of this question.

The PRESIDENT pointed out that, in fixing the various age-limits, the Commission would not be in any way prejudging a subsequent decision regarding various categories of ships. As in the case of definitions, the Commission ought to avail itself provisionally of the classification given in the draft Convention, it being understood that alterations could always be made later. The Commission need not fear that it would be binding itself by adopting any particular age-limit for any particular category of ships. In the matter of ships of over 10,000 tons, for instance, it might suggest an age-limit even if these ships were later on abolished. Certain steps could be proposed with regard to these vessels, which, for the present at least, were still in existence.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) concurred with the French delegate. No delegation could be in a more difficult position from the point of view of discussing certain technical details immediately than the German delegation. It was nevertheless indispensable that the Naval Commission should make every effort to push forward as far as possible with its work, pending the decisions of the General Commission. One thing that had to be avoided was that the various Commissions should keep on referring questions to one another.

Consequently, he would beg the Soviet delegate to withdraw his proposal that the discussion of age-limits should be adjourned. As the President had observed, it would be possible at any time, in the light of the decisions of the General Commission, to revise the figures adopted.

Mr. SWANSON (United States of America) was in entire agreement with the French and German delegates. The age-limits of ships was pre-eminently a question for the Naval Commission to decide—in fact, that Commission was the only one qualified to decide it. If the experts of the Naval Commission were unable to define the period at the end of which a ship of a given type might be regarded as "over-age", then who could? If the Naval Commission were unable to answer a question like that, then what other question could it answer? By reaching a decision on the subject, the Naval Commission would facilitate the work of the General Commission.

He hoped, therefore, that the delegate of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics would be good enough to withdraw his proposal.

M. VENTZOFF (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) argued that the question of age-limits was intimately bound up with that of definitions. Nevertheless, in deference to the wishes of other delegations, he consented to withdraw his proposal and agree that the age-limits to be adopted provisionally should be discussed immediately.



The PRESIDENT thanked the delegate of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on behalf of the Commission.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT (Spain) observed that the Spanish proposal had been drafted so as not to prejudice any decisions which might be taken concerning definitions: the figures it proposed depended solely on tonnage. This proposal would raise the age-limit of the various types of vessels, thus tending to decrease the aggressive potentialities of navies. All delegates were aware that, after twenty years of existence, a warship of 10,000 tons was still in perfectly good condition and would only be replaced in order to obtain a more modern vessel of greater fighting capacity.

M. SAWADA (Japan) said that discussion had now reached a point at which the Japanese delegation thought it opportune to submit the following proposals:

" 1. Present paragraphs (a) and (b) of No. 2 to be amended as follows:

" (a) Capital ships: those exceeding 20,000 tons (20,320 metric tons), 26 years; those not exceeding 20,000 tons (20,320 metric tons), 20 years; subject to special provisions as may be necessary for the replacement of existing ships.

" (b) Aircraft-carriers: those exceeding 20,000 tons (20,320 metric tons), 26 years; those not exceeding 20,000 tons (20,320 metric tons), 20 years; subject to special provisions as may be necessary for existing ships.

" 2. The following provision to be added at the end of the first paragraph of No. 3:

" But, in the case of a surface vessel exceeding 20,000 tons (20,320 metric tons), this period is extended to four years."

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## FIFTH MEETING

*Held on Thursday, March 17th, 1932, at 10.30 a.m.*

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President: M. COLBAN.

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### 13. COMMUNICATION FROM THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT REGARDING THE ELECTION OF HÜSNÜ BEY.

The PRESIDENT stated that he had received a communication from the Turkish Government. The latter regretted that Tevfik Bey had been obliged to return to Turkey, and thanked the Commission for electing Hüsnü Bey, delegate of Turkey, to replace him as Vice-President of the Commission.

### 14. — INTERPRETATION OF THE TERM "EFFECTIVES".

The PRESIDENT pointed out that the Naval Commission had decided to adjourn its examination of the question of effectives until the Land Commission had reached a decision with regard to land effectives.

The Commission's Rapporteur, M. Westman, had followed the work of the Land Commission and its sub-committee of experts. A questionnaire had been addressed to all the delegations represented on the Land Commission, asking them how they interpreted the term "effectives". The Committee of Experts had received replies in writing as well as verbal explanations from certain delegations.

M. Westman thought the Naval Commission should note the results thus obtained and should take similar action with regard to naval effectives.

The Bureau could study the question in consultation with the delegations specially interested—in particular, the United Kingdom, French, German, Italian, Japanese, United States and Soviet delegations—and any other delegations which desired to participate in this study. The Bureau might prepare, with the representatives of these delegations, a questionnaire concerning the interpretation of the term "effectives". That questionnaire could be forwarded direct to the delegations, which would be able to study it and reply to it during the Easter recess. The Naval Commission would then have important documentation at its disposal when its proceedings reopened.

15. ITEM 2 OF THE AGENDA : ANNEX IV TO CHAPTER B OF PART II OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION. (Continuation of the discussion.)

The PRESIDENT pointed out that the Commission had begun to examine paragraph 2 of Annex IV, and that various amendments had been tabled. The amendment furthest from the original text was that submitted by the Spanish delegation.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT (Spain) explained that, in drafting its new rules for replacement, the Spanish delegation had borne in mind that the General Commission's decisions with regard to limitation of the tonnage of various categories of vessels were not yet known. For that reason it had not designated by name the categories for which it proposed age-limits. It had used the division generally adopted—that of the draft Convention—namely :

- (1) Vessels exceeding 10,000 tons ;
- (2) Surface vessels exceeding 3,000 tons but not exceeding 10,000 tons ;
- (3) Surface vessels not exceeding 3,000 tons ;
- (4) Submarines.

For vessels exceeding 10,000 tons standard displacement, the Spanish delegation proposed that the age-limit should be 24 years. There seemed to be agreement that a limit of 20 years was not sufficient for these large vessels. Consultation of a naval year-book would show that in many navies vessels over 20 years and even over 25 years of age were included in the number of capital ships. Moreover, certain delegations had proposed that the age-limit for capital ships should be raised to 26 years.

The same observation might be made with regard to cruisers. Cruisers over 16 years of age were to be found in many navies. Consequently, the Spanish delegation proposed that the age-limit should be 20 years.

For surface vessels not exceeding 3,000 tons displacement, the Spanish delegation proposed that the age-limit should be raised slightly and should in all cases be 16 years.

For submarines the age-limit should be 14 years instead of 13. This age-limit might later be increased again, when further progress had been made in the construction of submarines, particularly in regard to the strengthening of the hull.

The Spanish delegation was prepared to support any proposal for raising still further the limits it had suggested.

There was another point on which the Spanish delegation did not wish to submit a formal proposal, but to which it desired to draw the Commission's attention. In the Washington and London Treaties, tonnage was expressed in British tons. Should not tonnage be expressed, in a general convention binding upon all countries, not in British but in metric tons ?

M. Charles DUMONT (France) asked the other delegations to excuse him if he availed himself of the Spanish statement, which applied to all categories of vessels, to submit the observations of the French delegation.

In the first place, with regard to principles, France, who was a signatory of the Treaty of Washington and part of the Treaty of London, felt that she was bound by these treaties never to go back on what was already settled. Article 23 of the Treaty of London laid down that:

“ Unless the High Contracting Parties should agree otherwise by reason of a more general agreement limiting naval armaments, to which they all become parties, they shall meet in conference in 1935 to frame a new treaty to replace and to carry out the purposes of the present treaty. ”

There was, therefore, a moral obligation to endeavour to enlarge the scope of these treaties by adopting stricter measures for reduction and limitation. That was the light in which France would view all the proposals put forward.

With regard to age-limits, the figures adopted in the Treaty of London were : 20 years for ships of over 3,000 tons ; 16 years for ships of under 3,000 tons ; and 13 years for submarines.

The Commission now had before it proposals to increase these age-limits. For capital ships the Spanish delegation proposed 24 years, the British delegation 26 years, and the Japanese delegation 26 years for vessels of over 20,000 tons. France would support any proposal to raise the age-limit to the maximum ; nevertheless, the French delegation thought that the best figure was 25 years.

The adoption of an age-limit of 25 years or more for the replacement of capital ships would constitute a very appreciable amplification of the provisions of the Treaty of London and would lead to a decrease of 20 per cent in the annual credits set aside for building war-vessels. In other words, taxpayers would benefit to that extent. No country was rich enough

at the present time to disregard such an important possibility. Moreover, Great Britain, Japan and the United States of America had in practice, by the naval holiday which they had undertaken to observe under the Treaties signed by them, raised the age-limit to 25 years.

As regarded cruisers, the question was not so easy. Several fairly complicated considerations had to be taken into account, such as the date on which these vessels were completed or the conditions under which certain cruisers were built in war-time. The rules adopted in the draft Convention for the replacement of surface vessels exceeding 3,000 tons but not exceeding 10,000 tons standard displacement (age-limit 16 years for ships laid down before January 1st, 1920, and 20 years for those laid down after December 31st, 1919) were the result of very minute enquiries in which all the factors had been taken into account. He did not think that these rules should be altered except for very weighty reasons.

Finally, with regard to submarines, France had, under the Washington Treaty, been allotted a minimum number of these vessels, taking her requirements into account. France had to maintain a sort of pontoon bridge between the home country and her North African possessions. The French delegation would nevertheless make every effort to accept the strictest provisions in that direction.

Nevertheless, a question of security arose in this connection, and, only a few weeks after the sad loss occasioned to the British Navy, the Naval Commission had to consider not only economies but also the safety of submarine crews, which had to perform duties daily fraught with risk.

The French delegation would go as far as possible in the direction of amplifying and strengthening the Washington and London Treaties. He firmly hoped that, when the Disarmament Conference came to an end, the question would no longer be one of constructing but merely of replacing ships. If so, any increase in the age-limit of vessels would lead to important decreases in the annual estimates for building.

Captain MARONI (Italy) said that the Italian delegation, actuated by the same sentiments as those expressed by the French delegate, agreed with the proposal to raise to 25 years the age-limit for the replacement of capital ships. It also agreed that the 13 years' age-limit for submarines should be maintained.

Vice-Admiral SURIE (Netherlands) thought that the question of age-limits was of great importance. The Netherlands delegation would certainly support any proposal to raise age-limits.

The raising of age-limits would have a two-fold result: on the one hand, the credits allocated to new construction would be reduced, and, on the other, the risk of renewed competition in naval armaments would be diminished.

The Netherlands delegation therefore supported the Spanish proposal, reserving the right to endorse subsequently any proposal which went further.

M. VENTZOFF (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) observed that, in the Preparatory Commission, the Soviet delegation had already spoken in favour of raising the age-limits of the various types of ships beyond the figures laid down in the draft Convention. He once more urged the raising of these age-limits for the following reasons:

Firstly, the problem of the age-limits of ships was directly connected with the technical progress achieved in naval construction. Experience proved that this progress had been so great that the rules regarding the life of vessels laid down before the world war, which were very near those indicated in the draft Convention, could be increased without affecting fighting potentiality.

Secondly, rapid progress had been achieved during the last ten years in what might be called the modernisation of old ships. It was technically possible now, by modernising ships, not only to maintain, but to increase their power as fighting units.

Thirdly, the raising of the age-limit would naturally bring about a decrease in expenditure, since expenditure depended directly on the rate at which vessels were replaced.

For all these reasons, the Soviet delegation supported the British proposal that the age-limit for capital ships should be 26 years. He felt bound to point out, however, that the Soviet delegation still interpreted the term "capital ships" as meaning ships exceeding 7,000 tons standard displacement.

In the case of surface vessels not exceeding 7,000 tons, the second draft Convention of the Soviet delegation proposed an age-limit of 20 years.

Though it maintained this proposal, the Soviet delegation would agree, if necessary, to an exception being allowed with regard to torpedo-boat destroyers and torpedo-boats (of less than 1,200 tons), which, by reason of the great difference in tonnage, could be accorded an age-limit of 16 years.

With regard to submarines, the Soviet delegation saw no adequate technical reasons for reducing the age-limit to the extent indicated in the draft Convention. It maintained its proposal to fix the age-limit for submarines at 15 years.

The PRESIDENT considered that the discussion had shown that the Naval Commission could not take a decision in the course of the present session. It was not sufficient that it should merely choose between the solution offered by the draft Convention and that proposed by the Japanese delegation, but it must pursue the discussion in the same spirit—that was to say, each delegation must express its views clearly and frankly.

When work was resumed after the Easter recess, the delegations would perhaps have received fresh instructions, conversations might take place between the delegates, and it would perhaps prove easy then to arrive at a general agreement.

M. SAWADA (Japan) declared that the Japanese delegation had listened with much interest to the views expressed by the previous speaker. There was no need to recall the fact that the text of the draft Convention had been settled as a result of profound study and long efforts on the part of the Preparatory Commission. The Japanese delegation therefore desired that the text of the draft Convention should, as a general rule, be maintained, as that would, in its opinion, facilitate the further work of the Conference.

Nevertheless, the Japanese delegation proposed that the age-limit of large units, capital ships and aircraft-carriers should be raised to 26 years. In order to achieve a reduction in naval expenditure, it was essential that an effort should be made to prolong the service period of large units to the extent compatible with the character of those vessels.

In the draft Convention, the age-limit proposed for capital ships was 20 years, the same as that proposed for cruisers. It was necessary, however, to make a distinction between these two categories of vessels in view of the difference in their tonnage. The Japanese delegation regarded it as reasonable to raise the age-limit for larger capital ships and aircraft-carriers to 26 years. The Japanese delegation earnestly hoped that the Naval Commission would agree with its view on this point.

The proposed Japanese amendment divided vessels into two classes: those whose tonnage exceeded 20,000 tons and those whose tonnage was less than 20,000 tons. The Japanese delegation considered that this distinction was the most reasonable one, but it would not insist on the adoption of these figures.

Vice-Admiral POUND (United Kingdom) observed that, in its amendment, the British delegation proposed that the age-limit of capital ships and aircraft-carriers should be raised to 26 years. It had done so for various reasons.

In the first place, the economy achieved would be all the greater the higher they raised the age-limits of vessels. It was moreover certain that vessels built like the large units of modern fleets could serve for 26 years.

Further, it was considered that a capital ship required a complete refit every 8 or 9 years. By fixing the age-limit at 26 years, they would avoid the third of these refits and they could replace the vessel just before it became fit to be scrapped, before it became uneconomical to maintain it longer.

It should be pointed out that, if they raised the age-limits, the stipulations concerning vessels at present in existence would assume great importance.

The United Kingdom delegation had not put forward any proposals with regard to vessels other than capital ships. In its opinion, a limit of 20 years would be reasonable in the case of surface vessels exceeding 3,000 tons but not exceeding 10,000 tons. On the other hand, it considered that it would be desirable to abolish in the case of these vessels the distinction drawn in the draft Convention between those laid down before January 1st, 1920, and those laid down after December 31st, 1919. Finally, the United Kingdom delegation proposed that the age-limit should be fixed at 16 years in the case of surface vessels not exceeding 3,000 tons and at 13 years in the case of submarines.

M. QUINTANA (Argentine) pointed out that the adoption of the Argentine proposal, to the effect that States non-signatories to the London Treaty should agree to refrain from laying down vessels of over 10,000 tons for the duration of that Treaty, would automatically create an extension of the age-limits of these vessels. The Argentine delegation would be prepared to accept the highest age-limit on which the Commission could agree. He was glad to note that the Japanese delegation had not insisted on its proposal to draw a distinction between vessels exceeding and vessels not exceeding 20,000 tons, because the Argentine delegation could not have agreed to that proposal.

Mr. SWANSON (United States of America) said he had listened with great interest to the various views expressed. He noted that all delegations were agreed that there should be no replacement of capital and other ships until such time as the cost of their maintenance and repair exceeded the cost of constructing new ships. After that date, no useful purpose could be served by endeavours to maintain such ships in commission. Neither he nor the United States experts had gone into the question sufficiently to be able to form a conclusion regarding age-limits, but he could tell the Commission that, under the London Treaty, the first capital ship which the United States would replace would be 28 years old and the last 31 years of age. Obviously, therefore, capital ships could be accorded a longer life than twenty years.

The British delegate had rightly said that, after three successive refits, the upkeep of an old ship became an uneconomic proposal and it was better to build a new one.

It should also be borne in mind that countries had a duty to replace old vessels after a certain time. Most persons travelling in passenger ships did so of their own free will : nevertheless, such ships were inspected at regular intervals and, if found to be unseaworthy, were not allowed to sail from port. That was done to protect passengers who might be tempted, by low rates, to travel in unseaworthy vessels. In the Navy, men were ordered to their ships—it might be to a submarine or torpedo-boat which had been subjected to great strain—and they had no choice. Under those conditions, it was the duty of the State to safeguard its defenders, and that should be a criterion to guide the experts in defining age-limits. In any case, the United States delegation, which had a perfectly open mind on the question, did not think that any ship should be retained beyond the limit of her usefulness. Surely all delegations were agreed that no one had the right to send men to sea in ships which were not entirely safe.

He had been much interested in the Soviet delegate's observations regarding modernisation. The United States of America had modernised certain vessels in a desire to effect economies. In point of fact, whereas a new battleship would have cost between 30 and 40 million dollars, the modernisation of an existing battleship cost only six million. That was a great saving to Governments, and the useful life of ships was thereby extended. He thought the Commission should pay great attention to this point.

He fully approved the President's suggestion that all delegations should meditate the points at issue and be prepared to explain their proposals concerning age-limits and replacement, so that when the Commission met again in April these matters could be settled.

It was a fact that some vessels speedily built in the great war did not possess a very considerable margin of safety. No doubt exceptions could be made for such cases if the delegations concerned frankly explained their case. The principle to bear in mind was the necessity of saving money without impairing efficiency.

He would like, therefore, to make a formal proposal on the lines of the President's suggestion, that the various questions outstanding should be carefully examined by the various delegations during the recess, so that when the Commission reassembled they could explain their proposals and reach a final settlement. The United States of America would carefully and sympathetically study all the proposals submitted, as they had no desire in these times of crisis to sanction the replacement of ships unless such replacement was absolutely inevitable.

M. WESTMAN (Sweden), Rapporteur, speaking as Swedish delegate, desired to explain Sweden's policy. Sweden had consistently urged that one of the best ways to reduce armaments was to extend the age-limit. The Swedish delegation was therefore very glad to note the trend of the present discussion, and would support the proposals which went furthest in the direction of extending age-limits. The discussion seemed to warrant a hope that the Commission would make appreciable progress as regards at least one of the problems raised by the reduction of naval armaments.

The PRESIDENT warmly supported the United States proposal that delegations should review the whole problem during the recess and send in definite reasoned proposals to the Bureau before the next session. Though this proposal had been made only in connection with age-limits and replacements, he thought it might apply to all the other problems before the Naval Commission.

The Naval Commission had now been in session for a week and could be said to have made progress. It would probably have made greater progress in regard to certain naval problems had these not been so intimately bound up with political problems and questions of principle. The Naval Commission could now advance no further until the General Commission had decided certain outstanding points.

He felt bound to say one word with regard to the general progress of the Conference. Up to the present, the Conference's work had run parallel to that of the Preparatory Commission—namely, it had been dealing only with the framework of the Convention. That essential part of the work would, of course, have to continue at the next session ; but the Conference would also have to deal courageously with the problems of the figures to be inserted in the general tables, and the Naval Commission must be prepared to begin the discussion of questions of substance.

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## SIXTH MEETING

*Held on Tuesday, April 26th, 1932, at 4.30 p.m.*

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President : M. COLBAN.

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16. CONSIDERATION OF THE QUESTIONS REFERRED TO THE NAVAL COMMISSION BY THE  
RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION, DATED APRIL 22ND, 1932  
(Document Conf.D./C.G.28(2)) : GENERAL DISCUSSION.

The PRESIDENT read the following resolution adopted by the General Commission on April 22nd :

“ In seeking to apply the principle of qualitative disarmament, as defined in the previous resolution (document Conf.D./C.G.26 (1)), the Conference is of opinion that the range of land, sea and air armaments should be examined by the competent special commissions with a view to selecting those weapons whose character is the most specifically offensive or those most efficacious against national defence or most threatening to civilians.”

The Naval Commission, without concerning itself with the action to be taken by the General Commission in the matter, was required to consider the range of sea armaments with a view to selecting those which were most specifically of the character mentioned in the General Commission's resolution. It was required, in fact, to select “ those weapons whose character is *the most* specifically offensive or those *most* efficacious against national defence or *most* threatening to civilians,” not to state that a particular weapon did or did not possess those characteristics in some degree. Obviously, according to circumstances, all weapons might be offensive and might, by the way they were used or abused, become threatening to civilians.

The Naval Commission could perform the task entrusted to it in various ways. It might consider, in the light of the General Commission's resolutions, all the proposals for the prohibition or internationalisation of certain weapons summarised in the “ Co-ordinating Table of the draft Convention and of the propositions referred to the General Commission ” (document Conf.D.102). On the other hand, the various delegations might study the matter and submit these proposals or fresh proposals to the Commission.

The President would not ask the Commission to make a choice between the various possible methods; certain methods might, moreover, be combined. He would rather ask it to begin with a general discussion. Some of the delegations would no doubt wish to express their views on the resolution.

The Bureau desired to draw the Commission's attention to certain armaments which, though they were not, strictly speaking, sea armaments, nevertheless concerned the Naval Commission, such as fortifications situated near the coast-line—in particular, those controlling the entrance to certain straits.

The Naval Commission would also have to consider the question of mines.

Finally, with regard to chemical and bacteriological forms of warfare, the Commission should, in any event, make itself conversant with the results achieved by the Land and Air Commissions, in order to take these into account in its own work. The Bureau would keep in close touch, in this connection, with the bureaux of the other two commissions.

Vice-Admiral POUND (United Kingdom) said that, in studying the General Commission's resolution, the United Kingdom delegation had observed that it would be very difficult to draw a clear distinction between the first two criteria proposed in the resolution. This was doubtless because the circumstances of naval warfare were entirely different from those of land warfare. Vice-Admiral Pound would therefore consider these two criteria together.

In the first place, the meaning of “ those weapons whose character is the most specifically offensive or those most efficacious against national defence ” should be made clear. The United

Kingdom delegation considered that the underlying idea was to select those weapons which enabled the attack of an aggressor rapidly to break down the defence of the State attacked.

Any warship might be employed, either for the offensive or the defensive, and, as the units of a fleet usually operated in groups, it would be difficult to distinguish between offensive and defensive arms.

It would seem, also, that the General Commission's resolution was based, *inter alia*, on the statement that scientific developments had recently led to the appearance of weapons which were particularly effective in breaking down a country's defence. Such developments had not taken place in the naval sphere.

Several delegations had included in offensive armaments certain types of vessels—in particular, capital ships over a given tonnage, aircraft-carriers and submarines. Vice-Admiral Pound would review these three types of vessels in succession.

(1) With regard to capital ships, the discussion could be approached either from the theoretical aspect or in the light of events which had actually occurred. There was an English proverb which said that an ounce of practice was worth a ton of theory. Vice-Admiral Pound would consider the question purely from the practical aspect.

Undoubtedly, large capital ships were particularly well equipped to check the offensive operations of the enemy. During the world war it had been noted that they were chiefly employed for defensive purposes—in particular, for the protection of convoys. Only on very rare occasions had they been employed for offensive operations. The example of the Dardanelles might be quoted, and there they had suffered a very marked defeat. The defence was always broken, not by capital ships, but by troops which had been landed.

It could therefore be said that the ability of a naval Power to invade a territory depended, not on whether it possessed a particular type of vessel, but solely on its general naval superiority. For example, in the case of two countries which possessed only destroyers in a particular area, it would be easy for the stronger to neutralise the enemy fleet and to land troops under the protection of firing from its vessels.

Capital ships had certainly been used for the bombardment of coastal-defence works on a few occasions, but such operations could not break down a country's defence. Moreover, such bombardments could have been undertaken by lesser vessels with practically the same effect.

(2) With regard to aircraft-carriers, their fighting value resided, not in their own power, which was weak, seeing that they were very vulnerable and relatively little armed, but in the torpedo and bombing aircraft they carried.

In any case, even if bombing operations were not prohibited in the future Convention, an air attack from one or more aircraft-carriers would always be less effective than an attack from a land base, and for several reasons. In the first place, the total tonnage of the aircraft-carriers at the disposal of a fleet was necessarily limited. On the other hand, they could not have on board bombing aircraft as large as were utilised in land aviation. Again, all who had had experience of the manœuvres of an aircraft-carrier knew the difficulties of operation.

Even if bombing operations were prohibited in the future Convention, aircraft-carriers would still be necessary, as their principal mission was to provide reconnaissance aeroplanes with a floating aerodrome on which to land, and these reconnaissance aeroplanes would be indispensable as long as there were air bases on land. Without them, a fleet would be blind.

In the opinion of the United Kingdom delegation, the offensive power of vessels, from the point of view from which it was now being discussed, would not be altered by any reduction in their size. Suggestions for the reduction in size of various classes of vessels had, however, been made by the Japanese delegation—in particular, in the case of capital ships and aircraft-carriers, and there might be good reasons for such reductions. The United Kingdom Government was ready to give its most sympathetic consideration to such proposals when the appropriate time came for discussing them.

(3) With regard to submarines, there had been a good deal of discussion as to whether they were offensive or defensive weapons. Without entering into the controversy, Vice-Admiral Pound would simply point out that, in any case, it could not be said that submarines could rapidly break down a country's defence.

The next question was to what extent the three types of vessels under discussion were threatening to civilians.

Navies generally were historically more tender in their treatment of civilians than were armies.

Civilians at sea had for long had special rights of protection by custom and international law. In the case of bombardment of towns by ships, special arrangements had been accepted in a Hague Convention to minimise, as far as possible, the danger to civilian life.

Consequently, it could not be suggested from past experience or for other reasons that any type of surface ship was specially threatening to civilians.

The submarine was, however, an exception to the general rule mentioned in connection with surface ships. Recent experience had shown that the submarine was a weapon that might in use be most threatening to civilians.

That arose from the fact that from its inherent qualities it was a weapon particularly susceptible to abuse in certain circumstances. That had been recognised in the Treaty signed at Washington on the subject of submarines. In the Washington Treaty, the signatory Powers had recognised the practical impossibility of using submarines as commerce-destroyers without violating the requirements universally accepted by civilised nations for the protection of the lives of neutrals and non-combatants.

The parties to Part IV of the London Naval Treaty had accepted as the established rules of international law that submarines, in their action with regard to merchant ships, must conform to the rules of international law to which surface vessels were subject. If that rule were generally accepted by all States, the threat to civilian life by the sub-marine would, of course, be much reduced.

In conclusion, Vice-Admiral Pound stated that, in the opinion of the United Kingdom delegation, no class of warship was specifically offensive. With regard to the safety of civilians, submarines should be classified as a weapon which was peculiarly threatening to them.

Captain MARONI (Italy) pointed out that the Italian delegation, taking as a basis the three criteria proposed in the General Commission's resolution, had submitted to the Conference the following proposals with regard to the naval arm :

- (1) The simultaneous abolition of capital ships and submarines ;
- (2) The abolition of aircraft-carriers.

It had proposed the simultaneous abolition of capital ships and submarines because it considered that these units might have a specifically offensive character, and be most efficacious against national defence. Captain Maroni would explain why the Italian delegation considered that these two types of vessels should be abolished simultaneously.

It had proposed the abolition of aircraft-carriers because it considered that they could be particularly threatening to civilians.

It was difficult, as the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Grandi, had pointed out in his speech in the General Commission, to draw a precise line between offensive and defensive armaments. But M. Grandi had added that this practical problem must be solved in the light of common sense and the experience acquired during the world war, which experience, moreover, had served in the preparation of Part V of the Treaties of Peace. Naval superiority at present belonged to the countries with the most capital ships and the most powerful capital ships. The real aggressive power of a fleet resided in its capital ships. Captain Maroni thought it hardly necessary to mention that the aggressive power of a vessel of 35,000 tons was more than twenty times greater than that of a vessel of 10,000 tons.

Only submarines could dare to face capital ships. Consequently, if submarines alone were abolished, the country with the most powerful capital ships would have absolute and undisputed naval supremacy.

The action of submarines, especially at the beginning of a conflict, and within the purview of purely military operations, might also be distinctly offensive. On the other hand, to the humanitarian objections justified by the activity of submarines during the world war, it could be replied that the provisions of the Treaty of London, under which submarines were subject to the rules applicable to surface vessels, could be made general and embodied in the Disarmament Convention.

The simultaneous abolition of capital ships and submarines would not appreciably affect the scale of values of the various fleets, and it was this simultaneous abolition alone which would permit of an effective reduction in the aggressive power of navies. On the other hand, the abolition of submarines alone would bring about an unfair and unjustifiable equilibrium.

Aircraft-carriers could be regarded as extremely mobile floating stations for bombing aircraft. Indeed, if reconnaissance aircraft and fighters could be embarked on board ordinary vessels, even of small tonnage, without difficulty, bombing aircraft could be transported only on aircraft-carriers. The extreme mobility and the great range of action of these vessels increased the scope and efficacy of the bombing aircraft they carried to a considerable extent.

Aircraft on board an aircraft-carrier had an enormous offensive capacity for bombing land objectives, and their remote base preserved them from attack. They could also attack commercial traffic lines, contrary to the generally accepted laws.

The Italian delegation therefore considered that aircraft-carriers were clearly aggressive and destructive.

In conclusion, Captain Maroni reiterated what M. Grandi had already said in the General Commission—namely, that the Italian delegation was prepared to consider a scheme for the gradual abolition of the classes of vessel in question, and that, in its view, an undertaking to destroy them might, in certain cases, be equivalent in practice to an undertaking not to replace them.



M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) read the following proposal submitted by the German delegation :

“ For the purpose of specifying, in accordance with the resolution of the General Commission, dated April 22nd, the weapons :

- “ (1) Whose character is the most specifically offensive ;
- “ (2) Which are most efficacious against national defence ;
- “ (3) Which are most threatening to civilians ;

“ The Naval Commission has decided to designate the following weapons as corresponding to the above definitions :

- “ (a) Capital ships whose standard displacement is over 10,000 tons and which carry a gun of a calibre over 280 mm. (11 inches) ;
- “ (b) All aircraft-carriers ;
- “ (c) All submarines ;
- “ (d) All chemical and bacteriological methods of warfare.”

In explaining the German point of view, he would refrain from commenting on the proposals of other delegations. In dealing with the naval aspect of the problem, moreover, he could only repeat M. Nadolny's observations of the previous week, on which the German proposals were based.

The German delegation noted with satisfaction the proposals for reducing or abolishing armaments of a specifically offensive character, but what had been said in this connection was not sufficient.

Indeed, there were no better criteria for selecting these weapons than those upon which certain provisions of the Treaty of Versailles were based. Immediately after the world war, a large number of experts agreed upon the armaments to be forbidden to Germany with the well-defined object of making any aggression on her part impossible. This point had been reproduced in a number of official documents.

Further, M. Grandi and Sir John Simon had referred to the Treaty of Versailles in a similar sense in their speeches, and the idea had been taken up in many Press articles throughout the world—in particular, quite recently in *The Times*. The Commission would not be surprised, therefore, by the German delegation's proposals.

Apart from the general suggestion that certain provisions of the Treaty of Versailles should be used as a guide in replying to the questions which the General Commission had put to the Naval Commission, M. von Rheinbaben would confine himself to several brief observations, and would make further observations when the matters were discussed in detail.

(1) It seemed obvious that capital ships whose standard displacement was over a certain tonnage were of a distinctly offensive character. That had been recognised at the Washington Conference and in numerous documents submitted to the present Conference. International public opinion was clearly in favour of their abolition.

They were certainly the chief element in all naval armament, and the special character of these formidable units should be made clear.

(2) If the German proposal to abolish all military aviation were adopted, there would obviously be no reason for the existence of aircraft-carriers. But, for the purposes of the present discussion, the German delegation desired to point out that aircraft-carriers could attack areas which would otherwise be free from attack on account of their remoteness. They were a specially efficacious arm against countries which did not themselves possess aircraft-carriers.

(3) The discussions with regard to submarines would probably be lengthy. The arguments for or against retaining them had already been put forward at Washington, and there were great divergencies of opinion. M. von Rheinbaben thought that those who upheld the submarine did so, not because they considered it a defensive weapon, but because it enabled them to maintain a small, not very costly and very efficacious fleet against capital ships. He himself had no doubt about the matter. In 1919, indeed, submarines were forbidden to Germany on account of their offensive character.

(4) The Commission would consider later, as the President had proposed, the question of chemical and bacteriological methods of warfare.

(5) Finally, the German delegation had proposed, during the general discussion, that certain fortresses which commanded communications between two open seas should be abolished. This request was based on the special restrictions imposed on Germany under Article 195 of the Treaty of Versailles.

Although the German delegation considered that this question was connected with the second criterion laid down in the General Commission's resolution, M. von Rheinbaben, in conformity with the President's suggestions, would not at present deal with it.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ (Spain) pointed out that the Spanish delegation had proposed the abolition of a number of classes of warships. He would give explanations later, when the questions were discussed in detail.

In his opinion, it would be very difficult to define the offensive or defensive characteristics of the different classes of vessels, but the Commission could fairly easily prepare lists in the light of the proposals already made. The objects of these proposals were as follows :

- (a) To abolish capital ships over a given tonnage and to limit the calibre of their guns;
- (b) To abolish aircraft-carriers;
- (c) To abolish submarines;
- (d) To lay down rules respecting the use of mines;
- (e) To prohibit chemical and bacteriological warfare;
- (f) To abolish fortifications controlling certain straits.

A number of conclusions could already be drawn from the discussion.

In the first place, there was apparently unanimity as to the abolition of the use of poison gas and of bacteriological warfare.

Seeing that the Air Commission had before it a proposal for the abolition of all military aviation, it would seem useless to discuss for the moment the question of aircraft-carriers.

It remained for the Commission to reach a decision with regard to :

- (1) Capital ships of over 10,000 tons, for example, and carrying guns of a calibre over 203 mm. (8 inches);
- (2) Submarines; and
- (3) Rules respecting the use of mines.

Vice-Admiral Montagut y Miró considered that the Commission should hear the views of the delegations on each of these points, and then proceed to a vote.

The PRESIDENT stated that he had suggested a general discussion precisely to enable the various delegations to explain whether the grounds for the proposals they had submitted with regard to the abolition of certain classes of vessels were the three criteria indicated in the General Commission's resolution. These proposals might, indeed, be due to entirely different considerations.

It appeared from the statements made at the present meeting and those to be made at the following meeting, that an agenda could be prepared which would enable the Commission to reply to the General Commission's questions.

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## SEVENTH MEETING

*Held on Wednesday, April 27th, 1932, at 10.30 a.m.*

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President : M. COLBAN.

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### 17. CONSIDERATION OF THE QUESTIONS REFERRED TO THE NAVAL COMMISSION BY THE RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION, DATED APRIL 22ND, 1932 (Document Conf.D./C.G.28(2)) : GENERAL DISCUSSION (*continuation*).

Mr. SWANSON (United States of America) said that the question now under examination was of a technical character and was designed and intended to have a technical reply. As a preliminary, he had requested the naval adviser of the United States delegation to prepare a statement.

Rear-Admiral HEPBURN (United States of America) read the following statement :

" 1. In the original American proposal bearing upon qualitative limitation of armaments, it was pointed out that one, and perhaps the most important of all, of the factors affecting security was the fear of invasion. That fear was largely based upon the existence of certain weapons which seemed peculiarly adapted, or, in the language of our terms of reference, *specifically* adapted, to increase aggressive power at the expense of defensive power. Three weapons of land warfare were designated as most obviously falling within this category. The feeling of security, it was believed, could not be improved or restored until there was also restored to defence the superiority it enjoyed in former times, and the only way to restore such superiority was to abolish weapons of this specific, inherent, aggressive quality.

" 2. The proposal to extend this 'aggressive-defensive' classification to naval weapons ignores some fundamental military considerations which should be frankly recognised.

" 3. With one exception, there is little similarity or analogy between land and naval warfare so far as offence and defence are concerned. The primary element in security is security against invasion and the forcible destruction or usurpation of territorial sovereignty. No nation exercises sovereignty at sea in a territorial sense. The object of naval warfare is control of the sea, and this control has to do with commerce. Whatever its importance or however vital to a nation's economic life, the integrity of ocean-borne commerce cannot reasonably be compared to the security of its territorial sovereignty. It fluctuates in time of peace as well as in war.

" 4. Certain naval types have been stigmatised as aggressive, notably battleships and aircraft-carriers. It is almost a naval truism that these very types are actually the least effective and the most inefficient with respect to action against merchant craft. The thesis of aggressive-defensive definition pushed to such limits as this involves a fallacy which cannot but inject an inherent weakness into any conclusions it may lead to.

" 5. The abolition of capital ships, submarines and aircraft-carriers would involve an entire recast of the theory of naval armament—its organisation, design and employment—on the part of naval Powers possessing those types. It would bring about a new evaluation as to the relative importance and functions of remaining types, with corresponding necessities for changes in design. Different nations would be affected differently. Our own fleet, for example, is built around the battleship as the principal type. The category of capital ships determines the type and number of ships required in other categories in order to achieve what we call a 'balanced fleet'. As a consequence, and more importantly, it determines the usefulness of our fleet to meet the naval necessities imposed upon us by our individual geographical and political situation. Many other Powers might be but slightly affected.

" 6. The adoption of so broad and sweeping a measure could not but violate the principle of having due regard for the individual necessities of nations.

" 7. We have already advocated the abolition of submarines. It might be argued that the abolition of this category is subject to the objections we have set forth with respect to other categories, but in our opinion it is not. The submarine category stands apart, separate and distinct from all other categories of naval craft, which are surface types, and designed to act in co-operation. The submarine has no fundamental connection with or dependence upon any other surface type. It is the enemy of all types except itself. Generally speaking, submarines are not even efficient as a weapon against other submarines either in offence or defence.

" 8. The exception mentioned as offering a similarity between land and naval warfare lies in the ocean transport of troops. To nations with large overseas possessions the security of these possessions may amount to a question of essential territorial sovereignty, and to defend it the ocean transport of troops may be necessary. As it happens, however, even this feature of the matter has little bearing upon the question of naval types of ships. Troops are transported either in merchant ships or in ships of the merchant type. They may be regarded as a specially important class of contraband. Naval types are no more offensive or defensive with respect to these transports than they are with respect to any other type of merchantmen.

" 9. The distinction between 'aggressive' and 'defensive' weapons cannot be applied to naval forces. Naval forces themselves cannot effect invasion or exercise sovereignty over enemy territory. On the other hand, they are the first line of defence against invasion. The protection from invasion of a long coast-line can be accomplished more efficiently and more economically by sea forces than by a line of shore fortifications. No naval types can be characterised as specifically 'offensive'. Their missions may be entirely 'defensive'. Nor can any naval type be said to be 'efficacious against national defence' or 'threatening to civil populations'."

Captain SOLSKI (Poland) said that the Polish delegation was prepared to discuss point by point the aspects of the problem of quantitative limitation when the various types of armaments came to be examined in detail. At the present preliminary discussion, he would merely submit a few general observations to define the attitude of the Polish delegation. They believed that, in considering the present points referred to them by the General Commission, it was also necessary to bear in mind another resolution which that Commission

had adopted on April 19th, which referred specifically to Article 8 of the Covenant and pointed out that account should also be taken of the geographical and special conditions of each State. There were States which, owing to their geographical configuration and coast-line, could not possibly constitute a danger to their maritime neighbours. Whatever armaments such States possessed, those armaments could never become offensive in the strict sense of the term. Poland possessed neither capital ships nor aircraft-carriers—those were vessels which concerned countries having wider maritime interests. He felt bound, however, to draw the Commission's attention to the importance of submarines as a defensive arm for less developed navies whose primary purpose was to defend the coasts of their country and its commercial interests in a relatively restricted area.

The Polish delegation was of opinion that these vessels, though highly useful for defence, were not particularly effective as a weapon against national defences, nor did they constitute a menace for civilians. The conditions under which these vessels could be employed had changed considerably since the world war. At the present time, submarines could, practically speaking, be employed only against warships. The rules laid down in Part IV of the Treaty of London, signed by the five leading naval Powers, who, taken together, possessed most of the submarines in the world, had subjected the action of submarines against merchant ships to the same rules of international law as were laid down for surface vessels. The contracting parties to that Treaty had invited all other Powers to approve these rules. Obviously, in these circumstances, civilians on merchant vessels ran no special risk from submarines.

From the point of view of national defence, submarines were mainly the defensive elements for the protection of coasts and territorial waters. Their existence made it possible to reduce the effectives and equipment for fixed coastal defences, with a consequent decrease in expenditure and of the forces protecting the coast-line. The main arm of submarines was the torpedo; but the number of torpedoes which each submarine could carry was very limited. Submarines were therefore more closely bound to their base than any surface vessel, which possessed supplies of munitions enabling it to engage the enemy on more than one occasion without having to seek replenishment.

M. VENTZOFF (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) observed that the present discussion was of particular importance as regarded the whole problem of qualitative disarmament. He would remind the Commission of M. Litvinoff's observation that the problem of qualitative disarmament was only one aspect of the greater problem of the reduction of armaments. Quantity was also a factor in determining the offensive possibilities of the various categories of naval armaments. If after abolishing capital ships or submarines it was not found possible to secure simultaneously substantial reduction in the tonnage of the present fleets of the most powerful countries, the distinction between specifically offensive or defensive naval armaments would have no meaning. He could not possibly endorse any tendency to suggest that the normalisation of the use of offensive naval arms in wartime could be a substitute for the abolition and reduction of naval means of attack. He agreed with the observations of the United Kingdom delegate that the meaning of "specifically offensive weapons" must be settled by experience and observation and not by a purely theoretical discussion. How could a modern naval force imperil national defence? There were five ways in which it could do so: (1) by the blockade of ports in all its forms; (2) by the preparation of invasion; (3) by the attacking of merchant vessels on the high seas; (4) by the attacking of vital centres of the country by aircraft attached to floating bases; (5) by the attacking of these same centres when they were within the range of heavy naval guns.

These operations could not be carried out without the aid of a particular type of vessel possessing the special offensive characteristics which should be abolished without reserve. If the characteristics of the fundamental types of existing vessels were studied, it would be seen that some had been so developed as to have acquired a specifically offensive character. These characteristics were, for instance, heavy displacement, large radius of action, calibre and range of guns, in certain cases, speed, and so on. The Soviet delegation could not, therefore, limit the list of offensive naval weapons to large submarines having a wide radius of action. Clearly, capital ships could be utilised to guard sea communications. But, as soon as they were numerous, capital ships became an offensive arm, an indispensable part of the forces required to invade a foreign territory. He doubted whether the example of the Dardanelles operations could really be quoted as proof of the ineffectiveness of the action of capital ships against coast defences. As far as their knowledge went, there were many reasons other than the quality of the capital ships which led to the failure of that interesting operation. Not merely capital ships, but also monitors with heavy guns, and even certain types of Washington cruisers, were extremely useful for invasion operations against enemy territory. Consequently, not only capital ships, but also certain types of Washington cruisers, possessed certain qualitative properties which precluded their inclusion in the category of defensive armaments.

Large submarines were clearly an aggressive arm, in the same way as aircraft-carriers in which large aircraft could be transported. The German delegation had rightly pointed out that the Versailles Treaty, drawn up under the immediate impression of the world war, had given a correct description of the naval arms which might be regarded as offensive. M. Ventzoff would merely add that this description should be extended to include the vast development which had taken place in the last ten years in the technicalities of naval construction. Accordingly, and in conformity with its scheme for the reduction of armaments, the Soviet delegation thought that it would be possible to draw up the following basic list of offensive naval arms ;

- (1) All warships of over 10,000 tons displacement whose maximum gun calibre exceeds 12 inches ;
- (2) All aircraft-carriers and all other special means for transporting aircraft ;
- (3) All submarines of over 600 tons ;
- (4) All chemical and bacteriological methods of naval warfare.

When this list came to be discussed in detail, other kinds of offensive armaments might be added to it. For instance, in view of technical developments, the tonnage of submarines might be still further decreased.

M. MORESCO (Netherlands) said that the value of the general discussion was to enable the Commission to determine what categories of the various naval armaments would have to be discussed before a reply could be given to the General Commission on the points submitted. The Netherlands delegation would have a word to say on these several categories when the time came. At present, all it asked was that " automatic contact mines " should be added to the list of armaments to be discussed from the point of view of the General Commission's resolution. Regulations for these mines had been adopted at the second Hague Peace Conference in 1907, and, a few years later, the Institute of International Law had proposed the abolition of high-sea mines. The Netherlands delegation desired that this question should be taken up again, and that the proposal of the Institute of International Law for the prohibition of these mines should be endorsed. Automatic contact mines clearly came within the scope of the third point referred to the Commission, as they were, whatever their military employment, extremely dangerous to the civilian population. They had been responsible for thousands of deaths during the last war, and even for a long time afterwards.

M. SAITO (Japan) made the following statement :

" The Japanese delegation believes that, in the field of naval armaments, the armaments whose character is the most specifically offensive, which are most efficacious against national defence and which are most threatening to civilians, are (1) aircraft-carriers and (2) naval vessels equipped with landing-on platforms or decks for aircraft, and that no weapons are more qualified to be selected for the purpose of qualitative limitation.

" In the selection of weapons having one or more of the characteristics enumerated by the General Commission, it is naturally important that attention should be directed to the innate and intrinsic character of the weapons, as well as to their use. From that point of view, the two kinds of war-vessels just mentioned possess, in their nature and use, all three characteristics —*i.e.*, they are specifically offensive, efficacious against national defence, and threatening to civilians.

" I. (1) Aircraft-carriers possess extensive mobility and add tremendously to the mobility of aircraft. As a result, it is no exaggeration to say that not even the remotest part of the globe will be beyond the reach of their threatening power. Augmenting so much the action and power of aircraft, the aircraft-carrier is of a highly aggressive character and is a suitable weapon for surprise attacks. (2) When such aircraft-carriers are afloat, the national defence relations between countries are bound to become very complicated. No country, with the possible exception of some inland States, can remain indifferent to the menace of an attack from the air owing to the existence of aircraft-carriers. (3) Further, the presence of aircraft-carriers greatly increases the aggressive nature of a fleet. (4) Of course, aircraft-carriers could be used for defensive purposes in the vicinity of their home country, but nothing is more unpractical and unwise. There is no navy, I am sure, that will use aircraft-carriers for coast defence purposes. The reasons are, first, that the construction and maintenance of the aircraft-carrier entail a great financial outlay ; and, secondly, the same purpose can be effectively served by coastal air forces. (5) New weapons are always especially effective when they first make their appearance. The submarine proved to be so at the time of the world war. The aircraft-carrier is a new weapon that has appeared after the world war. If the aircraft-carrier comes to be used actually in warfare, it may cause unexpected destruction and may constitute a great menace to civilians.

" The only objects at which submarines aim their attacks are enemy vessels, and the damage they can inflict is confined to the sea. This is not the case with aircraft-carriers, which can work

havoc on land as well as at sea, including among the potential victims of attack buildings, railways and civilian population.

" II. As regards vessels equipped with landing-on platforms or decks, at the time of the London Naval Conference of 1930, it was agreed between the United States of America, Great Britain and Japan that certain cruisers might be equipped with such platforms or decks. That agreement was reached out of a humane desire to increase the personal safety of those flying over the sea. It was only intended to permit the erection of such, relatively small, platforms or decks as would be necessary for that humanitarian purpose. It would be regrettable if, on the strength of that agreement, cruisers were to be converted into something very similar to aircraft-carriers—an eventuality entirely foreign to the spirit in which the agreement was reached and to the spirit of disarmament itself. Fortunately, no cruisers have, as yet, been equipped with aircraft landing-on platforms or decks, and it would seem opportune and well advised for this Conference to arrive at an agreement to prohibit such equipment on naval vessels. Moreover, if we could agree to the abolition of aircraft-carriers, the necessity for the saving of lives of aviators with no equipment for alighting on water would disappear of itself.

" These are the reasons for which we propose the selection of the aircraft-carrier and the vessel equipped with landing-on platforms or decks for aircraft as the aggressive weapons contemplated by the decision of the General Commission.

" I wish to mention, on this occasion, that the question of vessels carrying aircraft naturally bears a close relation to the question of air forces. I believe that this question is also being discussed in the Air Commission. But it can be considered independently of the problem of the internationalisation of civil aviation. It is capable of solution, in the opinion of the Japanese delegation, as a naval question without reference to the Air Commission.

" As regards capital ships, the Japanese delegation listened with great interest to the views expressed here yesterday by the delegate of the United Kingdom regarding the capital ship, and we entirely share his views that the capital ship cannot be regarded as a weapon most specifically offensive.

" With regard to submarines, it is a well-recognised fact that the submarine, being slow in speed and poorly armed, cannot possibly compete on the water with any kind of surface craft or aircraft. It is sometimes regarded as an offensive weapon, solely on account of its peculiar characteristic of being able to submerge and conceal its presence. But a submarine, when submerged, is much slower in speed and has a decidedly narrower field of vision than when on the surface. Under water, the period during which it can continue in action is much shortened, and the presence of a single chaser in the vicinity will prevent its coming to the surface. It lacks mobility, and it is only when the enemy vessel comes into close proximity that the submarine can display its offensive power. A submarine cannot pursue its enemy or carry on a prolonged action against him. The ability to veil its movements in secrecy is an attribute that gives the submarine, not an offensive, but a defensive value. Hence, a nation which is faced with the necessity of protecting far-flung possessions and strategic areas and yet cannot possess an adequate strength in surface craft can find no weapon so peculiarly effective for defence as the submarine.

" Because the submarine was frequently used during the world war as a raider of mercantile shipping, it is sometimes criticised as being an inhuman weapon of war. But such criticism, we believe, takes into consideration only those cases in which the submarine was abused. Similarly viewed, there is no vessel or weapon of war which, according to its use, could escape the same criticism. As a matter of fact, there are weapons which could be productive of consequences far more inhuman than the submarine. In view of such attributes of the submarine, the Japanese delegation does not incline to regard the submarine as an aggressive weapon."

Colonel MARTOLA (Finland) said that the Finnish delegation merely wished to emphasise a point which had emerged from the various speeches heard in the course of the general discussion—namely, it was difficult to find any convincing or unassailable argument against submarines as compared with capital ships in seeking to determine what naval armaments were most specifically offensive in character, most effective against national defence and threatening to civilians. Capital ships existed before submarines were thought of—in fact, the submarine was first invented in order to counter the formidable power of capital ships. That was why—and, indeed, that was the only reason why—small countries whose resources did not permit them to possess large surface vessels, constructed and maintained submarines. Submarines, therefore, existed because capital ships existed. Without submarines, small fleets would be totally deprived of means of defence against more powerful fleets of surface vessels. It might, moreover, be asked how a submarine could equal a capital ship in offensive powers in the matter of bombarding coastal defences, for instance. Submarines of small

tonnage and low range of action were, in fact, designed for defensive rather than offensive purposes. Certainly, wrongful use could be made of submarines against merchant vessels. In that case, submarines might, to a certain extent, threaten civilians; but, in this case also, if the use of submarines were governed by the rules adopted in London, submarines would constitute no greater menace to civilians than surface vessels. That was all the more true of submarines of low tonnage with a small radius of action which could not proceed very far from the coasts it was their duty to defend.

In conclusion, therefore, he wished to draw the Commission's attention to the fact that small countries were interested in submarines only as a consequence of the existence of more powerful naval armaments.

Rear-Admiral LU (China) said that the Chinese delegation regarded capital ships as being of a highly aggressive nature and as a powerful means of attack against national defences. The power of capital ships armed with long-range guns to wreak destruction by attacking coasts and coastal fortifications had been amply demonstrated. They were therefore aggressive weapons within the meaning of Points 1 and 2 referred to the Naval Commission by the General Commission. He agreed with the German delegation that aircraft-carriers were also an essentially offensive weapon. Submarines—particularly large submarines—not only possessed terrific offensive power, but were bound to cause risk to civilian travellers by sea. Lastly, the opinion was almost unanimous that forms of chemical and bacteriological warfare were to be regarded as aggressive in the highest degree.

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## EIGHTH MEETING

*Held on Thursday, April 28th, 1932, at 10 a.m.*

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President : M. COLBAN.

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18. CONSIDERATION OF THE QUESTIONS REFERRED TO THE NAVAL COMMISSION BY THE  
RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION, DATED APRIL 22ND, 1932  
(Document Conf.D./C.G.28(2)) : GENERAL DISCUSSION (*continuation*).

M. Charles DUMONT (France) pointed out that the problem the Naval Commission had been discussing for two days had been referred to it by two resolutions of the General Commission. The first resolution declared approval of the principle of qualitative disarmament—that was to say, the selection of certain classes or descriptions of weapons the possession or use of which, in view of their offensive character, should be absolutely prohibited to all States or internationalised by means of a general convention. The second resolution stated that those weapons should be selected whose character was the most specifically offensive or those most efficacious against national defence or most threatening to civilians.

No doubt these two motions had raised great hopes in many countries. It could probably be said that they had nowhere been welcomed with such favour and hope as in France. France had no desire to annex an inch of territory or one human family in any part of the world. Her policy was strictly defensive. She had only one aim — having been invaded four times, she desired security, desired peace. What need had she for specifically offensive armaments, those which threatened the life and property of civilians, those which might destroy organisations for the defence of frontiers, since all she desired was to be left in peace? Consequently, any decisions taken first by the Naval Commission and subsequently by the General Commission against purely offensive armaments already had the full support of French public opinion.

With regard to naval armaments in particular, France would welcome enthusiastically the removal of any fear that specifically offensive armaments would be used against her.

A very large proportion of her population lived on the shores of the North Sea, the English Channel, the Atlantic, and the two French shores of the Mediterranean. She had to protect her very special communications with Algeria. Three departments of France were on the other side of the Mediterranean. She kept a large part of her troops in North Africa. From the point of view of Article 8 of the League Covenant, it was these circumstances which governed the conditions and rules she had to bear in mind in deciding what was the necessary minimum for security, and what naval armaments she required.

Her sole need, her sole aim, in all this was to protect herself. She had no ambitions. He was therefore able to say that any anti-offensive policy was France's policy.

How could the Commission examine carefully the questions put to it? It seemed to him that it would be a good plan to pass from the simple to the complex, from what was clear to what was less clear. He would therefore adopt the inverse order to that adopted in the General Commission's resolution. He would first consider naval armaments in the light of the third criterion—those most threatening to civilians. That was a simple, clear idea which should help the Commission to reach conclusions. Secondly, he would consider armaments which might be destructive and threatening to national defence organisations. Finally, he would come to the categories of vessels which might be specially offensive.

With regard to naval armaments particularly threatening to civilians, the French delegation desired first to support fully the arguments put forward by the Netherlands delegate on the previous day. Automatic contact mines should never be drifting mines; they should never be laid in the open sea; they should only be laid anchored in territorial waters, on condition perhaps that a somewhat different definition were found for territorial waters. It was fundamental that the defence should have at least the same rights as the attack. Consequently, the range of a gun should, generally speaking, constitute the limits of the waters in which automatic mines might be laid. The French delegation would always oppose any attempt to justify the laying of mines in the open sea. Mines should be used only for defence or for blockading coasts and ports close to the coast-line. Mines should be specially marked, so to speak, by the nations which used them.

The League should have technical control over the manufacture of mines, so that any mine which broke away from its moorings was immediately made inoperative and so harmless. Thousands of fishermen and passengers would then no longer be drowned, as they were during and after the war, as a result of the explosion of drifting mines which had broken from their moorings.

In the second place, the Commission had to consider surface vessels. How could they threaten civilians? M. Charles Dumont considered that all surface vessels could threaten civilians when they did not comply with the international rules laid down in the ninth Hague Convention. Need he point out—although these recollections were particularly painful—that during the last war surface vessels attacked and bombarded open, undefended towns? On the first day of the war, the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* had bombarded Philippeville and Bône. The number of dead and wounded in those towns was smaller than in Hartlepool and Scarborough. But the bombardment was a sign that, from the very first day, the *Goeben* had torn up for the duration of the war all the conventions signed at The Hague and elsewhere. That must not happen again. Surface vessels must comply with the international rules. M. Charles Dumont would reiterate that respect for international rules was the foundation of the whole of the new order. The new order would be one of trickery and hypocrisy if disobedience to international law were not punished. There could be no clearer indication of the aggressor within the meaning of Article 16 of the League Covenant than disobedience to the international rules laid down in the convention to be drawn up by the Conference.

Consequently, all surface vessels which violated international law, attacked open towns, or attacked ports and roadsteads without conforming to the rules contained in the ninth Hague Convention, became offensive weapons. Were they therefore to be prohibited? No. Surface vessels, capital ships, all classes of cruisers, destroyers and torpedo-boats had their place in a new policy, such as France's policy. They were parts of that whole which the United States delegate called an "order of architecture". The fact that a weapon could be used for criminal purposes should not condemn it.

With regard to submarines, M. Charles Dumont said that there was no paradox in the statement that these vessels were the least threatening to civilians. Indeed, how were civilians really threatened? They could be threatened on land or on sea. They were threatened by blind bombardment from a distance, or by an attack on warships in a port, which struck the town itself and found victims among both combatants and non-combatants. The submarine in itself was a very poor weapon for bombardment. The few shells it might fire were of very little real danger to civilians. It might frighten the population. It might insult a port. It had never done great damage to the population in ports or on the coast. It was a necessary weapon. The members of the Commission had heard the small nations strongly affirm—and France repeated it with them and after them—that the naval supremacy of the powerful nations with a large number of big ships might become insupportable if submarines, the weapon of the poor, did not introduce at sea, an element of mystery, of the unknown, so that the most powerful fleets would never be so certain of success as to be tempted to abuse their power. The submarine was a weapon against the pride of power. It could be made the refuge of right. It must be retained.

The submarine, which was of small value for land bombardment, was a formidable weapon against surface war vessels. During the great war, 312,000 tons of allied warships had been



sunk by submarines. The losses of the French navy from this cause had amounted to 82,530 tons, or three-fourths of its total losses.

It was plain then that when the submarine was mentioned as a vessel intended for attacking merchantmen, half its history during the great war was overlooked. The fact was that during the great war—and those dreadful years could only be discreetly mentioned here—an inhuman and cruel use had been made of submarines. It was to prevent such years ever occurring again that the Conference had met. At the London Conference France had made suitable proposals for regulating the use of the submarine. She had asked for the adoption of Article 22, which was fair, clear and precise, and which read :

“ 1. In their action with regard to merchant ships, submarines must conform to the rules of International Law to which surface vessels are subject.

“ 2. In particular, except in the case of persistent refusal to stop on being duly summoned, or of active resistance to visit or search, a warship, whether surface vessel or submarine, may not sink or render incapable of navigation a merchant vessel without having first placed passengers, crew and ship's papers in a place of safety. For this purpose, the ship's boats are not regarded as a place of safety unless the safety of the passengers and crew is assured, in the existing sea and weather conditions by the proximity of land, or the presence of another vessel which is in a position to take them on board.”

That article contained certain categorical rules. He was certain that by its duration alone the League had sufficiently developed respect for international law and increased the hope that it would enable the world to avoid the worst barbarities of war, so that any State which violated that article and sank trading vessels or ships carrying passengers without taking precautions for the safety of the non-combatants would arouse a cry for vengeance, and no one would hesitate to demand the most stringent and forceful sanctions against an aggressor who broke the law of nations in that way.

If that were the law of the submarine, there were no vessels less dangerous to the civilian population than this class of ship, which was so poorly equipped for bombardment, for it came up to the surface with only one gun, had a very small supply of ammunition and was not fast enough to pursue a modern vessel effectively.

What decision would the Naval Commission take with regard to submarines ? Part IV of the Treaty of London had been signed by France. The Treaty had not yet been ratified by the French Parliament, but the non-ratification of the Treaty need not be taken into account. It was due to the fact that the various French Governments had hoped to be able to submit the entire Treaty to Parliament immediately after an agreement with Italy which would make it possible for the entire Treaty—and not only Part IV, which had already been signed—to be signed by the French representatives and ratified by the French Parliament.

The time for that had not yet come, but France hoped it would come. Nevertheless, there could be no question that in the case of the present Conference what was wanted was a complete and precise convention which would regulate, not only surface vessels, but mines as well. The Hague Conventions must be brought into line with the standard of technical progress achieved since the Hague. They must be made to concord with the demands of the conscience of mankind, the strength of which had been enhanced by the League. The Geneva Conference would be failing in its most elementary duty if it separated without having redrafted, remodelled and completed that Convention. He felt no doubt that the Naval Commission which, under M. Colban's presidency, was working in an atmosphere of cordiality and union, could make a valuable contribution to the work in hand.

There was a last question to be examined in connection with naval armaments as a possible menace to non-combatants. That was the question of bombardment from the air and, in close connection with that matter, the question of aircraft-carriers to which the Japanese delegate had referred. The question of bombardment from the air would be discussed in a general manner by the Air Commission, but it was too closely connected with naval armaments to make it possible for the Naval Commission to ignore it or pass it over in silence. The Naval Commission must discuss that issue. Bombardment from the air was a new peril, a cruel and monstrous menace to civilisation. It affected not only combatants who had resolved to sacrifice their lives in the defence of their country. It destroyed as well the children in their cradles, the aged by the fireside and those buildings in every great city whose beauty entitled them to immortality. All that was menaced by a bombardment from the air. A falling bomb was blind. He was not thinking of incendiary bombs, since they were prohibited by unanimous agreement, nor of bacteriological bombs. How could the representative of the country which had given birth to Pasteur agree that it should be possible to sow death with the germs which his genius had isolated for the relief of human suffering ? Bombardment from the air was an abomination when it was carried out on civilians, whether on land or at sea. France considered that this was the predominant question at the Conference. She had suggested certain principles. The French delegation held the firm conviction that this was the crux of the Conference's discussions and that the Conference would satisfy the expectations of the world and its own conscience if it took some decisive action in the matter. It considered that the internationalisation of civil aviation was the only possible way of strictly and surely limiting or abolishing

bombardment from the air. Months would be needed for the manufacture of heavy artillery if certain types of heavy guns were prohibited ; weeks would be needed for the manufacture of tanks or submarines, if tanks or submarines were prohibited ; only a few hours were needed to convert a civil plane into a bombing-plane. That was why the strictest precautions were necessary if it were desired to do away with the peril, the menace, the nightmare of bombardment from the air. Such precautions would not conflict with the interests of any State ; they would serve the security of all.

It was not yet known what decisions the General Commission would take regarding bombardment from the air. It might, however, be hoped that they would go far in the direction of restriction and regulation. The question of aircraft-carriers would then arise. He owed a reply to the Italian delegate, and to the Japanese delegate as well. If bombing-planes, which were or would be, of necessity, heavy planes carrying a big load, were to disappear, did that mean that aircraft-carriers should disappear *ipso facto* ? As Minister of the Marine and previously as *Rapporteur-Général* of the Finance Commission, M. Charles Dumont had consulted all the relevant papers and competent authorities. He was obliged to say both to the Italian and to the Japanese delegates that the opinions he had been furnished with were not favourable to their contentions. A modern fleet, by the speed of its destroyers and cruisers and the power of its artillery, with a range of 40 kilometres, must necessarily advance in a formation covering a large tract of sea. Could it in case of attack assemble sufficiently quickly unless the waters far ahead of it were reconnoitred by scouting and reconnaissance planes ?

Italy was in a special situation strategically. Situated between the Tyrrhenian Sea and the western Mediterranean, with bases at close intervals all along the two coasts of the Mediterranean and the Adriatic, with bases in Sicily and Sardinia, she had exceptional opportunities for obtaining information by means of planes which, flying from one base to another, could scour the seas and see what was happening and give warning of any preparations.

A country like Italy, with bases at close intervals and a powerful flying force, could dispense with aircraft-carriers. The position was very different in the western Mediterranean, where France had still no certainty that in all weathers fast planes could be despatched from Toulon to Bizerta or from Toulon to Oran to watch throughout the length and breadth of the western Mediterranean any possible menace to her fleets or convoys. And, if the Atlantic were considered, it was manifest that planes could not fly from one French base to another to watch and bring warning. In western Africa, France had forces which must be able to remain constantly in touch with the home country, even in times of danger. The points of contact were off the Spanish and Portuguese coast, and so far from the French bases that reconnaissance planes could not be sent out from these bases to scout for them. Reconnaissance planes carried on aircraft-carriers or on vessels equipped so that planes could land on them could alone discharge this duty.

He believed, however, that if the bombing aviation forces were reduced, it would be equally possible to have aircraft-carriers with reduced tonnage and a reduced gun calibre, so that they could not be aircraft-carriers and camouflaged cruisers at one and the same time.

He believed, therefore, that, if an effort were made, the Commission could reach a compromise on the question of aircraft-carriers. In any case, it would have made up its mind on an essential point. An aircraft-carrier which transported neither bombing-planes nor bombs for bombardments ceased to be a menace to civilians. It was no longer within the category of vessel having the formidable offensive characteristics which the Japanese delegate had described, and able through its mobility and power to transport to the ends of the world all the horrors of bombardment from the air.

That concluded his analysis of the different naval armaments from the point of view of their possible menace to the civilian population. He would sum up in one word. What was essential was a regulation forming part of a convention brought about, interpreted and supported by the League, which would include a number of international rules. Anyone breaking those rules would without any question be the aggressor within the meaning of Article 16, and the sanctions prescribed by the League Covenant would have to be applied against him.

He came next to the second of the criteria which the General Commission had instructed the Naval Commission to study—defensive organisation. That was a term which could be understood in very different ways. To avoid useless repetition, he would for the moment consider only permanent defensive organisation—that was to say, the organisation of coast defence by submerged mines and by fixed or mobile batteries. Which were the ships that could destroy defensive organisations prepared for the defence of the coast against bombardment and landing of troops ? Plainly, all naval armaments, bombing-planes, all surface vessels and in particular all capital ships, since they, as the United States delegate had observed, were the first line of defence against landings ; they were also the arm which was used to prepare for landings by covering the coast with fire so as to drive the defence force from its positions and by covering too with fire the areas in which mines had been sown so as to prevent mine-sweepers from carrying out their task. He would repeat, surface vessels sometimes played an offensive part. They could play such a part in a war of defence. They could do so in a war made by the League on the aggressor under Article 16 of the Covenant. The fact that capital ships could attempt to destroy defensive organisations was not a reason for prohibiting them. The United

Kingdom delegate had moreover observed that they sometimes failed in such attempts and that the Dardanelles expedition had afforded a memorable example of such failure.

Successful landings had been rare since the introduction of mines, submarines and coastal batteries to defend the shore.

The conclusion must be that for the defence it was necessary that the shore too should have long-range batteries. It must be recognised that shore batteries should have at least the calibre and range of the guns carried by ships.

If it were possible and necessary to limit shore batteries, attention should be directed to mobile batteries, batteries mounted on railway trains which could be sent from the coast to other battle fronts. They would undoubtedly be regulated if the calibre of capital ships was regulated.

Batteries in cupolas, on the other hand, or in covered concrete emplacements and trained seawards were menacing only to the enemy afloat who came within their range. They were strictly defensive. They menaced no one except those who came to attack them.

The principal menace to defensive frontier organisations was therefore the capital ship which could bombard roadsteads where army transports or other vessels were lying. The capital ship was all the more formidable the more powerful it was and the longer the range of its guns. Without touching on the question of maintaining the capital ship in fleets, it could therefore be said that anything that reduced the tonnage of capital ships and the calibre of their guns, and at the same time reduced the shore defence batteries, would at the same time have the effect of reducing, to an extent that was equally desirable, the offensive power of fleets and of easing budgetary burdens, because both the tonnage of capital ships and the calibre of the shore defence batteries would be reduced. France considered that, while recognising the unquestionable value of the capital ship in so far as concerned its proper objects, the defence of convoys, communications and the coast, it would be possible considerably to lighten the budgetary burdens of the nations and to diminish the aggressive and offensive features of capital ships to the extent to which it was found possible, by agreement with the signatories of the London Treaty, to reduce the tonnage of capital ships and the calibre of their guns.

He came next to the third criterion which the Naval Commission had been instructed to study, the weapons which had the most specifically offensive characteristics. The Commission had reached the third day of the general discussion, and he did not think that any attempt had yet been made to indicate precisely the meaning of the words "specifically offensive character". It had been said, and rightly, that all vessels were offensive and defensive. War vessels became offensive or defensive by turns according to the strategy employed in a campaign or the tactics adopted in battle, according to whether they were used for an offensive purpose one day and a defensive one the next, and *vice versa*. That was true. Undeniably capital ships were both offensive and defensive, cruisers were both offensive and defensive, and so were destroyers. The submarine alone was almost always defensive because it could not take up the pursuit of any modern warship, but lay in wait to defend against enemy attack anything assigned to its protection by command headquarters—*e.g.*, convoys and transports, the coast, a roadstead or a port.

If, however, each class of vessel were analysed, were there not certain features which might indicate that a navy had constructed vessels for more offensive purposes? That was the question which M. Charles Dumont asked. It would, perhaps, take the present discussion a little farther. How, hypothetically, should a vessel intended for specifically defensive purposes be constructed? It should be able to protect a convoy, to ensure communications between two parts of the national territory divided by foreign territory. This vessel would have to keep near the convoy. It must keep open the sea between the two parts of the divided territory. It would be attacked. It would have to protect itself and others. It must therefore be able to take as well as to give blows. It must be so balanced in conception and construction that its armament, speed and radius of action were not prejudicial to its safety. A vessel must be protected in order that it might fulfil its defensive rôle and remain at its post. Suppose, therefore, that in constructing a cruiser the need for protection was deliberately ignored and that armament, gun power and, above all, radius of action were the main considerations. It was immediately clear that such a vessel would appear to be an armed raider for attacking transports and commercial lines of communication, rather than a vessel to protect convoys, which had to be taken from one sea-coast to another, or to protect ports. It could therefore be said that a navy which sacrificed protection to armament, speed and, above all, range of action, was one which constructed vessels of an offensive character. The consequences were serious, for if these vessels, these armed raiders, appeared, other vessels would have to be protected. In order to protect itself, a nation which had reason to fear they would attack its troop and re-victualling convoys would construct vessels for meeting the attack. Such vessels would have to be armed at least to the same extent, and have at least the same speed and range of action. The nation which constructed them, however, would conceive of them as defensive vessels and as requiring adequate protection, regard being had to the calibre of the guns to which they might have to stand up. To equalise the weight, the tonnage of the second type of vessel would have to be greater than that of the other vessel, for protection and weight would have to be taken into account in providing for equality of armament, speed and range of action.

The Naval Commission might therefore suggest to the General Commission that specifically offensive vessels were those which, for a given tonnage, sacrificed protection either to armament, and speed, or to range of action, or to two of these factors together, armament and range of action.

There was another factor which must be borne in mind—equal tonnage—in making a vessel strictly offensive. The structural parts must be as light as possible in order to increase the power of the working parts. Suppose a Diesel engine were selected; generally speaking, the Diesel engine was heavier than a turbine-engine, but if the Diesel were constructed with special materials, with special steel, its weight might hardly exceed, if it exceeded at all, the weight of turbine engines constructed of ordinary material. The hull of the vessel in ordinary material weighed a certain amount for a given tonnage. The same resistance would be obtained but with 30 to 40 per cent less weight if the hull were made of special alloys. Thus an offensive navy had two characteristics: attention was paid to its fighting capacity rather than to means of protection, and it also cost considerably more for the same tonnage, owing to the higher cost of materials giving equal resistance for a very much lower weight.

All the delegates—the Conference had met for this purpose—desired to reduce the military burdens imposed on their nations. They must take care. If the nations were left free to enter into competition in quality and this were not foreseen, controlled and regulated, the Conference's work would be useless. It would be useless to conclude a convention to delay the replacement of vessels, to reduce the tonnage of capital ships, and the calibre of their guns, to limit, regulate strictly, perhaps abolish bombing-aircraft, and at the same time to reduce the tonnage of aircraft-carriers and the calibre of their guns. The taxpayers would derive no benefit from all these measures, military budgets would not be diminished if, though the tonnage were reduced, there was competition (with reduced tonnage) for greater speed by means of a reduction in the weight of hulls and engines. What would be the point of decreasing the calibre of guns, if it were endeavoured by new means to construct gun chambers in which, by reason of the steel used, pressure could be increased so that, in spite of the reduced calibre, the muzzle velocity, range and penetration of projectiles remained the same.

M. Charles Dumont therefore asked—and he was of opinion that great advantage could be derived from the discussion—that among specifically offensive vessels should be included vessels whose armament, speed and, above all, radius of action were placed first, and whose cost of construction was abnormally high.

In France, it was possible to determine almost exactly the cost of vessels per kilogramme.

On an average, capital ships cost 23 to 25 francs per kilogramme, cruisers 28 to 30 francs, destroyers 32 to 35 francs, and submarines about 45 francs. There was a certain armed raider the cost of which was not what M. Charles Dumont would call normal for France, the United Kingdom and the United States, but which was the same as that of a submarine.

Consequently, to reduce the financial burden imposed on the nations, and to make the studies on the reduction of tonnage, the reduction of calibre and the quantitative reduction of navies of some value required an effort, difficult to make, but necessary to limit expenditure on each category of vessel per average ton. That was a new idea, and M. Charles Dumont apologised for presenting it, but he was convinced that if the Naval Commission overlooked it, all its work might be rendered useless, and there would be no relief from military budgets.

He would summarise very simply the results of the French delegation's study of the questions raised by saying that it agreed with the United Kingdom, the United States and Japan that capital ships should be maintained. It would be glad to collaborate with the United Kingdom and the United States in bringing about a reduction in the tonnage of capital ships and the calibre of their guns in order to relieve the military burdens due to these capital ships. Before the Easter vacation, the Naval Commission had already decided that the age of replacement of these vessels should be 25 instead of 20 years. He himself had pointed out that the resultant saving on replacement of capital ships would be 20 per cent. The saving to taxpayers would be even greater if the Commission agreed to a large reduction in tonnage and calibre.

With regard to Italy, was she so far from being able to reach agreement? Captain Maroni had said plainly that there could be no question of abolishing submarines unless capital ships were abolished at the same time. Though he had felt unable to reach agreement in this sense, in view of the attitude of the United Kingdom, the United States, Japan and France with regard to the abolition of capital ships, could he not help the Conference to achieve important results by making Italy's valuable assistance available, with a view to bringing about a considerable reduction in tonnage and calibre?

With regard to Japan's attitude, M. Charles Dumont had just shown that there were now only fairly small differences between the Japanese delegation and the French delegation with regard to aircraft-carriers. If the aircraft-carrier did not of itself constitute a fighting unit, if it did not carry guns which turned it into a fighting cruiser, if it could carry only light reconnaissance aeroplanes but neither bombing-aircraft nor bombs for bombardment purposes, it could not constitute the danger to which the Japanese delegate had called attention on the previous day.

Consequently here was a field in which considerable agreement seemed prepared and possible. There was no doubt about agreement. It was easier, as regards the strict regulations that would have to be laid down in the convention which should be the outcome of the Conference's proceedings that there should be strict provisions, humane provisions, carefully drawn up, with regard to the use of automatic mines, submarines and surface vessels, in so far as mines, submarines and surface vessels of all categories might threaten non-combatants. M. Charles Dumont repeated that the preparation of this convention, carefully drawn up, strengthened and provided with sanctions was one of the chief tasks of the Conference. It would be of considerable practical importance, in view of the League's power. It would help to restore a feeling of security and confidence. It would bring nearer and make more extensive the other stages of simultaneous, progressive and supervised disarmament, which every civilised man must desire if he cared about the safety of his country and of his rights.

In conclusion, the French delegate could only say that the French delegation's investigations had not led it to recommend the abolition of any particular category of naval armaments; but, generally speaking, it had been led to consider how armaments could be reduced and how in particular the burden imposed on taxpayers could be reduced, care being taken that any saving the Commission might make was not spent or wasted or consumed in a competition as regards quality.

Did this policy of reduction, this policy of saving, come up to the world's expectations? Would it suffice, in the difficult period through which the world was passing, with all its misery and despair? M. Charles Dumont would not dare to say that. The other task was beyond the power of the delegates. They were, indeed, fully conscious of it; they were all men; they were all civilised men. They knew the price of peace. They were prepared to pay any price to preserve peace, and to make it more stable and lasting. But to reduce military burdens by radical measures, to deliver the peoples from fear of war was within the province of politics, and politics governed technical questions as it governed economic questions.

Politics were concerned with passions, feelings, will-power, the human soul. The world was guided by the mind, the heart of man. The Commission had not the same responsibilities as the Political Commission, but it was entitled to make a recommendation. If only, in these days of moratoria, moratoria of hatred, bitterness, ambition only satisfied by a world upheaval and the destruction of civilisation, could be introduced for ten years, how enthusiastically, how joyfully the Commission would prepare the technical conditions for bringing about so vast a scheme of disarmament. Unfortunately, that was not the case.

To the question put by the General Commission, the French delegation had endeavoured to reply carefully and clearly. It hoped that its study would help to bring about agreement first in the Naval Commission and then in the General Commission for a first and appreciable reduction in the military forces of the overburdened nations. He hoped that the Conference would at least achieve this first result.

Vice-Admiral WENCK (Denmark) pointed out that in the "Memorandum relating to the Suggestions of the Danish Delegation", dated April 13th, 1932 (document Conf.D.112), the Danish delegation had indicated the naval weapons whose character was, in its view, the most specifically offensive or those most efficacious against national defence or most threatening to civilians.

That document therefore contained the Danish delegation's reply to the questions put to the Naval Commission by the General Commission in its resolution of April 22nd (document Conf.D./C.G.28(2)).

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) stated that he had listened carefully to the French delegate's speech. The Commission would understand that, now that the general discussion was about to end, M. von Rheinbaben did not desire to deal with each point of this speech in detail. He would, however, return to it later when these questions were examined again. At the same time, he desired to make two brief general observations.

In the first place, he could not help feeling that the French delegate had dealt with problems which were somewhat outside the matters before the Naval Commission. M. Charles Dumont had, in particular, referred to the four invasions from which his country had suffered in one century. The term "invasion" seemed to indicate that the country which was the victim of invasion had simply defended itself against the attacks of the enemy. But history showed that invasions were often the result of previous acts of aggression. Thus, for example, the invasions of 1813 and 1814, which M. Dumont doubtless had in mind, had been preceded by the greatest acts of aggression that history had recorded during recent centuries. It was useless to discuss these questions in the Naval Commission, however, for the delegations could not reach agreement as to the details of past history.

Again, the French delegate had referred to the alleged abuse of certain weapons during the world war, such as the bombardment by German warships of open towns situated on the Mediterranean and British coasts. The German delegation felt obliged to point out that the reasons for these bombardments were exclusively military. In any case, M. von Rheinbaben

thought there was no doubt that, during the world war, a repetition of which all Governments and peoples were anxious to prevent at all costs, a number of abuses of all kinds had been committed by all the armed forces concerned. Thus, for example, many villages and open towns on German territory had been bombarded by enemy aircraft.

M. von Rheinbaben repeated once again, however, that the German delegation hoped the French delegation would not discuss these questions in the Naval Commission. The Commission should keep strictly to the problems before it, and not seek to extend its scope. It was important, as M. Dumont had said, to reach agreement through the harmonious collaboration of all the delegations, and for this purpose it would be better to leave aside the questions to which reference had just been made.

The PRESIDENT noted with great satisfaction that, even when particularly delicate questions were discussed, goodwill and courtesy rendered their settlement easy.

He declared that the general discussion preceding the detailed consideration of the questions put to the Naval Commission by the General Commission in its resolution of April 22nd was closed.

The Bureau had prepared the following draft agenda on the basis of the observations made by the various delegations during the general discussion :

“ Application of the resolution of the General Commission dated April 22nd, 1932 (document Conf.D./C.G.28(2)) to :

“ 1. Capital ships ;

“ 2. Aircraft-carriers ;

“ 3. Submarines ;

“ 4. Mines ;

“ 5. Various items, including chemical and bacteriological warfare, and coast fortifications.”

The President explained that the types of vessels enumerated in this agenda were not defined strictly, and that each category included the vessels which the delegations thought should appear in it. The list was drawn up rather on the basis of a natural conception of each type.

*The Commission adopted the draft agenda.*

With regard to the continuation of the Commission's work, the PRESIDENT read a note (document Conf.D./C.A.12) in which the President of the Air Commission asked the delegations on that Commission to hand to the Secretariat a note indicating the air armaments which they desired to have included in the list of armaments: (a) those whose character was the most specifically offensive ; (b) those most efficacious against national defence ; (c) those most threatening to civilians.

It was not necessary for the members of the Naval Commission to follow that procedure, seeing that most of the delegations had already indicated, during the general discussion, the main lines of their reply to the General Commission's questions. In order to facilitate the discussion of each class of vessel, however, it would perhaps be advisable for the delegations to submit their proposals to the Secretariat in writing, and in any case to be prepared to state their arguments at the following meetings.

In defining the offensive or defensive characteristics of the various types of vessels, a number of criteria mentioned during the discussion should be borne in mind, such as tonnage, calibre of guns, rules for replacement (age-limits), range of guns, fighting value, speed, and cost of construction of the various classes of vessels.

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## NINTH MEETING

*Held on Friday, April 29th, 1932, at 10.30 a.m.*

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President : M. COLBAN.

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### 19. APPLICATION TO CAPITAL SHIPS OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION DATED APRIL 22ND (document Conf.D./C.G. 28(2)).

The PRESIDENT proposed that the Commission should now discuss the first point on the agenda—namely, capital ships. This did not mean that the general discussion should be reopened. The present aim of the Commission should be to see if it could not get to closer grips with the specific points. For instance, as regarded capital ships, the Commission would

need to consider what characteristics rendered those ships more or less aggressive and more or less of a menace to national defence and the civilian population.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ (Spain) said that the Spanish delegation had prepared the following statement, in which it had endeavoured to suggest criteria for the determination of the specific points now before the Commission :

“ The Spanish delegation, after a careful study of the various questions referred to the Naval Commission by the General Commission in its resolution of April 22nd last, is of opinion :

“ (a) That the specifically offensive character of naval armaments must be determined according to the destructive power of the arms, the possibility of rapid conveyance to the places where they might be used, and the conditions permitting them to remain at these places for the whole time required to exert their action ;

“ (b) That the character of greatest efficacy against national defence must be determined according to criteria similar to those enumerated above, taking also into account the destructive effect of the arms upon fortifications constructed by countries for the defence of their territory ; and

“ (c) That the arms most threatening to civilians are those the use of which is likely to be the more or less intentional cause of loss of life and damage to the property of non-combatants.

“ On the basis of these criteria the Spanish delegation considers :

“ (1) That capital ships come under cases (a), (b) and (c) mentioned above ;

“ (2) That, although aircraft-carriers also seem to fulfil the three said cases, the Naval Commission should not pronounce on this point immediately, since any resolution on this subject must be conditional on the studies of the Air Commission with regard to the aircraft carried on this type of vessel ;

“ (3) That submarines of small tonnage and limited radius of action possess none of the characteristics of cases (a) and (b), and that, while the experience of the last war has led certain delegations to regard submarines as weapons covered by case (c), the possibility of sinking merchant ships without first providing for the safety of the passengers and crew does not belong exclusively to this type of vessel, but can also arise with other types. It therefore does not seem that the use of submarines of small tonnage exposes non-combatants to greater risks than the use of surface vessels, provided that the countries accept a resolution similar to the provisions of Part IV of the Treaty of London ;

“ (4) That mines moored in the neighbourhood of national ports are specifically defensive weapons, but that, on the contrary, mines moored in the open sea, and, still more, floating mines, come under case (c).

“ In virtue of the foregoing, the Spanish delegation has the honour to submit the following proposals for the consideration of the Naval Commission :

“ (a) Capital ships have a specifically offensive character, are most efficacious against national defence and are threatening to civilians ;

“ (b) No pronouncement should be made with regard to aircraft-carriers until the Air Commission has informed the Naval Commission of its views on aviation, or without reaching an agreement on the subject with the Air Commission ;

“ (c) Submarines of small tonnage and of limited range of action do not come under any of the three cases referred to in the General Commission's resolution of April 22nd, 1932, provided that States assume the undertaking only to employ them in the circumstances provided for in Part IV of the Treaty of London ; and

“ (d) Mines moored in the open sea and unattached floating mines or mines possessing a mechanism permitting them to remain near the surface are very threatening to civilians.”

In accordance with the President's suggestion, the Spanish delegation had endeavoured to make this statement as objective and practical as possible. In its opinion, the points to be considered in respect of each category were : (a) the power of destruction ; (b) the possibility of transporting this power to a distance ; and (c) the possibility of maintaining that power, at the required distance, for a period long enough to allow of the execution of the destructive purpose. The Spanish delegation believed that capital ships involved all these

three points. They were possessed of great offensive power, could convey that power to great distances and could carry out their destructive purpose. In fact, they were specially designed for that purpose. He admitted that the destructive power of capital ships was not limitless : on several occasions capital ships had failed in their destructive object. But in many other cases the very presence of capital ships on the spot had brought about by force the decision of a dispute between a stronger and a weaker country, to the disadvantage of the latter, irrespective of rights and wrongs.

He agreed that in some cases capital ships formed a national bulwark of defence. They could indeed be of immense use for defensive purposes, but if their sole object had been defence they would have been of quite a different type and certainly smaller in size. Though the definition was admittedly conventional, it might, he thought, be laid down that all capital ships of over 10,000 tons and carrying guns of over 203 mm. calibre must be regarded as pre-eminently offensive weapons. In any case, an attempt should be made to define a limit of tonnage and calibre which, if exceeded in vessels, would allow of a demand for either their abolition or their internationalisation. In view of the proposals of other delegations, he hoped that an agreement might be reached on this point, taking as the limit 10,000 tons and 203 mm. calibre guns. Naturally the offensive capacity of any particular arm was always relative, depending as it did on the aggressive potentiality of the other arms. If, however, the view were adopted that the purpose of fleets, apart from coastal defence, was the policing of the seas, it would be impossible to agree on a convention if that convention allowed any Power to remain in the position of being able suddenly to dominate the seas.

There were in the world more than one hundred merchant vessels capable of steaming over twenty knots, of considerable tonnage and strongly built so that guns of 120 mm. (4.7") or even 150 mm. (5.9") could easily be mounted in them. Consequently, navies for police purposes must possess at least the same speed as these merchant vessels and possess a greater power of attack. That result could be obtained within the 10,000-ton limit. In that case, would it not be possible to agree that all capital ships above that limit must be regarded as specifically offensive? The Spanish delegation did not agree with the German and Soviet delegations that the limit for gun calibre should be placed as high as 280 or 304 mm. If capital ships could steam twenty knots and were sufficiently protected, a 203 mm. limit should be sufficient. In fact, as the characteristics of ships should be properly balanced, the armament of a 10,000-ton war vessel could hardly, for technical reasons, exceed 203 mm. guns.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) said he must point out once more that the German delegation's attitude was based in general on the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. He would endeavour to explain why capital ships of over 10,000 tons armed with guns of over 280 mm. (11") should be regarded as specifically offensive weapons. Much had been said for and against the offensive character of capital ships as a class. It would be impossible, however, for the Commission to make any real progress unless it came down to details and raised the question what were the specific characteristics of vessels of over or under 10,000 tons respectively, from the point of view of their aggressive potentiality. Again, might capital ships of lower tonnage possess a similar power of aggression under changed conditions?

Certain delegates had seemed, in their speeches, to have gone beyond the Commission's terms of reference. For instance, the French Government had itself already reached certain decisions and had made proposals with regard to battleships having a displacement of more than 10,000 tons and carrying guns of over 203 mm. (8"). It had suggested that these vessels should be placed in a special category and should be treated in a particular manner. It was rather astonishing, therefore, that the French delegate, in his speech, had not seemed to take due account of these decisions and suggestions.

With regard to the special characteristics of capital ships, the United States delegation had pointed out that these were not very effective against merchant vessels. He agreed that cruisers were far more suitable for this purpose. Capital ships, however, in addition to their direct action, could exert an indirect action such as blockade. The one outstanding example of this in recent times had been the blockade of the German coasts during the war, the consequences of which had been decisive. Again, the action of cruisers was impossible without the support of capital ships. Some delegations seemed to fear any suggestion of giving a new orientation to defensive policy, but surely every decision taken henceforth would to some extent give a new direction to that policy, though there would of course always be transition periods. There would be no question of scrapping existing armaments on the day following the signature of the Convention. He felt, indeed, that the first decision ought to be to lay



down a new defensive policy. If delegations were afraid to do so, he feared that an agreement on naval disarmament would never be possible.

He agreed with the Soviet delegation's views concerning the offensive possibilities of capital ships. Moreover, a backbone of capital ships was necessary for navies if ever the purpose of those navies was to carry out an invasion—an invasion which would be aggressive, whether successful or not.

He fully appreciated the Italian delegation's argument that the consideration of capital ships must be linked up with that of submarines. As Germany possessed no submarines, however, she must leave other delegations to discuss that proposal.

He wished the Commission to understand that Germany was ready to accept any proposal for disarmament going beyond the terms of the Versailles Treaty, if that proposal were also accepted by all other countries.

He failed to see why an agreement should not be reached to reduce tonnage. If the tonnage of all capital ships were reduced to a certain level, those ships would retain their defensive potentiality and lose all their aggressive capacity. He therefore agreed that capital ships of a tonnage of over 10,000 tons and with guns having a calibre of over 280 mm. should be regarded as specifically offensive weapons.

With regard to the French delegation's criticism of the German "pocket battleship", which seemed to be regarded in some quarters as a veritable mystery ship, M. von Rheinbaben made the following statement :

"If I understood aright, it was said that this ship, more than any other type, embodied the characteristics of an aggressive weapon. I am particularly grateful to the honourable delegate of France for giving me this opportunity of refuting the legend that has been woven around this ship, which has thereby almost become a mystery ship.

"May I ask you to consider for one moment the position of the German naval officer and the German naval designer who finds himself confronted with the task of constructing a battleship of one-third of the tonnage of the battleships which other nations are allowed to possess under international conventions? No responsible German official could assume the responsibility of recommending the construction of a ship which, if war were to break out, would simply serve as a target for foreign fleets. Apart from the loss of the lives of many sailors this would be equivalent to throwing into the sea many millions of public money raised from a nation which is labouring under the most serious financial difficulties. The naval designer had, on the contrary, the task of constructing a ship not exceeding the 10,000-ton limit which would prevent Germany from being utterly defenceless in a naval attack. I am deeply convinced that no naval officer and no statesman of any other nation would have felt that responsibility towards their nation to a lesser degree.

"In the course of yesterday's debate, some of the characteristics of the 'pocket battleship' were mentioned with a view to proving that there was a definitely aggressive tendency underlying its construction. Let me examine these characteristics one by one, to see whether they give her an aggressive character or whether, on the contrary, the German naval designers have not succeeded in supplying the German nation with a very remarkable means of defence.

"One of the characteristics mentioned in order to prove the aggressive tendency of this type of vessel was that her armour bore no relation to the number and calibre of her guns. That I admit. But it is the fault not of the guns but of the extremely low tonnage within which we had to keep, and which unfortunately did not enable Germany to give the ship stronger armour. What are the means by which such a ship can defend herself? You can give a ship armour strong enough to resist any enemy shells. If tonnage were limited, this would mean that there would be no weight left for adequate guns. Such a ship would be valueless as a capital ship. The second means of defence for the ship is her artillery. In view of the weak armour which such a small ship must be given, it is essential that she should be in a position to defend herself against attack by means of her artillery. You all know that another country decided, as a direct reply to the construction of the German battleship, to build itself a new battleship, and that after years of research this State came to the conclusion that a ship of not less than 26,000 tons could be considered as equivalent to the German 10,000-ton ship. This surplus of 16,000 tons, which the foreign ship has over the German ship, was in fact large enough to give the foreign ship the necessary armour as well as an incontestably superior artillery. Unfortunately, Germany was not in such a favourable position.

"It is furthermore said that the speed of the German battleship is essentially superior to that of most other existing capital ships. Speed, however, is in the first place a means of defence. A ship whose maximum gun-calibre is 280 mm. (11") and which must expect to meet other ships with a gun-calibre of 406 mm. (16") has no possibility of escaping being sunk within ten minutes otherwise than by avoiding more powerful adversaries. That is why cruisers of less powerful armour have still greater speed to enable them to get away from superior enemies.

“ Another criticism of the ship was that she was built with the best material and according to a method of saving weight, wherever that is possible. Both armour and artillery as well as speed are exclusively questions of weight. A naval designer wishing to take account of these conditions is bound to use only the best material and the most perfect method of construction in order to save the weight on the construction of the hull which he needs in order to meet the requirements of the naval officer.

“ It is furthermore declared that the German ship has an extraordinarily large radius of action. As you all know, a ship's radius of action is primarily constituted by the number of successive days she can remain at sea. A ship with a small radius of action may perhaps have to return to port every three days for refuelling. A ship having twice as large a radius of action can remain at sea six days. If, for the purposes of national defence, a certain station at sea must be occupied by a ship and the ship must return to port after a few days owing to her limited radius of action, she must be replaced at her station by another ship. Whether such replacement is possible depends upon the number of ships available. A country in the privileged position of having a large number of ships at its disposal or not limited as to the number of ships it possesses can afford to have ships with a small radius of action, getting, in return, all the advantages this involves in armour and guns. For there will always be the necessary replacement ships at hand, and such a country can easily organise a system of relief. A country, however, which is not only limited in the tonnage of its ships but also in the number it can possess has no use for ships except such as can remain at sea for a long period before having to be relieved by other ships.

“ Thus, this new German battleship has not only met with criticism in our meeting of yesterday, but also in Parliamentary discussions and even at a Naval Conference and in the Press, on account of its special features. The most important of these criticisms, however, is that the construction of this ship has cost such enormous sums. This must be admitted if we compare the costs with those of the 10,000-ton cruisers of the other naval Powers. She costs approximately one and a half times as much as a 10,000-ton Washington cruiser. But just as you cannot reasonably compare the costs of a 1,000-ton submarine with those of a 1,000-ton destroyer, you cannot compare the costs of a 10,000-ton battleship with those of a 10,000-ton cruiser. The essential element in a cruiser is her speed, which must enable her to avoid stronger ships and attack weaker ones. Our battleship, it is true, can avoid stronger ships if she wishes. But as the smaller ships have a greater speed than she, there can be no question of attacking these. The German ship can merely do what is required of her against weaker ships. She is primarily an instrument of defence, and was contemplated as such by the military experts of the Allied Powers, who drew up the naval clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. In order to prove to the world how expensive this ship is, a comparison was made between the costs per ton of this ship and of other existing capital ships. I can assure you that had Germany had the possibility of building a 25,000-ton ship, this difference in the cost per ton would certainly not have existed. But if you are forced to give a 10,000-ton ship a certain fighting value, enabling her to be at least of a relative importance in the play of naval forces, you are bound, as I have already said, to use only the best material for her construction, and that makes high costs unavoidable. If you follow the German proposal and reduce capital ships to 10,000 tons, there might—though this is purely my own personal opinion—be a possibility in future, in view of the enormous cost of a modern fleet, to revise the limited German naval programme; you will realise that, in future, the impoverished German people will be able to reduce considerably the costs of its battleships.

“ In conclusion, I should like to stress publicly the fact that the German battleship is only half as expensive as the capital ships of the other naval Powers, which are three times as large. If, therefore, you were yourselves to take up the construction of ships like the German ‘ pocket battleship ’, without increasing the number of your capital ships, you would save a considerable amount in construction costs, which would be welcome news to your taxpayers.

“ If, finally, it is said that the *Deutschland* type of vessel upset the definitions incorporated in other naval agreements, my reply is that the Treaty of Versailles, which prescribes this ship for us, is older than any other of the naval agreements concluded in the meantime. If these agreements contain definitions which are not compatible with those included in the Treaty of Versailles, if these agreements stipulate the same 10,000-ton limit in regard to the cruisers of the five contracting Powers, which was laid down in the Treaty of Versailles in respect of the German battleship, nobody can possibly say that that was Germany's fault. The assertion that Germany's new battleship is bringing confusion into the definitions of other naval agreements reminds me, if I may be allowed to say so, of the tale of the lamb and the wolf.

“ Although the construction of the ship has meant a great effort and has involved high costs, and although I do not deny that every German interested in naval questions is proud of the fact that Germany has succeeded, in spite of the heavy restrictions imposed upon us, in creating a reliable instrument of defence, I must remind you in this connection that it has

been declared, in the course of the general discussion, that Germany would be ready to sacrifice this ship on the altar of disarmament if other naval Powers were ready to do the same with their capital ships."

The PRESIDENT observed that the discussion on the different types of warships which might be regarded as specifically offensive in character could not be confined to abstract and objective channels. He had therefore thought it right to allow naval experts to speak of their own practical experiences. He said this in order to avoid any impression that the discussion was spreading beyond the strict limits of the agenda.

M. SAITO (Japan) said that the Japanese delegation did not consider that capital ships came within the category of offensive armaments which the General Commission had desired the Naval Commission to determine. The same view had also been expressed by other delegations. Reasons for not regarding capital ships as specifically offensive weapons or most threatening to civilians had been explained by the United Kingdom delegate and also by the United States and French delegates, but, since other speakers held different opinions, he would venture to expound briefly the Japanese delegation's views on this subject.

In doing so, he thought it important to have a clear conception of the nature of the task which was being undertaken by the Naval Commission. The Naval Commission was not considering the actual aggressiveness or defensive character of weapons. In a sense, all weapons might be said to possess some degree of aggressiveness or offensiveness. Even a private individual entirely unarmed might be said to have some aggressive power so long as he had his fist with which to deal a blow and legs with which to give a kick. What the Naval Commission was discussing was not the aggressiveness of weapons but the degree of aggressiveness—the graduation, so to speak, of weapons according to their degree of aggressiveness.

With that point in view, he wished to consider the question of capital ships. They formed the backbone of some navies, possessing as they did a power and stability far superior in many respects to those of other types of vessels. One of their characteristics was that no single bomb, torpedo, shell or mine, however powerful, could sink them, nor could they be constructed within a short space of time. They thus formed an element of stability in the naval strength of nations. The power of capital ships did not, however, make them a suitable arm to engage in action independently of other classes of vessels. Their movements were usually and most effectively made in concert with the rest of the fleet. To single them out and to call them the most offensive weapons was neither proper nor pertinent. Capital ships would only become offensive weapons when the whole of the fleet was employed in offensive warfare.

As compared with aircraft-carriers, which, acting independently and from places far from the coast, could make their destructive power felt on land as well as at sea, menacing even civilian populations in inland areas, capital ships were of a wholly different character. The Japanese delegation, therefore, could not agree with the view that, simply because capital ships were large in size and possessed guns of large calibre, they were of a character most specifically offensive or most threatening to civilians. In making these observations, he was not excluding the possibility of reducing the unit size and gun calibre of capital ships. That would be a most desirable achievement from the point of view both of disarmament and of lightening the financial burden of nations. Needless to say, the reduction should not be of such a nature as to deprive capital ships of their essential character. The Japanese delegation believed that, on that basis, a method might be worked out for effecting a suitable reduction in the unit size and gun calibre of capital ships.

Mr. SWANSON (United States of America) wished in the first place to congratulate the Commission and the delegations on the atmosphere of goodwill and mutual comprehension in which the discussions were taking place. In particular, the French, German and Italian delegations had explained their views with commendable frankness.

Clearly, it was not for the Naval Commission to discuss the equalisation of navies. That was a political question to be decided solely by the political power of each country. Nor could it possibly be the object of the convention to undermine existing systems of defence. No nation could be expected to reverse, or even to reorganise, immediately the whole of its defensive policy. The United States of America had always relied on its navy as the most complete method of defence. The United States did not fear an attack from any neighbours, and he hoped and believed that that confidence was fully reciprocated. The American people believed that the best way for a country to obtain and maintain security was for it to possess the goodwill of its neighbours. In that case it need have no fear.

Moreover, the United States relied on its navy to defend something which was of paramount importance to the whole world—the Panama Canal. His country felt that it had a sacred trust to protect that canal for all countries in times both of peace and of war. There

existed no international obligation as in the case of the Suez Canal. It was simply that the United States of America realised its duty and was determined to fulfil its moral obligation. For that purpose, however, an adequate navy was absolutely necessary.

On the other hand, the United States navy did not constitute a menace to any nation. The United States was a party to the Pact of Paris, which prohibited the employment of military force as an instrument of national policy. The United States intended to adhere strictly to the letter and spirit of that Pact.

The United States navy existed, then, solely for defensive purposes. His country possessed a fleet which, when completed, would be equal to that of any other country. If after the war the United States had completed its programme of construction, it would have attained absolute world supremacy at sea so far as technical equipment could assure such supremacy, and yet his country had convened the Washington Conference of Naval Powers and had agreed to reduce its navy to equality with certain other navies. By that decision, 175 million dollars had been sacrificed, and gladly sacrificed, to promote security by good understanding. It had always been and would always be the policy of the United States to strive for limitation and reduction, without, however, infringing the right of countries to ensure their defence.

He would repeat that the Commission was called upon to discuss not equalisation but certain specific points concerning the offensive potentiality of certain categories of naval armaments. Of these, he proposed for the moment to discuss only the characteristics of capital ships.

He agreed that naval power allied with military power might constitute a threat. If the function of the naval power was to project the military power beyond the legitimate defensive area of that power, then naval power would constitute a menace. That, however, was not the case with the United States of America, whose present land effectives were only 124,000, a figure proportionately less than that allowed to certain countries under the peace treaties.

In any case, capital ships were of no particular importance in themselves as an instrument for blockade. They were comparatively slow in their movements and took a great time to build. It was impossible to keep the construction of capital ships secret, and they could not therefore form an element of surprise.

Reviewing all these considerations together, it was surely absurd to say that capital ships were a substantially offensive arm when they were in reality the arm best calculated—and almost solely calculated—to ensure defence. As he had said, capital ships formed the backbone of the United States organisation for defensive purposes. If that view were not admitted, then the whole of the United States policy would have to be reversed, with enormous consequent expenditure. The situation was the same with regard to certain other countries which were parties to the Washington and London Treaties. Capital ships, in short, being less vulnerable to attack, were the most efficient defensive weapons at sea. Surely it could not be the desire of the Conference to oblige countries which at present relied on this purely defensive arm to revert to the system of large armies. It should not be forgotten that it was solely the existence of navies for defensive purposes which had enabled certain countries to reduce their land armaments. The naval Powers had set a good example. It was they who had first agreed to limit their forces.

He had heard with great satisfaction the French delegate express a hope that France and Italy would become parties to the London Naval Agreement. That would be a great step forward towards the solid organisation of peace.

In short, the United States of America were absolutely opposed to the characterisation of capital ships as offensive armaments, seeing that they regarded their own capital ships as their chief and first line of national defence.

Captain MARONI (Italy) thought that it was not part of the Commission's work to modify the definitions given in existing treaties. It had in fact decided to take the definitions of the Washington and London Treaties as the basis of its discussions.

Under these definitions a capital ship was a ship having a displacement of over 10,000 tons and carrying guns of over 203 mm. (8"). It concentrated great offensive power in a hull of great defensive capacity. Its specific character could therefore be summarised as follows: a maximum of offensive capacity with a maximum power of resistance.

He did not need to prove that the ratio between the foot-pound of energy developed by the guns carried and the displacement followed the exponential law. Though cruisers' guns might fire more rapidly, the heavier shells fired by capital ships were far more likely to reach their target. It also seemed hardly necessary to state that the characteristics of the construction of a capital ship were such that this vessel might be regarded as almost invulnerable, whether it was fired at by artillery or was attacked by aircraft or submarines.

He therefore did not see the least difficulty in unhesitatingly classifying capital ships in the category of offensive armaments. Even delegates who did not share the Italian point of view admitted that when a battleship reached the scene of operations, all the other units

were obliged to give way and leave it master of the situation. Faster ships might flee ; those which would not or could not were doomed to destruction. Only submarines and bombing-aircraft could endeavour to put up a fight, with some hope of success, against the capital ship. That being admitted, it seemed very difficult to deny that the capital ship possessed a specifically offensive character as compared with other less protected and less powerfully armed vessels. Nor could it be denied that its efficacy might be decisive when it was employed to wipe out the defence of a country which possessed no—or at any rate too few—capital ships.

But there was another consideration. Was there any greater danger for a seafaring Power than that of the blockade of its coasts by superior naval forces ? The civilian population might not be directly threatened by capital ships ; he agreed with the French delegate on that point, and considered that the rules of war should be respected. Nevertheless, history offered numerous examples of terrible suffering inflicted by certain blockades on thousands of non-combatants and even on the populations of neutral countries. If the blockade was applied by a fleet supported by capital ships, no other fleet without capital ships could possibly break it up. From that standpoint, then, capital ships might also be regarded as dangerous to civilian populations.

In short, the Italian delegation regarded the specifically offensive character of capital ships as proved. It believed that it had also been proved that capital ships were only indispensable to a fleet if other fleets possessed them.

Mr. LATHAM (Australia) said that the convening of the Conference had raised great hopes in Australia, and that its work was followed with deep interest and sympathy. But the expression of certain sentiments was not enough to secure positive results. A technical commission like the Naval Commission must go very carefully into the definite questions laid before it ; as the President and various speakers had already pointed out, the General Commission, in its resolution of April 22nd, had not instructed the Naval Commission to state whether any given naval armament possessed specifically offensive characteristics or whether it threatened civilian populations, but to state what arms displayed these characteristics to the highest degree. All arms were offensive from a certain point of view. The Commission should merely establish a list of naval arms classified according to the degree of their aggressiveness.

The problem should be looked at in a practical light, and he therefore proposed to begin by examining it from the standpoint of his own country, though he recognised that that procedure would not allow definite conclusions to be drawn as regards other countries, as conditions varied so greatly from country to country. Australia was very far distant from centres in which armaments had reached a high pitch of development. She had no aggressive intentions against any country, and the navy was above all her main line of defence.

It was highly improbable that Australia would be attacked by capital ships. Such an attack would be made only to support the landing of troops for the invasion of the country. Unless troops were landed, capital ships could only bombard the coasts, the effect of which would be slight. In the case of invasion, capital ships would be used to protect convoys and cover the landing of troops by their gunfire. They would not constitute the really aggressive element in the operations.

If merchant vessels were attacked, cruisers would mainly be employed for that purpose and not capital ships. From the point of view of Australia, capital ships were important for defensive purposes. They would assist in protection of sea-borne commerce and defence against invasion. From her point of view, therefore, capital ships were a purely defensive arm.

From a more general standpoint it might be said that capital ships never came into action against a civilian population, but only against an adversary's fleet. Blockades were generally carried out by units other than battleships ; the latter were, in the case of blockade, only factors of support and reserve. Considered, therefore, in the light of the criteria of the General Commission's resolution, capital ships should be placed rather at the end than at the head of the lists to be drawn up by the Naval Commission.

A country which sought to organise its defence effectively might well possess capital ships to protect its coasts and maritime trade.

The same, however, would not apply to a country which was definitely organising aggression, as distinct from defence. If a country had a common land frontier with the country it intended to invade, obviously it would not employ its capital ships ; if the two countries were separated by sea, capital ships would not be built and used as themselves aggressive weapons. They would, in such a case, be required, if at all, for the purpose of meeting the naval power of the contemplated enemy. They would meet other capital ships in battle and could protect the transport of troops against the counter-attacks of the adversary or some other naval Power.

In short, he held that capital ships should appear rather towards the end than at the head of the list to be drawn up by the Naval Commission. However, he reserved the right,

when the Naval Commission had replied to the General Commission's resolution, to revert to the question of a substantial reduction of tonnage. That question was quite distinct from the question of relative offensiveness to which the attention of the Commission should now be confined.

Vice-Admiral POUND (United Kingdom) desired to reply first to the French delegate's proposal to the effect that limitation might be based on the cost per kilogramme of the construction of war vessels. The method suggested would be impracticable seeing that the price of labour, raw materials and purchasing power of money varied considerably from country to country. Moreover, the most convinced supporters of methods of budgetary limitation admitted that the naval expenditure of the various countries were not comparable *inter se*. The figures of such expenditure merely showed whether in any particular country the expenditure on armaments was increasing or decreasing. There was a perfectly good method available for the limitation of naval armaments—direct limitation, which had stood the test of time. It would not be wise to add thereto other forms of indirect limitation which would without doubt cause great difficulty.

Coming to the question of capital ships, he thought the Commission ought to decide what type exactly the various delegations had in mind. He assumed that they were referring to the large units possessed by the five great naval Powers.

He had already said that the criterion for determining the extent to which an arm was aggressive was to consider whether that arm could rapidly put its adversary out of action. Any arm might break down the defence of a country by exercising slow pressure over a sufficient length of time. The delegate of the United States of America had given a wonderfully clear illustration of the defensive part played by capital ships. He wholeheartedly seconded Senator Swanson's remarks.

Before capital ships were accused of possessing a specifically offensive character, it was only right that their defensive character should also be put in the balance.

Naval forces could break down the defence of a country in two ways: (1) by preventing that country from obtaining supplies; and (2) by supporting an invasion.

As the German delegate had pointed out, when the question was one of holding up the country's supplies, the work of blockade was entrusted to other types of vessels, capital ships only exercising an indirect influence. The United Kingdom delegation also believed that blockade by sea was made possible, not by the fact that a country possessed any given type of vessel, but by the general naval superiority of that country. The principal advantage, however, which such naval superiority conferred on the country possessing it was the power of defending its sea-borne trade. For a country like Great Britain, that was a point of capital importance. In any case, it could not be said that capital ships were able to deal such blows at an enemy as would put him out of action.

The support which a fleet could afford in the invasion of a country was mainly command of the seas in the area in which troops were to be landed. But in this case also the result would be due not to the existence of vessels of any given type but to general naval superiority.

Was the capital ship more suitable than any other kind of vessel for protecting the landing of troops? Two cases might arise: either the coasts on which the landing took place might not be fortified, or they might.

In the former case the landing might take place under the fire of cruisers or destroyers as well as under the fire of capital ships. There remained the case in which troops were to be landed on a fortified coast. Certain delegations had stated that only capital ships could reduce coastal fortifications to silence. Experience of the world war had proved that this theory was unfounded, and that for easily comprehensible reasons. A warship contained a whole series of delicate instruments collected together at one single point, so that one single fortunate shot might put the whole vessel out of action. Moreover, vessels were in general visible from the observation posts on shore. Modern fortifications, on the other hand, were very skilfully concealed; their ammunition depots were situated at a great depth below the surface, and the firing was often directed from a long distance from the guns themselves. The hazards were therefore most unequal.

Formerly the situation was quite different. Most countries had a large number of capital ships, many of which were very old. They did not hesitate to use them in attacking fortresses and did not much care if they were damaged. But at the present time the number of large vessels possessed by any country could be counted on the fingers and their value was so great that there would be great hesitation in exposing them to the fire of fortified batteries. Moreover, when a warship thought that it had reduced a fortified battery to silence, it often happened that as soon as the battleship itself ceased fire the gunners of the battery again took up their positions and reopened fire on the vessel.

In conclusion, if all these points were taken into consideration together with the undoubted defensive part which capital ships were called upon to play, the Commission could only return, as regarded these vessels, a verdict of acquittal.

## TENTH MEETING

*Held on Tuesday, May 3rd, 1932, at 10 a.m.*

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President : M. COLBAN.

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20. APPLICATION TO CAPITAL SHIPS OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION DATED APRIL 22ND (document Conf.D./C.G.28(2)) [*continuation of the discussion*].

The PRESIDENT observed that all delegations might, when the draft report came to be discussed, mention in that report that they shared some particular opinion expressed by another delegation.

Commodore DE TAMM (Sweden) emphasised the importance of the discussion which had taken place during the last few meetings. It had shown how complicated the problem was and how divergent were the opinions of the various delegations.

It seemed to show that the great naval Powers on the one hand, and the smaller Powers on the other, regarded the situation in rather a different light. The smaller Powers naturally looked at the question of large capital ships mainly from the point of view of the efficacy of those ships against defence organisations—i.e., the second case mentioned in the General Commission's resolution. All delegations, however, agreed that the same treatment should not be applied to all capital ships. The suggestions by certain representatives of great Powers that it might be possible to limit the tonnage and gun calibre of capital ships were welcomed by countries which only possessed low-tonnage fleets.

Moreover, several speakers had emphasised the fact that each fleet should be considered as a whole, since the nature of a vessel might vary according to the composition of the rest of the fleet to which it belonged. That fact had been taken into consideration in the draft Convention prepared by the Preparatory Commission, which classified capital ships of under 8,000 tons, the calibre of whose guns did not exceed 203 mm. (8"), in a special category, provided those vessels belonged to a fleet which did not possess any vessel of greater tonnage.

It would appear in any case that these low-tonnage vessels could not rightly be regarded as specifically offensive or specially threatening to civilians.

In order to allay the anxiety expressed with regard to capital ships, several speakers had pointed out that in practice the efficacy of these ships against coastal defence was not very great. He would not discuss that point. He would merely say that small countries which did not possess large units did not all share that opinion. Nevertheless, in order to reply on this point to the General Commission's question, the Naval Commission might simply note that capital ships were, of all warships, the most dangerous to coastal defences, and that any steps taken to abolish or reduce this class of vessel would doubtless increase the feeling of security in the different countries which, as Mr. Gibson had said, was the very object of the American proposal upon which the present discussion turned. Consequently, the Swedish delegation would be glad if the Naval Commission replied to the question submitted to it in such a way as to allow the General Commission to decide in favour of limitation, commencing with capital ships. For its part, the Swedish delegation could see no objection to indicating capital ships of over 10,000 tons—or even 8,000 tons, as mentioned in the draft Convention—for inclusion in any list to be submitted to the General Commission in response to its request made in the resolution of April 22nd.

The Swedish delegation would also agree to limiting the calibre of capital ships' guns. Nevertheless, it was obvious, he thought, that a warship with a small radius of action and a moderate speed was of a decidedly defensive character, even if it possessed a gun of 280 mm. (11") or 305 mm. (12") calibre.

Colonel RIAZI (Persia) said that the naval programme which his Government had commenced to carry out was a very modest one. Nevertheless, the Persian delegation, in spite of the fact that the extent of Persia's coast called for a fairly strong fleet, was prepared to accept, for the first phase of disarmament, any unanimously adopted arrangement. The Persian delegation would, however, urge that any resolutions which might be adopted should not affect the legitimate interests and security of countries which did not possess large naval forces.

The Persian delegation thought that the offensive or defensive characteristics of the various types of warships could only be determined very relatively. If, moreover, the question were studied in the abstract, it would be found that, for a country whose coastline was not fortified and which did not possess warships armed with large-calibre guns, any vessel carrying such guns would be aggressive. But in the present discussion, the scope of which was world-wide, the Persian delegation thought that the definition of vessels possessing specifically offensive characteristics could only be attained when the Land Commission had fixed the range and calibre of guns authorised for coastal defence purposes. When that range and calibre had been determined, any vessel carrying guns of greater range or calibre might be regarded as a specifically offensive armament.

With regard to submarines, the Persian delegation shared the opinion expressed by the Finnish delegation. Submarines with a small radius of action could not be regarded as specifically offensive armaments if the international restrictions of a humanitarian character laid down in the Treaty of London were universally and strictly observed.

No opinion concerning the offensive or non-offensive character of aircraft-carriers could be formed until the Air Commission had reached a decision with regard to military aviation.

Finally, the Persian delegation felt that all armaments connected with chemical or bacteriological warfare should be regarded as specifically offensive and inhuman.

The PRESIDENT read the following proposal submitted by the Roumanian delegation :

“ As regards the application to capital ships of the General Commission's resolution of April 22nd, 1932, the Roumanian delegation, in regarding this question from the point of view of the maritime interests of Roumania, considers that capital ships, by reason of their radius of action, their speed and their heavy armament, are the most efficacious of all surface ships against national defence.

“ States which are unable to possess capital ships and which cannot line all their maritime frontiers with heavy guns must employ submarines to protect themselves against the aggressive action of large surface ships. ”

M. VENTZOFF (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that most of the speakers, while showing that they possessed a profound knowledge of the questions under consideration, had perhaps rather lost sight of fundamentals.

Three quite definite questions had been submitted to the Naval Commission, and on that Commission's replies the decision to be taken by the General Commission would doubtless depend. The discussion had, however, proved that views were very divergent. True, most of the delegations, including the Italian, German, Chinese, Spanish, Swedish, Roumanian and also the Soviet delegations, had replied affirmatively to most of the questions raised by the General Commission. But as the minority was composed of great naval Powers, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan and France, he would venture to put forward a few more arguments.

In the first place, the Naval Commission would, he thought, be wise if it entirely discarded the idea of replacing the qualitative reduction of armaments by methods for regulating naval warfare.

The General Commission had taken a clear decision recognising the need for qualitative reduction ; that decision, which had perhaps been preceded by a good deal of heart-searching, had been reached unanimously. It was the Naval Commission's task to assist the General Commission with its experience and knowledge. No one would thank the Naval Commission if, instead of answering the questions submitted to it, it expressed an opinion that all that was needed was to sign some vague manifesto condemning the torpedoing of merchant vessels without warning or the bombardment of coasts without previous notice. Nor would anybody be particularly pleased with it if, after a special study of modern fleets, it stated that these fleets presented no characteristics—or hardly any—that could reasonably be regarded as offensive. It was really not possible to maintain that a code of the procedure to be permitted in war-time could replace the qualitative and quantitative reduction of naval armaments.

It had also been argued that the abolition of capital ships would upset the complicated machinery of the national defence of the great naval Powers. It had been stated that the question of capital ships was not a new one ; that it had been discussed at Washington and in London, where a list had been drawn up of the tonnage permitted for each unit and for the whole of each fleet, and that any new decision which put capital ships into the category of offensive armaments might gravely perturb the programme of naval construction.

He was really perplexed to know what connection these matters had with the reduction of armaments. When the representative of the United Kingdom had submitted to the General Commission his proposal for qualitative reduction, and when the representative of France proposed that capital ships and large submarines should be placed at the disposal of an international force, did they really believe that no change would be made in the allocation of naval strengths ? Moreover, it was not the mission of the Naval Commission to decide whether



capital ships should be abolished, internationalised or reduced in tonnage. It was not called upon to reply to this political question but merely to certain technical questions raised by the General Commission.

In so doing, the Naval Commission ought to take into account, as regarded capital ships, the possibilities of these ships from a tactical point of view. Any endeavour to link up this question with the length of coasts, the number and quality of naval bases, possible combinations in cases of dispute—in short, national security and the particular conditions of each country—could only lead them straight into a blind alley.

If they were to avoid losing themselves in an inextricable maze, they ought to consider fundamentals anew.

Several of the previous speakers had observed that, in order to undertake offensive operations at sea and, in particular, to land troops in foreign territory, it was not enough to possess capital ships: the command of the seas had also to be secured, either totally or regionally. Obviously such command implied the existence of certain advantages such as naval bases, the quantity and quality of vessels of the various categories, preparedness of effectives and the capacity of the commanders of a modern fleet. But these questions also lay quite outside the Naval Commission's terms of reference. The Commission had to consider not the whole problem of the command of the seas but only part of that problem.

The only question they had to elucidate was the part played by capital ships in offensive operations. To determine that point, they must consider in what respects capital ships were being developed and what were the changes in their construction and armaments during the last twenty years. Though he could not go into minute details, he would quote one or two examples.

If the characteristics of Japanese capital ships in 1911 of the *Settsu* type were compared with those of the *Nagato* type in 1920, very marked differences would be noted. Tonnage had risen from 21,000 to 34,000 tons, the range of the guns from 10 to 18 miles, and the gun-power represented by the total broadside-weight of all the guns having the main artillery calibre from 4,876 to 7,944 kg.

In the case of British capital ships, the progress which had been achieved between 1917 (*Temeraire* type) and 1927 (*Nelson* type) was still more marked. Tonnage had risen from 22,000 to 40,400 tons, speed had passed from 21.5 to 23.5 knots, the range of the main armament guns had increased from 10 to 20 miles and the broadside-weight from 3,084 to 9,450 kilos, while the radius of action had passed from 6,000 miles (at 13 knots) to 14,000 miles (at 15 knots).

Identical or similar changes had occurred in American and other capital ships.

What was the conclusion to be drawn from these figures? In spite of the fact that geographical conditions have not changed, in spite of the apparent absence of new operations to be undertaken by high seas fleets, the characteristics of capital ships which had been most extended and developed were the most specially offensive ones (gun-power, radius of action and tonnage).

Apart from qualitative characteristics, the Soviet delegation recognised the great importance to be attached to the experience acquired during the world war. The German representative had quoted in this connection examples which confirmed the opinion of the Soviet delegation—namely, that capital ships were essential to offensive operations by a fleet, particularly when that fleet intended to invade foreign territory.

The Soviet Union had itself experienced immediately after the world war in its own territory the effects of the offensive capacities of these sea monsters. All attempts at foreign intervention which took place during the civil war, starting from the Black Sea coast, were always supported by the fire of capital ships which had come from afar, which threatened the national defence and which decimated the population.

For instance, in 1919, a squadron of warships, flying the flags of several countries, included eight capital ships. It was only the fire of these ships which made it possible to land troops in the Crimea, in the Caucasus and at Odessa. It might, of course, be said that these attempts had proved very unfortunate for those who made them; he could, however, assure the Commission that their lack of success was not due to the weakness of the capital ships employed. The entire failure of the armed invasion was due to quite different causes.

Moreover, the newspapers, in referring to the events at Shanghai, had explained that the old Woo-Sung ramparts had not been carried by storm because capital ships were unable to approach up the Yang-Tse-Kiang.

These examples were sufficient to prove that modern capital ships were necessary for the success of naval operations in foreign waters. In these operations, the decisive part was played by capital ships owing to the properties they possessed from a tactical point of view. It was capital ships that made success possible.

Consequently, to the question raised by the General Commission, the Soviet delegation replied that capital ships were: (a) specifically offensive, (b) particularly dangerous to national defence and (c) particularly threatening to the civilian population.

It had already been pointed out that a limited number of capital ships of a certain type could be used for defence. A technical study of the question had led the Soviet delegation to believe that a tonnage of 10,000 tons was quite sufficient to allow these vessels to be provided with all the requirements for the defence of a country when operations were conducted in the territorial waters of that country.

Moreover, defensive capital ships must be sufficiently armed to meet the attacks of enemy fleets. The Soviet delegation considered that an 11-12 inch calibre was the maximum calibre allowable for the guns of these vessels. It had therefore been very interested to hear the Spanish delegation propose a maximum calibre of 8 inches. A more detailed technical examination would make it possible to give a definite opinion on these figures.

In short, the Soviet delegation felt that the decision to be taken by the Naval Commission with regard to capital ships should not allow any doubt to remain. If the Commission wished to achieve any result at all, it must not merely enumerate the opinions expressed by the various delegations. The decision to be taken should not be a lecture on naval tactics but something intended to further the cause of disarmament.

The PRESIDENT read the following proposal submitted by the Netherlands delegation :

“ The Naval Commission is of opinion that capital ships, in proportion as they are larger and more heavily armed, are of a character more specifically offensive and more efficacious against national defence. ”

He invited that delegation to give any explanations it might consider necessary.

M. MORESCO (Netherlands) said that the statements of the various delegations had certainly helped to make it easier to appreciate the characteristics of capital ships and the use to which they could be put. Those statements were, however, scarcely such as to point to the possibility of arriving at a unanimous conclusion as regards the reply to be given to the General Commission. It was clear that the Naval Commission would not be able to ignore the question of capital ships since, under the terms of the resolution of April 22nd, it was bound to examine the whole series of naval armaments. It would therefore be obliged to give a decision on the question whether or no capital ships complied with the criteria enumerated in the resolution and, in particular, the first two criteria — that is to say, whether they should come under the category of weapons “ which are most specifically offensive and which are most efficacious against national defence ”.

If the Commission were to accept the statements of the representatives of the three most important naval Powers, its reply would have to be in the negative. The United Kingdom, the United States and Japan had stated that, in their opinion, capital ships were not more specifically offensive than any other type of warship. In the first speech of the general discussion it had even been stated that no type of warship was of a specifically offensive character. M. Moresco wondered what sort of impression would be produced by such a statement if the Naval Commission were to adopt it. He thought it would be an extremely unfortunate impression.

It would make an unfortunate impression, in the first place, on the General Commission, which had adopted the resolution in question unanimously. The members of the Naval Commission were present during the discussion of that resolution or had in any case followed that discussion, and they might be blamed for having failed to warn the heads of their delegations. It might be said that they had allowed the heads of their delegations to adopt a resolution which they knew was impossible of execution, instead of warning them that the conception of the offensive or defensive character of weapons was of no value in the case of naval armaments.

What was more serious, it would produce an unfortunate impression on public opinion, which demanded that real progress should finally be made in the direction of a reduction in armaments. The general discussion at the plenary meetings had led the nations to hope that a result might be achieved. Were they to be disappointed again ?

It was the more important to take account of that danger, inasmuch as any failure to find a solution of a particular important question might have regrettable results with regard to other questions dealt with by the Naval Commission or by other commissions.

Certain delegations had tried to reassure the Commission by pointing out that, if they refused to acknowledge the distinction between offensive and defensive weapons, that would not prevent them from accepting any limitation of the tonnage of warships ; a limitation of that kind might be useful for financial reasons, and in any case the question would be examined afresh in three years, as was provided in the London Treaty.

M. Moresco considered that this argument could be reversed : if the Naval Commission admitted that capital ships, or at least those exceeding a tonnage to be fixed, presented the characteristics enumerated in the resolution, it did not follow that existing ships exceeding that tonnage would have to be destroyed immediately. Indeed, according to what had been proposed by the Italian delegation, they might examine such a system of progressive abolition as would make the undertaking to destroy ships equivalent in practice to an undertaking not to replace them.

He would not discuss the alternative proposed in the resolution, as he considered that the time had not come to deal with it. It seemed to him that the Commission was free to take any appropriate decision without fear of upsetting the present systems of defence or of entailing considerable expenditure or giving rise to other objections.

What decision was appropriate ?

First of all, the Commission ought to take its stand on the well-known principle of civil law that, when a clause was capable of being interpreted in two different ways, it should be understood in the sense which would give it practical effect rather than in the sense which would prevent its producing any effect. If the Commission stated that a warship was only an offensive or defensive weapon according to the use made of it, the resolution of the General

Commission would have no effect. Certainly it was true that a sword-stick could be used as a support and an ordinary stick could be used to assault a person. It was none the less true that a sword-stick was of a "more specifically offensive character" than an ordinary stick, though that did not prevent its being more efficacious for the purpose of defence; the one did not exclude the other. If the Commission were to interpret the resolution in the simplest and most natural way, it would state that in proportion as they are larger and more strongly armed, capital ships are of a more specifically offensive character and are more efficacious against national defence. Those were the limits of the Commission's present task. It was not obliged to propose limits on tonnage or calibre. If the delegations could agree on such limits, it would be preferable to do so, but it seemed improbable that such a difficult question, involving so many technical and political considerations, could be settled immediately or in a very short time.

Moreover, the Naval Commission would be able to deal with it during the discussion of the points referred to it by the General Commission, and in particular the question relating to Article 14 of the draft Convention.

He was of opinion that, if the Commission replied in the sense which he had indicated, it would thereby enable the General Commission to take a step forward. That was the more desirable inasmuch as the difficulty in connection with capital ships would no doubt arise in the case of the other types of vessels also, and it was therefore essential to overcome that difficulty immediately.

Captain SOLSKI (Poland) pointed out that the application to capital ships of the General Commission's resolution interested in different ways the members of the Commission who represented the countries with maritime interests. It was not only a question of the requirements of the various fleets but also of the menace to the various Powers constituted by the existence of capital ships in the vicinity of their territory.

He desired to stress the fact—and he did so with great satisfaction—that during the discussions on capital ships most of the speakers had examined the characteristics of those ships in the light of the peculiar obligations and position of their own countries.

The discussion, which the Polish delegation had followed with the very greatest attention, showed once more that, whenever there was a question of examining from a practical point of view the necessity of maintaining for the defence of a country this or that force, or of discussing the reason for this or that composition of those forces, it was necessary to regard the question within the natural framework of the requirements of defence and of the international obligations of the country in question. Thus, during the present discussion, which was confined to the characteristics of one type of warship, the Naval Commission had been furnished with important explanations by various delegations, who had based their contentions on the provisions of Article 8 of the Covenant.

No doubt all the delegations were prepared to admit that the Powers with overseas possessions had the best technical reasons for basing their system of naval defence on capital ships, the true backbone of their fleets.

It was none the less true that in certain parts of the world there were fleets possessing large capital ships (or ships of inferior tonnage but of equivalent power), whereas other countries in the same part of the world had no equivalent naval armaments. Consequently, although, in the case of the countries with overseas possessions, the Polish delegation was prepared to admit that their capital ships were primarily of a defensive character, in the particular case of restricted theatres of operations in certain districts there could be no doubt that capital ships might be used as an offensive weapon.

In view of that fact, the best practical method would perhaps be that which had been followed in the naval disarmament already carried out, and which was based on the special situation of various countries.

Furthermore, the Polish delegation had been very much impressed by the statements of Admiral Pound, who had said that the success of naval aggression did not depend exclusively on the composition of the aggressor's fleet but in the long run on his general naval superiority. Captain Solski was therefore of opinion that, as regards qualitative limitation, the relative numerical value of the various fleets should be largely taken into account.

The last remark he would make would be in connection with a problem affecting the very existence of each country and of special importance for the civilian populations—the problem of blockades.

Several of the previous speakers had pointed out that a blockade could be carried out, not only by capital ships, but by naval forces of whatever composition, provided that they were generally superior to the adversary's forces.

The position of the Baltic countries rendered them vulnerable to any blockade. That applied, in particular, to countries which, like Poland, had no outlet except on that sea. What possibility of defence had the less developed fleets?

Captain Maroni had answered that question by saying that all vessels composing modern fleets must give way to capital ships, with the exception of the submarine—the weapon of the weak—which could alone venture to oppose them with any chance of success. Submarines could therefore still more easily defy superior naval forces when the latter were composed of ships other than capital ships. The Polish delegation reserved the right to raise those questions again when the time came.

Commodore OTTO (Norway) said that the Norwegian delegation entirely concurred in the observations of the Swedish delegation.

Cemal HÜSNÜ Bey (Turkey) was of opinion that capital ships certainly possessed the three characteristics defined by the General Commission, and in particular the first two: they were specifically offensive, very effective against national defence and were an arm which threatened the civilian population.

Without entering into technical details, which would prolong the discussion and had been developed by other delegates, he would quote an historical example to show how these powerful armaments were instruments of aggression *par excellence*.

The attack on the Dardanelles by large capital ships coming from distant countries to force the Straits and cover the landing of troops in Turkish territory had amply demonstrated what such ships could do. If these operations had finally proved unsatisfactory for the attackers, that was not by any means—as had already been explained in the course of the discussion—due to the inefficacy of capital ships from an offensive point of view; the Dardanelles affair merely showed how great was the genius of the man who had directed the defence, and who now presided over the destinies of the Turkish nation. Moreover, the sacrifices made and losses suffered by the Turkish people at that time were considerable. Finally, the large battleships of the Allied Powers had remained a permanent menace to the Turkish population during the whole of the campaign which the Turkish people had had to conduct to safeguard its independence. Accordingly, the Turkish delegation held that capital ships were pre-eminently offensive armaments.

The PRESIDENT noted that there were no more speakers on the question of capital ships. The Spanish and Netherlands delegations had, however, put forward certain definite proposals. Moreover, many of the speeches made during the last two days had also contained suggestions which might possibly be transformed into proposals. He therefore thought the best course would be to refer all these matters to the Bureau. The Bureau would try to find a formula which, even if it did not secure unanimous approval, would at any rate make clear the views of the Naval Commission on this question.

He proposed that the Bureau should follow the system which had already given good results in other cases—namely, to invite those delegations which were specially interested in the question to appoint members to work with the Bureau. Nobody, of course, would be excluded, and every delegation had the right to send a representative. The only object of a voluntary restriction of numbers would be to expedite business. He felt that he could not allow the discussion to come to an end at the stage it had now reached. The Commission should surely endeavour to reach as definite an opinion as possible, and an opinion endorsed by the greatest possible number of delegations.

*Agreed.*

21. APPLICATION TO AIRCRAFT-CARRIERS OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION DATED APRIL 22ND, 1932 (document Conf. D./C.G.28 (2)).

The PRESIDENT said the Commission now had to consider the second point on its agenda—namely, aircraft-carriers. In this connection the Spanish delegation had raised what might almost be regarded as a previous question—namely, that, although aircraft-carriers also seem to fulfil the three conditions, the Naval Commission should not pronounce on this point immediately, since any resolution on the subject must be conditional on the studies of the Air Commission with regard to the aircraft carried on this type of vessel.

He had reflected on this point at some length. In the first place, the Spanish delegation had agreed to the agenda, which included a discussion on the application to aircraft-carriers of the General Commission's resolution. He assumed the Spanish delegation's intention to be that the Naval Commission should not reach any decision regarding the characteristics of aircraft-carriers which might embarrass the Air Commission or even hinder it in its discussions regarding the aircraft themselves; in other words, the rights of the Air Commission in this matter should be reserved. But, since the Air Commission would need to be in possession of all the elements which might help it in reaching a decision, the Naval Commission might possibly assist the Air Commission by endeavouring to decide whether aircraft-carriers did or did not possess all or any of the characteristics referred to in the resolution of the General Commission. The Naval Commission should, for instance, be in a position to say to the Air Commission that, if certain aircraft (whatever the decision reached regarding these aircraft in themselves) were put on certain ships, the combination would or would not possess some or all of the characteristics referred to in the General Commission's resolution. He therefore asked the Spanish delegation whether, in view of these considerations, it would agree that a discussion should nevertheless take place.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ (Spain) said that, in presenting its proposal, the Spanish delegation had in view the President's own remark to the effect that some questions could be decided only by joint discussions between two or more Commissions. Surely this was one

of the cases in point. The Air Commission would have to consider the characteristics of all aircraft, not only bombers, but fighters and scouts. If the Air Commission concluded, for instance, that all aircraft were non-offensive in character, and the Naval Commission concluded that aircraft-carriers possessed specifically offensive characteristics, then the two Commissions would have reached two incompatible decisions. If, however, the President felt that it was desirable to discuss this point with a view to ascertaining certain preliminary views, the Spanish delegation would raise no objection.

The PRESIDENT assured the Spanish delegation that all incompatibility between the decisions of the various technical commissions would be avoided by the fact that the Bureau of the Naval Commission kept constantly in very close touch with the other Bureaux. If the Naval Commission could reach agreement, and if its conclusion could then be incorporated in a joint report, the three Bureaux would submit that report to the General Commission. As a matter of fact, the question of aircraft-carriers had been dealt with fairly fully by the various speakers in the general discussion.

M. Charles DUMONT (France) said that the French delegation's views as expressed in the general discussion had not varied. Though the point in question was referred to in the Washington and London Treaties, nevertheless the delegations possessed full powers and could vote on all questions, even those which had already been discussed at the time of the conclusion of the Washington and London Treaties. The French delegation believed that the standard displacement specified in Article 15 of the draft Convention could be reduced. Even if, as the French delegation ardently hoped, a decision were reached to abolish large bombing aircraft, it also hoped that aircraft-carriers would still be allowed in fleets, but only for such reconnaissance aircraft as might be necessary for scouting purposes and to protect convoys.

M. MORESCO (Netherlands) thought the answer to the question raised in the General Commission's resolution depended upon whether bombing aircraft were to be allowed or not. If bombing aircraft were retained, then aircraft-carriers would certainly come within the scope of the three cases mentioned in the resolution, and more particularly the first and second of these cases.

Mr. SWANSON (United States of America) pointed out that under the London Naval Treaty the tonnage of these vessels allowed was 135,000 tons each to the United States of America and Great Britain, 81,000 tons to Japan and 60,000 tons to France. The aircraft carried on these vessels were extremely useful for scouting purposes, and up to the present their use for such purposes had not been criticised. As regarded bombing aircraft, the London Treaty had fixed a definite distribution of naval power and the ratio of aircraft allowed to each Power for protection against submarines. Bombing aircraft would be useful for the protection of fleets so long as submarines were maintained. Submarines were highly offensive weapons, particularly if the regulations laid down in the London Treaty concerning action against merchant vessels, and indeed against warships, were not complied with. It would not be possible to consider the abolition of aircraft bombing unless submarines were also abolished. The definite usefulness of the defensive employment of bombing aircraft against submarines should be taken into consideration if any question were raised of the redistribution of naval power. It would be contrary to the spirit of the London Treaty to abolish aircraft-carriers and not submarines. The spirit of that Treaty ought to be adhered to, and there should be no redistribution of naval power otherwise than in the light of the clauses of that Treaty. Would it, for instance, be logical to contemplate the abolition of naval bombing if fleets were still exposed to bombing from land? He therefore agreed with the Spanish delegation that land and naval bombing must be considered together.

The United States delegation felt that there ought to be no redistribution of naval power before December 31st, 1936, when the London Treaty might come up for reconsideration, unless the signatories to that Treaty consented to such a change as would be expressed in a universal agreement. It would be eminently desirable, however, that such a universal agreement should itself embody the decisions of the London Treaty.

The PRESIDENT said that the special attention of the Air Commission would be drawn to the points which had just been raised, but naturally the Air Commission would be free to take such decisions as lay within its competence.

M. Charles DUMONT (France) said, in regard to the reference which had just been made to the London Naval Treaty, that France desired and intended to honour her signature. But Article 23 of the London Treaty itself laid down that :

“ The present Treaty shall remain in force until the 31st December, 1936, . . . Unless the High Contracting Parties should agree otherwise by reason of a more general agreement limiting naval armaments, to which they all become parties . . . ”

Provision had therefore been made in the London Treaty itself for the decisions of the present Conference, which was consequently free to raise any question, including the allocation of tonnage and other modifications, provided a general agreement were reached.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) observed that in this matter, as in others, the attitude of the German delegation was governed by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Germany was prohibited under that Treaty from constructing or possessing aircraft-carriers, on the ground that these were aggressive weapons.

A new argument had, however, been put forward to the effect that aircraft-carriers were specifically aggressive only when they carried bombing aircraft, and that if they carried other aircraft—for instance, for scouting or reconnaissance purposes—they would lose their specifically aggressive character. He would point out, however, that there was no need for reconnaissance and scouting aircraft to be carried on special vessels. If the General Commission decided to allow small scouting aircraft, such aircraft could easily be carried on existing vessels.

The United States delegate had suggested that carriers of bombing aircraft were necessary to deal with the submarine menace and that they were one of the best arms for detecting and destroying submarines. He ventured to disagree with that view. In fact, during the war, very few submarines had been sunk by aircraft. If, however, submarines were abolished, as the German delegation proposed, there would be no need to revert to this argument.

M. VENTZOFF (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Soviet delegation was of opinion that aircraft-carriers were specifically offensive armaments within the meaning of all three points of the General Commission's resolution. In any future war, if a fleet were in its own waters, it would not require aircraft-carriers. Those would be required only if a fleet were carrying on operations in foreign waters—i.e., if it were again engaged in offensive warfare. Consequently, all aircraft-carriers should be regarded as specifically offensive under all three headings of the General Commission's resolution, whatever type of aircraft they might carry.

Captain MARONI (Italy) reiterated the Italian delegation's opinion—the reasons for which it had already explained—that all aircraft-carriers were pre-eminently aggressive and dangerous to national defences. The question of aircraft-carriers was naturally bound up with bombing aircraft. It was possible, of course, that bombing aircraft might be abolished, but the Naval Commission could not, in the present discussion, be oblivious to the fact that such aircraft still existed. Reconnaissance and scouting work could perfectly well be done by aircraft carried in other types of vessels.

The PRESIDENT understood that certain delegations had not been prepared to discuss the question of aircraft-carriers immediately. The discussion might therefore be resumed at the next meeting.

A few days previously he had said that the work of the Commission was well advanced. He felt that the time had now come when the Naval Commission should make an effort to progress as rapidly as possible. Its future work might be divided into two stages: (1) termination of the discussion of the points on the agenda and discussion by the Bureau of the agreed formula in which the Commission's conclusions might be submitted; (2) the drawing up in a public session of a draft report which, when it had been co-ordinated with the reports of the other Commissions, could be submitted to the General Commission.

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## ELEVENTH MEETING

*Held on Wednesday, May 4th, 1932, at 10 a.m.*

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President : M. COLBAN.

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### 22. MEETING OF THE BUREAUX OF THE THREE TECHNICAL COMMISSIONS.

The PRESIDENT, before inviting the Commission to carry out its agenda, explained the decisions reached at a meeting of the Bureaux of the three technical commissions which had taken place under the Presidency of M. Politis. These Commissions had all made considerable progress in examining the questions submitted to them by the General Commission. The Land and Air Commissions would not, however, be able to complete their work and adopt

a final report before Whitsun. Nevertheless, it was understood that the Naval Commission should endeavour to terminate the discussion of its agenda as soon as possible, so that the Rapporteur might prepare a draft report. This would then be examined by the Bureau, assisted by the representatives of any delegations particularly interested.

The question of chemical and bacteriological warfare would be examined later by a mixed commission appointed by the three technical commissions.

23. APPLICATION TO AIRCRAFT-CARRIERS OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION DATED APRIL 22ND, 1932 (document Conf.D./C.G.28(2)) : [continuation of the discussion.]

Sir Bolton EYRES-MONSELL (United Kingdom) observed that several delegations had endeavoured to prove that aircraft-carriers possessed characteristics which corresponded to the criteria proposed by the General Commission, so that these vessels were to be regarded as arms " which were most specifically offensive or most efficacious against national defence and most threatening to civilians ". He did not think these accusations were justified if levelled against the vessels themselves. The latter were very vulnerable, very slightly protected and armed with very light guns. All the offensive or defensive characteristics of aircraft-carriers were to be looked for, therefore, in the aircraft they carried.

Such aircraft were of three different types : bombers, reconnaissance aircraft and fighters. Most aircraft-carriers carried about an equal proportion of all three. The number of reconnaissance aircraft was, however, generally more than one-third of the total, whereas the number of bombing aircraft was generally less than one-third.

He would consider each type separately.

1. *Bombing Aircraft.*

He would start with these because, although reconnaissance aircraft were incomparably the most important in the view of the United Kingdom delegation, it was bombing aircraft which most delegations doubtless had in mind when attributing a specifically offensive character to aircraft-carriers. He agreed on this point with the Spanish representative : the Naval Commission could not give a final reply on this subject before the Air Commission had reached a decision with regard to air-bombing in general.

He thought, however, that the great offensive power attributed to the aircraft carried by aircraft-carriers had been rather exaggerated. The vessels which carried these aircraft were, as he had already said, very vulnerable. The number of aircraft aboard each vessel was naturally limited and they could never be so large as the large bombing aeroplanes used from land bases. The performance of their aircraft was also poor compared with land-based aircraft, because they had to have the special qualities which enabled them to land in the small area of the deck of a ship—and from recent personal experience he could assure the Commission that it looked very small from the air. The operation of an aircraft-carrier was also not such a simple matter as might be supposed ; when aircraft took off from or landed on the deck of an aircraft-carrier the latter had to steam at high speed directly into the wind. All naval officers in the Commission would realise what a restriction this imposed on operations. Moreover, the United Kingdom delegation was prepared to accept a reduction in the present size of aircraft-carriers. The Commission, therefore, would doubtless realise that the scope of an attack carried out by bombing aircraft having an aircraft-carrier base could not be so extensive as some seemed to think. However, as already mentioned, he did not think the Naval Commission could give a decision on the subject of the use of bombing by aircraft from a carrier until the Air Commission had dealt with the whole question of bombing from the air generally.

2. *Reconnaissance Aircraft.*

There were more reconnaissance aircraft on aircraft-carriers than other types of aircraft. They were, in fact, the aircraft-carriers' *raison d'être*. At the previous meeting the Spanish, Italian and Soviet representatives had argued that to operate reconnaissance aircraft it was not necessary to have special vessels ; these craft could perfectly well be carried in ordinary warships. It was true they could be so carried ; the difficulty lay in the fact that aircraft, after taking off, could not re-align on ordinary warships. In that case, then, only seaplanes could be used ; but, unless the surface of the sea was quite calm, these would be very likely to sink when alighting, and their crews would be drowned. It was a known fact that dead calms were rare on the high seas. It was therefore indispensable that fleets should possess a vessel

on which aircraft could alight, and aircraft-carriers were the only vessels which answered that requirement.

Reconnaissance aircraft were used for two main purposes : First, they might be said to constitute the eyes of a fleet. A fleet which did not possess aircraft-carriers would be blind in the face of an enemy fleet, which would know all its movements, and might also be supported perhaps by aircraft operating from neighbouring coastal bases. Secondly, reconnaissance aircraft were necessary when a fleet was passing close to the coasts of a foreign country, and ran the risk of being attacked by bombing aircraft coming from the land. At the previous meeting the Soviet delegate had stated that a fleet which happened to be in the neighbourhood of the territory of a foreign country was necessarily in the wrong. That remark obviously could not apply to the fleets of countries which had overseas possessions. Those fleets were sometimes obliged, on their way to those possessions, to pass near the coasts of a foreign country. In that case, it was absolutely necessary for them to possess reconnaissance aircraft as well as fighters to defend themselves against any air attack, or against aircraft coming to throw flares to facilitate a submarine attack.

### 3. *Fighter Aircraft.*

The representative of the United Kingdom saw no necessity for discussing this question. Fighter aircraft were obviously essentially defensive.

On examining these two types of aircraft then, reconnaissance and fighter aeroplanes, in the light of the General Commission's criteria, the Naval Commission could only say " Not guilty ".

The PRESIDENT pointed out that the Commission should consider the various weapons from the naval aspect only, and was not required to form judgments as to the different types of aircraft. A report of the discussion would, moreover, be sent to the Air Commission, which would bear it in mind in connection with its own work.

Captain ROSCA (Roumania) briefly summarised the Roumanian point of view on aircraft-carriers. The Roumanian delegation considered that these vessels were most threatening to civilians, as they increased the radius of action of bombing aircraft, enabling them to attack objectives within a country at a great distance from the coast.

Aircraft-carriers, which were necessarily intended for reconnaissance aircraft, would be less threatening to civilians if bombing aircraft were abolished, the bombing of land objectives or merchant vessels by any aircraft or the torpedoing of merchant vessels by torpedo-aircraft being prohibited at the same time.

M. SAITO (Japan) thought that, as the President had already suggested, the Commission should consider vessels with similar characteristics at the same time as aircraft-carriers — that was to say, cruisers with landing-on platforms for aircraft. The Japanese delegation considered that, so far as their more or less aggressive character was concerned, these vessels did not differ from aircraft-carriers properly so called.

The Japanese delegation attached great importance to the question of such special cruisers, and drew the Commission's attention to the fact that, at the present time, no navy possessed such vessels, and it would seem very desirable to prevent their appearance.

During the general discussion, M. Saito had explained why the Japanese delegation considered that aircraft-carriers and vessels of the same kind should be classified with weapons " whose character is the most specifically offensive or those most efficacious against national defence or most threatening to civilians ". The reasons were as follows :

1. These vessels were very mobile, and could therefore be used for a surprise attack.
2. They complicated the question of national defence.
3. They increased the aggressive character of a fleet.
4. They were more suitable for offensive operations than for coastal defence.
5. Being a new weapon, they could be used for destructive purposes as yet unforeseen.

M. Saito would not repeat the explanations he had already given, but would simply clear up certain points in connection with the various arguments which had been put forward since.

It had been claimed that to abolish the vessels under review would disturb the internal equilibrium of a fleet and would necessitate changes in naval strategy. The Japanese delegation thought, on the contrary, that the abolition of these vessels would simplify the question of



national defence and would bring about very little change in the relative strengths of the various navies. The effects of their abolition would, indeed, be reciprocal, and no navy would be prejudiced.

An attempt had also been made to show that, if those vessels were prohibited from carrying bombing aircraft, the problem would be solved. The Japanese delegation was not of that opinion. It considered that the possession of an aircraft-carrier or similar vessel would enable a fleet which was also generally superior to undertake more readily offensive operations in remote areas. Clearly, aircraft-carriers or similar vessels increased the aggressive character of a fleet, and it was difficult to understand why they should be considered indispensable to a fleet not designed for offensive operations.

To those who maintained that those vessels were necessary for the transport of reconnaissance aircraft, the Japanese delegation replied that, in its view, a small number of those aircraft could easily be transported on an ordinary vessel and launched by means of a catapult.

The Japanese delegation fully agreed with the other delegations that aircraft-carriers were efficacious against submarines. It should be recognised, however, that submarines were the very weapons which a navy inferior in the strength of surface craft required for purposes of national defence. Consequently, to say that aircraft-carriers were efficacious against submarines amounted to confirming that they were among the most efficacious weapons against national defence.

The suggestion had also been made that a fleet ought to possess aircraft-carriers to protect itself from attacks by a land air force. But the Japanese delegation thought that such circumstances would never occur unless the fleet went near the coast of the enemy country with aggressive intentions.

The Japanese delegation therefore felt that the vessels under review should be considered as typically offensive within the meaning of the General Commission's three criteria independently of any decisions which the other technical commissions might take. It had already been made clear at the Washington and London Naval Conferences that aircraft-carriers could be discussed independently of air forces.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ (Spain) said that the Spanish delegation considered that bombing aircraft were specifically offensive weapons and were threatening to civilians, but that their radius of action was relatively small. Aircraft-carriers made good this defect by enabling bombing aircraft to carry out their work of destruction in the most remote countries. It might be said that their role with respect to aircraft was analogous to that of guns with respect to shells. The Spanish delegation therefore considered that aircraft-carriers were specifically offensive weapons and were threatening to civilians.

Necmettin SADIK Bey (Turkey) said the Turkish delegation considered that aircraft-carriers corresponded exactly to the General Commission's three criteria. These vessels, by transporting aeroplanes to great distances, gave them great radius of action. It could therefore be said that they were specifically offensive, were most efficacious against national defence, and were very threatening to civilians.

In the very unlikely event of bombing aircraft being omitted from the category of offensive weapons, prohibition to transport them on aircraft-carriers would not alter the fact that these vessels were weapons of great offensive potentiality, for, in spite of all, they would still be able to carry bombing aircraft to a distance.

The PRESIDENT noted that consideration of aircraft-carriers was concluded, and invited the Commission to turn its attention to submarines.

#### 24. APPLICATION TO SUBMARINES OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION DATED APRIL 22ND, 1932 (document Conf.D./C.G.28(2)).

The PRESIDENT pointed out that various speakers had already referred to submarines during the discussions. He drew the Commission's attention to the following concrete proposals which had been made in this connection :

1. In the statement it had submitted at the ninth meeting of the Commission the Spanish delegation had explained the following proposal contained in document Conf.D.74 :

" No submersible vessel may have a displacement of more than 1,000 tons or a radius of action greater than that which the Conference may determine as giving the vessel an aggressive character."

2. In document Conf.D./C.G.25<sup>1</sup> the Yugoslav delegation had proposed the abolition of submarines having a large range of action.

3. The Roumanian delegation had stated at the tenth meeting of the Commission that "States which are unable to possess capital ships and which cannot line their maritime frontiers with heavy guns must employ submarines to protect themselves against the aggressive action of large surface ships".

4. The German delegation had proposed at the sixth meeting of the Commission in that all submarines should be designated as corresponding to the definitions proposed by the General Commission. This proposal had been confirmed by the German delegate.

5. The Danish delegation had proposed in document Conf.D.112 that a distinction should be drawn between submarines of over and under 500-600 tons.

6. The Soviet delegation had proposed that the tonnage of submarines should be limited to 600 tons.

M. MORESCO (Netherlands) stated that the Netherlands delegation was able to accept the Spanish proposal—namely, that submarines of small tonnage should not be considered as specifically offensive weapons, provided that the countries adopted a resolution similar to Part IV of the Treaty of London.

M. Moresco pointed out that, according to the Spanish proposal, the aggressive character of submarines, as of other vessels, increased in proportion to the increase in tonnage. Radius of action, speed, reserve fuel and the number of torpedoes carried depended upon tonnage.

The armament of a submarine should also be considered, however, from the point of view of its efficacy in the event of surface action. If not only its tonnage but also the calibre of its guns were increased, it might become a kind of submersible armoured ship, the water surrounding it serving as a kind of armour.

If, moreover, the Conference decided to limit the armament and tonnage of submarines and to submit this class of vessel to the rules of international law laid down in the Treaty of London, measures must also be taken with respect to armed merchant vessels. The existence of the latter must not incite submarines to break the rules in question. This point should be examined later, and M. Moresco only mentioned it as a reminder.

In reply to a point of order raised by Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ (Spain), the PRESIDENT confirmed that the Commission should confine itself for the moment to examining the questions put to it by the General Commission. It was not required to say that a particular weapon should be abolished or internationalised.

Sir Bolton EYRES-MONSELL (United Kingdom) said that the United Kingdom advocated, as a humanitarian measure, the abolition and prohibition of submarines. The opening discussion at the Disarmament Conference had revealed a widespread desire for the abolition of weapons which could be used aggressively against non-combatants. The abolition of submarines was urged for that reason. The essential objection to the submarine was that it was a weapon particularly liable to be misused: in any future war, countries employing submarines would be strongly tempted to use them in whatever way might be most effective for immediate purposes. Owing to their limited vision, which made it difficult for them to identify vessels sighted (especially in a fading light), submarines were liable to be accidentally misused. Of course, if all States adhered to the rules laid down in Part IV of the London Treaty, the chances of misuse would be greatly reduced.

The existence of submarines imposed upon all navies higher requirements for destroyers and anti-submarine craft. Besides being a direct contribution to the reduction of armaments, therefore, the abolition of submarines would lead to lower levels in the destroyer category and fewer vessels of the exempt class.

The cost of building submarines was more than twice the cost per ton of surface ships. They required depot ships and shore establishments; they were expensive to maintain and their life was reckoned at only thirteen years. Their abolition would produce very great financial saving, further increased by the acceptance of lower levels for destroyers and other small craft. Such abolition presented no practical difficulty. Submarines were easily defined, could not be constructed or maintained in secret and had no commercial use. If submarines were once abolished, experience in their building and use would be lost and years would elapse before any nation could build up a submarine service again.

<sup>1</sup> See minutes of the fourteenth meeting of the General Commission.

Certain delegations opposed to the abolition of submarines had suggested that the object in view could be achieved by reducing their maximum size ; that view had just been supported by the representative of the Netherlands. The United Kingdom delegation did not agree that reduction in size would be a satisfactory substitute for abolition ; the economy achieved would be much less, because anti-submarine vessels would still be necessary. Moreover, as experience of building and maintaining submarines would continue, the measure would not be so effective in war as abolition.

Nevertheless, the United Kingdom delegation had given the matter of reduction in size most careful consideration, and these were the conclusions it had reached : Delegations which had stated their reasons for desiring to maintain submarines had said they required them for defensive purposes in the vicinity of their home and colonial territories. The United Kingdom delegation had accordingly investigated the problem of reduction in size to see whether a tonnage could be found below which submarines would be suitable only for coastal operations. Unless the reduction in size achieved that differentiation, it would clearly be useless. An analysis of past submarine operations had led to the conclusion that the dividing line might be put at a standard displacement of 250 tons surface (340 tons submerged). Small submarines of that tonnage (they might be called " coastal " submarines) would meet the requirements of those who need submarines for defence of home or colonial territories, but would not be suitable for prolonged operations away from their base. Though unable to carry out prolonged operations, they would have a sufficient radius of action and sea-keeping qualities to enable them to be sent to a base in any part of the world.

The United Kingdom delegation would consequently be prepared to support a reduction in the maximum size of submarines to 250 tons surface displacement (340 tons submerged).

Reduction to any figure higher than that would be quite a different matter and could not be supported by the United Kingdom delegation, because it would not succeed in limiting submarines to the true " coastal " type.

There was no point in reducing the size of submarines and at the same time increasing their number, so that, if size were reduced by agreement, it would be necessary, when the reduction came into operation, for a corresponding reduction to be made in the total tonnage at present allocated to certain Powers by the London Naval Treaty and the tonnage which might be allocated to other Powers at the present Conference.

Commodore DE TAMM (Sweden) observed that the question whether submarines could and should be regarded as coming within the terms of the three cases defined in the General Commission's resolution had led to a discussion in which very different opinions had been expressed. Before the Commission finally decided on its attitude, he wondered whether it would not be desirable—as had already been proposed—to draw a distinction between the various types of submarines. In the case of surface vessels, several delegations were agreed that certain categories of vessels might be regarded as more specifically offensive than others. The discussion had shown that the offensive capacity of surface vessels increased in proportion to their displacement, their radius of action, etc. He would suggest that in the case of submarines also the larger types could be more easily used in operations of an offensive character than smaller types. The latter were much more effective as instruments of defence than as instruments of aggression against the maritime defences of a country. Although sometimes their tactical procedure of attack might assume an offensive character, they were, in principle, more suitable for strategic defence than for offensive operations. Though the discussion had shown that doubts existed on this point, there was an ever-widening agreement in favour of adopting rules to oblige submarines to observe the same attitude with regard to merchant vessels as was now incumbent on surface vessels. That would certainly help to allay the anxiety of those who demanded guarantees against the possible misuse of submarines.

The practical task before the Commission was therefore to seek out among the various types of submarines a limit below which it could be rightly argued that the defensive character of the vessel became its preponderant feature.

Of course, there would be difficulties in fixing this limit—difficulties which should not be under-estimated. A number of different factors would have to be taken into consideration. The lowest limit would be the best. Other factors should, however, be borne in mind. Satisfactory defensive qualities should be maintained, and the craft should be safe to handle ; painful experience had demonstrated the importance of that point. Due regard should be had for the comfort of the crew, particularly in the case of submarines having to navigate in northern seas or under extreme climatic conditions.

In these circumstances, he thought that a tonnage of 250 tons would not be adequate. That limit might be fixed as a result of negotiations at which each delegation would be able to express its views. This exchange of views might take place in a small specially appointed sub-committee, or in the Drafting Committee to which the President had referred on the previous day. He was willing to leave the decision regarding this point of procedure to the Bureau.

M. Charles DUMONT (France) observed that the Spanish delegation had raised a highly important question to which the President had given an answer that reflected his unfailing perspicacity. The Naval Commission was not, under its present terms of reference, called upon to discuss either the abolition of any category or categories of vessels or, indeed, the question of the tonnage of any particular class of vessel. The Commission's sole duty at present was to reply to the questions which had been submitted to it in the resolution of the General Commission. It had discussed capital ships and aircraft-carriers in the light of the General Commission's resolution, and it had now in the same way to consider whether submarines were specifically offensive armaments, whether they were specially efficacious against national defence or specially threatened the civilian population. Those and no others were the points they had to decide.

It was the Commission's present task to consider these points as they affected capital ships, aircraft-carriers, mines and submarines and to give, as far as possible, a clear and categorical answer to each point as it affected each category of armaments. The clearest of the three criteria suggested in the General Commission's resolution—the clearest, at any rate, as regarded submarines—was that which asked whether any of these arms were specially threatening to the civilian population. The civilian population throughout the whole world was beset with anxiety owing to the experience of the late war. If the Conference were able to say that, if ever the terrible experience of war occurred again, the civilian population at least would be secure, then the League of Nations could claim that some progress had been made. He had listened attentively to the misgivings expressed by the First Lord of the British Admiralty lest countries which possessed submarines might be tempted in time of stress to misuse them. In reply to this he would say, in the first place, that quite clearly submarines were the least menacing of all naval craft, if the rules laid down in Part IV of the London Treaty with regard to merchant vessels were faithfully observed.

Sir Bolton Eyres-Monsell had asked what would happen if submarines violated international law. Personally, he felt that, if the Conference had to consider possibilities of the violation of international law by the various countries, it had better dissolve without further discussion. Ever since the League of Nations had been in existence, the great anxiety of France had been to secure the proper enforcement of its pacts and the application of sanctions by the community of nations in the case of their violation. If that problem could not be solved, nothing could be solved. It was, however, a general problem which lay entirely outside the scope of the Naval Commission's present discussion. He might say, however, that he was convinced that the meetings held under the auspices of the League were gradually creating and strengthening respect for international law and the condemnation of any violation of such law.

He repeated, then, that submarines were of all naval craft the least capable of menacing a civilian population. Submarines were only intended to attack warships. They were entirely unsuitable for the bombardment of coasts and coastal defence. Could anyone possibly maintain that the Dardanelles attack, for instance, could have been undertaken by submarines? They were perfectly incapable in themselves of carrying out a blockade. They were therefore not a menace to the civilian population on land, and would not be a menace to civilians at sea if the rules of international law were observed. In short, submarines were not a menace to any country, though they were the very soul of the defence of many countries. They were sentries posted to keep watch on the capital ships of other fleets: if a powerful fleet were tempted to abuse its power, the unknown risks of submarine defence would act as a deterrent.

Submarines, then, were not specifically offensive craft, though all craft might be to a certain extent offensive or defensive according to their role.

Some delegates had seemed inclined to suggest that an attempt might be made to define the defensive or offensive characteristics of submarines in relation to their tonnage. The French delegation was prepared to consider the expediency of reducing tonnage in connection with capital ships and aircraft-carriers; but with regard to submarines the situation was rather different, particularly as it affected France. The position of France in this matter could only be understood in the light of recent naval history. France had during the war abandoned her construction programme of capital ships. After the war she found herself in a very weak naval position, and had therefore tried to organise her defence by means of submarines. In the last ten years she had made great progress in this respect, by dint of hard work, heavy sacrifice and considerable boldness in the technical field. So much so that Article 7 of the London Treaty accorded special rights to France in this matter, allowing her submarine craft of over 2,000 and up to 2,800 tons. In other words, compensation had been allowed for France's undoubted poverty in capital ships. France's 2,800-ton submarines had been produced at a heavy cost in all respects. She could not make a great sacrifice in the matter of her submarine defences unless all other nations made similar great sacrifices. The French delegation would nevertheless go into this matter and would see in the General Commission what decisions could be taken with regard to the maximum displacement, with due regard, of course, to the clauses of the London Treaty.

In the Naval Commission, however, the only question at present was whether submarines possessed offensive or defensive characteristics. He would point out in this connection that

they were of immense defensive utility in the protection of merchant-ship convoys, their employment for that purpose being entirely proper; but for that purpose also they must possess the requisite tonnage and speed. He therefore requested the Commission to give its most careful consideration to this aspect of the question, particularly when applying the various criteria to such cases. He could only repeat his statement that, if such submarines conformed—as they would conform—to the rules of international law, they would possess no offensive character within the terms of the General Commission's resolution. Any decision on the part of the Naval Commission regulating the question of the offensive or defensive character of ships by tonnage alone would involve a detailed enquiry into the national navies of the various countries—an enquiry which would be complicated and possibly dangerous. He did not think, however, that the offensive character of vessels could be determined by the factor of tonnage. Even vessels of heavy tonnage might be used defensively. For the small nations and for France and Japan, submarines used legitimately, their action being governed by rules for the treatment of merchant vessels, formed an indispensable element of defence. He hoped it might be possible subsequently to revise the Hague Convention in such a way as to make it totally unnecessary, in any circumstances, to arm merchant vessels. That would provide a further guarantee of the exclusively defensive use of submarines. The essential point was that the whole question should be examined in a spirit of absolute objectivity, having regard to the needs of all. France required her submarines only for the defence of her coasts and communications. She therefore felt—to quote the expression used on two occasions by the United Kingdom delegate—that in the case of submarines also, the Commission should “return a verdict of acquittal”.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) observed that the Versailles Treaty prohibited Germany from possessing submarines, on the ground that these vessels possessed an essentially aggressive character. If that view were correct, all submarines should be abolished.

He noted that certain delegations were in favour of drawing a distinction between various classes of submarines, arguing that the smaller types of these vessels were of a purely defensive character. As he had stated on a previous occasion in the course of the discussion, he was surprised that the views of the French delegation, as expressed in the Naval Commission, seemed to take no account of the French proposals put forward before the Conference on February 5th—namely, that certain forms of armaments should be internationalised. Again, some delegations had argued the inoffensiveness of capital ships, while others had upheld the inoffensiveness of submarines. Was the Commission to conclude, therefore, that only cruisers and torpedo-boats possessed aggressive characteristics? He was afraid that, if the Commission continued to proceed in this manner, it would reach no conclusions at all concerning the criteria submitted to it. The German delegation deplored the slowness of the Commission's progress, particularly in view of the President's observation that possibly two more weeks might elapse before the Commission came to a definite decision. The Commission had to remember that it was dealing with problems which had aroused great public interest, the hopes of the public being centred on their solution. The Commission should make every effort to avoid deceiving those hopes. The Treaty of Versailles had given a precise definition of the armaments to which the criteria contained in the General Commission's resolution applied, and the German delegation felt that, generally speaking, these definitions should be sufficient.

The PRESIDENT observed that the Commission's discussions were bound to take some time. The Commission was faced with a problem which, as it had not been discussed thoroughly by the Preparatory Commission but had only been touched upon in a sub-committee of that Commission, was not mentioned in the draft Convention. The Commission was therefore treading on new ground and dealing with questions of very great importance. It was quite comprehensible that the various delegations should desire to go deeply into these questions, to clear the atmosphere and see whether some common policy could not be evolved. The Commission was not wasting its time: its discussions would provide the Conference with valuable material for its future work.

When he had said that the representatives of the three commissions would not be able to submit their proposals for some time, he had not meant that there was any excuse for delay. On the contrary, the Commission should endeavour to terminate the discussion of its present agenda as soon as possible, since public opinion was awaiting the evolution of some practical and constructive policy.

M. Charles DUMONT (France) assured the German delegate that it was not from lack of courtesy that he had omitted to reply to that delegate's reference on a previous occasion to the apparent divergence between French policy as explained in the Naval Commission and as outlined by the French delegation on February 5th. In point of fact, the French proposals made on February 5th did not really come within the scope of the present limited discussion. The French proposals to internationalise certain armaments were based, not on the idea that these armaments were specifically aggressive, but on the idea that it was necessary to provide the League of Nations with a powerful force. The Naval Commission was not discussing that point. In only one case did the French proposals suggest, on the ground of their

danger to civilians, that nations should actually divest themselves of certain armaments—namely, bombing aircraft—and hand these aircraft over to the League of Nations. In other cases the proposal was that countries should keep their armaments but place them, in certain circumstances, at the disposal of the League. All that was quite unconnected with the intrinsic offensive or defensive characteristics of the arms in question, apart, as he had just said, from the case of bombing aircraft. Surely, therefore, the present discussion on the criteria referred to the Naval Commission by the General Commission had no connection whatever with the French proposals made on February 5th.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) thanked the French delegate for his explanation. That point of view had not occurred to him when studying the French proposals.

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## TWELFTH MEETING

*Held on Thursday, May 5th, 1932, at 10 a.m.*

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President : M. COLBAN.

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### 25. APPLICATION TO SUBMARINES OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION DATED APRIL 22ND, 1932 (document Conf. D./C.G.28(2)) (*continuation of the discussion*).

Captain MARONI (Italy) observed that the Italian Government's views on submarines had already been explained at the London Naval Conference, at the plenary meeting of the Disarmament Conference, in the General Commission and by himself in the Naval Commission. In no other sphere was the close interdependence of offence and defence more clearly demonstrated.

All previous speakers had recognised that submarine action against merchant vessels must in future be subject to the conditions and rules accepted for surface warships. Submarines therefore need only be considered from a purely military point of view. From that point of view they were, in the Italian delegation's opinion, clearly both offensive and defensive in character.

They might be offensive directly or indirectly. Their action might be particularly effective when combined with that of other units of a fleet in carrying out a preconceived plan of attack. Moreover, the very existence of submarines made it necessary to develop means of defence, torpedo-boat destroyers, convoy vessels, etc.—in other words, to increase definitely the aggressive power of fleets.

The defensive character of fleets was still more easy to prove. Submarines were the most efficacious defensive arm for less powerful fleets ; it might even be said that only by means of submarines could these fleets oppose aggressive operations threatening the territory or food-supplies of their respective countries.

That submarines constituted a defensive weapon could not be denied when it was realised that they were the only weapon which could be employed with any hope of success against capital ships. The potential defensive capacity of submarines should therefore, in the Italian delegation's opinion, be considered in relation to the potential offensive capacity of capital ships. If the latter were abolished, submarines would no longer be necessary. That correlation was proved by the fact that the tonnage of capital ships had been considerably increased to enable them to resist submarine attack. It might be said that the huge modern warship was largely the outcome of submarine development.

The Italian Government had studied this double aspect of the question with great care, in the light of the very important interests involved, and had reached the following conclusion : it had instructed the Italian delegation—with a view to reconciling the right of each country to provide itself with the most effective means for ensuring international defence with the Italian Government's firm intention to co-operate in bringing about a definite and substantial reduction in armaments—to propose to the Conference the simultaneous abolition of submarines and capital ships.

In reply to the various proposals that had been made that the tonnage of submarines should be reduced, the Italian delegation could not agree to any appreciable reduction, because in its opinion that would amount practically to a unilateral abolition of submarines without any corresponding abolition of capital ships. Such unilateral abolition would make the strong still stronger and the weak still weaker.

Captain SOLSKI (Poland) observed that, in their statements concerning capital ships and aircraft-carriers, the various delegations had endeavoured, by adducing the special needs of their respective countries and in some cases their wide maritime interests, to prove the necessity for maintaining the most powerful and costly naval armaments. The Commission had noted that most delegations representing countries which possess few if any capital ships and aircraft-carriers, while admitting the special defensive needs of the great naval Powers, were unable to agree that these vessels were solely defensive, particularly in the case of Powers without overseas possessions. But the question of submarines was of great importance to all countries having maritime interests, both to those whose defence was already ensured by great surface units and to those who were obliged to base their defensive system on smaller craft.

Poland with her thirty-two million inhabitants had an outlet to only one sea — the Baltic. The whole economic organisation of the country was directed towards that sea. Fifty-one per cent of the foreign trade of Poland was sea-borne. There was a very large volume of trade between the interior and the sea-coast, particularly as regarded the most essential raw materials, 60 to 80 per cent of which was sea-borne. The traffic of the port of Danzig had, from 1913 to 1930, increased from about two million to more than eight million tons, while the traffic of the new port of Gdynia had risen in a few years from nil to three and a half million tons.

Naturally, the principal thought and duty of each State was to ensure the safety of its sea-borne trade. At the present time, in most cases, that safety depended on the existence of defensive naval forces, which, in the Polish delegation's opinion, might be modest but should be strictly based on the requirements of national defence. Their composition should vary according to the geographical and political situation of the various countries and the degree of security attained. They might be small and consist of relatively small vessels, but they must include submarines, the only low-tonnage craft which could face capital ships.

He need not repeat all the very convincing arguments in favour of maintaining submarines which had already been advanced during the discussion. He would merely emphasise the fact that submarines could be used against capital ships only and were in no way a menace to the coastal defences of a country, least of all to fortifications. No delegation had been able to prove the contrary; the one reservation made with regard to submarines concerned solely the question of the uses to which they were put.

After examining the details of this question from a practical point of view, the Polish delegation had concluded that, though public opinion and the conscience of the nations condemned the manner in which submarines had sometimes been employed during the world war, they might perfectly well be employed in other ways which would be quite in keeping with the rules and usages of naval warfare.

There was one new fact which might profoundly modify the action of submarines against merchant vessels—the only action in which submarines directly threatened the non-combatant population. He referred to the provisions of Article 22 of the Treaty of London, which subjected submarines to the same rules as surface vessels. This part of the Treaty had been signed by the five principal naval Powers, who possessed between them 80 per cent of all the submarines in the world. It was therefore incorrect to maintain that all submarines were a greater menace to non-combatants at sea than surface vessels.

Poland was prepared to follow the example given by the Powers which had signed the Treaty of London, and she hoped that the provisions of this Treaty would become a universally recognised rule of international law. If the Commission thought that this question lay outside the questions referred to it by the General Commission, it might nevertheless draw that Commission's attention to the importance of the question from the point of view of the peaceful development of international trade.

Commodore OTTO (Norway) proposed to examine the question of submarines in the light of each of the three criteria proposed by the General Commission.

In the first place, it could hardly be maintained that submarines were a particularly offensive weapon against surface warships. They had been so, to a certain degree, fifteen to twenty years previously, but, considering the numerous devices for protection against submarine attack which had been invented during the war and after, it must be admitted at the present time that submarines, operating independently, of the other units of a fleet, had rather limited chances of launching a successful attack against surface ships. Those chances in any case limited to such a degree that submarines could not be characterised as specifically offensive. Nor were they particularly suitable for co-operation with a fleet of surface vessels in offensive operations.

Submarines were much more a defensive weapon for the protection of coasts. There they could operate at comparatively short distances from their bases and in close co-operation with other naval forces. From that point of view, they were a very valuable weapon for small navies, particularly when the number of surface vessels of those navies was strictly limited.

Very little could be said as to the efficacy of submarines against national defences. It was not greater than that of surface vessels, and was probably less.

Finally, the danger presented by submarines to non-combatants at sea, crews and passengers of merchant ships, depended not on their special characteristics but upon the way in which they were used.

It would be very desirable, however, to reduce the tonnage and radius of action of submarines, and the Norwegian delegation was in favour of such reduction.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ (Spain) observed that the Spanish delegation had already expressed its views with regard to submarines in the proposal it had embodied in the statement it made at the ninth meeting of the Commission. It took as its starting-point the principle that all States should accept the provisions of Article 22 of the Treaty of London. That point had already been explained by other delegates, including the French delegate, whose observations he entirely endorsed.

Two objections only had been raised to the arguments put forward by the Spanish delegation :

Firstly, certain delegations had argued that submarines were a very serious menace to capital ships and that they led to the construction of larger and larger capital ships and an ever-increasing number of torpedo-boat destroyers, thus involving very heavy expenditure.

He did not deny that, but would point out that the object of the Disarmament Conference was not to enable countries to construct large navies on the cheap, but to enable small Powers to defend themselves against possible attacks by a stronger naval Power.

Secondly, the German delegation had stated that in its opinion the offensive nature of submarines had been settled by the fact that Germany had been prohibited from possessing these vessels under the Treaty of Versailles.

That, he thought, was a valuable argument in discussing the question of the equality of rights ; but it did not prove that submarines were weapons of a specifically offensive character or were particularly threatening to civilians. The authors of the Treaty had been mainly governed by a desire to ensure naval supremacy for the victors and to deprive the vanquished of weapons which might endanger that supremacy : the submarine was certainly such a weapon.

M. SAITO (Japan) reminded the Commission that the Japanese delegation's opinion had already been explained during the general discussion. He would therefore merely amplify certain points.

Submarines were not a very powerful weapon. Their guns were of a smaller calibre than those of almost all other warships. They carried torpedoes which could not be compared—as regarded their power of destruction—with those carried by destroyers or cruisers. Their communication facilities, their speed and their field of vision were very limited. Even in the case of submarines having a large radius of action, that radius was much less than the radius of large surface vessels.

Consequently the combatant value of a submarine was undeniable less than that of a surface vessel. It would be quite unjust to classify submarines in the category of specifically offensive vessels.

The only characteristic peculiar to submarines was that they could submerge. But, once submerged, their action, communication facilities and field of vision diminished still further and they could not face a surface vessel. They could only keep on the watch and wait until a surface vessel drew near. Only then could they utilise all their means and combat even very powerful surface vessels with some chance of success owing to their invisibility. Submarines, possessing as they did such negative fighting power, should therefore be regarded as a defensive arm particularly suitable for lesser navies. Their abolition, as proposed by certain delegations, would give complete supremacy to the great naval Powers and would prevent less powerful fleets from defending their territory. The powerful fleets would become still more powerful and smaller fleets still weaker.

It had also been stated in the course of the discussion that large submarines, or submarines possessing a large radius of action, should in any case be regarded as specifically offensive. The Japanese delegation did not share that opinion. The offensive potentiality of the largest submarines now in existence could not be compared with that of surface vessels, seeing that, from the point of view of speed, guns and torpedoes, they were distinctly inferior. He could not believe that the submarine of the type contemplated in the Preparatory Commission's draft Convention could be regarded as a particularly offensive weapon.

Moreover, a reduction in the tonnage of submarines would produce very different consequences in different countries. The general conditions, geographical situation and topographical peculiarities of a country, as well as the prevalent meteorological conditions in the neighbouring seas, should all be taken into consideration in determining the size of a submarine. For instance,



a country possessing long coasts, scattered possessions or great stretches of sea to defend needed submarines large enough to allow them to fulfil their defensive mission. Experience had proved to the Japanese fleet that small submarines were not very practicable from the point of view of remaining at sea and the comfort of those who had to live in them. Moreover, in seas where waves were generally high it was often impossible for a small submarine navigating under water to use its periscope — a fact which greatly diminished its efficacy.

It had also been said that submarines could be misused. The Japanese delegation would point out, however, that surface vessels could be similarly misused with even more deplorable results from the point of view of civilians. It could not, therefore, be said that submarines were in any way particularly menacing to civilians. They would cease to constitute any menace whatsoever if, as the French delegate had suggested, all States subscribed to Article 22 of the London Naval Treaty.

Finally, the Japanese delegation pointed out that submarines of a tonnage of not more than 2,000 tons, such as those contemplated in the draft Convention, were an indispensable defensive weapon for less powerful navies and did not correspond to any of the three criteria proposed by the General Commission. The Japanese delegation was unable to approve proposals for the drastic limitation of the strength of submarines without regard to the strength of surface vessels and naval forces in general.

Necmettin SADIK Bey (Turkey) said that the Turkish delegation regarded submarines of over a certain tonnage, powerfully armed and having a wide radius of action, as specifically offensive weapons. On the other hand, submarines under a certain tonnage to be determined, without a large radius of action, were an essentially defensive arm, and particularly useful for countries which did not possess a powerful fleet.

If, however, all the delegations agreed to regard all submarines without exception as specifically offensive weapons, Turkey would not raise any objection.

Rear-Admiral TEH YUEN LU (China) thought that submarines should be considered with reference to surface vessels. As the Italian delegate had pointed out, only submarines could face capital ships—that, indeed, was their principal use. If, therefore, the Conference, in order to bring about the substantial disarmament which the whole world wished, decided to abolish capital ships, submarines would lose their principal *raison d'être* and could hardly be utilised for any purpose except to attack merchant shipping. They would then become a serious menace to non-combatants at sea, if the rules of international law, as defined in Article 22 of the Treaty of London, were not respected.

Consequently, the Chinese delegation proposed the simultaneous abolition of capital ships and submarines.

Mr. SWANSON (United States of America) said that, as the United States delegation had explained its point of view with regard to submarines, he would not repeat the arguments already put forward. He would simply confirm that the American delegation was prepared to agree to the abolition of submarines, considering that they were not an essential part of a navy, and that their abolition would not disorganise the existing fleets.

Mr. Swanson was surprised that the horrors of the last war appeared to have been so soon forgotten. For his part, he had a very clear recollection of the feeling against submarines of both peoples and Governments at that time, when almost all the Press did not hesitate to call them cruel assassins of the sea. At the present moment, however, they seemed to be considered the most valued defenders of home and country.

An attempt had been made to show that the submarine would cease to be a danger to civilians if the provisions of Part IV, Article 22, of the London Naval Treaty were made general and adopted by all States. The American delegation thought the danger would not be entirely removed, however, and feared, like the United Kingdom delegation, that, in the event of a new war, the horrors of the last war might be repeated.

It would seem, indeed, that the officer in charge of a submarine, even if he endeavoured, in all good faith, to apply the rules laid down in Article 22 of the Treaty of London, would find it most difficult to comply with them strictly, as the officer in charge of a surface vessel would be able to do. A submarine was not provided with adequate means for taking on board the crew and passengers of a merchant ship. It had no lifeboats, nor could it take a vessel into port. It would consequently have to rely either on the boats on board the merchant ship, or on any surface vessels which might be on the spot, for the safety of the crew and passengers.

The officer in charge of the submarine might, however, have decided that the ship's boats would suffice to take the members of the crew and the passengers to land, whereas, owing to

some miscalculation, some error of judgment or some other reason, they might not all be landed safe and sound. There would undoubtedly then be violent protests. The officer in charge of the submarine would be accused of failing to respect the undertakings given by his country; the occurrence would be exaggerated to the full extent necessitated by propaganda; and reprisals would probably take place, followed by counter-reprisals. Horrors as terrible as, if not worse than, those of the world war would be let loose.

In the same way, should the officer in charge of the submarine rely on surface vessels on the spot to take the crew and passengers on board, subsequent events might prevent these vessels from doing so. The consequences would be the same as in the previous case.

The Commission must aim at reducing the inhumanity of war as far as possible, and the abolition of submarines would appear to be an important step in this direction.

On the other hand, the United States delegation fully appreciated the attitude of the small Powers towards submarines, particularly of countries which had ports, or seas commanded by narrow straits, to defend. It had apparently been felt that improvements in listening devices on board surface vessels would diminish the importance of submarines. The contrary had occurred, however: submarines had been provided with improved listening devices, which increased their offensive capacity to such an extent that the use which would be made of them in a possible future war could not be foreseen.

The object of the Disarmament Conference was not only to prevent a new war, but also to reduce expenditure on naval armaments. The existence of submarines had led to the construction of surface vessels of greater tonnage and with an increasing number of compartments in order that they might be more resistant to torpedoes. It had also led to the construction of an excessive number of destroyers. The abolition of submarines would appreciably reduce budgets.

Finally, Mr. Swanson stated that he had spoken during the present discussion partly on account of the proposals which had been made for limiting the displacement of submarines. For the moment, the United States delegation reserved all questions concerning the limitation of submarine displacement. It felt that, if submarines were maintained, it must be borne in mind that the countries with overseas possessions, which were prohibited by treaty from constructing submarine bases in those possessions, needed submarines of sufficient tonnage to enable them to make long voyages. The American delegation thought this point of view should be taken into consideration in determining the offensive or defensive character of submarines of large tonnage.

The PRESIDENT stated that the discussion regarding submarines was closed.

26. APPLICATION TO MINES OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION  
DATED APRIL 22ND, 1932 (document Conf. D./C.G.28(2)).

The PRESIDENT stated that the Commission had now to consider the question of automatic contact mines, solely, of course, in the light of the three points specified in the General Commission's resolution. In that connection there was a proposal contained in the Netherlands memorandum (document Conf. D.108) to the effect that "it should be prohibited to lay automatic contact mines in the open sea"; a proposal by the Spanish delegation in the statement it submitted to the Commission at its ninth meeting to the effect that "mines moored in the neighbourhood of national ports are specifically defensive weapons, but that, on the contrary, mines moored in the open sea and, still more, floating mines, came under case C", and that, consequently, mines moored in the open sea and unattached floating mines or mines possessing a mechanism permitting them to remain near the surface are very threatening to civilians"; and, again, a Danish proposal contained in document Conf.D.112 to the effect that "mines are in themselves a definitely defensive weapon, but their application may be offensive when they are laid near the enemy coasts or on frequented routes by mine-layers, more particularly torpedo-boats, destroyers and submarines. The laying of mines in such circumstances must be regarded as a definitely offensive act. At the same time, however, the mine is peculiarly suited for certain defensive purposes—for example, the protection of the ports and anchorages of a country. The best procedure as regards mines would be to prohibit the use of automatic contact mines in the open sea."

Admiral SURIE (Netherlands) reminded the Commission of the great number of non-belligerents and neutrals who had lost their lives owing to the sinking of merchant vessels by contact mines laid at sea. The eighth Convention of the second Hague Peace Conference in 1907 had laid down rules for the employment of such mines in warfare, but even before 1907 the world had seen how dangerous such mines could still be long after hostilities had ceased.

The Hague Convention on the laying of contact-mines was based on the principle of the freedom of sea-routes open to all nations. The recent war had shown that those rules were not sufficient to prevent a huge loss of life among non-combatants. Moreover, during the war certain maritime routes had been completely barred. He might add that even in the discussions at the Hague Conference in 1907 certain delegates had foreseen these possibilities.

The resolution adopted by the General Commission afforded an opportunity to express a definite opinion on this question. The Netherlands delegation desired to submit the following proposal, which it hoped the Naval Commission would unanimously accept :

“ The Naval Commission is of opinion that submarine automatic contact mines laid in the open sea are extremely threatening to civilians.”

Another and a very delicate question was how the eighth Convention of the Hague Conference could be modified so as to afford greater security. That, however, was a question which the Naval Commission could not discuss. Article 4 of the 1907 Hague Convention concerning the rights of neutrals to lay contact-mines off their coasts had given rise to a long and complicated debate. The expression “ off their coasts ” had been used because it had been found impossible to define “ the extent of the territorial sea ”. Nor, for that matter, had the first Codification Conference at The Hague in 1930 been able to agree upon the extent of the territorial sea. Consequently, the expression “ open sea ” might give rise to difficulties, but he thought that that question might be left to a special committee.

At present he was only asking the Naval Commission to express an opinion concerning the danger to civilians of automatic contact mines.

Sir Bolton EYRES-MONSELL (United Kingdom) observed that the essential difference between automatic contact mines in the open sea and other weapons was that directly the mine had been laid it passed entirely out of control of those who had laid it. It was doubtless that difference which had led the Hague Peace Conference to attempt to frame rules which had subsequently been embodied in a Convention. He agreed with the Netherlands delegate that these rules did not succeed in providing complete safeguards against the indiscriminate laying of mines, though they would prove very useful if their spirit were observed as well as their letter.

The Commission's present task was to apply the three criteria of the General Commission's resolution to these mines. In the first place, the opinion of the United Kingdom delegation was that these mines were offensive. in a tactical sense Their object was blindly to destroy or cripple ships. Even where mine-fields formed part of a general strategic plan, of defence, the United Kingdom delegation felt bound to reply that these mines were specifically offensive. The answer to the second point, whether such mines were a menace to national defence, was in the negative. With regard to the third criterion, mines once sown passed out of human control, their subsequent effect being governed entirely by chance, so that they might be just as likely to blow up an inoffensive passenger liner as a warship. Consequently, this type of mine sown in the open sea was definitely a threat to civilians.

The United Kingdom delegation had carefully considered this matter. It had taken the meaning of the Netherlands proposal to be—and in the light of the statement they had just heard this seemed to be the right interpretation—that prohibition should apply to mines sown “ on the high sea ” and not to defensive mine-fields laid off a country's own coast. The United Kingdom delegation was anxious to do all it could to protect merchant shipping, but it could not be entirely oblivious to the lessons of the late war, especially as mines had proved to be one of the few measures which had proved an effective defence against submarines. In laying their mines the British navy had always adhered to the rules of the Hague Convention and had always advised neutrals when mine-fields were laid ; but so long as submarines existed it would be impossible to forgo the laying of mines as a defence. The United Kingdom delegation could therefore agree to the prohibition of the use of automatic mines on the high sea, provided submarines were also abolished.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) welcomed the proposals of the Netherlands delegation. Like the United Kingdom delegation, the German delegation replied affirmatively to the application of the first and the third of the criteria to mines, and negatively to the application of the second.

The attitude of the German delegation had hitherto been based on the stipulations of the Treaty of Versailles ; but that Treaty contained no restrictions with regard to the laying of mines. As he had said on another occasion, however, Germany was ready to accept any measure which went even beyond the stipulations of the Treaty of Versailles, provided it were accepted by the other nations as well.

Captain MARONI (Italy) said that the Italian delegation regarded automatic contact mines as offensive weapons extremely dangerous to the civilian population, particularly if their presence were not notified to navigators. The experience of the war had shown, however, that mines might be used defensively against submarines. The Italian delegation could therefore approve the Netherlands suggestion provided submarines also were abolished, as Italy had proposed.

27. APPLICATION TO COAST FORTIFICATIONS OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION DATED APRIL 22ND, 1932 (document Conf. D./C.G.28(2)).

The PRESIDENT pointed out that the next item on the agenda was "Coast Fortifications". That question had been raised at the Conference and had consequently been put on the agenda of the Naval Commission to allow of its discussion, if necessary, though most delegations were agreed that the matter only just came within the Commission's competence, if at all. Would the Commission therefore agree to pass this question by for the present, it being understood that it might be of interest and might in some ways be connected with naval questions?

*Agreed.*

28. APPLICATION TO RIVER CRAFT OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION DATED APRIL 22ND, 1932 (document Conf. D./C.G.28 (2)).

The PRESIDENT proposed that the Commission should discuss the question of river craft and monitors. The Hungarian delegation had a proposal to submit on the subject.

General TANCZOS (Hungary) desired to submit the following proposal by the Hungarian delegation :

"With a view to specifying' in accordance with the resolution of the General Commission dated April 22nd, those weapons whose character is :

- " 1. The most specifically offensive ;
- " 2. Most efficacious against national defence ;
- " 3. Most threatening to civilians ;

the Hungarian delegation considers that the following vessels should be designated as corresponding to the above definitions :

"Surface river war vessels specially constructed for use on European rivers, whose standard displacement exceeds 250 tons and the calibre of whose guns exceeds 3.15" (80 mm.)

"This proposal is complementary to that concerning river-craft submitted by the Hungarian delegation on March 15th, at the fourth meeting of the Commission."

One of the essential objects of the qualitative reduction of armaments was to give national defences the required superiority over powers of attack. The recent war had on many occasions shown that it had only been possible to carry thorough offensive operations along or across rivers through the effective support of river fleets and, in particular, the larger units of such fleets. Monitors and river gunboats of a certain tonnage and armament were therefore of a specifically offensive character. They were also very efficacious against national defences owing to their strong armour and relatively powerful guns. They could break down resistance along rivers and were built to carry an attack—even by surprise—far into the interior of a country. They were thus a very definite threat to civilians.

Personally, he was of opinion that the problem of river-craft could be examined only in connection with the national requirements and special circumstances of each country. The defensive or offensive nature of certain armaments also could be decided only in the light of the special considerations mentioned in Article 8 of the Covenant.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) supported the Hungarian delegation's proposals, which he held to be eminently sound and reasonable.

M. VENTZOFF (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) observed that the Soviet delegation also wished to include two other types of vessels as coming within the terms of the General Commission's criteria. The first of these were sea-going monitors, which had been placed in a special category under the London Treaty. Owing to their gun-power and mobility,

these vessels had been specially constructed to attack coastal defences. They were therefore an effective offensive weapon against such defences. The second case was that of certain Washington cruisers, which, being lightly armoured or unarmoured, of 10,000 tons displacement, armed with 8-inch guns, and possessing great speed and a great radius of action, were a formidable menace to maritime commerce and an almost indispensable instrument for the enforcing of blockades. They were therefore specifically offensive and were threatening to civilians.

Captain ROSSI-SABATINI (Yugoslavia) pointed out that the size and displacement of river craft were already limited by the conditions of fluvial navigation, so that they were bound to be of smaller tonnage and power than sea-going warships. The same criteria could not be applied to them as were applied to sea-going vessels. The Yugoslav delegation did not consider that river monitors came within the scope of any of the three cases mentioned in the General Commission's resolution.

Captain MARONI (Italy) said that the Italian delegation shared the Hungarian delegation's opinion and supported its proposals.

Captain ROSCA (Roumania) said that the Roumanian delegation regarded monitors as being of a specifically defensive nature, on account of their small tonnage, their small armament and their field of action, which was limited to rivers where their draught allowed them to navigate. As floating batteries they were used for the defence of river estuaries.

The PRESIDENT stated that the Commission was of opinion that a careful distinction had to be drawn between river- and sea-craft. River-craft, indeed, came within the category of "exempt" vessels, which had not yet been discussed. Both in the London Naval Treaty and the draft Convention, provision had been made for a much higher tonnage than the 250 tons to which reference had just been made. The question of the adjustment of such tonnage would be considered in due course.

The Commission had come to the end of its present agenda, but it had only accomplished the first half of its task. It would now have to endeavour to submit a report which should be something more than a mere summary reflecting differences of opinion. He proposed that the various delegations should discuss informally among themselves the points which had been raised, in order to see whether some greater measure of agreement could be reached. The Commission might then meet to complete this exchange of views. It would be desirable to avoid a great mass of detail in the Commission's report. That document ought to be as clear and definite as possible: the nearer its recommendations came to unanimity the better it would be.

He hoped therefore that the various delegations would enter on this further stage of their work in a spirit of cordial collaboration and that they would be prepared to make certain mutual concessions.

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## THIRTEENTH MEETING

*Held on Saturday, May 7th, 1932, at 10 a.m.*

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President : M. COLBAN.

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### 29. TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF M. DOUMER, PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.

The PRESIDENT desired to express his horror and grief at hearing of the incomprehensible assault which had caused the death of the President of the French Republic.

(The members of the Commissions rose as a tribute of respect to the memory of M. Paul Doumer.)

M. Doumer had died at his post, thus giving his own life to his country, to which he had already given his four sons; no man could do more than that to merit a place in history as a good and loyal citizen whom all would remember with admiration.

France had lost a statesman who had risen step by step to the highest position in his country. The family of M. Doumer had lost a father and a husband after they had lost so much else.

On behalf of the Naval Commission, the President addressed his deepest sympathy to the family of M. Doumer and to the whole of France, hoping that the memory of the admirable work accomplished by the late President would soften the pangs of grief and compensate to some extent the loss sustained. From the depth of his heart he also addressed his sympathy to M. Charles Dumont and the French delegation. He knew that his own emotion was shared by all the members of the Commission.

He would say no more, but would invite the Commission to pay its heartfelt tribute to the deceased, who had been illustrious through the greatness of his country and the high office he had held therein.

In the circumstances he proposed that the Commission should suspend its work until May 9th.

M. Charles DUMONT (France) said that it was with very great emotion that, on behalf of the French delegation, he thanked the President and all the members of the Commission.

He could assure the Commission that the sole thought of the President of the Republic had always been to promote the cause of peace and work for the betterment of the human race.

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## FOURTEENTH MEETING

*Held on Monday, May 9th, 1932, at 10 a.m.*

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President : M. COLBAN.

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### 30. APPLICATION TO RIVER-CRAFT OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION DATED APRIL 22ND 1932 (document Conf.D./C.G.28(2)) (*continuation of the discussion*).

Captain ROSCA (Roumania) drew attention to the Roumanian delegation's statement, during the discussion on the Hungarian proposal, that the purely defensive character of river vessels resulted from :

- (a) Their special construction, which prevented their use as sea-going vessels ;
- (b) Their limited radius of action along the river itself, and this only where the depth of the water exceeded their draught ;
- (c) Their limited armaments (the most powerful river monitors in existence carried a maximum of three 120-mm. (4.7") guns).

Monitors could, of course, be regarded as floating batteries for the defence of river frontiers in marshy regions where land artillery could not proceed. The same was the case on deltas and at river mouths, where, in the absence of sea-going naval strength, floating batteries represented the sole artillery capable of use for local defence.

The efficacy of river-craft was, however, reduced in view of—

- (a) The relative ineffectiveness of the guns carried, as compared with that of the same guns on land ;
- (b) Their high degree of vulnerability, especially in the presence of fixed or floating mines.

Lastly, the Roumanian delegation drew the Naval Commission's attention to the following points :

1. If the Hungarian proposal were adopted, the calibre of floating batteries proceeding along waterways could not exceed 80 mm., (3.25") whereas the calibre of land guns proceeding on a parallel course along the banks, on tractors or by rail, only a score or so of metres away from the floating batteries, would not be limited.

2. Sea-going vessels, whose tonnage, speed and armaments were infinitely superior to those of the largest river monitors in existence, could proceed up rivers to take part in war operations. For example 5,000-ton cruisers carrying six or eight 150-mm. (5.9") guns could proceed up the Danube. He recalled the fact that, during the world war, allied gunboats and vessels with improvised armaments, among them guns of a calibre up to 210 mm. (8.27"), had proceeded up the Danube as far as 350 kilometres (217 miles) from the mouth.

Could such sea-going vessels be regarded as purely defensive in character, if monitors, which were much smaller and poorly armed, were regarded as offensive in character ?

In conclusion, the Roumanian delegation considered that, in view of the low degree of efficacy of river-craft, none of the three criteria in the General Commission's resolution of April 22nd applied to them.

Moreover, the Powers signatory to the London Naval Treaty had decided to exempt from all limitation vessels possessing the characteristics defined in Article 8 of that Treaty—this obviously because of their low fighting value. All existing monitors, came within this category and should thus be deemed to be " exempt vessels ".

General TANCZOS (Hungary) pointed out that the Preparatory Commission had not envisaged qualitative disarmament and had therefore not provided for limitation of the vessels at present under discussion.

As regarded land guns, which could proceed along river-banks by tractor or rail, as the Roumanian delegate had stated, it should be remembered that these invariably acted in conjunction with the other land forces; hence they could not be used for surprise action. Monitors, on the other hand, could move swiftly up certain rivers and be used for a surprise attack. In his view, 5,000-ton cruisers could not be used effectively on the lower Danube, and their use was in any case impossible above the Kaza gorge near the town of [Orsova]. Lastly, the Preparatory Commission had classed warships not exceeding 600 tons as "exempt vessels" solely on account of the way in which it envisaged disarmament.

Captain SOLSKI (Poland) stated that the Polish delegation viewed floating batteries as intended for use in conjunction with land weapons. Thus in certain countries the small flotilla of river-craft formed part of an army corps. These vessels were useless on the high seas and must therefore be regarded as floating batteries supporting land artillery.

If the Land Commission decided to limit the calibre of land guns, the Naval Commission might, in the light of such a decision, consider limitation of the calibre of the armaments carried by monitors and river-craft.

The Polish delegation considered that the question of river-craft should be referred to the Land Commission.

General TANCZOS (Hungary) could not agree that the question of river-craft should be referred to the Land Commission. The crews of the vessels in question were assimilated to those of other vessels in the fleet. The vessels themselves formed part of the navy and were under the naval high command. Moreover all the States had shown river-craft under naval armaments in the reports which they had submitted; thus the Naval, not the Land, Commission must examine the question.

The Preparatory Commission had, moreover, drawn a clear distinction, where defences against sea-borne attacks were concerned, between fixed defences and mobile defences. In the case of the latter, after a statement that "vessels of small sea-going efficiency and low power of endurance" should be considered capable of use for coast land-defence only, the Commission had made the following reservation (document C.739.M.278.1926.IX[C.P.D.28]: Report of Sub-Commission A, page 141):

"But in this case proximity to the coast of another State or to an important commercial trade route would confer on such craft, in spite of their limited radius of action, a high offensive value.

"Further, since all such craft are capable of being transported either as a whole or in sections, they cannot be considered as purely defensive."

The PRESIDENT thought that the Naval Commission was quite in a position to consider the question of river-craft.

### 31. GENERAL STUDY OF THE PROPOSALS AND SUGGESTIONS MADE DURING THE DISCUSSION OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION DATED APRIL 22ND, 1932 (document Conf.D./C.G.28 (2)).

The PRESIDENT explained that there was no question of reopening the discussion on the various criteria submitted to the Naval Commission by the General Commission. The present aim should be to extract from the discussion the clearest and most definite replies possible to the questions. Most delegates who had spoken had put forward arguments in favour of one solution or another, based on the special circumstances of their own country or the result of their personal experience.

The discussion had perhaps somewhat exceeded the limits of what was strictly necessary in order to formulate a reply to the General Commission. Without omitting anything from the various statements made which might doubtless be of service to the General Commission, the aim should now be to sort out and classify the opinions of the various delegations. That was the difficult task with which the Rapporteur of the Naval Commission had to cope.

The Commission had before it a number of definite proposals regarding the reply to be made to the General Commission. These proposals had been submitted in particular by the German, Netherlands, Italian, Spanish and Danish delegations respectively. Moreover, suggestions had been made in the course of the discussion which indicated the opinion of each delegation.

With a view to clearing the ground, he proposed that the Commission should first examine the question of capital ships.

M. WESTMAN (Sweden), Rapporteur, desired, before the discussion opened, to outline to the Commission the present state of its work.

The views expressed had been very divergent. Nevertheless he thought that, on certain points at least, some measure of agreement might be reached.

With regard to capital ships, the opinions of the various delegations might be summarised as follows :

1. The United Kingdom and the United States delegations had maintained that capital ships should not be regarded as coming under any of the three criteria of the General Commission's resolution.

2. The French delegation thought that capital ships were both defensive and offensive. It was nevertheless prepared to state that the largest of these ships mounting the largest guns were relatively more threatening as regarded national defence and civilians.

3. The attitude of the Japanese delegation was very similar to that of the French delegation. Though defending capital ships, the Japanese delegation stated that a reduction in this category of vessels would be desirable both from the point of view of disarmament and in order to lighten the financial burdens of the various countries.

4. The Italian delegation held that the question of capital ships should be considered concurrently with that of submarines.

5. Finally, a large number of delegations had stated their opinion that capital ships were particularly offensive and were very efficacious against national defence ; many of these delegations had also declared that capital ships were threatening to civilians. In this group, however, there were several shades of opinion, particularly as regarded the third criterion—*i.e.*, whether capital ships were threatening to civilians.

Nevertheless it might be possible in this case to discover a general formula which would meet all the opinions of this group. The report must also contain, however, the necessary details concerning the attitude of the various delegations.

He would remind the Commission of the following proposals :

(a) The German delegation had declared that certain clauses of the Treaty of Versailles ought to be used as a guide in replying to the General Commission's questions. It therefore proposed that capital ships of over 10,000 tons mounting guns exceeding 280-mm. (11") in calibre should be regarded as responding to all three criteria.

(b) The Soviet delegation had proposed as maximum limits 10,000 tons and 305-mm. (12") guns.

(c) The Spanish delegation had proposed as maximum limits 10,000 tons and 203-mm. (8") guns.

(d) The Danish delegation, like the Soviet delegation, considered that certain battle-cruisers should be regarded as specifically offensive arms.

(e) The Swedish delegation was prepared to regard as specifically offensive armaments capital ships of more than 10,000 (or even 8,000) tons.

If the Commission's report were drawn up as matters now stood, the Rapporteur could do no more than reproduce these different opinions. It would be very desirable if the Naval Commission were to try to ascertain how far it might be possible to harmonise these differences of opinion, which in many cases referred only to minor points.

M. MORESCO (Netherlands) asked the Rapporteur whether he intended to draw a distinction between the various criteria of the resolution. In other words, whether he would say : " Certain vessels respond to the criteria of the General Commission's resolution ", or " Certain vessels respond to the first, second or third of these criteria ". Obviously there would be more chance of reaching an agreement if the former—*i.e.*, the more general—of these two formulæ were adopted.

M. WESTMAN (Sweden), Rapporteur, thought that the reply to this question would depend on the results of the present discussion. For the moment, as many delegations had defined their views with regard to each of these three criteria separately and as there was no unanimous opinion, he would be obliged to state what was the attitude of each delegation as witnessed by the Minutes.

M. QUINTANA (Argentine) agreed with the President and Rapporteur that it would be desirable to group together the largest possible number of the various opinions which had been expressed. He asked the Rapporteur to be good enough to repeat what, in brief, was the opinion of the French delegation concerning capital ships, as that was the opinion which most nearly approached the views of the Argentine delegation.



M. WESTMAN (Sweden), Rapporteur, replied that the French delegation had drafted a note<sup>1</sup> expressing its views regarding the General Commission's resolution. In that note it summarised its views with regard to capital ships as follows :

“ To sum up, capital ships such as those which at present exist in the principal navies are both *defensive* and *offensive*. All that can be affirmed is that the biggest of these ships carrying the largest calibres are relatively more offensive against national defence and the civilian population than capital ships of smaller tonnage carrying guns of smaller calibre.”

M. QUINTANA (Argentine) said that the Argentine delegation agreed with the French delegation's opinion. Moreover, the Argentine delegation could see no objection to limiting to the lowest figure the tonnage per unit of these vessels, with a view to reducing their offensive potentiality and lightening the financial burden of the various countries.

Mr. SWANSON (United States of America) was of opinion that the President had been very wise in allowing great latitude in the discussion. It was indeed very important to ascertain the exact views of the various delegations on the points set out in the General Commission's resolution. This statement of views was bound to be of help to the Conference in drawing up its General Convention for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments.

It should be clearly understood, however, that the Naval Commission was not at present called upon to discuss the size of vessels. The Naval Commission was intended to be a technical and scientific body ; it should justify that reputation by giving a technical and scientific reply to the questions submitted to it by the General Commission. With that end in view, the Chief Naval Adviser to the United States delegation had prepared a technical reply.

Rear-Admiral HEPBURN (United States of America) recognised that the Naval Commission was now discussing the replies to be made to the General Commission's questions from the point of view of capital ships only. Nevertheless, he thought that the observations he proposed to submit concerning naval weapons as a whole might lead to a clearer point of view with regard to capital ships also.

He then read the following statement :

“ The general discussion and the discussion of separate categories have covered a very wide range. It is apparent that many views have been advanced which involve issues that still await action by the General Commission as matters of principle. Offhand, five or six could be received by any one of us.

“ Some confusion appears to exist by reason of the use of technical terms in a loose sense. The terms *offence* and *defence*, for example, and such derivations as *strategical offensive*, *tactical defensive*, have definite technical meanings in military science. They are exactly descriptive of certain military operations and situations that occur in war. They have no relation to the question of *aggression*. *Aggression* is a political issue. While the exact definition of the term *aggression* is not within the authority of this Commission, the Commission may usefully take cognisance of its meaning as established by common usage if confusion with technical terms is at the same time avoided.

“ The second criterion of the resolution—viz., *or those most efficacious against national defence*—was added on the motion of the United States delegation. This criterion was offered merely in elaboration or explanation of the first criterion, which reads *whose character is the most specifically offensive*, and not as establishing a second category of specifically offensive armament. This point has been made by the delegate of the United Kingdom.

“ In formulating the report of this Commission, it is manifestly of the first importance that there should be no misunderstanding and no difference of opinion with regard to the meaning and scope of our terms of reference. Unless there is a clear understanding as to our terms of reference, it is difficult to conceive how any useful or even intelligent report can be made. The character of the discussion which has taken place would suggest that the Commission is far from unanimity on that essential point.

“ If we examine the resolution that forms our terms of reference in the light of its origin and subsequent development through discussion in the General Commission, it is, we believe, clear that the term *offensive* is intended to cover the idea of political aggression, and that the offensive operations envisaged are those directed against the territorial sovereignty of the nation suffering aggression. In other words, it is the special situation of a nation threatened with sudden invasion upon the outbreak of war which forms the background of the first two criteria. The third criterion—viz., *most threatening to civilians*—appears open to discussion in a wider field.

“ This conception of the meaning of the resolution is supported by the discussions which have occurred in the Naval Commission itself, in which the terms *aggressive* and *offensive* have been used almost interchangeably.

<sup>1</sup> Doc. Conf. D./C.N./C.R. 5.

“ Under such an interpretation of our terms of reference we find ourselves faced with a concrete technical question, perfectly appropriate to discussion by a technical committee, less liable than many others to misleading or doctrinaire treatment, and holding forth promise of a solution embodying immense benefits to the cause of reduction of armaments.

“ Roughly phrased, that question as regards the first two criteria might be put as follows :

“ Assuming the threat of armed aggression directed toward invasion of territorial sovereignty, are there any weapons which, by reason of their specific, inherent character, offer greater advantages to the aggressor than to the nation threatened with aggression ? ”

“ If in the whole range of land, sea and air armament any important categories of weapon can be so defined and adequately dealt with, a most important result will have been achieved.

“ That this is indeed the correct and intended meaning of the resolution of the General Commission is indicated by the use of the word *character* in the first criterion. This obviously refers to the intrinsic nature of the weapons to be examined with respect to the functions for which they were designed, or to which they may be devoted, and not to the matter of their relative or absolute physical strength as weapons. To list weapons in the order of their physical strength as an indication of their relative *offensiveness* would be an absurdity, since if the strongest or *most offensive* were eliminated we should be faced with a remaining list of exactly the same nature. Moreover, such a treatment of the question would be to ignore or disregard the fundamental principles of naval science. It is precisely the intelligent consideration of such questions that forms, in the present state of the proceedings at least, the most important reason for this Naval Commission's existence.

“ Again, all considerations of relative total national strength should be excluded from the technical question before us. As pointed out in the beginning, such considerations lead directly into the questions of principle which plainly involve the most important final issues of this Conference as a whole, and which have not as yet been reached on the agenda of the General Commission. It cannot be assumed that all the work of the Preparatory Commission, all the careful and arduous planning of the last two months devoted to the one end of establishing an orderly and effective procedure for the Conference, has been suddenly scrapped and thrown aside in favour of final settlement by this new principle of qualitative disarmament, which, in its inception, was designed only as a helpful measure which might bring some important result in itself and, in any event, promised to simplify and facilitate the solution of other basic problems.

“ In conclusion, therefore, it seems necessary that our Rapporteur, in preparing his report, be guided by an interpretation of the terms of reference that is not only strictly pertinent to the literal terms of the resolution before us but also in consonance with the procedure adopted by the General Commission.

“ Although the discussion which has taken place in this Commission has been so wide in character, and although it offers so many difficulties in the formulation of a useful report unless we can arrive at some closer interpretation of our terms of reference, it should not be overlooked that this broad treatment of the subject has covered much of importance to the final outcome of the Conference and much that would be useful to the General Commission in the consideration of questions as yet untouched. The substance of this discussion should not be lost.

“ If the Commission were to adopt the suggestions here outlined regarding the definition of our terms of reference, it would be possible to formulate a draft of a useful definitive report upon the proceedings in accordance therewith. As a separate part of the report, or as an appendix, it would be useful and pertinent to give an account of the whole discussion which has taken place, incorporating verbatim texts of individual statements or explanations which any of the Powers here represented may desire to submit.”

The PRESIDENT felt bound, before calling upon the next speaker, to emphasise the point to which he had already referred in his opening remarks—namely, that the Naval Commission must try to give as definite replies as possible in regard to the three criteria enumerated in the General Commission's resolution. The general discussion had been of great value : certain questions outside the Naval Commission's immediate terms of reference had been touched upon. Those questions were of course reserved for the General Commission and would doubtless be discussed by that Commission in due course.

Sir Bolton EYRES-MONSELL (United Kingdom) agreed with the view of the United States delegation that a clearer definition of the Naval Commission's terms of reference was necessary. In that connection he would refer the Commission to a paragraph from the first speech made by the United Kingdom delegate :

“ It is necessary to be quite clear in our minds as to what we mean when we say that a weapon is most specifically offensive or most efficacious against national defence, and I suggest that the underlying idea is to select those weapons which enable the attack on an aggressor rapidly to break down the defence of the State attacked, and that this is the basis from which we should look at the various naval types.”

In the view of the United Kingdom delegation, it was essential to obtain a clear definition of the terms of reference. It would then be easier to proceed to draw up a report on the various naval types.

The United Kingdom delegation also considered it desirable to combine the criteria (a) and (b). Until the United States delegation had mentioned the point, he had been unaware that (b) had been framed on the representation of that delegation. In his first speech the United Kingdom delegate had also said that :

“ In the case of land and air armaments there may no doubt be a difference between (a) and (b) of the resolution, but so far as naval armaments are concerned it seems that they amount in effect to the same thing, and it is consequently proposed to deal with (a) and (b) together.”

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ (Spain) thought that the Rapporteur's proposal to divide the various delegations into groups was the best course that could be followed. The Commission had now before it a number of proposals, some of which were rather lengthy. Among others, he noted the proposal of the United States and United Kingdom delegations that the first two criteria in the resolution should be combined, and the Netherlands proposal that a single reply should be given to all three criteria. He agreed with the President that it was impossible to form an opinion on all these proposals immediately; the delegations must have time to reflect. There was also the French proposal, which made a number of definite suggestions, not only as regarded the matters now under consideration by the Naval Commission, but as regarded limitation, abolition, regulation, internationalisation and even budgetary questions. If the Commission began to discuss this proposal in detail, it would find itself going once more over all the ground it had already covered—and even further. Some delegations had already expressed the opinion that the Commission was going beyond its terms of reference. Personally, he thought the Commission would be wise to reply only to the questions put to it by the General Commission, and its reply should be couched in a technical form. As it seemed impossible to obtain a unanimous or almost unanimous view, it would be better, he repeated, to divide the delegations into groups. He suggested a resolution on the following lines :

“ The Naval Commission is of opinion that all the naval arms may be indicated as possessing offensive characteristics, but they may also be used defensively. Their defensive nature depends upon the way in which they are employed as well as on the undertakings given in peace-time by the various countries regarding their employment and the manner in which those undertakings are honoured in war-time.

“ The above consideration, together with the different geographical and political conditions of the different countries, makes it quite impossible to state the point at which such armaments cease to be defensive and become offensive.

“ In the opinion of.....delegations this point begins.....  
In the opinion of other delegations it begins.....”

Captain RUSPOLI (Italy) agreed that a clear understanding of the Commission's terms of reference was absolutely essential. The Commission, however, would never emerge from the tangle of arguments if it lost sight of the primary object of the General Commission's task, which was also reflected in the questions submitted to the Naval Commission—namely, the reduction of armaments. The three parts of the General Commission's resolution should be read in the same spirit in which they had been framed and also in conjunction with the General Commission's resolution in document Conf.D./C.G.26(i), to which the resolution of April 22nd itself referred, so that the texts of the two resolutions might be considered together as follows :

“ In seeking to apply the principle of qualitative disarmament, the Conference is of opinion that the range of land, sea and air armaments should be examined by the competent special commissions with a view to 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.”

That should be the Commission's object. If it limited itself to the letter of its terms of reference it would flounder into a hopeless morass. On the contrary, it should always bear in mind the primary object of the whole Conference, which was the limitation and reduction of armaments.

Sir Bolton EYRES-MONSELL (United Kingdom) observed that the Spanish delegation had seemed to suggest that the United States delegation or the United Kingdom delegation was pursuing a course which would lead to the reopening of the whole discussion. That was far from the case. Surely, without reopening the discussion it should not be difficult for the Bureau to give a clear definition of the criteria (a) and (b) which would be of the very greatest help.

The Italian delegate had seemed to think that the Naval Commission ought itself to bear in mind the possibilities of reduction. Sir Bolton Eyres-Monsell submitted that the Naval Commission had no mandate whatsoever to discuss this matter, which would be duly considered in another place.

He would like to touch on one other point ; the Rapporteur's observations had seemed to suggest that Japan differed from the United Kingdom because she advocated a reduction in the size of capital ships and their guns—the inference being that the United Kingdom was not in favour of such reduction. On the contrary, the United Kingdom delegate had said in his first speech that " the United Kingdom delegation was ready to give its most sympathetic consideration to such proposals ". It still adhered to that determination.

M. QUINTANA (Argentine) thought the discussion was showing a tendency to spread. At the beginning he had said he considered that the general discussion had thrown quite sufficient light on the matter to enable the Naval Commission to formulate an answer. He had added that by way of simplifying matters the Argentine delegation was prepared to agree to the French delegation's proposal. After hearing the Spanish delegate's remarks, however, he was bound to say that he did not mean that the Argentine delegation was prepared to adhere to the whole of the French proposals, but only, for the moment, to that part of them which referred to capital ships.

There had been some discussion as to whether the Naval Commission should reply to all three questions together or to each separately, or even, as the United Kingdom delegation had suggested, to the first and second together and to the third separately. Personally, he thought that it should be possible to give a single reply to all three questions, since in reality the gist of each question was very similar to that of the others. The Commission should surely decide the point as soon as possible.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) expressed satisfaction at the manner in which the discussion had been developing that day. For the first time it seemed just possible that some useful decision might emerge. The Commission had heard many speakers, and the speeches had proved that it was not an easy matter to group the results of the discussion in the form of separate replies to the three criteria submitted by the General Commission. Some delegations had suggested that the answers should be drafted from a purely technical point of view. Others had argued that, in the first place, a clear definition must be reached of the terms of reference themselves. There was a great difference between these two points of view. He did not think that the Naval Commission's reply would be satisfactory if it were based on purely technical considerations. As had been pointed out, the same arms might be offensive and defensive. It had also been observed that the nature of armaments might vary according to the intentions of the country which possessed them. From a technical point of view ; it might be possible to say that certain arms were defensive or offensive according to the spirit in which they were or would be employed, but that would not be a very useful reply. He wondered whether the Commission would not be better inspired to base its answer on the hypothesis that, if a given country desired to attack another country, certain armaments would be more offensive in character than others. He believed that the observations of the United Kingdom and the United States delegations were framed in that sense. If they presupposed a desire on the part of a country to launch an attack, they could then say, on the basis of that supposition, which weapons possessed the characteristics indicated in the General Commission's criteria.

He ventured to refer once more to the Treaty of Versailles. The covering note to the Treaty, dated June 16th, 1919, did not—he admitted the point was a delicate one—necessarily correspond with Germany's own views, but, in any case, the introduction to the military clauses of the reply of the Allied and Associated Powers to the observations of the German delegation on the conditions of peace read as follows :

" . . . [the] requirements in regard to German armaments were not made solely with the object of rendering it impossible for Germany to resume her policy of military aggression. They are also the first steps towards that general reduction and limitation of armaments which they seek to bring about as one of the most fruitful preventives of war and which it will be one of the first duties of the League of Nations to promote."

The Treaty of Versailles therefore gave a very clear definition of the object which the Naval Commission should keep in view in formulating its reply. The cases in question should be looked at from the point of view of " a policy of military aggression "—*i.e.*, the case of a country which meditated an attack. Only on that basis would the Commission succeed in drafting a satisfactory reply.

Rear-Admiral LABORDE (France) said that, if the Naval Commission wanted to make a clear and effective reply to the questions submitted to it, there could be no doubt in the first place that it should answer those questions on a strictly technical basis, omitting all non-pertinent considerations. It should give a separate reply to each question in each category, because for

one and the same type the answer might be different under a different heading. To combine the various headings would lead to confusion. The Commission's reply must necessarily take the form of a short account of the proceedings, indicating the various groups of ideas. The Commission could see now that it would only reach a relative and incomplete agreement. The discussion had not, however, been sterile. A number of suggestions had been made which would be referred to the General Commission—suggestions that might pave the way for qualitative reduction, as desired by the General Commission, and might also produce other constructive proposals leading to economy.

M. SAITO (Japan) observed that the various technical and intrinsic characteristics of vessels had been thoroughly discussed. The discussion had shown that there existed a great diversity of opinions. The President had rightly pointed out that the Commission should endeavour to define as clearly as possible the nature of the various vessels, in order that it might submit an answer to the General Commission which would help the latter in its work.

In view, however, of the diversity of opinions to which he had referred, he doubted whether the Naval Commission could do much more than its Rapporteur had suggested, thus providing the clearest possible picture of the various opinions held.

He agreed with the Italian delegation that the Naval Commission should endeavour to keep in mind the main objective of the General Commission when it had asked the Naval Commission to indicate certain weapons as coming within the three criteria submitted. If the Commission kept that point in view and followed the lines suggested by the Rapporteur, it would make a useful contribution to the work of the Conference. It was necessary, he thought, to determine first whether or not the replies to (a) and (b) should be amalgamated; but, in making his report, the Rapporteur should not find it difficult to characterise the various armaments according to the result of the Naval Commission's discussion, whether (a) or (b) were treated together or separately.

Captain RUSPOLI (Italy) explained that he had not intended to imply that it was for the Naval Commission to decide on reductions. He had meant that, in interpreting the text referred to it by the General Commission, it should not lose sight of the fundamental reason for which the Conference had been convened. It would be better not to adhere too strictly to the letter of this text. All categories of arms were specifically offensive when used to attack less-armed nations. It was impossible to limit considerations of national defence to the possibility of invasion. As a matter of fact, there was as yet no agreed definition of "national defence". National defence was a far wider question than defence against threatened invasion only: for some countries at least, national defence connoted also the maintenance of their supplies in time of war.

M. MORESCO (Netherlands) disapproved the tendency to insist on scientific definitions at the outset. Nevertheless he had listened with great interest to Admiral Hepburn's statement. Definitions were a long and thankless task. He supported the observations of the Italian and Spanish delegations and of the French delegation (as regarded the first part of its note). The Rapporteur should, he thought, give a very concise summary of the opinions set out in the discussion and should endeavour to group the various delegations on general lines, bearing in mind the desire of the General Commission to secure assistance in preparing the way for qualitative disarmament. The replies should, if possible, be framed in such a way as to enable the General Commission's resolution to become subsequently operative. If the Naval Commission simply said that it could not answer the questions, it would not be acting in conformity with the Conference's wishes.

The second part of the opening paragraph of the French note could not of course be considered at present. But the Netherlands delegation entirely concurred with the particular observation that "the same ships may be used to protect and attack the civilian population. It may nevertheless be admitted that the biggest ships carrying the biggest guns are those which are likely to cause the greatest damage to the non-combatant population". If the power of attack were reduced, there would be less danger of attack, because small nations could not build big armaments. It could be said, indeed, that the most powerful armaments possessed the greatest potentiality for offence.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) said that his views had been adequately expressed by the Italian delegate. If the General Commission had required only a strictly technical opinion, it would have appointed a committee of experts. Though the Naval Commission was called a technical commission, it was only technical in a limited sense, as not all of its members were naval technicians. Did not this prove that the Naval Commission was intended to combine technical knowledge with political judgment? That was the light in which he read point 1

of the French note. The Naval Commission should give an answer from a strictly technical point of view, but on the basis of certain political suppositions. Only then would its reply be clear.

M. WESTMAN (Sweden), Rapporteur, observed that his suggestion concerning the general outline of the report (*i.e.*, to group the various views) seemed to have been fairly favourably received. With regard to the observation of the United Kingdom delegation concerning the possible reduction of tonnage and calibre, he had noted the passage in the United Kingdom delegate's speech to which Sir Bolton Eyres-Monsell had referred, but had not ventured to draw any definite inference from that passage, seeing that at the end of his speech of April 29th the United Kingdom delegate had called, as regarded capital ships, for a "verdict of acquittal". Certainly, however, the General Commission would have to consider many points not before the Naval Commission—for instance, the financial aspect of the problem, which obviously might lead to other results than those arising from the discussions of the Naval Commission itself.

The PRESIDENT stated that the discussion was now closed. Several possibilities had been suggested: to reply separately to points (a), (b) and (c) or separately to points (a) and (b) combined and (c) or to all three points together. It was also necessary to define the exact scope of the reply. Finally, the French delegation's note must also be taken into account. He thought it might perhaps be rather dangerous to follow the suggestion of the United Kingdom delegation and ask the Bureau to define the questions and make specific proposals. Personally he thought it would be better to appoint a drafting committee to review these points, composed of the representatives of the Argentine, the United Kingdom, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America, it being understood that any other delegation not represented on the drafting committee, but particularly interested in any special point, could always send a representative to be present while that point was being discussed.

*The President's proposal was adopted.*

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## FIFTEENTH MEETING

*Held on Friday, May 27th, 1932, at 10 a.m.*

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President : M. COLBAN.

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### 32. EXAMINATION OF THE DRAFT REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE NAVAL COMMISSION BY THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE (document Conf.D./C.N.30).

The PRESIDENT called upon the Commission to examine the draft report submitted to it by the Drafting Committee. When such amendments had been made to that report as the Commission might deem necessary, it would be collated with the reports of the other technical commissions before being sent on to the General Commission.

M. WESTMAN (Sweden), Rapporteur, reminded the Commission that, in considering its reply to the General Commission's resolution of April 22nd, it had encountered a difficulty at the outset. Certain delegations had thought that the terms of the resolution were not sufficiently clear to allow of a definite reply.

In particular the United States delegation had pointed out that, in order to be able to give a satisfactory answer to the questions raised and state that any particular category of arms fell—or did not fall—within the terms of the resolution, it was not enough to consider the use to which such arms might be put in "normal" war operations. In the opinion of the United States delegation, the problem stated in those terms was insoluble. It had proposed, however, that the Commission should consider whether there were any arms which, in the case of armed aggression against the territorial sovereignty of a State, offered, by reason of their special characteristics, greater advantages to the aggressor than to the defender.

Other delegations, however, had not been able to agree with this view and had stated that all arms were of an offensive nature when employed for offensive purposes. Those delegations thought that the problem of national defence should not be regarded from the sole standpoint of an invasion or violation of territorial sovereignty; the problem was a much vaster one.

There had also been differences of opinion on other points. Some delegations had felt bound to refer to the terms of Article 8 of the Covenant and had said that the Naval

Commission ought to frame its reply in the light of that article—*i.e.*, taking into consideration the national safety, international obligations, geographical situation and circumstances of each country.

Other delegations had argued that the General Commission's resolution of April 22nd was really an endorsement of the principle of qualitative disarmament. Consequently, the Naval Commission was called upon to decide on what arms these measures of disarmament—*i.e.*, abolition or internationalisation, or placing at the disposal of the League of Nations—should apply.

Finally, in order to explain as far as possible the opinions of the various delegations regarding the Naval Commission's terms of reference, the latter adopted an interpretation intended to serve as a guide for delegations in their replies to the questions raised. The interpretation was as follows :

“ Supposing one State either (a) adopts a policy of armed aggression, or (b) undertakes offensive operations against another State, what are the weapons which, by reason of their specific character, and without prejudice to their defensive purposes, are most likely to enable that policy, or those operations, to be brought rapidly to a successful conclusion ? ”

It should be noted, moreover, that very few delegations had stated whether they adopted standpoint (a) in preference to standpoint (b).

Owing to the wide divergence of opinions which had become manifest, the Naval Commission had had to abandon all attempt to give a unanimous reply to the General Commission's questions, and had had to content itself with stating in its report the view of the various delegations or groups of delegations.

Nevertheless, as those views were fully developed and explained, the report would provide the General Commission with useful information which would help it to reach decisions concerning the limitation and reduction of armaments with a full knowledge of the facts.

He would emphasise the fact that certain delegations, while clearly admitting their inability to declare that any given arm did or did not come under the criteria of the resolution of April 22nd, had said that they had no wish to prejudice the question whether any given arm should be prohibited or not. This latter point would be settled by the General Commission, which would be obliged to take into consideration very many aspects of the case—more especially, financial and political—which lay outside the domain of the Naval Commission. The General Commission would therefore be called upon to solve a still more difficult and far-reaching problem. It was to be hoped, however, that it would be able to discover factors for agreement and compromise which were not available to the Naval Commission.

*The draft report was read and discussed chapter by chapter.*

#### *Introduction and Part I. Capital Ships.*

The PRESIDENT pointed out that obviously each delegation was only responsible for its own statement.

Captain MARONI (Italy) said that the Italian delegation, which had helped to draw up the report, approved that document and did not intend to propose any sort of amendment.

Having noted, however, that certain delegations, though they had not agreed with the conclusions of the Italian delegation, nevertheless shared that delegation's views on fundamentals, he thought it might be desirable to make a brief statement.

In endeavouring to reply to the questions raised, each delegation had taken as its starting-point the proposals submitted at the beginning of their work, and it was in the light of that observation that he requested the Commission to take the following explanations into consideration :

The Italian delegation regarded capital ships as defined by the Treaties—*i.e.*, vessels of over 10,000 tons and mounting more than 8-inch guns—as being specifically offensive, *even* if navies were still to include submarines. On the other hand, it held that submarines would be offensive *only* if navies no longer included capital ships.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ (Spain) said that after hearing Captain Maroni's explanation the Spanish delegation entirely agreed with the Italian delegation's views. Moreover, on examining Part I of the report he noted that all delegations, with the exception of the three greatest naval Powers, were agreed on the fundamentals of the reply to be made to the General Commission with regard to capital ships. He therefore proposed that the opinion of all these delegations should be set out in one single text without introducing any new arguments, and that the various reservations should be omitted.

M. WESTMAN (Sweden), Rapporteur, observed that several delegations had informed him that they agreed with the conclusions adopted by the Argentine, Finnish, French, German, Netherlands, Norwegian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish and Soviet delegations. These were the delegations of Denmark, Greece, Roumania, Turkey and Yugoslavia.

Moreover, the Danish delegation had informed him that it withdrew its reservation in regard to capital ships.

Commodore DE TAMM (Sweden) declared that the Swedish delegation would withdraw its statement regarding capital ships, which had already been set out in full in the Minutes

M. WESTMAN (Sweden), Rapporteur, said that the Roumanian delegation agreed with the Spanish delegation's statement.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ (Spain) said that, if the other delegations withdrew their statements the Spanish delegation would be prepared to withdraw its own. There might be a footnote stating that certain delegations (Denmark, Soviet, Spain) considered that the tonnage limit should be fixed at 10,000 tons, whereas other delegations preferred 8,000 tons.

General VATEFF (Bulgaria) asked that the Bulgarian delegation should be included among those whose conclusions figured in the report after the statement of the Italian delegation.

Rear-Admiral VON SCHOULTZ (Finland) considered that if most of the reservations were omitted, there would no longer be any mention of figures regarding displacement or tonnage for capital ships. It was necessary to avoid any ambiguity on the subject, and for that reason he asked for the insertion of the following in the report :

“ As an accumulation of mechanical force and as a concentration of offensive armaments, the modern capital ship is a means of destruction without equal. This is why it cannot be characterised as other than specifically offensive and as possessing the most efficacy against national defence.

“ In view of the great range of its guns and the destructive force of its projectiles, a capital ship is at the same time most dangerous to the civil populations of the sea coasts.

“ The offensive qualities of capital ships—which do not, on the other hand, prevent their being employed with as much efficacy for defensive purposes, decrease with the diminution of their tonnage.

“ Consequently, the delegation of Finland would agree with any unanimous resolution of the Naval Commission which would have in view the reduction of the tonnage of capital ships.”

## *Part II. Aircraft-carriers.*

The PRESIDENT pointed out the importance of the following observation at the beginning of Part II :

“ Pending the results of the discussion in the Air Commission, the following statements in regard to aircraft-carriers have been made in the Naval Commission.”

The Bureaux of the three technical Commissions would examine the possibility of coordinating the opinions expressed by these Commissions. If any changes in the present report were then deemed necessary, the Naval Commission would be convened, so that it might express its opinion.

M. WESTMAN (Sweden), Rapporteur, said that the delegations of Denmark, Roumania, Turkey and Yugoslavia had just informed him that they agreed with the reply of the Finnish, German, Italian, Netherlands, Norwegian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish and Soviet delegations to the three questions which had been put.

Moreover, the Greek delegation had informed him that it agreed with the first paragraph of that reply.

M. SATO (Japan) asked that the text of paragraph 4 of the Japanese declaration should be replaced by the following :

“ 4. The character of these vessels permits of their being employed more advantageously for aggressive than for defensive purposes.

“ Coast-defence air operations can be carried out more effectively and more economically by a shore-based coast-defence air force than by aircraft carriers.”

## *Part III. Submarines.*

M. WESTMAN (Sweden), Rapporteur, informed the Commission that the Latvian and Roumanian delegations agreed with the opinion of the Finnish, French, Italian Polish and Spanish delegations. The Latvian delegation also agreed with the conclusions of the Finnish, French and Polish delegations regarding the defensive character of the submarine.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ (Spain) said that the Spanish delegation accepted these conclusions subject to the reservation set out in the previous paragraph of the report.



M. WESTMAN (Sweden), Rapporteur, said that the Danish, Greek, Turkish and Yugoslav delegations agreed with the opinion of the Netherlands, Norwegian, and Swedish delegations.

Commodore DE TAMM (Sweden) said that the Swedish delegation would have been prepared to discuss the figure of 600-700 tons as a possible tonnage limit above which the offensive nature of submarines would be regarded as predominating.

M. WESTMAN (Sweden), Rapporteur, said that the Danish delegation withdrew its statement regarding submarines of more than 500-600 tons.

Rear-Admiral DE SOUZA E FARO (Portugal) said that the Portuguese delegation also agreed with the opinion of the Netherlands, Norwegian and Swedish delegations.

#### *Part IV. Automatic Contact Mines.*

M. WESTMAN (Sweden), Rapporteur, informed the Commission that the Roumanian delegation agreed with the two suggestions of the French delegation, and that the delegations of the United States of America and the Argentine agreed with the joint statement of the United Kingdom and Italian delegations.

Moreover, the Netherlands delegation asked that the following declaration should be inserted in the report :

“ The Netherlands delegation, considering that the Naval Commission had unanimously agreed to its proposal that automatic contact mines laid ‘ in the open sea ’ are to be regarded as one of the arms which are most threatening to the civilian population, regrets that, in the present report the expression ‘ open sea ’ should have been replaced by the words ‘ outside a coastal zone to be defined ’.

“ The discussions show that this substitution should not be regarded as being intended to modify the meaning of the declaration or to prejudice the principle of the freedom of the seas on which it is based.

“ Consequently, the Netherlands delegation wishes to state that in defining the coastal zone the above principle should be strictly adhered to.”

#### *Part V. River War Vessels.*

The PRESIDENT pointed out that Part V of the report was merely a summary of the Naval Commission's discussion on river craft. The Commission, it will be remembered, decided to express no opinion on these craft.

M. WESTMAN (Sweden), Rapporteur, pointed out that the Roumanian delegation had asked for the insertion of the following statement :

“ The Roumanian delegation urges that the question of river war vessels should be discussed from the general point of view of all river war vessels on rivers in every continent.”

General TANCZOS (Hungary) desired to specify that the Hungarian delegation reserved the right to revert to the question of river war vessels in due course.

The PRESIDENT repeated that it was understood that each delegation was only responsible for the statements ascribed to it.

*The Commission adopted the report as a whole, with the changes indicated in the course of the discussion.*

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## SIXTEENTH MEETING

*Held on Tuesday, May 31st, 1932, at 10 a.m.*

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President : M. COLBAN.

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### 33. REPLY OF THE NAVAL COMMISSION TO THE QUESTIONS REFERRED TO IT BY THE GENERAL COMMISSION IN ITS RESOLUTION OF APRIL 22ND, 1932 (document Conf.D./C.G.28(2)).

The PRESIDENT said that letters had been sent to the President of the Conference and to the Presidents of the Air and Land Commissions informing them that the Naval Commission had completed its reply to the General Commission's questions, and that a copy of that reply was enclosed. The letters further added that the Bureau of the Naval Commission would hold itself at the disposal of the other Commissions' Bureaux, with a view to considering jointly the reports of the Naval, Land and Air Commissions.

He had received a letter dated May 30th, 1932, from the Brazilian delegation enclosing that delegation's observations on the Naval Commission's report. The Brazilian delegation asked that these observations should be included in the Minutes. They were as follows :

" *Capital Ships.* — As the Brazilian constitution prohibits all wars of aggression and as Brazil has undertaken to submit all international disputes to arbitration, the Brazilian delegation considers that, for Brazil, cruisers constitute the main nucleus of the country's mobile defences.

" The Brazilian delegation therefore endorses declarations Nos. 1, 2 and 3 of the United States of America, the United Kingdom and the Japanese delegations, as set out in the report, though it admits that 'in the case of an attack, the greater the tonnage of these ships and the higher the calibre of their guns, the greater is their efficacy against naval and coast defences'.

" *Aircraft-carriers.* — The point in discussion is not the comparative vulnerability of aircraft-carriers, because these vessels are auxiliaries and not units of the fighting line. The nature of the assistance they are intended to afford implies that the range of action of shore-based aircraft is insufficient, in relation to the area of operations contemplated for the fleet ; otherwise, the advantages of shore-based aircraft would have been preferred. The presumed intention therefore underlying the existence of aircraft-carriers is that hostilities will take place outside the territorial waters and even very far away from those waters—an intention which connotes offensive operations and a war of aggression.

" It must, however, be admitted that, in the case of countries possessing overseas colonies—and in this case only—and for reasons of economy, aircraft-carriers may possess a defensive character.

" *Submarines.* — The Brazilian delegation agrees with the opinion expressed by the delegation of the United States of America in the report, with the following additional remarks. First, the idea put forward by several delegations that the reduction of the tonnage of submarines would give these arms a defensive character cannot be admitted, because it would involve an examination, by comparative methods, of the concept of the open sea or limited maritime areas as the possible theatre of naval operations for all nations. With regard to submarine mine-layers, the very idea that these vessels are intended to operate in foreign waters deprives them of all defensive characteristics.

" *Automatic Contact Mines.* — The Brazilian delegation agrees with the views expressed concerning the endorsement of the Hague Conventions for the limitation of the zone within which mines can be laid and on the communication of information regarding these zones. It is understood that the remarks concerning the defensive nature of mines do not refer to those laid by submarine mine-layers."

The President stated that the Rapporteur would probably be able to add the name of Brazil to various groups of countries mentioned in the report in the light of the Brazilian statement, which would appear in the Minutes, so that that delegation would have been treated in every respect like the other delegations.

34. ITEM 2 OF THE AGENDA : ANNEX IV TO CHAPTER B OF PART II OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION :  
RULES FOR REPLACEMENT (*continuation of discussion*)<sup>1</sup>.

*Paragraph 2.*<sup>2</sup>

The PRESIDENT reminded the Commission that at its fourth meeting it had adopted paragraph 1 of this annex. It now had to consider paragraph 2 and the following paragraphs. With regard to paragraph 2, a number of proposals had been laid before the Commission, by the Japanese delegation<sup>3</sup> the United Kingdom delegation<sup>4</sup>, the Spanish delegation,<sup>4</sup> the Hungarian delegation<sup>4</sup>—as regarded river-craft—and the German delegation<sup>4</sup>. He also reminded the Commission that the United Kingdom delegation had submitted the following proposal :

" In paragraph 2 (a) for ' Capital ships : 20 years . . .' read ' Capital ships : 26 years . . . '

" In paragraph 2 (b) for ' Aircraft carriers : 20 years . . .' read ' Aircraft carriers : 26 years . . . '"

<sup>1</sup> For previous discussion, see Minutes of the third, fourth and fifth meetings.

<sup>2</sup> For text, see Minutes of the fourth meeting, pages 14 and 15.

<sup>3</sup> For text, see Minutes of the fourth meeting, page 17.

<sup>4</sup> For text, see Minutes of the fourth meeting, page 15.

Further, the following proposal had been submitted by the Chinese delegation :

“ 1. *Capital Ships.*

“ Owing to the technical progress made and the high cost involved in the construction of modern vessels of war, the age-limit of capital ships should be extended as far as possible.

“ 2. *Surface Vessels exceeding 3,000 Tons but not exceeding 10,000 Tons Standard Displacement.*

“ The age-limit of these vessels should be not less than 20 years.

“ 3. *Surface Vessels not exceeding 3,000 Tons Standard Displacement.*

“ The age-limit of these vessels, whose efficiency is less, and whose cost of construction is lower, than that of larger vessels, should be 16 years, as proposed by the Spanish delegation.”

The Soviet delegation had also submitted a proposal, namely :

“ In conformity with its proposals made verbally at the meeting of the Naval Commission on March 17th, 1932, the Soviet delegation has the honour to state as follows its opinion in regard to the age-limits of warships :

- “ Ships of 7,000 tons and over : 26 years ;
- “ Ships over 1,200 tons and up to 7,000 tons : 20 years ;
- “ Ships of 1,200 tons and under : 16 years ;
- “ Submarines : 15 years.

“ The reasons why these various limits have been chosen were stated in the Soviet delegate's speech at the above-mentioned meeting.”

In addition to these, suggestions had been put forward at the fifth meeting of the Naval Commission, held on March 17th, by the Netherlands, Argentine, Swedish, French, United States of America and Italian delegations respectively.

The Commission had had ample time to try to reach complete agreement in the course of private conversations. Accordingly, he thought there was no need to reopen the general discussion. He proposed that the Commission should at once consider paragraph 2, taking each category of vessels separately, unless it preferred the Spanish delegation's proposal to divide all vessels, for purposes of replacement, into those under and those over 10,000 tons displacement respectively. Every decision now taken must be more or less provisional because it was impossible to foresee, at the present juncture, what categories and types of ships would be mentioned in the Convention and what definition would ultimately be adopted. The Commission was at present working on the definition in Annex III which it had provisionally adopted as a useful guide.

(a) *Capital Ships.*

The PRESIDENT said that in regard to capital ships the Preparatory Commission had adopted the limit of 20 years as an example drawn from the London and Washington Treaties. The Japanese delegation had proposed to subdivide vessels into those under and those over 20,000 tons, suggesting an age-limit of 20 years for the former and 26 years for the latter. That delegation had, however, stated that it would not press for the maintenance of this subdivision. The United Kingdom delegation had proposed 26 years, the German delegation 20 years, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics 26 years, the French delegation 25 years, the Netherlands, Argentine, Chinese and Swedish delegations as high an age-limit as possible, the United States delegation an age-limit of over 20 years and no replacement before it was absolutely necessary, while Italy had proposed 25 years.

Senator SWANSON (United States of America), M. Charles DUMONT (France), M. QUINTANA (Argentine) and Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ (Spain) stated that, in order to secure unanimity, their delegations were prepared to accept the United Kingdom proposal of an age-limit of 26 years for the replacement of capital ships.

Captain BIÖRKLUND (Sweden) observed that as regards capital ships it seemed possible to reach an agreement on the figure of 26 years if the delegations which had proposed a lower age-limit would accept a solution which would be, so to speak, more economical to their own countries. As the age-limit decreased with the tonnage, it should be mainly the countries possessing small capital ships which would ask for a lower age-limit. Sweden was one of those countries, yet she would accept the figure of 26 years even for capital ships of less tonnage.

The PRESIDENT presumed that the Swedish delegation's declaration might be taken to mean that the Commission accepted paragraph 2 (a) with an age-limit of 26 years as applying to smaller vessels which were regarded as capital ships only on account of the calibre of their guns.

Captain MARONI (Italy) accepted the figure of 26 years, provided it was understood that this figure applied only to future ships. In the case of existing ships, special agreements would have to be reached, as indicated in the text of section (a).

The PRESIDENT assured Captain Maroni that the Commission was discussing this matter on the basis of the integral text of the draft Convention.

Rear-Admiral VON SCHOULTZ (Finland) agreed to the age-limit of 26 years, with the comments made by the Swedish delegate.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) said that, as Annex IV included regulations for certain categories of vessels which Germany was forbidden to possess, the German delegation preferred to abstain from all comments at the first reading.

He added that, in spite of the observations of the Swedish delegation, the definition of capital ships was not yet quite clear. Apart from the previous observations therefore, it would be preferable for the German delegation to abstain from expressing any opinion for the time being.

The PRESIDENT observed that the Commission was discussing, not merely vessels which Germany was not allowed to possess, but also smaller vessels which, though under 10,000 tons, were armed with 8-inch guns. Did the German delegation also wish to express no opinion concerning cruisers? Again, did the German delegation, though it abstained, mean that it did not desire to prevent the Commission as a whole from adopting the age-limit of 26 years, or did it, on the contrary, wish that the age-limit of 20 years should be adhered to?

Captain MARONI (Italy) drew the Commission's attention to what he regarded as a lack of concordance between the texts of paragraphs 2 and 3. In paragraph 2 it was said: "when the following number of years have elapsed since the *date* of its completion", whereas in paragraph 3 the text read: "shall not be laid down more than three years before the *year* in which the vessel", etc. The employment of these two terms might lead to quite different results, as the expression "year" might include any date from January 1st to December 31st, thus involving a difference of twelve months. He therefore proposed that in paragraph 2 the word "years" should be inserted instead of the word "date".

The PRESIDENT desired, before calling upon the Commission to consider Captain Maroni's proposal, to note that no delegation had opposed the age-limit of 26 years. He therefore took it that the Commission unanimously agreed upon that figure, as the abstention of the German delegation did not imply that that delegation was necessarily opposed to the stated age-limit.

He then called upon the Commission to examine the Italian delegate's proposal.

Senator SWANSON (United States of America) observed that the effect of the Italian proposal might be to extend the age-limit for twelve months.

Captain MARONI (Italy) replied, in connection with paragraph 3, that naval programmes were based on years and not on fixed dates. Moreover, these programmes provided not for one but for several vessels. The text he proposed, therefore, would bring the whole Annex more into line with current practice.

Admiral SURIE (Netherlands) agreed with Captain Maroni that it would be preferable to harmonise these two paragraphs. Instead, however, of substituting "year" for "date" in paragraph 2, would it not be better to say "date" instead of "year" in paragraph 3? He agreed with the United States delegate that the use of the word "year" might involve a difference of twelve months.

Captain MARONI (Italy) was prepared to accept Admiral Surie's suggestion, as his only desire was to harmonise the two texts. He feared, however, that the suggestion might lead to complications.

Captain PHILLIPS (United Kingdom) explained that the authors of the draft Convention had taken the text of the London Treaty as their model. In the Washington Treaty the word "date" had been used, but this had, as a result of the experience acquired, been changed in the London Treaty to "year". The fact was that shipbuilding programmes were drawn up on an annual basis. If, therefore, the object was to afford a practical comparison between the navies of the different countries, it was far more convenient to take a year and assume that all vessels built on or after January 1st of that year were those to which the stipulations (for instance, as regarded replacement) would apply. In any case, some such general assumption was necessary: it was not possible to base calculations on an almost infinite number of actual dates. The United Kingdom delegation would, however, be prepared to agree to the maintenance of the present text provisionally, subject to the reservation that the matter should be gone into more carefully.

Captain MARONI (Italy) agreed with these observations.

M. SAWADA (Japan) said that the Japanese delegation reserved its opinion.

The PRESIDENT pointed out that the Commission was not yet examining paragraph 3, though attention had been drawn to the connection between that paragraph and paragraph 2 now under consideration. The Commission appeared to have reached agreement regarding the text of paragraph 2, maintaining the word "date" therein. The various delegations would have ample time for reflection before the Commission came to discuss paragraph 3. The text adopted provisionally read as follows:

"2. A vessel shall be deemed 'over age' when the following number of years have elapsed since the date of its completion:

"(a) Capital ships: 26 years, subject to special provisions as may be necessary for the replacement of existing ships."

(b) *Aircraft-carriers.*

The PRESIDENT said that, in this connection, the Commission had before it the proposal of the United Kingdom delegation to fix the age-limit at 26 years; that of the Japanese delegation to fix the limit at 26 years for vessels of over 20,000 tons or at 20 years for vessels over 10,000 but under 20,000 tons. The German and Soviet delegations were in favour of absolute prohibition. During the discussions on March 17th, several delegations had said that if aircraft-carriers were to be allowed, they would prefer the longest possible age-limit. The Spanish delegation had proposed an age-limit of 24 years for vessels of over 10,000 tons displacement. Obviously then, if it were possible to conceive of aircraft-carriers of under 10,000 tons, the Spanish proposal would no longer apply to these.

Captain PHILLIPS (United Kingdom) observed that the United Kingdom delegation had proposed 26 years. Other delegations thought that this age-limit was too high. On reflection, the United Kingdom delegation was prepared to agree with the other delegations on an age-limit of 20 years, because aircraft-carriers were more lightly built and navigated more often at full speed than other vessels of similar tonnage. A very high speed was always necessary for flying off and flying on, if there were no strong wind. Therefore the wear and tear in the case of aircraft-carriers was heavier even than in the case of cruisers or destroyers.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ (Spain) pointed out that the Spanish delegation had proposed the abolition of aircraft-carriers. Such proposals, therefore, as he made referred to vessels of over 10,000 tons without any specification of type. He must abide by those proposals, and the age-limit for such vessels should, in the Spanish delegation's opinion, stand at the 26 years he had just accepted, instead of the 24 years he had originally suggested.

Captain MARONI (Italy) was prepared to accept 20 years.

M. Charles DUMONT (France) shared the United Kingdom delegation's views. The French delegation was prepared to accept an age-limit of 20 years for aircraft-carriers of all tonnages. As in the case of submarines, the factor of safety should be borne in mind. Aircraft-carriers were fragile craft that had to steam at very high speeds. Moreover, owing to the length of deck necessary, it was difficult to conceive the possibility of constructing aircraft-carriers of under 14,000 tons.

M. SAWADA (Japan) said that the Japanese delegation had agreed to 26 years as the age-limit for capital ships and had withdrawn its proposal to divide those ships into vessels of over and under 20,000 tons respectively. The Japanese delegation felt bound, however, to maintain that division in the case of aircraft-carriers. It therefore proposed for aircraft-carriers of over 20,000 tons an age-limit of 26 years, and for aircraft-carriers of under 20,000 tons 20 years, it being always borne in mind that the fundamental aim of the Conference was to achieve economy and the reduction of armaments.

Senator SWANSON (United States of America) agreed with the United Kingdom delegation that aircraft-carriers could not be accorded a higher age-limit than cruisers. The question of the safety of the crews had to be considered in proportion to the great strain to which aircraft-carriers were exposed. Accordingly, he considered an age-limit of 20 years to be the right and proper one.

The PRESIDENT noted that the Commission unanimously agreed in principle to maintain the text of the draft Convention, which specified that the age-limit for aircraft-carriers should be 20 years. True, the Japanese delegation had proposed an age-limit of 26 years for aircraft-carriers of over 20,000 tons, while the Spanish delegation maintained its view that, while 20 years might be a proper age-limit for vessels of under 10,000 tons, the limit for all vessels of every category of over 10,000 tons should be 26 years. He would remind the Commission, however, that the Convention would have to be signed and ratified by all delegations. Some effort would therefore have to be made to reach unanimity. He hoped that, during the time which would elapse before the signature of the Convention, it might be possible for the outstanding delegations to reach an agreement or compromise with the other delegations.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ (Spain) observed that all conclusions reached in the Naval Commission would depend upon the final decisions reached by the General Commission. He personally felt sure that the General Commission would place a limit on the maximum tonnage of aircraft-carriers, in order to prevent them from carrying bombing aeroplanes. In that case, if the tonnage of aircraft-carriers were fixed at under 10,000 tons, the Spanish delegation would be in agreement with the majority. Subject to that consideration, he was prepared to subscribe to the views of the present majority in the Naval Commission.

The PRESIDENT noted that, in these circumstances, the Naval Commission agreed, subject to any changes which might be made by the General Commission, to the text as it now stood in the draft Convention, the German delegation abstaining.

M. SMIRNOFF (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) declared that, as the Soviet delegation had proposed the abolition of aircraft-carriers, that delegation must make every reservation with regard to the present decision.

(c) *Surface Vessels exceeding 3,000 Tons but not exceeding 10,000 Tons Standard Displacement.*

The PRESIDENT remarked that several delegations had made proposals in this connection. On March 17th, the United Kingdom delegation had suggested 20 years as the age-limit for all these vessels whenever built. He understood, however, that that suggestion was not final. The Spanish delegation had proposed 20 years. The German delegation had proposed 20 years for cruisers. The Chinese delegation had proposed 20 years. The Soviet delegation, 20 years for vessels of over 3,000 and under 7,000 tons. The Netherlands, Argentine and Swedish delegations had stated on March 17th that they were in favour of the greatest possible extension of the age-limit. France had suggested 20 years. The United States of America had not expressed an opinion concerning cruisers but had made the general statement that vessels should not be replaced before replacement became absolutely necessary. That delegation had also stated on March 17th that, when the smaller categories of vessels came to be considered, the need for the proper accommodation of crews should be borne in mind.

M. SAWADA (Japan), reverting first to paragraph (b), hoped that it was quite clear that the Commission was only adopting these texts provisionally. With regard to (c), many of the vessels in question had not been designed or constructed with a view to active service exceeding 20 years in the case of cruisers and 16 in the case of destroyers. The position had been discussed with great care at the time of the preparation of the London Treaty. The Japanese delegation thought that the terms of the London Treaty should not be modified, and he was therefore in favour of maintaining the text of the draft Convention as it stood.

Captain PHILLIPS (United Kingdom) observed that, with regard to special age-limits, the United Kingdom proposals were not made with a view to altering the terms of the London Treaty which was in force and to which, as was well known, the United Kingdom intended to adhere until it expired. The United Kingdom delegation's idea was that States which were not signatories to the London Treaty might not need any such clause. If that were so, the drafting of the present Convention would be simplified. The United Kingdom delegation would not, however, press its proposal if there were any opposition.

Captain MARONI (Italy) thought that the text of the draft Convention did not require amendment.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ (Spain) said that, as some countries were bound by the London and Washington Treaties and some were not, he would like to propose one general reservation to be inserted at the beginning of the annex, to the following effect: "Subject to special arrangements as may be necessary for the replacement of existing ships. . .".

Rear-Admiral VON SCHOULTZ (Finland) said that, in view of the ultimate purpose of the Conference, the Finnish delegation would support the group of countries which was prepared to subscribe to the highest age-limit.

M. Charles DUMONT (France) could not agree to the Spanish delegation's proposal for a general reservation. It was better that specific and exact terms should be employed as far as possible. These questions had been most carefully studied at the time of the preparation of the London and Washington Treaties, and he thought that the decisions reached could be applied to all countries. He was therefore in favour of leaving the text as it stood.

Senator SWANSON (United States of America) said the United States delegation endorsed the observations of the United Kingdom and French delegations. The authors of the Washington and London Treaties had had to make provision for vessels which had been hastily built during the war, when solid construction had possibly, in some cases, been sacrificed on the altar of speed of construction. That was a point which must be borne in mind, and was the reason why the United States delegation held that the text of the draft Convention should be maintained without alteration. The United States of America intended to carry out in their entirety the provisions of the London Treaty.

Captain PHILLIPS (United Kingdom) drew the Commission's attention to the need for making a slight change in the wording of (c). As it stood, it might be taken to cover also the capital ships and aircraft-carriers mentioned in (a) and (b). He therefore proposed the following wording:

"(c) Surface vessels, other than capital ships and aircraft-carriers."

Vice-Admiral SURIE (Netherlands) thought the age-limit of 16 years could not adversely affect the interests of any delegation, and urged that (c) should be maintained as it stood.

M. SMIRNOFF (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) held that, as the London agreement had been accepted only by certain naval Powers, different solutions might be adopted in the Convention. The Soviet delegation proposed that (c) should apply to vessels of over 1,200 tons and under 7,000 tons displacement. It could not accept the Japanese, American and United Kingdom proposals.

The PRESIDENT noted that no other delegation desired to express an opinion in regard to (c); he would therefore sum up the discussion.

The United Kingdom delegation had suggested that the distinction between vessels laid down before or after January 1st, 1920, respectively, should be eliminated. It had not, however, embodied this suggestion in the form of a definite proposal.

The Spanish delegation had proposed a modification in this distinction.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ (Spain) said he did not press his proposal.

The PRESIDENT then reminded the Commission that the Japanese, Italian, United Kingdom, French and United States delegations had stated they were in favour of maintaining the figures set out in the draft Convention—*i.e.*, 16 and 20 years respectively, according to whether vessels had been laid down before or after January 1st, 1920.

No delegation had spoken against the maintenance of these figures. The Soviet delegation, however, held that (c) should apply to vessels between 1,200 and 7,000 tons, rather than to vessels between 3,000 and 10,000 tons, and for that reason could not agree to the present text of (c). Possibly the General Commission might, when it came to examine the question of definitions, decide to reduce the minimum tonnage of capital ships from 10,000 to 7,000 tons. But, in the meantime, the Commission should, he thought, adhere to the definitions given in the draft Convention, which it had decided to adopt provisionally. He hoped, therefore, that the Soviet delegation would be satisfied if its statement were set out in the Minutes.

Lastly, the United Kingdom delegation had proposed a drafting change, which the Commission would doubtless be willing to accept. According to this proposal, (c) would be drafted as follows :

“ Surface vessels, other than those referred to in (a) and (b), exceeding 3,000 tons (3,048 metric tons) but not exceeding 10,000 tons (10,160 metric tons) standard displacement :

“ (i) If laid down before January 1st, 1920, 16 years ;

“ (ii) If laid down after December 31st, 1919, 20 years.”

The PRESIDENT therefore noted that the Commission unanimously adopted section (c), the reservation of the Soviet delegation being noted, and the German delegation abstaining, as for the whole of Annex IV.

(d) *Surface Vessels not exceeding 3,000 Tons Standard Displacement.*

The PRESIDENT observed that the United Kingdom delegation had, at the meeting on March 17th, proposed that the age-limit should be fixed at 16 years for all vessels not exceeding 3,000 tons.

Captain PHILLIPS (United Kingdom) said that the United Kingdom delegation withdrew this proposal, which it had only submitted with a view to simplifying the text.

The PRESIDENT recapitulated the other proposals put forward on this subject :

The Spanish delegation had proposed a uniform age-limit of 16 years for all surface vessels not exceeding 3,000 tons.

The German delegation had made a similar proposal ; but this proposal would not be discussed at present owing to the general reservation which that delegation had made with regard to Annex IV.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics delegation had proposed that the age-limit should be fixed at 16 years for vessels under 1,200 tons.

The Chinese delegation had also proposed an age-limit of 16 years.

Finally, there was the group of States, to which he had previously alluded, in favour of the highest age-limit possible.

Captain MARONI (Italy) thought that the arguments which had been put forward in favour of maintaining section (c) held good for the maintenance of (d) also. Accordingly the Italian delegation proposed that the present text of (d) should not be altered.

The PRESIDENT observed that in section (d) a drafting change was necessary similar to that which had been made in (c)—*i.e.*, (d) should read as follows :

“ (d) Surface vessels other than those referred to in the preceding sections . . . ”

M. SAWADA (Japan) proposed that the present text of (d) should be maintained, for the reasons for which he had urged the maintenance of (c) as it stood.

Captain SOLSKI (Poland) said that the Polish delegation was prepared to accept the maintenance of the present text of (d).

He would nevertheless point out that the distinction drawn in this section between vessels laid down before or after January 1st, 1921, had ceased to be of current interest. Vessels laid down before January 1st, 1921, might be replaced in 1933, but, in view of the period of two years allowed in paragraph 3, replacement vessels might be laid down as early as 1931. Vessels laid down after December 31st, 1920, might be replaced in 1936 and the replacement vessels



might be laid down in 1934. The Convention on which the Disarmament Conference was working would probably, however, not come into force before 1934—*i.e.*, the year in which replacement vessels might be laid down for all the vessels referred to in (d). In these circumstances, was there any point in maintaining the distinction ?

The PRESIDENT admitted the logic of the Polish delegation's observation, but thought that, nevertheless, there would be no reason against maintaining the existing text of (d), which was accepted by several delegations, seeing that the text to be adopted would be very carefully examined and revised by a drafting committee.

M. Charles DUMONT (France) was in favour of maintaining the text as it stood. He felt that, in the light of the Polish delegate's observation, such a decision might be interpreted as an exhortation to carry on the work of the Conference as rapidly as possible. Moreover, the distinction in question would bear witness to the long labours of the Preparatory Commission.

Senator SWANSON (United States of America) agreed with the French delegate. Vessels laid down before January 1st, 1920, had possibly been completed only two or three years afterwards, and the date on which countries would be entitled to replace them might be later than that indicated by the Polish delegate.

The PRESIDENT noted that no delegation had spoken against the maintenance of the present text of (d). It might therefore be regarded as unanimously adopted by the Commission, with the drafting change he had indicated, the Soviet delegation's reservation with regard to tonnage limits being noted, and the German delegation abstaining.

(e) *Submarines.*

The PRESIDENT reminded the Commission that the following proposals had been made regarding the age-limit of submarines :

The Spanish delegation proposed 14 years ; the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics delegation, 15 years ; and, at the meeting on March 17th, the Italian and United Kingdom delegations had spoken in favour of 13 years.

As no delegation had asked that the limit should be lower than 13 years, he would ask the Commission whether it proposed to maintain the limit of 13 years laid down in the draft Convention or was prepared to accept 14 or 15 years or a longer period.

Captain MARONI (Italy) said that the Italian delegation maintained its proposal to fix the age-limit at 13 years. This proposal was based on considerations of the safety of crews.

M. Charles DUMONT (France) stated that since the meeting of March 17th the enquiries conducted by the technical section of the French delegation had convinced that delegation that the age-limit of submarines could not be extended beyond 13 years. If any country desired to maintain certain submarines in service for a longer period, it would always be entitled to do so, but the Commission should not lay down a higher limit.

Captain PHILLIPS (United Kingdom) said that the United Kingdom delegation was in entire agreement with the Italian and French delegations.

Captain FERRAZ E CASTRO (Brazil) supported the views expressed by the Italian, French and United Kingdom delegations. He observed that, if the 13-year limit was not maintained, it would be necessary to make reservations concerning the vessels existing at the present time.

Senator SWANSON (United States of America) held that, if submarines were to be allowed, they must be made sufficiently safe for the crews. The Preparatory Commission and the naval experts of all countries considered that 13 years was a reasonable age-limit. Moreover, as the French delegate had observed, every country would be free to prolong the service period of its submarines if it chose. In view of the present world situation, it was unlikely that any country would wish to replace a submarine prematurely, at any rate until the upkeep of the submarine became more costly than its replacement.

The United States delegation therefore considered that the age-limit for submarines should be maintained at 13 years.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ (Spain) thought that, owing to the perfection of modern building processes, an age-limit of 14 years would still afford all necessary guarantees for the safety of crews. But the statements of the representatives of several great Powers which had acquired much experience in this domain had convinced him that it would be preferable to fix the age-limit at 13 years. The Spanish delegation did not therefore press its proposal.

M. SAWADA (Japan) was in favour of maintaining the text of the Convention.

Captain SOLSKI (Poland) said that, on the ground of ensuring the safety of crews, the Polish delegation also agreed to 13 years.

The PRESIDENT noted that eight delegations had spoken in favour of adopting the age-limit of 13 years. He assumed that, in view of the technical considerations put forward, the Soviet delegation would be satisfied if its opinion were set out in the Minutes.

M. SMIRNOFF (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) reminded the Commission that the Soviet delegation proposed 15 years as the age-limit for submarines.

The PRESIDENT noted that section (e) had been adopted, the counter-proposal of the Soviet delegation being noted and the German delegation abstaining.

*Proposal of the Hungarian Delegation to introduce a Section (f) concerning River War Vessels.<sup>1</sup>*

The PRESIDENT reminded the Commission that the Hungarian delegation had proposed the introduction of a section (f) prescribing an age-limit of 25 years for river gunboats, monitors and patrol vessels.

Captain MARONI (Italy) pointed out that the Naval Commission had in its report to the General Commission referred the question of river war vessels to the General Commission. He therefore proposed that consideration of the Hungarian proposal should be adjourned until a decision had been taken by the General Commission on that subject.

General TANCZOS (Hungary) said he would defer to the Commission's views, but thought that the Hungarian delegation's proposal might nevertheless be discussed at the same time as the question of definitions.

The PRESIDENT noted the Commission's unanimous opinion that there was no need for the present meeting to discuss the age-limit for river vessels.

*Paragraph 3.*

The PRESIDENT observed that at the opening of the meeting it had been decided in principle to substitute for the words "the year in which" the words "the date on which."

Captain MARONI (Italy) pointed out that all the replacement tables were drawn up on the basis of the year during which each vessel was completed, and that naval construction programmes were also prepared on an annual basis. The adoption of the amendment proposed by the Netherlands delegate might therefore give rise to complications and difficulties. He therefore withdrew his previous acceptance and proposed that the words "the year in which" in paragraph 3 should be maintained, and that in paragraph 2 the words "the date of its completion" should be replaced by the words "the year of its completion".

*The discussion was deferred until the next meeting.*

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<sup>1</sup> See Minutes of the fourth meeting, page 15.

## SEVENTEENTH MEETING

*Held on Wednesday, June 1st, 1932, at 10 a.m.*

President : M. COLBAN.

35. ITEM 2 OF THE AGENDA : ANNEX IV TO CHAPTER B OF PART II OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION :  
RULES FOR REPLACEMENT (*continuation of the discussion*).

*Paragraph 3 (continuation).*

The PRESIDENT reminded the Commission that at the previous meeting the Italian delegation had proposed that in paragraph 3 of Annex IV the words "the year in which" should be maintained, and that in paragraph 2 the words "the date of its completion" should be replaced by the words "the year of its completion".

Captain MARONI (Italy) said that, in view of the difficulties of interpretation involved, the Italian delegation proposed the retention for the present of the expressions employed in the existing text of Annex IV, these terms having been adopted at the London Naval Conference. It might, however, be possible to discover a more satisfactory form of words later.

The PRESIDENT noted that the Italian delegation withdrew its proposal.

He called upon the Commission to discuss the amendment proposed by the Japanese delegation to the effect that the following provision should be added at the end of the first sub-paragraph of paragraph 3 :

"But in the case of a surface vessel exceeding 20,000 tons (20,320 metric tons), this period is extended to four years".

M. SAWADA (Japan) observed, in support of this proposal, that technical as well as economical considerations should be taken into account in the construction of those large units and that it had taken from three and a half to five years to build ships like the *Mutsu*, the *Nagato*, the *Nelson*, the *Rodney*, the *Maryland*, or the *Colorado*. It therefore seemed logical to extend to four years, for vessels of this type, the period provided for in paragraph 3.

Senator SWANSON (United States of America) read to the Commission the following note, prepared by the experts of the American delegation, setting out that delegation's views with regard to the Japanese proposal :

"1. Paragraph 3 of Annex IV provides that the keel for a replacement vessel shall not be laid more than three years before the year in which the vessel being replaced becomes over age, except in the case of surface vessels not exceeding 3,000 tons, where two years is the limit.

"The Japanese proposal would make this period four years in the case of surface vessels over 20,000 tons.

"2. Paragraph (a), Section I of Annex V requires that the vessel being replaced be made incapable of warlike service within six months of the completion of its successor, and provides that, in case of delay in the completion of the new vessel, the old vessels must be made incapable of warlike service within four and a half years from the date of laying of the keel of the new vessel; except that for surface vessels not exceeding 3,000 tons this period is three and a half years.

"The Japanese proposal would increase this period to five and a half years in the case of surface vessels exceeding 20,000 tons.

"3. According to the present wording of these paragraphs there would be a normal overlap of about six months, when both ships, the old and the new, might be available in case of war, with a maximum overlap of about nine months. This allows for no delay in the completion of the new vessel, and contemplates the possibility of being able to speed up the last stages of construction when the ship is practically completed. It also contemplates the possibility of taking less time than six months for demilitarisation of the old vessel, a process which can be accelerated by the use of the acetylene torch and other modern methods.

"If the Japanese proposal regarding Annex IV were accepted, permitting the laying of replacement keels four years before the vessel to be replaced becomes over age, the

average overlap might be nine months and the maximum overlap fifteen months, allowing for no delay in completion of the new vessel. The possibilities of speeding up the last stages of construction of a new vessel are naturally greater the longer the ship has been under construction.

“ In the latter case, if a delay occurred in the completion of the new vessels, thus increasing the possible building period to five years, the average overlap might be increased to about one year and the maximum to about two years.

“ 4. Thus, it appears, the acceptance of the Japanese proposal would greatly increase the period of overlap between the virtual completion of a new vessel and demilitarisation of the old, making two vessels available instead of one during that period. It should be pointed out that the present rules, which allow for a delay in the completion of the new vessel and a total period of four and a half years from the date of laying the keel of the new vessel to the date of demilitarisation of the old vessel, give sufficient latitude for all ordinary delays, and extraordinary delays are beyond the scope of these rules.”

He wished, moreover, to draw special attention to the fact that every State always conserved its right to replace a vessel up to the time at which it exercised that right. Consequently, the United States delegation was most decidedly in favour of maintaining the present wording of the first sub-paragraph of paragraph 3—a wording which had been adopted both at Washington and in London.

M. Charles DUMONT (France) said that the French delegation shared the opinion of the United States delegation, for the reasons explained by that delegation.

The PRESIDENT asked whether, in view of the statements of the United States and French delegations, the Japanese delegation felt bound to maintain its proposal. If the Japanese delegation found it difficult to reply to this question immediately, the Commission might—as the question was one of the text of the Convention, which could not be contrary to the opinion of one of the principal naval Powers—decide perhaps to maintain provisionally the present text of the first sub-paragraph of paragraph 3. The members of the Japanese delegation could revert to this point in private conversations with the members of the other delegations.

M. SAWADA (Japan) agreed to this procedure.

The PRESIDENT noted that the second sub-paragraph of paragraph 3 was *adopted* without discussion, and that the *whole of paragraph 3 was adopted* at first reading.

#### *Paragraph 4.*

*Paragraph 4 was adopted* without discussion.

The PRESIDENT then observed that the Commission had before it an amendment submitted by the British delegation to the effect that an additional paragraph, No. 5, should be inserted in Annex IV, as follows :

“ 5. Vessels replaced shall be disposed of in accordance with the provisions of Annex V to this chapter.”

This proposal was followed by a note stating that the reason for the addition was that it linked up Annex IV with Annex V.

Captain PHILLIPS (United Kingdom) said that the amendment was a matter of drafting. A provision similar to that proposed by the United Kingdom delegation formed the last paragraph of Article 3 of the Washington Treaty and of Section II of Annex I to the Treaty of London. The United Kingdom delegation felt that, unless the new Convention contained some such clause, there would be nothing to oblige a State to dispose of a vessel at the time of its replacement, though that was obviously the object aimed at.

M. SAWADA (Japan), while admitting the logic of the arguments put forward by the United Kingdom delegation, regretted that he was obliged to declare that the Japanese delegation could not accept this proposal.

While it was obvious indeed that vessels “ over age ” could no longer be used in operations in which they would have to face first-class warships, they might nevertheless be utilised for other purposes, such as patrolling coasts and protecting ports. As the work of the Conference was not yet in a very advanced stage and as no arrangements had yet been made concerning the allocation of naval forces between the various Powers, the Japanese delegation thought that it would be impossible to see whether certain countries were in need of those over-age vessels.

Quite possibly an agreement satisfactory to all might be reached under which no retention of those vessels was necessary ; but it might also happen, if very marked differences were allowed in the relative naval strengths of the various Powers, that weaker countries would be authorised to retain a suitable number of over-age vessels in a condition fit, not for offensive purposes, but for those of coast defence, in order to mitigate the sense of insecurity which would be entertained by those countries to which an inferior naval strength was allotted. Such a solution might become necessary for the sake of certain countries and the success of the Conference.

This question could be discussed later, and the Japanese delegation thought that it was not opportune for the Naval Commission to take a decision at present on the subject. Consequently, it regretted that it was not able to accept the United Kingdom delegation's proposal.

The PRESIDENT felt bound to point out that the United Kingdom proposal was one of form rather than of substance. Article 22 of the draft Convention laid down that any vessels of war which had to be disposed of should be disposed of in accordance with the rules set out in Annex V. It would seem, therefore, that the observations of the Japanese delegation should apply rather to Annex V. The Japanese delegation might, when this Annex came to be examined at its first reading (or even later), raise the point whether a vessel "over age" could be used for purposes other than those stated in the present text of the Annex. The Commission would then consider the possibility of amending this text in order to meet the wishes of the Japanese delegation. The London Treaty contained special provisions regarding certain "special vessels" ; similar clauses might be embodied in the new Convention.

He therefore hoped that the Commission would be able to discuss this question later, without connecting it up with Annex IV, which did not refer to the manner in which replaced units were to be disposed of. In the light of this explanation, would the United Kingdom delegation agree to the adjournment of the discussion on its proposal until Annex V had been adopted ? The Japanese delegation would then be in a position to know exactly what it would be undertaking to do if it subscribed to the proposal.

Captain PHILLIPS (United Kingdom) saw no objection to the procedure proposed by the President, but thought that perhaps it might be as well to be quite clear as to the position before leaving the subject. The United Kingdom delegation had proposed a drafting amendment because it felt there was a gap in the Convention which should be filled. Hitherto the general rule had been considered to be that a vessel replaced should be disposed of. There were, of course, exceptions to this general rule provided for in both the Washington Treaty and the London Treaty, and no doubt similar exceptions would eventually be embodied in the present Treaty. Perhaps the Japanese delegation would, however, be good enough to say whether it agreed that the general rule was that when a vessel was replaced the old vessel should be disposed of.

M. SAWADA (Japan) recognised that a question of principle was involved, but explained that, until the Conference had reached agreement as to the respective naval strengths of the various Powers, the Japanese delegation would have some difficulty in accepting a provision prescribing that certain vessels should be disposed of.

The PRESIDENT thought there was some misunderstanding. If all the delegations agreed that a given country must not construct a vessel in replacement, in excess of the total tonnage allocated to it, until the vessel replaced had been disposed of as provided in Annex V, the question was apparently settled. The United Kingdom proposal simply mentioned this fact specifically. Exceptions could be embodied in the new Convention, as in the Washington and London Treaties, but the principle of limitation by means of a maximum tonnage figure led to the inevitable conclusion that no vessel could be replaced without being disposed of.

The President believed the Japanese delegation was also of that opinion, but found it difficult, until figures had been fixed, to decide which vessels might be retained for special purposes. The Japanese delegation would, he felt, be satisfied when he assured it that at the present stage of the discussion no delegation could give any undertaking with regard to the figures. The Naval Commission was at present preparing a plan, as the Preparatory Commission had done, in which definite figures would subsequently be inserted.

If the Commission was of that opinion, there was no need to continue the discussion, and the examination of this proposal would be adjourned for the moment, unless the United Kingdom delegation insisted that its proposal should be put to the vote.

The Commission would now pass to Annex V, and the Japanese delegation could ask for the inclusion in that Annex of any additional stipulations which it considered necessary.

The PRESIDENT noted that Annex IV *was adopted* in first reading.

36. ITEM 2 OF THE AGENDA : ARTICLE 18 OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION.

*Article 18.*

“ In regard to the replacement of the vessels of war limited by the present Convention, the High Contracting Parties will comply with the rules set out in Annex IV to this Chapter. ”

*Article 18 was adopted without discussion.*

37. ITEM 5 OF THE AGENDA : ARTICLE 22 OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION.

*Article 22.*

“ Any vessels of war which have to be disposed of as being surplus to the tonnage figures allowed by the present Convention shall be disposed of in accordance with the rules set out in Annex V to this Chapter. ”

The PRESIDENT asked the Commission to examine Annex V, on which this Article depended.

38. ITEM 5 OF THE AGENDA : ANNEX V TO CHAPTER B OF PART II OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION :

*“ Rules for Disposal of Vessels of War. ”*

“ The present Convention provides for the disposal of vessels of war in the following ways :

- “ (1) By scrapping (sinking or breaking up) ;
- “ (2) By converting the vessel to a hulk ;
- “ (3) By converting the vessel to target use exclusively ;
- “ (4) By retaining the vessel exclusively for experimental purposes ;
- “ (5) By retaining the vessel exclusively for training purposes,

“ Any vessel of war to be disposed of may either be scrapped or converted to a hulk at the option of the High Contracting Party concerned.

“ Vessels which have been retained for target, experimental or training purposes shall finally be scrapped or converted to hulks.

*“ Section I. — Vessels to be scrapped. ”*

“ (a) A vessel to be disposed of by scrapping, by reason of its replacement, must be rendered incapable of warlike service within six months of the date of the completion of its successor, or of the first of its successors if there are more than one. If, however, the completion of the new vessel or vessels be delayed, the work of rendering the old vessel incapable of warlike service shall, nevertheless, be completed within four and a half years from the date of laying the keel of the new vessel, or of the first of the new vessels ; but should the new vessel, or any of the new vessels, be a surface vessel not exceeding 3,000 tons (3,048 metric tons) standard displacement, this period is reduced to three and a half years.

“ (b) A vessel to be scrapped shall be considered incapable of warlike service when there shall have been removed and landed or else destroyed in the ship :

- “ (1) All guns and essential parts of guns, fire control tops and revolving parts of all barbets and turrets ;
- “ (2) All hydraulic or electric machinery for operating turrets ;
- “ (3) All fire-control instruments and range-finders ;
- “ (4) All ammunition, explosives, mines and mine rails ;
- “ (5) All torpedoes, war heads, torpedo-tubes and training-racks ;
- “ (6) All wireless telegraphy installations ;
- “ (7) All main propelling machinery, or alternatively the armoured conning-tower and all side armour-plate ;
- “ (8) All aircraft cranes, derricks, lifts and launching apparatus. All landing-on or flying-off platforms and decks, or alternatively all main propelling machinery ;
- “ (9) In addition, in the case of submarines, all main storage batteries, air compressor plants and ballast pumps.

“(c) Scrapping shall be finally effected in either of the following ways, within twelve months of the date of which the work of rendering the vessel incapable of warlike service is due for completion :

“(1) Permanent sinking of the vessel ;

“(2) Breaking the vessel up ; this shall always include the destruction or removal of all machinery, boilers and armour, and all deck, side and bottom plating.

“ *Section II. — Vessels to be converted to Hulks.*

“ A vessel to be disposed of by conversion to a hulk shall be considered finally disposed of when the conditions prescribed in Section I, paragraph (b), of this Annex, have been complied with, omitting sub-paragraphs (6), (7) and (8), and when the following have been effected :

“(1) Mutilation beyond repair of all propeller-shafts, thrust-blocks, turbine-gearing or main propelling-motors and turbines or cylinders of main engines ;

“(2) Removal of propeller-brackets ;

“(3) Removal and breaking up of all aircraft-lifts, and the removal of all aircraft cranes, derricks and launching apparatus.

“ The vessel must be put in the above condition within the same limits of time as provided in Section I for rendering a vessel incapable of warlike service.

“ *Section III. — Vessels to be converted to Target Use.*

“(a) A vessel to be disposed of by conversion to target use exclusively shall be considered incapable of warlike service when there have been removed and landed, or rendered unserviceable on board, the following :

“(1) All guns ;

“(2) All fire-control tops and instruments and main fire-control communication wiring ;

“(3) All machinery for operating gun mountings or turrets ;

“(4) All ammunition, explosives, mines, torpedoes and torpedo-tubes ;

“(5) All aviation facilities and accessories.

“ The vessel must be put into the above conditions within the same limits of time as provided in Section I for rendering a vessel incapable of warlike service.

“(b) Each High Contracting Party is permitted to retain, for target use exclusively, at any one time :

“(1) Not more than three vessels (cruisers or destroyers), but of these three vessels only one may exceed 3,000 tons (3,048 metric tons) standard displacement ;

“(2) One submarine.

“(c) On retaining a vessel for target use, the High Contracting Party concerned undertakes not to re-condition it for warlike service.

“ *Section IV. — Vessels retained for Experimental Purposes.*

“(a) A vessel to be disposed of by conversion to experimental purposes exclusively shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of Section III (a) of this Annex.

“(b) Without prejudice to the general rules, and provided that due notice be given to the other High Contracting Parties, reasonable variation from the condition prescribed in Section III (a) of this Annex, in so far as may be necessary for the purposes of a special experiment, may be permitted as a temporary measure.

“ Any High Contracting Party taking advantage of this provision is required to furnish full details of any such variations and the period for which they will be required.

“(c) Each High Contracting Party is permitted to retain for experimental purposes exclusively at any one time :

“(1) Not more than two vessels (cruisers or destroyers), but of these two vessels only one may exceed 3,000 tons (3,048 metric tons) standard displacement ;

“(2) One submarine.

“(d) On retaining a vessel for experimental purposes, the High Contracting Party concerned undertakes not to re-condition it for warlike service.

“Section V. — Vessels retained for Training Purposes.

“ (a) The following vessels may be retained, for training purposes exclusively, by the High Contracting Parties concerned :

.....

“ (b) Vessels retained for training purposes under the provisions of paragraph (a) shall, within six months of the date on which they are required to be disposed of, be dealt with as follows :

“ 1. *Capital Ships.* — The following is to be carried out :

“ (1) Removal of main-armament guns, revolving parts of all barbetstes and turrets ; machinery for operating turrets ; but three turrets with their armament may be retained in each ship ;

“ (2) Removal of all ammunition and explosives in excess of the quantity required for target-practice training for the guns remaining on board ;

“ (3) Removal of conning-tower and the side-armour belt between the foremost and aftermost barbetsstes ;

“ (4) Removal or mutilation of all torpedo-tubes ;

“ (5) Removal or mutilation on board of all boilers in excess of the number required for a maximum speed of eighteen knots.

“ 2. *Other Surface Vessels.* — The following is to be carried out :

“ (1) Removal of one-half of the guns, but four guns of main calibre may be retained on each vessel ;

“ (2) Removal of all torpedo-tubes ;

“ (3) Removal of all aviation facilities and accessories ;

“ (4) Removal of one-half of the boilers.

“ (c) The High Contracting Party concerned undertakes that vessels retained in accordance with the provision of this Section shall not be used for any combatant purpose.”

The PRESIDENT saw no necessity for a general discussion on Annex V. Although it reproduced almost exactly certain provisions of the Treaty of London, by which the five principal naval Powers were bound, it could, of course, be improved if necessary. The various draft amendments would be read, and the points arising out of them would be considered.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) said that the German delegation had submitted the following amendment to Annex V :

“ Insert after the word ‘ landed ’ the following note : ‘ War material landed may be kept as reserve material only within the limits authorised by Article . . . Stocks exceeding those limits shall be destroyed ’, in Section I. Vessels to be scrapped, paragraph (b) ; and Section III—Vessels to be converted to target use, paragraph (a).”

His delegation did not for the moment press this draft amendment, since it felt that the work was not yet sufficiently advanced to permit of decisions on the matter. It would return to its proposal later.

He desired to ask one general question. As the General Commission had not yet reached certain decisions in regard to principles and had not adopted certain essential definitions, should not the Naval Commission’s present examination of the draft Convention be regarded as provisional ? Or, rather, if the Commission felt that this was a first reading, would it not be better, in view of the importance of the questions involved, to decide that there should be three readings instead of two, in order that the delegations might still have two separate opportunities to propose amendments ?

The PRESIDENT, in reply to the German delegate’s general question, said the Commission was at present examining the draft Convention in first reading. He pointed out, however, that all the results of the Commission’s work would have to be embodied in the Convention which was to be the final outcome of all the Conference’s proceedings. As it was not yet known how the Conference’s work would develop, it was difficult to foresee how many readings would be required. The Conference had not only to pass resolutions but to prepare a text for signature by the delegations. The latter, therefore, could at any time propose any amendments they thought necessary.



The President did not desire to bind himself by stating formally that the Naval Commission would proceed to a given number of readings, but he assured the Commission that the Bureau would do nothing to prevent the delegations, who represented Governments, from changing the text they would be required to sign, up to the last moment. Nevertheless, the Commission should endeavour to reach as definite a decision as possible on each point, in order to provide a sound basis that would not require too much modification.

The President hoped that, as his statement fully reserved the position of the delegations, it would give satisfaction to the German delegation.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) said that the President's reply satisfied the German delegation. It merely desired to point out that the Naval Commission's work was considerably in advance of that of the other technical commissions, at least in so far as quantitative disarmament was concerned. While agreeing that the Commission must endeavour, as the President had said, to reach as definite decisions as possible on each point, the German delegation desired the delegations to have an opportunity, without returning to the details of the various points, to introduce additional amendments, if necessary, during a third reading.

#### *Preamble to Annex V.*

*The Preamble to Annex V was adopted without discussion.*

#### *Section I. — Vessels to be scrapped.*

The PRESIDENT noted that an amendment had been proposed by the United Kingdom delegation to the following effect :

“(a) A vessel to be disposed of by scrapping in accordance with Article 22 of this Convention must be rendered incapable of warlike service in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section within twelve months from the coming into force of the present Convention, and the scrapping shall be finally effected within twenty-four months from such coming into force.”

If this amendment were accepted, it would become paragraph (a) of Section I, the present paragraph (a) becoming paragraph (b).

Captain PHILLIPS (United Kingdom) said that the amendment had been put forward for purely drafting reasons. Two classes of vessels had to be disposed of : those which would be scrapped when the Convention came into force, and those which would be scrapped later on replacement during the period of the Convention's existence. Separate provision had been made for these two categories in the Washington and London Treaties and in the draft Convention itself (Articles 18 and 22), but no separate provision has been made in Section I of Annex V.

The United Kingdom amendment proposed that a rather longer period should be allowed for the disposal of vessels to be scrapped when the Convention came into force, because the number of these vessels would probably be considerable, so that a longer time-limit would be necessary. No extra time had been allowed for the scrapping of this class of vessel under the Washington Treaty, and difficulty had therefore been experienced in getting the vessels broken up in time. That point had been taken into consideration in the London Treaty, in which provision had been made for extra time for the scrapping of vessels which had to be disposed of after the Treaty had come into force.

The PRESIDENT asked whether—it being understood that the Japanese proposal concerning the present paragraph (a) was reserved—the Commission accepted the United Kingdom amendment.

Senator SWANSON (United States of America) said that he was entirely in agreement with the intention of the United Kingdom proposal. As at present drafted, however, that proposal, referring as it did to Article 22 of the Convention, seemed to presuppose that the said Article applied only to such ships as would be surplus directly the Convention came into force. Was that indeed the meaning of Article 22 ? Did that article not apply to vessels in existence when the Convention came into force as well as to vessels which would subsequently become surplus tonnage as replacement occurred ? If it did apply to both cases, he suggested that this ought to be clearly stated.

The PRESIDENT said that personally he felt that Article 22 was intended to refer to both cases. Perhaps it might be preferable slightly to redraft the amendment as follows, and say :

“(a) A vessel to be disposed of owing to the fact that it has become surplus tonnage by reason of the coming into force of the Convention, must be rendered, etc.”

*The amendment was adopted with this modification.*

The PRESIDENT observed that the amendment to Section I (b) (formerly I (a)) proposed by the Japanese delegation was similar to the amendment it had suggested in connection with paragraph 3 of Annex IV. The proposal was to the following effect :

“ Add at the end of Section I, paragraph (b) (formerly (a)) :

“ ‘ But should the new vessel be a surface vessel exceeding 20,000 tons (20,320 metric tons) the above period is extended to five and a half years ’ .”

M. SAWADA (Japan) explained that the proposal was a logical corollary of the proposal regarding paragraph 3 of Annex IV, the decision regarding which had been adjourned owing to the difficulty experienced by certain delegations in accepting the Japanese point of view. In spite, however, of the arguments brought forward against the proposal, the Japanese delegation was still convinced that, owing to the long time required for the construction of vessels of over 20,000 tons, the period for laying down the keels of replacement tonnage should be four years, and that, consequently, five and a half years from the date of laying down the keel of the new vessel of over 20,000 tons should be allowed for the work of rendering the old vessel incapable of warlike service.

Senator SWANSON (United States of America) said that he had already stated his objections to the Japanese amendment in connection with paragraph 3 of Annex IV. He maintained those objections in connection with the present proposal. The American delegation was convinced that the period of four and a half years laid down in the present text was sufficient.

The PRESIDENT asked whether—provided the Japanese delegation saw no objection—the Commission would be prepared to deal with this amendment in the same way as it had dealt with the amendment of paragraph 3.

M. SAWADA (Japan) said that the Japanese delegation would raise no objection to that procedure.

*Agreed.*

*Paragraph (c) (formerly Paragraph (b)).*

The PRESIDENT assumed that, as the German proposal regarding this paragraph had been withdrawn for the moment, and as no objection had been raised, the Commission was prepared to adopt it.

*Agreed.*

*Paragraph (d) (formerly Paragraph (c)).*

*This paragraph was adopted without discussion.*

#### *Section II. — Vessels to be converted into Hulks.*

The PRESIDENT pointed out that this section reproduced the wording of the London Treaty. It had been most carefully studied by the Preparatory Commission, which had included naval experts of nearly all the naval Powers.

*The section was adopted without discussion.*

#### *Section III. — Vessels to be converted to Target Use.*

The PRESIDENT reminded the Commission that the German amendment to this section was provisionally withdrawn.

*The section was adopted without discussion.*

#### *Section IV. — Vessels retained for Experimental Purposes.*

*This section was adopted without discussion.*

#### *Section V. — Vessels retained for Training Purposes.*

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Commission might first consider only paragraph (a) and the first part of (b) of this section, because there were certain amendments to Nos. 1 and 2 of paragraph (b) and to paragraph (c).

*Paragraph (a) was adopted without discussion.*

The PRESIDENT said that the French delegation had proposed an amendment to (3) of paragraph (b) 1 as follows :

“ Delete the words : ‘ and the side armour belt between the foremost and aftermost barbettes ’.”

Rear-Admiral LABORDE (France) explained that the object of this proposal was economy. It would be a costly matter to remove this side armour belt in six months. After all, there was the moral guarantee provided in paragraph (c) as well as all the preceding material provisions.

Captain MARONI (Italy) and Vice-Admiral SURIE (Netherlands) supported the French proposal.

Rear-Admiral HEPBURN (United States of America) said he felt bound to point out that the armour belt was a very important part of the characteristics of capital ships. Consequently, the American delegation would have to reserve its judgment, since it would require time for reflection and might even have to refer the matter to the United States Government.

Captain PHILLIPS (United Kingdom) made a similar statement.

The PRESIDENT asked whether the French delegation was prepared to allow a little more time to the delegations for the consideration of its proposal. He hoped that the delegations would inform him as soon as they were ready to discuss this point—namely, the omission of the words, “ the side armour belt between the foremost and aftermost barbettes ”.

The French delegation had proposed a further amendment with regard to (5) of paragraph (b) 1—namely, to add the words, “ If the vessel be motor-driven, removal or mutilation on board of all motors in excess of the number required for a maximum speed of 18 knots ”.

Rear-Admiral LABORDE (France) explained that the aim of this amendment was to extend the scope of the clause to all kinds of vessels, motor-driven as well as steam-propelled.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) agreed that, at first sight, the French proposal seemed to be a logical one. On closer examination, however, it would be found difficult to express an opinion. It was a comparatively easy matter to take out boilers, but the removal of motors was a different and very difficult technical problem. He therefore agreed that the delegations needed time for further reflection.

The PRESIDENT asked whether the French delegation would have any objection if this second proposal were treated in the same way as the first.

*Agreed.*

The PRESIDENT suggested that, subject to the reservation that the French proposal would be considered later, the Commission might note that paragraph (b) 1 had not encountered any objections at the first reading.

The French delegation had further proposed in connection with paragraph (b) 2 (4) the addition of a clause similar to the previous clause concerning motor-driven vessels.

Rear-Admiral LABORDE (France) noted that (4) of No. 2, paragraph (b), contained a far more general stipulation than the previous ones. The removal of half of the boilers might amount to reducing the propelling power by one-half, but need not amount to reducing the speed to an equal extent. In point of fact, a speed of about 36 knots would be reduced to something between 27 and 29 knots. In the case of motor-driven vessels, the problem might be more difficult. The object of the French proposal was to make the provisions in both cases apply equally to motor-driven and steam-propelled vessels.

Captain FERRAZ E CASTRO (Brazil) pointed out with regard to (1) of (b) 2 that, if “ half of the guns ” were to be removed, but “ four guns of main calibre might be retained on each vessel ”, this might mean, in the case of old vessels kept in service for training purposes (which generally had two turrets with two guns each), that, notwithstanding the first half of the clause, all the four guns might be kept, in view of the second part of the clause. That was surely an illogicality which should be met by a drafting change.

Vice-Admiral SURIE (Netherlands) observed that, the French proposal was intended to harmonise (4) of No. 2 with (5) of No. 1, and that consequently, if the Commission subsequently accepted the French proposal, it might be necessary to insert some indication as to the maximum speed allowable for “ other surface vessels ”.

Rear-Admiral LABORDE (France) explained that the French proposal was only intended to make (5) of No. 1 and (4) of No. 2 apply equally to motor-driven vessels. He agreed, however, that some provision might have to be made in (4) of No. 2 for defining a maximum speed.

Rear-Admiral HEPBURN (United States of America) pointed out that "capital ships" were a well-defined category in respect of which a maximum speed might be laid down. "Other surface vessels", however, was meant to include as many other types of vessels as possible. It would hardly be feasible to lay down a maximum speed for so many different types.

Rear-Admiral LABORDE (France) agreed with Rear-Admiral Hepburn on this point. It would nevertheless be necessary to make some provision for a diminution of speed in (4) of No. 2. It might be possible, for instance, to say that as many motors should be removed as would be necessary to reduce the speed by a certain percentage.

Captain PHILLIPS (United Kingdom) agreed that some provision ought to be made for motor-driven vessels. Would not "power" be a better criterion than "speed"? For instance, provision might be made for reducing by one-half the motor power of the vessel concerned. The object of the clause was to make sure that the vessel became useless for its original purpose. In the case of steam-driven vessels, the removal of one-half of the boilers would amount to removing one-half of the power. A similar provision would not be suitable for the case of motor-driven vessels.

Captain ROSSI SABATINI (Yugoslavia) said he preferred a speed-limit, if possible. To base the decision on power alone might prove very awkward—for instance, some small vessels, such as sloops, possessed only two boilers. If one of these boilers were removed, the ship would not be able to put to sea at all.

Rear-Admiral LABORDE (France) thought that the suggestion of the United Kingdom delegate—which he supposed referred only to (4) of No. 2—was a very happy one. The proposal then would be to reduce the boiler or motor power by one-half.

The PRESIDENT assumed that all delegations would desire to have time to consult their technical experts on this point. The final decision regarding the French proposal would therefore be reserved.

*Agreed.*

The PRESIDENT added that there was still a proposal by the Netherlands delegation to add a new paragraph between paragraphs (b) and (c) as follows :

"Vessels which have been converted into vessels for training purposes before the entry into force of this Convention may be maintained in the condition into which they have been converted."

The reasons given for this amendment were as follows :

"Vessels for training purposes exist in all navies. The majority of these vessels are obsolete warships, which are retained solely for instructional purposes. The condition of these vessels will not, however, correspond exactly to the rules laid down in Section V (see paragraphs 1 and 2), and it seems too much to compel the High Contracting Parties to make this condition conform to these rules ; besides unnecessary expenditure it would involve, this change would also prevent, for a comparatively long time, the utilisation of these vessels for instructional purposes.

"Further, the last paragraph of this Section constitutes a guarantee that these vessels will not be used for any combatant purpose."

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ (Spain) wondered whether the Annex was the right place in which to insert this text. Article 23 of the draft Convention was very similar to the Netherlands proposal. He thought, therefore, that these clauses should be either both in the main body of the Convention or both in the Annex.

Captain PHILLIPS (United Kingdom) agreed with the main idea of the Netherlands proposal. He wished, however, to draw attention to two points. First, the Netherlands text as it stood, "before the entry into force of this Convention", was rather vague. Would it not be better to take a more definite date—as, for instance, that of the opening of the Disarmament Conference, February 2nd, 1932? Secondly, there were, as he thought the Spanish delegate intended to imply, two kinds of vessels used for training purposes—stationary vessels, as referred to in Article 23, and seagoing vessels, as referred to in the Annex. The Netherlands proposal seemed to refer to the seagoing class. He suggested that the Commission would find it difficult to reach a decision until it had before it a list of the seagoing vessels which would be actually affected by the proposal.

Vice-Admiral SURIE (Netherlands) agreed that Article 23 was meant to refer to stationary vessels and that the present proposal referred to seagoing vessels. The Netherlands delegation was prepared to accept a modification of its draft if the other delegations agreed on the principle.

Senator SWANSON (United States of America) observed that a proposal to insert a new article in the draft Convention would be out of order at the present time. If the proposal were inserted in the Annex, its terms as they stood were too broad unless some specific date were inserted. This addition might, however, open the way for the conversion to training-ships of all ships. While not suspicious of the intentions of any country, he thought, as such great care had been taken in other places to make provision for all eventualities, equal care should be exercised in this case. Might it not be possible to deal with the matter under Annex II, "List of Special Vessels"? "Special vessels" might include ships of very different types. Annex II afforded a very satisfactory opportunity for taking such vessels into account.

M. SAWADA (Japan) supported the suggestion of the United States delegation.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ (Spain) thought it illogical that stationary training-ships should be dealt with in an article and mobile training-ships in an annex. Surely both should be treated in the same way. Would it not be preferable to add after paragraph (b) of Section V the words:

"This provision shall not apply to ships already used for training purposes on or before (some particular date, such as June 1st, 1932)"?

Captain PHILLIPS (United Kingdom) agreed with the United States delegation that the clause should be made clearer. He was, however, not convinced that the best place for dealing with this matter was under Annex II: "List of Special Vessels". These special vessels, he thought, were meant to be various types of combatant vessels which were difficult to classify under the present categories. Those vessels, moreover, were destined in time to die out, and they would not be replaced. Seagoing vessels retained for training purposes would, however, be replaced in due course by other "replaced" vessels. They were, therefore, in a category apart from the "special vessels", and separate provision ought to be made for them.

In the London Treaty, all these vessels had been named, and he supposed they would be named in the Convention. He therefore thought it would be best to add a separate paragraph, as the Netherlands delegation had suggested, but in the form of a definite list of vessels, for instance: "The following vessels . . . may be retained".

The PRESIDENT noted that no definite objections had been raised to the Netherlands delegation's proposal. The only question was where that proposal could best be inserted. He suggested that the matter might be discussed again when the Commission came to examine the French proposals and the point raised by the Brazilian delegate.

Captain PHILLIPS (United Kingdom) suggested that, if the delegations should agree on inserting a list, much time might be saved if the various countries would send in the names of the vessels concerned to the Bureau as soon as possible.

The PRESIDENT recommended this proposal.

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## EIGHTEENTH MEETING

*Held on Thursday, June 2nd, 1932, at 10 a.m.*

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President : M. COLBAN.

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### 39. ITEM 7 OF THE AGENDA : ANNEX I TO CHAPTER B OF PART II OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION : EXEMPT VESSELS.

*"Exempt Vessels.*

"Subject to any special agreements which may submit them to limitation, the following vessels are exempt from limitation :

"(a) Naval surface combatant vessels of 600 tons (610 metric tons) standard displacement and under ;

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" (b) Naval surface combatant vessels exceeding 600 tons (610 metric tons), but not exceeding 2,000 tons (2,032 metric tons) standard displacement, provided they have none of the following characteristics :

- " (1) Mount a gun above 6.1-inch (155 millimetres) calibre ;
- " (2) Mount more than four guns above 3-inch (76 millimetres) calibre ;
- " (3) Are designed or fitted to launch torpedoes ;
- " (4) Are designed for a speed greater than twenty knots.

" (c) Naval surface vessels not specifically built as fighting ships which are employed on fleet duties or as troop transports or in some other way than as fighting ships, provided they have none of the following characteristics :

- " (1) Mount a gun above 6.1-inch (155 millimetres) calibre ;
- " (2) Mount more than four guns above 3-inch (76 millimetres) calibre ;
- " (3) Are designed or fitted to launch torpedoes ;
- " (4) Are designed for a speed greater than twenty knots ;
- " (5) Are protected by armour plate ;
- " (6) Are designed or fitted to launch mines ;
- " (7) Are fitted to receive aircraft on board from the air ;
- " (8) Mount more than one aircraft-launching apparatus on the centre line : or two, one on each broadside ;
- " (9) If fitted with any means of launching aircraft into the air, are designed or adopted to operate at sea more than three aircraft. "

The PRESIDENT said that the Commission had before it two amendments to this Annex. Firstly, a proposal by the Italian delegation modifying the text of the draft Annex as follows :

In (a) and (b), for " 600 tons (610 metric tons) " read " 100 tons (102 metric tons) " ;  
In (b) (4) and (c) (4), for " twenty knots " read " eighteen knots " .

Secondly, a proposal by the German delegation, modifying the text of the draft Annex as follows :

The introductory sentence to read as follows : " Subject to such stricter conditions as the Contracting Parties were ready to accept in a special Convention, the following vessels are not subject to limitation : "

In (b) (1) and (c) (1) for " 6.1-inch (155 millimetres) " read " 4.1-inch (105 millimetres) "

A footnote to (b) and (c) stipulated that the armament was to be provided from the supplies in reserve for the fleet.

The President suggested that the Commission should take first the more far reaching of the two amendments—*i.e.*, the Italian proposal.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) accepted the procedure proposed by the President, although he would have thought the German amendment should perhaps be taken first, since it put forward, among other suggestions, an amendment to the introductory sentence of Annex I.

The PRESIDENT thanked the German delegation for not insisting on having its amendment discussed first. He reminded the Commission that it had decided that it would not discuss the reservation in the first line of Annex I. That was expressly mentioned in the Bureau's report.<sup>1</sup> No delegation would, accordingly, be asked to commit itself for the time being with regard to the first sentence.

Captain MARONI (Italy) observed that at the London Naval Conference the Italian delegation had made the following declaration, which it had renewed later in the Preparatory Commission :

" In order to facilitate the Committee's work, the Italian delegation will accept the figure of 600 tons standard displacement. It desires, however, its opinion to be placed on record—*viz.*, that it would be desirable to reduce this figure to a maximum of 100 tons, because destroyers even with a standard displacement of under 600 tons might be highly effective vessels of offence when used in the narrow seas."

<sup>1</sup> Document Conf.D./C.N.2. ●

When stating in London that it reserved its right to submit the matter to the Disarmament Conference, the Italian delegation had said further that it considered it desirable to reduce from 20 to 18 knots the maximum speed of exempt vessels referred to in paragraphs (b) and (c.) The following explanations might be given in support of this contention.

With regard to the reduction of tonnage from 600 to 100 tons, it should be remarked that, if the Conference desired to have a limitation and reduction Convention which would bring about a fair equilibrium between the world fleets over a certain number of years, it must not fail to take steps to prevent the possibility of that equilibrium being unexpectedly threatened.

It need merely be pointed out that at present it was possible to build 600-ton destroyers equipped with turbine engines, which were stronger and more seaworthy than the pre-war destroyers, with a sustained cruising speed of over 30 knots and a radius of action of 1,500 miles at 15 knots, and with an armament of a calibre that might be as much as 120 millimetres (4.7 inches) and numerous torpedo tubes. With the use of fast oil engines and an extensive utilisation of light alloys it might be anticipated that yet more striking results could soon be obtained: for instance, for a tonnage of 600 tons, a speed of 50 knots, a radius of action of 2,500 miles and an armament comprising two 100 millimetres (3.9 inches) guns and four torpedo tubes.

If a Power whose naval forces were limited by the Convention began to construct a large number of light units possessing the characteristics described, the equilibrium achieved would probably be seriously disturbed. There was no need to dwell on the possible consequences of an eventuality of that kind. The Italian delegation wished merely to emphasise that such an eventuality might even cause certain Powers to ask for the application of the safeguarding clauses.

As to 2,000-ton vessels mounting four 150-millimetres (5.9 inches) guns and capable of a speed of 20 knots, the Italian delegation considered that they might offer a grave menace to merchant vessels and that, to conform to the spirit of the limitation contemplated, the maximum speed of these vessels should be fixed at a figure below that of the speed of the majority of modern merchant vessels—*i.e.*, less than 18 knots.

Finally, the Italian delegation pointed out that Annex I as it stood contemplated, in conformity with what the Italian delegation itself had proposed, the possibility of special agreements. That made the text more elastic and justified the hope that agreement could be reached on this important matter.

Rear-Admiral LABORDE (France) said that in the French delegation's opinion the figures in the draft Convention had been judiciously selected. The French delegation necessarily looked at the matter from the standpoint of its own country—*i.e.*, a country possessing numerous colonies remote from the mother-country and likewise from one another, and a long coast-line. A country in that position must be able, without being compelled to withdraw important units from the fleet in home waters, to have small vessels available for duty in the colonies. Such duties were not only local, but intercolonial as well, and vessels of that class must be able to accompany convoys between one colony and another or between a colony and the mother-country, and they must be capable of protecting the coasts. This latter duty could, in the last resort, be carried out by armed trawlers, as had been done during the world war, or by even slower vessels; but in modern warfare, operations were conducted so rapidly that it was thought essential that all vessels should have a certain speed.

The Italian delegate had mentioned a speed of 50 knots. There was no need, the French delegate thought, to contemplate so high a speed for some time to come, but even in the case of vessels capable of 30 knots it must be remembered that the sea cruising speed of destroyers was appreciably lower than their maximum and that this class of ship had neither the solidity of hull, nor the sea-going qualities, nor the conditions of comfort possessed by vessels with a higher tonnage.

There was no very great difference between 20 knots and the 18 knots proposed by the Italian delegation. Nevertheless, the French delegation considered that the figure of 20 knots suggested in the draft Convention should be maintained, for the precise reason that many modern merchant vessels attained a higher speed.

In short, the French delegation proposed that the figure in the draft Convention should be adhered to.

Captain BIÖRKLUND (Sweden) said that the Swedish delegation had long maintained that the Convention should be as comprehensive as possible. If certain vessels were exempt from the scope of the Convention, there would be grave danger that construction would be concentrated on such vessels. For these reasons, the Swedish delegation supported the Italian proposal in its main lines. It would have preferred to go even further and suggest a maximum tonnage of 600 tons for exempt vessels referred to in paragraph (b). It recognised, however, that that proposal would have little chance of acceptance by the majority of the delegations.

The Swedish delegation fully realised that the question presented a different aspect for the great Powers and it appreciated their view that vessels of under 600 tons were of secondary importance. That, however, was not the case in the narrow seas.

To the French delegate, who had explained the reasons which made such vessels necessary to countries with colonial possessions, he would, however, point out that there was no question of prohibiting their construction, but merely of including them in the calculation of the global tonnage allocated to each country. That was indispensable for the following reasons :

If no provision were made for the limitation of the vessels in question, they could be built in large numbers and would offer a serious menace to countries situated on narrow seas.

The question of river war vessels had not yet been settled and it would, in Captain Biörklund's opinion, be undesirable for this category to escape the effects of the Convention. It would probably be better to choose a lower limit for exempted vessels, so that the largest river vessels would come under the Convention.

A new fact had occurred since the draft Convention was drawn up. The discussions had shown that there were many delegations who thought that the laying of mines on the high seas should be prohibited. The vessels under discussion at the moment were particularly suitable for mine-laying, especially in the narrow seas.

General TANCZOS (Hungary) pointed out that the Italian proposal to fix at 100 tons the limit below which all surface vessels would be exempt from limitation implied that these vessels would be regarded as "non-combatant" from the standpoint of limitation. The Hungarian delegation had repeatedly explained and defended the following argument in the Naval Commission : river war vessels were a category apart in the sphere of naval armaments. The delegation considered that it was not fair to enforce the same limits for river war vessels as for other surface vessels. Consequently, it had intended to propose a lower limit than that proposed by the Italian delegation for the river war vessels to be exempted. In the spirit of compromise, however, by which all the Commission's discussions should be guided, the Hungarian delegation was prepared to accept the Italian proposal in the hope that by so doing it would facilitate a unanimous vote.

It would be glad, however, if a slight change could be made in the Italian proposal by inserting in paragraph (b) a new point 5 identical to point 5 in paragraph (c) and reading : "are protected by armoured plate". General Tanczos hoped that the Italian delegation would have no objection to this amendment.

The PRESIDENT said that the Hungarian delegation's amendment would be discussed later when the Commission examined the point to which it related.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) supported the Italian proposal. The German delegation had proposed that the limit of 600 tons should be maintained, but it seconded the Italian proposal on the general grounds which it had already stated repeatedly—namely, that it was prepared to accept any measure devised to secure a more drastic limitation or reduction of armaments, provided that measure was accepted by all delegations.

The German delegation shared the Swedish delegate's view. To the French delegate, who had expressed the opposite opinion, M. von Rheinbaben desired to point out that during the proceedings in the Preparatory Commission it had been specified that the figures mentioned in the draft Convention were given purely as illustrations. Hence, the Conference could change those figures at its discretion even in the case of figures adopted in the Washington and London Treaties. Moreover, it was by exercising that right that the Naval Commission had expressed the view that the age-limit for capital ships should be raised from twenty to twenty-six years. The French delegate had advanced some important considerations regarding the fact that some countries had a special need of vessels between 100 and 600 tons. The Convention should make allowance for that need, but it could do so by laying down specific rules with regard to such vessels instead of exempting them entirely from limitation.

Rear-Admiral VON SCHOULTZ (Finland) stated that his delegation, broadly speaking, supported the Italian proposal, considering the arguments raised by the Italian, Swedish and German delegations very convincing. It was fully alive to the position of the great naval Powers with overseas possessions who considered that they required vessels of between 100 and 600 tons. Nevertheless there was, as the Swedish delegate had emphasised, no question of prohibiting these vessels ; it was simply a matter of taking them into account in calculating the aggregate tonnage allocated to each country.

A further point required consideration. Though many countries considered the vessels in question necessary for coast defence purposes, it should be remembered that European naval history had proved that countless invasions were supported by the action of small war vessels, in the Mediterranean as well as in the Channel or North Sea. During the world war, too, small-tonnage vessels had been used for offensive operations just as often as more powerful units.



It was therefore essential to take these vessels into account when allocating its aggregate tonnage to each country. Failing this, the limitation established by the Conference would be fictitious. The Finnish delegation therefore not only supported the Italian proposal, but was ready to support any other proposal tending to reduce the tonnage and armament of exempt vessels.

Captain PHILLIPS (United Kingdom) said that his delegation shared the French view. He reminded the Commission that, when in 1927 the question of extending certain rules for limitation to all war vessels had arisen, the experts had carefully examined the means of obtaining effective limitation without involving unnecessary complications. It was only after ripe reflection that the present limits had been adopted, exempting as they did a whole host of small vessels hard to classify, of low fighting value, and the existence of which did not affect the equilibrium established between the naval forces of the different Powers.

Some delegations had painted a terrible picture of the possible results of the construction of a large number of vessels of between 100 and 600 tons. His delegation considered that this danger had been exaggerated. A glance at the existing vessels in this category would show that they were comparatively inoffensive, their main object being the policing of the seas in time of peace.

The Finnish delegation had alluded to certain events in naval history. It must be remembered, however, that vessels which were to-day considered suitable for exemption from limitation in view of their low fighting value might have been used decisively not so very long ago. Now, however, they no longer constituted an element of great importance in a country's naval strength.

He would remind the Commission that during certain earlier meetings capital ships were the vessels accused of possessing particularly offensive characteristics, many delegations considering that their offensiveness increased with any increase in their tonnage. To-day small vessels under 600 tons were being indicted on the same count.

The real difficulty was, of course, that of applying exemption regulations to the naval strength of countries with vastly different requirements; he would point out, however, as mentioned by the Italian delegate, that the clause given at the head of Annex I was intended to remedy this very difficulty. If certain countries wished to be bound by stricter regulations, they could be so within the framework of the Convention. This idea was not new, since the Convention also provided for the possibility of transfers in the case of fleets the total tonnage of which was less than a given limit. It was along these lines that the Commission must seek the solution of the problem before it.

Rear-Admiral TEH YUEN LU (China) stated that the Chinese delegation felt that the vessels under discussion should be subject to the strictest possible rules for limitation, in the interests of countries possessing but slight naval strength. The Chinese delegation was therefore in general agreement with the Italian, Swedish, Hungarian and Finnish delegations.

M. SMIRNOFF (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) recalled that the Soviet delegation had already proposed that the tonnage limit of vessels exempted under (a) should be fixed at 100 tons. A 600-ton limit was unacceptable, since, besides the reasons already given, the number of such vessels might constitute a decisive factor. Moreover, as had already been pointed out, there was no question of prohibiting these vessels, but simply of reckoning them in the aggregate tonnage to be allocated to each country. His delegation therefore supported the Italian proposal. It would not be difficult to find a solution of the technical difficulties to which the United Kingdom delegate had alluded.

M. ANDERSEN (Denmark) supported the broad outlines of the Italian proposal, and shared the view expressed by the Italian and Swedish delegations. He was well aware of the special situation of Powers with overseas possessions, but to exempt all vessels under 600 tons involved the risk of encouraging fresh armaments; the Commission should guard against this, and make every effort to render the Convention as complete as possible. The Danish delegation hoped that agreement upon this point would be achieved either in the Naval or in the General Commission.

His delegation further considered that, in the interests of logic, the Italian proposal should be slightly amended by the insertion in paragraph (b) of a supplementary item identical with that given under paragraph (c) 6, in the following terms: "are designed or fitted to launch mines".

The PRESIDENT stated that this amendment would be discussed when the Commission came to consider the passage in question.

Captain SOLSKI (Poland) rose not to oppose the Italian proposal but to defend the text of the draft Convention. Annex I opened with the following words: "Subject to any special agreements which may submit them to limitation, the following vessels are exempt from limitation". Thus allowance was made for the possibility of special agreements, and the text was sufficiently general to figure in a general convention. In going into greater detail the Commission might become lost in a maze of questions and involved in rather serious complications.

The Polish delegation was well aware of the urgent need for achieving a result acceptable to all delegations. The provisions of Annex I had been taken from the London Naval Treaty. They had been adopted after ripe reflection and accepted by the principal naval Powers. They were, further, in harmony with Article 19 of the draft Convention, which dealt with the armament of merchant ships.

The Polish delegation had been struck by the soundness of the arguments raised by the United Kingdom delegate and supported the French and United Kingdom delegations in their views. It therefore considered it preferable to retain the actual text of Annex I and to pass as soon as possible to the next item on the agenda.

The PRESIDENT again reminded the Commission that it had decided not to discuss for the moment the opening sentence of Annex I. There was, of course, nothing to prevent a group of States from concluding special agreements in order to bind themselves further.

Rear-Admiral VON SCHOULTZ (Finland) pointed out to the United Kingdom delegate that the statements made by the Finnish delegation on the subject of capital ships were logically linked with those referring to vessels of from 100 to 600 tons. The Finnish delegation considered that the offensive character of capital ships increased with any increase in their tonnage, but maintained that a very large number of small-tonnage vessels could in aggregate constitute a threat to a country's national defence. It was therefore essential that such vessels should not be exempt from all limitation.

He understood only too well that a country whose possessions had a long sea-board required the vessels under discussion. It was merely a question of limiting their number, and the Commission should not be deterred by the purely technical difficulties which might arise.

Rear-Admiral HEPBURN (United States of America) pointed out that, though the question was not as important as that of capital ships, the Italian and German proposals were concerned with a highly technical problem requiring attentive study. The United States delegation therefore reserved its final opinion, though it considered that the Commission might usefully discuss the subject.

As the United Kingdom delegate had pointed out, it had been intended to exempt a whole category of vessels from the Convention in order to exempt a large number of very small war vessels such as despatch-boats, mine-sweepers, etc., which were hard to classify. It had been felt that the non-limitation of such vessels would not bring about their construction in such numbers as to affect the equilibrium between the naval forces of the various countries. Experience had proved that this was the case, since construction of these vessels had not taken place on any unduly large scale. It was, for reasons of convenience, preferable not to subject these vessels to rules for limitation.

He would point out that the only change proposed by the Italian delegation as regards vessels exempt under (b) was the reduction from 20 to 18 knots in the speed of these vessels. Thus it would appear that this delegation, together with all those who supported its proposal, considered that the other characteristics of vessels coming under category (b) were satisfactorily settled. The most important of the conditions imposed upon these vessels was that they should not be designed or fitted to launch torpedoes. The question, then, came to this: Was it possible to construct torpedo-boats of less than 600 tons? The American delegation considered that a compromise was possible here, but that the question required some study. It agreed with the French and United Kingdom view, and would consider the question with these delegations.

He would point out that the 18-knot limit had been adopted at the 1927 Three-Power Conference after extensive study. The London Conference had raised the limit to 20 knots for the following reasons: firstly, because the vessels concerned were of relatively low tonnage and were often unable to travel at their full speed; further, it had been considered that, to have an effective speed of 18 knots, a maximum speed of 20 knots should be allowed. Moreover, the speed of merchant ships had since 1927 steadily increased; thus it could be stated that the advantages which a vessel gained from a 20-knot maximum speed were not greater than those afforded five years since by a maximum speed of 15 knots.

Vice-Admiral SURIE (Netherlands) observed that as the object of the draft Convention was to limit and reduce all vessels possessing a military value, the Netherlands delegation supported the Italian delegation's proposals. It must, however, be admitted that this type of vessel was very useful for coastal patrolling and for police work in colonial waters. The fact that a country possessed and required such craft might possibly be taken into consideration as a reason for increasing its figure of allotted tonnage.

M. SAWADA (Japan) had listened with great interest to the views expressed by the various speakers, but regretted that he was unable to share the opinions of the delegations which supported the Italian proposal. The Japanese delegation was in favour of the arguments put forward by the French and British delegations to maintain the text of the draft Convention as it stood. The reasons for this were not far to seek. Firstly, as the United Kingdom delegation had pointed out, the text of the draft Convention was the result of very careful studies which had been going on ever since the Geneva Three-Power Conference of 1927. Consequently, he could not see that there was any need to modify that text.

Secondly, surface vessels of 600 tons and under possessed so slight a capacity for undertaking operations in the open sea that there was no need to limit them. Japan was a country of numerous islands: her coast-line was a very long one and the weather conditions at sea were far from good, so that Japanese seamen were exposed to considerable risks. In the case of a country like Japan, therefore, it was impossible for the navy to perform its duties adequately with vessels of a very small size. The figures contained in the draft Convention were the very minimum to which the Japanese delegation could agree.

Thirdly, it was not quite fair to discuss this category of vessel apart from other categories: he had in mind, particularly, large merchant vessels which could readily be employed in war-time. Viewed in that light, it would be unjust to fix the speed and gun calibre of these vessels at limits lower than those indicated in the draft Convention. The Japanese delegation was therefore in favour of maintaining the text of the draft Convention now under discussion. He added that he was in favour of the retention not only of paragraph (a) but also the whole text of Annex I.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ (Spain) was entirely convinced that the building of vessels of 600 tons and under would be a purely defensive measure in the present state of armaments. Such vessels would be most inoffensive and yet of great assistance to defence. He admitted the possibility, as the Italian delegation had pointed out, of building vessels under 600 tons which might be of very offensive character, though, if large vessels still existed, these small vessels would be practically useless for attack. If and where, however, there were no large vessels, particularly in narrow seas, these small vessels might acquire great importance. The Spanish delegation quite understood the Italian delegation's point of view, but thought that special situations, geographical or otherwise, could be regulated by means of special treaties. If capital ships were abolished, then the military value of smaller ships would be increased proportionately, so vessels of 600 tons and under would acquire greater importance. The Spanish delegation could not therefore, at the present time, decide either for or against the Italian proposal, and must reserve its decision, which would depend on the decision taken in regard to capital ships, which Spain hoped would be abolished.

Captain ROSCA (Roumania) agreed with the terms of Annex I and said that these rules should be applied as rigorously to river-craft as to sea-going craft. It should also be borne in mind that small sea-craft could be employed on rivers, particularly if they were constructed with a view to such two-fold employment.

Captain SCASSO (Argentine) fully concurred with the views of the French delegation.

Captain FERRAZ E CASTRO (Brazil) pointed out that the speeches of the Italian, French, Swedish and other delegates showed that some delegates had in mind the geographical conditions of narrow seas, while others were thinking of the open sea. As a further complication, there had been references to overseas colonies, the extent of coasts and natural difficulties which in some cases rendered communications easier by sea than by land. Consequently, several delegates had made initial reservations in the light of these considerations. Thus it seemed impossible to make any change in the present draft which would bring it into harmony with the various points of view, except by providing specifically for all these different contingencies.

Rear-Admiral DE SOUZA E FARO (Portugal) agreed with the view expressed by the United Kingdom, French, Argentine and Polish delegations that it would be preferable to leave the text as it stood.

Captain MARONI (Italy), though not wishing to open a controversy, felt bound to point out the object of discriminating between limitable and non-limitable vessels was to draw a distinction between vessels of real military value and those of no real military value. He felt that he had proved that vessels of 600 tons and under could possess real military value.

With regard to the remarks of the Spanish delegate, he would draw attention to the reply which Sub-Commission A of the Preparatory Commission of the Disarmament Conference gave to the question, "Are there any armaments (and if so, what) which are only capable of being used for the defence of a State's territory?" That reply was: "Vessels of small seagoing efficiency and low power of endurance, capable of use only within a strictly limited distance of the national coast-line. But in this case proximity to the coast of another State, or to an important commercial trade route, would confer on such craft, in spite of their limited radius of action, a high offensive value."<sup>1</sup>

He agreed that some countries needed vessels for patrolling and police purposes in far-distant colonies; but such duties could perfectly well be carried out by vessels coming under paragraphs (b) and (c).

Rear-Admiral HEPBURN (United States of America) thought it might be possible to reach a compromise regarding the characteristics of small craft of 600 tons and under, but what he mainly had in view was the possibility, if the Powers decided to reduce the tonnage of small craft, of discussing and agreeing upon the number and type of vessels of this category, already in existence, which might be allowed to remain in the possession of the different countries.

He did not for one instant suggest that an agreement should be reached for an unrestricted construction of torpedo craft under a certain tonnage.

Rear-Admiral LABORDE (France) reminded the Commission that during the war, in the Adriatic, a small launch of 20 tons had sunk a capital ship. If, therefore, the object of the Italian proposal was to achieve absolute security from the possibility of attack by small vessels, the tonnage of those vessels would have to be reduced to zero.

Captain MARONI (Italy) stated that the Italian delegation was prepared, if the French delegation considered it would be useful, to accept the lowest possible limit.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ (Spain) did not propose to continue the discussion on the situation in narrow seas, which was, after all, a secondary question; but as he himself had been a member of the Sub-Commission A to which Captain Maroni had referred, he would beg the Italian delegate to read the paragraph following on the paragraph he had quoted—namely, "Further, since all such craft are capable of being transported either as a whole or in sections, they cannot be considered as purely defensive."<sup>1</sup> If the proposal aimed at providing against the military value even of vessels which could be transported by rail in sections, the degree of discrimination necessary would become excessive.

Captain FERRAZ E CASTRO (Brazil) pointed out another objection to the Italian delegation's proposal with reference to small navies. In the case of countries having long coasts to protect, whose small navies consisted almost entirely of smaller craft, practically the whole tonnage allotted would have to be employed on subsidiary services.

The PRESIDENT thought that there was no further use in prolonging the discussion at present, because paragraphs (b) and (c) would necessarily be influenced by the decisions reached regarding the maximum tonnage of exempt vessels.

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<sup>1</sup> See document C.739.M.278.1926.IX: Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference: Report of Sub-Commission A, page 141.

NINETEENTH MEETING.

*Held on Friday, June 3rd, 1932, at 10 a.m.*

President : M. COLBAN.

40. ITEM 5 OF THE AGENDA : ANNEX V TO CHAPTER B OF PART II OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION :  
RULES FOR DISPOSAL OF VESSELS OF WAR : AMENDMENT BY THE FRENCH DELEGATION.

The PRESIDENT, referring to the discussion at the end of the seventeenth meeting, drew the Commission's attention to the following text for paragraph (b) 2 (4) of Annex V, submitted by the French delegation as the outcome of that discussion :

“ Removal or mutilation on board of part of the boilers or motors so as to reduce the motive power to one-half of what it was originally. ”

41. ITEM 7 OF THE AGENDA : ANNEX I TO CHAPTER B OF PART II OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION :  
EXEMPT VESSELS (*continuation of the discussion*).

*Paragraph (b).*

The PRESIDENT stated that the German delegation had proposed the reduction from 6.1 to 4.1 inches (155 to 105 millimetres) of the maximum calibre of the guns in exempt vessels referred to in paragraph (b). Further, the Hungarian delegation had proposed the addition of the characteristic indicated in (c) (5), “ are protected by armour plate ”, to the characteristics enumerated in (b). The Danish delegation had also proposed the addition of the characteristic indicated in (c) (6), “ are designed or fitted to launch mines ”, to those enumerated in (b).

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) explained the reasons why the German delegation had proposed to reduce from 6.1 to 4.1 inches (155 to 105 millimetres) the calibre of guns carried by exempt vessels referred to in paragraph (b). For the armament of torpedo-boat destroyers, Germany had proposed a maximum calibre of 4.1 inches. It would be illogical to allow exempt vessels to possess guns of a calibre higher than those allowed on certain other vessels to which limitation was applied.

Moreover, in the definition given in Annex III, it was indicated that the calibre of the guns of destroyers should not exceed 5.1 inches. In these circumstances, he did not see how the figure of 6.1 inches could be adopted for the calibre of the guns of exempt vessels.

Rear-Admiral VON SCHOULTZ (Finland) said that he shared the views of the German delegation.

Captain SOLSKI (Poland) drew the Commission's attention to Article 19 of the draft Convention, which provided for the necessary stiffening of decks of merchant ships for the mounting of guns not exceeding 6.1 inches (155 millimetres). The Polish delegation thought that the German proposal could not be usefully discussed unless this article were examined at the same time. Otherwise the Commission might arrive at the paradoxical result of having to reduce the calibre of the armament of exempt war vessels to a figure below that of the calibre of guns which could be mounted on merchant vessels.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) thanked the Polish delegate for having drawn the Commission's attention to this point. The German delegation proposed that the maximum calibre of guns which might be mounted on merchant vessels should be reduced from 6.1 to 4.1 inches (155 to 105 millimetres).

Rear-Admiral LABORDE (France) said that the French delegation held that no change should be made in paragraph (b) of Annex I.

In reply to the German delegate's argument, which was based on the definitions in Annex III, he would point out that the only definition admitted by the French delegation with regard to light surface vessels was that given in paragraph (cd) of Annex III.

Captain SOLSKI (Poland) thanked the German delegate for the explanation he had given, which supported the thesis of the Polish delegation—namely, that the question of the maximum

calibre for the armament of exempt vessels referred to in paragraph (b) was closely connected with the contents of Article 19, and that the Commission could not give an opinion on the former until it knew what decisions would be reached regarding the latter.

Rear-Admiral TEH YUEN LU (China) observed that the Chinese delegation was in favour of as strict a limitation as possible of exempt vessels. Consequently, it supported the German proposal to reduce from 6.1 to 4.1 inches (155 to 105 millimetres) the maximum calibre of the guns in exempt vessels referred to in paragraph (b).

Captain FERRAZ E CASTRO (Brazil) agreed with the French delegate's views. If the German proposal were adopted, the 4.7-inch (120 millimetres) guns on certain old vessels in auxiliary fleets would have to be replaced, which would mean useless expense.

Captain PHILLIPS (United Kingdom) said that the United Kingdom delegation was of the opinion that the text of the draft Convention, which had been drawn up after careful study and was based on very definite reasons, should be maintained. If, as the United Kingdom delegation had indicated at the previous meeting, exempt vessels did not constitute a decisive factor in the value of naval forces, they were nevertheless warships and as such ought to have the right to be so armed that they could be used for the purpose for which they were intended. The armament allowed should not be weaker than that which could be improvised in time of war. Experience showed that the heaviest guns which could be improvised without too much difficulty were 6.1-inch guns, which were the largest hand-worked guns and required no machinery. All guns of a higher calibre required hydraulic or other machinery to work them.

He agreed with the French delegate that the German delegate's argument based on the definition of destroyers could not be taken into consideration, seeing that certain countries did not admit the division of light surface vessels into several categories.

M. SMIRNOFF (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) was astonished that the United Kingdom delegation should have seen fit to urge the permissibility of large-calibre guns in exempt vessels. Surely the Conference had not met to discuss the best type of guns or the most useful weapons for warfare. The Soviet delegation therefore entirely supported the German delegation's proposal.

Captain BIÖRKLUND (Sweden) said that the Swedish delegation, which on the previous day had spoken in favour of diminishing the strength of vessels in class (a), was equally in favour of decreasing the permitted attributes of the vessels referred to in paragraph (b). There was a close connection between the calibre of guns allowed to the latter vessels and the arming of merchant vessels referred to in Article 19 of the draft Convention. He thought it would be impossible to settle the question of the calibre of guns in the vessels referred to in paragraph (b) until a decision had been taken regarding Article 19 of the draft Convention.

If there were to be a discussion on the reduction of the tonnage of the vessels referred to in (a) right down to 100 tons, it would clearly be necessary to raise the question, in the proposed sub-committee, of reducing the tonnage of 2,000 tons referred to in (b).

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) observed that for the moment the wind did not seem to be in the direction of disarmament. He had not been convinced by the arguments of his opponents. If exempt vessels were allowed to have 6.1-inch (155 millimetres) guns, all nations, and particularly the smaller countries possessing small fleets, would in time be obliged to arm all their vessels with guns of that calibre. The result would therefore be a raising rather than a lowering of the scale of armaments. He again begged the Commission to consider whether it would not be possible—provisionally at least, as the present was only a first reading—to adopt a lower figure than that indicated in the draft Convention. As the Polish delegate had rightly pointed out, other articles might be inserted in the Convention which the Naval Commission would have to take into account later on.

As regarded the remark of the Brazilian delegate, concerning the difficulty of reducing the calibre of guns in special vessels because it was impossible to say how a number of smaller craft would be classified, he suggested that Annex II might be used for the inclusion of all these varieties of smaller craft.

M. SAWADA (Japan) pointed out that the Japanese delegation had stated, in the discussion regarding paragraph (a) of Annex I, that it was in favour of maintaining the whole text of Annex I as it stood. Obviously therefore the same remark applied to paragraphs (b) and (c).

Captain FERRAZ DE CASTRO (Brazil), in reply to the German delegate, thought it was impossible at present to consider the inclusion in Annex II of the craft to which he had referred, because the Commission as yet possessed no list of the ships to be included in this class of special vessels. For that reason he had not referred to Annex II. The ships he had in view were, however, covered by paragraph (c) of Annex I.

Senator SWANSON (United States of America) was of opinion that the present question was pre-eminently one which it was for the Naval Commission to discuss and to decide. The United States of America was not in favour of any change in the terms of the London Treaty. Nevertheless, it felt that vessels in the exempt category should be allowed to possess a gun-power equal to that of any similar vessels they might be called upon to meet. This was a point that the various delegates to the Naval Commission must endeavour to settle among themselves in spite of the great diversity of opinions expressed. He hoped that all delegations were prepared to make a great effort to reach unanimity by conciliation and compromise. In particular, he hoped that some way would be discovered of relieving the smaller Powers and countries with smaller navies of their anxiety in this connection. He therefore suggested that all delegations should send their proposals to the Bureau, and that the Bureau should spare no endeavour to reach that unanimity necessary for the conclusion of a treaty. They would be more likely in that way, he thought—rather than by continuing the present discussion—to achieve an early result.

Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ (Spain) was also very anxious that the Commission should reach an agreement, at least as far as secondary points were concerned. With regard to the connection between the proposals in Annex I and the arming of vessels, he recognised that it should be possible to arm exempt vessels with guns at least equal to those of merchant ships, but he would point out in that connection that the Spanish delegation had submitted a proposal to prevent merchant vessels from being armed with guns of 5.9 inches (150-millimetres) calibre. If that proposal were accepted, the calibre of the guns of exempt vessels might also be reduced.

Although he did not share the fears expressed by certain delegations, since he did not believe that any country contemplated building an offensive fleet consisting of exempt vessels, he thought it desirable that the Commission should give the impression that it was making some effort towards reduction. He therefore suggested that exempt vessels should be allowed guns equal or inferior to those of destroyers. He was, however, prepared to accept the opinion of the majority.

The PRESIDENT observed that the Commission could not discuss Annex I and Article 19 concurrently, as Article 19 had been referred to the General Commission, in view of the fact that it contained certain stipulations of principle which were of political importance. In examining the point whether 6.1 inches (155 millimetres) was a suitable calibre for the guns of exempt vessels covered by paragraphs (b) and (c), he did not think it was essential at present to enter into a simultaneous discussion of Article 19. Of course, if the Commission did adopt some lower figure in Annex I, in accordance with the German and Spanish proposals, that decision might in the long run affect the final text of Article 19, but he was sure that the Commission could discuss the figures of the calibre of guns to be mentioned in Annex I quite apart from Article 19.

Captain SOLSKI (Poland) believed that the Commission was not really very far from agreement. As soon as the calibre allowed on merchant vessels had been reduced, he hoped to have the pleasure of joining forces with the German delegation. It was impossible for him to do so at present, however.

*The Commission decided* to refer to its Bureau and to a Sub-Commission to be appointed to collaborate with it the Italian proposal for the reduction of the maximum speed to 18 knots, the Hungarian proposal for the addition of paragraph (c) (5) to the list in paragraph (b), and the Danish proposal for the addition of paragraph (c) (6) to the list in paragraph (b).

The PRESIDENT assumed that, as no other amendments had been put forward, the Bureau and sub-commission would be entitled to suppose that the Naval Commission was prepared—apart from any decision it might reach regarding the three amendments referred to the Bureau—to accept Annex I provisionally. Of course, if the decisions in connection with the three amendments specified led to a recasting of the text of the Annex, then the discussion might have to be reopened on certain points.

42. ITEM 6 OF THE AGENDA : ARTICLE 23 OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION : HULKS AND STATIONARY TRAINING ESTABLISHMENTS.

*" Article 23.*

" Existing ships of various types, which, prior to April 1st, 1930, have been used as stationary training establishments of hulks, may be retained in a non-seagoing condition. "

The PRESIDENT observed that in this connection the Commission had before it the Netherlands proposal concerning Section V of Annex V, submitted during the discussion of that Annex, together with the Spanish suggestion made at the seventeenth meeting that the contents of this proposal could be considered in conjunction with the text of Article 23. He noted that no fundamental objection had been raised either to the idea of the Netherlands proposal, or to the text of Article 23, or to the Spanish suggestion. The question was therefore merely one of drafting or an adjustment of texts. In that case he proposed that this question should also be referred to the Bureau and sub-commission.

*Agreed.*

The PRESIDENT suggested that the sub-commission might also be authorised to consider whether the figure of 2,000 tons mentioned in (b) of Annex I should be modified, if any delegation so requested.

*Agreed.*

43. ITEM 9 OF THE AGENDA : ARTICLE 34 OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION : PUBLICITY REGARDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF WAR VESSELS.

*" Article 34.*

" Within one month after the date of laying down and the date of completion respectively of each vessel of war, other than the vessels exempt from limitation under Annex I to Chapter B of Part II, laid down or completed by or for them or within their jurisdiction after the coming into force of the present Convention, the High Contracting Parties shall communicate to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations the information detailed below :

" (a) The date of laying down the keel and the following particulars :

" Classification of the vessel and for whom built (if not for the High Contracting Party) ;

" Standard displacement in tons and metric tons ;

" Principal dimensions—namely, length of water-line, extreme beam at or below water-line ;

" Mean draught at standard displacement ;

" Calibre of the largest gun.

" (b) The date of completion, together with the foregoing particulars relating to the vessel at that date.

" The above information shall be immediately communicated by the Secretary-General to all the High Contracting Parties and shall be published by the Secretary-General not later than..... in each year. "

The PRESIDENT observed that no amendment had been submitted in connection with this article.

M. SMIRNOFF (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was not a Member of the League of Nations, it could not agree to the clause in this article whereby information regarding publicity was to be communicated to the Secretary-General of the League. Moreover, the Soviet delegation had consistently pointed out that publicity of armaments was no adequate substitute for real and actual disarmament. Consequently, the Soviet delegation would abstain from discussing Article 34 until appreciable positive results had been obtained in the domain of disarmament.

Captain MARONI (Italy) said that, with regard to the question of exempt vessels as raised in Article 34, the Italian delegation accepted the text of that article in its present form provided it was clearly understood that " exempt vessels " in that text should be taken to mean " vessels which cannot possess any appreciable offensive value ".



M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) and General TÁNCZOS (Hungary) supported the declaration of the Italian delegation.

Rear-Admiral VON SCHOULTZ (Finland) thought that the matter of exempt vessels was a very important question of principle, because the whole idea of exempt vessels, by authorising the existence of non-limitable units, was a negation of limitation and a contradiction in terms. He noted that the principal arguments brought against the limitation of exempt vessels had been raised by the representatives of the great naval Powers. One of the weak points in all the naval treaties hitherto concluded was the very large and varied group of exempt vessels provided for therein—vessels which escaped limitation. He shared the opinion expressed by the Italian and Swedish delegations that that group should be subject to limitation, and supported the declaration which the Italian delegation had just made.

Subject to the above observations, the text of Article 34 was *adopted* at first reading.

#### 44. APPOINTMENT OF A SUB-COMMISSION.

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Sub-Commission appointed to co-operate with the Bureau should consist of representatives from the United States, Brazilian, United Kingdom, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Netherlands, Polish, Roumanian, Soviet and Swedish delegations.

The Sub-Commission would discuss, and if possible settle, the various points held over during the discussion, and would help the Rapporteur point by point in drawing up his report.

*Agreed.*

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### TWENTIETH MEETING

*Held on Saturday, June 11th, 1932, at 10.30 a.m.*

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President : M. COLBAN.

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#### 45. COMMUNICATION FROM THE AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION IN REGARD TO THE NAVAL COMMISSION'S REPORT TO THE GENERAL COMMISSION (Document Conf.D./C.G.28(2)).

The PRESIDENT informed the Commission that he had received a letter, dated June 5th, from the Australian delegation pointing out that that delegation supported the views of the United States, United Kingdom and Japanese delegations on capital ships, the Argentine and United Kingdom delegations on aircraft-carriers and the Argentine and United Kingdom delegations on submarines, as set forth in the Naval Commission's report. The letter further contained the following statement :

“ The Australian delegation is of opinion that the discussions of the Commission have emphasised the fact that any form of naval armament may be used offensively or defensively and may, according to circumstances, be efficacious against national defence and also threatening to civilians, in the sense of producing actual danger or reasonable apprehension of danger to them.

“ The Commission, however, is asked to report which forms of naval armament most particularly possess these characteristics. In reply to this question, the Australian delegation states its opinion that submarines, particularly those of large tonnage and extensive cruising radius, come most definitely within the category of being most threatening to civilians ; that capital ships are particularly adapted for operating against other naval units and for protecting naval units, and do not as such fall within the class of vessels *most* specifically offensive, etc. ; and that the offensive, etc., qualities of aircraft-carriers depend upon the use for general bombing purposes of the aeroplanes which they carry—a question which has not yet been considered by the Naval Commission.”

#### 46. EXAMINATION OF THE REPORT TO THE GENERAL COMMISSION CALLED FOR BY THAT COMMISSION'S RESOLUTION DATED APRIL 22ND, 1932 (document Conf.D.121).

The PRESIDENT informed the Commission that the Bureaux of the three Technical Commissions and of the Special Committee on Chemical and Bacteriological Weapons had met to consider the co-ordination of their various reports. The Bureaux had decided that no co-ordination was practicable and that the four separate reports should be submitted to the General Commission as they stood.

He reminded the Naval Commission, however, that it had originally decided to insert the following text at the beginning of Part II (Aircraft-carriers) of its report :

“ Pending the results of the discussion in the Air Commission, the following statements in regard to aircraft-carriers have been made in the Naval Commission.”

As the results of the Air Commission's discussions were now known, that text had been replaced in the Final Report by the following statement :

“ In regard to aircraft-carriers, the Naval Commission draws attention to the Air Commission's report (document Conf.D.123, Part I, paragraph 1(d)) and to the declarations relative to this paragraph in Part III.”

The two Commissions thus maintained their entire independence, and it would be for the General Commission to draw its own conclusions from their replies.

*The Commission decided to send the report, without other changes, to the President of the Conference.*

47. EXAMINATION OF THE REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMISSION APPOINTED TO CONSIDER WITH THE BUREAU OF THE COMMISSION THE VARIOUS POINTS HELD OVER.

M. WESTMAN (Sweden), Rapporteur, explained that the Sub-Commission had adopted the main lines of the report, which he proposed to read. The report constituted a provisional summing-up of the Commission's work and determined the various points held over. It would form a basis for subsequent discussion. The Commission need not adopt the report, but only note its contents as defining the results so far obtained.

*The Sub-Commission's report was read:*

“ At its meeting on June 3rd, the Naval Commission appointed a Sub-Commission to discuss, and if possible to settle, with the collaboration of the Bureau, the different points held over during the discussions which took place with regard to certain parts of the Preparatory Commission's draft Convention during the sixteenth to nineteenth meetings of the Naval Commission. The following delegations were represented in the Sub-Commission : United States of America, Brazil, United Kingdom, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, Roumania, Sweden, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

“ The Sub-Commission began its work with a discussion of Annex IV to Chapter B of Part II of the draft Convention : ‘ Rules for Replacement ’.

“ *Annex IV.*

“ The German delegation wished it to be stated that it refrained from taking part in the discussion in those cases in which the text before the Sub-Commission relates to classes of ships of which Germany proposes the abolition.

“ The Sub-Commission points out that by its decision of March 15th, 1932, the Naval Commission adopted paragraph 1 without modification.

“ Paragraph 2 of the text of the draft Convention reads as follows :

“ 2. A vessel shall be deemed to be “ over-age ” when the following number of years have elapsed since the date of its completion :

“ (a) Capital ships : 20 years, subject to special provision as may be necessary for the replacement of existing ships.

“ (b) Aircraft-carriers : 20 years, subject to special provision as may be necessary for existing ships.

“ (c) Surface vessels exceeding 3,000 tons (3,048 metric tons) but not exceeding 10,000 tons (10,160 metric tons) standard displacement :

“ (i) If laid down before January 1st, 1929—16 years.

“ (ii) If laid down after December 31st, 1919—20 years.

“ (d) Surface vessels not exceeding 3,000 tons (3,048 metric tons) standard displacement :

“ (i) If laid down before January 1st, 1921—12 years.

“ (ii) If laid down after December 31st, 1920—16 years.

“ (e) Submarines : 13 years.’

“ The Sub-Commission discussed whether, in the first sentence of paragraph 2, the expression ‘ since the date of its completion ’ should be modified. The Sub-Commission decided, however, to propose to the Naval Commission the maintenance of the text for the time being.

“ During the discussion on this matter, several proposals were made. The United Kingdom delegate, supported by the delegates of Italy, France and Finland, proposed the following text :

“ ‘ A vessel shall be deemed to be “ over-age ” when the following number of years have elapsed since January 1st of the year of its completion. ’

“ The Swedish delegate, supported by the Netherlands delegate, pointed out that the modification proposed by the United Kingdom delegate might have the effect of lowering the age-limits proposed for the various types of ships by anything up to twelve months. If a definite date were to be specified in the text, the Swedish delegate would be rather in favour of the date December 31st of the year of completion.”

Vice-Admiral POUND (United Kingdom) pointed out, with reference to the last paragraph which the Rapporteur had read, that this lowering of the age-limit was more apparent than real, since the keel of the new vessel might already be laid on January 1st three years (or two) before the year in which the old vessel became over-age, and this date of laying the keel was really the governing factor.

Captain MARONI (Italy), Rear-Admiral LABORDE (France) and Rear-Admiral VON SCHOULTZ (Finland) supported the United Kingdom delegate's view.

*Reading of the report (continued) :*

“ The German delegate, while concurring in the United Kingdom delegate's view, emphasised that the proposed modification would appear to necessitate special consideration for the case of ships having a very short life—*e.g.*, submarines.

“ The Japanese delegate was in favour of the present text.

“ The United States delegate reserved his opinion.

“ In accordance with the Naval Commission's decision, the Sub-Commission inserted in sub-paragraph (a) the figure ‘ 26 years ’ instead of ‘ 20 years ’ as an age-limit for capital ships.

“ As regards sub-paragraph (b), the Japanese delegation proposed for aircraft-carriers of over 20,000 tons an age-limit of 26 years and for those of less than 20,000 tons an age-limit of 20 years.

“ This proposal not having been accepted by the Sub-Commission, the Japanese delegation reserved the right to raise the question again.

“ The Soviet delegation, referring to its proposal for the abolition of aircraft-carriers, made a reservation with regard to the Sub-Commission's recommendation to fix the age-limit for aircraft-carriers at 20 years.

“ In order to make the text clearer, the Sub-Commission considers that in sub-paragraphs (c) and (d) the words ‘ other than those covered by the previous sub-paragraphs ’ should be inserted after the words ‘ surface vessels ’.

“ In connection with sub-paragraph (c), the Soviet delegation contended that this provision, instead of applying to vessels of between 3,000 and 10,000 tons, should apply to vessels with a tonnage of between 1,200 and 7,000 tons.

“ As regards paragraph 3, the Sub-Commission unanimously proposed that the word ‘ calendar ’ should be inserted before the word ‘ year ’ which appears in the text.

“ The Japanese delegation, referring to the very considerable periods required, according to recent experience, for the construction of large warships, proposed the addition to paragraph 3 of a provision making four years (instead of three) the longest period admissible for the laying-down of surface vessels exceeding 20,000 tons (20,320 metric tons).

“ Certain delegations having considered the period suggested too long, the French delegation, with the object of reaching a compromise acceptable to all the delegations, proposed to fix the period in question at three and a half years. As a result of that proposal, the tenor of paragraph 3 would be as follows :

“ ‘ The keels of replacement tonnage shall not be laid down more than three years before the calendar year in which the vessel to be replaced becomes “ over-age ” ; but this period is extended to three and a half years in the case of any surface vessels exceeding 20,000 tons (20,320 metric tons), and is reduced to two years in the case of any replacement surface vessel not exceeding 3,000 tons (3,048 metric tons) standard displacement. ’

“ The French delegation pointed out that the provisions of Annex V, Section I, being left intact would preclude an unduly long period of overlapping.

“ The United Kingdom delegation expressed readiness to accept the text proposed by the French delegation.”

Vice-Admiral POUND (United Kingdom) wished to point out, for the sake of clearness, that the last paragraph which the Rapporteur had read applied on condition that the text of Section I of Annex V remained the same as in the draft Convention.

Rear-Admiral LABORDE (France) agreed with this observation.

*Reading of the report (continued) :*

“ The Japanese delegate, whilst maintaining his original proposal, stated that he could fall in with the French proposal provided that the following amendment were inserted in Section I, paragraph (a), of Annex V :

“ ‘ But should the new vessel be a surface vessel exceeding 20,000 tons (20,320 metric tons), this period shall be increased to 5 years.’

“ The United States delegate was unable to accept any change involving any extension of the time-limits specified in paragraph (a) of Section I, Annex V.

“ The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics delegate was in favour of maintaining the present text.

“ The last sub-paragraph of paragraph 3, and similarly paragraph 4, did not call for discussion.

“ The United Kingdom proposal to add a new paragraph 5 to Annex IV, with the object of linking up Annex IV with Annex V, was considered by the Sub-Commission, and it was decided to recommend the Naval Commission to accept it in the following amended form :

“ ‘ Except as otherwise provided in the present Convention, vessels replaced shall be disposed of in accordance with the provisions of Annex V to this Chapter.’

“ Should the foregoing paragraph be adopted by the Naval Commission, it would seem expedient to amend Article 22 of the draft Convention by inserting similarly the phrase :

“ ‘ Except as otherwise provided in the present Convention.’

“ *Annex V.*

“ The Sub-Commission next proceeded to discuss Annex V to Chapter B of Part II of the draft Convention : ‘ Rules for Disposal of Vessels of War ’.

“ The preamble was adopted without discussion.

“ The United Kingdom delegation directed attention to the expediency of making special provision for the vessels to be scrapped when the Convention comes into force, as was done in both the London and Washington Treaties. It was also suggested that, as in the London Treaty, a longer period than the normal should be allowed for scrapping these vessels, in view of the fact that in all probability there will be a very considerable number of such vessels.

“ On the basis of the decisions already reached by the Naval Commission, the Sub-Commission proposed to insert a new paragraph (a) worded as follows :

“ ‘ A vessel to be disposed of by scrapping on the coming into force of the present Convention as being in excess of the tonnage prescribed must be rendered incapable of warlike service within twelve months from the coming into force of the Convention, and the scrapping shall be finally effected within twenty-four months from such coming into force.’

“ The present paragraph (a) will thus become (b), and so on.

“ As regards a proposal submitted by the Japanese delegation that the period of four and a half years laid down in new paragraph (b) be increased to five and a half years if the new vessel is a surface vessel exceeding 20,000 tons (20,320 metric tons), the Sub-Commission decided to recommend that its further examination should take place simultaneously with the proposals submitted on the subject of Annex IV, paragraph (3), referred to above.

“ Sections II, ‘ Vessels to be converted to Hulks ’ ; III, ‘ Vessels to be converted to Target Use ’ ; IV, ‘ Vessels retained for Experimental Purposes ’ did not give rise to any observations.

“ As regards Section V, ‘ Vessels retained for Training Purposes ’, several changes were proposed.

“ The French delegation proposed that in paragraph 1—‘ Capital Ships ’, point (3)—the words ‘ and the side-armour belt between the foremost and aftermost barbets ’ be deleted.

“ The French delegation also proposed certain rules designed to ensure the application of the provisions of paragraph 1, point (5), and of paragraph 2, point (4), to motor-driven vessels as well as to steam-driven vessels.

“ In this connection the following text was suggested :

“ ‘ If the vessel is motor-driven, removal or mutilation on board of all motors in excess of the number required for a maximum speed of 18 knots.’

“ The United Kingdom delegation suggested that motive power would be a better criterion than speed and that, for example, the motive power of the vessel concerned might be reduced by one-half. In the case of steamships, the removal of one-half of the boilers would be equivalent to depriving the vessel of one-half of its motive power, and a similar clause might perhaps be laid down for motor-driven vessels.”

Rear-Admiral LABORDE (France) observed that the French delegation had proposed that the last point of sub-paragraph 2, paragraph (b), Section V of Annex V should be worded as follows :

“ 4. Removal or mutilation on board of part of the boilers or motors so as to reduce the motive power to one-half of what it was originally.”<sup>1</sup>

*Reading of the report (continued) :*

“ The Netherlands delegation proposed the addition of a new paragraph between paragraphs (b) and (c) as follows :

“ ‘ Vessels which have been converted into vessels for training purposes before the entry into force of this Convention may be maintained in the condition into which they have been converted.’

“ Certain delegations, while supporting the aforesaid proposal, stressed the expediency of supplementing it by adding a definite date—for example, the date of the meeting of the Disarmament Conference.

“ After some discussion on vessels to be retained for training purposes, the Sub-Commission unanimously agreed that the examination of this question could usefully be undertaken only when the work of the Disarmament Conference had progressed sufficiently to enable delegations to form an idea of the whole body of the naval provisions of the Convention, more especially as regards the various types of vessels to be considered.

“ Nevertheless, the Sub-Commission wishes to draw the attention of the Naval Commission at once to the desirability of interested delegations handing in to the Bureau, firstly, the fullest possible particulars as to the types of vessels which might, in their opinion, come within the ambit of the rules set forth in Section V of Annex V, and, secondly, with a view to an examination of the above-mentioned Netherlands proposal, lists of the existing training-ships, with particulars of their present condition.

“ *Annex I.*

“ During the discussion in the Naval Commission concerning Annex I : Exempt Vessels, the Italian delegation proposed that the maximum tonnage of the exempt vessels referred to in paragraph (a) should be reduced from 600 to 100 tons, and the maximum speed of the vessels referred to in paragraph (b) from 20 to 18 knots. Moreover, the German delegation proposed that the maximum calibres of the guns of exempt vessels should be reduced from 6.1 to 4.1 inches (155 to 105 millimetres).

“ The delegations of the following countries were broadly in favour of the Italian proposal : China, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Netherlands, Sweden, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

“ The delegations of the following countries were in favour of maintaining the text of the draft Convention : Argentine, United Kingdom, France, Japan, Poland, Portugal, Roumania.

“ The delegations of Spain and the United States of America reserved their final opinion.

“ The delegation of Brazil considered that the text of the draft Convention could not be modified without taking into account the special conditions of each State.

“ The delegation of Denmark suggested the addition to paragraph (b) of paragraph (c), point (6), concerning mines.

“ The Hungarian delegation proposed the introduction into paragraph (b) of paragraph (c), point (5), concerning armour-plate.

<sup>1</sup> See Minutes of nineteenth meeting.

“ The Sub-Commission, after carefully considering the question of Exempt Vessels, agreed to propose the following resolution to the Naval Commission :

“ 1. Actually this category of ship is intended to include vessels whose military value, either individual or collective, does not appreciably increase the combatant strength of fleets.

“ 2. The need for establishing such a category is due to the necessity for excluding from all limitation vessels of a great variety of types which are nevertheless indispensable to meet the requirements of the various Powers for minor combatant or auxiliary services.

“ 3. It has become clear during the discussions of the Naval Commission that the actual text of Annex I, which defines the characteristics of vessels exempt from limitation, while suitable for the purpose of the London Treaty, is not equally suitable for universal application in the case of a General Convention to which all Powers will be signatory, owing to the fact that it allows the building of combatant vessels which might in certain regions appreciably upset the balance of strength allowed in the limitable categories.

“ 4. The Naval Commission considers that any question of revision of this text must wait until decisions have been arrived at on the definitions of the types of limitable vessels and other relevant matters.”

The PRESIDENT inferred from the report that it contained nothing which was likely to militate against a final agreement.

M. SMIRNOFF (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, as the questions in Annexes I, IV and V, now under consideration, could not be finally resolved until a number of decisions of principle had been reached by the General Commission with regard to disarmament (for instance, reduction of tonnage, abolition, reduction or limitation of global tonnage, etc. . . .), the Soviet delegation regarded the discussion of this part of the draft Convention as preliminary, maintained its point of view regarding the age-limits mentioned in document Conf.D./C.N.18<sup>1</sup> and reserved the right to revert at a later date to the aforesaid questions.

## TWENTY-FIRST MEETING

*Held on Wednesday, July 20th, 1932, at 3 p.m.*

In the Chair, M. DUPRÉ (Vice-President), then M. MORESCO.

### 48. ELECTION OF A PRESIDENT TO REPLACE M. COLBAN, RESIGNED.

The VICE-PRESIDENT said that the meeting was being held for the purpose of electing a President to replace M. Eric Colban, who had resigned owing to illness resulting from an accident.

Before proceeding to the election, he wished to express his deepest regret at the unfortunate circumstance which had deprived the Naval Commission of so courteous and competent a President. He proposed—because he was sure that this was the desire of all present—to send to M. Colban, on behalf of the Commission, and also on his own behalf, a message of friendship and gratitude and an expression of hope for speedy recovery.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) thought that the Commission had not far to look in order to discover someone who might preside over its future work. He referred to the first Vice-President, M. Dupré, who was now in the Chair and had already presided over the Commission sometimes in the absence of M. Colban and over sub-committees and drafting committees. All members of the Commission were aware of M. Dupré's great interest in the problem and of his unfailing tact and courtesy. He therefore ventured to hope that the Commission would elect M. Dupré as its new President unanimously and by acclamation.

The VICE-PRESIDENT said he was very touched by this mark of confidence. He thanked both the German delegate and the Commission and wished that he could have acceded to the proposal, which was a great honour for his country and for himself. He regretted, however, that it would be quite impossible for him to do so, as his duties in Canada as a member of the

<sup>1</sup> The age-limits in question are mentioned by M. Ventzoff in his speech before the Commission on March 17th, 1932 (see page 19).

Government prevented him, and would prevent him in the future, from coming regularly to Geneva and staying there long enough to preside over the future work of the Commission. He would therefore invite the Commission to proceed to a new choice.

Mr. SWANSON (United States of America) expressed deep regret that it was impossible for M. Dupré to accept the presidency. Such success as the Naval Commission had been able to achieve in its work was very largely due to M. Dupré's constant and untiring efforts. He fully realised, however, the heavy duties which would prevent M. Dupré from accepting the Presidency.

Admiral ACTON (Italy) said that the Italian delegation also regretted the inability of M. Dupré to accept the Presidency. In presiding over the Committee which had drawn up the report to the General Commission, M. Dupré had displayed unerring competence and impartiality. Though he quite understood that M. Dupré was obliged to return to Canada, he nevertheless hoped that he would find it possible to come back once more and participate in the work of the Naval Commission.

The VICE-PRESIDENT sincerely thanked Senator Swanson and Admiral Acton for their very kind words.

M. IRGENS (Norway) thanked the Vice-President for his tribute to M. Colban. The accident which had made it necessary for M. Colban to withdraw from the Commission temporarily was a blow all the more bitter in that M. Colban had been so deeply interested in the work of the Naval Commission.

Since M. Dupré found himself irrevocably unable to accept the Presidency, he would, as representing the country of the former President—even though he were the newest member of the Commission—venture to suggest that the Commission should elect M. Moresco, delegate of the Netherlands, as its new President.

M. VON RHEINBABEN (Germany) said that, as circumstances were now different, he heartily supported M. Irgens' proposal.

Mr. SWANSON (United States of America) seconded this proposal, referring both to his personal esteem for M. Moresco and to the high opinion in which M. Moresco was held by the whole Commission. He particularly welcomed this proposal in view of the close ties of friendship which united the United States of America to the Netherlands.

The VICE-PRESIDENT said he presumed that the Norwegian delegate's proposal was unanimously accepted. He therefore declared M. Moresco elected President of the Naval Commission and begged to congratulate the Commission on its choice. He was quite sure that M. Moresco would prove a worthy successor to M. Colban. He himself would be happy to serve as Vice-President under the new President. He would ask M. Moresco to take the President's Chair.

(M. Moresco took the President's Chair.)

M. MORESCO (Netherlands), President, thanked the members of the Commission for the great honour they had done to his country and to himself.

He feared that the task before him might be no easy one, as he possessed neither technical knowledge of naval matters nor the great experience which M. Colban had acquired as Director of the Disarmament Section. He felt indeed that he would need all the kind indulgence of the Commission in carrying out his duties as President. He was sure, however, that he could count on the sincerest collaboration of all.

He associated himself wholeheartedly with M. Dupré's suggestion to send to M. Colban a message of gratitude and sympathy and an expression of hope for a speedy return to health.

As the sole item on the agenda—namely, the election of a new President—had now been dealt with, he declared the meeting closed.

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DOCUMENTS OF THE NAVAL COMMISSION.

Conf.D./C.N.1(2).

REVISED LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE NAVAL COMMISSION,  
FEBRUARY 27TH—JULY 20TH, 1932.

*President:* M. E. COLBAN (Norway), succeeded by M. E. MORESCO (Netherlands).

*Vice-Presidents:* Mr. M. DUPRÉ (Canada); TEVFIK Bey (Turkey), succeeded by Cemal HÜSNÜ Bey (Turkey).

*Rapporteur:* M. K. I. WESTMAN (Sweden).

Country	Members	Substitutes
<i>Afghanistan:</i>	Lieut.-General OMAR KHAN	M. A. Husein AZIZ KHAN YUSUF KHAN
<i>Union of South Africa:</i>	Major F. F. PIENAAR	Mr. W. C. NAUDÉ Mr. H. CAMP
<i>Albania:</i>		
<i>United States of America:</i>	The Hon. Claude A. SWANSON Rear-Admiral A. J. HEPBURN	
<i>Argentine Republic:</i>	Dr. Carlos QUINTANA	Captain León L. SCASSO
<i>Australia:</i>	Mr. J. G. LATHAM, or Sir G. de Laune RYRIE	Mr. V. C. DUFFY, or Mr. F. G. SHEDDEN
<i>Austria:</i>	General TARBUK	
<i>Belgium:</i>	M. BOURQUIN	Major VAN DER DONCKT
<i>Bolivia:</i>		
<i>Brazil:</i>	Captain A. FERRAZ DE CASTRO Captain A. RODRIGUES DE VASCONCELLOS	Lieutenant Ernani DO AMARAL PEIXOTO
<i>United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:</i>	Sir Bolton M. EYRES-MONSELL Vice-Admiral A. D. P. R. POUND	Captain T. S. V. PHILLIPS, R.N.
<i>Bulgaria:</i>	General VATEFF	Colonel MARINOFF
<i>Canada:</i>	Mr. Maurice DUPRÉ	Mr. T. A. STONE
<i>Chile:</i>	M. J. VALDÉS-MENDEVILLE	



Country	Members	Substitutes
<i>China:</i>	General Moo Song WHANG	Rear-Admiral Teh Yuen LU M. T. M. CHIU
<i>Colombia:</i>	M. A. J. RESTREPO	
<i>Costa Rica:</i>	M. V. FIGUEREDO-LORA	
<i>Cuba:</i>	M. A. DE AGÜERO Y BETHANCOURT	M. G. DE BLANCK Captain E. A. PRIETO
<i>Czechoslovakia</i>	Lieut.-Colonel NEMECEK	M. K. TRPÁK
<i>Denmark:</i>	M. Alsing ANDERSEN M. J. P. STENSALLE	Vice-Admiral H. W. WENCK Captain A. C. C. SÖRENSEN
<i>Egypt:</i>		
<i>Estonia:</i>	General J. LAIDONER	Colonel R. TOMBERG
<i>Ethiopia:</i>	Comte LAGARDE, DUC D'ENTOTTO	
<i>Finland:</i>	M. R. HOLSTI	Rear-Admiral G. VON SCHOULTZ Colonel I. A. E. MARTOLA Dr. K. E. P. HIITONEN
<i>France:</i>	M. PIETRI M. Charles DUMONT Rear-Admiral LABORDE	M. R. MASSIGLI M. MOYSSET M. L. AUBERT
<i>Germany:</i>	Baron VON RHEINBABEN	Vice-Admiral Baron VON FREYBERG-EISENBERG- ALLMENDINGEN
<i>Greece:</i>	M. R. RAPHAËL	Capitaine de frégate S. MATESSIS Commandant J. DIMAKIS
<i>Guatemala:</i>		
<i>Haiti:</i>		
<i>Honduras:</i>		
<i>Hungary:</i>	Count A. APPONYI General TÁNCZOS M. J. PELÉNYI	Colonel DE SIEGLER Baron KUHN (Lieutenant) Captain DE HARDY
<i>India:</i>	H.H. the AGA Khan	The Rt. Hon. Sir Samuel HOARE Sir Henry WHEELER Lt.-Colonel W. E. BEAZLEY
<i>Irish Free State:</i>	Mr. J. J. HEARNE	Mr. S. LESTER
<i>Italy:</i>	Admiral G. SIRIANNI	Admiral ACTON General DE MARINIS STANDARDO DI RICIGLIANO Captain RUSPOLI Captain P. MARONI
<i>Japan:</i>	M. N. SATO, or Vice-Admiral O. NAGANO	M. S. SAWADA Rear-Admiral W. KOMAKI M. Hiroshi SAITO
<i>Latvia:</i>	General A. KALEYS	M. J. FELDMANS
<i>Liberia:</i>	Dr. A. SOTTILE	

Country	Members	Substitutes
<i>Lithuania:</i>	Colonel LANSKORONSKIS	
<i>Luxemburg:</i>		
<i>Mexico:</i>	Dr. F. CASTILLO NAJERA	Major P. MERCADO
<i>Netherlands:</i>	M. E. MORESCO Vice-Admiral SURIE Captain J. A. GAUW	
<i>New Zealand:</i>	Sir Thomas WILFORD	Mr. C. KNOWLES
<i>Norway:</i>	M. E. COLBAN	Commodore OTTO M. IRGENS
<i>Panama:</i>	M. Narciso GARAY	
<i>Persia:</i>	Colonel A. RIAZI	Major BAHAR-MASTE Captain S. CHEYBANI
<i>Peru:</i>		
<i>Poland:</i>	General S. BURHARDT-BUKACKI	M. T. KOMARNICKI Captain SOLSKI Sub-Lieutenant LASOCKI
<i>Portugal:</i>	General Ivens FERRAZ	Professor Lobo D'AVILA LIMA Rear-Admiral J. DE SOUZA E FARO
<i>Roumania:</i>	M. Constantin ANTONIADE	General Th. DUMITRESCO Colonel STOICESCO Captain E. ROSCA
<i>Sa'udi Arabia:</i>	Sheikh Hafiz WAHBA	M. E. DUSSAC
<i>Siam:</i>	Prince Pridi Debyabongs DEVAKULA	Rear-Admiral Phya RAJAWANGSAN
<i>Spain:</i>	M. J. GIRAL PEREIRA M. Leopoldo PALACIOS	M. S. DE MADARIAGA M. ARAQUISTAIN M. J. LÓPEZ OLIVÁN Vice-Admiral MONTAGUT Y MIRÓ M. Pelayo GARCÍA OLAY
<i>Sweden:</i>	M. K. I. WESTMAN M. A. G. F. VOUGT	Commodore C. F. DE TAMM Commander A. E. BIÖRKLUND
<i>Switzerland:</i>	M. C. GORGÉ	
<i>Turkey:</i>	TEVFIK Bey Cemal HÜSNÜ Bey Necmeddin SADIK Bey	Colonel NURI Bey
<i>Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:</i>	M. S. VENTZOFF	M. P. SMIRNOFF M. V. SOCOLINE
<i>Uruguay:</i>	Dr. E. BUERO	Dr. Paulina LUISI
<i>Venezuela:</i>	M. L. G. CHACÍN ITRIAGO	M. L. F. CALVANI
<i>Yugoslavia:</i>	M. I. CHOUMENKOVITCH Captain Gaston ROSSI-SABATINI	M. I. PERNE

Geneva, March 12th, 1932.

## REPORT BY THE BUREAU OF THE NAVAL COMMISSION CONCERNING THE QUESTIONS TO BE EXAMINED BY THE COMMISSION.

In accordance with the decision taken by the Naval Commission at its second meeting on March 9th, its Bureau met at 4 p.m. on March 10th to consider the List of Questions referred to the Naval Commission by the General Commission—vide document Conf.D.103<sup>1</sup>—and

A. To divide these questions into groups showing :

(a) Questions of which the discussion could be begun forthwith in the Naval Commission ;

(b) Questions of which the discussion could only be begun in the Naval Commission after their previous discussion by the General or other Commission.

B. To decide on the order in which the questions coming under A(a) above should be discussed.

Proposals in regard to these matters were sent in by the delegations of the Argentine Republic, the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America.

The delegations of these States, together with those of States which had taken part in the discussion in the Naval Commission on March 9th,<sup>2</sup> were requested to attend—should they so desire—the meeting of the Bureau, and the delegates of the Argentine Republic, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the United States of America were present at the meeting.

It was agreed to recommend to the Commission that the questions shown in the list in document Conf.D.103<sup>1</sup> should be dealt with as follows :

Item.

1, 2, 3. Defer until after consideration of the corresponding questions by the Land Commission.

4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. Refer to the General Commission for previous consideration.

10, 11. Discuss forthwith in the Naval Commission.

12. Refer to the General Commission for previous consideration.

13, 14, 15, 16. Discuss forthwith in the Naval Commission.

17. Discuss forthwith in the Naval Commission.

It was agreed that the reservation made in the first line of Annex I to Chapter B of Part II of the draft Convention<sup>3</sup>—regarding previous Conventions—should not be dealt with by the Naval Commission.

18. Defer for subsequent discussion in the Naval Commission after decisions have been reached in the General Commission in regard to Items 7, 8 and 9.

19. Discuss forthwith in the Naval Commission.

20. Defer until after consideration by the National Defence Expenditure Commission.

21, 22. Defer until after discussion of Items 1, 2 and 3 above.

23. Defer until after discussion of Item 20 above.

24. Discuss forthwith in the Naval Commission.

25. Defer for subsequent discussion in the Naval Commission after a decision has been reached in the General Commission in regard to Item 12.

From the above, it will be seen that it is considered that the following questions can be discussed forthwith in the Naval Commission. The order of discussion proposed is that set out below :

Items 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 24.

The attached draft agenda shows in detail the questions for discussion and the order in which it is proposed they should be taken.

The President will keep in touch with the Presidents of the other Commissions and will keep the Naval Commission informed of the progress of events of interest to it in the other Commissions.

The next meeting of the Naval Commission will be called by its President after consultation with the Bureau of the Conference.

<sup>1</sup> See Conference Documents, Vol. I, page 179.

<sup>2</sup> See Minutes of the Naval Commission, page 1.

<sup>3</sup> See Conference Documents, Vol. I, page 14.

DRAFT AGENDA.

- Note* 1. The number in brackets in the left-hand column is the item number in the list of questions given in document Conf.D.103.<sup>1</sup>
2. The wording in Columns 2 and 3 is taken from the tables in document Conf.D.102.<sup>2</sup>
3. Questions will, as a general rule, be discussed in the order shown below.

DRAFT CONVENTION.<sup>3</sup>

RELEVANT PROPOSALS.

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. (10) <i>Article 17.</i><br>General undertaking. No vessel of war exceeding limitations prescribed to be acquired by, or constructed by, for or within the jurisdiction of any High Contracting Party. | (1) Contracting parties not to build or allow to be built on their territories any warships exceeding the prescribed limits. — Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Conf. D.87. Article 17, paragraph (c)).<br>(2) Not to cause new vessels to be constructed in foreign yard over and above the limits laid down for each contracting State. — Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Conf.D.87. Article 17, paragraph (d)). |
| 2. (11) <i>Article 18 and Annex IV to Chapter B of Part II.</i><br>Rules for replacement.                                                                                                                | Only replacement vessels to be built. Age-limits for replacement. Replaced vessels not to be used for warlike purposes. — Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Conf. D.87. Article 16, 1st paragraph and paragraph (a). Article 17 (a)).                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 3. (13) <i>Article 20.</i><br>Use of vessels of war constructed for another Power.                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 4. (14) <i>Article 21.</i><br>Cession of vessels of war to another Power.                                                                                                                                | No handing over or sale of warships to another Power if such Power can use them as warships supernumary to its prescribed establishment. — Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Conf.D.87. Article 17, paragraph (b)).                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 5. (15) <i>Article 22 and Annex V to Chapter B of Part II.</i><br>Rules for disposal of vessels of war.                                                                                                  | Rules for disposal. Disarmament of warships; what this comprises. Procedure for striking vessels off the establishment and rendering them unfit for warlike purposes. — Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Conf. D.87. Article 14).                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 6. (16) <i>Article 23.</i><br>Hulks or training establishments.                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 7. (17) <i>Annex I to Chapter B of Part II.</i><br>Exempt vessels.                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 8. (19) <i>Annex III to Chapter B of Part II.</i><br>Definitions.                                                                                                                                        | (1) Amended definitions. — Germany (Conf.D.79.II.A.12).<br>(2) Standard displacement. Amended definition. — Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Conf.D.87. Article 16, note).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 9. (24) <i>Article 34.</i><br>Publicity regarding the construction of war vessels.                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

<sup>1</sup> See Conference Documents, Vol. I, page 179.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 160 to 164 and page 169.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 12 to 17 and page 24.

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[Conf. D./C.N.30(1).]

Geneva, May 28th, 1932.

REPORT TO THE GENERAL COMMISSION CALLED FOR BY THAT  
COMMISSION'S RESOLUTION DATED APRIL 22ND, 1932  
(Document Conf.D./C.G.28(2)).

*Rapporteur*: M. K. I. WESTMAN (Sweden).

INTRODUCTION.

The General Commission of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments at its meeting on April 22nd, 1932, adopted the following resolution (document Conf.D./C.G.28(2)) :

“ In seeking to apply the principle of qualitative disarmament as defined in the previous resolution (document Conf.D./C.G.26(1)), the Conference is of opinion that the range of land, sea and air armaments should be examined by the competent special Commissions with a view to selecting those weapons whose character is the most specifically offensive or those most efficacious against national defence or most threatening to civilians.”

For the purpose of determining the naval armaments which are, in accordance with the terms of the resolution, “ the most specifically offensive or those most efficacious against national defence or most threatening to civilians ”, the Naval Commission met on April 26th, 1932.

After a general discussion, the Naval Commission adopted the agenda prepared by its Bureau in accordance with which it considered, first, capital ships and subsequently discussed aircraft-carriers, submarines and mines. The Commission also considered river gunboats and monitors.

In regard to the use of poison gases and bacteriological warfare, the General Commission has decided to confide the consideration of these questions to a special Commission constituted for this purpose.

The discussions which have taken place in the Naval Commission in pursuance of the resolution of the General Commission of April 22nd, 1932, have not been confined to the questions to which the text of the resolution relates directly. A number of delegations have thought well to develop their views, in more complete fashion than the actual terms of reference would have required, on naval problems in general and on the special needs and circumstances of their respective countries. They have been led in this way to indicate the fundamental considerations at the base of their attitude to the problems raised by the General Commission's resolution. Questions have thus been discussed in regard to the problem of the abolition of certain forms of naval armaments, reductions of tonnage and of the combatant power of units, the difficulties arising in connection with the application of the term “ aggression ”, and problems in regard to the definition of “ the relative offensive and defensive power ” of the different types of war vessels.

The discussion indicated that one of the reasons for the divergent views expressed lies in a difference in interpretation of the terms of reference given by the General Commission. Certain delegations have found the terms of the General Commission's resolution sufficiently clear for them to be taken at once as the basis of the work of the Naval Commission. Other delegates, on the other hand, in view of the special conditions existing in the sphere of naval armaments, have thought it necessary to discuss and state clearly the sense in which the General Commission's resolution should be interpreted.

These latter delegations have, for their part, expressed the opinion that the instruction to consider the different naval armaments with a view to determining those weapons “ whose character is the most specifically offensive ” appears to presuppose the use of such weapons for purposes of a policy of aggression and that the naval operations to be considered are, consequently, primarily those directed towards the invasion and violation of the territorial sovereignty of a country. In other words, in order to define the task of the Naval Commission, the latter has, in their opinion, to consider whether there are weapons which, in the event of armed aggression directed suddenly against the territorial sovereignty of a State, offer, in virtue of their inherent specific character, greater advantages to the aggressor than to the nation which is the victim of aggression.

The delegations adhering to this view feel that this interpretation is the only one consonant with the origin and development of the resolution as shown by the discussion in the General Commission. Furthermore, they feel that to consider the offensive operations in question

as embracing all the normal operations of war would lead directly into insoluble problems. Such a wider interpretation would likewise involve matters of principle which have not yet been dealt with by the General Commission.

Other delegations stated their opinion that, whenever a State adopts a policy of aggression, all naval armaments whatsoever, whether limitable or non-limitable within the meaning of the Washington and London Naval Treaties, are specifically offensive, but that, on the other hand, all these naval armaments whatsoever become defensive when employed by a nation which is being subjected to aggression.

Moreover, certain delegations, with the object of defining more closely the terms of reference to the Naval Commission, have been at pains to recall the resolution of April 20th, 1932, adopted by all the Members of the Conference, with exception of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (document Conf.D./C.G.24), under the terms of which the provisions of Article 8 of the Covenant of the League of Nations are to be applied for the purpose of determining the criteria for the limitation and reduction of armaments and have argued accordingly that it is necessary to reduce armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations, taking into account at the same time the geographical situation and special circumstances of each State. The General Commission on these grounds decided that the application of these criteria and the methods by which the reduction and limitation of armaments would have to be effected should immediately be examined from a practical standpoint.

Other delegations, however, while anxious to be guided by the general lines laid down by the General Commission, have been at pains to emphasise the point that the object of the Conference is none other than the reduction and the limitation of armaments, and that all efforts should be directed to this object. In this connection, it is essential to bear in mind that the General Commission, by its resolution of April 22nd (document Conf.D./C.G.26(1)), adopted this very principle of qualitative disarmament—that is to say, the selection of certain categories or certain types of weapons the possession or use of which would be either completely forbidden to all States or internationalised by means of a general convention.

They take the view that all kinds of weapons are offensive when they are utilised in attacking other nations. It is, however, impossible to limit considerations of national defence to the eventuality of invasion or violation of territorial sovereignty. National defence is a much vaster problem. No definition of the term "national defence" has been recorded up to the present.

To sum up the results of the discussion and to define as closely as possible the task of the Naval Commission, the latter has agreed to the following resolution (document Conf.D./C.N./C.R.10) :

"The Naval Commission having found that nearly all naval weapons possess to some extent both an offensive and defensive character at the same time ;

"Being convinced that it is very difficult, if not impossible, from a purely technical point of view, to define the criteria of these arms so far as their mainly offensive or defensive character is concerned, since this character even varies according to the circumstances of the different countries ;

"Has come to the conclusion that it can most usefully answer the questions put by the General Commission in giving them the following interpretation :

"Supposing one State either (a) adopts a policy of armed aggression, or (b) undertakes offensive operations against another State, what are the weapons which, by reason of their specific character, and without prejudice to their defensive purposes, are most likely to enable that policy or those operations to be brought rapidly to a successful conclusion ?"

It has been understood that the different States, in indicating the naval weapons which, in their opinion, are the most specifically offensive and the most efficacious against national defence, could indicate whether, in coming to their opinion, they have adopted the attitude indicated above under (a) or that indicated above under (b).

It has been felt at the same time that in their replies the States desiring to do so might refrain from distinguishing between the two criteria—viz., "the most specifically offensive weapons" and "the weapons most efficacious against national defence"—which are mentioned in the resolution of the General Commission.

\* \* \*

The *German* delegation stated that, while it accepted the text of the above resolution, in its opinion the provisions of the Versailles Treaty contain the reply to give to the questions put by the General Commission's resolution, seeing that these provisions have been laid down expressly for the purpose of rendering it impossible for Germany to proceed to a policy of aggression.

The *Soviet* delegation considers that the preamble to the report of the Naval Commission must conform strictly to the terms of reference given by the General Commission on April 22nd, and this is why it declares itself against any extension and revision of the full powers delegated to the Naval Commission, and against the discussion of questions touched upon in the Naval Commission (definition of aggression, the "time factor", definition of the offensive and of the defensive, etc.). The Soviet delegation considers that any attempt to apply the principle of

“national security” to the General Commission’s decision of April 22nd nullifies any results that may be arrived at in regard to qualitative disarmament, and that, notwithstanding differences in geographical conditions, the technical-tactical criteria of present-day naval armaments clearly permit of a definite reply—and this in numerical terms—being given to the three questions put by the General Commission.

Efforts have been made to arrive at a single text, in regard to the various naval arms, acceptable to all the delegations. These efforts having proved unsuccessful, it has consequently been necessary to compile this report in the form in which it now appears—a series of statements by different delegations or groups of delegations, setting forth their particular points of view.

## PART I. — CAPITAL SHIPS.

The *Australian*, the *United States of America*, the *Japanese* and the *United Kingdom* delegations consider that :

“ 1. While in many respects capital ships possess fighting qualities superior to other types of vessels, they are not so constituted that they can be effectively operated independently of other types.

“ 2. For certain countries having great maritime interests, vital lines of overseas communication, or long coast-lines to defend, and which are dependent to a large extent on their fleets for security, the capital ship constitutes the essential backbone of their defence forces.

“ 3. Capital ships are among the least efficient naval weapons for independent operations against merchant commerce.

“ 4. The foregoing considerations are equally applicable, whether the terms of reference are interpreted in accordance with either (a) or (b) or both of paragraph 4 of the Naval Commission’s resolution (see page 127), and the delegations concerned are accordingly of the opinion that capital ships :

“ (a) Are not most specifically offensive ;

“ (b) Are not most efficacious against national defence ;

“ (c) Are not most menacing to civilian populations.

“ 5. Questions of reduction in displacement and gun calibre of capital ships are regarded as outside the present terms of reference, since they involve matters of principle to be first discussed by the General Commission.”

The *Brazilian* delegation agrees with paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of the above statement by the *Australian*, the *United States of America*, the *Japanese* and the *United Kingdom* delegations, while considering, however, that, “ in the case of an attack, the greater the tonnage of those ships and the greater the calibre of their guns, the more efficacious they are against naval and coast defences ”.

The *Italian* delegation stated that :

“ Italy, which has to defend great maritime interests, vital lines of overseas communications and very long coast-lines, and whose security and very life depend on her fleet, while recognising that, in the present state of armaments, capital ships, as defined and limited by existing Treaties, constitute an important element in naval forces, considers that these ships :

“ Are specifically offensive ;

“ Are most efficacious against national defence, and

“ Indirectly, are most threatening to civil populations.

“ The Italian delegation considers that a proposal aiming simply at the reduction of displacement and of gun calibre of capital ships is not within the terms of reference of the Naval Commission.

“ In any case, the Italian delegation is of the opinion that a proposal of this sort will not only not achieve the object of the General Commission but would, on the contrary, lead to the creation of a new type of rapid armoured vessel, and consequently to a new competition in naval construction.”

The *Chinese* delegation, in respect to China, supported the *Italian* delegation’s statement above.

The delegations of *Germany*, the *Argentine*, *Bulgaria*, *Denmark*, *Spain*, *Finland*, *France*, *Greece*, *Norway*, the *Netherlands*, *Poland*, *Roumania*, *Siam*, *Sweden*, *Turkey*, the *Union of Soviet Socialist Republics* and *Yugoslavia* agree on the following conclusions :

“ (a) In regard to capital ships, the predominance of their offensive character over their defensive qualities increases with their tonnage and the calibre of their guns.

“ (b) While admitting that capital ships may contribute efficaciously towards national defence, it must be stated that, in the case of an attack, the greater the tonnage of these ships and the higher the calibre of their guns, the greater is their efficacy against naval and coast defences.

“(c) In regard to the threat to civil populations, it must be stated that the greater the tonnage of these ships and the higher the calibre of their guns, the more they risk causing damage to these populations.

“Consequently, these delegations consider that capital ships exceeding a certain tonnage and carrying guns exceeding a certain calibre must be considered as being :

- “(a) Most specifically offensive ;
- “(b) Most efficacious against national defence ;
- “(c) Most threatening to civilians.”

The following delegations, while agreeing to this last statement, have defined their attitudes as follows :

The German delegate has stated that, in accordance with the provisions of the Versailles Treaty, capital ships of over 10,000 tons and carrying a gun of over 11-inch calibre come within the criteria stated in the General Commission's resolution.

He has further stated that the German delegation would be able to accept a unanimous resolution by the Naval Commission going even further than the provisions of the Versailles Treaty.

The Spanish and Roumanian delegates have proposed to characterise as coming under the three criteria all capital ships over 10,000 tons carrying guns of a calibre over 8 inches.

The French delegation considers that the tonnage above which capital ships come within the three criteria is that necessary to ensure to them a sufficient protection against present-day methods of attack.

The delegate of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has stated that the basic list of offensive naval armaments should comprise all warships of a displacement over 10,000 tons, the maximum calibre of whose guns is over 12 inches (305 millimetres).

He further stated that, in his view, certain types of Washington cruisers possess certain qualitative properties which prevent their being included in the category of defensive armaments.

Further, the delegations of the *Argentine, France, Poland and Roumania* have stated that :  
“Whenever a State adopts a policy of aggression, all capital ships are :

- “(a) Specifically offensive ;
- “(b) Efficacious against national defence ;
- “(c) Threatening to civil populations.”

## PART II. — AIRCRAFT-CARRIERS.

In regard to aircraft-carriers, the Naval Commission draws attention to the Air Commission's Report (document Conf.D./123), Part I, paragraph I (d), and to the declarations relative to this paragraph in Part III).<sup>1</sup>

The delegations of the *Argentine, Australia* and the *United Kingdom* have expressed the following opinion :

“The aircraft-carrier is a vessel which is more vulnerable than any other type of warship and serves solely as an aerodrome from which aircraft can be operated, and therefore cannot of itself be utilised for offensive purposes.

“The question of whether or not the aircraft which are carried in aircraft-carriers can be classified as most specifically offensive, as most efficacious against national defence, or most threatening to civilians depends upon the type of machine carried and the conclusions of the Air Commission as to the offensiveness of different types of aircraft.”

<sup>1</sup> REPORT BY THE AIR COMMISSION.

### Part I.

I. (d) The possibilities of offensive action of aeroplanes carried by aircraft-carriers or warships equipped with landing-platforms (or landing-decks) must be regarded as being increased by the mobility of the vessels which carry them.

### Part III.

Conclusion I (d) was adopted by 16 votes to 2 (United States of America and Portugal). In consequence of this vote, the United States delegation made the following declaration :

“The delegation of the United States considers that the statement in Paragraph I (d) as to the increased possibility of offensive action of ship-based aircraft is inappropriate for inclusion in a report which deals with aircraft generally and which does not otherwise discuss specific types of aircraft or the influence of the base of action upon their offensive capabilities.

“One of the tests already contained in the report is that of capability of arriving at an objective. Thus the mobility feature of ship-based aircraft is already taken into account and any further reference in the report which might give the impression that individual ship-based aircraft are more specifically offensive than individual aircraft taking off from bases close to land frontiers is misleading.”

The Portuguese delegation associated itself with this declaration, and the United Kingdom delegation stated that it shared the views therein expressed.



The *United States* delegation believes that :

“ The terms of reference should be interpreted as regards the first two criteria in accordance with subdivision (a) of the fourth paragraph of the resolution adopted by the Naval Commission; that is to say, in connection with a situation characterised by a policy of armed aggression.

“ The aircraft-carrier is a particularly vulnerable type of warship. It serves only as an aerodrome from which aircraft can be operated.

“ The aircraft-carrier has been recognised by nations possessing that type of vessel as a legitimate type of naval weapon to operate as an auxiliary arm of the fleet. Its principal mission is in connection with fleet operations, particularly in reconnaissance and defence of the fleet against surprise attack.

“ The air armament of an aircraft-carrier is limited in quantity and quality to such extent that it would be ineffective in attacks against the coasts of another country protected by shore-based aircraft.

“ Even if bombing were abolished, aircraft-carriers would still be needed for scouting and other purposes of a purely defensive nature.

“ The value of aircraft-carriers for defence is great, in that they furnish advance information of the approach from seaward of an attacking or invading force.

“ Because of the nature of their operations, aircraft-carriers alone cannot effectively control commerce.

“ The use of naval weapons in such manner as to endanger civilians has been restricted by international agreement for many years and there is no reason why all operations of aircraft-carriers should not be covered by such agreements.

“ In view of the above considerations, the delegation of the *United States* believes that aircraft-carriers do not come within the scope of the three criteria mentioned in the resolution of the General Commission.

“ Questions of reduction in displacement and gun calibre of aircraft-carriers are regarded as outside the present terms of reference, since they involve matters of principle to be first discussed by the General Commission.”

The *French* delegation made the following statement :

“ The question of bombing aircraft being provisionally reserved, these ships will in all cases carry machines destined for other purposes, especially for reconnaissance and scouting.

“ In these circumstances :

“ (a) They are not specifically offensive. On the other hand, they are extremely effective in defence for long-distance scouting for naval forces or convoys and for discovering the possible proximity of an attacking force.

“ (b) They are not particularly threatening to national defence. In the open sea, they are both defensive and offensive. In the neighbourhood of the coast, their aerial resources are usually inferior in quality and quantity to those of the coastal air-force. They are less dangerous to the defence in proportion as their guns are of smaller calibre.

“ (c) Without bombing machines, they are not particularly dangerous to the civilian population. Their power of injuring this population would be still further reduced if, instead of guns of 203 millimetres (8 inches), they only carried guns of 155 millimetres (6.1 inches), which are necessary and sufficient to repel the attacks of small vessels.

Further, the *Argentine* and *French* delegations have stated that :

“ Whenever a State adopts a policy of aggression, all aircraft-carriers are :

“ (a) Specifically offensive ;

“ (b) Efficacious against national defence ;

“ (c) Threatening to civil populations.”

The *German, Chinese, Danish, Spanish, Finnish, Italian, Netherlands, Norwegian, Polish, Roumanian, Siamese, Swedish, Soviet, Turkish* and *Yugoslav* delegations have intimated that they reply in the affirmative to the first as well as the second and third questions.

“ In practice, the aircraft-carrier being a mobile base for bombing aircraft puts within range of these aircraft a considerable number of objectives which otherwise would be outside the range of attack.

“ At the present time, these vessels carry fighter, reconnaissance and bombing aircraft. Even if they were designed for carrying only the two former classes, it is necessary to take into account the fact that the majority of reconnaissance aircraft can be employed for bombing purposes, especially if they be employed at the short distances and in the favourable circumstances which aircraft-carriers permit of being realised.”

The *German* delegation desired to add the following paragraph to the above declaration :

“ Aircraft-carriers are a particularly efficacious arm, in the sense of the three criteria, against countries which do not possess a sufficient air defence.”

The *Polish* delegation, while agreeing with the above declaration of the fifteen Powers, is of the opinion that :

“ The characteristics of aircraft-carriers must be above all considered in the light of the geographical situation and the special conditions of different parts of the world. It is clear that the characteristics stated in the above declaration are especially applicable in the case of narrow waters.”

The delegation of the *Union of Soviet Socialist Republics* agrees with the above statement by the fifteen Powers, while at the same time considering that it applies equally to all other special means of transport for aircraft.

The *Greek* delegation adheres to the views expressed in the first paragraph of the above declaration by the fifteen Powers, from the words “ In practice . . . ” to “. . . range of attack ”.

The *Japanese* and *Siamese* delegations made the following statement :

“ Aircraft-carriers and warships equipped with landing-on platforms or decks must be classed among the arms which are most specifically offensive, most efficacious against national defence or most threatening to civilians.

“ 1. Being highly mobile aerodromes and capable of acting independently of the fleet, these vessels are not only most suitable for making surprise attacks but are capable of working havoc upon inland regions far removed from the sea.

“ 2. The existence of these vessels increases the points to be protected and complicates the relations between the national defence systems of the various countries.

“ 3. These vessels enhance the capacity of a fleet for reconnaissance, observation, and especially for attack ; they also accentuate the aggressive character of a fleet, and enable it to operate in the neighbourhood of the coast of an adversary which even possesses coast-defence air forces.

“ 4. The character of these vessels permits of their being employed more advantageously for aggressive than for defensive purposes.

“ Coast-defence air operations can be carried out more effectively and more economically by a shore-based coast-defence air force than by aircraft-carriers.

“ 5. Being a new arm, they may serve destructive purposes as yet unforeseen.”

### PART III. — SUBMARINES.

The *Argentine*, the *Australian* and *United Kingdom* delegations have made the following declaration :

“ (a) In the case of the submarine, we propose to deal first with criterion No. 3, ‘ most threatening to civilians ’, since it is on this criterion that most of our discussion has turned.

“ The submarine, a new-comer to naval warfare, has undoubtedly a worse record from the point of view of our criterion than have surface ships over the long period that they have been employed. Surface vessels, as well as submarines, were used in the world war for commerce destruction, and the difference in the manner in which these types of vessels were employed is known to all the world. We have asked ourselves whether this is merely due to chance or whether there are not underlying factors which led to this result.

“ We are of opinion that there are such underlying factors.

“ The submarine is a vessel of very special construction which leads to two principal results :

“ First, she is unable either to accommodate sufficient naval ratings to enable a prize crew to be put on board with a view to sending a captured merchant vessel into port for examination or to accommodate the crews of vessels sunk (except for a very limited number), so that, after carrying out the normal procedure of visit and search, a submarine, unless she is to violate the accepted rules of warfare at sea, will frequently be obliged to set her prey free for lack of anywhere to put the crew and passengers.

“ Secondly, she is a weak and vulnerable vessel on the surface, with the result that she cannot be sure of the outcome of an encounter with a merchant ship, should the latter make use of the historic right of all merchant ships to resist capture and endeavour to escape.

“ The result of these two inherent limitations is that the submarine in many cases finds herself in the position in which, while she is on the scene of operations and can see the enemy merchant vessels passing by, she has either to abandon practically all efforts to interfere with those merchant vessels or else to adopt methods which are contrary to the historic rules of war at sea and to common humanity.

“ Similar problems do not exist in the case of the surface ship, and it is this fact, in our opinion, which is largely responsible for the different manner in which the two types of vessel have been used.

“ It has been contended that if all nations adhere to the rules for the conduct of submarines in war, laid down in Part IV of the London Naval Treaty, the differentiation between the surface ship and the submarine in their use against trade will disappear.

“ It must be remembered, however, that these rules are not really new. The submarine, when it entered the field of naval weapons, was subject to exactly the same rules as were surface ships. What is noteworthy is that the surface ship followed those rules and the submarine did not.

“ The Argentine, Australian and United Kingdom delegations do not wish to belittle the value of rules solemnly accepted in this manner, and they sincerely hope that the particular rules in question may be accepted by all nations. They must, however, stress the fact that no rules can alter the inherent limitations of the submarine mentioned above. The fact remains, therefore, that, should another war unfortunately take place in the future, the temptation to use the submarine in an inhuman manner will inevitably be greater than the temptation to use surface ships.

“ The Argentine, Australian and United Kingdom delegations are therefore forced to the conclusion that the submarine is a type of vessel which should be classed as ‘ most threatening to civilians ’.

“ (b) We come now to the first of our criteria, ‘ most specifically offensive ’.

“ The submarine, like all types of vessels, can be used in an offensive or defensive manner, according to the type of operation which is being undertaken.

“ We do not, however, feel that the submarine can be selected as a weapon which will enable the attack of an aggressor rapidly to break down the defence of the State attacked, which, as we have already said, we have taken as our guiding principle in determining whether weapons are specifically offensive.

“ Our answer to criterion No. 1 is accordingly, No.

“ (c) ‘ Most efficacious against national defence ’. The submarine used over a long period can be very efficacious against national defence if used in a manner contrary to the rules laid down in Part IV of the London Naval Treaty.

“ We do not, however, feel that the submarine can be singled out from amongst other naval weapons as possessing qualities which make it most efficacious against national defence.”

The *Canadian* delegation desires to associate itself with the above declaration of the delegations of the Argentine, Australia and the United Kingdom regarding submarines.

The *United States of America* delegation considers :

“ (a) That the terms of reference, as regards the first two criteria, should be interpreted in accordance with subdivision (a) of the resolution adopted by the Naval Commission ; that is to say, in connection with a situation characterised by a policy of armed aggression.

“ Under this interpretation, no distinction need be drawn between the first two criteria.

“ Historically, the outstanding stigmata of measures of armed aggression have been secret preparation and sudden attack, with or without formal declaration of war.

“ Of all naval weapons, the submarine is best adapted, by reason of its specific character, to carry out secret preparations of decisive effect in sudden offensive operations against the naval defence forces of another Power. Submarines in the possession of the country suffering aggression do not afford adequate defence against such an operation.

“ In view of the above, the United States delegation is of the opinion that the submarine is a naval weapon whose character is :

“ (a) Most specifically offensive ;

“ (b) Most efficacious against national defence.

“ (b) With respect to the third criterion—*i.e.*, ‘ whose character is most threatening to civilians ’—it may be admitted that the submarine is relatively inoffensive in so far as concerns civilians on shore. The only civilians whose safety in war has ever given rise to apprehension in connection with the submarine are civilians at sea, including passengers and crews of non-combatant and neutral vessels.

“ The submarine, because of her inherent limitations, is less able than any type of surface vessel to assure the safety of non-combatants in the exercise of the right of visit and search.

“ The inability of submarines properly to exercise control over commerce, even when acting in good faith, probably would result in incidents, followed by retaliation and a repetition of the horrors of the late war.

“ The provisions of Article 22 of the London Naval Treaty do not ensure to civilians the same degree of safety that they formerly enjoyed when subjected to control by surface ships alone. Whereas the surface vessel of war was obligated with entire responsibility for their safety, the submarine, by these rules, is authorised to place this obligation upon the non-combatants themselves or upon some other ship in the vicinity over which the submarine

exerts no authority. Furthermore, these rules tend to encourage the submarine to sink vessels at sea, a practice which formerly was permitted to surface ships only under exceptional circumstances.

“ In view of the above, the United States delegation considers the submarine as a naval weapon whose character is specifically threatening to civilians.

“ Questions of reduction in displacement and gun-calibre of submarines are regarded as outside the present terms of reference, since they involve matters of principle to be first discussed by the General Commission.”

The delegation of *Brazil* agrees with the above opinion of the delegation of the United States of America, and wishes to add to it the following remarks :

“ In the first place, the idea of reduction of the tonnage of submarines, suggested by several delegations in order to give them a defensive character, must not be considered, because it would necessitate an examination, by the comparative method, of the natural features of the open sea or narrow waters as theatre of possible naval operations for all nations.

“ In regard to the mine-laying submarine, the mere idea that its purpose is to operate in foreign waters takes from it its defensive character.”

The delegation of the *Union of Soviet Socialist Republics* adheres to the above opinion expressed by the delegation of the United States of America, with the addition of the following remark :

“ Although the question of reduction of tonnage does not fall within the terms of reference given in the General Commission's resolution, all the considerations advanced by the United States delegation apply particularly to submarines of over 600 tons.”

The delegations of *Spain, Finland, France, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Roumania, Siam and Venezuela* have put forward the following opinion :

“ (a) Submarines possess at the same time the character of either an offensive or a defensive arm. They are able to co-operate usefully in coastal waters or in the open sea, in many defensive operations (protection of a coast against bombardment or a disembarkation, protection of convoys, etc.). They are particularly qualified for the defensive duties of patrolling and protection.

“ (b) They contribute at the same time to the naval defence of a given country and to the sea-borne attack, or the blockade, of an enemy country.

“ (c) They are not particularly threatening to non-combatants, on the understanding that all States will have to adhere to the rules laid down in Part IV of the Treaty of London.”

The above delegations recall several of the remarks they have already put forward during the discussions.

“ Submarines have, in regard to merchant vessels, the same rights and the same duties as surface vessels. They will exercise their rights only if they can at the same time acquit themselves of their duties. It must be conceded that the commanding officer of a submarine will obey the instructions of his Governments as implicitly as will the commanding officer of a surface vessel.

“ The submarine has the same rights as other vessels to search merchant ships. Capture, seizure and destruction can only take place in accordance with the conditions laid down by international law. A submarine escorting a captured ship may be obliged to release it and flee from surface patrols ; but this is also true for a surface captor encountering in the same circumstances a hostile ship stronger than itself.

“ It may here be remarked that submarines of large tonnage are those with the greatest facilities for taking on board personnel which has had to abandon its ship for any reason.

“ It is not possible, on the basis of the case of the last war, to draw general conclusions from particular circumstances. The special use which was made of submarines arises, not from their innate characteristics, but from the instructions they have received, which have, moreover, varied from time to time. The reason for this is not a technical one but political. The duties of ships of all categories, including submarines, have already been restated and definitely laid down. They are, in this respect, the subject of repeated declarations, the value and effectiveness of which cannot be called in question.

“ In those circumstances, the reproach of inhumanity with regard to non-combatants cannot be adduced against submarines.

“ The submarine is chiefly intended to act against warships. It is essentially suitable for operating against them and in conjunction with naval forces of all kinds. The history of the war provides numerous examples of such action and shows the importance of the part which the submarine plays or can play in collective operations of a purely naval character.

“ The submarine which attacks from close quarters is not more liable to commit errors than surface vessels attacking by gunfire at night or in thick weather, or at a great distance in clear weather.

“ By its very existence and by the uncertainty as to the place and degree of the danger which it constitutes, the submarine is the best defence of small or medium navies. As several delegations have emphasised, its abolition would be equivalent to increasing the inequality between the weak and the strong.”

The delegations of *Finland, France, Latvia, Poland, Roumania and Venezuela* conclude that the defensive character of the submarine is clearly preponderant and thus it is indispensable to the defence of certain Powers.

These delegations consider that, in consequence, the submarine :

- “ (a) Is not a specifically offensive arm ;
- “ (b) Is not an arm particularly efficacious against national defence ;
- “ (c) Is not an arm threatening to civilian populations.”

The *Spanish* delegation, while supporting the above conclusions of the delegations of *Finland*, *France*, *Latvia*, *Poland*, *Roumania* and *Venezuela*, considers that submarines of large displacement can take part in offensive fleet operations, and, in certain cases, in the blockade of distant countries, and that submarines of a displacement exceeding 1,000 tons are most specifically offensive.

The delegations of *China* and *Italy* consider that the offensive character of submarines would become preponderant if capital ships did not exist. Consequently :

- “ (a) If capital ships form part of fleets, the construction of submarines is necessary for defensive reasons.
- “ (b) If capital ships do not form part of fleets, the construction of submarines would have a specifically offensive character.”

The delegations of *Finland*, *France*, *Italy* and *Venezuela* consider that displacement is not a criterion for defining the more or less offensive character of submarines. Actually, in narrow waters, small submarines can be as efficacious as those of large tonnage, and, in the case of a defensive action having to be prosecuted to a considerable distance from the submarine's proper bases, these latter are the only ones which can take part in it.

Further, the *Argentine* and *French* delegations consider that, whenever a State adopts a policy of aggression, submarines are :

- “ (a) Specifically offensive ;
- “ (b) Efficacious against national defence.”

The *Japanese* delegation makes the following statement :

“ As compared with surface craft, the submarine is a far less effective weapon whether afloat or submerged, it being only upon the approach of an enemy vessel into close proximity that a submarine can show its power of attack. The submarine is therefore a defensive weapon, one which is indispensable for the defence of a Power with an inferior navy.

“ Any fear that the submarine might be so used as to endanger civilians has been removed by the rules of international law.

“ In view of the foregoing, it cannot be said that the submarine is :

- “ (a) Specifically offensive ;
- “ (b) Efficacious against national defence ;
- “ (c) Menacing to civil populations.

“ The defensive character of the submarine does not alter according to its size. The type of submarine best adapted to a given country naturally varies with its peculiar conditions and, for Japan, the maximum unit size should not be less than 2,000 tons.”

The *German* delegation has pointed out that the authors of the Treaty of Versailles have, by the terms of this Treaty, characterised the submarine as a specifically offensive arm.

The delegations of *Denmark*, *Greece*, *Norway*, the *Netherlands*, *Portugal*, *Sweden*, *Turkey* and *Yugoslavia* are of opinion that :

“ Submarines of large tonnage, and the most heavily armed both as regards torpedoes and guns, are the most capable of operating in an offensive manner and the most efficacious against national defence. The capacity of submarines to operate in these directions diminishes in proportion to their tonnage and their armament.

“ Submarines of lesser tonnage, and especially those whose tonnage does not exceed that strictly necessary to ensure to them sufficient qualities of security and habitability, are predominantly defensive in character.

“ As regards civil populations, it cannot be said that submarines are particularly threatening to them, so long as they conform, in the same way as other vessels, to the rules of international law.

“ Consequently, these delegations consider that :

- “ (a) Submarines of large tonnage are most specifically offensive ;
- “ (b) Submarines of large tonnage are most efficacious against national defence ;
- “ (c) Submarines are not specifically threatening to civil populations so long as they conform, in the same way as other vessels, to the rules of international law.”

“ The *Portuguese* delegation, while accepting the above declaration, considers that the limit of tonnage sufficient to permit of the employment of submarines specially for coast and harbour defence—having regard to the necessity of their possessing adequate arrangements for the protection of their crews—should not exceed 1,200 tons on the surface.”

#### PART IV. — AUTOMATIC CONTACT MINES.

At the request of a number of delegations, the Naval Commission also considered whether automatic contact mines come within the series of naval armaments referred to in the General Commission's resolution of April 22nd.

In this connection, the Naval Commission would call attention to the fact that the eighth Convention of the second Peace Conference at The Hague in 1907 laid down rules for the use of contact mines at sea. In virtue of the said rules, it is forbidden to lay unanchored automatic contact mines, unless they be so constructed as to become harmless one hour at most after those who laid them have lost control over them, and to lay anchored automatic contact mines which do not become harmless as soon as they have broken loose from their moorings. It is also forbidden to lay automatic contact mines off the coasts and ports of the enemy with the sole object of intercepting commercial navigation. It is further prescribed that, when anchored automatic contact mines are employed, every possible precaution must be taken for the security of peaceful navigation. The belligerents undertake to provide, as far as possible, for these mines becoming harmless after a limited time has elapsed, and, where the mines cease to be under observation, to notify the danger-zones, as soon as military exigencies permit, by a notice to mariners, which must also be communicated to the Governments through diplomatic channels.

The experience of the great war showed, however, that these rules had not prevented great loss of life among non-combatants.

The General Commission's resolution, which is submitted to the Naval Commission, has appeared to provide the latter with a suitable opportunity for reverting to the problems relating to the laying of contact mines at sea.

In the course of the discussion in the Naval Commission, several delegations laid stress on the specifically offensive character of mines laid outside a coastal zone to be determined, pointing out the essential difference which exists between automatic contact mines and other naval weapons, in view of the fact that once mines have been laid they entirely escape the control of those who have laid them.

Certain delegations, on the other hand, expressed the opinion that mines laid within the coastal zone to be determined are a definitely defensive weapon, essential to the defence of coasts and sea-ports. Any regulations concerning mines should proceed from the idea that the coast defences should possess special facilities.

The Naval Commission examined also the question whether contact mines should be regarded as a weapon particularly efficacious against the national defence of a country. This question was answered in the negative.

As regards the third criterion indicated by the General Commission—that of the threatening character of certain naval arms to the civilian population—the Naval Commission is of the opinion that automatic contact mines laid outside a coastal zone to be determined expose non-combatants to very serious dangers, especially when these mines have been laid without timely notification or on a sea-route which is necessary to non-combatant and neutral shipping.

The *French* and *Roumanian* delegations have suggested that the gun-range of modern ships should be taken as the limit of the coastal zone in which automatic contact mines might be laid.

The *German* delegation has, on the other hand, expressed the opinion that, in view of the great range of modern large-calibre guns, a limit thus fixed would not reduce sufficiently the dangers to which non-combatants are exposed.

The *French* and *Roumanian* delegations have suggested that all mines should be marked by the Government which employs them.

The *Argentine*, the *United States of America*, the *Italian* and the *United Kingdom* delegations, while supporting the proposal to regard the use of automatic mines in the open sea as specifically dangerous to non-combatants, desired to state that they regarded mines laid in the open sea as a very effective defence against submarines. Hence they could only recommend their prohibition on the condition that submarines should also be abolished.

The delegation of the *Union of Soviet Socialist Republics* makes the following statement :

“ The Soviet delegation, returning to the first proposal of the Netherlands delegation contained in document Conf.D./C.N.26, which reads :

“ “ The Naval Commission is of the opinion that submarine automatic contact mines laid in the open sea are extremely threatening to civilians”.

“ Considers that to this question it is necessary to give a simple reply. From this point of view, it is possible to agree entirely with the formula given by the Netherlands delegation in this document.

“ As the further close examination and detailed investigation of the matter does not follow from the duty assigned to us by the General Commission and, first, leads to the discussion of a series of problems having no reference to qualitative disarmament, and, secondly and lastly, compels us to discuss questions which require preliminary solution in principle by the General Commission, the Soviet delegation abstains from accepting a more detailed document.”

The *United Kingdom* delegation has made the following statement :

“ The original proposal of the Netherlands delegation was to prohibit the laying of contact mines in the ‘ open sea ’.

“ It was on this basis that discussions took place in the Naval Commission, and the United Kingdom delegation, seeing no reason for the substitution of the words ‘ outside a coastal zone to be determined ’ for the words ‘ open sea ’, wish to place on record that, in associating themselves with the finding of the Commission, it is on the understanding that in their case the words ‘ open sea ’ must be substituted for ‘ outside a coastal zone to be determined ’.”

The *Netherlands* delegation, considering that the Naval Commission has unanimously agreed with its proposal declaring that automatic contact mines laid “ in the open sea ” are among the arms most threatening to civil populations, regrets that, in the present report, the words, “ in the open sea ” have been replaced by the words “ outside a coastal zone to be determined ”.

It appears from the discussions that this substitution cannot be considered as having for its object the modification of the meaning of the declaration, nor to endanger the principle of the freedom of the seas on which it is based.

Consequently, the Netherlands delegation wishes to state that, in the determination of the coastal zone, this principle must be strictly respected.

#### PART V. — RIVER WAR VESSELS.

With reference to the resolution of the General Commission of April 22nd, two arguments have been upheld in the Naval Commission in regard to the nature of monitors and river craft.

The *Hungarian* delegation, supported by the delegations of *Germany*, *Italy* and the *Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, is of the opinion that surface river vessels, specially built for service on European rivers, are most capable of offensive action and of contributing efficaciously in offensive operations of which the purpose is to break down the national defence. The offensive capacity is relatively greater in the larger types of these vessels and decreases proportionately with the tonnage and armament.

Large river craft carrying relatively heavy artillery are the vessels which are most likely to cause the greatest damage to civilian populations.

These States therefore consider that surface river vessels specially constructed for use on European rivers with a standard displacement exceeding 250 tons and artillery of more than 105 millimetres (4.1 inches) calibre should be regarded as :

- (a) Specifically offensive ;
- (b) Specially efficacious against national defence ;
- (c) Most menacing to civil populations.

The *Polish*, *Roumanian* and *Yugoslav* delegations, on the other hand, hold that river craft do not come under any of the three headings mentioned in the resolution of the General Commission. Such craft, they claim, should be regarded as defensive weapons, in view of their special construction, limited field of action and lighter armament.

For certain countries whose naval forces are insufficient to ensure the defence of their maritime frontiers, certain river craft serve as floating batteries for the defence of estuaries and deltas against attacks from ocean-going vessels. It is perfectly logical that such river craft should be supplied with artillery comparable to that of sea-going vessels, which are considered, in the opinion of all the naval Powers, as being of a specifically offensive nature. Furthermore, the effective power of their artillery, compared with land artillery of the same calibre, and their vulnerability, particularly to mines, lead these delegations to the conclusion that river craft cannot be regarded as specifically offensive nor particularly efficacious against national defence, nor as most menacing weapons to civil populations. The *Roumanian* delegation has stressed the desirability of the question of river war vessels being discussed in taking into consideration all existing river war vessels on the rivers of all the continents.

The naval Commission has carefully examined the questions whether monitors and river craft come under the categories of arms covered by the resolution of the General Commission. It was obliged to find that, according to the proposal of the *Hungarian* delegation, the problem has arisen only in regard to European rivers.

However, in view of the general terms of reference of the General Commission, it seems to the Naval Commission difficult to restrict the discussion of the problem purely to surface river craft specially constructed for use on European rivers. Indeed, it seems unavoidable, for the purpose of replying to the questions put by the General Commission, that the question should be examined under a broader aspect, since the categories of vessels in question exist in other continents also.

Moreover, the Naval Commission considered that a discussion on the general plane could not be usefully entered upon without taking into consideration the particular situation existing in other parts of the world where vessels of the categories in question are also in use. In order to take into due account all these special conditions liable to influence the problem, the Naval Commission would require data which it does not possess and which is all the more necessary in that the question of monitors and river craft implies problems concerning, not only the naval forces properly so-called, but also certain land armaments and coast artillery.

The Naval Commission has, therefore, decided not to give any opinion on the subject of monitors and river craft, and to confine itself to bringing the foregoing details to the attention of the General Commission.

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Official No. : Conf.D.127.

Geneva, June 23rd, 1932.

REPORT TO THE GENERAL COMMISSION (Document Conf.D.121).

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*Note by the Secretary-General.*

In accordance with the instructions of the President of the Conference, the Secretary-General has the honour to circulate to the Conference the following document :

COMMUNICATION, DATED JUNE 16TH, 1932, FROM THE PERSIAN DELEGATE TO THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE NAVAL COMMISSION.

Geneva, June 16th, 1932.

[*Translation.*]

I have the honour to inform you that, on reading the opinions of the various delegations on naval armaments, I have observed that the report to the General Commission contains no mention of the views expressed by the Persian delegation.

At the Naval Commission's meeting on May 3rd, Colonel Riazi gave his opinion on the whole of the naval questions on the agenda.

This statement made it clear that Persia was prepared to accept the lowest naval armaments and recognised *a priori* as non-offensive only submarines of small tonnage, provided that in the use of these vessels the international humanitarian restrictions imposed by the Treaty of London were rendered general and strictly observed.

I should therefore be very much obliged if you would have these general ideas inserted in the report as the opinion of the Persian delegation and, should it not be possible to modify the final report, append this declaration to the report to be sent to the General Commission and inform the other members of the Commission of its tenor.

(Signed) A. SEPAHBODI.

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Official No. : Conf.D./C.N.15.

Geneva, March 22nd, 1932.

QUESTIONNAIRE DRAWN UP BY THE BUREAU OF THE NAVAL  
COMMISSION REGARDING THE DEFINITIONS (LEGAL OR THEORETICAL  
EFFECTIVES, BUDGETARY EFFECTIVES, ACTUAL OR REAL EFFECTIVES)  
CONTAINED IN ARTICLES 2, 3 AND 4 OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION  
DRAWN UP BY THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION FOR THE  
DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE (Document C.687.M.288.1930.IX).

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The naval Commission has requested its Bureau to prepare for the further technical work of the Commission in regard to naval personnel.

The Bureau, with the assistance of several of the Commission's technical experts, has drawn up a questionnaire which might serve as an *aide-mémoire* to the delegations in their statements regarding the interpretations given by them to Articles 2, 3 and 4 of the draft Convention.



The Bureau would be glad if delegations will forward to the Bureau, when the Conference resumes its sittings, their replies to the attached questionnaire.

Document Conf.D./C.T.4, which shows how the analogous questions have been treated by the Land Commission, is forwarded herewith for information to all delegations.<sup>1</sup>

1. What meaning have you given to the word "effectives" ? (Theoretical or legal, budgetary, actual, etc., effectives.)

2. What have you counted as days of presence ? (Short leave, long leave, illness, travelling, early discharge, etc.) :

- (a) For an officer ;
- (b) For a professional sailor ;
- (c) For a conscript sailor serving with the colours ;
- (d) For a militiaman, reservist, etc., undergoing a period of service, attending a drill, a training lecture, a muster-parade or an inspection.

3. What have you counted in your effectives ? (Various services, missions, persons detached to civil services, etc.) :

- (a) Officers ;
- (b) Professional sailors ;
- (c) Cadet officers or cadet petty-officers undergoing preparatory naval training ;
- (d) Men called up with the annual contingent, militiamen, reservists ;
- (e) Young men undergoing preparatory naval training (boys, etc.).

4. Have you counted in your effectives :

- (a) Coast watchers and coastguards ;
- (b) Coast-defence personnel.

5. Have you counted in the "formations organised on a military basis" any classes of personnel not covered by the above headings ?

6. What difficulties have you met in interpreting the terms employed in Articles 2, 3 and 4 of the draft Convention ?

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<sup>1</sup> See Series D, Volume 1, pages 100 to 108.

Geneva, May 31st, 1932.

REPLIES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE (Document Conf.D./C.N.15) REGARDING THE DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS LEGAL OR THEORETICAL EFFECTIVES, BUDGETARY EFFECTIVES, ACTUAL OR REAL EFFECTIVES, CONTAINED IN ARTICLES 2, 3 AND 4 OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION DRAWN UP BY THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION FOR THE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE (Document C.687.M.288.1930.IX).

Country.	Question 1.	Question 2.	Question 3.	Question 4.	Question 5.	Question 6.
1. Union of South Africa.	<i>Actual</i> —i.e., men doing training in the South African Naval Service—whole-time serving, or a number of men doing between them 365 days' service in the year in the Naval Volunteer Reserve.	<i>Full-time Personnel.</i> — 365 days. <i>Naval Reserve Personnel.</i> — Maximum number of days training permitted by law—six hours' parades equal one day's duty.	All members of the forces who have engaged for service.	(a) No coast-watchers. No coast-guards. (b) Coast defence personnel is Garrison Artillery and members of, and counted with, the land (military) forces.	There are no such formations in connection with naval service.	None, except to determine a day's presence for part-time Naval Volunteer Reserve—where a parade or parades totalling six hours are taken as one day's duty.
2. New Zealand.	<i>Actual.</i>	(a) (b) Regular forces —periods of temporary absence counted as days of duty. (c) There are no conscripts. (d) Only class is reservists of New Zealand Naval Forces—for whom days of training are counted as days of presence.	Counted in : (a) Officers ; (b) Professional sailors; (c) Reservists ; (d) Boys accepted for service and under training. Other classes not applicable.	(a) (b) Coast defence personnel included in military returns.	No such formations in New Zealand.	Returns are based on our interpretation of Articles 2 and 3. Following points are worthy of mention : (a) Term " Effective " in draft Convention needs definition ; (b) Definition of a day's duty appears necessary.
3. United States of America.	Figures in the United States report of particulars	<i>Regular Navy and Marine Corps.</i> — Each	(a) All officers of regular Navy and Marine Corps and	United States coast defences are manned by Coast	No.	Except as noted in foregoing comment—no

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Country.

Question 1.

to the League of Nations are for average daily number of effectives in service or in training according to Articles 2, 3 and 4 of draft Convention—with no deductions for absence.

*Theoretical or Legal Effectives.* — This term would be understood as applying to the maximum strength authorised by law. In the United States, it would refer to the maximum authorised strength of the regular Navy and Marine Corps.

*Budgetary Effectives.* — By this term would be understood the personnel for which current appropriations provide. In the United States, the annual appropriations provide for members of personnel much lower than the authorised strength.

Question 2.

officer and man is counted as performing a day's duty every day with no deductions for leave, illness or any absence.

Number given is average number of actual effectives on last day of each month of the year.

*Naval and Marine Corps Reserve.* — Number is calculated according to Article 3. Days in training are counted days of duty.

Periods of training of less than a day are counted on basis eight hours' training equivalent to one day's duty.

Question 3.

certain reserves with status of effectives including Supply, Construction, Civil Engineers, Medical and Dental Corps, and Chaplains.

(b) All enlisted men of regular Navy, Marine Corps and Reserve.

(c) Midshipmen at Naval Academy are not counted—their training is preliminary. They will be counted in future if this is to be the general practice.

All enlisted men at trade schools are included, as they are personnel of regular navy.

(d) Reservists counted according to their time in training—see under Question 2.

(e) Civilian college students taking courses in Reserve Officers' Training Corps not counted—their instruction is preliminary and involves no commitment to service.

Enlisted men at naval training stations are counted, as they belong to personnel of regular navy.

Question 4.

Artillery Corps—part of United States Army—not included.

Coast-guard not included. — See Note 1 (below).

Question 5.

Question 6.

great difficulty. — See Note 2 (below).

*Note 1.* — The coast-guard of the United States was formed in 1915 by a consolidation under that name of the then existing Revenue-Cutter Service and the Life-saving Service. It is essentially a police force to prevent smuggling and to prevent the loss of life at sea. By the law which created it, in time of peace it operates under the Treasury Department. Similarly, it operates as a part of the navy, subject to the orders of the Secretary of the Navy, only in time of war or when the President shall so direct. It is not a part of the navy, nor has the navy any control over the personnel of the coast-guard, except when co-operating therewith in accordance with the express provisions of law referred to above. The executive act required to bring the coast-guard under control of the navy is similar in effect to a measure of mobilisation. For these reasons, the coast-guard is not considered "capable of being employed for military purposes without measures of mobilisation", and its personnel have not been included as naval effectives.

*Note 2.* — Except as noted in the foregoing comment (Note 1), there has been no great difficulty in interpreting these terms in their relation to the naval forces of the United States. Similarly, other Powers will probably have found little difficulty in making a definite interpretation as regards their own forces. The difficulties arise when it is a question of determining whether a common interpretation has governed the data submitted by the various Powers. These difficulties are inherent in the wide differences in organisation and composition of naval effectives, and directly reflect the fact that the number of naval effectives is a less significant measure of naval strength than are the numbers and types of ships composing a navy. As illustrations of the kinds of difficulties to be encountered in applying a single formula for the limitation of naval effectives, the following may be mentioned:

Countries with short terms of service or enlistment require larger complements for their vessels than countries with a system of long-term enlistments. There are nations which include in their naval establishments personnel of a Marine Corps, air forces, crews of supply and other non-combatant vessels, and personnel for shore activities such as coast defences. Other nations include some of these effectives in their land or separate air forces or employ civilians for these duties.

These differences were clearly shown in the particulars submitted to the League by the various Powers. The figures of some countries such as the United States and Japan included all naval aviation personnel, because such personnel is an integral part of the navy, whereas the figures of other countries such as the United Kingdom, France and Italy did not include naval aviation personnel, because such personnel belong to a separate air force. The figures of some countries such as the United States included the crews of oilers and supply ships, all of which are manned by naval personnel, whereas the figures of other countries such as the United Kingdom did not include the crews of such vessels, because these vessels are manned by civilian personnel. Some figures included personnel of a Marine Corps whose duties are both on board ship and in naval stations ashore (United States), whereas others included the personnel of a much smaller Marine Corps whose duties are solely afloat (the United Kingdom). One country did not include Royal Marine Police (the United Kingdom), while in another country (United States), the duties of this organisation are performed by enlisted men of the Marine Corps who have been included in the figures. Some figures included the personnel of coast defences (France), because such defences are manned by naval personnel, while others did not include such personnel because they are an integral part of the army (United States). Some nations reported effectives for sea formations organised on a military basis (Italy), while other nations had no such effectives. The coast-guard organisations of the United States and the United Kingdom were not included, as these formations are not available without measures of mobilisation. There appear to be no such organisations in the other three of the five great naval Powers. The United Kingdom did not report effectives for other parts of the empire which are separate members of the League of Nations, although the vessels belonging to those nations are counted in the tonnages upon which the ratios of the London Treaty are based.

4. Sweden.	<p>Figures for volunteer personnel are "Legal Effectives", which corresponds to "Budgetary Effectives".</p> <p>Figures for conscripts are "Actual Effectives".</p>	<p>No deductions for leave or absence for illness, etc.</p> <p>For professional personnel, 365 days are counted.</p> <p>For conscripts of the annual contingent, the "effective" days are counted.</p>	<p>Reserve officers and N.C.O's are included, also "military-civilians" (supply staff, doctors, musicians, etc.), midshipmen, reserve midshipmen and boys.</p>	<p>Coast-guard, pilotage and lighthouse personnel are civilians and are not included unless they have completed periods in the navy.</p> <p>Coast fixed defence personnel is included.</p>	No	<p>Members of civil clubs of "Motor Boat Flotillas" are not included, as they cannot be employed without previous mobilisation.</p> <p>If they have completed short periods in the navy, they are included.</p>
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5. Portugal.	<p>Average budgetary.</p> <p>The budget laid down the naval contingent as required for the fleet. A certain percentage of naval personnel is employed ashore for necessary naval services dealing directly with the fleet and also in the instructional schools.</p>	<p>The budget lays down the days of presence for each category.</p> <p>Only naval personnel is shown—the average effectives cannot be exceeded and no deductions are made for absence.</p>	<p>(a) Officer effectives comprise all classes of naval officers, including auxiliary officers.</p> <p>Officers of the naval reserve are excluded and also those on unlimited leave, or extraordinary and special missions, and supernumeraries.</p> <p>(b) Included only the men in active naval service—naval reserve not included.</p> <p>(c) Cadet officers and petty officers undergoing preparatory naval training are included.</p> <p><i>Enseignes élèves</i> of the Naval School are not included.</p> <p>(d) All men called up with the naval contingent are included, except reservists. There are no militiamen.</p> <p>(e) Young men doing preparatory naval training are included.</p>	<p>There is no naval personnel exclusively for these services.</p>	No.	No.
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Country.	Question 1.	Question 2.	Question 3.	Questions 4 and 5.	Question 6.
6. Japan.	<p>The word "Effectives" in Part II (Naval Armaments) of Japanese Government communication dated March 10th, 1931, means "Actual Effectives".</p> <p>"Number of Effectives established by the Military Ordinance . . . 138026" corresponds to "Legal Effectives".</p>	<p>In days of presence are included days of leave, illness and travelling for officers, professional sailors and conscripts.</p> <p>Days of early discharge are not included.</p> <p>For reservists, days for calling up for "service" or training are included, but those for "inspection" are not.</p>	<p>Officers and men of all grades in active service and reservists called up for service or training are counted—whether in service at sea, land service corps, naval administration, colleges, hospitals, navy yards, on missions or detached to civil service.</p> <p>Cadets of naval colleges doing preparatory training for active service are included.</p> <p>No young men receive compulsory preparatory naval training.</p>	<p>No coast-guard nor sea formations organised on a military basis exist at present.</p>	
7. China.	<p>Number given is average daily effectives for the year.</p>	<p>No deduction for absence except in case of early discharge.</p>	<p>All personnel performing duty in the naval service, attached to other administrations, serving in the formations organised on a military basis and under training in the various schools.</p>		
8. Canada.	<p>Number given is number of those actually undergoing service.</p>	<p>No deductions for leave, illness, travelling for officers, professional sailors or reservists undergoing service.</p> <p>No conscripts exist.</p>	<p>Included : officers, professional sailors and reservists undergoing service.</p> <p>No cadet officers, cadet petty officers, young men undergoing preparatory naval training or naval militia exist.</p>	<p>Question 4. Coast-guard and coast defence personnel not included.</p> <p>Officers and crew of Dominion steamers, tugs, icebreakers, etc., fishery protection vessels and Customs vessels are not included except when belonging to naval reserves and doing training with that force.</p> <p><i>Vide</i> Canadian return (document Conf.D.26).</p>	<p>Question 5. No. No.</p>

9. United Kingdom.

All officers and men from their date of entry have been returned as "Effectives".

Total active service personnel is obtained by taking the average of monthly returns of numbers borne in the financial year.

(a) (b) Temporary absences due to leave, sickness, etc., have been considered periods of duty.

(c) Not applicable.

(d) Actual number of days under training is given in the return. Temporary absences due to leave, sickness, etc., have been considered as periods of duty. Drills, parades, lectures, etc., have been counted as periods of duty—six hours' drill, etc., has been reckoned as equivalent of one day's duty.

(a) Officers attached to Fleet Air Arm have been included in Table VI.

(a) and (b) Officers and men serving in navies of other members of British Commonwealth of Nations or on missions have not been included.

(c) All cadets under training or serving afloat or in colleges ashore have been included.

(d) Not applicable.

(e) Boys at establishments at which they are trained for the navy have been included.

The only establishments which train boys solely for a naval career are part of the navy and the boys are considered as "effectives" from their date of entry.

(a) Coast-guard not included. They do not come within the category of naval forces or sea formations organised on a military basis because:

(1) In peace-time the force is not under Admiralty control at all, but under the Board of Trade;

(2) The executive act required to bring the coast-guard under the Admiralty is similar in effect to a measure of mobilisation.

(3) The force is civilian and not organised on a military basis: its personnel do not undergo naval training.

(b) Personnel engaged on coast defence is not part of the navy and has therefore not been included in the naval section of the return.

None exist.

None.

A certain latitude has been assumed in the interpretation of Article 3, as explained in answer to Questions 1 and 2.

10. Norway.

Actual.

Counted as days of presence:

(a) (b) (c) All ranks of professional personnel—365 days.

Reserve personnel and conscripts—the number of days in service in the year.

(d) Not counted.

No deduction for leave, sick-leave, etc.

Counted in the effectives:

(a) (b) (c) Officers, N.C.O.'s, cadets and men in permanent active service.

(d) Conscripts in two contingents of different strength, each serving 6 months.

(e) None such exists.

(a) Not counted.

(b) Part of army organisation.

No.

With the method indicated, no difficulties. The small figures are due to strictly reduced number of ships in commission. These figures cannot be regarded as expressing the situation in the navy on each day of the year.

Country.	Question 1.	Question 2.	Question 3.	Question 4.	Question 5.	Question 6.
11. Argentine.	<p>Following meaning is given to the word "Effectives" :  The number of naval personnel, including commanding officers, officers, cadets of the naval school, apprentices of all schools for subordinate personnel (mechanics, gunners, seamen, engineers, electricians, torpedo-men, etc.), warrant-officers, petty officers, seamen and conscripts of all naval corps and special services (<i>cuervo general</i>, air force, mechanical and electrical engineer corps, torpedo corps, medical service and administration).</p> <p><i>Theoretical or legal effectives.</i> — Those authorised by the organic law of the navy.</p> <p><i>Budgetary Effectives.</i> — Those authorised by the annual Finance Act.</p> <p><i>Actual Effectives.</i> — Those entered on the daily rolls of vessels and all other naval units, whatever may be their position at the moment—<i>i.e.</i>, whether present, on short leave, sick, on mission, etc.</p>	<p>For (a) (b) (c) and (d) are counted all days from date of incorporation to date of discharge, with no deductions for sickness, leave, missions, etc.</p> <p>Discharge is removal from the service at end of engagement or for disciplinary reasons and, in the case of conscripts, on completion of legal period of service.</p>	<p>Counted : <i>actual</i> effectives incorporated in the navy, including those in units not intended for maritime defence. This applies to the Marine Prefecture, which is attached to the navy and whose personnel is organised for maritime police duties but receives no naval or military training nor forms part of naval reserves.</p> <p>We have thus counted all the personnel referred to in answer to Question 1, whatever service or duties they perform.</p> <p>(e) None exists.</p>	<p>No coast-watchers exist. If this refers to lighthouse or other hydrographic personnel, these are included in the effectives. Coast-guards are not counted, as they are civilians under the Ministry of Finance.</p> <p>There is no personnel specially organised for coast defence.</p>	<p>Although, as stated in our reply to Question 3, the personnel of the Prefecture is not organised on a military basis, it has been included for the purposes of Article 4, which refers to "police forces of all kinds". This personnel performs maritime police duties.</p>	None.
12. Netherlands.	<p><i>Actual—i.e.</i>, average daily effectives based on number of days of presence in the year.</p>	<p>Not counted : sick leave or early discharge.</p>	<p>These services are not included in the navy.</p>	<p>(a) Coast-watchers and coast-guards belonging to the naval militia are counted.</p> <p>Coast defence personnel belongs to the land forces.</p>	<p>No formations organised on a military basis exist.</p>	<p>By interpreting the word "Effectives" as "Actual Effectives", no difficulty has been met in completing the figures in the tables.</p>

13. Roumania.

*Budgetary* — i.e., the average effectives required to man, during the various periods of instruction, part of the existing warships and to form the land units and services appertaining to the navy.

The actual average effectives during 1931 have been inferior to the budgetary effectives.

For active personnel, 365 days per year. Officers on leave for over six months are not counted, neither are the usual short and long leaves granted to men in active service.

Reservists are counted as performing all the days of training laid down by law.

Counted in: all conscript sailors; all professional sailors and officers, including those of the following services: mechanics, engineers, doctors, pharmacists, supply and administration.

Personnel detached or on mission is included in the "Budgetary Effectives", also the pupils of the schools and auxiliary personnel.

Personnel of land units appertaining to the navy and intended for coast defence is counted in.

14. Australia.

"Effectives" represent the average daily numbers actually borne on the active strength of the Royal Australian Navy for the financial year ended June 30th, 1931.

(a) Permanent forces: 365 days' per annum; Naval Reserve: eight days' service per annum; Naval Reserve (S): fourteen days' per annum.

(b) 365 days' service per annum.

(c) Not applicable.

(d) Fleet Reserve: seven days' service per annum; Naval Reserve: eight days' service per annum; Naval Reserve (S): fourteen days' service per annum.

Counted in:

(a) Officers of permanent forces, Naval Reserve, Naval Reserve (S), borne on the active strength of the Royal Australian Navy (R.A.N.);

(b) Sailors of the permanent forces borne on the active strength of the R.A.N.;

(c) Naval cadets under training at the R.A.N. College.

(d) Fleet Reserve, Naval Reserve, Naval Reserve (S) undergoing the annual periods of training shown in answer to Question 2(d).

(e) None exist, apart from those included in categories above.

(a) Neither exist.

(b) Included under land forces.

None exist.

None.



Country.	Question 1.	Question 2.	Question 3.	Question 4.	Question 5.	Question 6.
15. Siam.	Effectives given in document Conf.D./R.C.I are "actual effectives" for year April 1st, 1930, to March 31st, 1931.	Counted in days of presence: short leave, long leave, illness, travelling for both officers and men. Early discharge is not counted in.	Effectives include all officers and sailors of the navy and those of the various services of the Ministry of Defence, cadet officers and cadet petty officers of the conscript age (21 years). There are no young men doing preparatory naval training.	There are no special effectives for (a) or (b). Officers and men serving at coast defence forts are counted in navy effectives. There are no coast-watchers.	No.	None.
16. Finland.	Naval average daily effectives have been calculated as if the number of officers and professional sailors had been, during the whole year, maintained at the level fixed by the law of "cadres"—as if the laws in force fixing the period of service—in active and reserve forces—had been applied exactly to conscripts serving in the sea defence. Thus Finland has given the sense "legal" to the word effectives.	In calculating the naval average daily effectives, no deduction has been made for absences or early discharge.	Counted in: Officers and corresponding ranks; professional petty officers and corresponding ratings, also fleet and coast artillery, conscripts, including the staff of the naval defences and the services directly appertaining thereto. There is no preparatory naval training for young men.	(a) Coast-guard effectives come under the Ministry of the Interior and are shown in Table VII — "Formations organised on a military basis". (b) Yes.	No.	—
17. Denmark.	The "Effectives" force is that which, in the relevant period, has actually been in service.	Temporary absences are ignored. There are no calls up for complementary or special courses, parades or inspections which are not comprised in the figures given.	Same points of view adopted as those indicated in answer to previous questions. Beyond the figures given, no fleet personnel detached to civil services exists. (c), (d) and (e) do not exist.	(a) Naval coast-watching is principally carried out by the lighthouse service, which is not included in figures given and amounts to about 325 men. There is no military coast-watching. (b) There is no maritime coast defence outside that given in the particulars.	No.	No particular difficulties.

18. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

In the information furnished to the Conference, the *budgetary* average of men in active service is given—in other words, the sea forces during the relevant year have received from the Government 29,039 rations in pay and food, in conformity with the lists of effectives and existing schedules.

Included : all men receiving a money, food or clothing ration.

Not included :

(a) Men belonging to other arms temporarily attached to naval units ;

(b) Reservists whose instructional periods have been the object of special allocations.

In the number of men in actual naval service are included all classes of persons entitled to rations of money, food and clothing in accordance with the laws regulating the naval forces—*i.e.*, the commandants (officers), quartermasters (petty officers), sailors of the contingent or re-engaged, volunteers, pupils of all naval schools.

The figure of 29,039 includes men belonging to the coast defence but does not include the effectives of frontier flotillas, who are shown in the chapter dealing with the troops of the State Political Administration.

The only formations organised on a military basis in the U.S.S.R. are the flotillas of the State Political Administration (see Table 2, document Conf.D. 72).

None.

19. India.

Actual — *i.e.*, naval officers and other ranks on the strength of, and performing duty with, the naval forces of India.

(a) (b) For officers and professional sailors every day in the year is counted as a day of presence—*i.e.*, no deductions are made for leave or absence for other reasons.

(c) (d) Conscripts, militiamen or reservists do not exist.

(a) (b) Included : All officers (British and Indian) and other ranks performing naval duty with naval forces of India. Civilians and followers are not included.

(c) Midshipmen doing preparatory naval training in the United Kingdom during 1929/30 are not included.

There are no cadet petty officers under training.

d) (e) There are none.

(a) There are none.

(b) Included in strength of land forces :

None.

None.

20. France.

A. *Legal Effectives* :

(a) For officers of the different branches of the navy (seagoing and non-seagoing), the legal effectives are those shown in the "Loi des Cadres" of March 4th, 1929. These

(a) Officers. — Officers are always considered present if comprised in the cadres.

(b) (c) Professional or conscript sailors serving with the colours. — All non-officer personnel

(a) Officers "outside the cadres" are replaced in the cadres and are not counted in the effectives.

(b) Professional sailors. The state of "outside the cadres" does not exist

(a) Semaphore watchers should figure in "the sea formations organised on a military basis". Thus it has been shown, for information, in document C.440.M.187.1931.IX — Conf.D.5 (page 14), that the

The total effectives of naval fire brigades, sailors belonging to the port administrations and military supervisors have been shown for information, as stated in

*The only difficulty met concerns Article 4.* It does not seem possible to find precise figures for "Sea formations organised on a military basis", until the Conference has considered what elements, in the

Country.

Question 1.

numbers have not yet been attained in their entirety. They will be attained, according to branches and ranks, at different periods between 1932 and 1938.

The Finance Law, voted each year at the same time as the regular budget, shows in addition the maximum number of officers which may be attained during the budgetary year.

(b) For the non-officer personnel, the legal effectives are laid down in the above-mentioned Finance Law.<sup>1</sup>

B. Budgetary Effectives.

The budgetary effectives are laid down in the Finance Law both for officer and non-officer personnel.

The budgetary effectives of non-officer personnel are the same as the legal effectives.<sup>2</sup>

C. Actual Effectives.

In principle, the actual effectives are strictly equal to the budgetary effectives and cannot exceed them.

However, as the non-officer personnel varies greatly during the year, because of fluctuations in voluntary engagements, agreement can only be realised, for non-officer personnel, between the average effectives of the year in question and the budgetary effectives laid down for the same year. In practice, the actual effectives are generally less than the legal effectives or the budgetary effectives, and the budget includes a considerable sum to be deducted for numbers not reached.

Question 2.

servicing with the colours are shown in the "Lists of Crews" and are considered as being present unless they have been discharged.

(d) Militiamen: Reservists. — The national navy has no militiamen. For reservists, a day of presence corresponds to an effective day of service.

The total of these days of presence constitutes the "period of reserve" for any single reservist.

Question 3.

for the non-officer personnel.

(c) Cadet officers or cadet petty-officers.

The pupils at schools which provide directly for the recruitment of officers are counted in.

Pupils at the petty-officers' school are not counted in; they are not bound by a contract of service until they leave this school.

(d) Men called up with the annual contingent. Reservists: these are similarly counted in.

(e) Young men undergoing preliminary naval training.

The young men of the naval professional schools whose contract does not come into force until the day of their leaving those schools are not counted in.

Question 4.

auxiliary corps used for police or fatigue duties in the French arsenals and on the coasts totals 4,419 men. This number of effectives comprises the semaphore watchers, the naval fire brigade, sailors belonging to the port administrations, and the military supervisors.

(b) All coast defence personnel is shown in Table VI ("Effectives of the sea armed forces").

Question 5.

the preceding column — together with that of semaphore watchers.

Question 6.

different countries, actually correspond to the definition in the draft Convention.

<sup>1</sup> The effectives shown in the Finance Law do not include, however: (a) Fleet reservists whose status is laid down in the Law for the Recruitment of the Army; (b) 2,900 youths in the professional schools undergoing preliminary training, who are shown in the budget (see Table VI document C.440.M.187 — Conf.D.5).

<sup>2</sup> Subject to the reserves indicated in note 1 above. In regard to fleet reservists, credits are provided in the budget only for reservists to be effectively recalled during the budgetary year.

21. Italy.

The following meaning has been given to the word "Effectives":

Average daily effectives, effectively present and performing military service in the Royal Navy or in the sea formations organised on a military basis.

By "Budgetary Effectives", mentioned in the note on page 6 of document Conf.D.13, is meant: The average daily effectives which may be reached in the classes of petty-officers, quartermasters and sailors, on the basis of the credits allocated annually to this heading in the Budget Law.

(a) Effective days of presence, included in which are short leave periods, ordinary leave, travelling days, time sick in hospital, periods when available for service on the establishment (*en disponibilité*), periods when available off the establishment (*hors cadres*) (naval attachés attached to other Ministries A.D.C. to H.M. the King and to the Royal Princes, etc.).

(b) Effective days of presence, included in which are short leave periods, ordinary leave, travelling days, time sick in hospital, periods available for service on the establishment (*en disponibilité*).

(c) Effective days of presence, included in which are short leave periods, ordinary leave, periods sick in hospital.

Days on leave awaiting discharge are not included.

(d) Effective days of presence.

(a) Officers detached to services other than the Royal Navy—*i.e.*, missions, civil service, etc.—are also counted in.

(b) Those detached to various services under other Ministries are also counted in.

(c) Cadet officers at the Leghorn Royal Naval Academy are counted in, as are also pupils at the Pola C.R.E.M. schools (specialist sailors).

(d) Those detached to special services are counted in.

(e) Not counted in, because no naval preparatory training under the direct control of the Royal Navy exists in Italy at present.

(a) Coast-watchers and coast-guards are counted in.

Yes, actually the following are counted in: Effectives of the "Guardia di Finanza" employed on coastal supervision; effectives in the port administrations and port inspectorates.

Articles 2 and 3: no difficulty.

Article 4: the formations organised on a military basis mentioned in Answer 5 should not, by a strict interpretation of Article 4 of the draft Convention, be counted in, seeing that a number of measures of mobilisation are necessary to put them into a state to serve for war purposes.

They have been shown, so as to give the greatest detail.

22. Yugoslavia.

The figures shown are *actual* effectives—*i.e.*, effectives who have, during the period in question, actually been in service in the navy and the naval air force. The cadets in the naval school and in all the schools for subordinate personnel are included.

The number of the theoretical or legal effectives is fixed by the "Loi des Cadres," but this number has not yet been reached.

The number of the budgetary effectives is laid down in the ordinary annual budget.

(a) (b) (c) Each day with no deductions for illness, leave, etc.

(d) For reservists: each day's service performed during the year.

All officers and assimilated ranks, petty officers, cadets and conscripts, including those in the naval air force.

Category (e) does not exist in the navy.

No special category of coast-watchers and coast-guards exists.

Sailors employed in observation duties are counted in.

Category (b) is included in the land army effectives.

There are no formations organised on a military basis.

No particular difficulty.