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Geneva, March 9th, 1932.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

**CONFERENCE FOR THE REDUCTION AND LIMITATION
OF ARMAMENTS**

**Co-ordination of the Draft Convention
and of the Propositions referred to the General Commission.**

REPORT BY M. BENEŠ TO THE BUREAU.

At its meeting on February 26th, 1932, the Bureau of the Conference decided to invite me, for the purpose of forthcoming discussions of the General Commission, to prepare a scheme of work grouping within the framework of the draft Convention the provisions of that instrument together with the various proposals submitted to the Conference.

I have the honour to submit the results of my work in document Conf.D.102 to my colleagues of the Bureau for examination. It seems to me desirable to append various explanations.

The General Commission has already itself taken certain decisions regarding the organisation of its work. It decided first "to carry on its discussions within the framework of the draft Convention for the reduction and limitation of armaments, full liberty being reserved to all delegations to develop their own proposals in subsequent debate and to move their amendments in the form of modifications, additions or omissions at the appropriate point". It was agreed, further, when the General Commission set up Special Commissions, that it would come within its province to study, from the standpoint of the principles involved, the questions submitted to the Conference to define the main lines on which the other commissions will work and to refer to the latter the questions with which they will have to deal.

Accordingly, I found it convenient to arrange in four columns the table of co-ordination which the Bureau had asked me to draw up.

The first column shows the subjects referred to in the various parts, chapters and articles of the draft Convention. In defining those subjects, I used the table of draft texts to be found in document C.428.M.178.1931.IX (documents of the Preparatory Commission, Series XI, page 53). Having thus indicated the framework for our future discussions, it seemed to me advisable to reproduce *in extenso* the text of the draft Convention and the reservations to be found in the final report of the Preparatory Commission, particularly as I am not sufficiently well informed as to the present attitude of the delegations with regard to those reservations.

In the second column I have endeavoured to place opposite each of the points in the first column all the proposals which it would seem possible to connect with them. I have tried to group them and classify them in such a way that they may be discussed methodically and under the best possible conditions.

I wish to point out that no comparison should be made between the contents of this column and the list drawn up by the Secretariat a few days ago (document Conf. D.99). That list mentions, under very general heads, all the delegations that have made suggestions or indicated to the Secretariat passages in their speeches.

In column 2 of my table I have taken into account only those suggestions which have been formulated in sufficiently precise terms to be able to form the subject of a special discussion.

The third column contains questions of principle raised by the provisions of the draft Convention and by the proposals of the delegations, the general political importance of which would appear to warrant their being treated first by the General Commission. My colleagues will realise that a classification of this kind is necessarily a delicate and difficult task. I therefore request them not to consider it as a complete or final work. It will be for the General Commission itself to select and to give definite expression to the main questions of principle which it will have to discuss. My task was merely to facilitate this work and to make suggestions.

The fourth column, lastly, contains observations which I found it necessary to make at this juncture, and which deal principally with the method and time of referring various questions to the Special Commissions.

The entire table has no other aim than to serve as a mere instrument for introducing a certain order into our discussions. I need not add that this table will need to be constantly adjusted and that the work will have to be co-ordinated and guided by the Bureau of the Conference and the Bureau of the General Commission.

In this connection, it may be useful to recall the principles which were apparently unanimously approved by the General Commission for the organisation of the work:

(1) The General Commission will, as a general rule, discuss in the first place all questions from the point of view of principles;

(2) After this discussion, the questions will, if necessary, be referred in due time to the Special Commissions;

(3) Questions which do not require any preliminary discussion from the point of view of principles may be referred immediately by the General Commission to the Special Commissions;|

(4) Questions dealt with by the Special Commissions will form the subject of reports to the General Commission. It is understood that the Special Commissions are always entitled to submit to the General Commission any questions of principle which have arisen and which they are unable to settle themselves.

The task of the Conference is, however, so complicated that it would be wise to consider certain modifications in the practical application of these principles. It will always be necessary to exercise careful guidance and co-ordination. The Bureau of the Conference must from time to time give instructions regarding the course of the work. In addition, the Bureau of the General Commission must keep in constant touch with the Chairmen of the Special Commissions. It will be particularly necessary to avoid discussions of principle being unnecessarily reopened in the Special Commissions, and not to lose sight of the organic connection between certain questions.

Moreover, there are, no doubt, questions the technical side of which is of such importance that they can be discussed in a Special Commission, even before the General Commission has taken a decision in principle or for the express reason of supplying material for reaching such a decision in principle.

In making this classification, I have, moreover, realised that it will probably be necessary to create joint commissions or sub-commissions or to request one Special Commission to study an entire problem which concerns several commissions. In the same way, the Special Commissions may have to appoint sub-commissions or committees of experts.

Column 4 of the table contains a number of observations arising out of the ideas expressed above.

If the table is approved by the Bureau, it might be used as a preliminary draft agenda, with any amendments that the Bureau may decide to make.
