

Geneva, February 27th, 1934.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

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

**Documents concerning the Date of the Resumption of the
Work of the Conference and the Correspondence between
the President of the Conference and the Governments
of the United Kingdom, France and Italy**

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¹ See report of the debate in Volume 285, No. 30, of "Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons".

Series of League of Nations Publications
IX. DISARMAMENT
1934. IX. 1.



NOTE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE.

With reference to the programme of work of the Conference approved by the Bureau at its meeting on November 22nd last (see document Conf.D./Bureau/P.V.54), when the Bureau agreed on the advisability of the undertaking of "parallel and supplementary efforts" between various States, the President of the Conference has the honour to communicate to the members of the General Commission the correspondence, with annexes, exchanged between the Governments of the United Kingdom, France and Italy, and himself, and also of the letters sent by him on January 26th and February 19th, 1934, to the members of the General Commission.

These documents are arranged in the following order :

(1) Letter, dated January 26th, 1934, sent by the President to the members of the General Commission (document Conf.D./C.L.11), with reference to the date of resumption of the work of the Conference ;

(2) Letter, dated January 27th, 1934, sent by the President to the Governments of the United Kingdom, France and Italy ;

(3) Replies to the President's letter—(2) above—from the Governments of :

(a) Italy, dated February 7th, 1934, with the Italian memorandum on disarmament annexed ;

(b) The United Kingdom, dated February 9th, 1934, with, annexed :

(i) The memorandum on disarmament presented to the United Kingdom Parliament on January 31st, 1934, and

(ii) The statement made in the House of Commons by Sir John Simon on February 6th, 1934, on the occasion of the debate on this memorandum ;

(c) France, dated February 10th, 1934, forwarding :

(i) Copy of the note communicated by the German Government to the French Ambassador in Berlin on December 18th, 1933 ;

(ii) Copy of the note, dated January 1st, 1934, stating the views of the French Government on the German note referred to in (i) above ;

(iii) Copy of the German Government's reply, dated January 19th, 1934, to the French Government's note referred to in (ii) above ;

(4) Copy of the French Government's reply, dated February 14th, 1934, to the German Government's note referred to in paragraph 3 (c) (iii) above ;

(5) Letter, dated February 19th, 1934, sent by the President of the Conference to the members of the General Commission (document Conf.D./C.L.12) with reference to the date of the meeting of the Bureau.

(6) Letter addressed on March 3rd, 1934 by the delegation of the United States of America to the Secretary-General, transmitting copy of the *aide-mémoire* communicated on February 19th by the United States Secretary of State to the United Kingdom Ambassador at Washington.

I. LETTER, DATED JANUARY 26TH, 1934, SENT BY THE PRESIDENT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION (DOCUMENT CONF.D./C.L.11) WITH REFERENCE TO THE DATE OF RESUMPTION OF THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE.

You will remember that, at its last meeting, the Bureau recognised that the differences of opinion at that time on several important political questions were too great to allow of any hope of a satisfactory result from a premature discussion in the General Commission. The Bureau considered that, at that stage, the work of the Conference would best be promoted by parallel and supplementary efforts among the various countries and the full use of diplomatic machinery. It expressed the hope that those efforts would be at once undertaken with energy, in order to expedite the work of the General Commission.

The Bureau accordingly decided to defer the resumption of the General Commission's proceedings to a date to be fixed by the officers of the Bureau, who, as you are aware, are the Vice-President, the Rapporteur, the Secretary-General and myself.

When, however, we met at Geneva on January 19th and 20th, we felt that, in view of the progress reported from the parallel and supplementary efforts to which I have referred,

it was inexpedient to interrupt those efforts by an immediate resumption of the Conference's proceedings. We also felt that it was highly important that, when the Bureau met, it should be in a position to complete the necessary preparations for establishing an agenda and fixing a date that would enable the General Commission to continue without interruption its work with a view to the conclusion of a convention.

We accordingly decided that the Governments in charge of the negotiations now proceeding should be asked to inform me of the situation before February 10th, so that the officers of the Bureau who will meet on February 13th may fix the date for the meeting of the Bureau according to circumstances, either immediately to consider the question of an adjournment or at whatever might seem the most suitable time to enable an agenda to be prepared for the General Commission.

You have no doubt already received this information from the official communiqué issued by the officers of the Bureau after their discussions on Saturday, January 20th. I have, however, thought it proper to communicate direct with each of the delegations to the General Commission to announce officially the decision that my colleagues and myself have had the honour to reach in the discharge of the functions entrusted to us by the Bureau.

(Signed) Arthur HENDERSON.

2. LETTER, DATED JANUARY 27TH, 1934, SENT BY THE PRESIDENT TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM, FRANCE AND ITALY.

By a letter dated January 26th, 1934 (document Conf.D./C.L.II), of which I enclose a copy, I had the honour to inform you that the officers of the Bureau decided, on January 20th, to hold a new meeting on February 13th, in order to give effect to the resolution of the Bureau of November 22nd and to fix a date for the resumption of the work of the Conference. To that end the officers decided that those responsible for the parallel and supplementary efforts should be invited to inform me of the situation not later than February 10th.

In execution of this decision I have the honour to request you to be good enough to supply me with the desired information by the date indicated, in order that I may forward it to my co-officers prior to the meeting of February 13th.

(Signed) Arthur HENDERSON.

3.

(a) REPLY OF THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT.

London, February 7th, 1934.

I beg to enclose the official text of the Italian Memorandum on Disarmament, which I have been instructed to communicate to you.

I am at your disposal if there is anything you should need in connection with the meeting of the Bureau on February 13th.

(Signed) GRANDI.

MEMORANDUM BY THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT.

In the conversations which took place in Rome on January 3rd and 4th between the Head of the Government and the British Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Head of the Government communicated to Sir John Simon the Italian point of view regarding the disarmament situation and the prospects of disarmament, as set forth in the following document :

I. The Italian Government is convinced, after examination of the problem of "disarmament", and taking into account the point of view of Germany and the general situation, that it is impossible not to acknowledge that we have reached the extreme limit of time available for breaking the deadlock in which we have found ourselves since June last.

The Italian Government thinks it unnecessary to dwell on this premise. It is enough to mention the existence of clear and numerous indications which go to prove that, if the solution be further delayed, re-armament will cease to be a debated question, and will become to-day or to-morrow a question which may be solved practically in a unilateral manner. The gravity of this fact is only too evident, not only in itself, but still more by reason of the increasing difficulties which it would create for a peaceful and juridical international solution of the problem of equality of rights, for a European *détente*, and for the possibility of reaching a reasonable convention of effective disarmament in a not too distant future. It is also certain that, if the problem be not solved, the results will be a renewed spirit of mutual suspicion, the division of Europe into hostile groups and a race in armaments.

From this premise the Italian Government deduces that all Governments must now assume their responsibilities in deciding to adopt a clearly defined attitude and to state it publicly.

2. The experience of the discussions that have taken place during the past two years at the Disarmament Conference, the course of the diplomatic negotiations, the public declarations made by statesmen, authorise the Italian Government to harbour well-grounded doubts whether the armed Powers desire, or are able to agree on, such measures of disarmament as would permit a solution of the present situation while maintaining the demands of Germany within the modest dimensions envisaged originally.

It is further necessary to bear in mind that Germany, by excluding from her demands for equality heavy material, and confining her claim to the so-called defensive material—that is to say, material which even on the most optimistic hypothesis would be retained by the armed Powers at least for the duration of a first period, or for that of the first convention—has been able to maintain in a measure that the problem of equality of rights is distinct from that of effective disarmament, this latter being considered as the task of the armed Powers exclusively, Germany having long ago completely done her part.

It follows that it becomes, for this reason, much more difficult to bring pressure upon Germany to make her recede from or moderate her claims for defensive material, even if the armed Powers were willing to consent to an important and immediate reduction of their offensive armaments; for the German position consists in denying the correlation between the two kinds of armaments—the first representing equality of rights and the second disarmament, which does not bind her, as she is not armed.

The Italian Government desires, however, to state that its policy has been, is, and intends to remain, the policy of disarmament. Only recently, by its unconditional acceptance of the British plan of March 16th, 1933, it afforded the most convincing proof of this. It continues therefore to consider a solution in this sense as the most desirable. If, therefore, within a reasonable time, the negotiations which are being pursued should afford justifiable hopes of seeing the armed Powers unanimously resolved to undertake substantial measures of disarmament, Italy, in accordance with her own interests, would not only adhere to this decision, but would not fail to join, with the utmost goodwill, in the attempt to turn this to immediate advantage, in order to obtain from Germany greater limitation of her re-armament than, in the contrary event, it seems possible to secure by agreement.

The Italian Government desires, however, to declare in all frankness that only precise proposals put forward without delay, not subordinated to clauses or conditions that are known, *a priori*, to be unacceptable to other Powers, and of such a scope as to create a technically, juridically and morally favourable position for the negotiators, would offer some hope of success. In the contrary event, we shall only have a renewal of declarations and counter-declarations, of academical discussions and of recriminations which could not prevent the repetition of the regrettable events to which allusion has been made earlier.

3. Leaving such a possibility still open, therefore, but turning, as, indeed, the urgency of the moment requires, to the situation as it appears at present, the Italian Government appeals to three principal criteria—that is, a condition of fact, a juridical point and an estimate of probabilities—which, in their aggregate, seem to it to restrict the field of solutions and combinations within clear and well-defined limits, which, having regard to the circumstances, are satisfactory.

(a) *Condition of Fact.*— The danger that, if no agreement be reached, the question of equality may, in fact, be solved independently of agreements tending to sanction it, and which regulate the method of its achievement. This consideration naturally raises the question whether the Powers would be able and would wish to take the sanctions required to hinder or suppress movements which do not take the treaties into account, and also the scope of those sanctions. The mere consideration of this eventuality affords a measure of the gravity of the situation which would arise in the event of no agreement being arrived at, and emphasises, if, indeed, that were necessary, the necessity of arriving at such an agreement in a prompt and satisfactory manner.

(b) *Juridical Point.*— It is undeniable that equality of rights has been solemnly recognised to Germany and the other States disarmed by the treaties. The impossibility in which the armed Powers, signatories of the said treaties, find themselves of immediately reducing their armaments to a level reasonably approaching the level of German disarmament gives to the German claim for re-armament a juridical and moral force, of which it is not easy to deny the evidence. And if it were possible to demonstrate, as will be shown below, that the conditions of security have already been reasonably met, the argument in favour of Germany assumes a value not easy to refute.

(c) *Estimate of Probabilities.*— The Italian Government cannot but give the utmost weight to the pacific declarations of President Hindenburg and Chancellor Hitler. Apart from the fact that it is not possible to base agreements on suspicion, one must admit that the repeated and uniform declarations of the Head of the German Government afford confidence that well-defined agreements, freely accepted, would not only not be lightly broken, but would not, for the whole term of their duration, be compromised in the diplomatic field by demands for further concessions and modifications.

And inasmuch as scrutiny of what may be in the interests and within the power of a contracting party undoubtedly invests the sincerity of its pledges with a greater certainty, the Italian Government expresses its considered opinion that the Germany of Hitler is at present taken up with a work of far-reaching transformation and internal re-adjustment with which it would be difficult to reconcile designs for warlike enterprises beyond the frontiers. It is understood in this connection that the Italian Government is naturally aware of the other and more material aspects of the problem of security, which will be referred to later.

4. Admitting what has been said above, the Italian Government is of opinion that it is still possible to conclude a Convention such as to satisfy—perhaps partially, but none the less positively—public opinion, especially if the latter were suitably enlightened. In considering this point, it should be remarked that we have clear indications that, also in the neutral countries directly interested, public opinion is adapting itself to the idea that the principal and practical question is no longer how to prevent German re-armament but how to avoid that such re-armament should take place unregulated and uncontrolled.

5. Considering now more particularly the convention which the Italian Government thinks might be realised, and which might remain in force up to December 31st, 1940, the Italian Government considers that it should, in particular, provide for :

(a) The abolition of chemical warfare with every necessary measure of supervision to prevent its preparation and organisation ;

(b) Prohibition of the bombardment of civil populations, it being understood that, in the field of prohibition of bombardment from the air, more radical measures might be possible when the rule of the interdependence of land, sea and air armaments so permits ; it should be noted that such a measure ought greatly to facilitate the solution of the problem of the parity of German air armaments ;

(c) Limitation to the present level of the military expenditure of Powers not bound by the Treaties, with a proviso concerning expenditure on replacements and completion of defensive works ;

(d) Limitation to the present level of land war material of the Powers not bound by the said treaties, with provision for necessary replacements.

6. It should be borne in mind that the German claim for an average daily effective force of 300,000 men is governed by the hypothesis that other armed Powers do not reduce their effectives to the figures put forward in the MacDonald plan, but keep to their present figures. If it were found preferable to face the problem of reduction, Germany declares herself ready to re-discuss the figures given above.

This being so, the Italian Government, considering the present level of effectives of, for instance, France, Poland and Czechoslovakia, doubt whether it can plausibly be argued that the ratios shown in the MacDonald plan are altered in favour of Germany in the German proposals.

As to the particular problem of the reduction and standardisation of effectives, the Italian Government wishes to point out that this would entail so many delicate problems between the other contracting Powers that facing it might cause damaging delays in the conclusion of the agreement. Further, it cannot ignore that, at least in so far as it is concerned, the abandonment of the present organisation of land effectives in the sense of the MacDonald plan would certainly entail an increase of expenditure not compensated by corresponding economies with regard to war material.

It is, therefore, prepared to negotiate on the basis of the *status quo* and of limitation as envisaged by the German proposals. As to the stages in which the transformation of the German forces and their increase would take place, the Italian Government is of opinion that those are necessitated naturally by technical requirements, and that, therefore, an opportunity is offered to make them the subject of contractual obligations. It is further to be noted that the work of transformation could not take place without that conspicuous diminution of capacity for not only offensive but also defensive action which usually accompanies periods of radical change in military organisation.

Whilst it seems difficult to reject *in toto* the German claims for defensive armaments—guns up to 155 mm. or the equivalent, anti-aircraft guns, tanks up to six tons, scouting and fighting planes—if we hope to see them realised under a regime of convention and supervision, the limits and the measure of the ratio between the defensive war materials and the effectives to be granted might form the object of negotiations.

7. In regard to naval armaments, under reserve of the examination of precise explanations which Germany would give in this connection, eventual revision of the conditions applying to German naval armaments ought, in principle, to be postponed until the next Naval Conference.

8. To the concessions which an agreement on those lines would entail, France would find an immediate and effective counterpart in the maintenance intact of the whole of her armaments. There seems to be no doubt that, from the technical military point of view, this would suffice to guarantee her an undoubted security for the whole duration of the Convention, so that, from the material point of view, this problem might be said to be favourably solved. This argument acquires greater validity if the efficacy of modern systems of permanent defence of the frontiers is taken into consideration, as well as the assistance ensured by existing treaties.

9. As to security based on treaties, it is unnecessary for the Italian Government to refer to the Pact of Rome, the Treaty of Locarno and the significance and value of the undertakings contained therein. It is not so much the formal and treaty aspects of security which give weight to the Four-Power Pact, as the continual and methodical collaboration between the great Western Powers which its clauses contemplate, both in the field of disarmament and in other fields.

Italy considers herself loyally bound by the Locarno Treaty, which assigns a special position to the Italian and British Governments, and, precisely on account of her unwavering loyalty, thinks that she does not diverge from the view of the London Government in holding that further diplomatic guarantees against aggressions are not only not indispensable, but, if multiplied, would tend to lose their value.

The German Government has, further, recently offered to conclude ten-year non-aggression pacts with all her neighbouring States.

10. A final and fundamental counterpart to the acceptance of Germany's demands—representing in itself a new contribution to security—might be an undertaking on the part of Germany to return to Geneva, not only with a view to signing the general Disarmament Convention, but to resume her place in the League of Nations. The Italian Government is particularly anxious to call attention to the first-rate importance of such an event.

11. Finally, the Italian Government cannot lay too much stress upon the necessity that the exchanges of view which are at present taking place should lead to sufficient progress to enable the entire question to emerge from the present deadlock, and thus to justify a meeting of the Foreign Ministers or of the Heads of Governments of the four Western Powers, to which meeting the representatives of the other principal Powers concerned might be invited.

(b) REPLY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT.

London, February 9th, 1934.

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a copy of a paper laid before Parliament on January 31st, containing the views of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom on disarmament and their proposals to meet the present situation, together with a copy of the explanatory statement which I made in the House of Commons on February 6th during the debate on the subject.

The memorandum has been communicated to all Governments participating in the Disarmament Conference with the request that it should be carefully studied. It is, moreover, the intention of His Majesty's Government that Mr. Eden, the Lord Privy Seal, should proceed to the capitals principally concerned as soon as possible, for the purpose of explaining their point of view and of learning by direct contact what is the attitude of other Governments to the British memorandum, in order that His Majesty's Government may, in the light of that knowledge, consider what should be the next step.

It is their view that, though it is essential that the work recently done through diplomatic channels should in due course be brought to Geneva and laid before the General Commission, some intermediate stage may, in point of fact, prove necessary.

(Signed) John SIMON.

(i) MEMORANDUM ON DISARMAMENT COMMUNICATED BY HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM TO THE GOVERNMENTS REPRESENTED AT THE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE.

I.

1. On November 22nd, the Bureau of the Disarmament Conference unanimously decided that the work of the Conference should be suspended for a period, in order to permit of parallel and supplementary efforts being carried on between different States, mainly through the diplomatic channel. In the interval this method has been actively pursued, and bilateral

communications have taken place between various capitals. As a result, the points of view of certain Governments have been further defined, and some general propositions which they had previously advanced have taken a more concrete shape. Yet it must be admitted that, on comparing the attitudes thus disclosed, no firm basis of agreement at present emerges ; and, while these diplomatic exchanges have undoubtedly cleared the ground and revealed the immensity and difficulty of the problem in their true proportions, the method recently followed cannot in itself produce a unanimous result and is in danger of exhausting its usefulness. On the other hand, a resumption of the discussions at Geneva without any new directive suggestions is only too likely to lead to further disappointment.

2. In these circumstances, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom consider that the time has arrived when they should make plain their own attitude in the present situation, the gravity of which must be apparent to every thoughtful mind, and should thus make a further positive contribution, so far as lies in their power, to promote a reconciliation of views in a matter upon which the future of the world may depend. If agreement is to be reached and a convention is to be signed, it is useless for any Power merely to insist on its own ideals and its own requirements or to refuse to depart in any degree from the solution which it deems best. His Majesty's Government are making the present communication, not for the purpose of formulating unattainable ideals, but in order to indicate the lines of a compromise which they believe, after reviewing the history of the discussions and closely studying the recent interchange of views, should be generally acceptable.

3. Before dealing with any specific proposition as to the measure or the regulation of armaments, His Majesty's Government must reassert the main objective to which all proposals on this subject are directed. That objective is, as Article 8 of the Covenant declares, the maintenance of peace. Even though increase of armed strength may be actuated by reasons of defence, it is an index of fear of attack from another quarter, and a measure of the alarm and disquiet existing between peoples. Conversely, a general agreement securing the limitation of armaments at the lowest practicable level would be the most effective and significant proof of international appeasement and an encouragement of the mutual confidence which springs from good and neighbourly relations. Consequently, His Majesty's Government regard agreement about armaments, not as an end in itself, but rather as a concomitant of world peace and as an outcome of political amelioration. For this reason, they have always acknowledged the relation between the conception of equality of rights on the one hand, and of security on the other. For this same reason, they welcome the indications that Herr Hitler's recent proposals, whatever may be said of their precise content, are concerned, not only with technical questions of armaments, but with political guarantees against aggression.

4. It follows from the above considerations that agreement is most likely to be reached on a broad basis which combines regulation of armaments with assurances in the political field. Protracted debates on disarmament in its limited and purely technical aspect can lead to no conclusion, unless wider considerations touching the equality and the security of nations are borne in mind and provided for. Hence the United Kingdom draft Convention, which was approved at Geneva as a basis of the ultimate agreement by a unanimous vote which included both France and Germany, began with a " Part I " on the subject of security, proposing methods of consultation for the purpose of determining on appropriate action in the event of a threatened breach of the Pact of Paris. The amplification of this proposal is dealt with below (paragraph 9). His Majesty's Government must emphasise that they have never departed from the principles and purposes of the draft Convention or have sought to substitute a second and contradictory draft for it. If there were any misapprehension in any quarter on this score, the declaration they are now making will finally remove it. The Prime Minister, when presenting the draft Convention to the Conference in March of last year, plainly intimated that it was not necessarily to be regarded as a final and unalterable text, and subsequent discussion has shown that it requires adjustment in certain respects if general agreement is to be reached. Any suggestions which have since been put forward for consideration have been tentatively advanced with a view to seeing whether they would promote such agreement, and for no other purpose. But the underlying conceptions of the draft Convention remain the standpoint of His Majesty's Government, and could only be abandoned if and when a more acceptable alternative were generally agreed.

5. But while His Majesty's Government are not prepared to depart from the lines of the draft Convention without being assured that there is an alternative which would more readily lead to universal agreement, they have been perfectly prepared to give unprejudiced consideration to new suggestions and to do their utmost to promote their general acceptance. The failure to reach agreement would inflict a fearful blow upon the hopes of all friends of peace throughout the world, whereas the attainment of agreement would create and build up that confidence which is the only secure basis for the limitation of armaments. The importance, therefore, of attaining international agreement by any possible means is so great

that no suggestions, from whatever quarter they come, should be rejected merely because of a preference for a better solution which is, in fact, unattainable. An illustration lies ready to hand. It is sometimes urged that the solution of the disarmament problem lies in the immediate abandonment by all the world of all the weapons which the Peace Treaties withheld from certain Powers. But it is manifest that such a solution is in practice unattainable at the present time. That is no reason for abandoning the effort to secure, in this first Convention, all that can be attained. The devotion of the whole British people to the cause of disarmament is deep and sincere, as is sufficiently proved by the present position of its armaments in comparison with those of other leading Powers. They realise that further progress can only be achieved by agreement, and therefore His Majesty's Government would still work for agreement, even though, having regard to the principle of equality of rights, agreement is found to involve alongside of disarmament in some quarters some measure of re-armament in others.

6. It should not be overlooked that the scheme of the draft Convention itself involves some degree of re-armament for those States whose armaments are at present restricted by treaty. Germany, for example, in view of the numerical increase proposed in her effectives, would need larger quantities of such weapons as she is already entitled to possess. And this is not all. His Majesty's Government have more than once publicly stated that an international agreement based on the admitted principle of equality of rights in a regime of security necessarily involves that, within the stages provided for by such an agreement, the situation must be reached in which arms of a kind permitted to one State cannot continue to be denied to another. His Majesty's Government see no escape from this conclusion, and they do not seek to escape from it, for they are convinced that the best prospect for the future peace of the world would be afforded by an agreement which recognises and provides for this parity of treatment, while it abolishes or reduces to the lowest possible level all arms of a specially offensive character, and provides by the most appropriate means available for a greater sense of security. So far as Europe is concerned, a reconciliation of the points of view of France and Germany is the essential condition of general agreement. If a way is not found to accommodate their respective points of view, this greater sense of security will not be promoted. And without it, substantial disarmament is impossible. On the other hand, if an agreement is reached, even if the agreement at present attainable falls short of the highest hopes, the gain of reaching and observing such an agreement would be immeasurable, and the fact that it had been reached and observed would form the firm foundation on which a further agreement of more comprehensive character might be based in the future.

7. We must therefore seek a solution where a solution can be found. No agreement is no solution at all, and the world will be thrown back upon unrestricted competition in the supply and manufacture of weapons of destruction, the end of which no man can see. Putting aside, therefore, as not immediately attainable the ideal of universal disarmament to Germany's permitted level, and refusing to acquiesce in the conclusion that agreement cannot be reached, the choice appears to His Majesty's Government to lie between two conceivable courses so far as the future armaments of the heavily armed Powers are concerned. These two choices are :

- (1) To reach agreement in a Convention which will involve the abandonment of certain classes of weapons by the most heavily armed Powers ;
- (2) To reach agreement on the basis that the most heavily armed Powers are unable or unwilling to disarm, but that they will undertake not to increase their present armaments.

The second course is the one which is indicated in certain quarters as the most that can be hoped for. But His Majesty's Government cannot contemplate as acceptable a conclusion which, though it would provide for a limitation of armaments, would do nothing whatever to secure their reduction. His Majesty's Government, therefore, would earnestly press upon other Governments that the first course, which they most strongly prefer and regard as more in accord with the main object to be attained, should not be abandoned, but should be actively pursued. The second part of this memorandum sets out the way in which His Majesty's Government believe this could be accomplished.

II.

8. His Majesty's Government conceive that international agreement in the matter of armaments can only be reached by making adequate provision under the three heads of (a) security, (b) equality of rights, (c) disarmament. These three topics were all dealt with in the draft Convention, and the object of the present document is to explain how, in the light of actual circumstances and of the claims and proposals put forward from various quarters, the contents of that draft Convention might be modified or expanded in certain particulars with a view to securing general agreement. His Majesty's Government have studied with close attention the points of view advanced by the French, Italian, German and other

Governments in the course of recent interchanges. Nearly a year ago His Majesty's Government undertook the responsibility of placing before the General Commission a full draft Convention. The adjustments now proposed in the text of that draft are such as subsequent communication and consideration show to be best calculated to bring about concrete results.

9. *Security.* — Part I of the draft Convention dealt with the subject of security. As the result of a redraft which was unanimously approved on May 24th, 1933, it now consists of four articles, three of which provide in effect that, in the event of a breach or threat of breach of the Pact of Paris, immediate consultation may be called for and shall take place between signatories to the Convention for the purpose of preserving the peace, of using good offices for the restoration of peace, and, in the event that it proves impossible thus to restore the peace, to determine which party or parties to the dispute should be held responsible. It will be observed therefore that, as at present drafted, the event which brings these provisions into play is the breach or threatened breach of the Pact of Paris. His Majesty's Government regard such provisions as of very great importance. But so vital is the connection of a feeling of security with the peace of the world that they would add to them yet further articles. It is in their view important to extend the principle of consultation in the event of a breach or threat of breach of the Pact of Paris to the event of a breach or threat of breach of the Disarmament Convention itself. They would therefore suggest that three new articles—2 (a), 2 (b) and 2 (c)—should be inserted between the revised Articles 2 and 3. The first of these—2 (a)—would be Article 89 of the present draft Convention, which declares that the loyal execution of the Convention is a matter of common interest to the contracting parties. Article 2 (b) would declare: "The provisions for immediate consultation contained in Article 1 will also be applicable in the event of the Permanent Disarmament Commission, to be set up in accordance with Part V, Section 1, of the present Convention, reporting the existence of facts which show that any High Contracting Party has failed to execute loyally the present Convention." Article 2 (c) would state: "It shall be the object of such consultation to exchange views as to the steps to be taken for the purpose of restoring the situation and of maintaining in operation the provisions of the present Convention." The insertion of these articles would, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, emphasise the inescapable duty of all signatories of the Convention to keep in the closest touch with one another, and to do whatever is right and possible to prevent or remedy any violation of so important an international treaty.

A further contribution to the cause of peace and security, by lessening any tension or anxiety which exists between Germany and surrounding States, is provided by the willingness of the German Chancellor to conclude pacts of non-aggression with all Germany's neighbours. Such pacts should in no way weaken, but, on the contrary, should expressly reaffirm existing obligations to maintain peace under such instruments as the Covenant of the League of Nations, the Pact of Paris and the Treaties of Locarno, and His Majesty's Government cannot doubt that, if such pacts were expressly entered into in connection with the Convention (which, like the pacts themselves, His Majesty's Government, for reasons stated below, consider might be made in the first instance for a period of ten years), their practical value for the purpose of creating a sense of security will not be disputed.

His Majesty's Government consider that the suggestions here collected under the head of security constitute a sum total worthy of general acceptance. They have a right to expect that, if these provisions and pledges were solemnly entered into, they would not be lightly violated, and that any violation of them would be met in the most practical and effective way by immediately assembling Governments and States in support of international peace and agreement against the disturber and the violator.

10. *Equality of Rights.* — The Five-Power Declaration of December 11th, 1932, put on record, in connection with the problem of disarmament, the principle "of equality of rights in a system which would provide security for all nations" and declared that this principle should find itself embodied in a Disarmament Convention effecting a substantial reduction and limitation of armaments. From this Declaration His Majesty's Government have never withdrawn and they now reaffirm their unqualified adherence to it. The previous paragraph of this memorandum attempts to define the essential elements of security without which the necessary conditions for an adequate Disarmament Convention would not be fulfilled. But His Majesty's Government do not hesitate to declare that the principle of equality of rights is no less essential in the matter of armaments than the principle of security—both must have their practical application if international agreement about armaments is to be reached. The proposals which follow, no less than the draft Convention itself, are conceived in that spirit, and constitute a practical fulfilment of that principle.

11. *Disarmament.* — His Majesty's Government are glad to understand that Chancellor Hitler has declared that Germany voluntarily renounces any claim to possess "offensive" weapons and limits herself to normal "defensive" armaments required for the army with

which she would be provided in the Convention. The German Chancellor, moreover, advances this proposition on the assumption that the heavily armed States are not prepared to abandon under the Convention any portion of their existing weapons. As already indicated in paragraph 7 of this memorandum, His Majesty's Government are entirely unwilling to accept this last assumption, and must insist that the only agreement worthy of the name of a Disarmament Convention will be one which contains reduction as well as limitation of armaments. There is, moreover, a further reason why His Majesty's Government emphasise the fact that the German Chancellor's declaration renouncing offensive armaments and claiming only what is necessary for normal defence is based upon the assumption that the heavily armed Powers are not prepared to reduce their own armaments in any degree. The measure of Germany's need will necessarily be reduced if this assumption proves incorrect. A positive contribution to disarmament by the heavily armed Powers will therefore help to bring the scale down all round, and should, as His Majesty's Government conceive, reduce the demands which Germany might otherwise be disposed to put forward.

12. The following proposals, in modification of the draft Convention, are put forward on the assumption that the agreement would last for ten years. They have been framed after giving the fullest and most anxious consideration to suggestions and criticisms from all other quarters, and represent, in the judgment of His Majesty's Government, what might well be agreed in existing circumstances.

13. (a) *Effectives.* — While His Majesty's Government are still in favour, so far as they are concerned, of the figures given in the table they submitted at the end of Article 13 of the draft Convention, they are aware of the recent discussion with the German Government in regard to the proper number of average daily effectives which should be allotted to Germany. To the figure of 200,000 on a basis of eight months' service proposed in the draft Convention, the German Government have suggested the alternative of 300,000 on a basis of twelve months' service. This is one of the outstanding points of difference emerging from the recent exchange of views through the diplomatic channel. Though the point is difficult and serious, His Majesty's Government do not think this divergence ought to raise any insuperable obstacle to an agreed compromise. In the draft Convention, they themselves proposed 200,000 as the figure for the average daily effectives stationed in the home country for France, Germany, Italy and Poland. It is not the figure of 200,000 which in their mind is the essential and unalterable element, but the principle of parity, fairly calculated and applied, in these effectives between the four countries. They are aware that difficult calculations are necessary to establish the right figures for the ten years which, as above suggested, would be the life of the Disarmament Convention, but His Majesty's Government are convinced that the fixing of the proper figure cannot be beyond the power of adjustment between the States principally concerned if the problem was made the subject of frank and conciliatory discussion between them. If the figure of 200,000 was found to be too low, an accommodation could surely be found between this figure (which His Majesty's Government believe to be preferred by the majority of the Powers concerned) and 300,000.

Agreement as to this figure will enable all European continental armies to be reduced to a standard type composed of short-term effectives as proposed in the draft Convention. His Majesty's Government suggest that this process should be completed in, at most, four years. In Article 16 of the draft Convention, eight months was suggested as the maximum total period of service for these effectives, though, at the same time, it was recognised that in special cases the period might have to be twelve months. His Majesty's Government appreciate that this must necessarily be a matter for the continental Governments to determine, and they are ready to concur in the longer period if such is the general desire.

In regard to land armed forces stationed overseas, His Majesty's Government have no further reductions to propose in addition to those already inserted in the draft Convention. These, it will be remembered, would entail a considerable reduction of French overseas forces.

A difficult problem has been raised in regard to the so-called "paramilitary training" —*i.e.*, the military training outside the army of men of military age. His Majesty's Government suggested that such training outside the army should be prohibited, this prohibition being checked by a system of permanent and automatic supervision, in which the supervising organisation should be guided less by a strict definition of the term "military training" than by the military knowledge and experience of its experts. They are particularly glad to be informed that the German Government have freely promised to provide proof, through the medium of control, that the S.A. and the S.S. are not of a military character, and have added that similar proof will be furnished in respect of the Labour Corps. It is essential to a settlement that any doubts and suspicions in regard to these matters should be set and kept at rest.

14. (b) *Land War Material.* — Certain countries will require, for the increased numbers of their standardised armies, an increased number of such weapons as are at present possessed by their smaller long-service armies. His Majesty's Government accept this view. They would emphasise that, under the Convention, prohibition as to the possession of anti-aircraft

guns would disappear. They would suggest that the maximum calibre of guns in permanent frontier and fortress defensive systems should be fixed by international agreement.

Of the types of land war material at present denied by treaty to certain Powers, His Majesty's Government consider two weapons in particular must be dealt with. His Majesty's Government proposed in their draft Convention that the maximum limit for the weight of tanks should be sixteen tons. They recognised, however, that this problem "evidently requires further international examination". They are most anxious, in the interests alike of disarmament and of the realisation of the equality of all countries, that progress should at once be made with the elimination of tanks above the sixteen-ton limit. They suggest, therefore, that tanks over thirty tons should be destroyed by the end of the first year, over twenty tons by the end of the third year and over sixteen tons by the end of the fifth year. These practical steps should help towards the solution of the problem, but "further international examination", as contemplated by Article 21 of the draft Convention, is obviously necessary. His Majesty's Government propose that this examination should be held by the Permanent Disarmament Commission, and should be completed not later than by the end of the third year. His Majesty's Government understand that the German Government maintains that tanks up to six tons are, in their view, necessary for the defence of their country. This view of the German Government was based on the supposition that other countries would make no reduction in respect of tanks at all, whereas His Majesty's Government now propose the reductions set forth above. None the less, His Majesty's Government are, for their part, willing to agree that the new German short-term service army, contemplated by the draft Convention, should be equipped with tanks up to six tons. His Majesty's Government would be willing to agree to a similar arrangement in respect of Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria.

As regards mobile land guns, it will be recalled that in the draft Convention His Majesty's Government made the proposal to secure that the maximum limit of these guns for the future should be 115 mm. They would greatly regret any proposals which tend to increase the size of future construction beyond this calibre, but they are bound to face the fact that the German Government maintains the view that mobile land guns up to 155 mm. are necessary as part of the armament of the proposed new short-term service army. His Majesty's Government, though still preferring the more drastic proposals of their draft Convention, are willing to acquiesce in this proposal as part of the Convention, if by so doing they can secure prompt and general agreement on all points. His Majesty's Government would be willing to agree to similar proposals in respect of Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria.

But there remains the question whether it is not possible, by means of the proposed Convention, to secure the reduction in the maximum calibre of mobile land guns possessed by any Power. His Majesty's Government propose that such guns over 350 mm. should be destroyed by the end of the first year, those over 220 mm. by the end of the fourth year and those over 155 mm. by the end of the seventh year.

15. (c) *Air Armaments.* — His Majesty's Government have repeatedly emphasised the great importance of agreement in regard to the limitation and reduction of air armaments which may, in the future, prove the most potent military weapons in the possession of mankind. Full reflection has convinced them of the justice of the proposals contained in Articles 34-41 of their draft Convention. Article 35 requires that the Permanent Disarmament Commission shall, immediately, devote itself to the working out of the best possible schemes providing for the complete abolition of military and naval aircraft, which must be dependent on the effective supervision of civil aviation to prevent its misuse for military purposes. His Majesty's Government are aware that the German delegation at Geneva moved an amendment to this article, proposing the total abolition of military and naval aircraft without, however, making any specific provision for solving the problem of civil aviation. The appropriate occasion to discuss this proposal would be the immediate enquiry provided for in Article 35. In their view, it would be prejudicial to the prospects of the enquiry that any party not hitherto entitled to possess military aircraft should claim such possession pending the results of the enquiry. At the same time they frankly recognise that Germany and other States not at present entitled to military aircraft could not be asked to postpone for long their claim. They suggest, therefore, that the maintenance of the *status quo* laid down in Article 36 of their draft Convention should be modified as follows: If the Permanent Disarmament Commission has not decided on abolition at the end of two years, all countries shall be entitled to possess military aircraft. Countries would reduce or increase by stages, as the case might be, in the following eight years, so as to attain, by the end of the Convention, the figures in the table annexed to Article 41, or some other figures to be agreed on. Germany would require parity with the principal air Powers by these stages, and corresponding provisions would be made for other Powers not at present entitled to possess military or naval aircraft.

16. It is, of course, understood that all construction or fresh acquisition of weapons of the kinds which are to be destroyed during the life of the Convention would be prohibited.

17. (d) *Naval Armaments.* — His Majesty's Government, for their part, still stand by the naval chapter of the draft Convention. They appreciate, however, that the time which has passed since they put forward that draft Convention last March has brought much closer the assembling of the Naval Conference of 1935. Should it be thought, in view of this consideration, that the situation prior to the 1935 Conference could appropriately be dealt with by some simpler arrangement than that contained in the naval chapter, His Majesty's Government would be prepared to make proposals to that end in due course. They suggest, however, that prompt agreement on other matters, and embodiment of that agreement in a worldwide convention, would be of great assistance to the naval discussions proposed in Article 33 of the draft Convention.

18. *Supervision.* — His Majesty's Government are well aware of the great importance attached by various Governments to the institution of a system of permanent and automatic supervision to control the observance of the Disarmament Convention. There is obviously a close connection between mutual agreement about levels of armament and a system of adequate international supervision. There are, however, many technical difficulties which arise in this connection and which must be practically met. His Majesty's Government affirm their willingness, if general agreement is reached on all other issues, to agree to the application of a system of permanent and automatic supervision, to come into force with the obligations of the Convention.

19. It will be seen that the adjustments which His Majesty's Government propose are based on a duration of ten years for the Convention. The draft Convention suggested five years. Continued reflection, however, on the subject and constant discussion with other Governments have convinced His Majesty's Government that any stable system should be founded on a longer period. Only if a longer view is taken can substantial reductions of armaments, and the full realisation of all countries' equality of rights and durable security, be realised. The proposal of the German Chancellor, that undertakings not to resort to force between Germany and other European Powers should be of at least ten years' duration, fits in very closely with the proposal now made by His Majesty's Government that the Disarmament Convention itself should be of ten years' duration. They confidently hope that, if a Convention on the lines now proposed can be accepted, humanity will within the coming ten years acquire such a deep-rooted conviction of the contribution to peace which such a Convention can make that, when the Convention is due to expire, further progress can be achieved in the reduction of armaments. By the successful conclusion of a Convention on such lines, and in the atmosphere of firmer peace and increased mutual confidence which would accompany it, the way will be prepared for a closer and more hopeful approach to the political and economic problems which at present perplex and divide the nations of the world.

20. The object of His Majesty's Government in formulating these proposals and presenting them for consideration is not to describe the terms of an agreement which they themselves would most desire, without regard to the claims or needs of others, but to propound a basis of compromise on which it would appear, in present circumstances, that general agreement could and should now be reached. The proposals, therefore, must be considered as a whole and they are framed in the endeavour fairly to meet essential claims on all sides. The grave consequences which would follow the failure of the Disarmament Conference are realised by all and need no further emphasis. The policy of His Majesty's Government in the international sphere is directed, first and foremost, to contributing to the utmost of their power to the avoidance of these consequences by promoting general agreement. If agreement is secured and the return of Germany to Geneva and to the League of Nations brought about (and this ought to be an essential condition of agreement), the signature of the Convention would open a new prospect of international co-operation and lay a new foundation for international order.

January 29th, 1934.

(ii) STATEMENT MADE BY SIR JOHN SIMON IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
ON FEBRUARY 6TH, 1934.¹

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (SIR JOHN SIMON). — The last date when disarmament was discussed in this House was December 21st, on the motion for the Christmas adjournment. Hon. members may recall that I then had to point out that, though it was natural enough that the question should be raised on the eve of the recess, the moment was not then opportune for a Government declaration. That was not due to any preference for being secretive or to any desire to treat the topic of international disarmament, which closely affects every man, woman and child, as though it were a mystery unfit for profane ears. It was simply due to the fact that in the third week of December last diplomatic exchanges were actually going on which were being treated by other Governments as confidential until they were concluded, and because the best hope of promoting agreement was to avoid any hardening of the attitude of different parties by premature disclosure when there was still a prospect that adverse points of view would approach one another and be further modified.

¹ See Report of the debate in Volume 285, No. 30 of "*Parliamentary Debates - House of Commons*".

Now the situation has changed, it has developed, and candid examination of the present position is not only possible, but may well be useful, and I have no doubt many hon. members of the House will contribute what they have to say this afternoon. Not all the earlier exchanges between Governments have been made public, though the substance of some communications in the month of December has appeared in the Press. But four very important documents of later date have now been textually published, and I have no doubt that, if it is the desire of the House, those from foreign Governments could be included in a White Paper. These four important documents may be treated as summing up the present points of view of the four Governments which have been principally concerned in these recent conversations.

I will tell the House what these four published documents are. There is, first, the last French Memorandum—there were earlier ones that have not been published—handed to the German Government by the French Ambassador in Berlin on January 1st, a Memorandum which was published by the French Government, with the consent of the German Government, exactly a month later, on February 1st. Secondly, there is the German reply to that document, a reply that was dated January 19th and was made public in Berlin on February 3rd. A full summary of it appeared in *The Times* newspaper yesterday. Thirdly, there is the Italian document, published on January 31st, which follows the general lines of a Memorandum which was shown to me confidentially by Signor Mussolini in Rome on January 3rd, though it was not exactly in the same terms. It had been somewhat modified. Lastly, there is our own document, dated January 29th, which was handed to the German Chancellor in Berlin before he spoke in the Reichstag the next day, and was at the same time confidentially supplied to the French and Italian Governments.

Those are the four documents which may be regarded as forming the basis of our discussion to-day, and the House may have noted that Chancellor Hitler, in his speech last Tuesday, after he had received the British document and had had time to study it, made a reference to it in these words :

“ We welcome gratefully the efforts made by the British Government to help in opening the way to more friendly relations. The Memorandum, which was handed to me yesterday by the British Ambassador, will be examined by us with the greatest good will, in the spirit that I have tried to define as the spirit which controls our foreign policy.”

Then, after Chancellor Hitler had made his speech, and after Signor Mussolini had taken the opportunity of publishing his own Memorandum the next day then, as the House knows, the British Memorandum was published as a White Paper, and it has been in the hands of hon. members and the public for the best part of a week.

Before coming to the British Memorandum, it will be convenient if I indicate briefly to the House some impressions which we were led to form on studying the series of documents and communications proceeding from other countries and certain answers which had been given to ourselves. We must get the setting right before we can judge the merits or demerits of the British Memorandum. Those impressions, I think I can satisfy the House, at once explain and justify the publication of the British Memorandum. I will mention two points. First of all, I can assure the House that the periods of confidential, bilateral interchange have been useful, but, useful as they have been, it did appear to us that after this method had been pursued for some six weeks or two months it was in danger of exhausting its utility. We never imagined that it was the substitute for a more general discussion. It was merely a method, a possible method, of approach. Secondly, we formed this clear conclusion, that although differences, even serious differences, still existed, still there was a greater approach to common ground and sufficient encouragement to justify a new effort at reconciliation on our own part.

Let me just explain those two points a little further. In the first place, as I have just said, we are satisfied that this method of diplomatic exchanges has at this stage of the Conference proved definitely useful. This is what it has done. It has brought out, not only points of difference, but points of agreement, and it has brought out clear explanations on points of doubt which certainly would not have been obtained otherwise. It would, therefore, be a complete misunderstanding to say that, because this method has not produced actual agreement, the method has been useless and a waste of time. Secondly, these recent exchanges have brought out in the clearest way how the key to a disarmament arrangement lies in the finding of an accommodation between France and Germany.

But it is a very great mistake to base oneself on that undoubted fact and draw a false inference from it. It is a great mistake to draw from that fact the conclusion that a Franco-German Agreement is most likely to be promoted and reached by leaving France and Germany to argue it out between themselves without any assistance. The interest of other nations in the regulation of armaments and the avoidance of a new armaments race is so great that any State which can do anything towards helping agreement along is bound to do its utmost both to compose the differences of others and to contribute what it can of itself. In our case our own country has a special interest and a special connection in this matter. It has a special interest, for it is certain that, if a satisfactory Disarmament Agreement cannot be promptly arrived at, we shall have to face the question of the state of our own armaments, which stand at a level which will have to be re-examined if we are to live in a world of unlimited re-armament.

We have a special connection with this matter too. We have a special connection with these efforts at reconciliation, because we are the authors of the draft Convention which was put before the Disarmament Conference nearly a year ago, and which still remains the basis upon which a Convention may be framed if the necessary adjustments can be promptly arrived at. Hon. members will have observed in the White Paper the statement that His Majesty's Government have never departed from the principles and purposes of the draft Convention, though they have always recognised that it might call for agreed modifications. It is worth noticing that, in the French Memorandum of January 1st, France twice refers to this British plan as the basis and describes her own suggestions as adjustments of the British plan—*aménagements* is the word she uses.

If we come more closely to these recent discussions, I would like to call the attention of the House to two or three points. First, there is no controversy at all that Germany would be prepared in a Convention to transform her long-term professional highly trained army into a short-service force. There is a difference of view as to what the size of the new army should be. Germany has claimed that, having regard, among other things, to the length of her frontiers and her geographical position, her new army should consist of 300,000 men recruited on the basis of twelve months' service. One of the reasons which Germany advances for so large a figure is the present size of the armies of her neighbours, and one expects, therefore, that the figure may be revised if those other armies are reduced. Signor Mussolini in the Italian document to which I have referred makes this very point. I will read a sentence. He says :

“ It should be borne in mind that the German claim for an average daily effective force of 300,000 men is governed by the hypothesis that other armed Powers do not reduce their effectives to the figures put forward in the MacDonal plan, but keep to their present figures.”

He goes on :

“ If it were found preferable to face the problem of reduction, Germany declares herself ready to rediscuss the figure given above.”

I think that is worth noting. This figure of 300,000, of course, contrasts with the figure of 200,000 on the basis of eight months' service which is contained in the draft Convention put forward by my right hon. friend the Prime Minister on behalf of the British Government in March last. These are some of the impressions which hon. members will gain if they study the documents to which I have referred.

Let me briefly indicate some of the points made in the documents from the French side. We have to look at both sides. It is no good pursuing the process of trying to persuade others unless all the time we have both sides of the problem before us. France insists on the absolute necessity of adequate supervision, by which she means the application of a system of international control which would be what is called periodic and automatic, so as to secure that the limitations laid down in the Convention are being observed. On that point it is satisfactory to know from these recent documents that Germany agrees, provided that control is international and is identical. I do not think we can expect her to accept some specialised control. On the other hand, she says openly, boldly and without qualification that she is prepared to submit, if others will do the same, to an adequate system of international control which will be periodic and automatic ; that is to say, which will come into operation, not because one side lays a charge against another, but because the Permanent Disarmament Commission itself organises a continuous system of supervision. I think that the House will see that this position is one that, having regard to our position and traditions, is not easy to accept. There are many technical difficulties to be surmounted. Hon. members will have noticed that in this White Paper we have in very plain terms stated in paragraph 18 :

“ His Majesty's Government are well aware of the great importance attached by various Governments to the institution of a system of permanent and automatic supervision to control the observance of the Disarmament Convention. There is obviously a close connection between mutual agreement about levels of armament and a system of adequate international supervision. There are, however, many technical difficulties which arise in this connection and which must be practically met. His Majesty's Government affirm their willingness, if general agreement is reached on all other issues, to agree to the application of a system of permanent and automatic supervision, to come into force with the obligations of the Convention.”

Then, again, France makes the point in her document—a perfectly fair point—that in reckoning effectives the existence of what are called para-military forces cannot be left out of account. That is a very serious point which will require adequate provision. Running through the French case is a preoccupation of great importance for us all, as to which I will say something in a few minutes—namely; the provision of security. I have tried to put to the House as plainly and as fairly as I can a sketch of the documents out of which the British Memorandum emerges.

Now I will take our own document. Hon. members have, I am sure, read it and studied it, and I shall not therefore be long about it. I would like to make three points of a general kind

about the British Memorandum. The first point is this : The British Memorandum is not a document putting forward some ideal plan without regard to the needs, or the claims, or the anxieties of others. Quite deliberately we make our choice, and we believe that we shall do more to help on this vital matter if we approach the actual situation in a spirit of realism. More than two years have passed since the Disarmament Conference first assembled. Time is running against the friends of disarmament. Brave words may be more exhilarating, but they are less useful; and this is not a unilateral declaration containing what may give great satisfaction in certain undoubtedly sincere quarters, but it is an attempt to provide a basis for prompt agreement. Idealism is the steam without which no great instrument of reform can proceed, but, though it may be the steam of the locomotive, we shall not make any progress by merely blowing off steam, and here we have deliberately faced the facts as we find them and the difficulties as we know them, and the Memorandum must be studied in that spirit.

In the second place, approaching the whole thing in a spirit of realism, we reach—I ask hon. members to give special attention to this—the inevitable deduction from two propositions, neither of which can be effectively challenged. The first proposition is that Germany's claim to equality of rights in the matter of armaments cannot be resisted, and ought not to be resisted.

Mr. MAXTON. — Why not ?

Sir John SIMON. — For the reason which, I think, will be the first to appeal to any Scotsman, that there is little likelihood of peace in the world if you try to put any country or race under an inferior jurisdiction. I am meaning, of course, that that is a situation to be met in a new Convention, and, if you are going to negotiate a new treaty, I think it must be on that basis. Secondly, no practical solution can be found on the basis that all nations throughout the world immediately abandon all weapons denied to Germany by the Treaty of Versailles. [An Hon. MEMBER. — Why not ?] I hear an hon. member say, Why not ? I reply to him by saying that if anyone pretends or professes that this is the immediate practical solution, well, then, he is preferring the luxury of his own illusions to the opportunity of supporting a practical plan. If those two propositions are correct, if you are going to negotiate a new Convention, you will have to recognise the equality of rights, and you must face the fact, whether you like it or not, that you cannot bring everybody down at once to the level permitted in the Peace Treaties. Then what is to be the conclusion ? There is only one possible conclusion, and the conclusion to those two propositions, it appears to me, is that in a new Convention you will have to face some re-armament by Germany. We should recognise that that conclusion does flow from both, and proceed without delay to negotiate a treaty on that basis.

There is a third general proposition. It is the question as to whether the heavily armed Powers are simply going to hold all the armaments they have, or whether it is possible to combine with other features in the Treaty provisions which will, according to a programme, as I stated, effect some reduction in the armaments of highly armed Powers. In other words, we have our choice—no reduction in armaments at all, or a Treaty which provides for some moderate, reasonable programme of the abandonment of the very biggest weapons by the most heavily armed Powers. Germany, in her document, assumes the first. Italy, in her document, regretfully contemplates that possibility. I have to say, on behalf of the British Government, that His Majesty's Government would view, not only with reluctance but with repugnance, a settlement which provided, it might be, for equality of rights, but provided for it without any reduction of armaments in any part of the world. We are bound to resist so melancholy a conclusion with all our might. The object of this Memorandum is to show how it is possible for highly armed Powers progressively to get rid of their heaviest weapons. . . .

If hon. members will look at the Memorandum, they will see, in paragraph 8, which contains a second and more detailed part of the document, reference to the three heads of security, equality of rights and disarmament, and, of course, it is very necessary to see how far the British Memorandum carries out those three principles in the proposals which follow. As regards effectives, His Majesty's Government insist on the principle of parity between the home forces of France, Germany, Italy and Poland. That was the principle of the British draft Convention, which both France and Germany in principle approved. In regard to land war materials, we would be prepared, for the sake of agreement, to accept Germany's own proposals as to how her short-service army should be equipped. Let me point out to the House that it is a mistake to suppose that we have conceded, or, indeed, that Germany suggests, the authorisation of further weapons to the existing German military organisation. It is as the new army proceeds to become embodied, and as the old army proceeds to be disbanded, step by step, that you will gradually get, according to this scheme, the provision of the weapons which Germany proposes. It should be equipped—so Germany claims—with certain additional mobile guns. To our regret, the figure which is approved by some other Powers, as well as demanded by Germany, is 155 millimetres. As regards tanks, Germany has declared in express terms that she asks for no tanks except some up to six tons, and as regards tanks our proposals re-assert that which was suggested in the British draft Convention—namely, that there should

be a tank enquiry, a further international examination to take place within three years, in which, of course, Germany would have a part.

In regard to air arms, it is true that His Majesty's Government urge that the States at present not entitled to possess military aircraft should not claim this right pending the result of the enquiry into the possibility of the complete abolition of military aircraft, which was proposed, and very largely supported, in the draft Convention. I wish to say that it does seem to His Majesty's Government that, if Germany were to be given permission to set up a military air force at the very moment when the possibility of complete abolition is being discussed, that manifestly would not be to the advantage of that most important investigation. Germany, with her vast, highly developed civil aviation, could play, of course, an important part, but we provide that, if at the end of the two years a decision has not been reached on the question of abolition, then, undoubtedly, it is necessary to face facts as they will be, and this is a change in regard to the Convention. While the draft Convention made no provision for military aircraft for Germany during the five years' life of the Convention, the Memorandum, having regard to what has passed since, lays down that, if absolute abolition of military aircraft is not reached at the end of two years, Germany will be entitled to begin building military aircraft herself, and during the next eight years the necessary reduction or increase will take place, and the principal air Powers will reach equality in military aircraft. I do not wish to spend more time on that point now, but it is one of very great difficulty and of immense importance.

Then I would draw special attention to the British proposals in regard to para-military formation—that is to say, military training outside the army of men of military age. Obviously if such training—military training—were widely indulged in abroad, the careful provision about the number of effectives would be waste paper. The Memorandum does not lay down a cast-iron definition as to what constitutes military training. We feel that this is a question which must be settled on practical lines in an atmosphere of good faith by the permanent Disarmament Commission and its advisers. Herr Hitler has promised to provide full proof to the Supervisory Committee of the non-military character of the bodies referred to, including the Labour Corps, and His Majesty's Government feel that it is essential to a settlement that any doubts in regard to these matters should be settled and kept at rest, and they entirely concur that the question of effectives and para-military training are closely interconnected.

I desire to say a word about security. If hon. members will look at paragraph 9 of the Memorandum they will see what the proposals of His Majesty's Government are. They will see that, in addition to what is already contained in the draft Convention, we propose further articles which are printed at the bottom of the page, and I hope everybody will study them. I may be asked, Is this a new commitment? If by a "new commitment" is meant a new undertaking given in advance to adopt a definite repressive action in ignorance of the circumstances hereafter arising which may be alleged to call for it, the answer is "No". This country will do its utmost faithfully to fulfil any obligations, and, indeed, its authority in the world would not be strengthened by casting any doubts on our intentions, or on the validity of those obligations. But it is not the Anglo-Saxon habit—that applies to America as well as to ourselves—to make defined engagements for undefined circumstances. We are entitled to say that our past history shows that when the occasion arises this country has not been found wanting. But if a Convention can be negotiated and signed, as we are prepared to sign it, which contains the provisions set out in our Memorandum under the head of "Security", then we are confident that a very material addition will have been made to the influences and forces which buttress the Convention and secure its loyal observance. I venture to repeat here, on behalf of the Government, the words in paragraph 9 :

"The insertion of these articles would, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, emphasise the inescapable duty of all signatories of the Convention to keep in the closest touch with one another, and to do whatever is right and possible to prevent or remedy any violation of so important an international treaty."

In addition to that, the paragraph calls attention to the non-aggression pacts which Herr Hitler is prepared to enter into, and since that declaration of the Chancellor was made we must take due notice of the fact that a very effective non-aggression pact has been negotiated between Germany and Poland. Obviously, again on the subject of security, it is very material to consider what I have said about supervision. I hope that a careful study of this Memorandum will convince our fellow-citizens and others throughout the world who are keen supporters of the reduction of armaments that our new proposals constitute a really serious advance. This advance consists largely, it is true, in formulating very definitely how disarmament can begin at once. In this connection it should be remembered that by the end of the first year the heaviest guns and heaviest tanks are intended to be abolished. No such heavy weapons could in future be constructed or acquired. The same thing applies to aircraft. The British draft Convention would secure that at least half the military aircraft of the world above the unladen weight of three tons must be destroyed, and no others of that type

constructed or acquired by the middle of 1936 ; but quite apart from the definite prohibitions and destructions provided for there is the provision for the tank enquiry and for the aeroplane enquiry to which I have already called attention ; and I maintain that His Majesty's Government have shown in this document the utmost limits of what is possible through strong but practical support of the cause of disarmament. They have endeavoured to go into the question and to sympathise with the points of view of many countries of the world. They have tried to set them down in a form which they consider fair, and they hope others may consider acceptable, and if such a Convention could be reached, ratified, brought into force and observed, then it would be beyond all question not only a provision for the next ten years in which we might place some strong, clear hope, but the beginning of, probably, greater things in the future.

I shall be asked, What is the next step, what are you going to do now ? It is all very well to have this document distributed, but what is to happen next ? The Government have caused this Memorandum to be communicated to all the countries represented at the Disarmament Conference, and we hope that it may be widely regarded as providing the best basis for agreement. More particularly, we are concerned to urge the conclusions at which we have arrived upon the other States with which we have recently been in especially close communication. It is difficult, except by personal contact, to make sure that the intention and purpose of a necessarily elaborate State document like this is completely understood abroad, or to make sure that we, in our turn, fully grasp the central points of difficulty which we are doing our utmost to meet. It is still more difficult to form what I may call the comparative view, the view which we get in contact with other nations, the comparative view which is gained by giving and receiving explanations in each of the principal capitals in turn. His Majesty's Government therefore intend to follow up the issue of this Memorandum by arranging for my hon. friend the Lord Privy Seal to visit Paris, Rome and Berlin as soon as possible for the purpose of explaining our point of view, and of learning by direct contact what is the attitude of other Governments to our Memorandum, in order that when we have my hon. friend's report the next step may be decided upon and undertaken with that knowledge. It had been intended that the Lord Privy Seal should start on his mission immediately, but the French Government are, for the moment, much occupied with the domestic situation, and we must consult them as to the earliest date on which this visit would be convenient. Directly the situation becomes favourable for it, we shall invite the French and other Governments to concur in the action which we propose.

I do not think that the step I have just indicated calls for any defence. I believe it to be supported by the whole House. In the matter of disarmament every increased delay makes the solution more difficult. Everything must be done, therefore, not only to improve the chances of decision but to accelerate them. The British Government have thrown all their efforts, all their energy, into the pursuit of this objective, and the White Paper indicates very clearly how completely we realise the gravity of the situation which will result if agreement is not promptly attained. I would ask the House to observe that if, indeed, the world is to be thrown into a competition of unrestricted armaments, well, we must face that eventuality and act accordingly ; but our first duty is to do all that lies in our power, as we are doing, to formulate and press upon others the best practicable basis for general agreement. In the troublous times through which we are passing Britain has the advantage of a free Parliament and a stable Government. There are many parts of the world which cannot make that double claim. Our responsibility and our moral authority in the councils of the nations are immeasurably enhanced by that fact. More than that, our right to speak, our duty to give a further lead, is reinforced by the fact that we have offered the most striking proof to the world of our good faith. We, at any rate, have, not under compulsion, but voluntarily, translated the desire for disarmament from words into deeds. I trust the course and outcome of this debate may be to show that the Government have truly interpreted the united resolve of Britain to do everything that can be done to bring about, in spite of all difficulties, international agreement about armaments, to strengthen in every possible practical way the peace structure of the world, and so to deliver ourselves and others from the dangers and the burden that would follow on final failure to agree.

(c) REPLY FROM THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT.

Paris, February 10th, 1934.

In two letters, dated January 26th and 27th, you expressed the desire to be informed, not later than February 10th, of the situation resulting from the negotiations which the French Government, in accordance with the recent deliberations of the Bureau of the Conference, has been conducting through diplomatic channels with other Governments on the question of the limitation and reduction of armaments.

I believe that I can best reply to your request by sending you herewith, with a delay due to the ministerial crisis :

(1) A copy of the memorandum communicated by the German Government to the French Ambassador at Berlin on December 18th, 1933 ;

(2) A copy of the memorandum, dated January 1st, 1934, in which the French Government expressed its views in reply to the memorandum just mentioned ;

(3) A copy of the reply made to this memorandum by the German Government on January 19th.

Consideration of these documents shows that the French Government has remained faithful to the views already frequently set forth by its representatives, who have discussed it directly with you. In accordance with the decisions already taken by the Conference, the French Government maintains its opinion that, on the one hand, a controlled reduction of armaments must take place by stages down to a level which will enable equality of rights to be realised in a system of security for all nations, and that, on the other hand, effective guarantees of execution are indispensable.

It would seem desirable to add the following considerations :

(1) The French Government cannot conceive, and it would be unable to accept, any calculation of the effectives attributed to each State that would not take account of the existence of formations which, in spite of certain denials, are incontestably of a military character. If no account were taken of these formations, no fair comparison could be made between the forces of the respective countries ; the parities contemplated would represent disparities to the detriment of the States in which no such formations exist.

(2) The French Government could not accept an immediate reduction of its armaments which would be accompanied by an immediate re-armament of a qualitative character of the Powers bound by the military clauses of the treaties.

(3) The question of the guarantees of execution in case the provisions of the Convention are violated is of especial importance ; you have been amply informed of the views of the French Government on this subject.

(4) Present circumstances, and more particularly the increasing pace at which certain countries are continuing to re-arm in contravention of the provisions of the treaties, necessitate a rapid solution of the problems with which the Conference is concerned.

(Signed) Louis BARTHOU.

(i) MEMORANDUM COMMUNICATED BY THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT TO THE
FRENCH AMBASSADOR IN BERLIN ON DECEMBER 18TH, 1933.

I.

In view of the attitude adopted by the heavily armed States, and more especially France, at Geneva during the disarmament negotiations, the German Government cannot share the opinion that there is at present any real prospect of general disarmament. It is convinced that new efforts in this direction would be as vain as the negotiations of the last few years have been. If this fear should prove unfounded, no one would be more sincerely pleased than the German Government.

Without wishing to examine the numerous considerations on which the German Government's conviction is based, it is nevertheless impossible not to mention two essential facts :

1. The reduction of the armaments of other European countries can only be practically considered if such reduction be carried out by every country in the world ; but nobody believes any longer in the possibility of such general international disarmament.

2. The events of the last few months make it clear that, even if the Governments of certain countries were seriously contemplating the possibility of disarming, they doubtless would not be in a position to present, with any hope of success, proposals to this effect to their parliaments for ratification.

For these reasons, the German Government feels that it can no longer cling to an illusion which can only complicate the relations between the various peoples instead of improving them. Having regard to actual facts, therefore, it feels justified in making the following statements :

(a) Germany is the only country that has genuinely discharged the disarmament obligations embodied in the Treaty of Versailles ;

(b) The heavily armed States either have no intention of disarming or do not feel in a position to do so ;

(c) Germany is entitled to obtain, in one way or another, equality of treatment as regards her own security.

These were the facts in the mind of the German Government when it put forward its last proposal for the settlement of the problem. The statement that France has signified at Geneva her acceptance of a specific programme of disarmament in no way alters the force of these statements; for the programme which is doubtless alluded to involved conditions which Germany could not accept, and which compelled the German Government to leave the Geneva Disarmament Conference.

If the other nations should decide—as the German Government is at present convinced that they will not do—to disarm completely, the German Government announces in advance that it would be prepared to adhere to such a Convention, and to disarm also, if necessary, down to the last gun and the last machine-gun.

If France, in particular, were ready to disarm in accordance with a specific programme, the German Government would be obliged if the French Government would furnish it with figures relating to the steps it would propose to take (effectives, material, period for execution, date of starting and numerical supervision of execution).

The German Government cannot see how the adjustment of Germany's armaments to the requirements of her security, and their partial adjustment to the level of the armaments of neighbouring States, could lead to a general increase in armament and be the starting-point of an armaments race. The German proposals concern defensive armaments exclusively. They are so moderate as to leave French armaments still superior. Furthermore, they preclude any armaments race because, according to these proposals, those countries which are already heavily armed would undertake not to increase their armaments.

The German Government's plan can be summarised as follows :

1. Germany will receive complete equality of rights.
2. The heavily armed States will undertake among themselves not to exceed the present level of their armaments.
3. Germany will adhere to this Convention, undertaking of her own free will to show such moderation in availing herself of the equality of rights to be conceded to her, that this equality cannot be regarded by any European Power as an offensive menace.
4. All States will acknowledge certain obligations in regard to the humane conduct of war and the non-employment of certain weapons against the civil population.
5. All States will accept a general and uniform system of supervision to verify and ensure the observance of these undertakings.
6. The European nations will guarantee among themselves the unconditional maintenance of peace by signing pacts of non-aggression, to be renewed after a period of ten years.

II.

Having laid down these essential principles, the German Government makes the following remarks in regard to the particular questions put to it by the French Ambassador :

1. The figure of 300,000 men represents the strength of the army that Germany needs on account of the length of her land frontiers and the effectives of her neighbours' armies.
2. It will, of course, take several years to convert the Reichswehr into a short-service army of 300,000 men. Financial considerations will likewise have a capital influence on the duration of this period of transformation.
3. The number of defensive arms claimed by Germany should correspond to the normal proportion of such arms in a modern defensive army.
4. The progressive realisation of this armament should necessarily proceed *pari passu* with the conversion of the Reichswehr referred to in paragraph 2.
5. The German Government is prepared to agree to a system of general and uniform international supervision, operating periodically and automatically.
6. When this supervision would begin to operate is a particular question that cannot be settled until agreement has been reached on the fundamental questions.
7. The conversion of the Reichswehr into a short-service army of 300,000 men will in no way affect the nature and character of the S.A. and S.S.

The S.A. and S.S. are not military organisations, and will not become such in the future. They are an inseparable factor in the political system of the National-Socialist revolution, and hence in the National-Socialist State. They comprise some 2½ million men, ranging from the age of 18 years to extreme old age. Their sole mission is to organise the political masses of our people so as to make the return of the communist peril impossible for evermore. Whether this system will be abolished depends upon whether the Bolshevist danger continues or disappears. The National-Socialist organisations opposed to the former Marxist "Reichsbanner" and the "Association of Communist Ex-Soldiers" have no military character whatsoever. The attempts that have been made to establish a military connection between the S.A. and S.S. and the Reichswehr, and to describe the former as auxiliary military formations,

emanate from political circles which see in the abolition of this protective organisation of the National-Socialist movement the possibility of a fresh disintegration of the German people and a resumption of communist activity.

In order to establish the peculiar character of the S.A. and S.S. as political organisations whose aim is to immunise the country, intellectually and physically, against the risk of communist disintegration, the German Government does not refuse, on the application of the supervision provided for the carrying-out of the Convention, to produce evidence of the literal truth of its assertions.

8. The German Government is prepared to consider the establishment of common rules for political associations and organisations for preparatory and advanced military training in the various countries.

9. The answer to the question regarding the supervision of such organisations in the various countries will be found in the particulars given at the end of paragraph 7 on the subject of the S.A. and S.S.

10. The content of the pacts of non-aggression which the German Government is prepared to sign with all its neighbours may be judged from the practice of the post-war period.

11. Whether, and to what extent, so far as Franco-German relations are concerned, the Rhineland Pact of Locarno concluded in 1925 gives rise to any particular considerations is a legal and technical problem which can be reserved for separate negotiation later.

12. The German Government is prepared at any time to settle amicably, by whatever procedures may seem most appropriate, any disputes that may arise between France and Germany.

III.

The restoration of the Saar Territory to Germany without a plebiscite was suggested purely with the object of avoiding, if possible, the excitement of public opinion in France and Germany by which the plebiscite would be attended, and of sparing the Saar population the disturbance of an election campaign, the issue of which is not in doubt. If the French Government takes the view that it cannot consent to the restoration of the Saar Territory to Germany without a plebiscite, the German Government regards the question as settled.

IV.

Having again quite clearly stated its views on the settlement of the disarmament problem, the German Government considers that further conversations have no chance of leading to any definite result, unless the other Governments, in their turn, unequivocally state their attitude to the German Government's view and indicate clearly and in detail how, for their parts, they think that the problem can be solved.

(ii) MEMORANDUM BY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT OF JANUARY 1ST, 1934.

On a number of occasions, the German Government expressed the wish, on which its Head laid particular emphasis, that negotiations should be undertaken between France and Germany to settle such difficulties as might be outstanding between the two countries.

The French Government replied to these overtures in no less definite terms. It expressed its resolve to examine in the most helpful and conciliatory spirit any proposals which might be put forward in the general interests of peace and in a genuine spirit of international co-operation. The French Ambassador was instructed to express the desire that the intentions manifested by the Chancellor should be given sufficiently definite form to enable the French Government to judge of the prospects of success of such negotiations.

The German Government has been good enough to fall in with these wishes: Statements have been made to the French Ambassador, and information has been given to him either verbally or in writing. After proceeding with the fuller deliberations referred to by the Ambassador, the French Government is now able to express its views on the various points so far considered.

Confining itself to the German Government's actual proposals, and without discussing for the moment the general considerations adduced in support thereof, particularly as regards the state of Germany's armaments, the French Government is sincerely gratified to learn that the German Government is prepared to conclude pacts of non-aggression with all its neighbours; it goes without saying that the conclusion of such pacts would only be desirable to the extent that, without in any way diminishing the guarantees of security provided by the agreements already in force, and particularly the Locarno Agreements, it would be likely to add fresh guarantees protecting the signatories both from any threat to their external independence and from any attempt at interference in their internal affairs.

The French Government also notes with satisfaction the German Government's acceptance, at any rate in principle, of automatic and periodical supervision on the spot, in conditions of full and equal reciprocity, without which any international convention regarding armaments must remain inoperative. The exact details of this supervision remain, indeed, to be defined, and the French Government would be glad to know whether Germany agrees to the measures contemplated at the last meetings of the Geneva Committees, in which unfortunately Germany did not take part.

But apart from these details to be fixed later, regarding which an agreement appears possible, there is one vital point which has engaged our attention and regarding which we desire to state our point of view in all frankness.

While asserting her goodwill in circumstances which should facilitate the settlement of outstanding difficulties, Germany puts forward a programme of claims as regards armaments which runs directly counter to the principles hitherto sanctioned by the Geneva Conference, with the German delegation's own approval, and expressly endorsed by the declaration of the Powers of December 11th, 1932, to which the German Government frequently refers.

The aim of the Conference in whose work Germany and ourselves have been associated is to arrive by stages at a substantial reduction of armaments. But what the German Government now seems to contemplate is a no less substantial re-armament, which is represented as only being capable of being deferred on financial grounds.

The specific statements which the German Government has communicated show, not only that Germany asks to have her permanent effectives raised to 300,000 men, but that this figure would be far from representing the total military forces which would be at all times at her disposal without need of any mobilisation.

To that figure must be added, in fact, the large proportion of the police force whose character as a military organisation was recognised during the Conference's earlier proceedings and whose abolition does not seem to be contemplated, despite the considerable increase in permanent effectives which would result from the programme envisaged by the German Government.

There must, in particular, be added the para-military organisations which have been continually multiplying in the last few years and which, since the present regime came into force, have assumed such a development and such a consistency that, apart from the political considerations put forward by the German State, of which it is the sole judge, they raise a military problem which cannot be ignored.

The French Government feels it must point out that at any rate a large proportion of the men belonging to these formations receive a large degree of military instruction from cadres supplied by the Reichswehr or trained by it; that, if they are not all armed in a permanent manner, they are at any rate trained in the handling of implements of war; that they are at all times at the disposal of their leaders; that their equipment, apart from the carrying of rifles, is in every way comparable with military equipment; that, in addition to infantry units, these organisations now include transport formations, cavalry units and even engineers; and that their organisation and territorial distribution are closely modelled on those of the army (companies, battalions, regiments, brigades, divisions, military areas).

In these circumstances, whatever the political considerations invoked, the possibility of the military utilisation of these organisations appears undeniable, and the French Government can only maintain, in conformity with the Conference's earlier decisions, that any convention for the limitation of armaments which took no account of such formations in the calculation of effectives would not permit of any equitable comparison being made between the forces concerned.

The French Government also notes that the German Government asks for an important degree of quantitative and qualitative re-armament in the matter of land and air material, and asks for this immediately, on the basis of the equality of rights, the principle of which was recognised in the declaration of December 11th, 1932. But for this equality to be brought about practically and equitably, a previous equalisation and standardisation of the effectives assigned to each country for the defence of its territory is necessary. Germany herself considers that several years will be required to bring this about.

The French Government observes lastly that, while the German Government accepts the principle of supervision, it does not say when this supervision would begin to operate. But the establishment and testing of this supervision on a footing of complete reciprocity are an essential condition of the loyal application of the convention, and can alone permit of the proposed reductions being carried out in an atmosphere of mutual security.

The French Government does not think that a convention established on such a basis would answer to the intentions of the Powers as a whole, as expressed in the Conference's deliberations; and it was certainly not in this spirit that the declaration of December 11th was signed. It fears that such a convention would, on the contrary, prepare the way for an armaments race, which the common efforts of civilised nations must strive to prevent.

It was precisely to obviate this danger that, at the moment when Germany left the Conference, the French Government was ready to accept an emendation of the British plan which, bearing in mind the political unrest existing in Europe, and the practical possibilities

of realisation, was aimed at bringing about by stages an important reduction in armaments and equality of rights.

Its intentions have not changed, and it is eager to take this opportunity of furnishing Germany with the specific details requested by M. von Neurath in his last communication.

France is ready to accept an emendation of the British plan involving, during the first years of the application of the Convention, a reduction in the French effectives *pari passu* with the transformation of the existing German forces, so that the two armies should be standardised on the basis of a defensive army with short-term service and limited effectives. In this way, it should be possible to arrive by degrees at parity between the French and German effectives which are comparable—*i.e.*, which are intended for the defence of the home territory.

As regards land material, France is prepared, as soon as the Convention begins to be applied, to agree not to increase any of her armaments beyond their present level, and further to prohibit all manufactures of material of greater calibre or tonnage than those authorised for all States.

Simultaneously, the trial and adjustment of a system of supervision applicable to all States, both as regards effectives and the manufacture or import of material, would be put in operation.

The second stage of application of the Convention would involve, first of all, the progressive abolition of material exceeding the common qualitative limits which had been fixed, and, in the second place, the assignment of the authorised material to the States subject to the military clauses of the Treaties of Peace, according to a programme also to be fixed by the Convention.

The French Government is prepared to state in figures the effectives, the calibres and the tonnages to be entered in a Convention on these lines. But it is clear that these figures can only be usefully discussed between all the Powers concerned, and that an agreement between France and Germany alone cannot suffice to establish them.

Nevertheless, in order to convince the German Government of the importance of the reductions which would be effected in the second stage, it may be stated that France would be quite ready to consider the eventual reduction of the calibre of mobile artillery authorised for all States to 15 centimetres (5.9 inches).

As regards air armaments, France, from the outset of the application of the Convention, not only agrees to the abolition of bombardment from the air, in the conditions defined by the Conference in its resolution of July 23rd, 1932, but would even be prepared to consider, if such a general reduction was accepted by the principal air forces and was accompanied by an effective supervision of civil aviation and air manufactures, a proportional reduction of 50 per cent of the material at present in service.

She considers, moreover, that the eventual aim of these important reductions should be the abolition of all national military aviation and its replacement by an international air force.

The main outlines of this programme, the details of which France is ready to discuss with Germany and the Powers concerned, suffice to show how inaccurate is the basis on which the German Government takes its stand in initiating conversations tending towards re-armament. For our part, we believe that progressive disarmament always remains possible as well as desirable, and that the adoption of the programme defined above, the adjustment and elaboration of which were only interrupted by Germany's withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference, offers, if Germany will co-operate in studying it, the best prospects of bringing about what must be our common aim—a general, substantial and progressive reduction of armaments, which would relieve the world of a burden which the economic crisis renders heavier and more dangerous, and which threatens peace and the economic structure of every country.

Whatever the difference of views on an essential problem which has been revealed by the Chancellor's communications but which does not seem irreconcilable, if the German Government will accept the assurance that the road to reductions of armaments remains largely open, the French Government would regret any failure to pursue the diplomatic conversations which the German Government has several times expressed the desire to carry on.

The French Government has indeed been glad to note the assurance that the German Government was prepared at any time to settle on a friendly basis and by the most appropriate means the differences which might arise between France and Germany. It fully shares this desire, and has consistently pursued, sometimes at great sacrifice, this essential policy of good-neighbourliness and understanding between two great countries whose agreement in a common task of international co-operation would be the surest guarantee of peace.

Moreover, the examination of the problems which arise as between Germany and ourselves, assuming that, as the Chancellor says, no territorial differences any longer exist between the two countries, will soon convince the German Government that the majority are not Franco-German, but European problems, and that France, if she is to remain faithful to the policy of international co-operation, cannot consider them without consulting the different Governments concerned and the League of Nations.

But, in order that there may be no misunderstanding as to its point of view, the French Government wishes to assure the German Government that all problems can be examined between the two Governments in a spirit of mutual comprehension, on the understanding that there is no intention of arriving at a solution independently of the Governments

directly concerned and contrary to the provisions of a Covenant to which we, as well as they, remain attached.

It is, indeed, in the League of Nations that that equality of rights so strongly urged by Germany finds its practical application. It is there that international co-operation can best be exercised. The French Government has many times proved by its acts that it could not conceive of such co-operation without Germany's participation. It still hopes that the German Government will be convinced of these facts, that it will not maintain a decision as regards the League of Nations which has been unanimously regretted, and that it will not persist in an abstention the consequences of which would be no less injurious to Germany than to the international community as a whole.

(iii) REPLY OF THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT DATED JANUARY 19TH, 1934, TO THE
FRENCH GOVERNMENT'S MEMORANDUM DATED JANUARY 1ST, 1934.

The German Government has examined with great interest the memorandum communicated to it by the French Ambassador at Berlin on January 1st, 1934. It observes with satisfaction that the French Government has accepted the suggestion that direct diplomatic negotiations should be opened between the two Governments on the problems outstanding between their countries, and that, with regard to the gravest and most delicate question, that of disarmament, it has given a detailed statement of its attitude to the German Government's previous declarations, and of the views it wishes to advance as to the further development of this question. The German Government has examined, entirely without prejudice, the considerations put forward in this connection in the French memorandum—primarily in the endeavour to ascertain whether and in what form those considerations offer, at the present juncture, any prospect of arriving at general disarmament. It wishes to inform the French Government quite frankly and plainly of the results of this examination, because it believes that such a method can alone dispel misunderstandings and promote the agreement which both parties desire.

I.

Before replying to the French memorandum's criticisms of the German proposals, the German Government would like to express its views on the plan that the French Government has thought fit to put forward as an alternative. If the German Government has rightly understood that plan, it would essentially take the following form :

The French Government wishes to divide the period of the Disarmament Convention to be concluded into two stages. During the first stage—the length of which is not specifically stated, but which would in any case cover several years—France would progressively reduce the strength of her army to an extent corresponding in time to the progress of the conversion of the Reichswehr, and in such a way that, ultimately, numerical equality would be reached between the strength of the German army and that of the French home forces. The memorandum does not specify whether and to what extent France contemplates, in this connection, any reduction of her oversea forces.

During the first stage, France would retain her existing land war material without reduction. On the other hand, the manufacture of new material exceeding in calibre and tonnage the maximum limits fixed by the Convention would be discontinued.

As regards military aircraft, France would already be prepared during the first stage to agree to a reduction of 50 per cent in her existing machines, provided that the air forces of the other great Powers were reduced in the same proportion, and that arrangements were made for effective supervision of civil aviation and aircraft manufacture.

In the second stage of the period of validity of the Convention—that is to say, after several years—the gradual destruction of land war material exceeding the fixed calibre and tonnage limits would be begun. Furthermore, the States disarmed under the Peace Treaties would be allowed gradually to acquire all the categories of arms authorised by the Convention. The details of the measures to be carried out during the second stage in regard to war material would have to be determined in advance in the Convention. In any case, however, regard would have to be paid to the experience gained in the supervisory procedure during the first stage.

The French Government is of opinion that such a programme offers the best prospects of gradually carrying out a substantial degree of general disarmament and relieving the world of a heavy burden in the interests of the maintenance of peace and of economic reconstruction.

To elucidate this point, it will be necessary to visualise, in a concrete form, the situation that would be created by a Convention concluded on the lines of the French plan. What would that situation be ?

In the important sphere of war material, disarmament would be put off for several years. During this time, the heavily armed States would retain the whole of their heavy material without reduction, even if this material is regarded as more particularly adapted to offensive purposes. It is questionable whether, from the standpoint of general security, any importance can be attached to the fact that the heavily armed States would undertake not to renew their heavy offensive material during that period. Germany, for her part, would have to content

herself with the wholly inadequate categories of arms provided for by the Treaty of Versailles, while during the same period she would have to undertake the conversion of the Reichswehr. How can the conversion of an army be carried out in practice if the material appropriate to its possible employment is not available at the outset? And how, in such a conversion of the Reichswehr, can Germany's security be in any way guaranteed?

With regard to the question of effectives, the standardisation of types of army would naturally presuppose that the approved type of army should also be adopted by other States. Moreover, the value of the reduction of effectives conceded by France during the first period cannot be properly judged unless it is stated what is to become of the French colonial troops. The French defence system has long been largely based on the employment of African troops in the home country. Consequently, a large proportion of France's African troops are permanently stationed in the home territory. Furthermore, if the German Government's information is correct, a complete organisation has been established to enable the troops stationed in Africa to be brought to France in the shortest possible time at any moment. This being so, is it not reasonable to think that the reduction of the home forces could always be balanced by calling in oversea troops, so long as the latter were not included in the reduction of effectives?

With reference to the air forces, it is open to question whether, in view of the method of reduction contemplated in the French memorandum, the important principle of equalising all the major air fleets at a common level would not be abandoned. Apart from this question, however, Germany is also bound to ask whether, during the first, and even during the second, stage of the Convention, she must continue to have no military air force. If the French plan replied in the affirmative to this question, the proposed reduction of the air forces of other countries would, in practice, make no change in the present situation of absolute inequality, or in Germany's complete lack of air defence. The German Government cannot foresee how far this unacceptable situation would be alleviated by the fixing of an objective to be reached in the indeterminate future—namely, the general abolition of military aircraft.

The arrangements contemplated in the memorandum for the second stage would also raise an important question. Are the explanations in the memorandum on the subject of supervision to be interpreted as meaning that the system applied in the second stage will depend entirely on the facts ascertained in the first stage? If that were the correct interpretation, the achievement of general disarmament would be influenced, in this second stage also, by a dangerous factor of uncertainty. It is true that supervision is to be applied effectively and in an identical manner to all States. But it is evident that the preliminary condition of equal supervision would not be fulfilled if, owing to the radical difference in the degrees of armament reduction, the supervision were, in practice, to be exercised quite differently in the countries already disarmed under the Peace Treaties from the way in which it was exercised in other countries. Since its scope would be much more extensive in the disarmed countries, would it not—even if the treaty were observed with the most entire loyalty—give more occasion in the disarmed countries than in the other countries for disputes which could be taken as a pretext for further postponing the second stage?

Even if it be possible to obviate this risk, the decisive question for Germany is still whether the discrimination she now suffers is to be further prolonged for a period of years. Can the other Powers produce any solid reason in support of such a project, incompatible as it is with Germany's honour and security?

The German Government is firmly convinced that this is absolutely impossible. The assertion in the memorandum that Germany's equality of rights in regard to material implies, according to the declaration of December 11th, that the conversion of the Reichswehr must first be completed, cannot be justified either by that declaration or by other conventions or by other facts.

Apart from the general considerations set forth above, there are numerous other particular points in the French proposal that require further elucidation. Some of these questions appear in the list appended to this document. The German Government would be grateful if they could be answered.

II.

Taking the main points of the French plan and its consequences, as we have done in the foregoing survey, we cannot but entertain grave doubts of the possibility of finding on these lines a solution of the disarmament problem which would be really equitable and calculated to safeguard peace. All things considered, the German Government is of opinion that the problem stands to-day exactly where it stood a few months ago, when, in consequence of the total bankruptcy of Geneva methods, it was obliged to withdraw from the League of Nations and leave the Disarmament Conference, and decided to make a fresh proposal. The German Government most keenly regrets that the French Government, in its memorandum, has not appreciated the motives of that proposal at their true worth. In making that proposal, the German Government had no intention of abandoning the idea of disarmament and demanding the re-armament of Germany instead. It desires again to state explicitly that Germany, for her part, has no more earnest wish than that general disarmament to the widest possible extent should be achieved. The German Government still considers that the best solution would be for all countries to reduce their armaments to a level corresponding to the degree

of disarmament provided for in the Treaty of Versailles. That would afford the simplest solution of the question of Germany's equality of rights. In any case, there is no measure, however far-reaching, in the field of quantitative and qualitative disarmament that Germany is not prepared to accept forthwith if it is applied in the same way by all other countries. Having made, and several times repeated, this categorical declaration, the German Government is entitled to deny in the most formal fashion the assertion that the true aim of its policy is the re-armament of Germany.

If the German Government's proposal was designed to seek an initial prompt settlement on the basis of a limitation of the armaments of the heavily armed States to their present level, the reason is that, in the German Government's intimate conviction, the course taken by the discussions that have been proceeding for nearly eight years has clearly shown that the principal Powers concerned, having powerful armaments, are in no way disposed for a really effective measure of disarmament—whatever may be the reason for this attitude. Even the memorandum of January 1st does not contemplate such a measure of disarmament. Needless to say, it is not the intention of the German proposal to reject at this stage such definite measures of disarmament as it may seem possible to agree upon in the near future. On the contrary, the Government has no greater desire than that the most extensive measures of disarmament possible should be taken within the scope of the system suggested by it. In view, however, of the situation as the German Government sees it to-day, those measures will never be far-reaching enough to bring about in themselves Germany's equality of rights in accordance with the declaration of December 11th, 1932. Facing that fact, we can see no other way of reaching a treaty settlement in the near future than to determine the measures of disarmament on which agreement is now possible; but, apart from that, to limit the armaments of the heavily armed States to their present level for the duration of the first Convention, and to establish Germany's equality of rights by a certain adjustment of her armaments to the level of those of other countries. The sole object of this proposal is to draw the necessary consequences from a *de facto* situation for which Germany is not responsible. Germany cannot be expected to support alone the consequences of that situation, in such a way as to remain, for years to come, subject to unilateral armament limitations not applying to other States and bearing no relation to the level of the armaments of those States.

Nor do we see how the application of the German proposal could lead to an armaments race. So far as Germany is concerned, it would only involve the creation of a defensive army which could not constitute a threat, however remote, to any other country. Moreover, the German proposal aims at fixing by treaty, for all States, specific limits of armaments, which *a priori* precludes any possibility of an armaments race.

Nor, again, can the German Government admit the objection that three hundred thousand men would be too high a figure for the German defensive army. Indeed, owing to Germany's geographical situation, and especially the length and nature of her frontiers, that figure represents the minimum she needs for her security in the present circumstances. This will be particularly plain if that figure is compared with the armaments of Germany's heavily armed neighbours, chief among whom, apart from France, are the latter's allies—Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Belgium. It should further be observed that all those countries possess, not merely very large active armies, but also powerful quantities of trained reserves, because, since the end of the war, on the basis of universal military service, which is in force in their territories, they have passed through army training all the young men who are fit to bear arms. These reserves, who have received full military training with the forces, and who are also required to carry out training and are liable for service in time of war, whose rolls are kept and checked, and some of whom may be called to the colours without a proclamation of general mobilisation, number some five millions in France alone.

Germany has no comparable forces to set off against the trained reserves of other countries. In particular, the political organisations that exist in Germany cannot be placed on the same footing as the trained reserves of other countries.

It has already been pointed out several times to the French Ambassador that the S.A. and S.S. formations have no military character. Moreover, the German Government has already declared itself willing to submit the non-military character of those associations to the proposed international supervision, provided other countries assume a like obligation in respect of the organisations in their territories. This arrangement would effectively dispel any fear lest Germany might indirectly, by means of her political organisations, exceed the strength of her forces as fixed by the Convention.

On the police question, it will probably not be difficult to reach an agreement. In the German Government's view, regard should be paid to the number and density of the population, and to other factors peculiar to the different countries (number of large towns, social conditions, etc.).

Lastly, in considering the figure of three hundred thousand men, it must be borne in mind that these would be soldiers performing a short term of service, whereas the Reichswehr consists of professional soldiers serving for twelve years. The French Government itself, in the course of the Geneva discussions, has constantly upheld the view that the military value

of soldiers performing a short term of military service must be regarded as considerably less than that of professional soldiers. From this standpoint, likewise, it would be wrong to look upon the figure of three hundred thousand men as representing any considerable increase in Germany's present military forces.

As regards the objections in the memorandum to the equipment of Germany's future army with defensive weapons—which the German Government considers to be necessary—it has already been pointed out above that the conversion of the Reichswehr into a short-service army cannot be carried through in practice unless the arms that army requires are made available at the actual time of the conversion. To attempt to convert the Reichswehr first, and only to equip it during a subsequent period with the defensive arms allowed by the Convention, would not merely entail the greatest difficulties of organisation in carrying through the conversion, but also, and above all, would make the army, for the first few years, entirely inadequate for its duty—namely, the defence of the country.

Lastly, as regards the details of the system of supervision provided for by the Convention, these are technical matters, on which it will not be difficult to arrive at an agreement as soon as the main points in the disarmament problem are cleared up. In the German Government's view, provided that parity is fully assured, it would be in the very nature of the problem that supervision should begin to operate at the actual moment of the Convention's entry into force.

III.

The foregoing remarks make it clear that the essential points on which the views of the two Governments on the disarmament problem still diverge are the evaluation of effectives and the moment at which the future German army may be equipped with defensive weapons. On these two questions, however, in the German Government's opinion, the proper solution is self-evident, if the views expressed are considered without prejudice, and taking into account the material, legal and moral factors.

The French Government cannot fail to observe that what the German Government thinks it necessary to demand in the present case is far less than what ought to be conceded to Germany if equality of rights were really and completely established. Even if Germany's future short-service army is three hundred thousand strong, and if it obtains the necessary defensive weapons at the actual time of the conversion of the Reichswehr into a new-type army, France and the other over-armed States will retain a considerable superiority in armaments. That being so, the rejection of Germany's demands could only mean that there was no real intention of recognising Germany's equality of rights. For that reason, the German Government trusts that the French Government, if it once more considers all the factors in the problem, will not exclude Germany's point of view, and will thus find the way to an understanding which Germany earnestly desires.

Needless to say, the German Government agrees that the disarmament problem cannot be settled simply by negotiations between Germany and France, but entails negotiations with all the States concerned. These general negotiations, however, would be much easier if France and Germany could come to an understanding on questions of principle, seeing that such an agreement is one of the most important preliminary conditions for the establishment of a Disarmament Convention.

The fact that Germany is prepared to co-operate with other countries in the international field, and the spirit in which she will do so, are clear from her proposal to conclude pacts of non-aggression. As to the form that such co-operation may take in the future, that seems to the German Government to be a question which must be answered later. The most urgent task at the present moment is to solve the problem of disarmament; its successful solution will open the way to the solution of the other political problems outstanding.

Questionnaire.

(1) What is the maximum figure to which the total French forces, home and colonial, are to be reduced ?

(2) How are France's oversea effectives and trained reserves to be computed in the scheme provided for in the French memorandum ?

(3) If the conversion of her army into a short-service defensive army were not to be extended to the oversea effectives stationed in the home country as well as to those in the oversea territories, would France be prepared to undertake that her oversea troops should not be stationed or employed in the home territory, either in time of peace or in time of war ?

(4) What is to be done with mobile land guns exceeding 15 centimetres (5.9 inches) ? Are they to be destroyed ? Will training in the use of such guns still be authorised ?

(5) What is the maximum tonnage to be fixed for tanks ? What will be done with tanks exceeding this maximum ?

(6) Does the French Government contemplate quantitative limitation of certain categories of arms, including material in stock, for all countries? To what categories of arms would such limitation apply?

(7) What will be the armament of the French troops not brought under the measures for the standardisation of types of army?

(8) Within what period would the abolition of 50 per cent of the aeroplanes at present in service be carried out? Are the aeroplanes abolished to be destroyed, or how else are they to be dealt with?

(9) What is to be the scope of the supervision of civil aviation and aircraft manufacture, which, according to the French proposal, is the prerequisite of any reduction in the number of military aeroplanes at present in service?

(10) Is the Convention to provide specifically for the abolition of military aviation by a stated date and, if so, what date is proposed?

(11) Is the prohibition of bombing from the air, which the French Government is prepared to accept, to be general and absolute or, if not, what definite limitations are to be attached to such prohibition?

(12) Are the statements in the French memorandum regarding the supervision of war material to be understood as meaning that, so far as she herself is concerned, France is merely prepared to accept supervision of manufacture and imports, or do they mean that such supervision is to be extended to material at present in service and in stock?

(13) What is the French Government's attitude in the matter of naval armaments?

4. MEMORANDUM HANDED TO THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF
THE REICH BY THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR IN BERLIN
ON FEBRUARY 14TH, 1934.

The French Government has received from the Ambassador of the Republic in Berlin the memorandum handed to M. François-Poncet on January 19th in reply to its own memorandum of January 1st.

In a frank and sincere spirit, the French Government had put forward a programme in conformity with the resolutions previously voted by the Geneva Conference with the participation of the German delegation. This programme provided, by stages, and with corresponding guarantees of control and security, for substantial reductions of armaments, both in the matter of effectives and in that of land and air material.

On receiving this concrete and precise programme, the German Government, however, feels bound to assert once more that the "principal Powers concerned" (among which no doubt France must be reckoned) "having powerful armaments are not prepared for a really effective measure of disarmament". The Government of the Republic leaves to the Government of the Reich full responsibility for a conclusion to which it for its part cannot subscribe, more particularly because it is directly contradicted by its own proposals.

Arguing from mistaken premises, the German Government has not seen fit to modify the proposals which it put forward itself in its previous memorandum. Nor has it thought it desirable, in spite of the courteous request which was made to it, to explain the exact significance of several of its proposals. The French Government is legitimately surprised at this. It especially regrets not to find in the memorandum of January 19th adequate explanations of the German views in the matter of control; it regrets still more that the German Government has taken no notice either favourably or unfavourably of the observations presented in the memorandum of January 1st on the scope of pacts of non-aggression and on their relation to the Treaty of Locarno. Yet it would seem that this element in general security is too important to be passed over in silence when the conditions of a general and substantial reduction of armaments are being laid down.

The German Government must certainly be aware that the proposals formulated in the memorandum of January 1st were, from the point of view of the French Government, fundamental on two points.

The comparison of French and German effectives can be made only on the basis of comparable effectives—that is, those which are intended for the defence of home territory—and it is conceivable only if all forces which have any military character are included in whatever limitation is decreed.

Equality in material—that is, the attribution to Germany of material which the other Powers will keep and which is at present denied to her—can come only after the transformation of the German army and the absorption of the pre-military and para-military formations in the regular effectives which will be limited by the Convention.

By setting aside on these two essential points the proposals which were submitted to it, and of which it must have understood the scope and importance, the German Government has rejected the whole programme outlined in the memorandum of January 1st.

In these circumstances the French Government cannot see the use of the extensive *questionnaire* annexed to the last German memorandum, or what chance of progress it can offer. The French Government cannot but feel the difficulty of a discussion limited to two Governments when various and complex questions which affect all the Powers assembled in conference are at issue. These problems can be brought to a useful conclusion only with the participation of all the interested States, and a Franco-German examination of these questions undertaken as a preliminary process would have no useful purpose unless agreement had already been reached between the two countries on precise principles which would no longer be called in question.

Unfortunately, this is far from being so, as may be seen from facts which are only too clear. For instance, published documents show that the German army as regards organisation (high command, staffs, schools, reserve cadres, mobilisation), as regards effectives (peace establishment and trained reserves), and as regards material, already possesses resources incompatible with the provisions of the treaties, which must be taken as the basis of subsequent comparisons. Before considering the future, and in order to throw light upon it, we must consider the present.

* * *

Nevertheless, and subject to this necessary precaution, the French Government accepts the opportunity offered to dispel among so many difficulties two fundamental misunderstandings.

First of all, the French Government considers it of particular importance that effective control shall come into operation immediately the Convention is in force because of the necessity for perfecting, with the least possible delay, a mechanism which is to be an essential element of this Convention. In such a preoccupation, there is nothing prejudicial to the dignity of the German Government, whose rights no country can fail to appreciate. There are forms of control which might prove more dangerous than useful. Only an international organisation furnished with substantial means of investigation and action could provide the guarantees necessary for the maintenance of peace.

Further, the German Government appears to cast doubt upon the intention of the French Government to consider a limitation of its oversea effectives. Nothing could be less true. Nor is there any question of excluding from limitation the oversea forces, whose mobile character necessarily means that they are at all times ready, in home territory, to be sent in a minimum of time to any point in the colonial Empire at which their presence is thought expedient. Contrary to what the German Government appears to suppose, the French Government does not entertain the idea of compensating at any time it chooses for the reduction of its home forces laid down in the Convention by calling upon its oversea troops, since the Convention would strictly limit the number of effectives capable of being kept at home in peace-time.

These particular questions, important though they may be, cannot obscure the essential problem. They leave untouched the basic reasons for the divergence of views which has been revealed in the matter of effectives and which can be summarised as follows :

In claiming the figure of 300,000 men for a German army, transformed into a short-service unit, the German Government means that this figure should be fixed without taking into account either the militarised police or the para-military S.A. and S.S. formations. At the most they admit that, once the Convention has come into force, the control organisations may verify that the S.A. and S.S. formations have in fact no military character.

The French Government, on the other hand, has always held that the figures of limitation should embrace in their entirety forces of a military character, and they have taken it as settled that the S.A. and S.S. formations are of this type. The memorandum of January 1st contained in this connection detailed statements supported by precise facts. Since its refutation [of these statements] consists in a general declaration, the French Government is impelled to maintain in their entirety its previous statements. It cannot give its signature to a convention which would merely leave to the future the task of deciding whether the S.A. and S.S. formations have or have not a military value to be included in the calculations for the fixing of the relation between forces. A convention established on this principle would in effect be vitiated at the very base, and the first application of control, whatever its form, would produce the most dangerous misunderstandings. It is not a result of this kind which should be expected from an agreement reached after such long discussions, of which the conclusions should be accompanied by a relaxation in the political atmosphere of Europe.

The French Government ardently desires to collaborate with a sound comprehension of European feeling in this necessary improvement. It believes that a complete and sincere understanding with Germany would be the condition and the guarantee of such improvement. On the other hand, nothing could be more dangerous than a misunderstanding. It is for the German Government to dissipate or prevent it by explanations which it may be sure will be examined justly and without prejudice.

It is therefore the duty of the French Government to maintain the point of view for which the reasons have been given. These reasons justify the programme laid down in the memorandum of January 1st. The French Government considers, without wishing to throw doubt upon the reciprocity and sincerity of the intentions of the German Government, that a process of negotiations loses nothing by a recognition, a comparison, and even by a contrasting of the differences which stand in the way of final agreement.

5. LETTER, DATED FEBRUARY 19TH, 1934, SENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE TO MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION IN REGARD TO THE DATE OF MEETING OF THE BUREAU.

Conf. D./C.L.12.

Referring to my letter of January 26th, document Conf. D./C.L.11, I have the honour to inform you that the officers of the Bureau, composed of the Vice-Chairman, the Rapporteur, the Secretary-General, and myself, held a meeting in London on February 13th, in order to consider the date on which the Bureau should be summoned.

You will recall that by letters sent to the Governments of the United Kingdom, France and Italy on January 27th, I invited those Governments to inform me of the situation resulting from their negotiations.

The replies of the three Governments and the annexes attached thereto were closely considered. While welcoming the information that progress had been made, my colleagues and I thought that this progress was not sufficient to warrant an early meeting of the Bureau. We were unanimously of the opinion that a further effort should be made to secure a Disarmament Convention, and, after full consideration of all the circumstances, we felt that opportunities should be afforded for further efforts to narrow existing divergencies. We agreed that it would be unwise to take any decision which might be prejudicial to the new phase of the negotiations, which includes the visit of Mr. Eden to several of the European capitals.

We have therefore decided that, to allow time for the further efforts contemplated, and for any other steps which might arise out of them, the best course would be for the Bureau to meet on April 10th, with the understanding that, if the situation changes considerably, or if so requested by one or more of the Powers concerned in the negotiations, the President may summon the Bureau at an earlier date.

In either of these eventualities the officers have given me authority to convoke the Bureau.

(Signed) Arthur HENDERSON.

6. AIDE-MÉMOIRE COMMUNICATED ON FEBRUARY 19TH, 1934, BY THE UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE UNITED KINGDOM AMBASSADOR AT WASHINGTON.

Geneva, March 3rd, 1934.

Sir,

By direction of the Secretary of State, I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of a *aide-mémoire* which he handed to Sir Ronald Lindsay on February 19th, 1934, for your information and, if you should so desire, for inclusion in the compilation of documents regarding disarmament matters, which I understand you are about to publish.

I may add that my Government made this *aide-mémoire* public yesterday afternoon.

(Signed) Hugh R. WILSON.

TEXT OF AIDE-MÉMOIRE HANDED TO SIR RONALD LINDSAY BY SECRETARY OF STATE HULL AT WASHINGTON ON FEBRUARY 19TH, 1934.

The American Government has given careful study to the British memorandum on disarmament, dated January 29th. In many ways, the British suggestions are identical with the ideas expressed by the American delegation since the opening of the General Disarmament Conference in 1932. In other respects, they do not go so far in measures of actual disarmament as had been contemplated. The American Government has held the view that the most logical way in which to limit and reduce armaments was to limit and reduce the use to which such armaments could be put. This in turn implied a strengthening of the defensive power of a State and a corresponding reduction of its offensive power. To accomplish this, there were three main methods. The first, to abolish weapons of primary use in invasion, such as heavy mobile artillery, heavy tanks, bombardment aviation, etc. Second, continuous and automatic inspection. Third, and in connection with the General Disarmament Convention, a universal pact of non-aggression in which an undertaking would be given that the armed forces of no State should invade the territory of another country in violation of treaty rights.

In noting that the British proposals do not go so far, the American Government appreciates that they were probably drafted with a view to meeting the complexities of the present political situation in Europe and, at the same time, to achieve a large modicum of real disarmament. While the American Government is not in any way a participant in the European

political problems and therefore does not take part in diplomatic discussions relating thereto, it is nevertheless vitally interested in the maintenance of European peace and therefore welcomes the effort of the British Government to bring about agreement. This Government is in complete accord with the British Government in viewing a Convention involving an actual reduction in armaments, not only as essential in itself, but as facilitating a general political appeasement. While reserving its position on a few technical points and of course on the modifications to Part I, which, as Mr. Davis indicated on May 24th, 1933, it could not sign, the American Government is therefore in sympathy with the principles of the British suggestions and hopes that a successful resumption of the General Disarmament discussions may thereby be brought about.
