SECRETARY-GENERAL.

This morning Mr. Frohwein and after him Ambassador Nadolni, who by the way will be the chief German delegate to the Disarmament Conference, came to see me and spent between them an hour and a quarter with me. I think it worth while to jot down some of the most important points which occurred during these interviews.

These two gentlemen consider that it will create a very bad impression if the European Premiers do not honour by their presence the opening of the Conference. Public opinion might feel that the Governments do not give sufficient importance to the biggest Conference involving such tremendous issues for the peace of the world and the welfare of nations. Something ought to be done according to them in order that Premiers Bruning, Laval, Macdonald and perhaps others should be in Geneva at the start. If this is not possible, arrangements should be made so that they at least arrive in Geneva at the same time so that useful conversations can take place.

Mr. Nadolni entered into the core of the disarmament question and said that my responsibilities as chief of the Disarmament Section were tremendous and that everybody expected us to secure some solution as it was impossible to envisage failure without dismay as to what might ensue. He then hinted in guarded words of the disruption of the whole League idea, if the Conference fail.

I replied that I realised only too well the seriousness of the crises that might arise if we could not secure a minimum of positive result - something which reasonable and practical minds might regard as a first step and a promising prelude to better things in a less disturbed political atmosphere. This minimum, I said, we might secure if the two
great conflicting ideas did not keep us far apart during the Conference and if each one made a decisive step towards meeting the other.

As Mr. Nadolni expressed his concurrence with me in this respect, I said bluntly that I hoped he would not misunderstand me if I told him right away that in this respect a great effort was also to be expected from the German Government, that it was up to that Government to convince the nations assembled at the Conference that its desire for Disarmament in the sense of Article 8 of the Covenant is sincere and that the accusation that Germany has been doing and will continue to do all she can to cause the failure of the Conference by extreme demands will not be borne out by the attitude of the German delegation.

Mr. Nadolni said he understood my frankness and he assured me in a manner which seemed to me to be undoubtedly sincere that the German Government’s policy was not understood outside and that a grave misunderstanding existed as to the bearing of that policy, that the German people and Government had come to realise that nothing would benefit Germany but long years of restoration through organised peace and that Germany had come to Geneva with a positive spirit of co-operation with the other nations towards building up organised peace. But, he said, there is a minimum which had to be secured and which would mean for Germany that she as sitting at the Conference table with the same freedom of movement and thought as the other delegates.

Mr. Nadolni harped on this chord for some time in very guarded and diplomatic language, which I interpret as meaning: We will not ask the Conference to allow us to re-arm because we believe in disarmament and not in armaments. Is it too much for us to ask the Conference that the pledges given for the disarmament of other nations should be ful-
filled? What we drive at is arriving at what may be considered moral or legal equality of status. It is only then that our commitments may have any meaning as being undertaken with entire free will. We cannot speak in full freedom if, while we dispose of no strength, we see on the otherside of the table colleagues whose words are reminiscent of formidable military apparatus.

I replied to Mr. Nadolni that I was grateful to have heard from the mouth of the chief German delegate that Germany is not going to plead "re-armsments" at a disarmament conference, that moreover she will bring a positive spirit of co-operation with the other nations in the interests of the organisation of peace.

January 26th, 1932.
Mr. Nadolny expressed the wish to speak to me on Conference prospects and we discussed for nearly an hour the procedure to be followed in the immediate future. His ideas roughly correspond to those expressed by you in your last note to me. The salient features of the policy he advocates are the following:

(1) We should hurry up with the special commissions entrusted with the mandate on qualitative disarmament.

(2) As soon as the reports are ready the President must distribute them to all the Delegations. We must then have a discussion between the chiefs of the great powers' delegations under the presidency of Mr. Henderson, and arrive at certain decisions on the following issues:
   a) Qualitative disarmament.
   b) The principle of quantitative disarmament.
   c) Effectives.
   d) Equality.
   e) Security.

(3) Only after coming to a decision on these points should we convocate the General Commission, which should then serve as a clearing-house for the decisions adopted in private.

(4) It appears from the speech of M. Paul-Boncour at Dijon and the article of M. Herriot in the "Re Nouvelle" which confirms M. Paul-Boncour's views, that it is not at all material for the resumption of the political work on disarmament that the French Government should have had a vote of confidence from the new Chamber. After all, whatever we do in Geneva is done ad referendum.

(5) An alternative policy would be to have the conversations as above between the heads of the chief delegations here in Geneva, arrive at certain provisional decisions, prepare if necessary alternative solutions and submit them to the Chiefs
of Delegations of the great Powers at Lausanne. This alone would permit a useful discussion between the big people who will be at Lausanne. In other words, Mr. Nadolny would also consider it as a plausible policy (1) to have the discussion between the heads of the great Powers' delegations in Geneva, (2) to communicate the results arrived at to the heads of Governments at Lausanne so that they may usefully adopt definitive decisions, and only then convocate the General Commission in Geneva.

As Mr. Nadolny insisted very much on the necessity of quickly finishing the discussions on qualitative disarmament in the special commissions (he thinks this possible within the next eight days) I had to tell him that I feared I was not so optimistic as to the possibility of so speedy a termination of the work of these commissions. I reminded him also of the necessity of having the three bureaux of the special commissions meet together in order to co-ordinate the three reports. At this point Mr. Wilson of the U.S.A. delegation joined us. I went on to say that the co-ordination of the Naval Commission's report with that of the Land Commission would be very difficult; in view of the intrinsic differences of the two arms their reports are not made according to the same principles. Mr. Nadolny and Mr. Wilson both consider that it may not be absolutely necessary in that case to work out a general co-ordinated report. Why not hand the three reports and that on chemical warfare to the General Commission, and only after that distribution begin the conversations referred to above? The last phase of the procedure would be the clearing process within the General Commission.

21st May, 1932.
My dear President,

1. The Committee on Chemical and Bacteriological Warfare, which received the mandate of examining chemical and bacteriological arms from the point of view of the resolution adopted on April 22nd on qualitative disarmament, having concluded its work, have adopted a report and three resolutions. As you will see from the report (a copy of which I am enclosing herewith) some delegations accompanied their acceptance of the resolutions with certain reservations.

2. The Land Armaments Commission is not far from concluding its work. I expect we may have a report by next Tuesday.

3. The Air Armaments Commission is very much in arrears. Its Bureau has therefore suggested, and the Air Commission accepted this suggestion, to expedite the report regardless of the French questionnaire, which will be considered by the Sub-Committee, and should the latter's report be available in time, it will be embodied or annexed to the general report of the Air Commission for submission to the President of the Conference.

4. The Committee on Effectives has been encountering the last few days great difficulties as regards the interpretation of the mandate it received from the General Commission. Some delegations, in particular the French and, to a lesser degree, the American, would like to interpret the mandate of the committee in a wider sense. Conversely, certain other delegations, particularly the Italian delegation, would like to put a very narrow and rigid construction on the terms of reference given by the General Commission to the Committee on Effectives.

Thus, the French argued that you cannot gauge the military strength of a country solely on the basis of the official armed forces. You have equally to take account of formations entertained in certain countries, sometimes even under other Ministries than that of war. A comparable basis for the computation of effectives should be worked out, due account being taken of all these elements.

The Rt. Hon. Arthur Henderson,
President of the Disarmament Conference,
Hôtel de la Paix,
Geneva.
To this the Italians reply that the mandate given to the Committee by the General Commission excludes the possibility of embodying with the military forces young men of at least eighteen years of age who have received preliminary training.

On the other hand, the Italians would like to have under consideration in the Effectives Committee what is officially considered as the armed forces of a country. Their view is, of course, so far as it goes, shared by the Germans too. The Italians told me yesterday that a good deal of resentment is felt because the committee does not keep to its mandate and enters into the consideration of elements which do not in themselves constitute the armed forces of a country. One of them said to me that a wider interpretation of the mandate of the committee would be most unwelcome in Rome as it would imply interference with a system so closely connected with the internal organisation of the Fascist régime.

The meeting held on Thursday afternoon revealed against all hope the possibility of an understanding. The new text prepared by Colonel Strong was strongly opposed by Germany, Italy and Soviet Russia. The British delegate was equally opposed and presented himself a new text which, though more acceptable, was a mere statement of importance and which referred the difficulties back to the General Commission.

M. de Brouckère displayed all his resourcefulness and other well-known presidential qualities but it was all wasted on the committee. I had two interviews with him to-day and I understand he may come to see you to-morrow unless he still hopes something can be done. I am afraid the whole question may be referred back to the General Commission with a request to give a very precise mandate to the Effectives Committee as the resolution presented by the American delegation and adopted by the General Commission does not seem to have been a very happy one.

I think I am not indiscreet in telling you that M. de Brouckère has seen this morning the American delegation to whom he is going to present a statement such as might enable that delegation to take up the matter again in the Bureau or in the General Commission and eventually present a more enlightened text of resolution and one which the Effectives Committee can deal with.

As you are aware, the difficulties involved are of such political importance that the members of the Effectives Committee cannot reasonably be expected to settle them. How indeed could the German expert commit his Government on such a controversial issue as the trained reserve question or the Italian delegate on the military instruction given to Italian youth. Conversely, the French expert does not feel equal to commit his Government to the acceptance of both the German and the Italian views on the matter.

The General Commission may therefore have either to settle itself the political issues involved or to content itself with a mere work of accountancy on a rather unambitious basis.
and ask a very small body of experts to work out an
imperfect but practical basis of computation, say on
the basis of the figures given in the Armaments Year
Book of the League.

I apologise for having dealt with this point
at such length but I think it may be of use to you for
the possible meeting between you and M. de Brouckère, as
I understand the latter would finally, if all hope of an
agreement is lost, come to you.

Believe me, my dear President,

Yours very sincerely,
NOTE of a conversation between Mr. Henderson, Herr Nadolny, Mr. Eden and Mr. Cadogan, at the Hotel de la Paix, Geneva, on 29th April, 1933.

The meeting opened with a discussion on procedure.

HERR NADOLNY said that yesterday M. Massigli had complained that he - Herr Nadolny - had dealt in his speech with all his amendments to Part II, Section I. Herr Nadolny reminded Mr. Henderson that he had asked his permission to follow this procedure, and the President had agreed. In many cases it was necessary, in order properly to explain the attitude of a Delegation in regard to a whole section or chapter, to deal at once with the various amendments which it had proposed.

Further, Herr Nadolny said that he had understood from the Prime Minister's declaration that the British Draft Convention was merely in the nature of a proposal to which amendments could be made. Yesterday there seemed to be an impression at the General Commission that the British Draft had been adopted as more than a basis of discussion and that Delegations had not the right to propose substantial modifications. Herr Nadolny had never understood this to be the case, and he would have to move amendments which ran counter to certain provisions of the British Draft and which would be supported by other Delegations.

With regard to future procedure, he suggested that the General Commission should go through the whole Draft Convention as rapidly as possible in first reading. This might occupy perhaps a fortnight, and in the course of
that time every Delegation would be free to indicate its attitude in regard to each part of the Draft. The Commission should then proceed to a second reading in the light of the observations made: if at the end of that second reading there were two or three important questions on which agreement had not yet been reached, these would form the object of negotiation.

Mr. Henderson and Mr. Eden pointed out that the first reading suggested by Herr Nadolny would not, in fact, advance matters very much beyond the stage at which they now were, and they both insisted that it was absolutely necessary that Delegations should make the maximum possible concessions in order to create an atmosphere which would render ultimate agreement possible.

The meeting then examined the German amendments to Part II, Section II. As regards the amendment to Article 9(a), Herr Nadolny explained that he could not straight away withdraw this amendment, because there were other States which supported it. If, after discussion, the President were to put it to the vote, Herr Nadolny would be prepared to drop it in face of an adverse vote. Failure to secure this amendment would not prevent Germany signing the Convention.

It was agreed that the amendment to Article 9(c) presented no great difficulty.

Herr Nadolny maintained that the amendment to Article 13 was really of secondary importance, but it was pointed out to him that this whole question of police had considerable political significance at the moment and if an agreement could be reached on it, the effect would doubtless be very good. Herr Nadolny suggested that Brigadier Templerley might
be asked to summon his colleagues of the German, French and Hungarian Delegations, who had put in amendments to this Article, and endeavour to work out an acceptable solution. This was agreed, and instructions were sent to Brigadier Temperley accordingly.

On the question of the Effectives table, Herrnadolny said that this raised two big questions of principle, namely equality of rights and standardisation of armies. It was quite impossible to settle these two questions now. He thought that the only means of reaching an agreement on figures would be to ask each State in confidence what figure it claimed, and then endeavour to arrive at a balanced result.

Mr. Henderson and Mr. Eden said that they thought this would really result in showing that practically every State would ask for more effectives than were allotted to it in the table - with the result that we should come back to the conclusion that on the whole our table represented the only practical solution.

On the particular question of the distinction between home and overseas troops, Herrnadolny said that the German Government found it impossible to admit that France would be at liberty to maintain large forces of long service men in close proximity to the home country.

Mr. Eden expressed doubt as to the practicability of the solution proposed by the German Government. He said that it seemed to him that the real solution was to limit to an absolute minimum required for the maintenance of order the troops stationed in overseas territory. If that were done, very few - if any - of these troops could be removed in any circumstances for employment elsewhere.

Herr Nadolny
HERR NADOLNY said he did not see why it would be impossible to lay down a certain radius within which troops should be counted as being troops of the home country. However, he felt that a solution of this question could be reached: the point - which was one for experts - was to find out whether troops stationed overseas could, in fact, be immediately utilised elsewhere.

HERR NADOLNY then touched on the question of the standardisation of armies, and stated that his government could not agree to this chapter of the British draft. The question, in fact, had not been studied sufficiently. It would be an extremely difficult matter to transform the Reichswehr: it would be a matter like the abolition of military and naval aviation and would have to be studied at leisure by the Permanent Disarmament Commission.

MR. EDEN pointed out that if this matter were left to the Permanent Disarmament Commission, the French would claim that the reductions of material should also be left to the same body, and the result would be that the present Convention, beyond setting up the Permanent Disarmament Commission, would not make any real advance in disarmament.

HERR NADOLNY maintained his objections, which he said would be shared by other delegations. Moreover, he added that certain delegations - the Russians for example - would demand that this standardisation must be applied to the whole world: in fact his delegation shared that view. At any rate his government could not accept this principle now: he could not see that the Convention would be menaced by their refusal to accept it. If it were possible to disarm other parts of the world without reinforcement of his principle
principle, he did not see why it was essential for the disarmament of Europe.

At the close of the conversation, MR. HENDERSON repeated an appeal which he had made at the outset for good will in the conduct of these conversations and of the discussions in the General Commission.

HERR NADELNY, in thanking Mr. Henderson, assured him that he could always count on his good will: he had of course the duty of representing the interests of his country, but so far as his instructions allowed him he would always make the utmost concession and show the greatest desire to reach agreement on all points.
M. Nadolny is leaving tonight for Berlin.

Several delegations have asked me what will be the use of having the meeting of the General Commission on Monday, their argument being that as the Reichstag will discuss the situation on Wednesday only, on Monday at the General Commission it is very likely that certain delegations will make strong speeches in connection with war material and with the German request for qualitative equality in armaments it is certain that the repercussion of this discussion on the Reichstag events will be detrimental to the decision which the Germans will take on Wednesday with regard to disarmament.

The question therefore arises whether the meeting of the General Commission should not be postponed.

I have been to see the President, who was impressed by these arguments and he said he would be quite willing to postpone the General Commission, say, until Thursday, but of course he would not like to be alone in taking the responsibility for such an adjournment.

The President at one moment wondered whether it would not be possible for the United Kingdom delegation to make a statement, of course very appropriately drafted, to the effect that as the German chief delegate is going to Berlin and will no doubt bring back new instructions on the vital question which we are about to discuss, it may be appropriate to adjourn the meeting of the General Commission until late on Wednesday afternoon or Thursday morning. If the German instructions are favourable, in the opinion of the President, at the same moment as Hitler may read them in the Reichstag, M. von Rheinbaben might issue them here at the General Commission. Of course this is all based on the assumption
that the meeting of the Reichstag is intended to ease the
situation by certain concessions, instead of the contrary.
On June 24th, while I was still in London, M. Jean Paul-Boncour telephoned me, conveying the urgent desire of his uncle, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, that the President should stay a short time in Paris on his way back in order to have a talk on disarmament.

The President agreed to this, and on Monday at 9.45 in the morning Baker and I accompanied him to the Quai d'Orsay. The conversation lasted for about fifty minutes. The President explained the necessity of serious conversations being conducted previous to any talk of second reading; indeed, the texts could only be prepared after a greater measure of common agreement had been reached, and this could only be done through negotiations.

Mr. Paul-Boncour said he agreed with the President, and his Government would do its utmost to help him in his task. But France had no desire to start new five-Power conversations; they had done with five-Power conversations when they signed the Protocol on Equality of Rights in December, 1932.

He wished to introduce into the circuit of the conversations a new element, i.e. diplomatic conversations.

On the other hand, in order to avoid any misunderstanding he would prefer the conversations to be conducted by the President to be carried on with the collaboration of neutral elements like the Vice-President of the Conference (Mr. Politis) and the General Rapporteur (Mr. Benes). Nobody could then say that the conversations were only between great Powers.
Mr. Henderson, after having asked for some explanations as to what the diplomatic conversations would be, said he did not see what use the diplomats would be in this matter, since they were not acquainted with the details of the question. The General Commission had asked the President of the Conference to negotiate.

Nor did he understand how the negotiations would be carried on by a group of three men, however remarkable the Vice-President and the Rapporteur might be from the point of view of talent in negotiation. These men represented concrete and definite interests: the one in connection with the Little Entente, the other those of his Government. The President had alone been asked by the General Commission to carry on negotiations. That was a one-man job, not a three-men job - so much so that the President declared himself willing to help in order that the mandate should be given to Mr. Benes alone if the General Commission thought that would be better.

Mr. Paul-Boncour said he had made the proposals as regards the diplomats and the two other officers of the General Commission because he thought it would help in producing the result desired by the President himself, but that in view of the President's declaration he would not insist.

The President then said he wished very much to know if the French Government would enter into negotiations through the instrumentality of the President. It was very important to have an answer on this point. Mr. Paul-Boncour said he was ready to negotiate at any time with the President, either in Paris or Geneva, as he had always been in the past.
He would not come to Geneva now, as he knew the meetings would be rather formal and would only deal with the question of adjournment, but next week even he might come to Geneva if required, or meet the President in Paris.

Mr. Paul-Boncour then referred to the question of substance, and said that in face of what was going on in Germany it was essential for France, before anything else, to have a probationary period (période d'épreuve) of three to four years, during which the contracting parties would not build or re-arm. But this period of standstill must be verified and controlled. We have had many instances when the armaments truce had been voted repeatedly but never observed by any Government because there was no control.

In short, our Convention should be divided into two periods: 1) period of trial, probationary period, period of standstill; 2) period of the working out of the qualitative and quantitative deductions inserted in the Convention.

Naturally, the second period would start after the first, and the Germans would have no good reason to oppose such a Convention.

Mr. Henderson observed that if we tried to make progress only in the matter of control we would get nothing. He realised the possibilities of re-armament in Germany, but that was one more reason why we should speedily sign a Convention. If not, Germany would ostentatiously re-arm. He ventured to remind Mr. Paul-Boncour of the obligations which the Five-Power agreement entails for France. We should have to choose between two alternatives: a) fixing the status of armaments through a Convention, or failing that, b) Germany would take the matter into her own hands.
We must face Germany, and Japan as well, with a Convention which would of course include strict control.

Mr. Paul-Boncour repeated his views, and referred to what he had said to the President in Geneva in the presence of Mr. Baker, i.e. that undoubtedly the re-armament of Germany creates a very difficult situation, and that in face of the uncertainties in Germany France would require a period of trial and observation of the efficiency of control, so that it should become clear as to whether Germany re-arms or not. "We are convinced that they are re-arming, as we are informed of this from various sources, and in particular through Socialist channels."

As regards the President's ideas as to the date of adjournment, Mr. Paul-Boncour was in entire agreement, especially as in the present conflict of ideas to undertake the second reading would deal a fatal blow to the Conference. He again assured the President of his willingness to place himself at the disposal of the President for any negotiations at the latter's call.
RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE AND MR. NADOLNY

Mr. Nadolny called on Mr. Henderson this morning at 11 a.m. for information as to his programme with regard to the negotiations. The President explained that he would first go to Paris, then to London, then via Paris to Rome, and then to Berlin, where he expected to be some time, during three weeks in July, but would in due time inform the German Government of the exact date.

Mr. Nadolny then referred to the difficulties the President would have, in view of the fact that the method of negotiations did not provide him with the only weapon the President possessed, i.e. the presence of the delegations sitting in Conference. The President might bring pressure to bear on the delegations through the instrumentality of the Conference, but in private conversations his power would be limited.

The President said he did not agree with Mr. Nadolny, and that if he had no other quality he had courage; the fact that he had the right to convene the Bureau would work in the same direction as Mr. Nadolny thought the Conference would work. Could he not convene the Bureau and explain the position squarely to it, showing where the responsibilities lay?

There ensued a very long discussion as to the merits of conversations in the capitals versus meetings of the General Commission in Geneva. The President incidentally expressed his disappointment at the fact that Mr. Nadolny seemed to imply that he (the President) had failed in the negotiations he had to carry on in London, and that this new adjournment in view of fresh negotiations might mean a decent burial of the Conference. What preparation would such news
in the German press be for the President's trip to Berlin? It would from the beginning vitiate the success of negotiations. Mr. Nadolny explained that he had not meant that the President had failed, and that the responsibility must be thrown on the Governments which had refused to negotiate. The President said there was no refusal to negotiate, but that negotiations had not taken place because of the pressure of work of the delegates to the World Economic Conference.

Mr. Nadolny then asked the President if he would be informed of the result of the conversations the former would conduct in Paris, London and Rome, in order that when he arrived in Berlin he would find the ground already prepared. The President regretted that he was not able to comply with this request, as he did not believe in interim reports. The first conversations could not yield definite results. What, therefore, was the use of creating an artificial situation by proposals or suggestions which would mark only one phase of the entire process?

Mr. Nadolny did not insist on this demand, and assured the President that he would receive the full support of the German Government in the most difficult task he had undertaken, and that everybody in Germany respected and appreciated his action for disarmament. Would he not bring with him Mrs. Henderson, whom the Germans would be so glad to receive also? The President said he could not do that for certain personal reasons.

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Mr. Frohwein, of the German delegation, came to see me at 3.45 and explained to me the position as regards the possibilities of success of the negotiations. He thinks that the President will have more success in his negotiations if he can have with him one or two other Powers, because then there is a sort of give and take and one concession begets another. I replied that the President would serve only as a mediator to prompt the Governments to make their concessions the one vis-à-vis the other.

Mr. Frohwein then spoke to me about the difficulties concerning war material and effectives.

As regards the latter, he said that a solution might be found if the rule were adopted that the table of effectives should be granted as it stands with a surplus of 10% of the total number (i.e. 20,000 men for the great Powers to whom 200,000 were allotted in Table I) or 6 per 1,000 of the population. A formula such as this would permit the Germans to have their 200,000 men plus 39,000 police, because the greater number of the population would warrant a higher number of police agents.

As regards war material, and particularly aviation, Mr. Frohwein did not see how his country would accept that the others should possess military aviation and that she should not have a few engines herself.

30th June, 1933.
RECORD OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND 
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE AFTERNOON OF WEDNESDAY, 
NOVEMBER 29th, 1933.

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Present: Mr. Henderson, M. Avenol, Mr. Zilliacus.

M. AVENOL said he was on the whole satisfied with 
his visit to Rome. He had had a very long talk with Signor 
Mussolini. He had found the Italian attitude on disarmament 
changed.

Sig. Mussolini now argued that Germany's rearmament 
must be accepted as an accomplished fact and that as there was 
no question of any action to stop this process of rearmament 
the only thing that could be done was to conclude an agreement 
which would regulate the rhythm of German rearmament. The 
alternative was between regulated and unregulated rearmament. 
In the circumstances there could be no question of the other 
Powers giving up any of their existing armaments.

Sig. Mussolini's idea therefore was limitation of 
other armaments at existing levels with a measure of rearmament 
for Germany to be established by negotiation and a system of 
control applying all round.

M. Avenol had the impression that the Italian Govern-
ment were now beginning to feel nervous about Italy and that 
while they would sit on the fence as long as possible they 
would, if they had to come down, certainly not come down on 
the side of Germany. He did not believe that Italy in the 
existing circumstances wished France to reduce her armaments 
and he thought that in both France and Great Britain the Govern-
ments had abandoned the idea of disarmament.
As for the German Government there was no doubt that they were not in the least interested in other Powers disarming but concerned exclusively with securing as much and as quick rearmament as possible for themselves. Hitler had repeatedly stressed his desire for armaments in order to speak with authority in the Councils of the nations and to feel himself on level terms in this respect with the other great Powers. On the other hand, he did not believe the German claims had increased to any extent since Germany left the Conference and that Hitler was not thinking of war for the present as he realised he would be starting with a heavy handicap. The German Government seemed primarily concerned with prestige and this could be gained only if it received international sanction and approval for its rearmament programme.

In reply to a question from Mr. Henderson, M. Avenol did not appear to anticipate serious difficulties in securing the adoption of a Convention providing for German rearmament and limitation of other armaments with supervision for all. He thought that difficult as the situation was a solution of this kind was possible and would be preferable to no Convention at all. If the Conference broke up without any Convention whatever, he feared the result to the League might be well nigh fatal.

He had also spoken with Sig. Mussolini about the League. From what he heard afterwards, and from what passed at the time, he believed he had succeeded in bringing home some aspects of the situation that hitherto had escaped the attention of Il Duce. In particular he had pointed out that the idea of a purely European League was impracticable,
for Great Britain could not join any international group that did not include the Dominions and the British Commonwealth was world-wide and not European. Moreover, in the Far East the situation was that Japan was endeavouring to obtain a position of hegemony and this was contrary to the interests not only of China but of the Russians, the Americans, Britain and one or two other Powers. It was for this reason that America had co-operated so closely with the League in the first two years of the conflict and was represented on the Assembly Committee still charged with following the developments of the situation.

Again, in South America, the League was active in two big disputes and a small Central American State - Guatemala - for the first time had asked for a League financial adviser. This showed that the influence of the Monroe doctrine was weakening, if it was not dead, and that South American States had a direct interest in cultivating their relations with Europe through the League.

On the other hand, he saw no reason why it should not be possible to form a European Committee of the Council just as there had been Greek, Bulgarian, Austrian and other committees for special purposes. The League procedure was elastic and could be adapted just as readily to private and discreet methods and to the working of small groups of Powers as it could be to big public conferences of States. In general, the only thing rigid about the League was its Covenant and the Covenant was a document which had been so wisely drafted as to allow every possible latitude and adaptation to practical exigencies.

Mr. HENDERSON agreed that there was much to be said.
for the view that no Convention would be a greater disaster than any Convention whatever, even a Convention of the kind mentioned by M. Avenol. This had not been Mr. Henderson's opinion originally, but he now saw reason to change his mind on that point. He doubted whether, in view of the difficult circumstances, the Great Powers would be ready with their discussions by the second half of January. In that case if they asked for more time he supposed there was nothing for it but to let them have it.

He was most gratified at what M. Avenol told him about the Italian Government's attitude to the League which appeared to show that the newspaper talk about Italy's intention to leave the League was very much exaggerated.

M. Avenol confirmed this view and said that he thought there was no danger of the Italian Government leaving the League.
GENEVA

December 18th 1933.

My dear President,

1. M. A. Mangeot, Director of the Paris Academy of Music, has again written to me on the problem of disarmament and, referring to the rumours of your resignation in the near future, has expressed the opinion that there is one last move to be made before such a momentous decision is put into effect. He was in view a world plebiscite for peace, and I cannot do better than send you herewith (as I promised he would) an English translation of the draft resolution he has submitted.

2. The National Defence Expenditure Commission finished its work yesterday, but the Rapporteur-General, M. Jacquet, will stay in Geneva for another week or so to prepare the texts for publication. I hope shortly to be able to send you a copy of the texts with a covering letter from M. de Modzelewski, Chairman of the Technical Committee. The Committee has decided to reconvene on January 17th. I told M. de Modzelewski that I had some doubts as to the wisdom of this decision, which I should have preferred not to have been taken before consulting the President of the Conference. M. de Modzelewski said that was his own feeling but he was led to acceptance of this decision in view of M. de Vasconcellos' insistence.

The Right Honourable Arthur Henderson, M.P.,
President of the Conference for the
Reduction and Limitation of Armaments,
Transport House,
LONDON S.W.1.
3. Zilliacus informed me of the conversations you had in Paris with M. Paul-Boncour and Massigli and with the Soviet representative and M. de Madaïaga. I immediately made a copy of Zilliacus' letter for M. Avenol, and later in the day I discussed it with Captain Walters.

We should, all three of us, be only too happy if by your influence you could secure a Convention repudiating all rearmament and effecting some real reductions.

However, it is persistently rumoured in every country in the world that the Germans have rearmed or are rearming or are about to rearm. There is at any rate no doubt whatever that the idea of rearming is no longer being merely contemplated but is being or is about to be put into execution.

If that be so, if you and I at any rate assume that it is so, the question is, How are we going to circumscribe the rearming of Germany and the disastrous effects which it is bound to imply for a not-far-distant future.

If the beneficiaries of the Versailles Treaty had made up their minds to ensure respect of that Treaty and, while preventing German rearmament, attempted an appreciable reduction of the armaments of the highly-armed States, that would be a logical and sane attitude in that it would be consistent with both Part V of the Treaty and Article 8 of the Covenant. This would clarify the atmosphere and permit of the Conference prosecuting its work in that clarified atmosphere.

I understand however that neither the French nor any others are going to embark on a punitive expedition or, still less, on the fulfilment of Article 8 of the Covenant and that therefore we have on the one hand the armed Powers neglecting to fulfil those latter obligations and, on the other hand, Germany being left free to rearm to such extent
as she can.

In the circumstances the choice seems to be one as between these two alternatives:

(a) A Convention regulating the rearmament of Germany, thus circumscribing its nefarious effects, and providing at the same time for a general limitation of armaments of the heavily-armed countries, with possibly certain reductions as regards the mammoth category of aggressive weapons.

(b) No Convention at all – which entails the paradoxical situation of a theoretically disarmed Germany as provided in the Versailles Treaty but which would in fact be fast rearming. In this case our only guarantee is Article 213 of the Versailles Treaty.

As far as I am concerned, and I may add that the Secretary-General and Certain Walters were of the same opinion, there is no hesitation as to the choice to be made, i.e., a Convention, even as unsatisfactory as the one outlined under (a) above. My choice is dictated from my preoccupation both with the preservation of peace and also the possibility of our preparing a better second Convention in, say, five or seven years.

I would certainly not choose the alternative outlined under (b), which means a new European conflagration at very short notice, as I cannot believe Germany’s neighbours will wait until Germany becomes dangerously powerful from the point of view of war-preparations. In fact, choosing the second alternative would mean admitting that we are entering upon what I may call an undoubted period of race in armaments, the sole object of which will be preparation for the next conflict.

I am not enumerating all the reasons for which I would personally prefer alternative (a) as it would make this
letter unduly long, but let me mention another fundamental
reason for my choice, and that is the existence of the
League. Choosing alternative (b) would, I am afraid,
mean the rapid disintegration of the League of Nations.

I must again add, my choice is not made on merits,
but determined by present political factors: I would as
I said above, be only too happy if we could have a Convention
with real reduction and no rearmament, but I am well-nigh
convinced now that we shall not get that Convention. It
is only that conviction which prompts me to content myself
with the next best thing and to want to seize the opportunity
while there is yet time.

I imagine, though, the difficulties - not to say
the impossibilities - for you to appear to sponsor such
a Convention, vis-à-vis your own people. I do not
nevertheless despair that you may succeed in convincing
them of how utterly catastrophic it would be to choose the
alternative: no Convention - as that alternative would
mean the enforcement of Part V of the Versailles Treaty.

Now obviously that can be achieved, not by means of a mere
admission by the Council of the League (where the question
would first have to be brought), but through an occupation
of Germany. What would be the position of the League
after this discussion of Article 213 at the Council I leave
you to imagine!

Since your departure I have had repeated
discussions on these points with the delegates who are still
in Geneva, and I have been told by a French delegate whom
you know and like that, though logically there is no doubt
about the advisability of opting for alternative (a),
i.e. a Convention of limitation regulating and circumscrib
German rearmament, the French Government could
not sponsor such a policy without being at once swept out
of existence. The easiest course for the French Government will, it seems, be the one of letting things develop as they may. That policy is based on the assumption that, whatever concession France made to Germany, Germany would ask for more and more: why then should France lose the advantage of the present legal and political positions due to the Versailles Treaty.

But you know all this too well, so I will not prolong this epistle any further.

I will only say in conclusion that if we cannot prevent Germany from rearming, we must take our responsibilities by making our choice as between these two alternatives:

Do we want an unlimited and unregulated German rearmament or should we not rather opt for a circumscribed and regulated German rearmament.

The former will undoubtedly mean a new race in armaments, leading unmistakeably to war.

Believe me, my dear President,

Yours very sincerely,
MUST GERMANY BE ALLOWED TO REARMS?

The disarmament question is entering upon a new phase, which will oblige the French Government and Parliament to take certain very serious decisions.

Germany's withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference and from the League makes it clear that no Convention can be concluded which would maintain the system established by the Treaty of Versailles for the disarmament of Germany. In other words, it is not practicable to conclude any Convention which would not allow Germany to rearm.

*

Various policies are conceivable to prevent Germany's rearmament; but they all have one fundamental defect, namely, that they are at present purely theoretical and there is no chance of their being adopted and put into effect. Let us consider them in turn.

First impracticable solution - The Disarmament Conference would draw up a Convention without Germany's assistance, and it would then be proposed to Germany - that is to say, in actual fact, it would be imposed upon her by moral or material compulsion. This solution is hopelessly condemned by the fact that all the great Powers, apart from France, are more or less hostile to it.

Second impracticable solution. - The signatories of the Treaty of Versailles would insist upon the strict enforcement of Part V of the Treaty. To begin with, they would put into operation Article 213 of the Treaty, which concerns investigations. This solution would require the unanimous
will of the principal signatories of the Treaty. No such
unanimity exists, however. Isolated action by France would
involve her in a preventive war in which she would only have
the help of her Eastern allies; which is out of the question.

Third impracticable solution. — Germany's co-signa-
tories would agree to reduce their armaments in a short space
of time to the level of Germany's armaments as fixed by the
Treaty of Versailles.

In practice this solution would not suit anybody. France and England think it necessary, in the present circum-
stances, to retain a margin of superiority in armaments. Ger-
many, on the other hand, is anxious to preserve the military
machinery she has already constructed in contravention of the
Treaty of Versailles — in other words, not to undo the rearma-
ment she has already carried out.

Attracting as these three solutions may seem, they
are at present out of the question, because they could only be
put into effect in the presence of certain conditions (attitudes
of Governments and public opinion in all the countries concern-
eda) which do not in fact exist.

*   *   *

The foregoing solutions being excluded, two alter-
natives remain for France.

First alternative. — France would allow Germany's
rearment in fact, but would not admit its legality.

In that case, no Convention for the Limitation of
Armaments would be concluded, and France would retain complete
freedom. Even if no material obstacle were placed in the
way of Germany's rearment, she would nevertheless still be
legally bound by the Treaty of Versailles, and any rear- 
ament constituting a breach of the Treaty would place her, 
morally, in an awkward position. France, therefore, 
standing upon the Treaty of Versailles, would wait for new 
developments, mistakes and excesses on the part of Germany, 
to enable her to resume an active policy.

This solution represents the line of least resistance. 
It means that the Government would take no initiative, and 
at the same time would resolutely uphold the principle of 
its rights as established by the Treaty of Versailles. It 
would thus be able to avoid assuming responsibilities. 
If Germany rearmed and obliged others to increase their armaments 
in turn, the initiative in this armament race would come from 
Germany, and she would bear all the responsibility.

Criticism. This policy is condemned by its unavoidable 
result, which would be the unlimited arming of Germany, 
leading to the inevitable over-arming of France.

It is not even certain that the legal and moral diffi- 
culties in which Germany would be involved by her increasing 
rearmament would be real and lasting. When a breach of a 
treaty is manifest and continued, the fait accompli acquires 
more and more credit, and the broken treaty is more and more 
regarded as something of the past which has been condemned by 
realities. As for Germany's moral responsibility, she would 
endeavour to evade it by saying that she had only rearmed 
because others had steadily refused to disarm. In spite of 
the advent of the National Socialists to power, the idea that 
equality of treatment is Germany's right has retained a 
strong hold on international public opinion.
Second alternative. France would agree to the rearmament of Germany within the scope of an international convention limiting and controlling this rearmament.

This is the policy of realism. Since it is impossible to prevent the evil constituted by German rearmament, this rearmament must be tolerated, not for the pleasure of giving it legal and moral sanction, but in order to circumscribe its drawbacks. German rearmament must be allowed in order that it may be limited and controlled.

This solution is certainly a possible one. In the first place, Great Britain is in favour of it, because she thinks that it is the least bad solution which can in practice be adopted. Italy unreservedly supports it. In the second place, Germany seems prepared to accept it, while contenting herself with comparatively moderate figures.

It is true that the limited and controlled rearmament of Germany would have as a counterpart a limitation and reduction of French armaments, to speak only of those, but this reduction, allowing for German rearmament, would still leave France a certain margin of superiority.

Objections:

I leave on one side the point of view of people who do not regard the conclusion of a Convention limiting and controlling armaments as desirable, and who light-heartedly accept the prospect of an armaments race, believing that the only thing that matters is that France should remain free to arm as she thinks fit.

There remain two objections:

1. The first objection is the uncertainty of the German demands. It is doubted whether Germany would be content with restricted rearmament. When it came to
fixing definite figures Germany would perhaps put forward excessive claims. She would play a complicated and shifting game, seeking to take advantage of the differences between the other negotiators and to set them one against the other.

This is certainly a risk, and the success of such efforts as might be attempted would be far from assured. But preliminary diplomatic negotiations might be taken to ascertain whether, coming down to hard facts, an acceptable compromise could be found or not.

2. The second objection, which is probably the most serious, relates to French internal policy. It is thought that a Government which proposed to allow Germany to rearm would incur great unpopularity and would not be supported either by public opinion or by Parliament.

This argument certainly carries weight. At certain times there may exist prejudices or illusions of public opinion possessing such strength that it is practically impossible to run counter to them; but politicians often have a tendency to exaggerate the magnitude of obstacles, so as to save themselves the trouble of surmounting them.

After all, the duty of statesmen is to guide public opinion and point out to it the way out of a difficulty. It is by no means certain that French public opinion would fail to understand that a limited and controlled rearmament of Germany would be better than unlimited and uncontrolled rearmament. It would be sufficient to demonstrate to it that these are the only two alternatives.

Moreover, if Germany's rearmament policy is pursued without hindrance, the time will come when the country will have to be called upon to make new and large sacrifices for national defence. It is difficult to foresee what exactly will be the country's reactions when that time comes,
but they will certainly not be marked by the expression of satisfaction and of confidence in present or past Governments. It is quite conceivable that "Briandism" and the policy of conciliation followed by the Governments of the Left will then be represented with some success as an error of which the increase in French armaments is the ultimate consequence.

In any case, and leaving out of account the temporary unpopularity which a courageous and useful measure might bring upon the heads of its authors, the extreme risk presented by a new armaments race, which would follow an unlimited rearmament of Germany, must give serious food for thought. That must at all costs be avoided.

In conclusion, we would add that if it is desired to limit Germany's rearmament there must be no delay. Not a day must be wasted. On the one hand, the more Germany has actually realized the more exacting she will be, for she will want the limit which is to be fixed - not to be inferior to the degree of her existing rearmament. On the other hand, the further she has gone on the path of rearmament and the more it has been demonstrated that the other Powers can do nothing to prevent her from acting as she wishes, the less she will be disposed to sacrifice her new-found liberty to accept limitations and supervision. In the present instance, therefore, to understand the situation late will be equivalent to not understanding it at all, for the hour of decision will soon be past.
RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND SIR JOHN SIMON. (Sec. 87 [471]

PRESENT: Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Sir John Simon.
Mr. Eden.
Mr. Zilliacus.

(Sir John Simon left the room on two
occasions, when the conversation was
conducted with Mr. Eden).

THE PRESIDENT explained that he had come to Paris
in order to discuss the question of guarantees of execution
on which subject he was Rapporteur. He had ascertained the
views of the French Government which appeared to him to be
not unreasonable. The French Government was asking only for
measures of an economic and financial character. He thought
that it would not be possible or reasonable to leave it open
as to what should happen if the Permanent Disarmament Com-
mission duly noted a violation of the obligation not to
have armaments in excess of the levels prescribed by the
Convention. States that accepted the obligation to reduce
and limit their armaments and accepted international supervi-
sion and enquiry were bound, he considered, to accept as
a logical consequence, that if a breach of this obligation
had been internationally established, there must be some
international action to put an end to this violation of the
Convention; such action to be non-military in character and
to vary according to the judgment of the Permanent Disarmament
Commission as to the gravity of the particular offence.
Measures of pressure, of course, would not be resorted to
except until after the Permanent Disarmament Commission had
used its best endeavours to put an end to the breach by persua-
sion and expostulation.

SIR JOHNSIMON said they did not believe the United States would accept provisions going beyond that of consultation in case of a breach of the Convention. The procedure of consultation had been worked out in the first part of the Convention with reference to threats to peace through violations of the Pact of Paris. He thought it might be possible to secure American acceptance of similar provisions in relation to breaches of the Disarmament Convention, but he doubted whether it would be possible to go further with the Americans.

THE PRESIDENT said Mr. Wilson was coming through London on his way to the United States. The President would take the opportunity of apprising him fully of this question and requesting him as soon as possible to communicate the views of his Government. The President believed it would be possible to secure American acceptance.

MR. EDEN (Sir John Simon being out of the room) said that the British attitude would depend largely on that of the United States. It would be difficult for the British Government to go further than America was prepared to follow.

SIR JOHN SIMON asked whether the President had any record in writing of the French views on guarantees of execution.

THE PRESIDENT said he did possess a paper which, however, had only just been translated. He would communicate a statement in writing to Sir John Simon so soon as he had had a little time to consider the memorandum in his possession.

SIR JOHN SIMON asked the President what impression he had gathered of the situation after his talks in Paris. Lord Tyrrell had said that it was extremely difficult to ascertain what was the view of the French Government, because the Government was so weak, changed so frequently and was so concerned with its internal problems.
THE PRESIDENT replied that in his view the situation was extremely critical. He did not have the impression that it was difficult to ascertain where the French Government stood. On the contrary, he had found M. Paul-Boncour following events very closely and expressing the most emphatic views. He felt it was his duty not to conceal from Sir John Simon the fact that in French circles, as he had ascertained both in Geneva and Paris, a serious view was taken of what was regarded as a change of attitude by the British Government, contrary to undertakings which the French believed were mutually made and agreed upon.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that the agreement between the British, French, Americans, and, to some extent, the Italians, which was announced on October 14th in the Bureau, was merely an agreement to submit certain proposals in the hope that they might win general acceptance. So far from doing so those proposals had led to the withdrawal of Germany and had been entirely repudiated by Italy. The United States appeared to have disinterested themselves to a great extent in the situation that thus arose. The British Government had never considered that the agreement implied an undertaking to go through fire and water with the French on the 14th October proposals. He realised, however, that there was sore feeling in French Government circles, and would be glad to do anything in his power to set matters right.

MR. HENDERSON said he did not believe the difference of views and the soreness of feeling could be repaired through diplomatic exchanges. It was essential that the Foreign Secretary should himself discuss matters with M. Paul-Boncour. He asked what was the British view as to the next steps.

MR. EDEN replied (Sir John Simon being out of the room) that the Government had been proceeding on the assumption
that it was best to leave the French Government alone for a while, and try to ascertain what was the position of the German Government. So long as the French Government was weak it would continue to adopt a merely *non possumus* attitude on the basis of the October 14th proposals and if pressed, would grow resentful. He thought it advisable - and this view had been adopted after consultation with Lord Tyrrell - to await the coming of a strong Government in France.

THE PRESIDENT said that he had always been against any stonewalling of Germany, but was equally opposed to running after and cringing to Germany. That was why he had been in favour of going on with framing the Convention and then putting it forward to Germany in the shape of a fair offer. He asked what the British Government expected to get by its present approaches to Berlin, and expressed the fear that the present tactics would merely cause German claims to mount.

MR. EDEN said that the Government hoped to beat down the German demands somewhat.

THE PRESIDENT thought that these attempts at beating down might result in accepting measures of German rearmament, and asked whether the statements made by members of the Government in the House, strongly opposing rearmament and proclaiming the necessity of reductions of armaments were now to be regarded as no longer expressing the view of the Government.

MR. EDEN replied that the German Ambassador had recently, as he thought, put the matter forcefully, he had said that Germany had been granted the principle of equality of rights, but that it was living in a world of illusion to suppose that Germany's continental neighbours were prepared to disarm to her level. This, he had added, left only one answer
to the conundrum of how equality of rights should be granted.

THE PRESIDENT said he could not agree with the German Ambassador's way of presenting the situation, for it had all along been understood that the Convention should state on its face the reductions the other Powers were prepared to make for granting Germany equality of rights by the end of the period of the Convention.

SIR JOHN SIMON said the news from the British Ambassador in Berlin was that the German Government were in a slightly more reasonable frame of mind, owing to their apprehension lest M. Herriot should be the next French Prime Minister. For some reason he did not understand, the German Government seemed mortally afraid of the prospect of a return to power of M. Herriot. He would accept Mr. Henderson's advice and put matters in hand forthwith with a view to visiting Mr. Paul-Boncour. He hoped eventually to use his Christmas holiday for paying a visit to the Riviera, which might bring him within calling distance of Signor Mussolini, who, he understood, was accustomed to retire from time to time to his estate near Portofino. This was a matter which was still most strictly confidential as he had so far not mentioned it to anyone, and the arrangement was so tentative that it might fall through.

After some further discussion it was decided that it would be best to try to arrange for a meeting in Paris, round about 20th December, so as to take advantage of M. Benes's presence. M. Benes was expected in Paris about the 14th and would then come to London, after which he would return to Paris with the President and Sir John Simon to meet M. Paul-Boncour. M. Benes would attend this meeting in his capacity of General Rapporteur of the Conference,
as well as Rapporteur on the Duration of the Convention and Reduction of Land Material. Mr. Henderson would attend in his capacity both of President and of Rapporteur on the question of Guarantees of Execution.

THE PRESIDENT said he was bearing in mind the possibility of eventually proceeding to Rome after the Paris discussions, perhaps together with M. Benes, but that this would depend on the development of events and the desires of the other parties concerned.
CONFIDENTIAL.

RECORD OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR, AT THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN PARIS ON DECEMBER 6th, 1933.

PRESENT:         MR. HENDERSON.
                 M. DOVGALEVSKY.
                 MR. ZILLIACUS.

MR HENDERSON explained that the object of his visit was to apprise M. Dovgalevsky of the state of affairs as regarded the question of guarantees of execution of the Convention, on which subject Mr. Henderson was Rapporteur.

M. DOVGALEVSKY asked whether this was not a new question, which had never been discussed in any organ of the Conference.

THE PRESIDENT replied that this was not quite the case: the French and one or two other Governments had long pressed for what they first called "sanctions" and then "penalties" to be applied in case of violation of the Convention. This subject had been raised on more than one occasion at Geneva. The present phrase "guarantees of execution" was meant to convey the same idea but in an attenuated form, and laying stress on the fact that only measures of a non-military, that is, of an economic and financial, character, were contemplated. It was felt that States which undertook jointly to reduce and limit their armaments and to submit to international judgment as to whether those limitations were being respected could not adopt the position that if any of their number chose to disregard its obligations and to proceed to re-arm there was no duty to take any action on the matter.

M. DOVGALEVSKY promised to give the matter careful consideration. He asked Mr. Henderson what he thought of the
general situation as regarded the Disarmament Conference.

THE PRESIDENT replied that he would not conceal his view that the present position was graver than it ever had been. During his twenty-one months at the Conference he had never yet given up hope. He was now beginning to doubt whether they would achieve success or even a modest measure of success. There were now two clear tendencies: the one standing for rearmament, and the other for reductions of armaments, and he thought it seemed well-nigh impossible to conciliate them.

M. DOVGALEVSKY said that the President, with his long experience and wide knowledge of the situation, was obviously in a far better position to judge of the prospects of the Conference than himself. He wished he could suggest any arguments that might induce the President to take a more hopeful view. But he feared that, on the contrary, he could only endorse what the President had just said. In his view the outlook for the Conference was black.

But he drew hope from another consideration. He thought it might be desirable to approach the problem from a different angle and on a different basis. After all, Mr. Henderson was not only President of the Disarmament Conference. He was also a first-rank British statesman. As such he thought there was great work ahead for him, not at Geneva but in his own country, in leading his own people for the cause of peace and disarmament.

As for his own country he would say that the masses of the people would never understand a Convention that provided for rearmament instead of disarmament. If the proceedings at the Conference took that course the Conference would make itself an object of derision. It would do worse than that, for it would be bitterly disappointing the hopes which, after all, the masses of the people in many countries had put in the
eventual success of its labours during the two years it had been in being. There was really no way of reconciling rearma-
ment with the obligations of the States concerned with what all the Governments had been saying so frequently and with what their peoples wanted. Public opinion would never understand proposals for rearmament. If one State were allowed to rearm, other countries in the same position would also demand re-
armament. And the rest of the world would take this as a signal for increases in armaments. Thus a re-armament convention would in fact merely set in motion a new race in armaments.

What made the possibility of proposals for rearmament even more sinister was that they concerned a country which had become the victim of a bellicose hysteria or mania such as was well-nigh unique in the history of civilised nations. He felt exceedingly strongly on this subject and could not exaggerate the repugnance of his Government to the idea of any rearmament.

THE PRESIDENT said he could quite understand M. Dovgalevsky's feelings, which were only what he had anticipated, in view of the very strong line that had always been taken by the Soviet Union in favour of the most drastic measures of disarmament. He thought that the situation was now such that they must seriously consider the possibility that the States which stood for disarmament must adopt a common and clear attitude in January or February.

M. DOVGALEVSKY said he fully appreciated the gravity of the statement that had just been made, and agreed that the matter was one that should receive the most careful considera-
tion in the short time that remained.
CONFIDENTIAL.

RECORD OF TWO CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN THE
PRESIDENT AND M. PAUL-BONCOUR ON TUESDAY,
DECEMBER 5th, 1933.

PRESIDENT: Mr. HENDERSON.
M. PAUL-BONCOUR.
M. MASSIGLI
Mr. ZILLIACUS.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR said that the Committee at Geneva were doing very well. He thought better work was being done at Geneva than in Berlin. The conversations between M. François-Foncet and Hitler had revealed that the German Government were not interested in disarmament but solely concerned in pressing their claims to a measure of rearmament. Hitler had made a perfunctory reference to Germany's willingness to take part in total disarmament applying to all countries, but had added immediately that as there was no question of that Germany must achieve equality by the opposite method. He had then put forward his claims to 300,000 men and certain quantities - to be established by negotiation - of light tanks, 150-mm guns and scouting planes. M. François-Foncet had not given any reply and, as the French Government had then fallen the matter was carried no further. But he could not see how any French Government could undertake to negotiate on any such basis and therefore regarded the prospects of these conversations with considerable pessimism.

THE PRESIDENT asked what, in the French view, was the present British position?

M. PAUL-BONCOUR replied that he himself would be glad of information on this point. The Italian position
was perfectly clear—The Italians were now openly in
favour of a measure of German rearmament. But the British
position was obscure. From Mr. Baldwin's latest declarations
in the House and from conversations with Sir John Simon,
however, it seemed legitimate to infer that the British
Government had gone some way to abandon the position which
it adopted in October, and was inclined to take views similar
to those of the Italian Government. On the issue of rearmament
France could not and would not compromise. If the Disarmament
Conference ended in rearmament, it would be a negation of
everything for which the Conference stood. A rearmament
convention would immediately lead to increased armaments
not by one but by all Powers, and thus start a new race
in armaments.

THE PRESIDENT said that the object of his visit was
to discuss the question of guarantees of execution. He thought
strict supervision of the execution of the Convention, with
inspection on the spot, was essential but not enough. The
Permanent Disarmament Commission must also be in a position to
recommend measures of restraint appropriate to the offence
if it had ascertained that a signatory was exceeding the levels
of armaments to which it was entitled and failed to put an
end to this breach by persuasion.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR said that he entirely agreed with
the views expressed by the President. He did not wish to
put forward any memorandum for consideration at Geneva lest it
should lead to opposition from some States. But he was
quite prepared to give the President, in his capacity of
Rapporteur on this question, a statement in writing of the
French views, for the President's personal information.

THE PRESIDENT explained that this was precisely
what he required and he would, of course, treat the document
as a matter for his information only.
M. PAUL-PONCOUR then gave the President the memorandum. He then said that he wished to ask the President a question which he hoped would not be regarded as indiscreet. It was a question which he addressed to him not in his capacity as President but as the leader of the Labour movement in England. The question he wished to ask was whether the Labour Party stood for disarmament or whether it was prepared to accept a measure of rearmament as the outcome of the Conference.

THE PRESIDENT said this was a question he could answer without any hesitation: the Labour Party had always stood and continued to stand for disarmament by the heavily-armed Powers, and was strongly opposed to any re-armament of the disarmed Powers. The Labour Party's position had been made clear in a pamphlet entitled "Labour's Foreign Policy", of which Mr. Henderson was the author and which had been approved first by the National Executive and then by the Party Conference at Hastings. In a speech he made at Hastings and which had been immediately printed and circulated at the request of the Conference, Mr. Henderson had still further clarified the Labour position. He gave M. Paul-Poncours copies of these two publications.

The question of the system of supervision was then raised. After some discussion the President and M. Paul-Poncours agreed that the system of supervision should be applied only on the basis of the obligations of the eventual Disarmament Convention with reference only to matters covered by that Convention. Any State that wished to raise the question of an alleged infraction of the Versailles Treaty obligations could do so only under the system provided for that purpose by Article 213. of the Versailles Treaty.
THE PRESIDENT asked how long M. Paul-Boncour thought the conversations might last, and whether there was a reasonable prospect of their being terminated in time for the resumption of the Bureau and the General Commission of the Conference as from the middle of January.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR said that he thought there was very little chance of the conversations producing any results. He considered it more probable that when they were resumed the German Government would at the outset make clear its determination to discuss only on the basis of re-armament. The French Government would be equally positive in its refusal to discuss on this basis, and there would then be nothing left to do except to report to the President that the conversations had broken down.

THE PRESIDENT asked M. Paul-Boncour what position he thought he could adopt if faced with a situation of this sort in the middle of January.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR said that without presuming to advise or suggest the course of the President, he would merely say that for his part he would fully understand and appreciate the decision by the President that, in the circumstances, he did not feel justified in continuing his labours. He could not be sufficiently emphatic on the point that in no circumstances would the French Government consent to proposals for re-arming Germany and thereby starting a new race in armaments. They were prepared to modify the form of the October 14th proposals. He regretted that the expression "trial period" had ever been used, and he was quite prepared to rearrange and to rephrase the Draft Convention so that it should not appear to be divided up into two periods, but should merely provide what should be done in the first few years as well as in the last few years. (In subsequent discussions, M. Massigli twice gave it as his opinion that it would ultimately be possible
to come down from eight to seven years, although he said his Government could not make this admission now, as it might throw the door open to attempts to lower the period still further).

But in substance the French Government must maintain the October 14th position, that is, must continue to insist upon the necessity of a system of supervision coming into operation, and the transformation of the armies to a short-term basis becoming an accomplished fact before any reductions of material were begun. For technical reasons it would take four years for the transformation of armies to be carried through.

On the other hand, once this had been done, the French Government were prepared to go very far in reductions of armaments. It was prepared to put in the figures for these reductions into the Convention so soon as agreement had been reached on the text of the rest of the Convention, notably on the provisions concerning supervision and guarantees of execution.

Until those compensations, from the point of view of French opinion, were down in black and white in the Convention and had met with general acceptance, he could not throw his figures out into French public opinion, in view of the alarm and apprehension created by conditions in Germany. But he had in the course of the conversations last September already stated to the Powers concerned in those conversations what his Government were prepared to do, and he would now, under the seal of the strictest secrecy, communicate those figures to the President for his personal information.

M. PAUL-BONCOUR, then informed the President of what his Government were prepared to do as regards effectives, guns, tanks, aeroplanes and naval armaments. He added that of course Germany would at the end of the period of the Convention be allowed all the weapons retained by the other signatories.
Strictly Confidential.

RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN MR. HUGH WILSON,
DELEGATE OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE DISARMAMENT
CONFERENCE, AND MR. AGHNIDES.

(19th April 1954)

Mr. Wilson, accompanied by Mr. Mayer, came to see me this morning and informed me that, according to information he had received by telephone from London, the British reaction to the last French Note seemed to be one of profound disappointment and discontent. Mr. Wilson asked what my opinion was of the consequences of the note. I replied that it was not possible to view with optimism the situation created by the new French move, which does not bear out the promises given by M. Barthou to Mr. Henderson in my presence. I added that I was perfectly convinced that M. Barthou had acted in good faith when with the President and I could not but repeat my profound conviction of the good faith of that Minister. His disappointment must also be very great or else the French press would not report with so much profusion the fact that M. Barthou was defeated in the Cabinet Council. Nevertheless, I would not view the situation with complete pessimism, as this French move was again a tactical move intended probably, on the one hand, to obtain a greater measure of guarantees of execution from Great Britain, and, on the other hand, to secure a lesser degree of rearmament of Germany. Thirdly, I thought France would, if she ever consented to German rearmament, get something in exchange for her repudiation of the principle enunciated by the successive French Governments that this is a Disarmament Conference and therefore
no rearmament can be secured through its agency, but that equality of rights should be achieved through the successive stages of disarmament of the armed countries.

Mr. Wilson said that the reason given by the newspapers (to the effect that this sudden change in the French policy is due to the reply of the German Government to the representations made in Berlin by the British Ambassador in respect of the last budget of the Reichs national defence) cannot be very serious as the French have long known that the Germans spent for armaments and what they contemplated doing for the future. I admitted that it might be so, but from the tactical point of view I thought the publication of the last German budget might provide France with a very good pretext for taking up an attitude which, on the one hand, underlines the desire to secure a meeting of the General Commission and, on the other hand, constitutes the best excuse for not reducing her own armaments. I further added that this would incidentally cause great satisfaction to the three Little Entente countries who, I know it is a fact - made great efforts of late, and especially during the last meeting of the Bureau, to convince France not to strengthen Hitler by accepting a Convention just now when the Nazi Chancellor is beginning to lose ground. I remember in particular the comments of the Little Entente pundits when telling Mr. Henderson how the economic situation of the Reich was rendering Hitler's position difficult as the gold reserve in the Reich's safe had come down to the level of 5% for every mark in circulation. The last French Note can therefore be understood much better if taken in the light not only of disarmament alone, but of the relationship between France and her allies on the one side and
GENEVA

April 19th 1934.

My dear President,

Today has been a continuous round of visits from delegates, but I will send you only one record of conversation as it is of no interest to you to see that identical views have been exchanged in all of the interviews.

I might perhaps add here some of the ideas expressed by Mr. Fotitch, who, of course has at his fingers ends all the details of the complicated game which may have provoked the last French Note.

Mr. Fotitch said there may be two interpretations of the French Note:

1) During the last meeting of the Bureau both Mr. Henderson and Mr. Eden — and, further, Mr. Sandler — harped on the necessity of reductions of armaments, the French may have felt it necessary to put an end to all these hopes by firmly pointing out in their Note that, in view of German rearmament, they would never accept to disarm. A statement like that puts an end to possibilities of reduction, but it does not prevent our having a convention of limitation, with a moderate German rearmament.

2) A convention is not so useful to France as to Germany, because it implies that, at the expiry of the time-limit fixed for the duration of the Convention, Germany

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President of the Conference for the
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and France are in a state of complete equality. The worst thing about a convention from the French point of view is that it fixes a limit not to be trespassed over. Remember the economic and financial difficulties of Germany and the incomparably superior resources of France, and you will understand why, if no limit is fixed by a convention, France can maintain the present disparity of forces as between herself and Germany for a much longer period than is likely to be fixed as the duration of the first convention.

Mr. Fotitch agreed with me that, if the second alternative be at the back of the French Note, the situation is very serious, in that the only thing that remains to be done is the winding up of the Conference. He considers, however, that the Bureau should meet, to prepare the programme of the meeting of the General Commission.

* * *

The Soviet Delegation rang me up from Paris, asking me, in accordance with the instructions they had received from Moscow, when would the Bureau be convoked - on May 3rd or later? I said I would let them know as soon as you informed me of the precise date.

* * *

I must confess that, even after twenty-four hours, I continue to feel stunned by the French Note. It is a great pity that the hopes entertained by you and me and the millions of other people who looked forward to a fair settlement should receive such a blow.

Yours very sincerely,