LEAGUE OF NATIONS

ARMAMENTS YEAR-BOOK

General and Statistical Information

Albania — Argentina — Austria — Belgium — Brazil — British Empire (Great Britain and her Colonies, Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, Newfoundland, Union of South Africa) — Bulgaria — Chile — China — Czechoslovakia — Denmark — Estonia — Finland — France — Germany — Greece — Hungary — Italy — Japan — Latvia — Luxemburg — Netherlands — Norway — Poland — Roumania — Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Kingdom of) — Spain — Sweden — Switzerland — Union of Socialist Soviet Republics — United States of America.

Geneva, September 1924.
INTRODUCTION

The Year-book of information regarding the scale of armaments in the various countries, of which this is the first volume, is published in pursuance of the following decision taken by the Council of the League of Nations in July 1923:

"The Council, in view of the decision of the Temporary Mixed Commission with regard to the publication of a year-book which would allow the carrying out as from the present time of the intentions of the last paragraph of Article 8 of the Covenant, decides to authorise the Secretariat to publish this year-book, beginning with an experimental volume dealing with the figures for 1923 and developing this publication by degrees according to the experience acquired, it being clearly understood that the information would be drawn solely from official and public documents, and that the programme of the year-book would exactly correspond to the terms of the last paragraph of Article 8 of the Covenant."

This resolution was the result of enquiries undertaken by the Temporary Mixed Commission regarding both the exchange of information and the statistics of armaments; the general principles arrived at are summarised in the following terms in the Commission's report for 1923:

"I. At the suggestion of the Temporary Mixed Commission, the Third Assembly requested the Council to consider whether the time had not come to discuss the application of the last paragraph of Article 8 of the Covenant relating to the exchange of military information between States Members of the League. The Council referred this question for examination to the two Commissions on the Reduction of Armaments, at the same time emphasising, in a report which it had adopted, the close connection which existed between this question and the statistical enquiry which, at the Assembly's request, had occupied the attention of the Temporary Mixed Commission.

"The Temporary Mixed Commission has undertaken the work on these lines. The Commission considered first of all what practical results might be expected from an exchange of information such as is contemplated in Article 8 of the Covenant."
"The data which would supply the material for such an exchange concern facts which may be grouped under three headings:

"(1) Facts which are public property;
"(2) Facts which are known to foreign general staffs concerned, but which are not public property; and are obtained:
" (a) by the systematic sifting of public documents;
" (b) by other means;
"(3) Facts which are kept secret.

"Opinions may differ as to what military facts should come under the respective categories. It appears from the military point of view that the exchange of information may be carried out, without causing the least change in the present situation with regard to facts falling under the first two categories referred to above, 1 and 2 (a), i.e., with regard to facts which are public property and facts which are known to foreign general staffs concerned as a result of the systematic analysis of public documents. The question arises, however. What would be the use of an exchange of this nature?

"From the technical military point of view, such an innovation would not perceptibly modify the present conditions as regards general staff information. It would, nevertheless, tend to reduce the number of facts falling under category 2 (b) referred to above.

"From the moral point of view, however, the effect of such exchanges would be considerable. Article 8 of the Covenant was not drawn up with a view to facilitating the work of general staffs. Its object was to improve the political atmosphere by creating confidence. It seems clear, therefore, that the system laid down in Article 8 of the Covenant would, on these grounds, be of considerable advantage, from two points of view:

"(1) It would create among the general staffs concerned a feeling of confidence which is a result of open dealings, instead of the mutual distrust engendered by indirect and surreptitious methods of obtaining information.
"(2) It would create an organisation for mutual information concerning military situations which would render it possible to nip in the bud any campaign started by an alarmist Press and based upon the armaments of countries considered as potential enemies.

* * *

"II. The statistical enquiry which has been entrusted to the Temporary Mixed Commission and to the Secretariat, in conformity with resolutions adopted by the Second and Third Assemblies, may, to a
certain extent, be regarded as an exchange of information. It is true that the information concerning military, naval, and air questions, which is collected in the course of this enquiry, does not cover the whole programme outlined in Article 8 of the Covenant. The information does not all come direct from the Governments, although it is, in every case, obtained by comparing and studying official and public data. The Temporary Mixed Commission has decided to submit to the Assembly a collection of all the replies received from the Governments to the statistical tables, which were drawn up by the Permanent Advisory Commission and sent to all States, together with the results of the enquiry into the National Defence budgets which the Secretariat was instructed to carry out 1. The Commission is of opinion that the annual publication of such data on a scale which may be extended or reduced in accordance with the wishes of the Assembly and of the Council might prove to be one solution of the problem of exchanging information as defined in Article 8 of the Covenant, and such a solution would possess the advantage that it would be applied immediately.

“Having this end in view, the Commission decided to suggest to the Council ‘to collate the results of the statistical enquiry, to keep it up to date, and to publish a year-book which would be the most complete of all documents of this kind. The Secretariat should accordingly be invited to bring out a year-book based on information drawn from official documents and keeping within the limits of the last paragraph of Article 8 of the Covenant’.

“When this point was raised in the Council, the Rapporteur made the following remarks, which the Council adopted:

“‘The engagements undertaken by the signatories of the Covenant in the last paragraph of Article 8 might now be begun by giving instructions to the Secretariat periodically to publish a year-book containing a certain number of data regarding the matters referred to in the last paragraph of Article 8.’

“The programme for the statistical enquiry which was laid down by the First Assembly and amended by the Second could now be permanently established on the basis of the last paragraph of Article 8 of the Covenant. Two questions at once arise; the first is connected with collaboration by the Governments in this publication. There is no doubt that any direct official collaboration should be regarded as being a most valuable assistance to the publication which the Temporary Mixed Commission has in mind. It is nevertheless a fact that, if we judge by the experience acquired, there can be no question of making the publication of the proposed year-book dependent upon the receipt of the necessary information from all the Governments of States Members

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of the League. Such a method could have no result but the indefinite postponement of the publication. On the other hand, it may be said that there are hardly any States which do not periodically publish, if only for internal political reasons, the greater part of the information necessary for the proposed publication. From this point of view, the definition of the work which the Commission has undertaken and which is to be entrusted to the Secretariat is satisfactory from every point of view.

"The second question which arises is that of the extent of ground which this publication is to cover. The League of Nations already publishes, for instance, in its Economic and Financial and in its Epidemiological Sections, a certain amount of general information. There can be no doubt that the League of Nations should give at least as much attention to the publication of the information which directly affects disarmament and the maintenance of peace as to that of the technical information in respect of which its work has so successfully developed.

"On the other hand, such publication should be carefully organised. It would seem that the best method to carry it out successfully would be to proceed gradually. The collection to be published in the first year should be considered as only a first attempt which should be completed according as the experience acquired might allow. It would therefore be desirable to accept the suggestion of the Temporary Mixed Commission, it being, of course, understood that the programme of periodical publication would be gradually developed and proportionate to the experience in this matter obtained by the Secretariat."

In preparing the present volume, the Secretariat has paid strict regard to the principles defined above and to the rules laid down for it by the Council.

The Year-book is therefore presented in the form of a series of monographs, each of which relates to a separate State and comprises, in principle, three parts:

1st part: Military Forces (Land, Sea and Air);
2nd part: Budget Expenditure on National Defence;
3rd part: Industries capable of being used for War Purposes.

Each monograph is followed by a list of the official and public documents upon which it is based.

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1 Each monograph is preceded by geographical and statistical information — area, population, length of frontiers, railway systems, etc. It has not been possible to furnish all these particulars in every case.

As regards frontiers, it will sometimes be found that the lengths shown in the monographs on two countries with a common frontier are different. This is due to the fact that in compiling each monograph the Secretariat has taken its facts from the official documents of the country concerned, and these documents do not always agree on this particular point.
It has not always been possible to carry out the above programme to the full. It was almost impossible a priori to draw up the national monographs on exactly parallel lines. In addition to natural differences which were already sufficient to make absolute identity of treatment impossible, there were differences of organisation, more or less serious difficulties in obtaining the essential documents, the factor of distance, occasionally linguistic difficulties and in many cases the transition state of military legislation. As regards a certain number of countries, in this first publication it has been possible to give only limited information. Although in principle the year chosen is 1923, the Secretariat has, so far as possible, taken into account any more recent information which it has been able to obtain. Subject to these reservations, the aim has always been to attain the greatest possible measure of uniformity.

FIRST PART.

ARMY.

In preparing this part, the Secretariat has generally made an examination of the laws in force relating to the following points:

A. — The supreme military authority and its organs.
B. — Territorial military districts.
C. — Higher units (army corps, infantry divisions, cavalry divisions, etc.).
D. — Arms and services: Infantry, cavalry, artillery, engineers, aviation, etc.
E. — Police forces (gendarmes, Customs officers, etc.).
F. — Supplies required by the various units.
G. — System of recruiting: basic principle, military obligations (length of service, etc.).
H. — Budget strength and its distribution among the various arms (in the home country, in territory occupied in consequence of international obligations, in colonies, protectorates, etc.).
I. — Cadres (recruiting, promotion.) Schools.
J. — Pre-military instruction.

NAVY.

The only information published in the Year-book is that contained in the table drawn up by the Permanent Advisory Commission for

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1 Aviation forms the subject of a special section in cases in which it constitutes an independent organisation.
Military, Naval and Air Questions. This table shows the number and tonnage of the various warships by category (battleships, battle cruisers, coast-defence ships and monitors, aircraft-carriers, cruisers and light cruisers, destroyers and torpedo-boats, submarines and miscellaneous craft), together with the budget strength of the navigating and non-navigating personnel.

* * *

The official data have not, of course, been transformed in any way, except as regards arrangement and classification for purposes of uniformity.

In the case of countries whose military forces have been fixed by treaties, the monographs merely enumerate the armament restrictions laid down in the treaties in question.

SECOND PART.

BUDGET EXPENDITURE ON NATIONAL DEFENCE.

As regards the part of each monograph devoted to expenditure on national defence, the principles applied are those which have governed the work previously undertaken by the Secretariat in this connection and approved by the Council and the Assembly. Attention should be drawn to the existence of important differences between the accounting systems adopted in various countries in respect of military and naval expenditure, particularly as regards the following points:

(1) Some countries account for gross appropriations — that is, all money expenditure by the Naval and Military Departments is shown in the Budget; while other countries only include net appropriations — that is, expenditure after deduction of various receipts, such as proceeds from sale of old material, repayments from other Government Departments, contributions from Colonies or Local Governments, and sometimes even the yield of special taxes. The difference between gross and net appropriations is by no means negligible. It amounted to no less than £15,000,000 in the Army Budget for the United Kingdom for the financial year 1922-1923.

(2) Some countries account for military and naval establishments (powder factories, dockyards, etc.) in the budgets of the Army and Navy Departments, while others account for them as independent State undertakings.

(3) The respective functions undertaken by the Army and Navy Departments are not the same in various countries. For example, it is very frequently the case that the Navy Department administers certain services for civil purposes. On the other hand, there is great variation in practice with regard to the extent to which Civil Services perform functions of a military character.
(4) With regard to expenditure for non-effective services (pension charges, etc.), great differences of method exist. Pensions to persons disabled in the war (so-called war pensions) are generally excluded from the Army and Navy budgets. But with regard to other pensions, some States carry them to the Public Debt; others charge them to special Ministries of Pensions or to Departments of Finance; others, again, include them in the appropriations for the Department of War or of the Marine.

(5) In addition to these and other "normal" differences, there are exceptional factors of disturbance in the post-war period, as the methods employed for the accounting of "war charges" differ fundamentally. Some countries, for instance, have included in the Army and Navy budgets all demobilisation expenses, cost of repatriation, demobilisation gratuities, and outlay for the civil re-establishment of soldiers, while in other countries the same kind of expenditure is accounted for in civil budgets.

A further complication arises from the great divergence of practice existing with regard to the distribution of charges on account of colonial defence as between the budget of the home country and that of the colonies. In some cases all the costs are borne by the home country, with or without contributions from the colonies; in other cases the defence of the colonies is provided for by the colonial budgets, the home country only granting a contribution.

No attempt has been made in the present study to recast the Defence budgets according to a standard system in order to make them comparable. Such recasting, even were it possible, would, in fact, necessitate a very minute and protracted study, and would also in many cases necessitate the collection of information not always available in published official sources. It has only been possible to indicate the system adopted by each individual country. This being the case, the fact must be emphasised that the figures for defence expenditure presented in these monographs do not admit of comparison of the figures for one country with those for others.

The main object pursued in the preparation of these monographs has been to analyse the budgetary expenditure on National Defence, giving detailed notes on the several accounting systems, the relation between home and colonial defence, etc., in order to enable the reader to understand the significance of the figures of each country. It is self-evident that, before a synthetic study can be presented, ground-work analysis of the kind indicated must be undertaken as a preliminary step.

The Commission has further aimed at furnishing material indicating the development and tendency of defence expenditure in each individual country. In order to eliminate as far as possible the disturbing factor of fluctuations in currency and prices, the total sums expended on National Defence have been reduced to pre-war price level by reference to the index numbers of wholesale prices.
THIRD PART.

INDUSTRIES CAPABLE OF BEING USED FOR WAR PURPOSES.

This part has been drawn up in consequence of the last paragraph of Article 8 of the Covenant, according to which the exchange of information between all States is to extend to "the condition of such of their industries as are adaptable to warlike purposes". In view of the tendency of modern warfare to absorb all the industrial activity of the country, it would be difficult to define the limits to be given to this part of the Year-book. Raw materials, manufactured products, existing manufacturing capacity, the quantity of technically specialised labour and the number of persons capable of undertaking work of an administrative, technical or organising character, are all questions which have become of prime importance to-day, from the point of view of preparation for war. It has, however, been borne in mind that a first attempt was being made to establish a Year-book, to be developed by degrees. For the moment, the programme has been limited to the following sections:

RAW MATERIALS AND MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS.

(Output, Imports, Exports.)

I. FUEL.
A. Coal (coal, lignite, coke and briquettes, etc.
B. Petroleum (raw petroleum and refined petroleum).

II. MINERAL ORES AND METALS.
A. Mineral Ores: Iron, manganese, copper, lead, zinc, tungsten and pyrites.
B. Metals: Pig iron, iron and steel, copper, lead, zinc, aluminium, nickel, iron alloys.

III. CHEMICAL PRODUCTS.
A. Raw Materials: Nitrate of sodium, salt and sulphur.
B. Manufactured Products: Sulphate of ammonia, cyanamide of calcium, nitric acid, sulphuric acid, soda and spirit.

IV. VARIOUS PRODUCTS.
A. Cotton.
B. Rubber.

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1 A dash (-) in statistical tables of the various countries signifies that the documents consulted give no particulars for the year in question, or that the commercial figures for the commodity are negligible.

ws. A blank space signifies that it has not been possible to find figures with reference to the output and trade in certain articles and for specified years.
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