

in the opinion of the signatory Powers the rules contained in the Declaration "*correspond in substance with the generally recognised principles of international law.*" The significance of this pronouncement, which is further enhanced by the recitals of the preamble, is well brought out in the introductory portion of M. Renault's general report. He explains how the provisions of the Declaration are in the first instance binding upon the signatory Powers in virtue of their express engagement, under article 66, to give effect thereto in their national prize courts and in the instructions to their naval officers. There is this further consequence that the International Court will have authority to apply the rules generally, as being in conformity with the accepted principles of international law, quite apart from the specific obligation which the signatory Powers undertake to obey them in their relations with each other.

40. Theoretically it is true that in a case where a non-signatory Power appearing before the International Court declined to acknowledge any liability under some rule of the Declaration which it did not admit to be of general application, the court would be free to hold that, in the presence of the opposing contentions as to what the law was, no generally recognized rule governing the subject in dispute existed. The consequence, however, of this would be that, under article 7 of the Prize Court Convention, the court would have to give judgment "in accordance with the general principles of justice and equity." Is it likely that a court having a majority of judges whose countries have negotiated, and subscribed to, the Declaration of London would come to any other conclusion than that the rule upon which the States most directly concerned had, in spite of wide divergence in geographical position, in historical traditions, and in national interests, unanimously agreed, truly represented the justice and equity of the case? We do not therefore think we are going too far in declaring our belief that the end which His Majesty's Government had in view in calling the Naval Conference had been practically realized so far as concerns the general obligatory character of the body of rules laid down. To what extent the rules themselves will safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Great Britain, and how far their claim to general validity and therefore to general respect is made good by their inherent justice, and by their conformity with the true law of nations, of which, according to the view always upheld by this country, it is an essential feature that it should flow from the recognition of the principles of right and

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