

Lord Cecil was the only Delegate to be really insistent upon including "threat of war" in the application of the Convention. He was aware of the difficulties inherent in the phrase "threat of war." The expression was, however, not the invention of those who had framed the Convention: it was found in Article 11 of the Covenant, and was the basis of the proceedings recommended by the Preparatory Commission, the Council and the Assembly, which might be taken when a threat of war occurred. He quite agreed that the threat of war must be imminent and serious, and, if it would help in any way, he would be prepared to add such words to the Convention as would make it clear that the threat must not be remote or contingent. He replied to M. Munch by saying that the suggestion of the Danish Delegate seemed to him to be a triumph of ingenuity: he thought the danger of the organization of a threat of war by armament firms was very remote. Certainly, if there were the slightest suspicion of that, the Council would not lend itself to such proceedings.

M. Lange (Norway) was very definitely against the application of the Convention in case of threat of war. It was difficult to imagine how the plan could be put into operation in the case of a threat of war when no attack had yet taken place. In such a case they would have to decide who was the victim before there was a victim.

Generally speaking, most of the Delegates agreed that the decision as to the coming into operation of financial assistance should be left to the Council if the Convention were to be effective: otherwise it was thought that such delay would ensue, if the signatories to the Convention had to be consulted before putting the Convention into operation, that the Convention would become inoperative and ineffective.

M. Loudon (Netherlands) said that to require the previous consent of all the signatory States would nullify the effect of the scheme, and the Netherlands Government, recognizing this, had agreed to the decision being left to the Council alone. In making this exceptional concession it maintained, nevertheless, as a general principle, that in any other cases States were free to decide for themselves who was the aggressor.

Sir George Foster stated that Canada was deeply sympathetic with any project which had for its aim the prevention of war, but the draft Convention raised a difficult question for Canada as regards its possible participation in war without the sanction of the constituted authorities of the Nation, her Government and her Parliament. He had some doubt, personally, whether or not the authority of the Council's decision was the best that could be obtained. Two of the fourteen Members would certainly be eliminated, and possibly more. Consequently, there might be a comparatively small body of men left to take a decision which would result in an application of the Convention and this in a state of war, either prospective or actual.

Were the advantages to be derived from the putting into force of the Convention so great as to over-balance the objection to which he had alluded? Sir George suggested that there should be two classes of signatories: one, the class which adopted the Convention and could be counted upon in making up the loan; the other, the class which would comprise those who adhered to the same principle as that to which his Government adhered, and who, after knowing the decision of the Council as to the aggrieved party to which the loan was to go, came in as contributors to the loan, after agreeing with the Council's decision. This view, however, obtained no support, and M. Massigli (France) said that he viewed it with considerable alarm, because it might offer a serious temptation to Parliaments to delay their accession until the time came for the Convention to be brought into operation.