

Lord Cecil, in presenting his resolution, stated that disarmament was the only direct and positive safeguard against the outbreak of war. Agreements as to arbitration and security rested on the good faith of those who made them, and it would limit the usefulness of the League of Nations if it were said that the Assembly had no right to pass any resolution or make suggestions in regard to the work being carried on by the Preparatory Commission. He then reviewed the disarmament situation since the spring of 1927. With regard to the air arm, the broad general principles of reduction in aircraft had been established in 1927, and there had been no material advance since then. As for the naval arm, he recalled the unhappy difference of opinion which had arisen, and the resulting deadlock and adjournment of the question: the Preparatory Commission had done nothing further in the matter of naval disarmament, but a great deal had been done outside the Preparatory Commission, and he hoped that the negotiations going on at present would bring about a real advance. Of course it was desirable that there should be an agreement on the naval side of the question, but it must not be imagined that reduction and limitation of naval armaments alone were going to be any security for peace. The bulk of the fighting had always been done by troops on land, and it was vital to get a satisfactory treaty on land and air questions. The limitation of land material had not advanced one inch, and perhaps an unfriendly critic might say that in some respects there had been retrogression from the spring of 1927. He insisted upon the enormous importance of material in land warfare, and thought that it was not an extravagant possibility to suggest that, although in future there might be great national armies still in existence, they would more and more depend for their strength upon material and less upon the actual number of soldiers; it would mean an approximation of the conditions of land warfare to the conditions of warfare by sea and air.

Lord Cecil did not discuss at length or insist upon the first principle (a). With regard to Sub-paragraph (b) he admitted that it would be affectation for him to conceal the fact that this was likely to lead to considerable difference of opinion. He thought there were only two ways in which to limit the effectiveness of a land force—or indeed of any force—one was by limiting its numbers direct, the other by limiting its period of service. He considered that the Preparatory Disarmament Commission should reconsider the whole problem as, in his opinion, the solution arrived at was unsatisfactory. He attached by far the greatest importance to Sub-paragraph (c): quoting the resolution voted by the Preparatory Commission regarding limitation of armaments by a system of publicity of expenditure, he asked the members of the Committee whether they thought, really, that this was a satisfactory position in which to leave this grave question. He felt that the Committee would be failing in its duty if it did not press upon the Preparatory Commission the further consideration of the matter. If the only result of the preparatory work was to be a draft treaty which expressly excluded any reduction or limitation of material, the League would be offering to a hungering world, not bread, but a stone. As to the fourth point, (d), he was not suggesting any particular form of supervision, but he felt satisfied that to establish a disarmament treaty without providing for supervision in some form, would be a very incomplete solution of the problem entrusted to the Preparatory Commission. He concluded by making a strong appeal to the representatives of the Powers with great land armies, and particularly to the French Delegate, to accept his views. Lord Cecil's speech created a very deep impression upon the Committee, and he was warmly applauded.

M. Loudon (Netherlands), President of the Preparatory Commission, stated that he had been somewhat painfully surprised to see that the second part of the Cecil resolution was what he considered an undeserved criticism of the work