

The Secretary General.

Having met successively Mr. Henderson, M. Titulesco and Mr. Marriner of the American Delegation, with whom I lunched, I thought you might like to know some of the views expressed by them.

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Mr. Henderson seemed to be disturbed by the rumours about the Conference not doing useful work and spending time and money at this critical moment. He referred particularly to certain English newspapers, and also to an article published in the "Matin" by M. de Korab, the latter alluding to the imminence of an adjournment. Mr. Henderson said that there is no truth in these rumours; at any rate no Government has ever asked that we should adjourn, and had they done so he would have been the first to oppose it.

Incidentally, I asked M. Jean Paul-Boncour's opinion on the article by M. de Korab. M. Jean Paul-Boncour said he had to express his indignation to the correspondent of the "Matin" for such unwarranted talk. In his view it would have been better in the past and it would be better for the future if the Conference had decided ^{formally} that there should be meetings of the General Commission with its attendant publicity, and that these sessions should be followed by less important sessions of the Technical Commissions. He added that there could be no question of adjournment, but a decision of the sort taken by the Conference would avert many evils from which we actually suffer. I venture to say that I am in full sympathy with his view as I had expressed to you a similar idea in connection with the method to be followed on the resumption of work of the Conference after the Easter holidays.

Returning to my conversation with Mr. Henderson, I told him that as far as I was aware the new French Government might be constituted towards the 9th or 10th June, and that therefore we would have to proceed with the work at present entrusted to the Commissions and Committees until about that date. We should, however, lose no time in creating contacts between the new French Government and the other delegations of the great Powers in order to secure certain immediate political results such as would help to raise the Conference from its present state of depression. Having that ultimate purpose in view I did not entirely envisage the present situation with the same pessimism as the President. After all, these reports would at least have the usefulness of bringing us nearer a solution, in that this attempt will have shown the real difficulties which the General Commission will be called upon to face without further delay.

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Mr. Marriner of the American Delegation told me at the end of the lunch given by him (Mr. Sweetser was present) that if there is an idea of terminating the present session of the Conference and resuming the work, say, towards November, he would like it to be known that the American Delegation would not come back in November. In the States people thought that we are doing nothing and losing time, and Congress would not vote the necessary credits. Mr. Sweetser said he could not in the least share this view, but Mr. Marriner insisted.

I do hope that something encouraging may be done before that date in order to induce the Americans to continue their collaboration in the Conference.

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Mr. Titulesco wished to know when there would be a meeting of the General Commission, as if such a meeting was not contemplated for some time people like himself might return to their jobs instead of wasting time in Geneva. I replied that I could not give him a definite date, but that he knew the decision of the General Commission to the effect that it would meet as soon as either the Technical Commissions on qualitative disarmament or the Committee on Effectives had submitted their reports, an event, I added, which might take place towards the end of the month. Mr. Titulesco said he would like to know for certain in order that he and people who are in the same position as himself could leave Geneva and come back when necessary. I said I could not give any dates beyond the decisions of the General Commission, of which he is cognisant. Ambassador Sato and Mr. Boris Stein spoke in much the same vein, as also did Mr. Buere, President of the Land Armaments Commission, the two last wishing more particularly in respect of their holidays to know how to arrange their future programme of work or recess.

19th May, 1932.