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Mister President!

Honoured gentlemen!

We take the pleasure in submitting to you the draft of a decision regarding the introduction of the K 31 in the Army.

I.

According to the Federal decision of 14 June 1911, the rifle model 11 and the carbine model 11 have been introduced for the rifle-carrying troops of our army. Auszug [1st-line forces, ed] and Landwehr [2nd-line forces, ed] partially received the new weapons as early as 1913, partially during the 1st war years, the Landsturm [3rd-line forces, home guard, ed] on the other hand still carried the rifle model 89. We shall return to this point in section VI.

Since the introduction of the model 11 weapons, which at the time represented significant progress, and in particular during the 1914-1918 world war, the situation has developed further, namely in the following directions:

1. For reasons of manufacturing, training, and re-provisioning in the case of war (weapons and replacement parts), efforts have been in progress for many years towards the introduction of a single shoulder-fired weapon in the army instead of the model 96/11 and 11 long rifles and the model 11 carbine.
2. Above all there has been the desire to replace the long rifle with a shorter and lighter weapon and thereby to unburden the heavily-packed infantryman as far as possible.

The model 11 carbine has proved itself to be substantially handier than the long rifle in every respect, and in particular when the weapon is carried slung (in field service in difficult terrain).

To this end, the simplest solution would have been to equip the entire army with the model 11 carbine. Against this, however, stands the fact that the model 11 carbine is somewhat inferior to the long rifle model 11 in accuracy. From a purely military standpoint this situation would be rather less important; however in view of the large role played by the voluntary shooting organisations, it was not believed possible to succeed in this simplest route.

This consideration led to trials in recent years, aiming to improve the model 11 carbine. By mounting a heavier barrel, the precision should thereby be improved such that no difference should exist in comparison with the model 11 long rifle. 8 years ago, 200 such carbines were produced and tested. Only, the solution was not completely satisfactory. It did not result in cheapening the weapon, but rather made it more expensive.

3. Technically, the model 11 weapons are obsolete. They no longer conform to the current state-of-the-art in their construction. In particular there is the

consideration that the construction does not permit the individual parts to be processed as rationally as would be possible with modern machine tools. The model 11 weapons are consequently too expensive.

For all of these reasons, the decision was taken in the year 1929 not only to make the barrel of the model 11 carbine heavier, but also to overcome the existing defects of the weapons as much as possible by a comprehensive redesign and thereby to form the basis for cheaper manufacture.

To this end, the following guidelines applied:

- a. The new weapon should be no longer and not substantially heavier than the model 11 carbine;
- b. The handling when shooting should remain the same;
- c. The performance, particularly in view of accuracy, should be better than that of the model 11 carbine; it should not be inferior to that of the model 11 long rifle;
- d. In terms of construction, the defects of the current model 11 weapons should be eliminated such that the weapon is made cheaper by application of modern manufacturing methods.

The question whether the introduction of an entirely new rifle of the self-loading type should be considered, as was underlined in the bulletin of 27th of April 1909, was also examined in detail during these preliminary studies.

Although progress has been made in recent years in respect of self-loading rifles, there does not currently exist a model that is simple enough in construction that it could be given to a militiaman as a personal weapon to be taken home.

The significance of a self-loader has additionally been significantly reduced in our situation by increased numbers of heavy machine guns and the introduction of the light machine gun.

This question was thereby dropped. It should also be noted that the introduction of an automatic carbine would stress our budget as a result of its significantly higher manufacturing price.

During 1930, carbines of a new construction were prepared in the Federal arms factory and comprehensively tested in comparative shoots with the model 11 long rifle, model 11 carbine and the heavy-barreled carbine. In the same year, trials were carried out with a small series of such weapons with troops at the Wallenstadt shooting school and with shooting clubs.

In the course of 1931, experience was gained with 200 of these experimental carbines in 6 infantry recruit schools, in a cavalry NCO school, in a cavalry recruit school, in a mountain telegrapher recruit school and in several shooting clubs. These multiple and thorough tests will not only be of pure shooting and firearm-technical nature, but large-scale troop trials were carried out which provided the proof that the new weapon also fulfils the requirements of field service. All desires and requests made during these trials, if correct, will be taken into account.

At this point it should also be mentioned that the world champion shooter, Mr. K. Zimmerman, although he had the weapon in his hands for the first time and without use of special ammunition, attained a score in a 1st shooting trial which had caused excitement at an international match a few years ago (the corresponding shot pattern can be found in the files).

In general the test results can be summarised as follows:

the weight of the model 31 carbine is approximately 4 kg, and is thus approximately 0.5 kg lighter than the model 11 long rifle (weight of the model 11 long rifle without ancillaries = circa 4.5 kg, plate of the model 11 carbine without ancillaries = 3.9 kg.)

The model 31 carbine is the same length, and is handy as, the model 11 carbine.

As a result of the shortening of the bolt and the receiver, lengthening of the barrel and consequently of the site line is possible. Primarily for this reason the shooting performance is improved compared to the model 11 carbine; it is even somewhat better than that of the model 11 long rifle.

The model 31 carbine is furthermore significantly stronger in respect of its chamber and barrel than the model 11 arms, such that for instance in the case of foreign objects being present in the barrel (e.g. cleaning rod parts), the weapon does not burst at the chamber as before.

The locking of the bolt takes place in front of the loading opening, directly behind the case head; it is faultless, and exhibits great advantages in comparison with the previous system, in which the locking takes place behind the loading opening, and in particular prevents torn cases or makes them harmless.

The model 31 carbine is also cheaper than the model 11 carbine. The model 11 carbine with ancillaries has cost Fr. 168 in recent years. This price can no longer be maintained in the future and must be raised to Fr. 169 as a result of the Salary Ordinance I which came into force in 1932. The model 31 carbine can be delivered with ancillaries for Fr. 151 taking the current salaries into account. The saving per weapon is thus Fr. 18.

II.

Supported by these conclusions, the Bundesrat [Federal Council] declared in its decision of 22nd of January 1932 that the model 31 carbine be approved as ordnance [i.e. reglementary], as a replacement for the previous model 11 carbine.

This Bundesrat decision is supported by Article 87 of the federal law on military organisation of 1907, last paragraph.

In respect of the date of the introduction of the new carbine, nothing has yet been stated. In contrast, the ordnance declaration permits the arms factories to transition from the manufacture of the expense of old weapons to the

fabrication of the newer, cheaper, model.

### III.

It appears to us that the replacement of the model 11 carbine by the new model 31 cannot simply be left at that, but rather that the time has also come to replace the long rifle with the carbine. The lighter weight of the new weapon, the resulting desired lightening of the load of the infantryman, the greater handiness, the improved construction and the lower manufacturing price demand this step, which is permitted by the equal shooting performance. It should additionally be borne in mind that the financial consequences are also of concern. In the first instance it is merely a matter of a 1st decision, whose implementation will only proceed very gradually.

In our opinion it is the Parliament which is responsible for taking the decision. The approval of the model 31 carbine is, as already mentioned above, undoubtedly a simple ordnance question, whose resolution is, by law, within the competence of the Bundesrat. Things however appear to us to be different in respect of the introduction of the carbine as a universal weapon.

Indeed, this is also a matter of a revolutionary innovation in the field of the armament of our army. The carbine accounts already for a large part of the ordnance weapon of the army. Aside all the special troops, insofar as they are equipped with shoulder-fired weapons (cavalry, artillery, engineers, aviation troops, catering troops), a large part of the infantry is already today equipped with the carbine, namely the cyclists, the machine gunners, the telephone soldiers and the light machine gunners. Approximately 2/5 of the infantrymen carry the carbine already today; the long rifle is still carried only by the Fusiliers and the Riflemen. On this point, the introduction of the carbine as a universal weapon does not result in any fundamental change either in the ammunition or in the shooting performance.

On the other hand, there is an inherent significance in the fundamental withdrawal of the long rifle and its replacement with the carbine, which significantly goes beyond the framework of an ordnance approval. Apparently this brings into question the "general regulations on armament" edict, which article 87 of the federal law on military organisation transfers to the Parliament. The rifle 1911 was thereby explicitly introduced by decision of the Parliament, which thereby rejected, at least implicitly, the introduction of the carbine for all of the infantry. Should the same question nevertheless have been approved on the basis of the technical developments of that time, it thus appears to only be [legally] consistent if the decision is again reserved for the Parliament in this case.

### IV.

Concerning the introduction of the new weapons, it would of course be ideal to equip the entire army in one go, or in a very few years. That would however require considerable new manufacture with very high costs. We have thus looked for a cheaper way which would permit introduction of the new weapon without any significant additional costs. The disadvantage of a long transitional period

and a mix of model 11 and 31 weapons within the companies can be accepted since, as mentioned above, no fundamental change is introduced in respect of ammunition and shooting performance.

The following process is envisaged:

The rank and file who are currently equipped with the model 11 rifle or carbine keep their current weapon, with one exception which will be discussed below. The new carbine will simply be given to recruits, and in fact - to save money - only to the recruits of the Fusiliers and rifle companies. All other recruits, insofar as they are equipped with shoulder-fired weapons, receive the model 11 carbine as before.

It is thus achieved that 31 carbine is distributed in the 1st instance where it is most needed, namely with the infantry previously equipped with the long rifle. Furthermore, this process results in the great advantage that we do not increase the number of weapons to be produced annually, and thus avoid multiplying the manufacture costs. And finally this permits us to use up the model 11 carbines on hand. The reserves of such weapons is currently still rather large. It will also be continuously supported by carbines returned back by people leaving the service early for whatever reason (medical discharge, release from service under article 13 and so on); and it can be supported even further when the various carbine-carrying troops transition from the Landwehr to the Landsturm have their carbines taken away and replaced by 11 or 96/11 rifles. All of this permits carbine-carrying staff and units to still be provided with model 11 carbines, without new production. In any case, the returning weapons must again be returned into an impeccable state before being issued to recruits. That also costs money, however it is much cheaper than production of new weapons.

At the present time, the price to upgrade an old carbine is Fr. 42, and for the manufacture of a new weapon Fr. 151 or Fr. 161.

It cannot today be determined with certainty at what time the 31 carbine can then also be issued to recruits of other rifle-carrying troops. One would transition to this as soon as the inventory of 31 carbines permits. This is primarily dependent on the number of recruits to be equipped and from the numbers of 31 carbines returned again by soldiers leaving the service early over the years for whatever reason. It is also conceivable that the conditions at a certain time permit increasing the production of 31 carbines and thereby to permit issuing these weapons to further troops.

We anticipate starting to issue the 31 carbine to the recruits of the Fusiliers and rifle companies in the year 1935. The production numbers will permit this.

A special measure is intended for the mounted infantry. The requirement for a light rifle which is handy in difficult terrain is at its most noticeable there. We thus envisage in 1934 reequipping with the model 11 carbine the troops of the mountain brigades who are armed with the model 11 rifle when they take a repeat course, and likewise equipping the recruits in the recruit schools. The required number of carbines must be freshened up [yes, they said "aufgefrischt" J] for the re-equipping of the repeat-cause troops of the mountain infantry. The required credit of Fr. 156,000 is already provided for

in the war-materiel budget of 1933. A further sum of Fr. 23,000 must also be provided for in the 1934 budget.

V.

If the 31 carbine is introduced according to the process outlined above, the annual expenditures on shoulder-fired weapon can be kept at the current level. These were:

1931 Fr. 1,987,500

1932 Fr. 1,934,000

Provided for in 1933 budget Fr. 1,829,000

Budget 9034 will require Fr. 1,878,000

and from 1935 onwards will be required annually Fr. 1,890,000

Further details can be found in the tables in the files.

VI.

Finally, a further question should be debated, which admittedly is not directly connected with the introduction of the new carbine, but about which we would like to inform Parliament even though its resolution falls, in our opinion, within the competence of the Bundesrat.

As discussed above, today the Landsturm still carries the model 89. This is because, when the Landwehr troops transition into the Landsturm, their model 11 weapons are withdrawn and replaced by a model 89 rifle. Incidentally, we remind you here that this arrangement, which is carried out as a saving measure, resulted in much distress, because the man who was carried out his Auszug and Landwehr service, and indeed the entirety of his active service, with his rifle, valued on keeping it, ending his service with it, and taking it with him into retirement as his property according to Article 94 of the federal law on military organisation.

The special arming of the Landsturm, completely independently of this, has in consequence rather great disadvantages, in particular due to the fact that the ammunition which is to be used with this rifle is very different from that of the model 11. Neither can the cartridges to be used with the rifle 89 (90/03 or 90/23) be fired from a model 11 rifle, nor may the model 11 cartridge be fired from an 89 rifle for safety reasons. This requires a completely special provisioning of ammunition for the Landsturm and must lead to the worst imaginable difficulties in replacing ammunition when Landsturm troops are deployed alongside those of the Auszug and the Landwehr (which could very well be the case). This situation has already been the object of much worry for the responsible administrative bodies.

It can now be added to this that in the year 1934, for the first time an annual

intake which has never had the old model 89 in their hands will transition to the Landsturm, but have received their entire training with the model 11. Due to these considerations, the military department has already ordered that from the year 1934 onwards, re-equipping during the transition from the Landwehr to the Landsturm should no longer take place. The stock of 89 rifles has in the meantime been reduced to about 18,000 units, which would thus suffice for two years at the most.

After the above-mentioned order, the class of 1934 will convert to the Landsturm with the 1911 rifle. With this, however, rifles and ammunition of different types will be present within the Landsturm units, which appears to be fundamentally unacceptable for the reasons just mentioned. The entire Landsturm must thus of necessity be equipped with a model 11 weapon. The reserves on hand permit this without any further ado. Envisioned for this is the 11 or 96/11 rifle. - Once the Landsturm has only rifles of these models in their hands, the entire army will then only require a single type of ammunition. The great significance of this hardly needs any further explanation.

We will endeavour to dispose of and valorise [tr.note "verwerten" simultaneously means both these things here] the returning 89 rifles as far as possible. However, the prospects are not good.

The costs for re-equipping the Landsturm comprise the cost of freshening up the model 11 rifles to be issued to the Landsturm for a sum of Fr. 50,000, and the costs for the transport of weapons and ammunition in the sum of approximately Fr. 32,000. These sums are not included in the budget sums mentioned above under V for the year 1934.

In our opinion, the Bundesrat is competent to decide about the re-equipping of the Landsturm, subject to the required credit, since the meaning of the federal decision of 14 June 1911 mentioned in the introduction is undoubtedly to equip the entire army bit by bit with model 11 weapons. If the Bundesrat now, after 22 years, also wishes to furnish the Landsturm with a model 11 weapon, it acts only in fulfilment of an already adopted federal decision.

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In summary, we declare:

The introduction of the recommended model 31 carbine in the place of the long rifle reduces the burden of the infantryman, it is handier than the hitherto existing rifle, it increases safety when firing a shot; it is much better designed technically, and thereby simplifies manufacture and as a result is significantly cheaper as the current weapons.

The re-equipping of the Landsturm as envisaged by the Bundesrat results in the necessary unification of ammunition for all shoulder-fired weapons.

We recommend that you grant your acceptance of the draft Decision, attached below. With this we take the opportunity, you, Mister President, highly honoured gentlemen, to assure you of our highest regards.

Bern, 17 March 1933

In the name of the Swiss Bundesrat,

The federal president:  
Schulthess,

The Federal Chancellor:  
Kaeslin.

Decision of the Parliament

concerning

the introduction of the model 31 carbine in the Army

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The Parliament of the Swiss confederation,  
on the basis of Article 87 of the federal law of 12 April 1907 on the military  
organisation,  
in consideration of a Message of the Bundesrat of 17 March 1933:  
decides:

Art. 1.

The model 31 carbine will be assigned to all rifle-carrying troops as  
shoulder-fired arm.  
The introduction is to be carried out in steps, starting with the Fusilier and  
Rifle companies.

Art. 2.

In the year 1934, the infantrymen of the mountain infantry brigades who still  
carry rifles and must take a repeat course will be re-equipped with the model  
11 carbine. The recruits of the mountain infantry brigades will receive the  
model 11 carbine from then on until the introduction of the model 31 carbine.

Art. 3

The Parliament takes notes that the Bundesrat will order the re-equipping of  
the Landsturm with the model 11 or 96/11 rifle in the year 1934.

Art. 4

The Bundesrat will decree the provisions required for the execution of these

measures.

Art. 5

This decision enters immediately into force.