



*Photo by*

VISCOUNT ESHER.

*[Lafayette.*

*[Frontispiece.*



# HOW BRITAIN GOES TO WAR

A Digest and an Analysis of  
Evidence taken by the Royal Commission  
on the War in South Africa

*Compiled from the Blue Books for the information of the Public*

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
"THE TRUTH ABOUT THE NAVY"

8954. "What I complain of is that the English people are never taken into the confidence of the Government, as far as the condition of the Army is concerned—they are only told part of the truth, and the result is that when war is forced upon us we find ourselves with an insufficient amount of reserves of all sorts and kinds."—LORD WOLSELEY.

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"REVIEW OF REVIEWS" OFFICE

Norfolk Street, London, W.C.

*November, 1903*

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## THE ACCUSED.

### I. LIST OF CABINET IN 1895-9.

Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs . . . . .	}	Marquis of Salisbury.
Lord President of the Council . . . . .		The Duke of Devonshire.
Lord Chancellor . . . . .		Lord Halsbury.
Lord Privy Seal . . . . .		Viscount Cross.
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster . . . . .		{ Sir Henry James (now Lord James).
First Lord of the Treasury . . . . .		Rt. Hon. A. J. Balfour.
Secretary of State for the Home Department . . . . .		{ Sir Matthew White Ridley (now Lord Blagdon).
Chancellor of the Exchequer . . . . .		Rt. Hon. Sir M. Hicks-Beach.
Secretary of State for the Colonies . . . . .		Rt. Hon. J. Chamberlain.
Secretary of State for War . . . . .		The Marquis of Lansdowne.
Secretary of State for India . . . . .		Lord George Hamilton.
First Lord of the Admiralty . . . . .		{ Rt. Hon. G. J. Goschen (now Lord Goschen).
President of the Local Government Board . . . . .		Mr. Chaplin.
President of the Board of Trade . . . . .		Rt. Hon. C. T. Ritchie.
Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland . . . . .		Earl Cadogan.
— Lord Chancellor of Ireland . . . . .		Lord Ashbourne.
Secretary for Scotland . . . . .		Lord Balfour of Burleigh.
First Commissioner of Works . . . . .		Rt. Hon. A. Akers-Douglas.
President of the Board of Agriculture . . . . .		Mr. Walter Long.

DEDICATED

WITH ALL RESPECT, BUT WITHOUT PERMISSION,

TO

**His Majesty King Edward VII.,**

TO WHOSE MINISTERS IS ENTRUSTED THE RESPONSIBILITY

OF SEEING THAT HIS FORCES

ARE IN AN ADEQUATE POSTURE OF DEFENCE,

AND THAT

“READY, AYE READY,”

SHOULD BE

THE WATCHWORD OF HIS WAR OFFICE:

AS WELL AS OF HIS NAVY.

II. LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF THE WAR OFFICE  
SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR 1899.

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR.

1. The Marquess of Lansdowne, K.G. (Until November, 1900.)
2. Right Hon. St. John Brodrick, M.P.

PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE.

1. George Wyndham, Esq., M.P. (Until November, 1900.)
2. Right Hon. Lord Raglan. (Until August, 1902.)
3. The Earl of Hardwicke.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY.

1. Right Hon. J. Powell-Williams, M.P. (Until January, 1901.)
2. Lord Stanley, M.P.

PERMANENT UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE.

1. Sir Ralph H. Knox, K.C.B. (Until January, 1901.)
2. Colonel Sir Edward W. Ward, K.C.B. (From April, 1901.)

ASSISTANT UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE.

Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson, K.C.B.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

1. Field-Marshal the Right Hon. Viscount Wolseley, K.P. (Until December, 1900.)
2. Field-Marshal the Right Hon. Earl Roberts, K.G.

ADJUTANT-GENERAL.

1. General Sir H. E. Wood, V.C. (Until September, 1901.)
2. Lieutenant-General Sir T. Kelly-Kenny, K.C.B.

QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL.

1. Lieutenant-General Sir G. S. White, V.C. (Until September, 1899.)
2. Lieutenant-General Sir C. M. Clarke, Bart., G.C.B.

INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF FORTIFICATIONS.

General Sir R. Harrison, K.C.B., R.E.

## DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF ORDNANCE.

General Sir H. Brackenbury, G.C.B., R.E.

## DIRECTOR-GENERAL ARMY MEDICAL SERVICE.

1. Surgeon-General J. Jameson, M.D., C.B. (Until May, 1901.)
2. Surgeon-General A. F. Preston, M.B. (temporarily). (Until November, 1901.)
3. Surgeon-General W. Taylor, M.D., K.C.B.

## DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF MOBILIZATION AND MILITARY INTELLIGENCE.

1. Major-General Sir J. C. Ardagh, C.B., R.E. (Until April, 1901.)
2. Lieutenant-General Sir W. G. Nicholson, K.C.B., R.E.

## INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF REMOUNTS.

Major-General W. R. Truman.

## DIRECTOR-GENERAL ARMY VETERINARY DEPARTMENT.

Veterinary-Colonel F. Duck, C.B.

## CHAPLAIN-GENERAL.

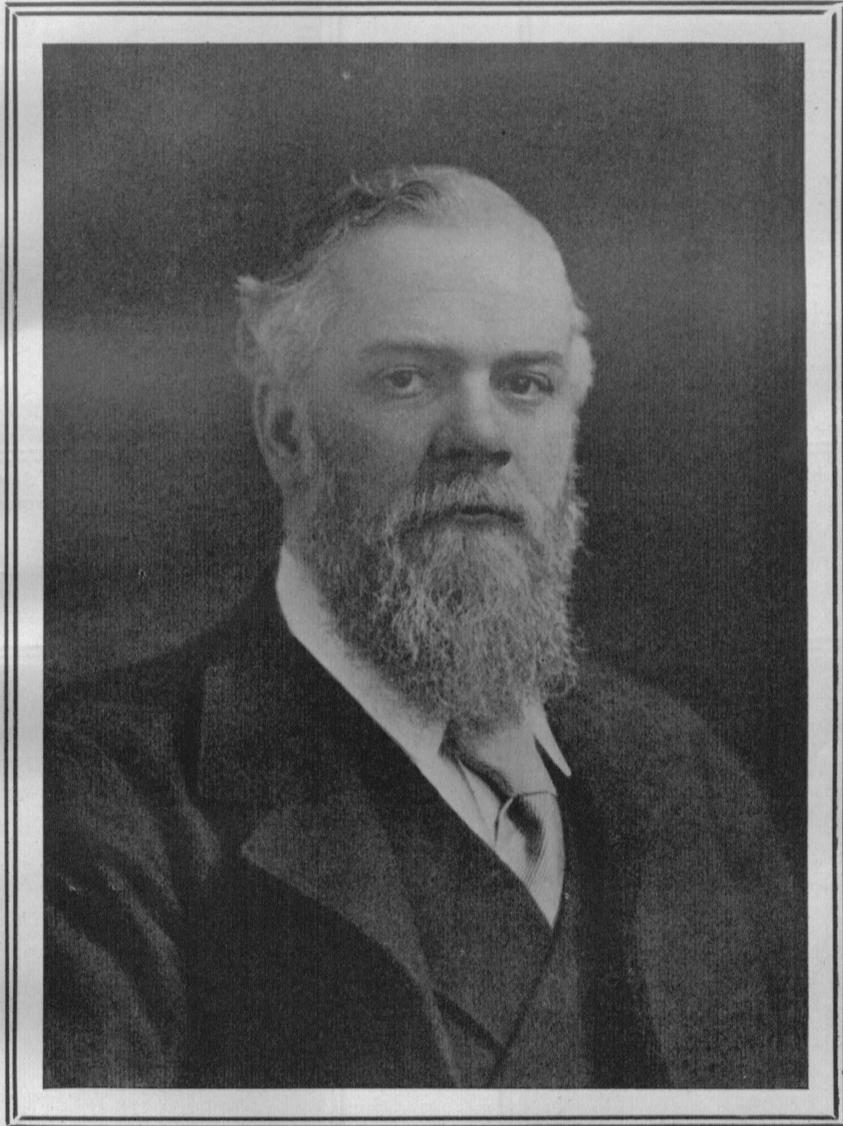
1. Rev. J. C. Edghill, D.D. (Until November, 1901.)
2. Right Rev. Bishop Taylor-Smith, D.D.

## ACCOUNTANT-GENERAL.

F. T. Marzials, Esq., C.B.

## DIRECTOR OF CONTRACTS.

A. Major, Esq.

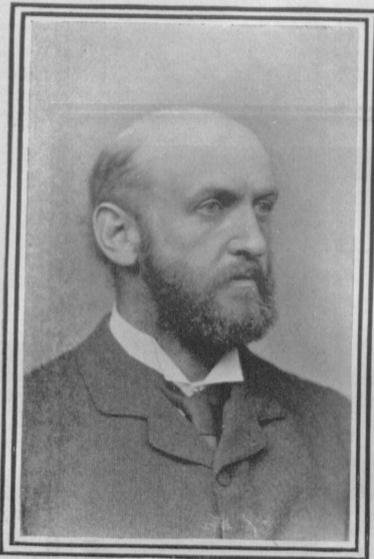


*Photo by*

*[Elliott & Fry.]*

LORD ELGIN.  
(Chairman of War Commission.)

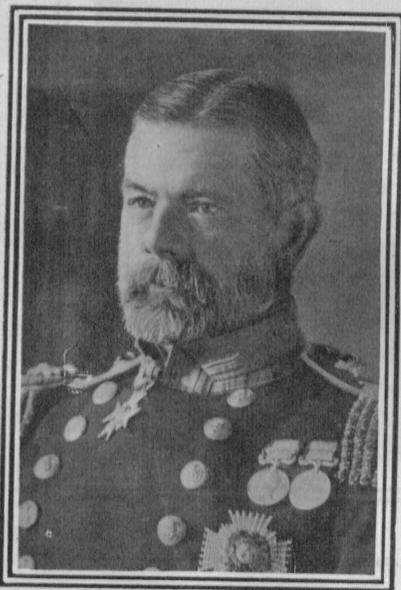
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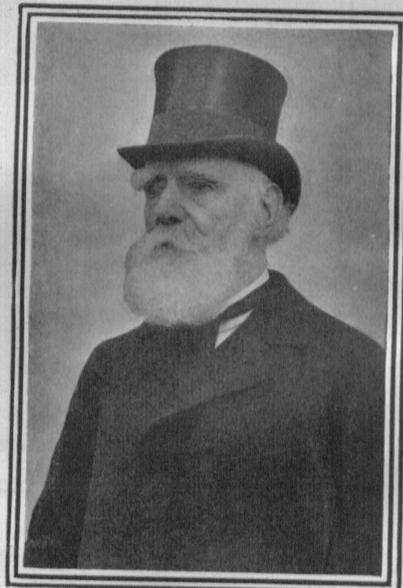
*Photo by* [Maul & Fox.]  
SIR JOHN JACKSON.



*Photo by* [Russell.]  
FIELD-MARSHAL SIR HENRY NORMAN.



*Photo by* [Elliott & Fry.]  
ADMIRAL SIR J. HOPKINS.



*Photo by* [Russell.]  
LORD STRATHCONA.

[face p. 7.]

## THE JUDGES.

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THE following is a list of the members of the Royal Commission appointed by Royal Warrant on September 9th, 1902, to inquire into the Military preparations for the War in South Africa, and into the supply of men, ammunition, equipment, and transport by sea and land in connection with the campaign, and into the Military operations up to the occupation of Pretoria.

The Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, K.G., &c.  
Viscount Esher, K.C.B., &c.  
Sir George Dashwood Taubman Goldie, K.C.M.G.  
Field-Marshal Sir Henry W. Norman, K.C.B., &c.  
Admiral Sir J. Ommanney Hopkins, G.C.B.  
Sir John Edge, Kt.  
Sir John Jackson, Kt.

On October 11th, 1902, another Royal Warrant appointed as additional members of the Commission :

Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal, K.C.M.G.  
Sir Frederick Darley, K.C.M.G., Chief Justice of New South Wales.

## THE WITNESSES.

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The first volume contains the first and greater part of the evidence of:  
Field-Marshal Lord Roberts.

And of:

Field-Marshal Viscount Wolsley.

And the evidence of:

Altham, Lt.-Col., Assistant Quartermaster-General Intelligence Division.  
(And again in Vol. ii.)  
Ardagh, Gen. Sir John, Director of Military Intelligence for 1896-1901.  
Borrett, Major-Gen., Inspector-General of Recruiting.  
Brabazon, Major-Gen., Commanding Imperial Yeomanry.  
Brackenbury, Gen. Sir Henry, Director-General of Ordnance.  
Chesham, Lord, Inspector-General Imperial Yeomanry.  
Chichester, Rear-Adm. Sir E., Bart., Principal Transport Officer.  
Clarke, Gen. Sir C. M., Quartermaster-General.  
Clayton, Col. F. T., Assistant Quartermaster-General at Headquarters.  
Cowans, Lt.-Col. J. S., Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General.  
Crutchley, Col. C., Assistant Adjutant-General for Recruiting.  
Davidson, Col. J., Staff Officer.  
Deane, Col. T., Yeomanry Committee.  
Douglas, Sir A. P., New Zealand.  
Duck, Vet.-Col. F., Director-General Veterinary Department.  
Dunne, Col. W.  
French, Major-Gen. Sir G. A., Australian Contingents.  
Fripp, Mr. A. D., Civilian Doctor with Forces.  
Graft, Mr. S. J., Assistant-Director of Transports.  
Grant, Lt.-Col., Mapping Section.  
Grove, Major-Gen. Sir C., Military Secretary to Commander-in-Chief.  
Gubbins, Col. W. L., Medical Service Corps.  
Hamilton, Lt.-Gen. Sir Ian, Military Secretary.  
Harris, Mr. C., Principal Accountant-General's Department, War Office.  
Harrison, General Sir R., Inspector-General of Fortifications.  
Hills, Major E. H., Mapping Section, Intelligence Division.  
Jameson, Surgeon-General.  
Jarvis, Lt.-Col.  
Johnston, Col. W., Assistant-Director Medical Service.  
Kelly-Kenny, Lt.-Gen. Sir Thomas, Adjutant-General to the Forces. (And  
again in Vol. ii.)  
Kitchener, Lord, Commander-in-Chief in India.

Knight, Major W. C.  
 Knox, Sir Ralph H., late Permanent Under Secretary of War Office.  
 Lake, Col. P. H. N., Assistant Quartermaster-General, Mobilisation Division.  
 Lucas, Col. A. G., Deputy Adjutant-General, Imperial Yeomanry.  
 Mackinnon, Major-Gen., Commanding City Imperial Volunteers.  
 Major, Mr. Alfred, Director of Army Contracts.  
 Marzials, Mr. F. T., Accountant-General, War Office.  
 Montgomery, Col. R. A., Deputy Director-General of Ordnance.  
 Mulcahy, Col. F. E., Army Clothing Department.  
 Nicholson, Lt.-Gen. Sir W. G., Director-General of Mobilisation. (And  
 again in Vol. ii.)  
 O'Grady-Haly, Major-Gen., Canadian Contingents.  
 Ogston, Prof. Alex.  
 Penton, Lt.-Col., Commanding New Zealand Forces.  
 Pitt, Capt. F. J., Naval Assistant-Director of Transports.  
 Richardson, Col. Sir W. D., Director of Supplies in South Africa.  
 Robb, Col. F. S., Assistant Adjutant-General.  
 Robertson, Assistant Quartermaster-General.  
 Salmond, Major-Gen. W., Deputy Adjutant-General.  
 Scarborough, Col. The Earl of, Imperial Yeomanry.  
 Stevens, Col. Sir J., Principal Ordnance Officer.  
 Stopford, Brig.-General, Chief Staff Officer, First Army Corps.  
 Turner, Major-Gen. Sir A. E., Inspector-General of Auxiliary Forces.  
 Valentia, Col. Viscount, Assistant Adjutant-General, Imperial Yeomanry.  
 Vincent, Col. Howard, M.P.  
 Ward, Col. Sir E., Permanent Under Secretary for War.  
 Wilson, Sir G. F., Assistant Under Secretary for War.  
 Wilson, Surg.-Gen. Sir W., Principal Medical Officer, South Africa.  
 Wilson, Lt.-Col. S. M., Army Medical Department.  
 Wood, Gen. Sir Evelyn, Adjutant-General, 1897-1901.  
 Wood, Major-Gen. Sir E., Royal Engineers.

The second volume contains the second part of the evidence of Lord Roberts and the evidence of :

Adye, Lt.-Col. John, Assistant Adjutant-General Colonial Forces.  
 Altham, Col. E. A., Intelligence Division.  
 Amery, L. S., *Times* Correspondent.  
 Armstrong, Major O., Financial Adviser to Lord Kitchener.  
 Atkins, J. B., *Manchester Guardian* Correspondent.  
 Baden-Powell, Major-Gen. R., Inspector-General of South African Constabulary.  
 Barton, Major-Gen., Commander in War.  
 Brodrick, the Right Hon. John, Secretary of War.  
 Buller, the Right Hon. Gen. Sir Redvers, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, South Africa.  
 Butler, Lt.-Gen. Sir W. F., General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, South Africa, from 1898-1899.  
 Carr, Col. E. E., Commander 2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers.  
 Clarke, Gen. Sir C. M., Quartermaster-General.  
 Coke, Major-Gen., Commander 10th Infantry Brigade.  
 Collen, Major-Gen. Sir E., Military Member Indian Council.  
 Colville, Major-Gen. Sir H., Commander 9th Division.  
 Crabbe, Col. E. M. S., 3rd Battalion Grenadier Guards.

Davidson, Col. W. L., Colonel on Staff.  
 Dawson, Lt. A. T., Vickers, Maxim and Co.  
 Deane, Col. T., Imperial Yeomanry.  
 Doyle, Sir A. Conan, Novelist and Doctor.  
 Forestier-Walker, Gen. Sir F. W., General Commanding in South Africa.  
 French, Lt.-Gen. Sir John, General Officer Commanding Cavalry.  
 Gatacre, Major-Gen. Sir W. F., Commanded at Stormberg.  
 Godley, Lt.-Col. A.  
 Haig, Col. D.  
 Hamilton, Lt.-Gen. Sir I. S. M., Kitchener's Chief of Staff.  
 Hamilton, Major-Gen. Sir B. M., Commander in War.  
 Harris, Vice-Adm. Sir R.  
 Hildyard, Major-Gen.  
 Hippisley, Brev.-Col., Director of Telegraphs, South Africa.  
 Hunter, Lt.-Gen. Sir A., Chief of Staff to Sir G. White.  
 Kekewich, Major-Gen., Commander at Kimberley.  
 Knox, Major-Gen. Sir C. E.  
 Lambton, Rear-Adm. Sir H., Naval Brigade, Ladysmith.  
 Lansdowne, The Marquis of, Foreign Secretary, formerly War Secretary.  
 Lovat, Major The Lord, Commanding Lovat's Scouts.  
 Macbean, Lt.-Col. Forbes, Gordon Highlanders.  
 Marshall, Major-Gen. Sir G. H., Royal Artillery.  
 Methuen, Lt.-Gen. The Lord, General Officer 1st Division.  
 Morgan, Lt.-Col. H. G., Director of Supplies.  
 Mortimer, Col. W. H., Chief Paymaster, South Africa.  
 Murray, Lt.-Col. A. J.  
 Noble, Sir A., Bart., Chairman Armstrong Company.  
 Paget, Major-Gen. A. H.  
 Plumer, Major-Gen. H. C. O.  
 Pole-Carew, Major-Gen. Sir R., Commander 11th Division.  
 Rimington, Brig.-Gen. M. F., Commanding Rimington's Scouts.  
 Rundle, Major-Gen. Sir H. M. L.  
 Stopford, Brig.-Gen. Sir F. W., Buller's Military Secretary.  
 Thorneycroft, Col. A. W., Commanding Thorneycroft's.  
 Treves, Sir Fred., Surgeon.  
 Trotter, Col. J. K., Assistant Quartermaster-General Intelligence Division.  
 Truman, Major-Gen. W. R., Inspector-General Remounts.  
 Tullibardine, Marquis of.  
 Warren, Sir Charles, Commander 5th Division.  
 White, Gen. Sir G. S., Defender of Ladysmith.

## THE VERDICT.

The Commission held its first meeting on October 8th, 1902, and its last on June 10th, 1903. It sat on 55 days to take evidence, and heard 114 witnesses, whose evidence is recorded in two volumes of Minutes of Evidence annexed to the Report, and containing altogether answers to 22,200 questions.

Its Report was issued to the public in the last week of August, 1903, in the following Blue Books:—

Cd. 1789. REPORT OF HIS MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO THE MILITARY PREPARATIONS AND OTHER MATTERS CONNECTED WITH THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA. (pp. 316. 2s. 7d.)

This volume contains :

1. The Report signed by all the Commissioners, which is divided into four sections :
    - (1) The Military Preparations for the War in South Africa.
    - (2) The Supply of Men.
    - (3) Ammunition, Equipment and Transport by Sea and Land.
    - (4) Questions of War Office Organisation.
  2. Notes by Commissioners.
    - (1) By Viscount Esher.
    - (2) By Sir G. Taubman Goldie.
    - (3) By Sir F. Darley and Sir J. Edge.
    - (4) By Sir John Jackson.
  3. Appendix.
    - A. Statement of the Intelligence Division.
    - B. Memoranda by Officers of the Intelligence Division concerning the Boer Armaments and probable Strength.
    - C. Selected Despatches bearing upon the Subject of the Military "Preparations for the War in South Africa."
    - D. Minutes by the Marquess of Lansdowne and Field-Marshal Viscount Wolseley on General Question of Strength of Army and of the War in South Africa; and by General Sir Redvers Buller on the latter subject.
    - E. Minute by General Sir Henry Brackenbury, G.C.B., K.C.S.I., of December 15th, 1899, on deficiency in stores.
- General Subject Index to the Minutes of Evidence.

Some days later appeared three supplementary volumes :

Cd. 1790. MINUTES OF EVIDENCE TAKEN BEFORE THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA. (Vol. i. pp. 534. 4s. 5*d.*)

Cd. 1791. I. MINUTES OF EVIDENCE TAKEN BEFORE THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA. (Vol. ii. pp. 720. 5s. 11*d.*)

#### II. APPENDICES ;

Containing eighteen documents, chiefly *prima* of evidence.  
The others contain telegrams and despatches relating to Lady-smith and Buller's relieving force.  
Sir Charles Warren's statement in reply to General Buller, &c.

#### III. AN INDEX OF EVIDENCE ACCORDING TO WITNESSES. (N.B. The General Subject Index is in the Report volume.)

Cd. 1792.—APPENDICES TO THE MINUTES OF EVIDENCE TAKEN BEFORE THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA. (pp. 445. 3s. 6*d.*)

The contents of this volume are very various.

The first is a useful chronology of events from the Conference in Bloemfontein to the occupation of Pretoria.

The bulk of the volume is taken up with statistical matter, official returns, &c., supplied by various departments.

There are, however, some documents of more general interest. There are, for instance :

Papers relating to South African surrenders.  
Correspondence concerning Col. Long's action at Colenso.  
Returns of all horses and mules used in the war.  
Lord Roberts's Report on the field transport in South Africa, &c.

Two thousand and fifteen foolscap pages, closely printed for the most part in small type, which can be bought by anybody from the official printers, Eyre and Spottiswoode, East Harding Street, Fleet Street, London.

Such is the monumental record of the labours of this remarkable Commission.

## PREFACE.

---

THERE will be a natural disposition on the part of many to regard this Digest and Summary of the more important evidence taken before the Royal Commission on the South African War as a mere weapon for use in party warfare.

That it will be effective as a missile in the electoral hurly-burly is probable. Nor is it undesirable that such should be the case. Under our system it is only possible to give effect to the judgment of the nation by a change of Administration.

But it would be a grave mistake to regard this *brochure* as if it were published as an electioneering pamphlet to serve the party now in Opposition.

The evils which the war brought to light, and which the Royal Commission has now placed on official record, are by no means the monopoly of the present Administration. The great mischief which this Report brings into clear relief before the eyes of all men is the lack of a directing brain in the administration of the affairs of the Empire. Policy and armaments should keep step. Soldiers and diplomatists should be in touch with each other. The Government should govern, and the Cabinet should secure co-ordination between the activities of its various departments. All this is the commonplace of statesmanship. But these truisms are constantly ignored, and that by politicians of both parties.

I can never forget my first introduction at close quarters to the astounding system, or no system, by which the policy of an Administration is sometimes carried without any reference to the strength of the armaments on which the defence of that policy depends. It was in 1884, just after the Egyptian War, and immediately before the menace of war with Russia over the Penjdeh incident on the Afghan frontier. Mr. Gladstone had taken office four years before, having been elected on a platform in which the naval coercion of the Turks occupied a conspicuous place.

My attention had been called to the extent to which the British Navy had been allowed to fall below par, and at the urgent instance of Mr. Arnold-Forster I began the investigation which resulted in the publication of "The Truth About the Navy," from which the rebuilding of the Fleet may be said to date.

In the course of my inquiries I had an opportunity of interviewing Sir Cooper Key, the First, and Lord Alcester, the Second of the Sea Lords who were responsible for the efficiency of the Fleet. I found both these highly-placed admirals in despair. They confirmed, and more than confirmed, the worst estimates which had been given me as to the comparative weakness of our first line of defence. Lord Alcester, in his blunt sailor fashion, declared that if this country were to be suddenly involved in war with France, the Fleet would be found so inadequate to defend our coasts that the inevitable

result would be that he and his colleagues would be strung up to the lamp-posts in Whitehall, and, added the old veteran, "it would serve us right." Sir Cooper Key was not less emphatic; he spoke in absolute despair. "Our Navy," he told me, "is far below what is regarded as its normal strength. Our coaling-stations are unarmed, we are short of battleships, and almost totally lacking in cruisers. We all know it here. We have made our reports. We have personally pressed the matter strongly upon the Ministry, and it is no use. Mr. Gladstone will not listen." "Give me the facts," I replied, "and I will make him listen." Sir Cooper Key smiled sadly at the confident young journalist. "How can you succeed," he said, "when we all have failed? We have approached him not only officially but personally, and it is all of no use. He turns his deaf ear to whatever is said about the Navy, and nothing can be done."

The *Pall Mall Gazette* descended upon Downing Street like a god out of the machine, and the scene changed as by magic. Mr. Gladstone was made to listen and to give way. He did so against Mr. Chamberlain's vehement protests, for in those days Mr. Chamberlain knew as little about the Navy as he now knows about political economy, and was as much opposed to being ready for war on sea as he was in 1899 to being ready for war on land. But while Cabinets never lack their ignoramuses whose optimism is based upon an indolent refusal to acquaint themselves with the facts, there is unfortunately not always a newspaper able and willing to compel them to face the facts and to do their duty.

The lesson I then learned under Mr. Gladstone comes back to me with redoubled force on reading the way in which the Unionist Cabinet prepared for the war in South Africa. Under Liberal and Conservative the same root of evil brought out the same fruit. Nor will any mere change of administrative machinery suffice to compel Prime Ministers and Secretaries of State to realise the fact that the responsibility of never allowing their policy to outstrip their armaments is at least as vital a part of Ministerial duty as the scoring off an opponent in debate, or the carrying of a General Election.

It is, however, no part of my task to suggest remedies; I content myself with the humbler function of condensing into a handy volume, cheap, accessible, and indexed, the substance of these bulky Blue Books which the Royal Commission has flung at the head of the British public, so far at least as it bears upon the one question of supreme importance: Whether the British Empire has or has not evolved anything corresponding to the grey matter of the human brain.

The Blue Books containing the Report of the Minutes of Evidence and Appendices contain 2,000 pages of closely-printed matter, and can only be obtained at an outlay of 16s. 5d. So far as the average citizen and British elector is concerned, he will probably find all that he needs to know, before making up his mind on the question, in the present volume.

W. T. STEAD.

November 10, 1903.

# HOW BRITAIN GOES TO WAR.

## CHAPTER I.

### BY WAY OF PREPARATION.

ON Friday night, June 21st, 1895, the House of Commons, by a majority of seven, carried a resolution moved by Mr. Brodrick, at the instigation of Mr. Chamberlain, for reducing Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's salary by £100. The vote was equivalent to a censure of Lord Rosebery's Administration for the failure of the War Office to keep in stock an adequate supply of cordite for small arm ammunition. Ministers tendered their resignation on June 22nd. On June 29th Lord Salisbury took over the seals of office from Lord Rosebery, and the Unionist Administration came into being. On July 13th the General Election opened. 2,369,917 votes were recorded for Liberals and Nationalists, against 2,406,898 for Conservatives and Unionists. The plurality of 36,981 votes secured a Unionist majority in the House of Commons of 152 votes over the Liberals and Nationalists combined.

The Ministry came into office as the result of a vote of censure directed against the War Office for its neglect in providing adequately for the needs of national defence. Its mandate was unmistakable. The nation with the utmost emphasis had endorsed the censure pronounced upon its predecessor and installed the new Cabinet in office in order that similar negligence might be effectively checked in future. Ministers had a free hand and *carte blanche*. They had a majority in both Houses of the Legislature. They were presided over by the Nestor of European statesmen. They were Imperialists to a man. They inherited a full exchequer, and they had no formidable opposition to face either in the House or in the country. They were pledged to maintain the efficiency of the Services, and they had unlimited resources to spend upon the Army and the Navy. Every penny they asked for was immediately voted by an obsequious majority.

The nation could not, within the limits of the Constitution, have done more than this to secure the efficiency of its Army and Navy. To turn out one Ministry for neglecting a small detail essential to the efficiency of its armaments and to instal another pledged to maintain the fighting Services at a maximum of readiness for war, this represents all that lies within the power of the electorate. With the change of Administration thus accomplished, the responsibility passed from the electors to the Ministers whom they had installed in office.

The new Cabinet decided that a sum of £21,162,000 was adequate to enable them to provide for the military defence of the Empire. They asked for and obtained a further sum of £21,838,000 for the maintenance of the Navy. They had thus at their disposal for the year ending March, 1898, the total sum of £43,000,000 with which to provide for the defence of the Empire, excluding another £14,000,000 spent on the Army of India. This sum was declared to be adequate by Ministers speaking on their responsibility in Parliament, and although some critics complained that more money should be spent upon the Navy, no independent critics of note asked for an increase in the military budget. Ministers and Opposition, Parliament and Press, all accepted as common ground the fact that if £21,000,000 were placed at the disposal of the Secretary of War, he would be able to keep his arsenals full, and to provide an efficient Army completely equipped in constant readiness for war at home or abroad.

Such a conviction was not unnatural when a comparison was made between the Army of Britain and the armies of the great military Powers. France in 1898 asked for £25,000,000 for an army of 541,000 men with the colours, and to provide adequate equipment and *matériel* for 2,500,000 in case of war. Germany in the same year asked for £26,000,000, and with this maintained 500,000 men with the colours and provided equipment, etc., for 3,000,000 in case of war. Even when allowance is made for a saving of £5,000,000, that might have been effected if compulsory service had enabled us to dispense with military pay, it did not seem that the allowance of £21,000,000 to the Secretary of State for War was inadequate, considering that he had only to maintain 150,000 men in the ranks and to provide equipment in case of war for an additional 500,000 of Reserves, Militia and Volunteers.

That Ministers themselves considered the military budget amply sufficient to enable them to face the contingency of war even with the greatest of military Powers was evident from their policy. They brought the Empire to the verge of war with no fewer than five different Powers in less than three years.

The first contingency which necessitated a careful estimate of the adequacy of our military resources to supply the means of carrying on military operations against a foreign State arose out of the Armenian massacres. The Sultan defied the representations and ignored the remonstrances of Europe. Lord Salisbury proposed to Italy the execution of a policy of concerted coercion which would have involved us in war with Turkey. From this early test of the sufficiency of their military preparations Ministers were saved by the veto upon the war pronounced by Lord Rosebery, acting, it is believed, like the Austrian ambassador in the late Conclave, on a hint from Berlin as to possible European complications.

The second contingency which compelled a comparison between their fighting equipment and the possible demand that would be made upon it by actual war arose out of the Venezuelan question. President Cleveland threatened war if we refused to allow the Venezuelan frontier to be delimited by arbitration. Lord Salisbury at first refused, and was supported in his refusal by the usual bluster of an ignorant and arrogant Press. Lord Salisbury ultimately gave way, but if we had gone to war we should have had to provide for the defence of a frontier running across the continent, and to wage war on sea and land against a nation strong on the sea and practically unassailable on land. Yet not even the near approach of such a contingency suggested to Ministers that they were inadequately equipped for a life and death struggle with a nation seventy millions strong.

While the Venezuelan controversy was still at its height, the Jameson Raid, or, rather, the Kaiser's telegram concerning the failure of the Jameson Raid, seemed to bring the Empire into close danger of a war with Germany. There may or there may not have been any justification for the alarm and indignation excited in this country by the Kaiser's telegram to President Kruger. But there is no question that there was a very widespread irritation, which found vent in the movements of fleets and the equipping of flying squadrons for special service. War with Germany was in the air, and Ministers who used words of defiance and who resorted to measures of ostentatious precaution against attack, must at least have considered among themselves whether, in case their challenging policy had provoked serious response, the resources of the War Office were quite adequate to meeting in arms the military masters of Central Europe. The Kaiser, however, made no response and the peril passed.

The fourth great Power whom they menaced with war was Russia. The series of events which culminated in the occupation of Port Arthur and the subsequent seizure of Wei-Hai-Wei brought us within measurable distance of a collision with the great military empire that shares with us the dominion of Asia. We escaped war by the skin of our teeth. But here also Ministers must have cast an anxious eye at the armaments which the annual forty-three millions placed at their disposal, in case Russia had regarded their action as a *casus belli*.

The fifth great Power whom they threatened with war was the Republic of France. For nearly a whole month in the autumn of 1898, after the arrival of Captain Marchand at Fashoda, we trembled on the brink of war with our greatest rival by sea, whose near neighbourhood to our shores would have made our invasion easy and, if to our Fleet happened any misadventure, our conquest certain. Ministers professed to contemplate the possibility of an appeal to arms with the utmost complacency. On this occasion peace was secured by the evacuation of Fashoda.

The purpose of this brief retrospect is not to bring any accusations against the Government of Great Britain, but merely to point out that down to the year before the outbreak of the Boer War, so far from being wrapped in oblivious dreams of perpetual peace, they had pursued policies which had brought them within measurable range of actual war with no fewer than four Powers of the first class and one Power of great fighting capacity. They had also prosecuted a campaign of conquest in the heart of Central Africa, and they had taken an active part in naval operations on the coast of Crete. They had been, or so at least it appeared to the outsider, kept constantly on the *qui vive* by alarms of war. They must have been perpetually engaged in burnishing their armour and in replenishing their powder-horns. If there is any relation whatever between policy involving danger of war and the preparation of armaments to give effect to our will, no Ministry could possibly have been more fully acquainted with their resources or more completely prepared for every contingency than were Lord Salisbury and his colleagues, when in the autumn of 1899, after long and repeated warnings, they were summoned to employ the armed force of the British Empire in overcoming the resistance of 70,000 men and boys who, without discipline or experience in war, ventured to oppose the will of the Imperial Government in defence of their national independence.

The subsequent pages of this *brochure* set out, chiefly in the shape of textual quotation from the evidence of the highest authorities summoned before the Royal Commission, how far this expectation was fulfilled. Their perusal will be not the less instructive because it sheds a grim and lurid light over

what might have happened if, instead of having to cope with a handful of farmers, our military authorities had been suddenly summoned to give battle in a life and death struggle with any of the great military empires of our time.

From 1895, when they took office, down to 1899, when they went to war with the Dutch Republics of South Africa, Ministers may be said to have been in a constant state of preparation for hostilities. To have been on the verge of war with five great Powers in three years was assuredly a record in the history of British Ministries. To have been ready to appeal to the dread arbitrament of war in disputes with Turkey, Germany, the United States, Russia and France, argued a robust confidence in their ability to make war on a great scale. It was therefore not to be dreamed of that, if a quarrel arose with the smallest republics in the world—excepting that of San Marino—the War Office, which had confidently undertaken prospective wars with the greatest of military empires, would have had the slightest difficulty in settling the matter in its stride.

The Dutch Republics of South Africa, according to Lord Kitchener's mature judgment after the war was over, were never able to put into the field all told more than 70,000 men and boys of their own people, although he thinks that in the course of the war they were joined by some 25,000 others from beyond their frontiers (Appendix volume, p. 445).

These 70,000 men and boys were destitute of military training, and although many of them were inured to the hardships of a frontiersman's life, they were strange to the yoke of discipline. To our trained legions they could only oppose a *levy en masse* of the whole male population, armed in hot haste at the last moment with weapons to which they were unaccustomed, and led by generals whose natural genius for war had never been perfected by the training of a military college. The ignorance of these untaught Boers was a byword in the mouths of our citizens,\* and the fanatical superstition which led them to ascribe a visitation of locusts to the displeasure of the Almighty was an endless cause of cachinnation among those whose laughter is as the crackling of thorns under the pot.

If as a military adversary they appeared to be contemptible, they were even more helpless in fields in which other foes would have been formidable antagonists. The Boer Republics were powerless on the Stock Exchange. They were without an ally, and they had not even a fishing smack on the seas with which to threaten the supremacy of the first of naval Powers. The fact that they were shut out from the sea freed us from the first and most harassing of all the perils which have to be faced when military expeditions are dispatched to distant lands. Our communications were absolutely safe. The war was strictly localised.

After the first few months of war it was as impossible for the Boers to import the necessaries of life from beyond their frontier as it was for the Parisians to break the blockade which the Germans had established round their capital. During the whole period of the war we were at peace with Europe and America. We were able to prosecute the work of conquest without dread of intervention. All the incalculable adverse chances which would have had to be faced, if we had been dealing with any of the great Powers whom we had been threatening with war, were swept from the board, when the only task before us was to crush out the national existence of a handful of Boers in a theatre of war from which they could not escape and into which

\* Lord Wolseley, speaking at the Authors' Club on November 4th, 1899, said:—"Of all the ignorant people in the world that I have ever been brought in contact with, I will back the Boers of South Africa as the most ignorant."

they could import no supplies, while we were as free to pour in reinforcements and munitions of war as if the campaign were being fought out in Yorkshire.

If, therefore, a beneficent Providence had been disposed to put the British Empire to a test, it might have objected to the selection of the Boer Republics for that purpose on the ground that the task was too absurdly easy. "Give us something more difficult," would have been the reply of the Briton. It was as if a Senior Wrangler were being tested by being set to do a sum in rule of three.

Not only were our antagonists numerically insignificant, but a campaign in their territory was free from most of the disadvantages which confront invading armies. The climate was healthy, the country commodious for campaigning, and the supply of victuals abundant. If we had been compelled to send an expedition to Manchuria, our commanders would have been confronted by a thousand difficulties unknown to our armies in South Africa. The theatre of war was familiar to our military authorities for nearly two generations. We fought over the Orange Free State more than half a century since. We annexed the Transvaal and ruled it as our own possession only twenty years ago. Our then Commander-in-Chief, Lord Wolseley, had reigned as a military satrap in Pretoria. His chief military advisers, Sir Redvers Buller and Sir Evelyn Wood, had won their laurels in South African campaigns. It may safely be said that excepting in the valleys round Aldershot, it would have been difficult to find any place on the world's surface where a British army ought to have felt itself so thoroughly at home, so familiar with every highway and byway, as on the illimitable veldt where the war was to be waged.

Not only was the country familiar to our soldiers, the contingency of a campaign within its borders had been constantly before the eyes of the authorities. For at least three years, officers of the Intelligence Department had traversed the Republics, and had drawn up secret suggestions for the further effective prosecution of what they regarded as the inevitable war. They had kept count of every rifle imported into the country, and of every piece of artillery that crossed the frontier. They knew how many cartridges were in the Boer arsenals. They discussed confidentially alternative routes of invasion and calculated the chances of the Boer resistance.

In short, it may safely be said that in no war that has been waged in the memory of living man had any Government such ample opportunities and such enormous odds in its favour as those enjoyed by Lord Salisbury's Administration in its campaign against the Boer Republics. There was long notice, to begin with. Time, three years of time, was given to the authorities to think out all the problems of the campaign, to prepare against every conceivable contingency, to provide against every possible demand, upon their resources. They had the inexhaustible markets not only of the Empire but of the whole world to draw upon.

They had a War Office inured to alarms, practised in preparing for wars with great Empires, under the command of a general familiar with the conditions of African war. Behind the War Office was the Cabinet, representing a coalition so potent as to make it absolutely supreme in both Houses of Parliament. The Queen, nearing the close of her glorious reign, was unable to offer any effective protest against whatever policy they might choose to pursue. The Opposition, distracted by divisions, was impotent. No autocrat was more free to dispose of all the resources of the Empire in preparing the means for giving effect to his policy than was the Cabinet of Lord Salisbury.

The Duke of Devonshire spoke the simple truth when he said that the

Unionist Government had not been placed in office "to carry any particular measure, but to devote their best energies to what they considered to be at this time the first and most pressing duty of any Government or any Parliament—that was to say, the careful administration of all the Great Departments of the State, and the wise and economic administration of the great resources of the country." According to their own account, they lost no time in putting the fighting services in fighting trim. In 1896 Mr. Balfour assured his constituents that "there never was a moment, I believe, in the recent history of this country when the British Empire was a better fighting machine than it is at the present time."

We shall now see what use it made of opportunities so unparalleled, and what kind of a fighting machine the British Empire proved to be in 1899.

CHAPTER II.

ON OUR PREPARATIONS FOR WAR IN GENERAL.

BEFORE examining the method in which Britain went to war in South Africa, it may be well as a preliminary exercise to see what preparations for war were made by the Government without special reference to the trouble with the Boers. Lord Wolseley was Commander-in-Chief from 1895 to 1900. He is therefore a witness of unimpeachable authority, and his evidence before the Royal Commission is clear and emphatic. The impression which it leaves upon the mind is that Lord Wolseley never was able to rise above his original conviction that three Army Corps of regular troops, properly equipped, were all that was necessary to enable Britain to wage war against any of her prospective foes. Three Army Corps, as the result proved, were inadequate to subdue the Boers. They could hardly be regarded as ample provision to resist, let us say, an attack by the French, who could mobilise a trained army of 2,500,000 men. But Lord Wolseley, as his evidence proves, stuck to his three Army Corps of regular troops adequately equipped—and did not succeed in getting it! This is the more remarkable because during the time when he was making unavailing representations to the Salisbury Cabinet as to the urgent need for this maximum of armed forces, the Foreign and Colonial Secretaries of State were indulging in spirited policies which at any moment might have called for the exertion of the whole military and naval strength of the Empire. Not even “the near thing” of Fashoda seemed to have added the least weight to the despairing representations of the Commander-in-Chief.

Lord Wolseley's evidence, which was taken on November 27–28th, 1902, occupies thirty-three pages of the first volume of the Minutes of Evidence. The passages relating to the South African War will be found in a subsequent chapter. I extract here only those passages in which Lord Wolseley describes his attempt to deal with the general problem of making the military forces of the Empire ready for war. The numbers of each question are quoted for convenience of verification and reference to context, but, as will be seen, the quotations do not always follow the original sequence of his examination.

EXTRACTS FROM THE EVIDENCE OF  
LORD WOLSELEY.

8703. Amongst the papers I referred to, before coming here to-day, I specially mentioned one I wrote on the 8th June, 1888 (*vide Appendix to Report Volume, page 217*), in which I pointed out what was, I thought, a very curious fact regarding a nation like ours, and that is so often at war in different parts of the world. It was, that we had

never formulated to ourselves as a Power, as a people, or as a Government—we had never put on paper to be transmitted from one Government to another what were the objects for which our Army was created and maintained. In that paper, I say this at the beginning, and go on to say: “As it has never been done I will do it for you.” I accordingly put down under five heads what I conceived to be the objects for which the Army was maintained. That paper was

very seriously considered, I know, by the Government, for I pointed out that the standing Army was then too small to fulfil those objects.

THE STANHOPE STANDARD.

8704. My enunciation of the objects for which the Army was maintained was practically accepted by the Government in a paper I received from Mr. Stanhope, then the Secretary of State for War. In this official answer, as I may call it—he recognised that we were always to be able, as one of the duties for which the Army existed, to put into the field at home three Army Corps for the defence of this country. That was the number of Army Corps I had specified, but I said they should be composed of Regular troops: whereas Mr. Stanhope . . . laid it down that the third was to be partly composed of Regulars and partly of Militia.

The following is the official text of the definition of what England expects her army to accomplish. It is extracted from Secretary of State's Minute, addressed to His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief, dated 8th December, 1888.

Her Majesty's Government have carefully considered the question of the general objects for which our Army is maintained. It has been considered in connection with the programme of the Admiralty, and with knowledge of the assistance which the Navy is capable of rendering in the various contingencies which appear to be reasonably probable; and they decide that the general basis of the requirements from our Army may be correctly laid down by stating that the objects of our military organisation are—

- (a.) The effective support of the civil power in all parts of the United Kingdom.
- (b.) To find the number of men for India, which has been fixed by arrangement with the Government of India.
- (c.) To find garrisons for all our fortresses and coaling stations, at home and abroad, according to a scale now laid down, and to maintain these garrisons at all times at the strength fixed for a peace or war footing.
- (d.) After providing for these require-

ments, to be able to mobilise rapidly for home defence two Army Corps of Regular troops, and one partly composed of Regulars and partly of Militia; and to organise the Auxiliary Forces, not allotted to Army Corps or garrisons, for the defence of London and for the defensible positions in advance, and for the defence of mercantile ports.

- (e.) Subject to the foregoing considerations, and to their financial obligations, to aim at being able, in case of necessity, to send abroad two complete Army Corps, with Cavalry Division and Line of Communication. But it will be distinctly understood that the probability of the employment of an Army Corps in the Field in any European war is sufficiently improbable to make it the primary duty of the military authorities to organise our forces efficiently for the defence of this country.

E. S.

1st June, 1891.

LORD LANSDOWNE'S ADDITION.

Lord Lansdowne in his Memorandum for the Cabinet, December 15th, 1897, says:—

2. I have always assumed that this scheme held the field, and I referred to it in the memorandum which I prepared for the Cabinet last year. The following should, however, be added to make the statement complete:—

- (f.) To be able to provide at short notice a small force for an expedition, demonstration, or temporary reinforcement without dislocating the peace organization and duties of the Home Army.
- (g.) To provide for the permanent maintenance of the force now occupying Egypt, and for the retention during some years to come of the extra force now employed in South Africa.

LORD WOLSELEY'S DEMANDS, 1896.

Extracts from Lord Wolseley's evidence (continued):—

8727. In a paper, on the 30th October, 1896, I reminded the Secretary of State that

In the minute I had written on the 22nd February, the one you have referred to, sir, I pointed out to him that the Army was not strong enough to do all that was required of it, and that to enable it to do so, certain additions were necessary. In those minutes I pressed the Government to make the Army strong enough to do the military business of the Empire; that is really what I was always trying to induce them to do. The Secretary of State, or the Cabinet rather, did not take my view of the matter, and they entered into many serious difficulties, both political and financial, and others, objecting to these additions being found. I did not question the statements, but I urged the necessity of this increase in order, as I believed, to make the Empire secure, and it was not, as I pointed out to the Secretary of State at the time, lessened by the existence of the difficulties to which he referred. In that paper, which I think you have got before you, I urged that the necessity for the increase was due to external causes, whilst the difficulties he urged as the reason for not satisfying the demands were mainly of an internal character. I illustrated my meaning by a very simple simile: "That a man may be too poor to pay for coals, and if he is, he is quite right not to order any. But the fact that he is right will not prevent his being frozen if the temperature goes too low—the coals would." That is a quotation from the paper I forwarded. (*Vide Appendix to Report Volume, page 232*, from which the following is an extract:—)

THE BRITISH ARMY AS IT IS.

Existing strength of the Army abroad:—

	India.	Coaling Stations.	Egypt, Cyprus and Natal.	Total.
Cavalry . . .	5,400	—	950	6,350
Artillery (Field, etc.)	8,900	—	340	9,240
Garrison ditto	3,670	5,700	150	9,520
Infantry . . .	52,150	19,686	3,934	75,770
Engineers . . .	—	1,700	100	1,800
	70,120	27,086	5,474	102,680

Lord Wolseley wrote:—

"This, then, is the force which we are bound to maintain abroad by conditions outside of us, over which we have no control, and from which we have no escape. This is the force which the Army actually at home must find and keep up independent of any

other requirements upon it for home defence or for a foreign expedition. So long as we are to maintain our Empire, these garrisons must be maintained intact. But our troops at home are at present unequal to maintain abroad in a satisfactory manner a force of this strength, and they are consequently in a perpetual state of exhaustion from the effort to do so.

"But how does it find these men? It finds them by a perpetual series of make-shifts, by transfers, by enlarged depôts, by bounties, by robbing Peter to pay Paul, by the denudation of the home cadres, by a succession of struggles and expedients which combine to keep it in a weak and exhausted condition, and leave it unfit to fulfil other requirements, such as the garrisons for home ports, and the Army Corps for home defence or for abroad, which are also an important part of its functions. We live from hand-to-mouth, like the insolvent debtor who meets his daily liabilities by shifts invented upon the spur of the moment, and with any money he can lay his hands on regardless of the ultimate loss he is incurring.

AND AS IT OUGHT TO BE.

"Our Army should be, and can be easily made, a smoothly and automatically working machine, capable of manufacturing for us each year all the soldiers normally required for the service of the State, both at home and abroad.

"Financial considerations have taken the first place, and the power of the Army to meet its obligations has been left to shift for itself. The result has been that we have not thoroughly attained either cheapness or efficiency.

"The Army has been discredited, the public discontented, the administrators of the Army have been blamed for a state of things they could not prevent, and all because, while Imperial needs have been recognised in the sense that we have been called upon to meet them, the means of doing this have not been given to us."

He therefore recommended that there should be added to the Army at once—

11 batteries Horse and Field Artillery . . . . .	1,500
15 companies Garrison ditto . . . . .	2,000
15 battalions Infantry . . . . .	12,500

## LORD LANSDOWNE'S REPLY.

To this Lord Lansdowne replied stating that the addition proposed would entail an immediate outlay of £2,000,000 for barracks and an increased annual cost of £1,275,000. The forces now in Egypt and in Natal, he maintained, must be regarded as temporary. After considerable discussion, Lord Lansdowne, in December, 1896, submitted to the Cabinet a proposal to increase the Garrison Artillery by 3,500 men, to add two battalions to the Guards, and one battalion each to the Cameron Highlanders, the West India Regiment and Malta Militia. This would entail an expenditure of £500,000 for barracks and an annual increase on the Army estimates of £450,000.

## WHY THE GARRISONS WERE INCREASED.

The increase of Garrison Artillery was made on the advice of the Colonial Defence Committee, which recommended the strengthening of our Colonial garrisons on three distinct grounds:—

- (i.) The increase in the naval and military forces of possible enemies, and the occupation, by foreign Powers, of points from which attacks upon our Colonies would offer fewer difficulties than before.
- (ii.) Alterations in the internal conditions of the defended ports, *e.g.*, the adoption of a new system of "fire control and position finding," and the introduction of new and additional guns, particularly the quick-firing guns now regarded as indispensable.
- (iii.) The inability of the Navy to guarantee that on a sudden outbreak of war, the necessary reinforcements shall reach our coaling stations and naval bases.

## LORD WOLSELEY'S DEMAND IN 1897.

8728. In the following year, on the 3rd November, 1897, I again pressed the Secretary of State to make the Army able to meet the demands which the country might at any time have to make upon it, and I think I may say that I was always hammering at this

one chord, and pointing out whenever I was asked, and even at times when I was not asked, that increases were necessary in order to bring up the Army to what I had laid down as the minimum, which I thought we always ought to have ready for home defence, and to enable us to send a small Army of two Army Corps abroad. I would like to call your attention to that memorandum of mine of the 3rd November, 1897, because . . .

8731. In 1897 I went further, because I pointed out in that paper of the 3rd November, that we urgently require an addition of nine Brigades of Artillery, that is 27 batteries, and 12 extra battalions of the Line. In all, the additions I demanded at that time amounted to 16,515 rank and file.

## LORD WOLSELEY'S MINUTES.

The official minutes are contained in the Appendices to the Report Volume. The following extracts will enable the reader to follow the discussion between the Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary of War.

On November 3rd, 1897, Lord Wolseley began his Minute (p. 242) as follows:—

1.—I assume it may be taken as accepted that a considerable increase to our Army is required.

4.—A common agreement lays down the main requirements on our Army to be—

First, that it should, with the help of the Auxiliary Forces, be able to protect this country against the largest invading force that France can be expected—under favouring conditions—to put across the Channel.

Secondly, that it should maintain our garrisons abroad at their necessary strength.

Thirdly, that it should, when required and without calling out the Reserves, furnish us with a small body of troops fit to be sent abroad either for a small expedition or as an emergent peace reinforcement.

5.—Taking, then, first, the defence of the country, and being anxious to keep as much as possible on lines already agreed upon, I will start on the basis that our mobile field army for home defence is to be three Army Corps; but I wish to say very distinctly, and with all the responsibility attaching to the

position of Commander-in-Chief, that these three Army Corps must be composed entirely of Regular troops, and must be complete in the requisite Artillery, Engineers, and other services. A composite corps, composed partly of Regular troops, partly of Militia deficient in Artillery, without Regular Field Engineers, and wanting in other services, is not in reality an Army Corps at all, and it is a misnomer to call it so; it is nothing but a bad makeshift and make-belief. If ever this country is invaded it will be by an army composed of picked troops, and we must not oppose picked troops with makeshifts. At least, if we do, we shall meet with disaster.

6.—Dealing first with the Infantry (the artillery is considered separately at the end of this paper), we require for three Army Corps 75 battalions. To these must be added the two battalions in the Channel Islands (which could not be withdrawn in the case of a war with France) and six more absolutely necessary for London, Dublin, and our three great Southern fortresses. The minimum number of battalions required for home defence thus totals up to 83, as follows:—

	Battalions.
For three Army Corps . . .	75
For the Channel Islands . . .	2
For the Tower, Buckingham Palace, Dublin, Dover, Ports- mouth and Plymouth, one each . . . . .	6
Total . . . . .	83

He then defined the increases necessary as follows:—

18.—In all they come to 16,515 rank and file, namely, 13,390 Infantry, and 3,125 Artillery. I consider them urgently, I may say imperatively, necessary, and I press in the strongest manner for their addition to the Army.

Lord Lansdowne (p. 244) replied, saying that the basis of three Army Corps of Regular troops had never been accepted by this or any other Government, and asking Lord Wolseley to supply reasons justifying a belief that we should be unable to resist invasion with a smaller force.

THE ARMY NEEDED TO DEFEND ENGLAND FROM INVASION.

To this Lord Wolseley (p. 245) replied:—

The minimum number of troops which it is thought the enemy would invade England with has long been taken at 150,000, and looking to the difficulties in transporting an army across even such a narrow sea, it is not thought he could bring over more in one journey. It must be remembered that in his army there will be no Militia, that all will be picked Regular troops.

The minimum force with which such an army could be met, with any fair prospect of success, would be 100,000 Regulars, completely equipped with guns and all that a modern army requires, 40,000 or 50,000 Militia, and 100,000 of our best Volunteers.

I do not think that any English General, conversant with the problem, would undertake the defence of England with any smaller force. Even with our three Army Corps of Regulars, many would feel it to be a dangerous undertaking when it is remembered that for the 140,000 Militia and Volunteers we have only obsolete guns, mostly old muzzle-loaders, which, from want of horses, can only be used as guns of position. Their shell fire and range is contemptible, and it would be cruel, if not a crime, to send these Auxiliary Forces into action with the artillery they possess at this moment.

It must be further remembered that, in order to put these three Army Corps (100,000 Regulars) in the field, Scotland and Ireland would have to be denuded of all Regular troops except Garrison Artillery and one battalion left in Dublin.

I think it will be felt that we cannot afford to explain in Parliament, or make otherwise public, that we bring the Irish Militia to England to draw the teeth of possible rebellion.

The defence of England as a military problem has been worked out, I should say, by every Colonel and General who has had anything to do with our mobilisation schemes.

As the outcome of all plans for the defence of London, it has long since been arranged that one of the three Army Corps of Regulars is to rendezvous in Essex, the other two between London and the south coast. We know where an enemy's army can and cannot be landed, etc. Defensive positions round the south and east of London have

been selected where the Volunteers and their obsolete guns are to take post. Some of these positions have works already constructed upon them, but for all, the works have been planned, and could, in accordance with the detailed drawing we have prepared, be taken in hand at any moment by either civilian or military labour.

But I assume it is not required that I should go into any further details on this point:

#### THE IRREDUCIBLE MINIMUM.

The Secretary of State wishes to know why three and not two, four, five or six Army Corps are deemed necessary for the defence of England. My answer is that to attempt the defence of London with anything below three fully-equipped Army Corps entirely of Regulars, would be to fly in the face of all military experience, and to entail upon England almost certain defeat if this country be ever invaded by an army on the scale prepared in 1804-5 by Napoleon for that purpose. It is believed by the skilled soldiers who have studied this question that to attempt to defend England with less than three fully-equipped Army Corps of regular soldiers, *i.e.*, 100,000 sabres and bayonets, would be madness. Why more than three Army Corps are not asked for is because the troops do not exist in England to form even the cadre of any more. In no other civilised country, I should say, would only three Army Corps be provided for home defence, if its coasts were as open as ours are to invasion.

From the experience of many years I can entirely endorse what his Royal Highness the late Commander-in-Chief stated in paragraph 64 of my minute of 8th June, 1888, upon the augmentation of the Army. He there said that he wished "to place on record that hitherto he has been more guided in his annual demands for men by what he thought he had some chance of getting, than by what he knew to be the total requirements of the country."

I confess that this feeling strongly influences me at this moment when I propose to resist invasion and defend London with an army in which the Regular troops are to consist only of three Army Corps (100,000 sabres and bayonets, with 450 guns).

I take into consideration most fully all that our superior Navy can do to protect us

from invasion in my calculations. I do not think it is necessary to go into professional details on this point. I content myself with remarking that both Napoleon and Wellington, Nelson and Collingwood believed in the possibility, I might say feasibility, of invasion. If I err in believing in the danger, I err in skilled company.

To this Minute Sir C. Grove appended a report on the Mobilisation Scheme, which showed—

That the demand for a field army of three Army Corps of Regular troops, in case of invasion, is not an accidental or unthought-out proposal, but is the outcome of many years' careful study of strategical conditions, much of it conducted by our highest military authorities. And that it represents, in their opinion, the absolute minimum with which the ground that has to be occupied can be covered.

#### THE ARMY INCREASED IN 1898.

Lord Lansdowne submitted to the Cabinet a Memorandum, the result of which was that he got, in 1898, six extra battalions, an addition of 80 men per battalion, 15 batteries of artillery, and three howitzer batteries, entailing an annual addition of £635,000 to the Army Estimates, which, in the year 1898-9, were £1,500,000 higher than those of 1896-7.

Nevertheless, Lord Wolseley was not satisfied.

In Lord Wolseley's minute of the 7th January, 1899, he says: "I must here repeat what I said in the minute of 3rd November, 1897, on the state of the Army, that it is not strong enough in infantry or field artillery to fulfil the objects for which it is intended"; that is after the additions to which you have spoken?—To this Lord Lansdowne replied (21320), "I am afraid you will always find that the soldiers will ask for more, whatever they get, but at the time when that large increase was obtained I remember very distinctly that Lord Wolseley expressed himself extremely pleased and satisfied."

#### LORD WOLSELEY STILL DISSATISFIED.

Lord Wolseley's chief ground of complaint was our inability to feed the two Army Corps

with reinforcements when once they got into the field.

It has always been accepted since 1888 that we should be prepared to send abroad two complete Army Corps, one Cavalry Division and Line of Communication troops, whenever the Army is mobilised. It may be taken as a fact that these will be ready for embarkation sooner than the ships to convey them abroad can be prepared for that duty. By robbing the Third Army Corps of all its transport, and almost all its horse and field batteries, we should be able to put that little Army into the field well equipped in every way for war.

For the first campaign each of these battalions will require about 600 men sent to them, in three drafts of about 200 men each at intervals, say, of two months.

But to enable us even to complete the second of these drafts we should require 10,000 more Line Reservists than we now possess.

LORD LANSDOWNE'S "MORAL."

To this Lord Lansdowne's significant reply was that—

As to the supply of the drafts which will be necessary for the two Army Corps, I am under the impression that we are in a better position to supply them than we have ever been, but I do not desire to under-rate our difficulties. The moral to be drawn from them is that we shall have to think twice before we send so large a force out of the country. It seems to me very improbable that we shall do so at the outbreak of hostilities, or so long as there is any apprehension of danger at home. If I am right, we should have time to raise and train more men, who would become available for drafts at a later stage of the war, when perhaps it might be necessary for us to assert ourselves beyond the limits of these islands.

THE SUMMONS TO THE MILITIA, 1899.

When we were on the verge of war with the Boers on September 30th, 1899, Lord Wolseley sent the following minute to Lord Lansdowne :—

1. When the troops now under orders have embarked, we shall have at home only 38½ battalions of Foot Guards and the Line, and 36 batteries of Horse and Field Artillery, all being only 4-gun batteries on the low peace establishment.

2. The political horizon in Europe may be clear at present; but, as in 1870, it may cloud over suddenly without any warning. I wish, therefore, to call your attention, and that of the Cabinet generally, to what I believe will soon be the dangerous weakness of our military position in England, unless the steps prescribed by our Army system be now followed.

5.—The following are the measures which I regard as that indispensable minimum, viz. :—

- (a) To call out a Militia battalion of each territorial regiment which has one or more Line battalions in South Africa. These number 37, but, owing to the limited barrack accommodation available, it might be safer at first only to call out 36 Militia battalions.
- (b) To raise seven regiments of cavalry at home to the higher peace establishment.
- (c) To raise to the higher peace establishment the 19 batteries of Horse and Field Artillery required for one Cavalry Division and one Army Corps.

Lord Lansdowne replied :—

I would certainly replace the absent battalions of Regular Infantry by embodying Militia, and I do not think the Commander-in-Chief's demand, which it will be seen falls very far short of the recommendations of the Committee, is at all unreasonable. I would comply with it, or, at the very least, embody one Militia battalion in each of 33 territorial regiments, selecting for this purpose all regiments of which both battalions will now be out of the country. I would attach to each of these battalions the officers and men left behind by the Line battalions employed in South Africa. The addition of these men to the Militia battalion would enable us to dispense with the services of a certain number of Militiamen, and to give leave to those whom it might, for sufficient reasons, be desirable to excuse.

The Cabinet accepted in principle the proposal to embody the Militia, but only sanctioned £500,000 of the million which it would cost.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CABINET.

Extract from Lord Wolseley's evidence (continued).

8793. Up to the 22nd of September, 1899,

there were many occasions on which demands were put forward, from you and other heads of departments, for supplies that you considered were absolutely necessary for the equipment of any force, if you had to send out a force without delay, and that you could not get authority for them?—That was so. It will be quite understood, of course, that those decisions were not the decisions of an individual. They were the decisions of the Cabinet. That, I think, is an important thing to remember. It was not the fault of any particular Minister or any particular man; they were the deliberate decisions of the rulers of England.

#### INSUFFICIENCY OF STORES.

8704. I have classed the notes I have made under two heads. First, the insufficiency of the establishment of our standing Army to fulfil the objects for which it was maintained; and secondly, the inadequacy of our reserves of military stores of all sorts and of war material generally. I would impress upon the Commission a point which, I think, is not generally known, not even thoroughly understood by ourselves—I mean the impossibility of getting the different articles which go to make up war material manufactured quickly in England. We were sorely in want of guns, ammunition, carts, wagons, tents, clothing, boots, shoes, saddles, and fifty different articles that I might easily mention. Every manufacturer of these articles in England was working in full blast for us and still they could not keep us supplied with all we wanted. But the foreign markets were positively closed to us because we were at war with the Boers; at least, it was because we were at war, and I assume it was because we were at war with the Boers. This very important fact I would like to impress upon the minds of those who constitute this Royal Commission, for it proves the absolute necessity of having always in England all the military stores required for the mobilisation of whatever force the country decides to have always at its hand ready to send into the field. We must not depend upon outside countries for help in this matter.

#### OUR OBSOLETE GUNS.

8812. Whilst this war was going on in South Africa, if we had had anything like serious trouble from abroad, and we had mobilised our Army at home for service, we

scarcely had any guns in England, a very small proportion of regular guns, and the whole of our Volunteers and Militia and Yeomanry remaining at home would have had guns of such an obsolete pattern that it would have been almost dangerous and criminal to ask men to stand up to them in the face of modern artillery, although that was a point which had been urged on the Government by myself over and over again long before the war. I do not know whether that is an incidental point that you would like to take notice of, but it is a very important one in an inquiry into the condition of our military establishments in England for fitness for war.

8813. We had no modern guns of any sort, kind, or description. Whether we have any now, I do not know—I doubt it.

9004. There is some discrepancy in these memoranda?—As regards the armament?

9005. Yes; a difference of opinion between yourself and the Secretary of State?—As regards the guns for the Militia and Volunteers—they are a disgrace.

9009. With regard to those Militia guns, for instance?—But they are Noah's Ark guns. They are things of a past generation.

#### OUR RESERVES OF STORES.

8945. I would emphasise the national risk and the danger to our country that is entailed upon us by the insufficiency of our home establishments of Regular troops as laid down in 1888, and the great paucity, the great lack of our reserves of stores—various military stores, such as vehicles, harness, saddlery, clothing, accoutrements, guns, and even ammunition. As to supply all those things would mean a very considerable outlay, every Government that I have ever known in England has always shrunk from it. They give you a little addition every year, but very small, and the result is that we were found in 1899 without those supplies we required for the mobilisation of the Army, and we had great difficulty in obtaining those supplies at the time. Now at the present moment, as I understand, in the present condition of things in England, our magazines are full, we have plenty of military stores, and plenty of military supplies of various sorts, but if the past is to be an indication of what we may expect will be done in the future, you will find that in another five or ten years we shall have a very different condition of things. The tempta-



*Photo by*

MAJ.-GENERAL SIR JOHN ARDAGH.

*[Russell.*

*[face p. 32.*



tion is so great from the political point of view that when it comes to the time every year for the Secretary of State for War to send in to the Cabinet, or to submit to the Cabinet, a note of the money he requires to maintain these magazines up to the very full point for war, at which I assume they are at the present moment, he is very apt to be driven to fall back upon his reserves. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, I suppose, brings great pressure to bear on the War Minister, and he is very liable to say, "Oh, you can get heaps of cloth in the market, and you can buy powder to any extent you like here and there," and so on, and the result is that we do live upon our capital after every war I have ever known anything about. If we go on in the future doing that you will find, if another serious war overtakes us this day five years, or this day ten years, we shall have the same thing over and over again.

LORD WOLSELEY'S SPECIFIC.

8946. I am afraid that involves a reformation of human nature?—Not unless our human nature is different from the human nature of all other nations in the world. There is no other nation I have ever heard of that presumes to call itself an independent and strong Power, which adopts that course.

8948. How are you going to strengthen human nature against the temptation?—If you will allow me to say so, I am quite prepared for that as well. I think that human nature is human nature, and when it is mixed up with politics it becomes—I will not say more human, but perhaps more difficult to deal with upon the point of military preparations for war in time of peace. I believe it to be quite possible to make

certain that we are at all times ready to mobilise at home three complete Army Corps, and to embark two of them for foreign service as soon as ships can be provided to receive them. Make the Commander-in-Chief, as long as he is, as at the present moment, a non-political man, submit to Parliament every year over his own signature a certificate to say that he, on his own responsibility, certifies to the country that those three Army Corps are absolutely complete in every store that is requisite in order to mobilise them at the shortest possible notice, and the same thing as regards the two Army Corps being ready for active service abroad.

8968. The great thing would be for the Commander-in-Chief to assure the English people, and that the English people should know, that the force they paid for was prepared and in a condition to go into the field on the shortest possible notice with all its supplies, stores and everything it required.

8954. What I complain of is that the English people are never taken into the confidence of the Government, as far as the condition of the Army is concerned—they are only told part of the truth, and the result is that when war is forced upon us we find ourselves with an insufficient amount of reserves of all sorts and kinds.

8955. When war is declared, and the English people find that money has to be provided, you think there is never any hesitation in providing it?—It is too late then.

8956. But, so far as the feeling of the British people goes, when it comes to that stage you do not find any hesitation on the part of the people in providing the necessary funds?—Never, and I do not think there would be the slightest hesitation in the English people supplying the money annually to keep up that condition of things.

With this closes the reference in the Royal Commission to preparations which were actually made to place the forces of the Empire on a footing commensurate to the demands which might be made upon them from any part of the world where our interests may be threatened.

The general criticism that will probably be made upon all the representations of Lord Wolseley and all the schemes of Lord Lansdowne, is that they seem hopelessly inadequate in the light of the demand which even a little war like this waged with the Boers may make upon our resources in men and munitions of war. The whole scheme of three Army Corps seems a hopeless anachronism as a means of maintaining our position as a great Power among the military empires of the world when it is remembered that in order to overcome 75,000 Boers we had to put under arms in South Africa no fewer than 448,000 men.

## CHAPTER III.

## ON OUR PREPARATIONS FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR, 1895-7.

THE war against the South African Republics may be divided into two parts. There was, first, the unofficial war waged by the Party of the Raid. This campaign was elaborated in the autumn of 1896 by Mr. Rhodes in Africa, with the cognisance and support of Mr. Chamberlain in London. The impatience of the latter in first insisting upon the conspirators hoisting the Union Jack and then goading Dr. Jameson into premature action by the "hurry up" telegrams, sent from the Colonial Office through Miss Flora Shaw and Mr. Maguire, brought the military stage of the unofficial war to a disastrous and ignominious end. But not for one single moment, not even when Dr. Jameson was awaiting his trial in London, did the conspirators abandon their active though secret campaign against the Transvaal. But for the resistance offered by Lord Rosmead and by Mr. Garrett, they would have succeeded in launching Mr. Chamberlain upon an official campaign against the Boers within less than twelve months of the surrender of Krugersdorp. They counted confidently upon their ability to secure the support of Mr. Chamberlain whenever the time came for the renewal of the Raid under the direct auspices of the British Crown. Their capacity to control Mr. Chamberlain was doubted by the Boers until the fiasco of the Hush Up Committee and the subsequent certificate of honour tendered to Mr. Rhodes by the Colonial Secretary in the House of Commons convinced Mr. Kruger that the Party of the Raid held Mr. Chamberlain in the hollow of its hand. From that moment the Boers never wavered in their conviction that war was inevitable. They pressed on their armaments, avowedly in order to defend their country against a new and, this time, an Imperial Raid. "What has happened will take place again," said Mr. Kruger to Mr. J. B. Robinson. "What is to prevent Mr. Rhodes and his coadjutors from again engineering some diabolical attempt against the independence of my country?"

The conviction that war was inevitable was accepted quite as readily by our military authorities. In "the statement of the Mobilisation Division," handed in to the Royal Commission by Lieut.-Gen. Sir W. G. Nicholson, headed "Action taken by the Mobilisation Subdivision to prepare for war in South Africa," the very first paragraph runs thus:—

"Ever since the Jameson Raid—*i.e.*, from the beginning of 1895—a war with the South African Republics had been looked upon in the Mobilisation Subdivision as something more than a possibility."—Appendix Vol. p. 17.

The "more than a possibility" must mean a probability or a certainty. A probability so strong as to approach to a certainty would probably be the correct version of the estimate prevailing in the Intelligence Department of the Army as to the chance of a renewal of the attack upon the Transvaal.

The Mobilisation Department, through its Intelligence Officers, set to work to calculate contingencies so as to form an estimate of the forces with which they

would have to deal. They compiled a secret handbook entitled "Military Notes," and issued it to the Army in April, 1898. In this they set forth frankly the advantages and disadvantages of different lines of advance through the Orange Free State; they reported upon the communications in Natal north of Ladysmith. They calculated to a nicety the millions of cartridges in the Boer arsenal, they over-estimated by a dozen the number of the Boer artillery, and they somewhat over-estimated the number of men the Boers could put into the field at the beginning of the war, although they under-estimated the number who subsequently rallied to the cause of the Republics when it became evident that their independent existence was in danger. All this information was collected and circulated in the avowed belief that war was inevitable. The conviction was naturally strengthened by their knowledge of the fact that President Kruger's respectful demand that the dispute should be referred to arbitration (May 7th, 1897) had been roughly rejected by Mr. Chamberlain, who had taken occasion to revive the phantom of British suzerainty which had been abandoned sixteen years before.

It is unnecessary to go in much detail into these earlier episodes of the unofficial war which led up to the war upon which the Royal Commission has just reported. Suffice it to say, that before the unofficial war began at the end of 1895, the paramountcy of Great Britain was maintained throughout Southern Africa by a force of 3,699 men. As the immediate result of the state of alarm occasioned by the Raid, "many steps of more or less importance had been taken with a view to placing the British garrison of South Africa in a more efficient position for taking the field if required."—Appendix Volume p. 17. Among other things, the number of British troops had been raised from 3,699, the ante-Raid figure, to 10,289, at which it stood on June 1st, 1899.

22189. (*Sir George Taubman Goldie.*) It might be as well to have on the notes the exact figures which I have got here. On the 1st December, 1896, there were 5,409 men in South Africa; on the 1st June, 1897, there were 8,154; on the 1st December, 1897, there were 9,593; on the 1st June, 1898, there were 9,036; on the 1st December, 1898, there were 8,456; on the 1st June, 1899, there were 10,289; and on the 1st October there were 22,104.

The story of the action taken by the military authorities to prepare for the contingency of war is best told in the words of Lord Wolseley, who was Commander-in-Chief during the whole of this preliminary period.

Extracts from Lord Wolseley's evidence, November 27th:—

THE WORK OF THE INTELLIGENCE  
DEPARTMENT.

8701. During, I think, a part of 1898, and certainly in 1899, we had in South Africa a number of officers, selected by myself and the staff about me, I think ten or twelve

clever, intelligent men, whom we sent there without any ostensible orders. They travelled throughout the country, and it was from them that we very largely obtained our best information with regard to the condition of things and the preparations that were being made for war. From them we obtained, I think I may say, very reliable information as to the extent to which the Boers, Mr. Kruger especially, had laid in preparations for the war in the shape of guns and warlike *matériel* of various sorts—ammunition and so on. They also obtained for us a very fair estimate of what the Boer strength was. To put it in round numbers as reported on several occasions, taking the sort of average and mean, I think it might be put down as 54,000 mounted Boers.

8703. We were preparing for a war, as far as we were allowed to do so, with a people who would turn out 54,000 men in the field, very well provided with ammunition and with a certain amount of very good modern guns.

LORD WOLSELEY'S WARNING.

8714. This question of a war with the Boer Power was always a factor in my mind.

I would like to go back as far as 1896, for I pointed out as early as then that we ought to take precautions, and to take certain measures to prepare ourselves for eventualities. In a paper I wrote then, called "The Strategical Importance of the Cape," for the Secretary of State, dated 14th February, 1896, together with a paper on the increase required for the Army, I wrote as follows: "In considering the future distribution of our small Army, it is, I think, very desirable we should reconsider our military position in South Africa, and especially as to the extent it has been, or soon may be, affected by political events." That is a quotation; and further on in that paper I said—another quotation: "I would recommend adding to the troops in South Africa, including the battalion recommended by the Colonial Defence Committee, the following: One regiment of Cavalry, one battery of Horse Artillery, and two battalions of Foot." That was as early as 1896, and I pointed out that if this was done the Cavalry regiment and the battery of Royal Artillery should be stationed in Natal.

8716. I said: "To anyone who knows South Africa well it must be evident that the present state of things," (this is in the same paper), "the existing distribution of power in South Africa cannot long continue. To give any future redistribution of it an English character we should be strong there. At present, and, indeed, ever since we pulled down our flag after our defeat at Majuba, the Afriander has believed the Boer Power to be superior to ours, and Dr. Jameson's recent surrender and the policy it has forced upon us, will inevitably tend to strengthen this belief."

#### HIS DEMAND FOR REINFORCEMENTS.

8720. At the time you wrote this in 1896, you thought this addition would have made the position in South Africa a safe one, as regards the Boers?—No, surely not. I could not think we should fight the Boer Power with a weak brigade of cavalry, a brigade of infantry, and two batteries of artillery, but it would be a very good advance guard to hold your advanced position until you could send reinforcements to it. I also said in my paper: "The presence of this cavalry brigade, etc., in Natal would have a steady effect upon the Boers, and joined to a strong brigade of infantry from Cape Town, and the battalion now at Maritzburg, would

always enable us, in case of need, to take up a strong forward position, either near Ladysmith in Natal, or on the Transvaal territory beyond Newcastle, on what is locally known as the Berg, or at Harrismith in the Orange Free State." Those were two strong little positions for such a force.

8727. Then five months afterwards, again in 1896, I addressed the Secretary of State on the subject of increasing the Natal garrison, and I pointed out that in order to have a full brigade of cavalry and a brigade of foot to occupy the position known as the Biggarsberg, we still required a regiment of cavalry, a battery of horse artillery, and two battalions of foot.

Extracts from Lord Lansdowne's evidence:—

21289. The garrison of South Africa was increased by one regiment of cavalry and three batteries of artillery instead of one battery of artillery, as proposed by Lord Wolseley, and by four battalions of infantry, instead of two battalions of infantry, as proposed by Lord Wolseley.

#### MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S DEMAND.

21295. The force which was at first applied for by the Secretary of State for the Colonies would have consisted of three regiments of cavalry and two batteries of artillery, and the estimated cost would have been £500,000; your letter argued for a reduction to the amounts I have previously stated, viz., £200,000.

21296. (*Sir George Taubman Goldie.*) After consultation with your colleagues?—Yes, the thing came before the Cabinet, and was discussed with that result.

21297. (*Chairman.*) With the outcome that it was reduced from what had been proposed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the amounts which were actually sent?—Yes.

21298. (*Viscount Esher.*) On what do you suppose the Secretary of State for the Colonies based that demand which the Chairman has just read out for a specific number of troops?—It is very hard for me to say, but the question, as I said just now, came before the Cabinet, and the decision of the Cabinet, for which the whole Cabinet is responsible, was that the smaller force should be sent.

21299. (*Chairman.*) Looking back on the correspondence, I think, from the previous

letter, on the 5th April, it is quite clear that Mr. Chamberlain's observations were based on the Intelligence Division's papers, and on the perusal of General Goodenough's despatch of the 13th December, 1896?—No doubt.

#### THE RESULT OF THE JAMESON RAID.

The activity of the Intelligence Department began the year after the Jameson Raid. As General Sir John Ardagh said in his evidence :—

5097. The Jameson Raid altered the circumstances very much. It increased the open antagonism between the Transvaal Government and the British Government. Before the Jameson Raid the tension was between the Uitlanders and the Transvaal Government ; but it became a national matter after the Jameson Raid.

Extracts from Sir John Ardagh's evidence, October 31st, 1902 :—

5022. I took over the Intelligence Department a few months after the Jameson Raid, so that a good deal of attention was directed at that moment on the condition of feeling existing in the Transvaal, and particularly in Johannesburg. Of course the differences of opinion between the Uitlanders and President Kruger's Government had been going on and increasing and ripening for a good many years, but they came to a head at that time in consequence of the Jameson Raid and the Johannesburg Revolution, and it became evident to a good many people that there must be a struggle sooner or later. I thought and hoped myself in 1896, that if the actual outbreak of the struggle was procrastinated, the necessity for it might die away altogether, because at that time the mines were increasing in their production by leaps and bounds, and as the mines increased, the Uitlander element, and particularly the British-speaking element, went on also increasing.

#### SIR JOHN ARDAGH'S HOPE FOR PEACE.

I should say that in 1896 there were probably 100,000 white Uitlanders in the Transvaal, and if the mines were to go on at the same rate, that 100,000 would go on constantly increasing ; and I hoped that a time might arrive when the Uitlander element would be so enormously powerful in the

country, and so overwhelmingly superior to the Boers in numbers and in organisation and intelligence, that the revolution would be a tranquil one. I expressed that view several times to my superiors in the War Office in the course of 1896, but I still urged that we ought to prepare for what possibly might happen any day, which was that the Boers having become so powerful, and having armed themselves, and having the great support which the creation of the Bond in Cape Colony had given them, might make up their minds that they were strong enough to face the British and force us into war—which actually happened.

#### HOW THE QUESTION MIGHT HAVE BEEN SETTLED.

5023. But at that time, in spite of these preparations, and the whole menacing attitude of the Boers, you thought that in the immediate present there was a reasonable prospect of avoiding war?—That there was a reasonable prospect, and there was a very great prize in reach by promoting the avoidance of war as much as possible, because time was entirely in our favour, time brought a constant increase in the number of the Uitlanders, who are mainly British, and when it came to the fact that for every able-bodied Boer there were half a dozen Uitlanders, it would have been impossible to prevent the Uitlanders getting possession of the country.

5024. And that you think might have taken place without any rupture between that country and ourselves?—I think if we had been able to stave off war it is not at all unlikely that it would have happened say about this year or next year.

5025. Without our interference?—Yes.

5026. And, therefore, was the nature of your representations meant to be that everything should be avoided which could bring on a rupture from our side?—Yes, the essence of my recommendation was that we should prepare for a rupture, but that, if possible, we should avoid it.

#### FORCE NECESSARY TO DEFEND NATAL.

5032. In 1896 and 1897, looking to the situation that you have been describing, did you make representations that the garrisons ought to be increased in South Africa?—Yes.

5033. Officially?—I was in daily communication with the Commander-in-Chief, but what I said was, perhaps, not so far as the Commander-in-Chief was willing to go. The Commander-in-Chief would, I believe, have recommended much more comprehensive military steps being taken.

5034. Then the Commander-in-Chief would have had more comprehensive preparations?—Yes.

5035. Were they for defence only or to prepare for the attack which you considered the best policy?—To prepare for the attack.

5036. But for defence alone did you form any estimate at that time of what addition ought to be made to the garrisons?—I think the only figures that I mentioned were 20,000 men.

5037. Would that have been sufficient to defend Natal?—I think it would.

#### WAS THE GOVERNMENT WARNED?

5045. I quite understand what you say, that a good many of your communications were made personally, both to the Commander-in-Chief and to the Secretary of State; but to sum up the matter, you did in your official position as Director of Military Intelligence bring officially before both the Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary of State your views on all these points that you have just mentioned to us?—Yes, I wrote at considerable length in 1896 on the point, and, I think, pretty exhaustively.

5046. And I think we had it in the statement from the Intelligence Division that the Secretary of State for the Colonies having had reports communicated to him, expressed his acknowledgments of their value on two occasions in 1897?—Yes, the Intelligence Department was in very constant communication with the Colonial Office. In fact, it always is, but at that time more so than usual.

5047. So that the Government, so far as your responsibility is concerned, were fully informed of the view that you took of the

position in South Africa?—I think I may say that they were quite fully informed.

#### FULL KNOWLEDGE OF BOER ARMAMENTS AND THEIR SCHEMES.

5102. As a matter of fact, from information that we received, we always knew the number of cannons, Maxims, guns, ammunition, powder, and everything else, that were being supplied to anyone that we were interested in.

5216. (*Sir John Edge.*) As a matter of fact, had you information in March or April, 1897, that the Boers were preparing for war, and would advance in three directions on or before the outbreak of war, namely, on Mafeking and Rhodesia, on Kimberley, and on the railway lines favourable for cutting Warrenton, Colesberg and Aliwal?—Yes, we used to receive very frequent information about what the Boers were proposing to do. They were singularly talkative, and they were not at all particular whom they spoke to, so that up to the last we generally had no difficulty in finding out what they really meant to do, about the invasion of Natal, for instance.

5217. Then you had no doubt, at any rate, that they intended to attack us even so far back as March, 1897?—Yes, and we had begun already making preparations at Kimberley, which was the most important place of the three.

5218. I think I am correct in saying that the intention of the Boers that was indicated to you early in 1897 was subsequently carried out?—Yes.

#### DID LORD LANSDOWNE READ THE REPORTS?

From Lord Lansdowne's evidence there appear to be some doubts whether the Secretary of State for War ever read Sir John Ardagh's warnings until just before the war.

The Royal Commission reports on this subject as follows:—

We were definitely informed by Lord Lansdowne that the papers of the Intelligence Division were never officially communicated to him as the basis of any proposals through the regular channel, *i.e.*, by order of the Commander-in-Chief. There arises therefore this somewhat extraordinary state of affairs, that the Secretary of State for War first had his attention specifically directed to important War Office papers by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to

whom they had been communicated in a sufficiently formal manner to enable him to use them officially, and to enable the Secretary of State for War to send an official reply. It is not, of course, alleged that these papers were suppressed; on the contrary, we know that a handbook was prepared from them, which was supplied to officers in South Africa, and afterwards presented to Parliament. But it is essential that the system of the future should provide, and it no doubt will provide, that the information collected by what is presumably the best means obtainable, shall be avowedly and necessarily the foundation of the plans for offence and defence proposed or adopted by the authorities responsible for that duty.—(Pp. 22-23.)

Extract from Lord Lansdowne's evidence, March 26th, 1903:—

The Commission have seen some important collections of notes on the South African Republics which were prepared by Sir John Ardagh; those collections of notes were not put officially before me by the Commander-in-Chief, but I became aware of their existence and I asked the Director-General to supply me with a copy of them.

21080. (*Viscount Esher.*) Is that a little book you are speaking of?—A little buff book.

21081. (*Chairman.*) But the little buff book was practically a summary of the more detailed papers which were written in the Intelligence Department at that time?—I am afraid we are at cross-purposes; I think the buff book you have in your mind is a later compilation which I have seen, which is of folio size.

21082. No?—The one I mean is a little duodecimo almost, or small octavo.

21083. That is the one I mean—Notes on the War.

(*Viscount Esher.*) Is that the one (*exhibiting a small book to the witness*)?—Yes.

21084. (*Chairman.*) That book is a summary of the more detailed papers which were in the Intelligence Department at that time?—Yes.

21085. You saw the detailed papers, I imagine, not only the buff book?—I may have seen some of them, but I have no recollection of any of those papers having been submitted to me formally by the Commander-in-Chief.

21086. (*Viscount Esher.*) Would it have been his duty to submit them to you?—I think so.

21087. Distinctly his duty?—His duty, and not that of the Director of Military Intelligence.

21088. (*Chairman.*) Because the papers begin—I hold them here in my hand—with 11th June, 1896, a paper written by Colonel Altham and another longer paper written by Sir John Ardagh in October of that year; you do not think you had those papers before you in 1896?—I do not think so; I may have seen some of them.

21089. (*Viscount Esher.*) Would there not be a note on the papers themselves if they had been to you?—Probably, but the Commission, of course, has ample opportunity of calling for the papers.

WHEN DID LORD LANSDOWNE OPEN HIS EYES?

21090. (*Chairman.*) It bears on the point at what time your attention was drawn to the possibilities of an outbreak of the war?—Yes, but I will not labour that point, because I fully admit that during the summer of 1899 and before that little book came into my hands I was aware that there was a possibility of war and that I had often discussed it both with the Commander-in-Chief and with the Director of Military Intelligence.

21091. In 1899?—In 1899.

21092. But not earlier than that?—It is very difficult for me to tell you to-day the precise moment at which I became aware that there was a possibility of hostilities. It was a matter of common notoriety before 1899 that the Boers were difficult to deal with politically, and that they were making preparations.

21093. The paper I allude to of Sir John Ardagh's, in October, 1896, is a long and able paper dealing with the whole subject historically, and showing the preparations which the Boers were making, and it contains near the end the following sentence: "For the immediate present there seems to be a reasonable prospect of tranquillity, in spite of warlike preparations, menacing

language, and oppressive legislation," and the whole tenour of the paper was that we ought to have been making preparations also, or at any rate have the preparations of the Boers in our mind; do you think you did not see that paper in 1896?—I doubt whether I saw it in 1896; I am afraid I cannot now tell you the exact moment when I first saw it, but the Commission has no doubt been informed that we did in fact add to the strength of the garrison of South Africa before 1899.

DID LORD WOLSELEY NOT SEND ON THE REPORTS?

21094. (*Viscount Esher.*) Must there not be something radically wrong with a system under which a paper of that degree of importance does not automatically go to the Secretary of State? In no other Department would a paper of such importance not go to the head of the Department as far as I know?—The question I think would be whether the paper was one which the Commander-in-Chief thought it his duty to lay before His Majesty's Government.

21095. Do you not think that was a very wide discretion to leave to the Commander-in-Chief?—I do not think so; he might receive advice that he did not think worth passing on.

21096. (*Chairman.*) I do not want to press you, Lord Lansdowne, as to the actual fact of when you saw those papers, but I just want to get quite clear before the Commission whether you did see them anything approaching to the time at which they were written. There is another paper, therefore, to which I want to refer, written in the Intelligence Department by Colonel Altham, in September, 1898, which is headed "Frontier Defence in South Africa in a War against the Dutch Republic." Have you any recollection of that paper?—I have a recollection of it because I have had it amongst my papers, and have looked at it lately, but I am afraid I cannot tell you the precise moment it came into my hands.

21097. At the beginning it had this sentence: "At the outbreak of such a war we shall at first be in a decided numerical inferiority; moreover we should have to face the problem of protecting a very long frontier, and should be handicapped with a certain amount of disloyalty (passive if not active)

within our own borders; at least a month or six weeks must elapse before any appreciable reinforcements could arrive from England or India." That summarised the situation very well?—Yes, we were always fully aware that a delay of that kind was inevitable.

LORD LANSDOWNE'S EXPLANATIONS.

21098. And at the end there were conclusions under five heads pointing out that it was necessary to provide for speedy mobilisation, for transport, for defence schemes, and for the dispatch of reinforcements; that was in 1898, before the date at which you say you became fully aware that a war was possible?—Yes. Perhaps the best way in which I can put it to the Commission is this, that I was aware not only in 1898, but before that, that there was a possibility of hostilities; it was really a matter of common knowledge. I do not wish for a moment to suggest that upon the mere point of the possibility of hostilities I required any special warning.

21099. But it was not brought officially before you by the proper channel—namely, through the Commander-in-Chief, as far as you know at that time? This detailed information in the Intelligence Department was not brought before you by the Commander-in-Chief before 1899, I think you said?—The information must have come before me much sooner than that, because we added to the South African garrison in 1898, and, therefore, I must have heard something about it before that time.

THE CABINET MUST HAVE BEEN INFORMED.

21100. May I put another question, as to which, of course, you will have to consider how far you can give us information? Did you consider it your duty to lay that state of matters before the Cabinet at that time—in 1898, say?—I am sure that it was brought before the Cabinet in 1898, because the additions which were made to the garrison were made with the sanction of the Cabinet.

21101. So that the Cabinet were aware, as is brought out in these papers, that the Boers were making warlike preparations, which could only be intended for war with this country, as early as 1898 at any rate?—Certainly.

21102. Any earlier, do you think?—I cannot say.

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21103. Because, as I say, in these papers written in 1896 the same danger is pointed out?—I am afraid I cannot say whether the Cabinet had that information in 1896 or not.

Extract from evidence given March 27th, 1903.

FURTHER EXPLANATION BY LORD  
LANSDOWNE.

21289. I am anxious to avoid leaving the Commission under the impression that the documents upon which that collection of notes was founded were unknown to me until 1899. When they first became known to me—because, as you remember, they are documents of different dates—I cannot tax my memory to say, but I think it quite possible, considering my intimate relations with Sir John Ardagh, of which I spoke yesterday, that soon after they were written they were informally made known to me; some, at any rate, of them may have been. What I wished to convey to the Commission was this, that those documents were never put before me by the Commander-in-Chief as a justification of a demand for important

measures designed to strengthen our position in South Africa. That was the object of my statement, and, indeed, as far as my memory serves me I cannot recollect any formal demand for precautionary measures of such a kind between Lord Wolseley's proposals, which were embodied in his minute of 1896, and his big demand which was put in the minute of June, 1899. I do not think there was anything between the two.

Sir John Ardagh wrote on September 3rd, 1897, to the General Commanding in Chief in South Africa on the subject of these reinforcements:—

3. The number of Imperial troops in the Colony has recently been increased, as a precautionary and pacific demonstration rendered necessary by the attitude of the South African Republic, and in no way intended to afford ground for a suspicion that aggressive action was contemplated, nor is it desired that the disposition of the troops in the Colony should be other than such as ordinary defensive and administrative requirements render expedient.—*Report Appendix*, p. 190.

The Intelligence Department therefore did its duty. But General Ardagh's memoranda shared the fate of Colonel Stoffel's despatches, in which he foretold to the rulers of the Second Empire the inevitable result of a war with Germany. They never seemed to have been read by the Ministers responsible for our armaments. The parallel between the Second Empire on the eve of Sedan and the Unionist Administration in 1899 is disagreeably close.

The Royal Commission judicially sum up the result of the evidence before them. They say:—

56. The consideration of the official records and the relative evidence sufficiently establishes the main fact that for at least three years before the outbreak of the War the Intelligence Department of the War Office had been fully aware of the warlike preparations in the Republics, and had recognised that the only object of these preparations could be to provide for hostilities with the British Government. If then the outbreak of the War found us unprepared, it is necessary to discriminate between the causes which contributed to unpreparedness.

## CHAPTER IV.

## MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S RESPONSIBILITY.

IN the criticism which this Report has evoked one point has been somewhat strangely overlooked. The fact that Mr. Chamberlain in the spring of 1897 asked for reinforcements for South Africa and insisted upon the danger of the military position in Natal has been referred to by some newspapers as if it demonstrated the prescience of the Colonial Secretary. But those who express this view ignore with singular unanimity the fact that in the spring of 1897 Mr. Chamberlain was conducting negotiations with the Transvaal Government which at any moment might have led to war. We were almost in the ultimatum stage when on March 6th, 1897, Mr. Chamberlain, in the words of the Royal Commission, "required" that the Transvaal Government should repeal the Aliens Immigration Act. "There can be little doubt," says the Report, that "a refusal of the Transvaal Government to comply would have led to war."—Report, p. 6.

It is an instructive commentary upon the methods of the new diplomacy that Mr. Chamberlain launched that quasi-ultimatum almost exactly a month before he bethought him that the South African garrisons were inadequate. He wrote his despatch "requiring" the repeal of the Aliens Act on March 6th. But it was not till April 5th that he wrote to the War Office to warn Lord Lansdowne that "grave questions are now pending" that "a despatch would be delivered by the British Agent at Pretoria," which, although not containing "anything which could be construed as an ultimatum," might, in view of the Boer preparations for war, suggest to "the more reckless of their advisers some step which Her Majesty's Government could not overlook or even go so far as to initiate aggressive actions." The weaker Power, locally, was making demands upon the stronger Power which if rejected meant war, and so within a fortnight of the presentation of a despatch which might have brought on immediate war Mr. Chamberlain informs the War Office of what he is after and asks for reinforcements!

And what reinforcements! The demand put forward by the Colonial Secretary is, that in order to prepare British South Africa for a war with the Transvaal, three regiments of cavalry and two batteries of artillery should be sent out, and that steps should be taken to enrol local levies! That was the way in which the Colonial Secretary gauged the military situation. He had 6,303 soldiers in South Africa; he was threatening the Boers with war if they did not do his bidding. To overcome these Boers we had to put in the field 448,000 armed men. But in April, 1897, the Colonial Secretary was quite satisfied that the despatch of three cavalry regiments and two batteries of artillery with equipment for 3,000 Colonial levies would have enabled us to cope with the Boers. Of all the preposterous miscalculations during this South African muddle the most monstrous surely was Mr.

Chamberlain's estimate in 1897 of the forces which would justify him in contemplating war against the Transvaal.

The following are the passages in the Report relating to this remarkable and generally overlooked episode in the story of the South African War.

"On the 15th and 26th December of the same year, 1896, the Colonial Secretary sent two despatches to the Transvaal Government, stating in the first that the new Aliens Immigration Law, imposing restrictions upon free immigration into the Transvaal, infringed the London Convention, and in the second that recent procedure of the Republic with regard to extradition treaties between themselves and Foreign Powers 'led to a distinct, though no doubt an unintentional breach of the London Convention.' By a despatch on 6th March, 1897, Mr. Chamberlain required that the Aliens Immigration Act should be revoked. There can be little doubt that a refusal of the Transvaal Government to comply would have led to war, and it will be subsequently shown how serious a view of the crisis was taken by the Imperial Authorities. The Transvaal Government, however, in a reply dated the 7th May, 1897, yielded on the point immediately at issue, though not admitting the Aliens Act to be a breach of the London Convention, and suggested the reference of other alleged breaches of the Convention to external arbitration.

"43. It has been pointed out that between the 6th March, 1897, when Mr. Chamberlain's despatch demanding the repeal of the Aliens Immigration Act was sent, and the 5th May, 1897, when the Transvaal Government yielded upon this point, a dangerous crisis occurred. On the 1st April, 1897, the effectives of all ranks in South Africa amounted to 6,303 men, with a mountain battery of six guns. In May, 1897, this force was strengthened by the despatch to Natal of two additional battalions of infantry and three batteries of field artillery. The total strength in South Africa thus raised stood at the beginning of December, 1897, at a total of 9,593 effectives of all ranks, of whom 4,019 were in Cape Colony, and 5,574, with 24 field guns, were in Natal."

The only witness examined upon this subject was Lord Lansdowne.

21289. (*Chairman.*) May I draw your attention to a correspondence with which we have been furnished between the Colonial Office and War Office in 1897, in which Mr. Chamberlain acknowledges having seen those papers which had been communicated to him by the Intelligence Division, and the War Office on the 29th April went into detail in the matter.

21291. The correspondence to which I allude proceeded on the fact that the Secretary of State for the Colonies had seen the papers in the Intelligence Division, which, therefore, must have been those first on the series, those of 1896, because this is in 1897, and on April 14th, 1897, Mr. Graham, the Under Secretary, wrote that he was directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to request that he would draw the particular attention of the Marquess of Lansdowne to reports furnished to this Department from time to time by the Director of Military

Intelligence, and especially to the letters from Major Altham and Major Northcote, of the 8th and 16th March. Did not that point at larger preparations being made than those which you have mentioned just now?—I should have thought that passage pointed rather to raids perhaps on a considerable scale, than to an invasion in force; but, at any rate, the outcome of those discussions was the gradual increase of the garrison to which reference has just been made.

This despatch had been preceded by a longer one marked "Secret and Immediate," dated Downing Street, 5th April, 1897, and addressed by the Colonial Office to the War Office.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S LETTER.

The text of this letter is as follows:—

Sir,—I am directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to request that you will submit

to the Marquess of Lansdowne the following observations upon the present situation of affairs in South Africa.

Grave questions are now pending between Her Majesty's Government and that of the South African Republic, the ultimate issue of which cannot with any certainty be foreseen. As Lord Lansdowne is aware, from the information compiled by the Director of Military Intelligence (to whom Mr. Chamberlain desires to express his acknowledgments for the valuable reports communicated to this Department from time to time), the Transvaal Government have been, and are still, importing vast quantities of munitions of war of all descriptions. It is understood that they have obtained the services of a considerable number of persons, of Continental origin, trained to the use of artillery and modern arms generally, and there is a powerful party within the State, who are urging the denunciation of the London Convention; and even a resort to offensive measures.

Mr. Chamberlain still hopes and believes that a satisfactory settlement of the present difficulties may be arrived at without a resort to arms. Such a contingency will certainly not at present arise from any action on the part of Her Majesty's Government; for, though certain despatches relating to recent breaches of the London Convention will be delivered by the British Agent at Pretoria to the Government of the South African Republic in about two weeks' time, they do not contain anything which could be construed as an ultimatum; and it is possible that they may lead to a lengthened diplomatic correspondence.

On the other hand, in view of the enormous and continued military preparations of the Transvaal Government, Mr. Chamberlain cannot conceal from himself the possibility that the latter, feeling themselves in a position of strength, and knowing that the British possessions in South Africa are comparatively defenceless against an attack from that side, may allow themselves to be carried away by the more reckless of their advisers, and take some step which Her Majesty's Government could not overlook, or even go so far as to initiate aggressive action.

In these circumstances the adoption by Her Majesty's Government of adequate measures of precaution becomes a matter of pressing importance. It cannot be doubted

that the Transvaal Government are alive to the advantage of securing an initial success, which would bring over to their side a large number of secret sympathisers in the colonies, and thereby increase the political even more than the military difficulties with which Her Majesty's Government would have to contend. From the information in the possession of this Department, it would appear that the programme of the Transvaal Government in the event of hostilities, includes, besides a movement on Natal, a raid upon the Kimberley mines, which appear to be in no position to resist attack, and the destruction, with the assistance or connivance of the Government of the Orange Free State, of the bridges over the Orange River.

From a perusal of General Goodenough's despatch to the War Office of the 30th September last, and of the reports made by Major Altham to the Intelligence Division, Mr. Chamberlain gathers that Her Majesty's forces at present in South Africa, in the event of an outbreak of hostilities, would, from their scanty numbers and the insufficiency of artillery and other war material, probably be unable even to protect the frontiers until the arrival of an expedition from home.

In such an event, apart from the advantage which, as already pointed out, would arise to the Boers from a success in the opening of the campaign, Her Majesty's Government would have to reckon with the feeling of indignation which would be excited among the loyal colonists, who would reproach the Government for having neglected—though with ample time for preparation—to take adequate measures for their safety; and Mr. Chamberlain cannot contemplate such a possibility without the gravest concern.

It has been suggested by Sir John Ardagh, in response to private inquiries from this Department, that, as, in the event of no other forces being available, it would be necessary, at the outset, to obtain the co-operation of Colonial levies, 3,000 sets of arms and equipment, with a supply of 300 rounds per rifle, and 1,500 sets of Mounted Infantry saddlery, should be despatched to each of the Colonies of the Cape and Natal; but Mr. Chamberlain, while inviting Lord Lansdowne's earnest consideration to this suggestion, has some doubts whether the organisation of such a force, hastily collected, unacquainted with its officers, and imperfectly

disciplined, would of itself meet the necessities of the case, though it would doubtless prove most useful if supported by a sufficient number of Imperial troops.

These, however, are questions for the Secretary of State for War and his military advisers; and the object of the present letter is that Mr. Chamberlain's views on the situation may be clearly placed before Lord Lansdowne, on whom rests the responsibility of deciding what military measures should be taken, to safeguard the interests of the Empire in South Africa at the present juncture.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) FRED GRAHAM.

The Under Secretary of State, War Office.

LORD LANSDOWNE'S REPLY.

To this letter Lord Lansdowne replied on the 29th April, 1897, acknowledging Mr. Chamberlain's warning, and replying to his proposals in detail. The following are the salient passages of Lord Lansdowne's reply:

9. The force at first applied for by the Secretary of State for the Colonies was to have consisted of three regiments of cavalry and two batteries of artillery, and an estimate was prepared in this office upon the assumption that the cavalry were to be sent out at full foreign strength for service abroad, that the artillery was to be horse artillery, that the force was to take with it a suitable amount of land transport, and that it might be required to leave this country with as little loss of time as possible, a condition which necessarily enhances the cost of transport. The cost of sending out a force under such conditions would probably have amounted to £500,000, and when the matter was discussed by Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Lansdowne with some of their colleagues it was considered that the expense was greater than was justified by the circumstances. It was indicated for Lord Lansdowne's guidance that the total outlay should not exceed £200,000, and Mr. Chamberlain suggested that a force of, say, two regiments of cavalry on the home establishment of horses, and two batteries of field, instead of horse artillery, might suffice, and that no land transport should be taken.

11. Such a force would, therefore, be on the one hand more costly than the conditions

laid down by H.M. Government admit, and on the other hand be insufficient to guarantee the safety of the frontier.

12. The question of what force is required in South Africa appears to Lord Lansdowne to depend mainly upon political conditions which are not, so far as he is able to judge, very clearly defined at present.

13. It is evident from the Colonial Office letter that there is considerable room for doubt with regard to the attitude of the Transvaal Government, and that it is impossible to predict whether in certain events that Government will take the offensive, or if it should do so, at what points. The force likely to be required in the event of war has been estimated at between 30,000 and 40,000 men.

17. Pending the arrival of so large a force it appears to be open to question whether, upon purely military grounds, there is much to be gained by sending out small additional bodies of troops for service on the frontier.

20. On the other hand, Lord Lansdowne does not for a moment question the soundness of the conclusion that, partly for the purpose of strengthening our diplomacy in South Africa and partly in view of the effect produced on the minds of the Colonists, we should not remain inactive in the face of the preparations recently made by President Kruger, and apparently still in progress, and he has therefore considered in concert with his military advisers what steps would, within the financial limit referred to in paragraph 9, be most effectual both as a demonstration and as a reinforcement.

23. It is accordingly intended to send at once to South Africa three batteries of field artillery. An additional battalion of infantry will also be sent.

24. The cost of sending a force thus composed is shown in Table C attached to this letter, and falls within the limit of £200,000 already referred to.

REINFORCEMENTS SENT.

Lord Lansdowne was asked, when before the Royal Commission—

21293. Do you think that that increase met the representation of the Secretary of State for the Colonies at that time? He made the guarded reply: We thought so at the time.

This brings us up to the beginning of 1898, when Lord Milner first began to take a hand in the game. On February 1st, 1898, he sent home a despatch to the Colonial Office calling attention to "a very serious defect in our military arrangements in South Africa"—viz., the want of transport. He concluded his despatch by the significant remark:—

"My duty is discharged when I have directed your attention to a fact which has such an important bearing upon policy, and have urged you, as I desire most earnestly to do, to bring the matter under the notice of the War Office."—Report, p. 191.

Mr. Chamberlain held this despatch over for nearly three weeks, and then sent it to the War Office, declaring that it demanded Lord Lansdowne's "most earnest attention."

#### LORD MILNER OPENS THE BALL.

Lord Milner, however, lost no time in opening the campaign against the South African Republic. On February 23, 1898, he sent the following confidential despatch to Mr. Chamberlain:—

Sir,—The action of the President of the South African Republic in suddenly dismissing the Chief Justice may lead to serious consequences to the whole of South Africa, and seems to render it desirable to review the present position of our relations with the Government of the South African Republic.

Into the legality of the dismissal of the Chief Justice, or the question whether it is in conflict with the engagements of the Republic towards Great Britain, as the Chief Justice appears to suggest in his letter to the President, I do not propose now to enter. Nor will I discuss its possible consequences affecting the interests of British subjects. But the fact that the President should have taken a step which, I venture to think, will be condemned in every civilised community as striking a fatal blow at the independence and authority of the Judicial body, indicates a complete indifference to public opinion and is especially of evil augury for the peaceful and satisfactory settlement of the numerous questions outstanding, or likely to arise in the near future, between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the South African Republic.

I may divide these questions into three classes:—

First.—There are those in which representations have been addressed to the Government of the Republic, to which we require an answer. In this connection I may refer to the removal of the Deeds Registry from Swaziland to Pretoria, and

the compulsory use of the Dutch language therein; the appointments of the State Secretary and Orphan Master of the South African Republic to be State Attorney and Orphan Master respectively for Swaziland; the question of the law governing the importation of arms and explosives into Swaziland; the delimitation of the Swazi-Portuguese boundary; and the question of the compensation to be awarded to the proprietor of the *Critic* newspaper.

Secondly.—There are cases which, though we are not at present awaiting a reply to our representations, may give rise to trouble before long. Among these are (1) the case of the Cape coloured persons, which I had hoped was satisfactorily settled, but which, if I may credit the reports that reach me, is being dealt with by the officials in a manner inconsistent with the understanding arrived at; (2) the mode of submitting to Her Majesty, under the Convention, treaties negotiated with Foreign Powers; (3) the legality of the present composition of the High Court, and the consequent validity or invalidity of its decisions in cases affecting British subjects; (4) the test case to be brought by the Indian Traders before a Court where, as it now appears, the counsel who drew the case against them will in all probability be sitting as judge to try it; (5) the objectionable appointments of magistrates in Swaziland; (6) the method of imposition and enforcement of the hut tax in that country; (7) the general question of the application of the laws of the South

African Republic to Swaziland; and (8) the treatment of the natives in the South African Republic, now that the Court to which, under the Convention, they are guaranteed free access, can no longer be regarded as a body independent of the Executive.

Thirdly.—We have the question of the dynamite monopoly, which stands in a category of its own. Her Majesty's Government are advised that this is a breach of the Convention, and a demand for redress would long before now have been made on the Government of the Republic had not Her Majesty's Government agreed, at my instance, to defer action for a time. I advised this course, not because I had any doubt as to the soundness of the view taken by Her Majesty's Government, but because I was ready to incur the charge—however unfounded—of indifference to British interests, rather than to anything which even partizan ingenuity could represent as savouring of menace or coercion so long as there was any chance of the Government of the South African Republic taking, of their own accord, the steps which the findings of their own Commission had shown to be right and necessary. I am still waiting to see if anything will be done in this direction during the present session of the Volksraad, though I fear there is now little hope of a favourable result.

The various cases to which I have referred are so well known to you that I have merely mentioned them by name. Of the minor grievances of British subjects which constantly reach me, I will say nothing. Under other circumstances, there are some of these which I should feel justified in taking up, but, as it seems to me, we have trouble enough, actual or prospective, in those important questions which I have enumerated.

As you are aware, my policy has been, while avoiding wherever possible a reference to our rights under the Convention, to endeavour to obtain satisfaction by friendly representations such as if made by one independent Power to another would meet with a courteous response; but I feel that I have not been met in the same spirit. I may refer you to what I wrote in my despatch No. 962 of the 15th December, in connection with my abortive attempt to negotiate an extradition treaty with the South African Republic, and I have only to add to it that

nothing has since occurred to remove or mitigate the feeling I then expressed of an increasing unfriendliness in the attitude of the Government of the South African Republic. The latest manifestation of it—reported in a despatch which goes to you by this mail—is a statement by a newspaper which habitually derives its inspiration from the Government at Pretoria, to the effect that a circular may shortly be issued to the Powers repudiating Her Majesty's position as Suzerain.

In making these observations it is not my desire to suggest any immediate action on the part of Her Majesty's Government, but merely to point out how unsatisfactory and pregnant with future trouble the situation is. I shall, of course, persevere in the course which I have hitherto adopted, and which I know has your full approval; but unless some change should come over the attitude of the Government of the Republic, I regard the outlook with great uneasiness. We seem to be entering upon a fresh period of strained relations between Her Majesty's Government and that of the South African Republic, such as existed a year ago, the recurrence of which is evidently fraught with peril.

I have, &c.,  
A. MILNER,  
Governor and High Commissioner.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S LETTER TO LORD  
LANSDOWNE.

Mr. Chamberlain kept the despatch for three weeks, and then forwarded it on April 6th to the War Office, with a covering letter written by his Secretary, Mr. Fred Graham. The letter requested Lord Lansdowne's attention to the memorandum issued by the Intelligence Department on March 12th, and continued as follows:—

I am to state that Mr. Chamberlain's policy is to refrain, as far as possible, from giving provocation to the South African Republic, and to abstain most carefully from any action which might be construed as a *casus belli*, but that he is constrained to conclude from the behaviour of the Government of the Republic, as shown by numerous other papers, that they would be glad to seize the opportunity of a complication between Great Britain and other European Powers either to denounce the London Con-

vention, in which case Her Majesty's Government could consider the situation at leisure, or to take offensive measures against the neighbouring territories under the rule or protection of Her Majesty.

Mr. Chamberlain would be glad if Lord Lansdowne would consider carefully whether any further measures should be taken to enable the Cape and Natal, at all events, to stand upon the defensive, especially in regard to a reserve of arms and ammunition for Her Majesty's Regular forces, and for supply to loyal Volunteers if desirable, a point which does not seem to have been pursued since the letter from this Department of the 5th April last year.

His Lordship is aware from the letter from this Department of the 11th ultimo, that the High Commissioner has drawn attention to the want of local transport, or of any adequate provision for collecting it at short notice.

#### LORD LANSDOWNE'S REPLY.

To this appeal the War Office replied on April 14th, dealing with the question of transport, as follows:—

I am to acquaint you that the Marquess of Lansdowne has given the question of the provision of transport to meet such contingencies his most careful consideration.

The establishment and the upkeep of a permanent transport nucleus in the Cape Colony for military purposes would, apart from the necessarily heavy initial outlay, involve such a large annual expenditure for maintenance, &c., for which the State would not in time of peace get an adequate return, that His Lordship is not at present prepared to agree to the formation of such an establishment.

In April, 1897, the General Officer Commanding, South Africa, was directed to look into the question of provision of Transport on Mobilisation, and in May of that year he was able to forward to this Office the draft of a contract with Messrs. Weil (the largest firm of transport owners in South Africa), under which a large amount of transport could be obtained at comparatively short notice. After due consideration, and in consultation with Mr. Chamberlain, the Secretary of State negatived this contract which was estimated for a large force.

In view, however, of the representation of Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Lansdowne thinks

that the time has arrived when the matter may be again reviewed, and, in consultation with his military advisers, His Lordship is of opinion that local endeavours might now be made by the General to enter into a standing contract for transport sufficient to render mobile a small force consisting of:—

- 4 Companies Mounted Infantry.
- 3 Field Batteries, R.A.
- 1 Company Royal Engineers.
- 4 Battalions Infantry.

With Staff and Departmental details, say some 4,500 men and 900 horses.

As such a contract will probably involve a considerable annual expenditure, Lord Lansdowne would be glad to know whether the Colony will be prepared to bear any portion of the annual cost?

#### MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S LAST LETTER.

On May 5th, 1898, a "secret" despatch was sent from Mr. Chamberlain to Lord Lansdowne, as follows:—

2. I am to state, for the information of the Marquess of Lansdowne, that since the receipt of your letter Mr. Chamberlain has again given very careful consideration to the measures which the political situation in South Africa appears to demand.

3. As his Lordship is aware, there are a number of questions which, despite the anxiety of Her Majesty's Government to preserve peace, may lead to a rupture with the South African Republic, and it may be taken as probable that the Government of the Republic would seize any favourable opportunity, offered by reason of Her Majesty's Government being involved in difficulties elsewhere, to assume suddenly a hostile attitude. The Government of the Republic believe that they may rely upon the support of Dutch sympathisers at the Cape and in Natal, and they intend to arm any adherents who, in the event of hostilities, may be found willing to join them, for whom they have ample supplies of arms. The number of such adherents would in all probability depend chiefly on the turn taken by events at the outbreak of hostilities, and for this reason, and also for the sake of the loyal colonists in the Cape and Natal, it is most desirable that Her Majesty's forces should be ready at once to meet, and at least hold in check until the arrival of reinforcements, any movement in force made from the T. V.

Failure to do this, or delay would almost certainly entail humiliation and increased expense.

4. It is, of course, for the Secretary of State for War to say whether provision should be made for this purpose, but Mr. Chamberlain is of opinion that the expense should not stand in the way of such minimum of preparation as may be, in the Secretary of State's opinion, necessary at least to secure this primary object.

5. Subject to this, Mr. Chamberlain agrees that an arrangement should also be made with a contractor, as proposed in your letter, to hold ready for use when wanted sufficient transport to render mobile such a force as his Lordship may consider necessary, certainly not less than that proposed.

6. With regard to the incidence of the cost, I am to point out that Sir Alfred Milner represented the grave inconvenience which might have resulted from the want of ready transport, had it been necessary to send troops into Basutoland, in connection with the recent disturbances, and that it appears to be essential that Her Majesty's Government should have an absolutely free hand to use the transport for such a purpose, which they could not have were the Cape Colony to bear a portion of the expense. But a more serious reason for deprecating an appeal to the Cape Government for a contribution to the cost of transport arises from the fact that sympathy with the Transvaal undoubtedly exists amongst the Dutch in parts of the Colony. Such an appeal would give undue publicity to the proposed measures. These measures would be described in some quarters, either from conviction or for political purposes, as being directed solely against the South African Republic. Acrimonious discussions in the Cape Parliament would take place, and the vote would very probably be rejected.

7. I am to add that Mr. Chamberlain is also of opinion that an ample reserve of stores should be established. On the special subject of an adequate reserve of rifles and ammunition, Mr. Chamberlain proposes to address a separate communication to Lord Lansdowne, with reference to your letter No. 57, Cape, 5839, of the 23rd ultimo.

8. I am to add, in conclusion, that Mr. Chamberlain considers that these measures should be carried out as quietly, but as quickly as possible,

## THE WAR OFFICE'S REPLY.

To this letter the War Office replied on June 9, 1898, as follows:—

9th June, 1898.

Sir,—I am directed by the Secretary of State for War to acknowledge the receipt of your secret letter of 5th ultimo regarding the necessity for providing transport to render mobile the force now in South Africa.

In reply I am to acquaint you, for the information of Mr. Secretary Chamberlain, that the Marquess of Lansdowne, on the recommendation of his military advisers, has approved of the following arrangements in connection with this service, viz. :—

(1.) The early provision of sufficient regimental transport to enable the troops now stationed at Ladysmith in Natal, and at Grahamstown, and Kingwilliamstown in Cape Colony, to take the field at short notice.

(2.) To purchase and retain on charge in Natal and Cape Colony sufficient vehicles, harness, &c., to provide the remainder of the troops in South Africa with equipment, but not with animals for regimental transport.

(3.) To negotiate after consulting the General Officer Commanding, South Africa, a standing contract for animals to horse the vehicles referred to in the preceding paragraph, within seven days.

(4.) Also to consult General Goodenough as to the terms, &c., on which a second standing contract can be effected to secure within thirty days sufficient vehicles, animals, &c., to complete the whole force in South Africa with the requisite general accessory services of Supply and Ammunition Columns, Field Hospitals, &c., for active field operations at a moderate distance from its base.

As the expenditure connected with the maintenance of the establishment of drivers and animals necessary under (1) would amount to the sum of £18,000 per annum at least; and as all the animals (viz., 470) could not be profitably employed on War Department services during peace, Lord Lansdowne would be glad if Mr. Chamberlain, should he see no political objection, would move the High Commissioner to assist the General Officer Commanding, South Africa, in making arrangements for letting out a number of the mules on easy terms, or failing this, for lending them to loyal

Colonists residing in the vicinity of Lady-smith, Grahamstown, and Kingwilliamstown. The animals so hired out or lent, should be subject to immediate recall for military purposes.

In conclusion, I am to express his Lordship's opinion that the foregoing arrangements, when completed, will be adequate

for present requirements, and if Mr. Chamberlain will use his influence with Sir Alfred Milner in the manner above indicated, it will probably assist materially in reducing the large expenditure necessarily contingent on the upkeep of establishments which cannot be profitably utilised.

This appears to have satisfied Mr. Chamberlain that everything was being done that it was necessary to do. We have no further representations by the Colonial Secretary as to the need for reinforcements. The only expression of opinion by Mr. Chamberlain on the subject that can be found in the evidence is the statement to be found in Lord Lansdowne's letter to Lord Wolseley, dated August 20, 1899, in which he said: "Mr. Chamberlain wrote to me two days ago that while he wished to avoid relaxing the pressure, he saw no occasion for reinforcements."—Report, p. 266. A month afterwards he broke off negotiations, and three weeks after that war was declared.

CHAPTER V.

THE WARNINGS OF GENERAL BUTLER.

THE next Chapter in the story begins with the despatch to General Butler, then the newly appointed General Commanding in Chief in South Africa, of a communication from the War Office asking him to prepare a defence scheme for South Africa. General Butler went out to Africa in November, 1898. In December, January, and part of February he was Acting High Commissioner, Administrator and Governor in Lord Milner's absence from Africa.

On December 21st, 1898, the War Office sent him a despatch summarising the evidence collected by the Intelligence Department, and asking him to report upon the defensive measures necessary in case hostilities broke out with the Boers. This despatch was the usual letter on defence schemes common to all military commands, and was in continuation of long previous correspondence sent to his predecessors on the same subject.

The following are the salient passages of this despatch :—

“ Sir,—(1) The extensive military preparations which have recently been made by the South African Republic have greatly changed the strategic situation in South Africa. As a consequence of these preparations the troops in the command were increased last year by considerable reinforcements, but even with this increase they remain much inferior in strength to the numbers which the Dutch Republics, or even the Transvaal alone, could place in the field. Her Majesty's Government have no special reason to apprehend any hostilities with the Republics in the immediate future, but as a matter of military precaution it is essential that the possibility of such hostilities should be borne in mind, and that the defensive measures should be definitely arranged which, during the early stages of the war, would be necessary pending the arrival of an expeditionary force from England. These arrangements have from time to time formed the subject of correspondence between this department and your predecessor, but as they are by no means yet complete in character the Commander-in-Chief considers it desirable

that your attention should be specially invited to the matter on your taking up command.

“ I am, therefore, directed by the Secretary of State for War to review briefly the situation.”

It was pointed out that it was probable the Orange Free State would throw in their lot with the Transvaal, that the Boers would be able to throw a force of 27,000 men across the frontier, but that such an invasion was improbable. His chief task was to provide against a raid by 2,000 or 3,000 Boers.

“ The plan for offensive operations must depend upon the political and military situation of the moment, and cannot now be definitely fixed. The fact, however, that an offensive advance will ultimately be undertaken as soon as sufficient forces have arrived, must be especially borne in mind in considering arrangements for the first or defensive stage of the campaign.

“(7) Having in view the above facts, Lord Lansdowne desires that you will forward at an early date detailed and full statement of the distributions you would propose to make of the troops which would be available for

frontier defence in the event of hostilities with the Dutch Republics; the dispositions should contemplate two conditions—

(a.) That of peace in Europe.

(b.) That of war between Great Britain and a Maritime Power.

“The Secretary of State for War further requests that you will report what period would elapse after receipt of orders to mobi-

lise before the troops would be ready to take up their dispositions. This period should be calculated on existing resources and existing arrangements, and not on any modification of such arrangements which may result from letters on the subject of the scale of transport, equipment, and other mobilisation details, which are being addressed to you separately.”

#### GENERAL BUTLER'S FIRST WARNING.

When this despatch reached Cape Town, General Butler was acting as High Commissioner, Administrator and Governor of Cape Colony. In that capacity he had formed and expressed a very strong opinion as to the conspiracy then on foot by certain British subjects to use the Edgar case for the purpose of inciting Britain to war with the Boers. This led to an urgent cablegram being despatched to him from the Home Government, calling upon him to explain in full, and to justify his statements.

In reply to this cablegram, General Butler on January 25th addressed a long and weighty letter to the Colonial Office, in which he solemnly warned the Colonial Secretary whither the policy of the South African League was tending.

After describing the factitious nature of the agitation got up about the Edgar case, he wrote :—

There was no unusual excitement outside the action taken by the South African League. I could no longer doubt that the agitation was, at that stage, largely artificial, and that it was being worked by a combination, in which the action of the Press and the South African League could scarcely be distinguished from each other.

#### “INFLAMMABLE NEWS.”

Under these circumstances, it seemed to me that it was my duty to inform you plainly of my opinion, and, further, it appeared to me necessary to indicate the undercurrents of action in connection, not only with the Edgar incident, but with the general condition of the entire situation. Hence my telegram of the 18th instant, meant for your private information, in view of possible and probable announcements appearing in the London Press similar to those published here, as representing the feeling in Johannesburg and South Africa. The avenues of ordinary intelligence are so occupied and arranged in South Africa that it seemed to me I had either to accept the fact of inflammable news and exaggerated reports reaching London, or adopt the practice of letting you know by

telegraph the exact situation as it appeared to me at the moment here. I adopted this latter alternative. The phrase used by Mr. Fraser—where he speaks of the South African League “forcing our hand”—in his telegram, No. 282, of the 31st December, exactly expressed what was being done. This was the real position. I declined to accept a situation in which irresponsible and concealed persons could practically dictate to the Government the line of action which these persons desired taken.

\* \* \* \* \*

I do not think I err when I say that it is easy to discern in many directions in this country the trace of influences which are being steadily directed, I will not say to the direct promotion of racial antagonism, but certainly to the evolution of aims which cannot fail to evolve that end.

#### A WAR OF RACES.

This policy, in my opinion, can only end, if persisted in, in producing a war of races—a conflict, the ultimate consequences of which no one could adequately estimate.

I do not believe that such a conflict is necessary to our interests here. On the contrary, I believe that these interests can best be advanced by the steadily applied forces of peace and progress acting upon two races

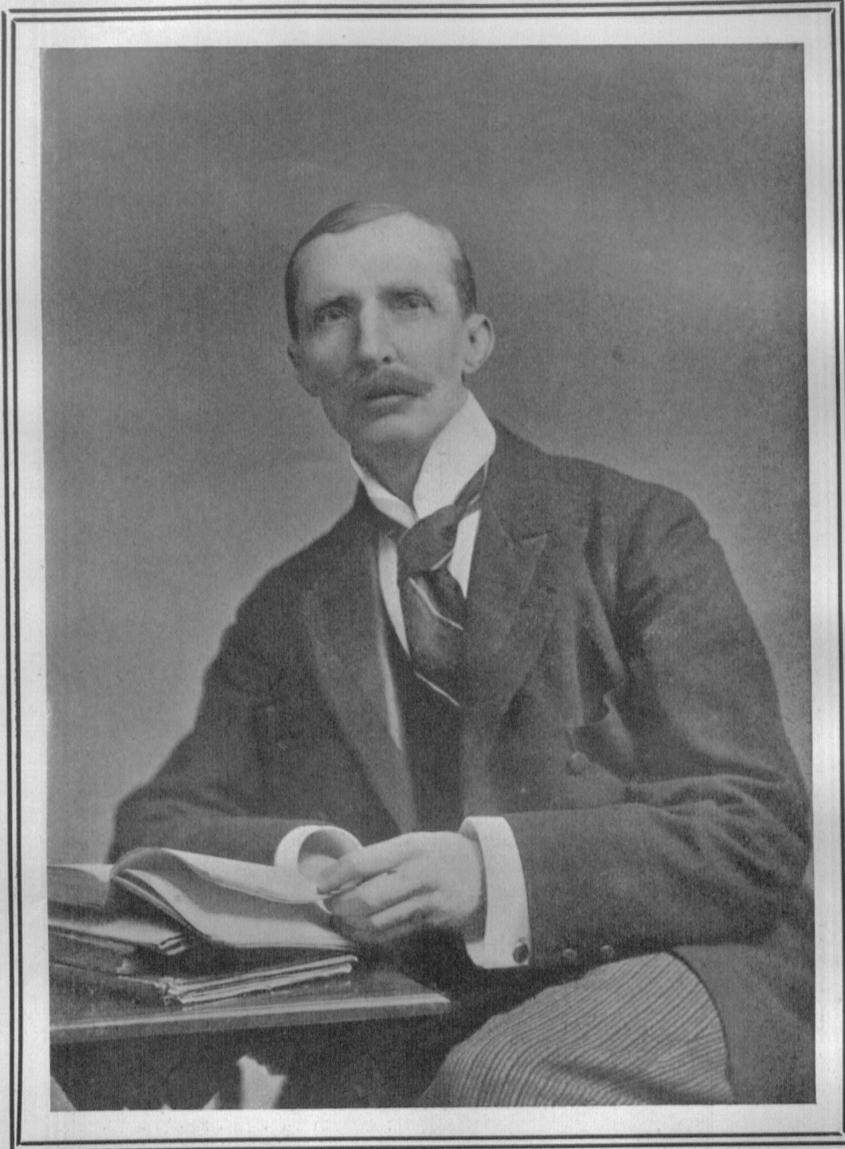


*Photo by]*

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR WILLIAM BUTLER.

*[Lambert & Weston.*

*[face p. 48.*



*Photo by*

SIR GEORGE DASHWOOD TAUBMAN GOLDIE.

*[Elliott & Fry.]*

*[ face p. 49.]*

which are not in their institutions or beliefs naturally antagonistic to each other. I believe that education, and the spread of enlightenment and social well-being, will bring about closer interests between the States and peoples of South Africa, producing either the desire or the necessity for a confederated form of Government, and gradually leading to a union on a closer basis, such as exists in Canada.

I believe that this union would, ere now, have taken place in some form at least but for mistakes in the past, which are mainly traceable to wrong information and to the precipitate action of influences similar to those I have been dealing with.

In my estimate of the forces bearing upon the Edgar affair, and matters cognate to it in Johannesburg, I found it impossible to shut out from consideration the fact that the South African League was to a large extent the direct descendant, and, at least, part inheritor of the traditions and aspirations of the combination of persons and principles which had so nearly led the Government of this Colony into grave trouble only three years ago; that the passions of that unfortunate period were still existing beneath the surface here; and that the same influences were to-day at work for the furtherance of the same objects then attempted.

#### GENERAL BUTLER'S REPORT.

When Lord Milner's return in February released General Butler from his political duties, he began to prepare his report on the defence of British South Africa, making for the purpose a personal inspection of the frontier, which entailed a journey of 3,000 miles. He was confronted by the serious difficulty that the War Office recommendations seemed to him quite suicidal.

It recommended to me, both in Natal and in the Cape Colony, the initial occupation of advanced positions, the adoption of which would, to my mind, have involved the earliest and the most complete initial disasters.

It pressed upon me seizing all the bridges of the Orange River between Cape Colony and the Orange Free State, as well as Van Reenan's Pass and other advanced positions in Natal, by the small force under my command. I had, therefore, not only to write a scheme of defence, but I had to argue it against the War Office proposals—hence the efforts on my part to give detailed reasons for my decisions in my dispatch 7th-12th June; and hence, too, my desire to personally inspect the entire frontier before putting my opinion into conflict with the views of the War Office, and of the officers who had been sent from England to inspect and report upon these frontiers eighteen months earlier.—Vol. 2 Evidence, p. 91.

#### WHY IT WAS DELAYED.

He was afterwards censured by Mr. Brodrick for taking so much time and pains over his report. But as General Butler wrote to the Adjutant-General, February 7th, 1902 :—

Had the War Office conveyed to me at any moment between January and June, 1899, the slightest intimation that a diplomatic initiative was about to be taken with the Dutch Republics, or that there was an early probability of war, I might perhaps have saved a few weeks in the preparation of this report, and undoubtedly I would earlier have given to the War Office the emphatic warnings which were so often repeated in my despatches and telegrams of the end of June. Had I even been made casually acquainted with the consultations and interchange of ideas and proposals as to armaments and frontier movements which took place in London in the end of January, 1899, and upon which so many matters of vital military importance afterwards turned, I would have devoted myself (as I did later in June, when I became aware of some of these things) to the attempt to show the home authorities how inadequate was their conception of what war in South Africa would mean, how deceptive were the assurances, and how dangerous was the advice they had received.

#### GENERAL BUTLER KEPT IN THE DARK.

Unfortunately, the General Officer Commanding in Chief was kept carefully in the dark as to the policy by which Lord Milner

was preparing to make war inevitable. General Butler says :—

Looking back from the present time to those early months of 1899, the sole sign of impending changes which I can trace is to be found in the obscure movement of the families of some of the officials, the sudden sales of the racing studs of the chief financial millionaires in Johannesburg, and the arrival in South Africa from England of the most noted persons connected with the Jameson Raid of 1895-96. The last-named immigration will be found mentioned in my despatches of June, 1899.

But who could have imagined that the persons to whom I have referred could have been the recipients of any information as to a coming war which had not been communicated to the General in Command in South Africa?

13535. When you got the instructions to get up this scheme, was it within your knowledge that the people at home contemplated the probability of war within a short time?—Not the slightest. I cannot give you a better answer to that than that I brought out all my family in March.

#### NO QUESTION OF REINFORCEMENTS.

Not only was no hint given him that Lord Milner was bent upon pursuing a policy which would precipitate war, but the official communications which he received pointed in a directly opposite direction.

During the months of March, April, and May, 1899, his proposals as to field manoeuvres, training grounds, and remount establishments were negated or reduced.

13488. He was directed to give up ordnance establishments, and to diminish hospital accommodation. Reserve men were withdrawn from South Africa. A battalion of infantry which had been at Ladysmith for two years, and had become acquainted with the surrounding country, was removed to India. The experienced officer commanding at that station was recalled to England, yet at the time these reductions, retrenchments, and removals were being made, it was actually suggested that General Butler, without being acquainted with the aims or objects of the Home Government, should have divined their minds and pressed for further reinforcements. As if to render this quite impossible,

cablegrams expressly informed him late in June, 1899, that the question of reinforcements would not then be considered.

#### MORE RIFLES THAN CAN POSSIBLY BE NEEDED.

Mr. Chamberlain was promising to write Lord Lansdowne a special letter pressing for an adequate reserve of rifles. The War Office was writing to General Butler about his scanty reserve of rifles in the Ordnance Store at Cape Town to this effect: "There has been a misunderstanding as to the reserve of rifles sent out, and you have a good many more than can possibly be needed."

13425. The inference was irresistible. His military chiefs did not anticipate war.

#### AFTER THE BLOEMFONTEIN CONFERENCE.

Suddenly, as the result of the action of Lord Milner at the Bloemfontein Conference, the fact that the Government was bent on war flashed upon the mind of the Commander-in-Chief in South Africa. He lost no time in addressing the most urgent warnings to his chiefs, warnings which he summarised later (*Evidence*, vol. 2, pp. 88-89) as follows :—

#### A SERIES OF WARNING DESPATCHES.

On the 12th June, 1899, I telegraphed—  
"In the event of a crisis arriving situation would be more that of civil war than of military operations free from complications."

On the same day (the 12th June, 1899), I wrote: "The War Office appear to think that the situation would be a purely military one, *i.e.*, as between two military Powers; they do not seem to realise how many civil war conditions such a crisis might evolve."

On the 14th June, he sent in his report as to the dispositions he would propose for adoption in the event of it becoming necessary to protect the frontier line. He added:—

I would, however, desire to remark that the consideration of this question presents many possibilities which make it different from preliminary operations which would be undertaken in the event of war between two regular military Powers whose populations were divided by defined frontiers. In the case of South Africa there dwells on our side

of the frontier a preponderating Dutch population, closely connected by family ties and mutual intercourse with the people on the other side. The events of the past few years have served to increase suspicion and racial antagonism, and therefore the possibility that at least the opening stages of war between the Dutch Republics and ourselves might produce active or secret combinations against our communications must be considered.

It will be observed that these dispositions and arrangements have taken no account of the contingency of complications with a foreign Power arising at the moment. Should such a state of affairs exist, the plans for the defence of Cape Colony would have to be revised *ab initio*.

On the 21st June, 1899, I repeated this warning in almost identical terms, pointing out "that the inhabitants on both sides of the frontier, both in the Cape Colony and in Natal, were composed of similar Dutch elements. That there was no abstract political situation in South Africa as distinct from a military one, but that both were involved together."

And again, "that the war might commit the white races of South Africa to a possible internecine struggle wherein about one million of men and women, scattered over an area nearly as large as Europe, might be involved."

On the 23rd June, 1899, I cabled that: "I believe that a war between the white races coming as a sequel to the Jameson Raid, and the subsequent events of the last three years, would be the greatest calamity that ever occurred in South Africa." Again, on July 4th, I wrote that "I could not accept the responsibility which might justly be mine if I failed to bring to your notice powerful outside influences, which might, at any moment, prove of the gravest military importance to South Africa, and to the Empire."

And in the same despatch I wrote that "as matters seemed shaping themselves in England and South Africa towards results which did not appear to me to be realised at home in their fullest gravity, I had endeavoured to place the exact position before you as it appeared to me at the moment."

Such were some of the clear and emphatic warnings which I gave. They were addressed by me, in my military capacity, to my military superiors, and were intended to be, and I

contend were, military warnings which could have no other meaning, coming from a man in my position, than that the conflict would partake of the nature of a civil war, and that the prolonged resistance and the peculiar difficulties which always attend civil war must needs be prepared for.

The warnings were emphatic enough, and I can only put down their not being understood to the infatuated conviction which, it seems, at that time was prevalent at home, that the display of "a resolute attitude" would speedily cow the Dutch-speaking population throughout Africa.

#### GENERAL BUTLER "RINGS THE WAR OFFICE BELL."

The matter is of such importance—for events have so signally vindicated the prescience of General Butler—that it may be well to enter a little more into detail. On June 21st the War Office telegraphed him to purchase 1,340 mules to complete the transport. The telegram closed thus: "Main object of these steps is to increase efficiency of existing force, apart from question of reinforcements, which is not now raised. Do you desire to make any observations?" Up to this time the War Office had been retrenching. He seized the opportunity offered by a request for observations to telegraph back his views as to the mischievous activity of what he called the Third Party, the party of the Raid, which was working night and day for war. General Butler told the Royal Commission—

13488. The Government did not seem to be aware of that, and this telegram brought matters to such a point that I thought it gave me the opportunity to speak. So I took those words "any observations," and answered in a way which I thought would at least ring the War Office bell.

And this is the way he rang that bell—

13490. You ask for my observations: present condition of opinion here is highly excited, and doubtless the news *quoting* preparations referred to in your telegram, if it transpires, will add largely to the ferment which am endeavouring to reduce by every means. Persistent effort of a party to pro-

duce war, forms in my estimation graver elements in situation here. Believe war between white races, coming as sequel to Jameson Raid, and subsequent events of last three years, would be greatest calamity that ever occurred in South Africa.

LORD MILNER'S REBUKE.

While the soldier was thus straining every nerve in order to preserve peace, the civilian who was working for war deemed it necessary to silence that honest protest and stifle the grim warnings of his Commander-in-Chief. He wrote to General Butler on June 24th, concerning the warning he addressed to the War Office on June 23rd :—

I regret that you should have thought it necessary in the observations with which your telegram concludes to enter into political considerations, especially as the tendency of your remarks is, in my opinion, calculated to convey a wrong impression of the actual situation here, and of the effect likely to be produced by a resolute attitude on the part of Her Majesty's Government.

I have informed the Secretary of State for the Colonies that I entirely demur to these observations.

General Butler replied on June 25th :—

I regret that the observations in the concluding portion of that message, replying to the Secretary of State for War, should not have commended themselves to you, but I cannot admit that these observations can be fairly defined as "political considerations." They refer to the possibilities of war, and to war in its worst form. They were made in what I believe to be the highest interests of the Empire, and for the honour of Her Majesty's Army.

LORD LANSDOWNE SUPPORTS LORD MILNER.

Lord Lansdowne being thus appealed to promptly decided in favour of Lord Milner. On June 27th he telegraphed to General Butler :—

13497. You have evidently misunderstood my telegram of 21st. You were invited to offer observations as to suitability of War Office proposals to secure object in view,

viz., increased efficiency of existing force, not as to general merits of policy adopted by Her Majesty's Government. You cannot understand too clearly that whatever your private opinions, it is your duty to be guided in all questions of policy by High Commissioner, who is fully aware of our views, and whom you will, of course, loyally support.

13520. That brought matters more or less to a climax. I found that if I tried to warn my people, as I thought I was entitled, and even bound to warn them, I was running counter to Sir Alfred Milner; so having received that message, I said on the 4th July, "If I am not satisfying you I can only place my resignation in your hands."

GENERAL BUTLER RESIGNS.

13623. When I received a communication to the effect that I was running counter to what Her Majesty's Government wished (it was a private communication, but I allude to it because it was an important question) I at once went to Sir Alfred Milner and said, "Have I been a hindrance to you, Sir, in the prosecution of your designs or your plans?" He said frankly that I had, and he named three occasions upon which I had been a hindrance to him. One was in not taking up the proposed Tuli Raid: another was in not employing a Mr. Wools-Sampson, who came to me in the middle of June, who was a very active, energetic man and who visited me at the request of Sir Alfred Milner to see if I could propose anything to him. I saw him in the presence of my military secretary and told him frankly, "Mr. Sampson, I have the greatest respect for your services" (because he was a very brave soldier and had fought well in the first Boer War), "but I know nothing from my chief in London of a war; if there is to be war I have not the least doubt you will receive a good command, but I can say nothing to you whatever." And the third was about the remarks I had sent to the Secretary of State on the 23rd June in reply to his query of "any observations?" I said it would be easily managed, and I wrote the first letter offering my resignation that night.

The resignation was promptly accepted, and Lord Milner was free to push on for war without a warning Cassandra in the person of the British Commander-in-Chief.

DID GENERAL BUTLER ASK FOR 100,000 MEN?

When General Butler was examined before the Royal Commission he made no claim to having ever sent home warning that 100,000 to 150,000 men would be needed to subdue the Boers.

13506. There is no document in evidence of that, but I stated 100,000 men over and over again; to be more particular, I stated 80,000, irrespective of the lines of communications, and the thing was growing. I was asked by a very high authority early in May, if it was necessary to bring pressure on the Boers with reference to some political questions—such as the Franchise, could the existing force in South Africa be of any use if moved towards the frontier? I laughed openly at the idea. “No,” I said; “the existing force in South Africa could only hold a few positions, which I have in my mind, until reinforcements arrive, and to bring pressure on the Dutch Republics at least 40,000 men will be required.” That was early in May—a sudden, off-hand question, nothing more. As things went on I put that number very much higher, and I said to my staff, “80,000 men, exclusive of the lines of communication”; and that was nothing wonderful, as the Dutch were writing to that effect at the time.

13507. Did you put that in an official document of any sort?—I do not know that I put it into any official document.

#### THE REWARD OF THE PROPHET.

General Butler ridiculed the notion of being able to foresee how many troops would be required when no information was given as to the objective of the campaign.

13512. Not only was the question complicated by what you were to fight the Boers on, for on that would depend the resistance of the Boers and the numbers against us, but it was further complicated by what you were going to do. If it was to be a case of “no goldfields and no territory,” I think 50,000 men would have sufficed to beat the Boers; but, if it was a case of going to the extreme end, then you ran up the numbers by ten and twenty times, you might multiply as you pleased.

13575. I could only talk of the general nature of the war if it was to come, and I could scarcely exaggerate the impression of its importance that I held, not only to the War Office, but to everybody with whom I spoke. It was the common subject of my pessimistic views. I was laughed at and ridiculed and vilified for it, but as to numbers I was careful, because, as I say, it depended on circumstances and eventualities over which I had no control or knowledge.

#### THE BOERS' DREAD OF A SECOND RAID.

General Butler explained very clearly his theory of the policy of the Boers before the war. He said:—

13587. The idea that the Boers wanted to produce war is to my mind wrong; it is a wrong reading of the situation, and on that all my preparations were based, and I was right. As a matter of fact, the Boers never did move until the reinforcements had arrived and the Army Corps was mobilised.

13586. What was it made them move in the end?—The mobilisation of the Army Corps and the appointment of Sir Redvers Buller to command.

13495. No, I knew that as long as certain forces were kept distinct from that Party (the Party of the Raid) they would not involve us in war; in other words, I knew the Boers would sit perfectly quiet, as they did before, but it was a very different thing the minute I, representing the Government or the War Office, came into the field even with the purchase of horses. That is what I knew.

13584. The essence of the Boer position was this—suspicion. They suspected everything we did, and you will find that running through all my despatches. The essence of the difficulty of the position was suspicion on the part of the Boers that they were going to have repeated a Raid or series of Raids, and they had not been prepared in 1895-96; as a matter of fact, they had hardly any ammunition at that time, and the first thing they did after the Raid was to begin to lay in rifles and ammunition, to build forts and order guns. In that sense they were preparing for war, but according to my belief in that sense only. You will find all through this suspicion on the part of the Boers that they were to be raided.

## A SECOND RAID PLANNED FROM TULLI.

To prove that their suspicions were by no means groundless, General Butler tells an extraordinary story of how, as early as July, 1899, Baden-Powell and Hore raised 200 men at Mafeking, with the object of invading the Transvaal. He was ordered to supply them with arms.

13886. The arrangements for the raiding from TullI took form in June or earlier; they were to be 1,400 strong, to make a movement on the Transvaal, on Pretoria, or Pietersburg. I am afraid I laughed the thing to scorn; it was like throwing bits of bread at a stone wall; in fact many of the Third Party never got beyond the idea of the Raid of 1895-96.

The raid from TullI I objected to. I said, "If I arm these people, the raid will be brought off by people not under my orders, the lines will be cut, and in the absence of information or communications they will carry out war on their own hook."

When Lord Milner wanted him to move up troops to the frontier, he objected at first, but said he would obey if he got a written order, but this was not done (13586).

HOW LORD LANSDOWNE RECEIVED  
GENERAL BUTLER.

In describing to the Royal Commission how the war was forced on, General Butler said:—

13588. We moved up a number of troops round the frontier.

13589. And in doing that provoked the war?—We sent a dozen officers from England into the Transvaal and the Orange Free State in July, raised troops at Mafeking, reinforced Natal with 10,000 or 12,000 men, organised a raid from TullI, moved troops to the frontiers, and, finally, mobilised an Army Corps, and then the Boers moved. My calculation of the chances was the right one; I said, they will not move as long as certain things are not done. Now I wish to make one statement to the Commission. When I came back I thought I should have been seen by the Ministers. I had many papers marked to be shown, but I saw Lord Lansdowne alone, and only for ten minutes.

He asked me the question: "If we move to the Biggarsberg what will happen?" I said, "If you move the force now at Ladysmith?" and he said "Yes." "Out of a hundred there are forty chances that that will bring on war," was my reply. "And if we cross the Biggarsberg?" was his next question, and my answer was, "Then out of a hundred there are seventy-five chances that it will bring on war." That conversation took place on the 12th September. I was treated with suspicion; they would not send for me or ask me anything. Of course at that time they were being told it was a case of ten millions of money and the whole thing over at Christmas, or at furthest at Easter. Every officer in the Army knows that; any one who told them the opposite was called names, ridiculed and laughed at, he was either a fool or a knave, or, as they said of me, I was both. I may talk with heat, my Lord, perhaps more than I ought to, but things were said of me which I believed were wholly unjust, and for years I have been silent.

## WHY GENERAL BUTLER WAS ABUSED.

13613. The point was this—that there was a school there, I do not want to mention names, which held that the Boers would never fight. How often it used to be said to me, "Ten Boers killed at Laing's Nek, and there is an end to the War." Some persons put it at forty, and they were rather fond of saying, "Forty Boers killed at Laing's Nek, and there is an end of the War." That was the sort of thing I could never understand. I could never believe it.

13620. Is it for that reason that when you came home you were treated with suspicion? Is that your point?—Well, you know the suspicion with which I was treated; the papers told you that.

13621. And, as I say, it arose out of that?—No, I believe it arose because I failed to confuse Cecil with Cæsar; that is my answer to that question. Had I merged Cæsar into Cecil I should have been a very different man to-day.

13622. You see you told us that the Government had been told that the whole thing would be over by Christmas, and it was to be a comparative walk-over, and it was in consequence of your not having taken that view that you were treated with suspicion. Is that so?—Yes, I think that is a very fair

deduction to make. I believe that in order to reduce the gravity of my warnings, motives were attached to them. I wished to do the best I could by my employers, and to tell them the thing I was looking at, but when I came back to the War Office I was told, "You are the best abused man in London." I knew nothing about it, but I found I was.

Such is the story of General Butler. That officer is still regarded as trustworthy and capable enough to be left in command of the important military station of Devonport. He arrived in this country within a month of the Declaration of War. He had been Commander-in-Chief in South Africa. Neither the Prime Minister nor the Colonial Secretary sent for him or asked him any questions. He saw the Secretary of War for ten minutes! Is it possible to conceive of any more damning count in the indictment against the men who within three weeks' time plunged the Empire into the South African War?

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE DELUSION ABOUT THE ORANGE FREE STATE.

IN deciding upon a policy which may involve Britain in hostilities, the first question to which the Ministers of the Crown may rightly be expected to bend all their energies to answer correctly, is whether the possible enemy has any possible allies. When Napoleon made his fatal plunge to the suicide of his Empire in 1870, he was under the delusion that he could count, if not upon the assistance, at least upon the benevolent neutrality of the South German States while he levied war against Prussia. His miscalculation was not more ridiculous than that made by our Ministers as to the probable attitude of the Orange Free State. In the midst of a thousand errors in detail and failures in administration, this miscalculation about the Orange Free State towers aloft as the most typical and deadly of all the blunders of the Government.

It was not merely that the adhesion of the Orange Free State would nearly double the number of fighting men whom we would have to face. The whole plan of campaign was bound up in the question whether the Free Staters would remain neutral or take sides. If they were neutral, the attack on the Transvaal must take place from a base in Natal. If they made common cause with President Kruger, the invading force would start from Cape Colony. Everything depended upon the question of the Free State, and Ministers, with a perversity of blundering almost miraculous, came to a wrong decision.

Mr. Balfour, after the war broke out, speaking to a sympathetic audience of Unionists at Dewsbury on November 28th, 1899, explained to them with the characteristic candour of an ingenuous child that the British forces had fared so badly in South Africa because the Government had never for a moment dreamed that the Orange Free State would join their foes. They would as soon have expected to be at war with Switzerland as with the Free State. The declaration has become historical. It is the supreme illustration of Ministerial ignorance on the point of vital importance to the success of their campaign. It excited marvel at the time. But we did not then know how inexcusable had been the ignorance of Ministers, and against how much painstaking representation by their own most trusted authorities they had persisted in hugging to their souls the dear delusion that the neutrality of the Free State was as certain as that of Switzerland. The evidence taken by the Royal Commission now enables us for the first time to appreciate the dogged obstinacy with which Ministers persisted in refusing to recognise what to all other mortals was as clear as day. All Ministries may make mistakes. Blunders are possible to all men. But when an engine-driver, with his eyes open, disregards the danger-signals and drives an express train crash into another train, he is tried for manslaughter. What would be the sentence on such an engine-driver if it were proved that on approaching the signal, the fact that it stood at danger was vociferously pointed out to him by

his mate the stoker, the station-master and the platelayer? Scant mercy would there be for such a driver if after the catastrophe had taken place he were impudently to declare that he had never seen the signal. It was his duty to see the signal, especially after it had been pointed out to him by all his mates.

It is enough to make one despair of Mr. Balfour and of the Empire which tolerates such a *dilettante* as Prime Minister, to recall his Dewsbury speech with its parallel between the position of Switzerland and the Free State, while we read the repeated painstaking demonstration placed before him and his colleagues as to the certainty that we should have to reckon with the Orange Free State. What is the use of keeping up an Intelligence Department if the Ministers of the Crown refuse to read its reports, and persist in staking the fate of the Empire on an assumption which their own officers had shown over and over again to be utterly baseless?

Bearing Mr. Balfour's Dewsbury speech in mind, read the following extracts from the official documents prepared by the Intelligence Department and circulated for the guidance of the Government and its military advisers as far back as June, 1896.

WARNINGS OF THE INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT, 1896.\*

MAJOR ALTHAM'S FIRST MEMORANDUM.

"Hitherto hostilities with the Transvaal and the Orange Free State have only been considered from an offensive point of view," &c.

OCTOBER 1896. SIR JOHN ARDAGH'S MEMORANDUM.

27. Hitherto we have confined our observations to the Boers of the Transvaal, who, on their own showing, can reckon on 22,000 burghers liable for military service. Let us now examine what support they can count upon from their brethren in South Africa at large.

28. That a military compact exists between the South African Republic and the Orange Free State is notorious, and the burghers of the latter have more than once shown their readiness to co-operate with their kinsmen across the Vaal. Will they do so if a war is provoked with England? This is a point upon which we must insist on a decision at the very outbreak of hostilities. The Free State must be offered the choice of two alternatives—

- (1.) Benevolent neutrality, with free passage for our troops, and facilities of supply; and
- (2.) War.

29. Although prudence would probably induce them to choose the first, we must be

\* Appendices A and B, *Report*, pp. 152-180.

ready for their possible recalcitrance, and make our preparations on the assumption that they are hostile. The number of their burghers liable for military service is reckoned at 13,000.

1897.

APRIL, 1897. SIR JOHN ARDAGH'S SECOND MEMORANDUM.

Responsible and sensible people in the Free State may be fully alive to the blessings of peace and the risks of war, but the racial sympathy between the rural Boers in both States will nevertheless prevail with individuals, and if war breaks out with the Transvaal, we must anticipate that although the ostensible attitude of the Free State Government may be peaceful, large numbers—say, at least 5,000 of their citizens—will be found fighting against us.

From a military point of view, therefore, I am strongly of opinion that nothing short of an actively benevolent attitude should be accepted from the Free State. If the Government cannot and does not restrain its burghers from fighting against us it should forthwith be treated as an enemy.

Procrastination and delay in settling this important question of policy at the critical moment will be most prejudicial to us.

1898.

SEPTEMBER, 1898. MAJOR ALTHAM'S SECOND MEMORANDUM.

The reasons for believing that in a war against the Transvaal we should certainly

find the sister Republic ranged against us, are given on page 42 of "Military Notes on Dutch Republics in South Africa."

1899.

JUNE, 1899. MAJOR ALTHAM'S THIRD MEMORANDUM.

For the above reasons it is considered that it may be confidently assumed that if we fight the Transvaal we must fight the Free State as well.

8TH AUGUST, 1899. MAJOR ALTHAM'S FOURTH MEMORANDUM.

1. THE TREATY RELATIONS OF THE FREE STATE AND TRANSVAAL.

The following treaties and conventions have been made with a view to a binding defensive alliance :—

(a.) *Potchefstroom Treaty, 9th March, 1889.*

This treaty, after a preamble, referring to the many ties of blood and friendship connecting the two States, and their mutual desire for future federal union, agrees—

- (i.) There should be an abiding peace and friendship between the two States.
- (ii.) The two States mutually bind themselves "to assist each other with all power and means whenever the independence of one of the two States shall be threatened or assailed from without, *unless the State, which has to render the assistance, shall show the injustice of the cause of the other State.*"

(b.) *Treaty of July, 1897.*

This treaty adds to the force of the Potchefstroom Treaty by the following Articles :—

Article II.—"The two Republics shall mutually aid and help each other when the independence of either be threatened in any way, unless the State to give support shall show *and prove* the injustice of such support."

Article III.—"The Governments of both States shall, as soon as possible, inform each other of such matters which may unfavourably affect the independence and peace of each other."

(c.) *Military Convention of July, 1897.*

This deals with the following points, all of which tend to confirm the belief that the defensive alliance is not regarded as a mere sentimental declaration :—

Articles I., II., and III. arrange for the command of the forces of the two States when acting together.

Article IV. provides for their discipline.

Article V., joint military expenditure.

Article VI., supplies.

Article VII., neither State to conclude peace without consent of the other.

The terms of this convention have been further amplified and confirmed by military laws passed in identical terms by the Raads of each State in October, 1898.

2. PRESENT POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN FREE STATE AND TRANSVAAL.

If in the present crisis Her Majesty's Government should find no other way of obtaining redress of the Uitlanders' grievances possible save that of an appeal to arms, it is absolutely certain from the whole attitude of the Transvaal Government and its supporters, that they will raise the cry that the independence of the South African Republic is threatened.

This cry will carry with it a demand on the Free State to fulfil its treaty obligations.

The only doubt therefore to be solved is whether the Free State will be desirous or able "to show *and prove* that the cause of the Transvaal is unjust."

The following facts seem to conclusively establish that the Free State Government neither intends nor would be able to maintain such a thesis :—

(a.) *Declaration of the Free State Raad after the Bloemfontein Conference.*

Immediately on Sir A. Milner breaking off the Bloemfontein Conference, the Orange Free State Raad passed a resolution that she entirely approved of the proposals of President Kruger, which had been rejected by the High Commissioner as inadequate. Since that date Kruger has, however, acting on the advice of delegates of the Free State and Cape Governments, made appreciable further concessions. It follows, therefore, that, *a fortiori*, the Free State Government are now debarred from maintaining that the cause of

the Transvaal is unjust; they are, therefore, clearly bound to fulfil their military obligations under the treaty.

(b.) *Official Declarations of Chairman of Raad and President.*

These are given in the cuttings attached marked (A).\* It will be seen that at the prerogation of the Raad, the Chairman officially exhorted the members, if war came, to join the burghers in military service, and that the President accepted this exhortation. It is to be noted also that the comment of a Bloemfontein paper (of Dutch sympathies), which is attached,\* points to these speeches as a definite indication of the intention of the Free State not to remain neutral in case of war.

(c.) *Military preparations of the Free State after the Bloemfontein Conference.*

In considering the following facts it must be borne in mind that there is no point whatever at issue or in dispute between Her Majesty's Government and the Free State; the relations of the two Governments are, on the contrary, on the most cordial footing. The evidence, therefore, that the Free State is preparing for war can lead to no other conclusion but that these preparations are due to her treaty obligations with the Transvaal, and that she intends to abide by those obligations.

(i.) *Special vote of £34,370 by Free State Raad for increase of Armament and Permanent Force.*

On 23rd June, 1899, the Raad voted the following items of extraordinary military expenditure:—

	£
Increase of Staats Artillery by 40 men and 80 horses . . .	2,000
Field telegraph equipment . . .	420
Purchase of tents . . . . .	3,400
Purchase of three Maxims, three Q.F. guns, and three store wagons . . . . .	4,050
Increase of ammunition reserve to 8,000,000 rounds . . . .	22,500
Secret Service money . . . .	2,000
	34,370

\* It is not considered necessary for the purposes of the Commission to print these papers.—B. H. Holland, Secretary.

To understand the real significance of this fact, it must be noted that the average total State expenditure for the ten years, 1886-96, is a little less than £300,000. This extraordinary vote represents therefore an immediate addition to their average annual expenditure of 11 per cent.; in other words, it is equivalent to Her Majesty's Government asking and obtaining from the House of Commons an immediate war credit of eleven millions sterling.

As regards the details of the expenditure, we have confirmatory evidence that money voted by the Raad is being actually spent.

(ii.) *Transfer of Ammunition from the Transvaal to the Free State.*

On 27th June last 500,000 rounds of Mauser ammunition were sent from Pretoria to Bloemfontein. There is reason to believe that the Free State is obtaining generally its warlike stores from Pretoria.

(iii.) *Railway Arrangements.*

It has been reported from two separate trustworthy sources that in the event of war the Netherlands Railway Company have arranged to take over the Free State lines, so that the entire control of the Free State railway will be in the hands of the Transvaal.

(iv.) *Preparation for Mobilisation.*

Since the Bloemfontein Conference, in at least two large districts of the Free State, Kroonstad and Winburg, sealed packets of ammunition have been issued to the burghers, with orders that they are not to be opened except in case of war. At Winburg the field-cornets of the neighbouring districts have been assembled by order of the Free State Government to consult as to the rapid mobilisation of the burghers. On the 13th July it was reported by the British Consul at Johannesburg that fifty Free State burghers had been sent to Krugersdorp, and that small batches were being drafted into the Transvaal by degrees.

(v.) *The Transvaal Plan of Campaign.*

The Pretoria plan of campaign, according to our latest information, contemplates a combined attack on Natal from Harrismith through Van Reenan's Pass, and from the Vryheid district. The whole basis of this plan is the active co-operation of the Free State.

## 3. CONCLUSION.

From the above facts it is submitted that there is a practical certainty that the Free State will officially join hands with the Transvaal, should war take place.

It is true, of course, that the Free State Government, and many of its burghers, would view such a war with great reluctance, and there is little doubt that they are throwing all their influence, at the present moment, into the scales for peace. But the exercise of that influence binds them still more closely to their treaty obligations, to which both their official declarations and acts show, conclusively, that they intend loyally to adhere. Moreover, although a considerable proportion of the Free State burghers dislike the prospect of war with England, yet a very large number of the Dutch Free State burghers would fight for the Transvaal, as they did in 1881, whether the Free State Government was officially at war or not. It is inconceivable, however, that we should again allow such a gross violation of neutrality, which would, as in the last war, so grievously hamper our strategic position.

The conclusions seem clear that our plan of campaign, as well as our preliminary defensive preparations, for the first phase of the war, should be based on the definite hypothesis of a hostile Free State.

E. A. ALTHAM,  
*D.A.A.G.*

8th August, 1899.

And yet with all these accumulated warnings before him, Mr. Balfour could on November 28th, 1899, make his Switzerland speech at Dewsbury!

It may be said that the official memoranda of Sir John Ardagh and Major Altham may have been overlooked by an overworked Leader of the House of Commons. But Mr. Chamberlain, as we know, received the private memoranda of the Intelligence Department. Why did he allow his colleagues to remain in this fools' paradise?

## LORD WOLSELEY'S WARNING.

But the excuse of failure to read the report of the Intelligence Department, even if ad-

mitted to the full, would not explain the indifference of Lord Lansdowne to the reminders of Lord Wolseley and to the repeated warnings of Sir Redvers Buller, whom he had selected to command the British Army in South Africa. Lord Wolseley, on June 8th, and again on July 7th, pointed out that the Orange Free Staters would be found fighting against us. In his evidence of November 28th, 1902, he gave the following answer:—

9085. We were for some time left in uncertainty, as I tried to point out yesterday, whether we should have to fight both the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. I confess, in dealing with that question, so far as I can express the opinion of our best soldiers at the time, and several of them knew South Africa, we all felt from the first that we should have to fight those two Powers, not the Transvaal only; but that did not seem to be, as I tried to prove yesterday from quotations from Lord Lansdowne's minutes, the exact impression of the Government at the moment.

Sir Redvers Buller's evidence before the Royal Commission is frank and outspoken.

## SIR REDVERS BULLER'S CONVICTION.

Extracts from Sir Redvers Buller's evidence, February 17th, 1903:—

15036. (*Sir John Edgc.*) When did you first know that it might be assumed that the Orange Free State would join the Transvaal? I knew it in 1881, and I never altered my opinion.

15037. I know that was your opinion all through, but when were you first informed by anyone in connection with the Government?—By nobody. I believe, if you recollect, in November, 1899, Mr. Balfour made a speech at Dewsbury, and he there said that on the 28th September (the figures worked out to that) if he had been asked whether the Orange Free State were likely to be at war with us he would have replied we were more likely to be at war with Switzerland, and that was the attitude certainly up to the day of my minute of September, with which I was met by Lord Lansdowne on every occasion when I mentioned the Orange Free State.

LORD LANSDOWNE LEAVES IT "OUT OF ACCOUNT."

15038. That in any consideration of the war and how you would conduct it in South Africa you were to leave the Orange Free State out of account altogether?—Out of account; that was Lord Lansdowne's expression, to leave the Orange Free State out of account; and that was really my difficulty, because in my own mind every plan I had and every theory I had about the war was based on the certainty that I should have to fight the Orange Free State, and practically when I was talking beforehand I was always having rather to argue on the supposition that I should not have to fight the Orange Free State.

15039. (*Chairman.*) Do you not say here that on the 30th September you were told the Government had decided to adopt the route by the Orange Free State?—Yes, on the 30th September; my minute was on the 24th September.

15040. Your remarks apply not up to the time you left the country, but only up to the time of that minute?—That is so. I read in the paper that they had made a treaty; I knew that from the newspapers. I forget the date of the treaty, but it was some considerable time before that—a treaty as to an offensive and defensive alliance.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTION.

15041. (*Sir John Edge.*) If you had been allowed to take the Orange Free State into account from the first as a certain opponent, what line would you have taken? Would you have suggested an advance through Natal, or an advance through Bloemfontein?—In all cases on Pretoria I should have advanced through the Free State, and I should have endeavoured not to advance through Natal. I may say that as long ago as 1895 the question was submitted to me, and I gave the opinion then very strongly against any advance through Natal. The difficulties in Natal are enormous, and nobody who has not seen the country can appreciate them.

15042. I think you said you formed the opinion in 1881 that in a war with the Transvaal we should have the Free State against us?—Yes, President Brand told me so then.

15043. And you had never seen anything to make you alter that opinion?—Never.

15050. (*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) Do you say that you had all the information the Intelligence Department had furnished to the Government?—I do not know about the Government; they gave me all the books.

15051. And the documents, I suppose?—Yes, I should say everything they furnished the Government with.

AS LATE AS AUGUST 16!

15052. Early in August you were aware of the practical certainty in their minds that the Free State would officially join hands with the Transvaal?—Yes, I was aware of it in the minds of the Intelligence Department, but it was not accepted by the Government. So late as the 16th August certainly, at any rate, one member of the Government would not have anything to do with the Free State.

15053. Did you discuss this document of the Intelligence Division with Lord Lansdowne?—No, I do not think I had any Intelligence Department documents given to me until I was appointed Commander-in-Chief.

15054. That is the point I wish to get at—I do not think I had, and I was appointed Commander-in-Chief on the 9th of October.

15055. When you told Sir John Hopkins that you had the Intelligence Division information, that was only when you were appointed Commander-in-Chief?—Yes. If I had gone to the Intelligence Department I have no doubt Sir John Ardagh, who was a very old friend of mine, would have given me anything I had asked him for, and I got from the Intelligence Department the information I used in the minute about the port of Durban.

LORD LANSDOWNE'S OBSTINACY.

15056. But the Secretary of State for War did not suggest to you at your early interview that you ought to see the Director of Military Intelligence and discuss the matter with him?—No, he told me to keep my appointment strictly confidential.

15057. And consequently he did not discuss with you any documents he had received from the Intelligence Division, giving reasons at great length?—He discussed with me the numbers, which he quoted from an Intelligence Department paper, that he said the Transvaal could put into the field.

15058. But in addition to that, reasons

showing fairly clearly the certainty that the Orange Free State would join with the South African Republic?—No; as I say, whenever I urged that I was confident of it myself—and I urged it to him several times, as often as I consistently could—in each case the answer always was that the Orange Free State was to be left out of account.

15059. There was a document on August 8th, 1899, giving at great length the reasons for believing certainly that the Orange Free State would join with the South African Republic in war. Were you given a copy of that document at the time in August?—I really could not say; I doubt it. I have seen the document, but my impression is that I got it considerably after that date.

15060. And you say that in any case you would not have paid much attention to it, as your mind was already made up that the Orange Free State would join the South African Republic?—Yes, I was confident.

15061. (*Viscount Esher.*) Did Lord Lansdowne never draw your attention to the treaty of July, 1897, between the Orange Free State and the Transvaal—there are only three clauses to it?—Never. I was aware of that treaty.

#### HE DECLINES TO DISCUSS THE QUESTION WITH BULLER.

15062. But Lord Lansdowne never discussed that treaty with you or mentioned it or referred to it?—Never; I can state that most confidently, because it was a point on which I was always grumbling to Lord Wolseley when we were talking of this war, that they would eventually have to go through the Free State, and I thought it should be settled, and that until we could make a plan of campaign we could not get on. It was absurd my making proposals for what I hoped not to have to do.

15063. Did you see that treaty?—I read it certainly.

15064. Had you seen it?—Yes, I had; I think I had seen it in 1897.

15065. Did it not satisfy you that practi-

cally the Orange Free State were bound to assist the Transvaal?—I never doubted it; my point always was that I remembered so well in 1881, as I said, the shameful behaviour of the Orange Free State, and when Mr. Brand was expostulated with he said he could not help himself—that blood was thicker than water, and I said, “Do not let the Government deceive themselves; this same thing will happen, and the Orange Free State men will fight on the side of the Transvaal whatever happens.” That was my conviction throughout.

15066. (*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) And you were aware that besides the treaty of July, 1897, there was a Military Convention of July, 1897?—Yes, an offensive and defensive alliance.

15067. There was a Military Convention as well, agreeing as to the command of the two forces, when the two States were acting together, providing for their discipline, supplies, and so forth?—Yes, I knew of that.

15068. But Lord Lansdowne never discussed that matter with you; he never brought that forward?—Never at all; he declined to discuss the question of the Orange Free State with me practically until the 23rd September, when he suddenly told me I might put my views forward as to the route.

15069. (*Chairman.*) There was a doubt, though, in spite of all these treaties and conventions, as to the attitude of the Orange Free State, was there not?—I believe this is so, but I had no doubt in my mind as to what the attitude of the Free State young men would be; that was the point.

15070. But there might be political reasons for not bringing forward the fact of the convention and treaty?—Yes; that was one of the reasons which influenced me when I said in my minute that I did not wish to do anything which would prevent negotiations or impede negotiations.

15071. (*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) But that would still make it necessary to take steps in view of the eventuality of the States joining hands?—I thought so.

Not till September 23rd did Lord Lansdowne ask the General whom he was sending out for a memorandum as to the route by which he proposed to advance to Pretoria. On September 5th, Sir Redvers had written to Lord Wolseley, saying: “Lord Lansdowne has given me to understand that in his opinion the Orange Free State route is tabooed for political reasons.” But on September 23rd Lord Lansdowne, recalling the fact that his military advisers have repeatedly insisted on the superiority of the route *via* Bloemfontein,

admitted that "the recent utterances of President Steyn may be taken as giving us fair notice that if there be war we shall have to reckon with both Republics."

General Buller eagerly availed himself of the invitation to plead for some immediate declaration of a definite policy in relation to the Free State. His memorandum, supported by Lord Wolseley, went before the Cabinet, and it was then apparently for the first time that Mr. Balfour discovered that there was a difference between the political attitude of Switzerland and that of the Orange Free State.

As to Lord Lansdowne's responsibility for the monstrous delusion of a Swiss Free State, that is a matter which he must settle between Mr. Balfour on one hand and Sir Redvers Buller on the other. In his evidence before the Royal Commission (March 26th), Lord Lansdowne flatly contradicted Sir Redvers's evidence. Lord Lansdowne said (21121): "I certainly never suggested to Sir Redvers Buller that the Orange Free State had not to be reckoned with." And again he says (21124): "I am sure he (Sir Redvers) had not been told by anyone to leave it (the Free State) out of his calculations." And then he went on to say that "we felt all through that practically whatever the Free State said, our difficulty would be equal to the sum of the two States" (21126). If this be so, it is an unsolved riddle how Mr. Balfour got the idea of an Orange-Swiss neutrality into his head; and it is equally strange how persistent is Sir Redvers Buller's assertion that Lord Lansdowne did say to him exactly the words which, three years later, he denies having uttered. The balance of probabilities strongly inclines to the theory that Lord Lansdowne's memory is confused as to the date when he woke up to the discovery that the Orange Free State could on no account be left out of our reckoning.

## CHAPTER VII.

## BLIND MAN'S BUFF IN HIGH PLACES.

We have now come to the critical period. On June 5th, 1899, the Bloemfontein Conference broke up. Lord Milner returned to Cape Town, leaving behind him at Bloemfontein two men—President Steyn and Mr. Fischer—profoundly convinced that he meant at all costs, and despite all concessions, to force war upon the Transvaal. The British Commander-in-Chief in London was equally convinced that war was inevitable, and on June 8th, 1899, he drew up a Minute to Lord Lansdowne, beginning with a somewhat obvious remark:—

LORD WOISELEY'S PROPOSAL IN  
JUNE, 1899.

"Looking to recent events in South Africa, I think it is very necessary, from a military point of view, that we should now consider our present position there."

He then proceeded to sketch out the measures which in his experienced judgment ought to be taken:—

We could supply all our troops now in South Africa with a double establishment of regimental transport. We could send out three companies of Army Service Corps—one at a time.

Taking advantage of the recent outbreak of fever in Natal, we might—

1. Accumulate in South Africa a large amount of medical transport and material.

2. Nominally to superintend the hutting of the troops at Ladysmith and other stations, we might send out three Field Companies R.E.

3. Commissariat supplies to a very large extent could be collected at Cape Town and Maritzburg.

4. We could at once despatch to the great sources of mule supply officers to make arrangements for purchasing mules as soon as they received telegraphic orders to begin.

5. We could increase our naval squadron on the Cape Station. This is, I think, a point of much importance.

6. We have been of late years urged very strongly to mobilise one of our three Army Corps and a Cavalry Division. Let us do this at once on Salisbury Plain, under the General whom it is intended should command in South Africa in the event of war. The expense would be an extremely small matter when compared with the cost of a war, and it might probably wake up the Transvaal to the fact that England was at last serious, and, by doing so, prevent war altogether. This would not require any immediate calling out of the Army Reserve. When the time came for war, the Reserves for that Army Corps and the Cavalry Division would alone be called out. They would join at Salisbury, taking the places of the superfluous young soldiers who would be disposed of according to our Regulations on the subject.

It is very evident that this demonstration would be far more effective if the Reserves for the force to be collected at Salisbury were called out as soon as the troops were placed under orders to assemble there, and I need scarcely add, that the Army Corps, should it have to be used in the field, would then be far more effective as a military machine for war purposes.

The operations should begin in South Africa as soon as possible, so as to be over by next November.

It would create an excellent feeling if each of the Australian Colonies, Tasmania, and

New Zealand, furnished contingents of mounted troops, and that Canada should furnish two battalions of Foot.

The general plan of campaign to be adopted is one that must thoroughly meet with the views of the General Officer selected for supreme command.

#### WHY MOBILISE ON SALISBURY PLAIN?

Before the Royal Commission Lord Wolseley made the following explanation and defence of his proposal:—

8778. I knew the Government were very anxious to avoid war, and I thought such a show of preparations for war on our part might somewhat influence Mr. Kruger, and might possibly deter him from the war towards which all his proceedings at that time seemed to point. I felt that even if this mobilisation had no deterrent effect on Mr. Kruger, it would at least make sure that we should, in the event of war, have in hand a thoroughly organised Army Corps ready to embark for South Africa at the shortest notice, and certainly ready to embark before the shipping could be supplied by the Admiralty for it. Had my advice been acted upon then, this Army Corps could have been in South Africa, and, very possibly, on the Orange River before Mr. Kruger declared war in October, and he declared war on the 11th October. There was no danger that our mobilisation of this Army Corps should have hastened Mr. Kruger's declaration of war, and this is a very important point, because I know people would at first say that if we had done so Mr. Kruger would have declared war immediately; but my answer to that is a very simple one, and it will be understood by anyone who knows the condition of things in South Africa, that Mr. Kruger could not have taken the field before the time he did, and he took the field upon the very earliest date that the Boer forces could take the field in South Africa, because all their men were mounted and were dependent entirely upon grass, and they have no grass to eat until early in October, in fact, the 10th is a very early time for grass; and, I think, that is the answer to the point I am sure would be made by people who heard my statement about this Army Corps being put down at Estcourt at the time I have mentioned; they would immediately say: "That would have hastened

the war," and my answer to that is that I do not think it could have done so.

#### THE REPLY OF LORD LANSDOWNE.

There is no record as to what Lord Lansdowne replied to this proposal. But Lord Wolseley, on June 13th, received a memorandum from Lord Lansdowne upon the subject of providing land transport for the troops then in South Africa, which began thus—this was on June 13th, remember: "Although there is no present intention of reinforcing the troops now in South Africa," etc., etc. "Well, that of course, coming to me after the many attempts I had made to reinforce our Army in South Africa, led me to think, if anything could do so, that we were either not going to war or would not go to war." (8786.)

#### THE APPOINTMENT OF SIR REDVERS BULLER.

The next important step taken by the Government was the secret appointment, some time in June, of Sir Redvers Buller to the command of the army in South Africa in the event of a war. Sir Redvers Buller gave his own version of the matter to the Royal Commission in a written statement, which he subsequently supplemented by his evidence.

#### GENERAL BULLER'S STATEMENT.

##### PREPARATION FOR WAR.—INTERVIEW WITH LORD LANSDOWNE, JUNE.

In June, 1899, I was summoned from Aldershot by Lord Lansdowne, who told me that, in the event of the war in South Africa, I had been selected to hold the command-in-chief. After submitting to him what seemed to me a preferable arrangement, I accepted the command, and we proceeded to discuss the question of the military policy to be pursued. I maintained that the only practicable route was that through the Orange Free State. He declined even to discuss this. Ultimately, we agreed that one Army Corps, a Cavalry Division, and seven battalions for the lines of communication would be a sufficient force, if the object of the Government were merely to attack the Transvaal; but I added that to leave the Orange Free State out of account was, to my mind, impossible. After leaving Lord Lansdowne, I saw the Commander-in-Chief at the War Office, gave him a summary of my remarks,

and received from him a promise of every assistance that he could afford. I begged both Lord Lansdowne and Lord Wolseley to recollect that I was not in the same position as Lord Wolseley when he organised the Egyptian Expedition of 1882, for he was then the Adjutant-General, and had the whole of the War Office at his back, whereas I was fully employed with my work at Aldershot.

INTERVIEW WITH LORD LANSDOWNE,  
JULY.—MINUTE 6TH JULY.

I heard no more of warlike preparations till the 3rd of July, when I was summoned by telegram from Devonshire to London. There Lord Lansdowne informed me that he had under consideration a proposal to send out to South Africa one Division of infantry and one Brigade of cavalry. I asked whither these troops were to be sent, and with what object. I found there was no definite object, but that it was considered desirable to send some troops to some part of South Africa. After discussing the matter with him at some length, I went to the War Office to see Lord Wolseley; but, finding that he had left the office, I sent him a memorandum, now dated 6th July, 1899, summarising the views which I had expressed to Lord Lansdowne. Herein I summed up my conclusions in the following words:—

“My view is that any operations against Pretoria should be commenced in the following sequence:

1. “Strengthen the Cape Colony and Natal garrisons to the extent that local authority now think sufficient to protect those colonies.”
2. “Make up your mind as to the route, and definitely as to the attitude to be adopted towards the Orange Free State.”
3. “Commence the formation of magazines on the intended line of route, and the mobilisation of the active force.”
4. “Send out this fighting force.”

The proposal to send out these 10,000 men came to nothing. I pressed hard at this time, and afterwards, that our Colonies might be garrisoned in accordance with a proper scheme of defence. I urged this again and again, but without success.

INTERVAL OF APPARENT INACTION.

From that date to the 15th August affairs

went on but slowly at the War Office.\* No Council of War was held; no plan of campaign was adopted; no regular military preparations were undertaken. In the middle of August I heard that all preparations for war in South Africa entailing expenditure had been stopped, and that the Secretary of State for War had gone to Ireland. Mr. Balfour, during his absence, came to the War Office and had an interview with Mr. Wyndham and Lord Wolseley. I also heard that it was believed that an Ultimatum was to be sent to the Transvaal on the 11th September.

MINUTE TO LORD SALISBURY,  
5TH SEPTEMBER.

The condition of affairs seemed to me to be alarming, for the intelligence given in the newspapers made it impossible to believe that war could be avoided. Not knowing what else to do, I approached the private secretary to Lord Salisbury. He came down next day to Aldershot, when I presented my views to him in such a light that he thought it his duty to lay them before Lord Salisbury on the following morning. I drew up a short unofficial memorandum, dated the 5th September, arguing to the conclusion that the time had come for the diplomatic authorities to consult the military authorities.

September 5, 1899.

Lord Salisbury,

As you ask for my ideas, I give them to you privately.

\* Lord Wolseley made representations on July 12th as to the urgent importance of buying mules, wagons, and harness, and repeated his demand for the mobilisation of an Army Corps on Salisbury Plain.

On July 17th he submitted this question to Sir Redvers Buller: Are you quite satisfied that our present position in the Cape Colony and in Natal is quite safe?

In the event of an ultimatum being sent to Kruger, telling him that unless he concedes what Sir A. Milner has demanded, Her Majesty's Government will feel obliged to adopt measures other than diplomatic, do you see any necessity for sending to either, or to both above-mentioned Colonies, any augmentation of our present garrisons there? And, if so, what should such augmentation consist of?

There was a meeting in Lord Lansdowne's room at the War Office on July 18th, 1899, at which Sir R. Buller was asked this question. He replied that he had complete confidence in Butler's ability and forethought, and that as long as clever men like Butler and Symons, on the spot, did not say there was danger, he saw no necessity for sending out any troops in advance of the Army Corps to strengthen our position against any possible attack by the Boers on our frontiers. I do not say these were his exact words, but they are the exact meaning and pith of what he said to Lansdowne and me.

On August 1st Lord Wolseley wrote expressing his satisfaction that 2,000 men were to be sent to Natal.

I am not happy as to the way things are going.

There must be some period at which the military and the diplomatic or political forces are brought into line, and, in my view, this ought to be before action is determined on—in other words, before the diplomat proceeds to an ultimatum the military should be in a position to enforce it.

This is not the case with regard to affairs in South Africa. So far as I am aware, the War Office has no idea of how matters are proceeding, and has not been consulted. I mean that they do not know how fast diplomacy is moving.

#### Conclusions.

The situation is one in which the diplomatic authorities should consult with the military authorities.

#### HIS MEMORANDUM TO LORD WOLSELEY.

On the 5th I heard that Lord Salisbury desired my views on the military situation. These I set forth in a memorandum addressed to the Commander-in-Chief of 5th September, 1899, in which I said: "I am not aware of the views of the Colonial Office, or of the nature of these negotiations, but they seem to have reached an acute stage, and I venture to submit that the time has come when, assuming that they involve the possibility of an expedition being undertaken, the Commander of that expedition ought to be a partner in them."

As a result of this memorandum, the Cabinet decided to send to India for a force of 5,500 men, which was the only organised body of troops that we could put in the field at the moment, without dislocating the whole of our mobilisation arrangements. On learning this, I at once wrote to the Secretary of State for War, pointing out that a Commander would be wanted in Natal when those reinforcements should arrive, and adding that, from the military point of view, it would be wise to make provision at once for a further force in Natal. He replied by return of post, saying that he did not see how, in the face of the decision of the Cabinet, the War Office could be expected to do more at that moment. Matters again drifted, and, apparently, the Government received news that the military situation was becoming less acute, for, on September 14th, on learning that the Officer Commanding at Cape Town

had made contracts for 1,000 mules more than were immediately required, the War Office directed that the contract for the excess number should be cancelled, and compensation paid to the contractor.

#### MINUTE OF 24TH SEPTEMBER REGARDING ROUTE TO BE ADOPTED.

From the first moment of my appointment in the middle of June, I had on every possible occasion urged upon the Secretary of State for War that it was mere self-deception to imagine that we could undertake an expedition against the Transvaal alone, leaving the Orange Free State out of account. On the 23rd September Lord Lansdowne asked me to place upon paper my reasons for attaching so much importance to the adoption of the route through the Orange Free State for invasion of the Transvaal. Accordingly I sent him a memorandum on the subject, dated 24th September. Herein I set forth, among other matters, that, owing to the configuration of the Natal frontier, an advance upon Pretoria by Natal would mean a flank march of 200 miles across the front of a doubtful friend, and, possibly, a concealed enemy. I added that the Orange Free State was open country, containing a good quantity of supplies, and that an advance through it would give us every chance of disposing of the Orange Free State first and settling with the Transvaal alone afterwards.

#### DETERMINATION TO START IN ADVANCE OF TROOPS.

The Cabinet met on the 29th September; and I was afterwards told by Lord Lansdowne that at this meeting the Government had decided to adopt the route by the Orange Free State, and to proceed with all military preparations excepting the mobilisation of the men. On the 30th therefore I wrote to Lord Lansdowne that further delay in the provision of troops would be to incur a very dangerous risk, and pressed for the immediate despatch of the reinforcements by the best ships that could be obtained. "I think," I said, "that if they delay the despatch of troops the Government will be incurring a very grave responsibility." In reply Lord Lansdowne professed himself unable to call out the Reserves, or in other words to mobilise, before the 7th of October. I reckoned from this date that the earliest

embarkation of troops would take place about the 22nd October, and that the Army Corps would be assembled at Cape Colony by 22nd December. I therefore urged that I should start for South Africa by the first steamer on the 7th October; but eventually the 14th was fixed as the date of my departure, and on the 9th I was gazetted Commander-in-Chief of the expedition.

EXTRACTS FROM SIR REDVERS BULLER'S EVIDENCE, FEBRUARY 17TH, 1903.

Sir Redvers Buller supplemented his written statement by his oral evidence, from which the following extracts are taken:—

WHO BROUGHT ON THE WAR?

14964. It was in June, I understand, that you first were selected to hold the Command-in-Chief in South Africa?—About the middle of June. I was told I should treat the appointment confidentially, but I was told if there was a war I should be Commander-in-Chief.

14965. So that there was at any rate an apprehension that a war might take place at that time?—Yes.

14966. Did you form an opinion that a war was likely?—I said that in my opinion the war was inevitable, but on the question of bringing it on, that I doubted that the Boers would bring it on unless we did.

14967. We have had a good deal of evidence to the effect that although there was that general apprehension of war, no distinct preparations were made at that time?—I know nothing about the preparations for war, except by hearsay. I was commanding at Aldershot at the time, and had a good deal to do, and was very little in London, and whenever I came to London I saw the Commander-in-Chief, and I gathered from him that preparations for war were not being made on the scale that he thought necessary.

WHAT GENERAL BULLER WAS TOLD.

14968. All that had been done, as far as you were concerned, was the agreement you mentioned that your force if it was sent out should be an Army Corps and Cavalry Division, and so on?—I was told that it was the intention of the Government to send that force, and I accepted it.

14969. You accepted it as sufficient?—Well, I did not actually accept it as suffi-

cient; I accepted it as a basis on which we should mobilise. At that time I was perfectly ignorant of whether I was going to fight with that force the Transvaal alone or the Transvaal and Orange Free State, and the only information I got from the Secretary of State was that the Orange Free State was out of account.

AN ABORTIVE PROPOSAL.

14970. But in July you heard of a different project?—Yes.

14971. And to that proposal to send out a division of infantry you had some objections, I think?—I did object to it very strongly. I objected to sending out any portion of what was intended to be our fighting force before we had a plan of campaign, and before we had, at any rate, come to a decision as to in what portion of the very large country, South Africa, the fighting force was really intended to be employed.

14972. Was not the object of sending out the 10,000 men then proposed simply to strengthen the existing garrisons in Cape Colony and Natal?—No, it was not; it was a definite force.

14973. But you were aware of the state of the garrisons in the Colonies at the time?—Yes, I was, and I pressed that those garrisons should be completed on a scale which could be made, as I put it, a safe ground for the fighting force to be based on, but that was not done.

HIS PLEA FOR REINFORCEMENTS.

14979. What I was alluding to was that you did not consider the garrisons as they had been placed in the Colonies sufficient?—I did not, and I go further than that; the conditions we were obliged to look at at the moment were the conditions of an actual war with, possibly, the Free State, but certainly the Transvaal, and no scheme of defence, according to my belief, had ever been prepared for those conditions, and therefore practically there was no scheme of defence.

14980. Did you form any idea in your own mind what would have been an adequate garrison—independently of an expeditionary force—for the two Colonies for the purposes of defence?—I did. My own idea at the time—I only mentioned it in conversation, and very vaguely, to Lord Wolseley—was that I thought about 15,000 men in Natal, just in front of Estcourt, somewhere about

Frere, behind the Tugela, in fact, would have been sufficient to have protected Natal.

14981. You thought they would attack, if they did attack, in Natal?—Yes.

“WE WERE NOT READY TO MOBILISE.”

14993. You heard nothing more for some time after that, but you became anxious as to the situation?—Yes, mobilisation requires a preliminary expenditure at the moment, and I gathered that that expenditure was not being carried out, so that we were not ready to mobilise.

14994. We had a good deal of evidence about the position at that time, and that is the case. There were certain preparations which the military authorities considered necessary, and which were not taken because of the absence of money. That appears from the evidence, and that is your position about it?—Yes, that was all I knew.

14,995. You thought that, considering your position as being designated for commanding the force in the field, it was your duty to put your views forward, and you did so in the beginning of September?—Yes, I thought I was going to find myself in a hornet's nest, and that I ought to do what I could to protect myself.

“OUR PREPARATIONS NOT KEEPING UP WITH THE SITUATION.”

14996. You put it forward in a memorandum which you addressed to the Commander-in-Chief?—Yes.

14997. Would you say shortly what your view of the position was at that time?—My view was that we were moving, I thought, rather rapidly towards war, and that our preparations were not keeping up with the situation.

14998. And you had an apprehension that if the negotiations, or any failure of negotiations, led to war, that absence of preparation would be of very serious consequence?—Yes, I was impressed with the fact that it was not my duty as a soldier to take any measures to make peace impossible or even difficult, but there were ordinary measures of preparation that could have been done privately and could not really have affected any peace negotiations, and those were not being taken; and, in my opinion, we had not enough time to spare to make it wise to delay them.

15000. Did you work that out in figures?

—I came to the conclusion that practically whatever we did they would have six weeks' start of us. I thought that the negotiations were tending rapidly towards war, and that we were not ready for war. I thought that we ought at once to decide as to the line of policy which would be adopted if we were forced into war, and that we ought to begin a regular and effective preparation, with a view of carrying out that policy at the very moment we found it was impossible to avoid war, and I thought that to do that we ought to protect our Colonies, and to have a force in our Colonies that would be sufficient to deter the enemy from invading them before we were ready.

DRIFTING INTO WAR.

15001. And, therefore, you advocated measures to be taken to delay any outbreak?—Yes, I advocated that the diplomatic proceedings should be conducted with a view to gaining time, and that the military preparations should be hurried.

15002. I suppose there is another way of putting that matter, that you would be of opinion that if there had been any means of forecasting the future earlier, and as soon as it became evident that there was a danger of war, the preparations ought then to have commenced?—Yes, to put it quite plainly, I thought the future was not being forecast—that we were drifting.

15003. In the memorandum, of which you have spoken, to the Commander-in-Chief, you elaborated that?—I elaborated that theory in the memorandum which I addressed to the Commander-in-Chief on the 5th September, and in which I said I knew he had represented those facts more fully, and, probably, better than I could, but I merely wanted to support the recommendations I knew he had put forward.

15004. Have you anything else to say about the position at the beginning of September?—Not beyond that my recommendations did not meet with the result that I had hoped they would; I still considered we were not in the beginning of September making sufficient preparation.

15005. Towards the end of September the Secretary of State asked you for your reasons with regard to the route, did he not?—Yes, he knew that from June up to that date I had always tried to impress upon him that, in my opinion, we could not leave the

Orange Free State out of account, and that they would in the end be found to side with the Transvaal. I had always told him my experience in 1881, when they were a very harassing friend, at any rate, and he asked me on that date to put my views on paper, and I did so.

AT LAST!

15006. You put in the memorandum dated 24th September?—Yes. That, I believe, was read or communicated to the Cabinet, and Lord Lansdowne told me, on the 30th, that the Cabinet had given orders for the expenditure—that was the expenditure for mobilisation—and I then pressed him to at once call out the Reserves, and I pointed out to him in a letter that he would incur a very dangerous military risk if that were not done, but he did not do so. He put it off until the 7th October.

15007. That was a week?—Yes, the 7th October was the earliest date he said that it could be done, and I said: “The crisis will come before the troops get out to South Africa; may I go out at once?” and it was definitely arranged that I should start on the 24th, and I did so.

15008. As we know, on the 9th the ultimatum came from the other side?—Yes.

TOO LATE ALL ROUND.

15009. That completes the period before the outbreak of the war; is there anything else with regard to the preparations for the war, which is the first head of our reference that you would like to say at this point?—Well, we were late; the preparations were not so well advanced as they should have been, and we were short of hospital equipment, harness and wagons, and those sort of things, and of supplies.

“I WAS NEVER CALLED BEFORE ANYTHING.”

15019. (*Viscount Esher.*) One of the points you mention in your statement is that no council of war was held; do you wish to suggest that one should have been held?—Well, I do suggest to the Commission that I was placed in an uncomfortable position—I made no complaint myself—but one which I do not think in future a General Officer ought to be placed in. I think there should have been a consideration of the intended expedition at which the Commander-in-Chief

designate should have expressed his views before the Army Board or the Defence Committee of the Cabinet, or before some Board who would have heard what he had to say, and he would have had an opportunity of raising a large number of questions that I should have liked many times during the three months to raise, but I never had any opportunity.

15020. You were never called before the Defence Committee of the Cabinet at all?—No, I was never called before anything.

“I WAS NEVER CONSULTED ABOUT ANYTHING.”

15021. And you were not present at any meeting of the Army Board at the War Office?—Not one—practically at not one. I was President of a Committee which sat at that time in the War Office which had nothing to do with the war, and occasionally Lord Wolseley, if he heard I was in the office, and there was any question going to be considered in the Secretary of State's room, sent down for me and asked me to come in; but that was a casual matter, and I was never consulted on anything, nor was I ever given any question to consider and answer by anybody.

15022. You had some interviews with Lord Lansdowne, of course?—Yes; Lord Lansdowne's instructions to me were: “Come in to see me if you come to town.”

“I SAW NOBODY AND WAS SHOWN NOTHING, AND WAS ASKED FOR NOTHING.”

15023. But you did not see the Prime Minister or the Colonial Secretary, or any other member of the Government?—No, nor did I see any of the correspondence that was passing at the time between the Cape and the Colonial Office.

15024. In the summary of your evidence there is a heading which begins: “General considerations affecting the plan of the campaign.” Did you lay those considerations before Lord Lansdowne or any other member of the Government?—No, I was never asked for my opinion on anything of the sort. I did indirectly discuss them with Lord Wolseley on several occasions, and we differed on an important point—namely, that he attached strategical importance to Bloemfontein which I did not.

15025. But that was a discussion between

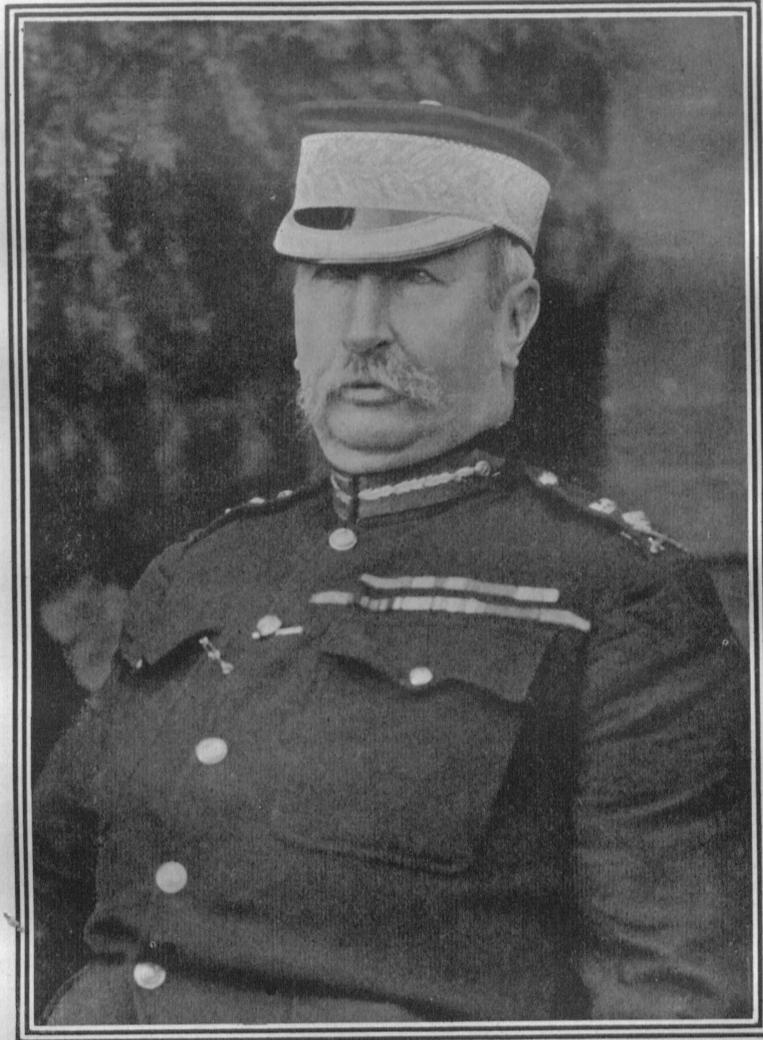


*Photo by*

FIELD-MARSHAL SIR GEORGE WHITE.

*[Langley.]*

*[See p. 72.]*



*Photo by]*

GENERAL SIR REDVERS BULLER.

*[Knight.*

*[face p. 73.*

you and the Commander-in-Chief?—A private discussion.

15026. And these general considerations were not laid before the Government, because you were never asked to state your opinion to any Minister of the Crown?—Never; I was asked for nothing.

“I RECEIVED NO INSTRUCTIONS.”

15030. (*Sir Henry Norman.*) Do I understand, Sir Redvers, that before your departure for South Africa you received no letter of general instructions as to what the Government wished to be done?—None.

15031. Nor on your arrival there?—None.

15032. Or after your arrival?—None—the usual letter of service.

15033. But that is a mere letter of appointment?—Yes.

15034. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) Speaking broadly, your opinion is that the Commander of a force such as you had under you at that time should be taken into the confidence of the Government?—I think so. I think I suffered myself a tremendous disadvantage by not having the smallest idea when I arrived at Cape Town of the course which negotiations had been taking, and the attitude of mind in which I should find Lord Milner.

“I WAS GIVEN NO NOTION OF THEIR POLICY.”

15035. And you further think that such a Commander ought to have an opportunity of expressing his views upon the state of military affairs to the Government?—I certainly think so. I think any man is better for having been forced to explain his views, and the very fact of explaining a man's views very often calls attention to various things he might otherwise overlook, and I think that to send a man out on that sort of expedition without having caused him first of all to give some notion of his policy is really placing him at a disadvantage. There were matters I should very much have liked myself to have brought forward and discussed. I was told to treat my appointment as confidential, and I was not able to discuss them very much, and it would have been an advantage for me to go before a body of gentlemen and say, “I think so and so.”

LORD LANSDOWNE'S REPLY.

So far Sir Redvers Buller. Now for Lord Lansdowne's rejoinder.

EXTRACTS FROM LORD LANSDOWNE'S EVIDENCE.

21247. As to Sir Redvers Buller not being taken into confidence by the War Office, which is the statement he has made?—My attention has been called to a statement contained in the summary of Sir Redvers Buller's evidence to that effect. I think Sir Redvers Buller is under a complete misapprehension. I should like in the first place to dwell upon the extreme unlikelihood of the Government having deliberately withheld from Sir Redvers Buller anything that it was desirable that he should know; after all he was selected by the Government; he carried our fortunes, and it was not very likely that we should keep him in the dark systematically, which is what I understand he alleges. We warned him in good time that he was to be asked to take command of the force, with the object that he might have ample opportunity of considering on what lines he should conduct these operations. I also wish to say that upon the occasion when I intimated to Sir Redvers Buller that he had been designated for the chief command I went out of my way to tell him that from that date anything that the War Office could supply him with in the way of information was his to ask for. If he wanted information and did not come for it, I submit that he had only himself to blame.

WHY DID HE NOT READ THE NEWSPAPERS?

21248. Of what date do you speak—in June?—I think it was in June. It seems to be assumed that there was a great deal of secret political intelligence which was within our knowledge and which was not within his, and which ought to have been imparted to him. That was not at all the case; everything that happened during the course of these negotiations appeared from day to day in the columns of the newspapers; there was really nothing that we could have imparted to him which he could not derive from the ordinary sources of information. He certainly had access to me, and as a matter of fact, he did on several occasions come to me at the War Office, although not

often. He certainly had access to the Commander-in-Chief, and to the Intelligence Branch, and it is also to be remembered that Colonel Stopford, who was designated as his Military Secretary, was at the time in charge of the Mobilisation Department in the War Office. Sir Redvers Buller could certainly have found out through him what was happening in the War Office; but I am bound also to say this, that Sir Redvers Buller's position in the War Office, although he had ceased to be a member of the Headquarters Staff, was such that he really could have obtained from anybody anything he wanted in the way of assistance or information.

#### HE HAD THE RUN OF THE WAR OFFICE.

He had been, as the Commission knows, for years in a quite exceptional position of authority in the War Office; he was Adjutant-General when the Duke of Cambridge was Commander-in-Chief, and at that time a great part of the work of the War Office was really conducted by Sir Redvers Buller, and by him alone. I say, having served in the War Office with Sir Redvers Buller, and knowing his relations with the War Office staff, that there was not a room in the War Office that Sir Redvers Buller could not have walked into whenever he pleased with the certainty that whatever assistance he could get in that room would be given to him without demur. I have known Sir Redvers Buller for some time, and it never occurred to me that he was a particularly diffident person, or very easily intimidated, particularly by civilians.

#### "PREPOSTEROUS" AND "MONSTROUS."

Therefore, if I may say so, coming back to a point which you mentioned just now, the suggestion that Sir Redvers Buller was, so to speak, boycotted at the War Office, and that it was because of that that he had to find out the Prime Minister's Private Secretary and appeal through him to the Prime Minister, seems to me to be a rather preposterous representation of the facts—I cannot put it more gently than that.

21249. As a matter of fact there was—and you have already referred to it—a Minute of his that went to the Prime Minister?—Yes, a Minute which might perfectly have been written earlier, and which might perfectly have been addressed to the Commander-in-Chief, or, if he preferred it, to me.

21250. Have you anything else to say with regard to that procedure?—No, I have not.

21251. At any rate there was no intention of yours to deny him any amount of your confidence?—I cannot put it too strongly that it was, not only far from my intentions, but I think it would have been a monstrous thing if, having invited Sir Redvers Buller to undertake this extremely important command, I, or anybody under me, had stopped short of giving him all the assistance that could possibly be afforded him. At any rate, if he believed that assistance of that kind was being withheld from him, I venture to suggest that he ought to have spoken or written to me, which he might have done at any moment during the summer.

#### LORD WOLSELEY AS THE IMPORTUNATE WIDOW.

Lord Lansdowne's emphatic repudiation of Sir Redvers Buller's statement would carry more weight if Sir Redvers Buller's experience was not supplemented by Lord Wolseley's, who, although Commander-in-Chief, was kept equally in the dark as to what was going on, and was equally baffled by the indecision of Ministers. He was always writing suggestions and making proposals which were not carried out.

#### EXTRACTS FROM LORD WOLSELEY'S EVIDENCE.

8788. Looking back to the whole of the summer of 1899, I may say I was constantly asking for the expenditure of public money upon services which would be necessary in the event of war, and I may again say that war at that time seemed to me absolutely inevitable. I could see no way out of it, as far as I was able to judge, but, of course, I

was not in the secrets of the Government, and it seemed to me to be a certainty. I could get no money for the purchase of clothing, equipment, transport, or any military stores, and without money, of course, I could do nothing in the way of preparing stores for the mobilisation of an army for field service.

#### THE CABINET AND THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

9029. Looking back to the time when

the war hung in the balance during the summer of 1899, I feel that national interests suffered because the Commander-in-Chief was not brought into direct and constant touch with the Cabinet. He had no opportunity of learning from day to day the collective views of the Cabinet upon the position in South Africa, and he could only obtain a glimpse of its policy and its views, and on the other hand the Members of the Cabinet only learnt his military opinions upon the position from day to day through a third party, the Civilian Secretary of State for War. In other words, the Cabinet generally, as a body, were not brought into contact with any military opinion whatever during the progress of the war.

9030. So far as you knew?—So far as I knew, and, of course, I was the military adviser of the Cabinet at the time.

9031. (*Sir Henry Norman.*) Would you not say "Any responsible military opinion?" because I have no doubt they were flooded?—They may have been by outside opinion, but I am talking of "responsible" opinions; I quite agree with you.

9032. (*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) Did you attend the meetings of the Defence Committee of the Cabinet?—I have been to one or two; I may have been to more, but not many.

9033. During that long period when the Boer war was pending, the last two years particularly, after the Raid did you only attend one or two meetings?—I could not tell you offhand, but I was very seldom at them.

9034. (*Viscount Esher.*) With regard to what Sir Henry Norman said, you have no reason to suppose that the Cabinet asked officially for any other military opinion except your own?—None.

#### MR. CHAMBERLAIN SEES NO REASON FOR REINFORCEMENTS!

Occasionally he got glimpses of the mind of the Colonial Secretary. Lord Lansdowne wrote to him from Derreen, August 20th, as follows:—

Your Memorandum of the 17th has reached me.

You have probably become aware since you wrote it that the outlook in South Africa has improved. We are not yet in a position to assume that matters will be satisfactorily settled; but Mr. Chamberlain wrote to me

two days ago that, while he wished to avoid relaxing the pressure, he saw no occasion for reinforcements.—Report, p. 266.

"WE ARE NOT PREPARED FOR WAR."

—LORD WOLSELEY.

Mr. Chamberlain, on August 18th, saw no need for reinforcements, although he was all for keeping up the pressure which forced on the war; the Commander-in-Chief was of a very different opinion. On August 24th he wrote to Lord Lansdowne as follows:—

Your note of the 20th is written in so hopeful a spirit of peace in South Africa that I assume the Cabinet has information on the subject not known to the Press. To judge of matters there from the daily papers, it would seem that every preparation is being made by Mr. Kruger for war, and that he is striving to force a war policy upon the Orange Free State also. He is a shrewd old fellow, who will, I have always thought, make terms at the last minute, and easy terms for us if we have the backbone to exact them, but will prolong the *pourparlers* and put England to all possible inconvenience and very great expense before he does make terms. It is not for me as a mere military adviser to pronounce when the interruption to business that must be caused by the Boers' present policy, and the very great outlay of public money it entails, has become a heavier and a greater and more dangerous burthen than the actual war for which we are preparing in dribbles. The pacific bent of public opinion at home compels us to be careful to avoid measures that might be fairly regarded as "hurrying the pace" and forcing on hostilities. The problem before us, according to my lights, is by what measures can we most effectively and judiciously make Kruger and Company fully realise that we mean business unless Sir A. Milner's modest demands are freely conceded.

A soldier in power would bring this about by such a display of force as that I have recommended from the first in this matter, and which on a smaller scale I strongly advocated in my note to you of the 18th inst., and in the minute enclosed with it. I write this very early in the morning before I have seen any of the newspapers of the day. But judging the position from all news to hand up to yesterday, I can see no change in Mr. Kruger's attitude towards us. At this moment we are *not* locally prepared for war

in South Africa, so that if it comes upon us under present circumstances we shall surrender the initiative to Kruger, and in no recent case that I can think of would, or, at least, if properly handled, could that initiative be more likely to seriously injure our national prestige or be more hurtful to the party in office, if I may venture upon such a political comment.

I still believe, perhaps foolishly, that a display of force would be the quickest and surest way to secure peace.

#### LORD LANSDOWNE'S REPLY.

Derreen, Kenmare, Aug. 27th, 1899.

My dear Wolseley,

Thanks for your letter of the 24th.

Your Minute was sent at once to Mr. Chamberlain, and a copy has reached Lord Salisbury by this time.

My own view is that we ought not to send further reinforcements to South Africa until it has become clear that the last proposals made by the South African Republic cannot be accepted as a basis for discussion.

While we are uncertain upon this point, I should certainly avoid "hurrying the pace and forcing on hostilities." We might, I think, precipitate them by an ill-timed turn of the screw.

On the other hand, it is clear that we must be ready to send reinforcements whenever we are told that the negotiations have broken down, and neither you nor I can judge how soon this may be.

#### MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S RESPONSE.

The response which Mr. Chamberlain made to Lord Wolseley's appeal of August 24th, which was sent to him at once by Lord Lansdowne, was characteristic. He had on August 18th declared that he saw no need for sending reinforcements to South Africa. The Commander-in-Chief had warned him in his letter of the 24th that "we were not locally prepared for war."

His "first intimation"! Is this statesmanship, or is it Blind Man's Buff?

On September 22nd Ministers at home had broken off all negotiations, and were engaged in drafting the new proposals which were to be forced upon the Boers by a menace of invasion. They had not yet gazetted Sir Redvers Buller to the command, neither had they summoned Parliament or called out the Army Reserves. In Cape Town, General Forestier-Walker had only received, on September 29th, the news that an Army Corps was coming. In Natal the Indian contingent and Sir George White were still on the sea.

So on August 26th Mr. Chamberlain deemed it wise, prudent, and patriotic to "kill Kruger with his mouth." Knowing that we were not locally prepared for war, and knowing he had stopped reinforcements being sent to South Africa, he proceeded to make the famous menacing speech to a Unionist demonstration at Highbury, in which he warned President Kruger that he was a squeezed sponge, and that the sands were running out of the hour-glass, phrases which were cabled to Johannesburg as a plain menace of war.

#### LORD WOLSELEY'S CRY OF DESPAIR.

When Lord Salisbury's private secretary gave Sir Redvers Buller at the beginning of September his first hint as to the imminence of war, Lord Wolseley wrote to Lord Lansdowne on September 5th as follows:—

The first intimation I have had that our negotiations with the Transvaal Government have reached an acute stage has come to me from Sir R. Buller. Asked by Lord Salisbury to state his views upon the military position in South Africa, he did so in a letter to me, which, as time pressed, he sent on in a letter to Lord Salisbury direct.

With the general tenor of his letter I fully concur. We have lost time, a misfortune in war and in preparing for war, which is deplorable. We must endeavour to make up for this military mistake by the skill of our diplomacy.

Can we not stave off actual hostilities for five or six weeks to enable us to collect in Natal the military force I have all along recommended should be sent there?

We have committed one of the very greatest blunders in war—namely, we have given our enemy the initiative. He is in a position to take the offensive, and by striking the first blow to ensure the great advantage of winning the first "round." Let us hope he may have no skilled soldiers to advise him on this point.

On September 28th the Commander-in-Chief sent a Minute to Lord Lansdowne which sounds the same note of entreaty to gain time which inspired his Minute at the beginning of the month.

The Minute begins :—

“ Postpone by diplomacy, for one month at least, any overt act of hostility on the part of the Transvaal.”

His warning words fell, as before, on deaf ears. Nothing could have been easier than to have secured the postponement. But Mr. Chamberlain was impatient. Lord Milner was imperious, and so the curtain was rung up in hot haste in October upon the War of the Unready.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE NEW DIPLOMACY ON THE EVE OF WAR.

THE last chapter closed with Lord Wolseley's despairing appeal for delay. The military authorities were not ready for war. Hence their despairing appeal to the diplomatists to gain time. But it does not seem to be the custom of the new diplomacy to pay any heed to the representations of the Army on which it relies to make good its blunders.

The Royal Commissioners in their Report confine themselves to the evidence given by their witnesses, who did not include either Lord Milner or Mr. Chamberlain. Hence they fail to bring into clear relief the fact which stands on record in the official negotiations, that, so far from there having been any difficulty in securing the delay which the military authorities begged for in vain, nothing could have been more easy than to have secured it, for the Boers, on their part, were actually imploring Mr. Chamberlain to postpone a rupture by keeping his word. He had only to be content with their acceptance of his own proposition for the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the new Franchise Law to have secured all the delay that Lord Wolseley wanted.

Mr. Chamberlain was so impatient to force matters to a head, that he went back on his own proposal, repudiated the promise given on his behalf by Lord Milner, and precipitated the war which his military authorities begged him to postpone.

As this constitutes what is perhaps the most damning of all the charges against the Government based upon the narrative of facts proved by the Commission, it may be well to quote from the earlier Blue Books exactly what happened.

## THE STEPS THAT LED TO WAR.

On August 1st, 1899, Lord Milner sent to the Transvaal Government the following proposal:—

“Her Majesty's Government authorise me to invite President South African Republic to appoint delegates to discuss with delegates to be appointed by me on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, whether Uitlander population will be given immediate and substantial representation by franchise law recently passed by Volksraad, together with other measures connected with it, such as increase of seats, and if not, what additions or alterations may be necessary to secure that result.”—Blue Book C 9518, p. 30.

On August 15th the State Attorney asked if the British Government would be willing to keep the proposal for a Joint Commission open pending the consideration of an alternative offer of a five years' franchise with conditions.

On August 17th Lord Milner informed Mr. Chamberlain that he had sent the following reply to Mr. Greene:—

“I have instructed British Agent as follows, as a first step:—

"If the South African Republic Government should reply to the invitation of a joint inquiry put forward by Her Majesty's Government by formally making the proposals described in your telegram, such a course would not be regarded by Her Majesty's Government as a refusal of their offer, but they would be prepared to consider the reply of the South African Republic Government on its merits. Please see State Secretary and inform him accordingly."—*Ib.* p. 46.

Having received this positive assurance that their alternative proposal would not be regarded as a rejection of the invitation to a joint inquiry, State Secretary Reitz sent to Sir Alfred Milner a note embodying the terms of the alternative proposal.

This note Mr. Chamberlain, after the war broke out, declared seemed to him to concede nine-tenths of the matter in dispute and the one-tenth was a mere matter of form.—(House of Commons, October 19th, 1899.)

#### THE BOERS' PLEA FOR A COMMISSION.

But the despatch of Mr. Chamberlain of August 28th, prefaced as it was by his speech about "the squeezed sponge" and "the sand in the hour-glass" (Highbury, August 28th), was read by the Boers and by everyone else at the time as an absolute rejection of their proposal. Mr. Reitz wrote on September 2nd stating that they accepted it in this sense, and expressed the surprise of the Boers at such a reception of their proposal. He said:—

"The proposal, which has now lapsed, contained in the letters of this Government of August 19th and August 21st was induced by suggestions given by British Agent to State Attorney, and these were accepted by this Government in good faith, and on express request, as equivalent to an assurance that the proposal would be acceptable to Her Majesty's Government."

Finding that their own alternative proposal, as they believed, had been rejected by Mr. Chamberlain, they intimated their willingness to accept the Joint Commission which he had pressed upon them on August 1st, and which Lord Milner had promised would be held open for their acceptance if their alternative proved unacceptable. The terms of the despatch of September 2nd prove unmistakably that whatever may have been the ultimate designs of the Boers, they committed themselves to a course which, whatever else it might have done, would at least have secured the delay for which the military authorities were pressing.

"Though it can in no wise abandon any of its rights, this Government would nevertheless be glad to convince and satisfy Her Majesty's Government that the franchise law now passed and these extension [?] of the representation with four new seats will immediately have the advantage of giving a substantial representation to the Outlander population, and that for the rest it is its intention to continue working with Her Majesty's Government on a friendly footing. This Government, having regard to the difference that, in their opinion, exists between the invitation as put forward in the telegram despatched on August 2nd, and that contained in the despatch of July 27th from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and further, to the fact that in the last named it is stated that the most suitable way of dealing with points involving complicated details and questions of a technical nature would be to discuss them in the first case by delegates appointed by both Governments, who should report the result of their deliberations and submit their recommendations to the two Governments respectively, and assuming that it is not intended thereby to interfere in the internal affairs of this Republic or to establish precedent, but simply to gain information and elucidations whether the measures already

taken are effectual or not, and, if not, to show this Government where such is the case, this Government would be glad to learn from Her Majesty's Government how they propose that the Commission should be constituted, and what place and time for meeting is suggested."—(*Ib.*, p. 54.)

#### THE BAD FAITH OF MR. CHAMBERLAIN.

Nothing, therefore, would have been easier than to have continued the negotiations, appointed the Commission, and waited for its report. To have done so would have been simply to act with ordinary good faith, and, in view of the representations of the British military authorities, with ordinary common-sense. But this did not suit the impatient eagerness of Mr. Chamberlain to enforce submission. Instead of welcoming the Boer acceptance of his own proposal, Mr. Chamberlain replied on September 8th:—

"Her Majesty's Government cannot now consent to go back to the proposals for which those in the note of August 19th are intended as a substitute, especially as they are satisfied that the law of 1899 in which these proposals were finally embodied is insufficient to secure the immediate and substantial representation which Her Majesty's Government have always had in view and which they gather from the reply of the Government of the South African Republic that the latter admit to be reasonable."

He closed his despatch by the well-known intimation that ministers would reserve to themselves the right to reconsider the situation *de novo*, and to formulate their own proposals.—C. 9251. No. 52.

#### THE BOERS RENEW THEIR APPEAL.

Even then the Transvaal Government did not close negotiations. On September 16th, Mr. Reitz renewed his imploring appeal to the Government to abide by its own proposition. He remarked with natural surprise upon Mr. Chamberlain's abandonment of his own proposal.

"And with a view to the assurance given by the Secretary of State for Colonies that he would not consider the said offer as a refusal in answer to his invitation to a joint inquiry based upon existing franchise law and scheme of representation for Witwatersrand goldfields, it cannot understand why as soon as this invitation was accepted (as was done by this Government in its Note, September 2nd) Her Majesty's Government declares that it cannot any longer agree to the inquiry on this subject and for purposes which that Government itself proposes."

He then went on, in the name of the Transvaal Government, to declare that it would still welcome the Joint Commission.

"It considers that if conditions are contained in the existing franchise law which has been passed, and in the scheme of representation, which might tend to frustrate object contemplated, it will attract the attention of the Commission, and thus be brought to the knowledge of this Government.

"Finally, this Government continues to cherish hope that Her Majesty's Government on further consideration will feel itself free to abandon idea of making new proposals more difficult for this Government, and imposing new conditions, and will declare itself satisfied to abide by its own proposal for a Joint Commission as first proposed by Secretary of State for Colonies in Imperial Parliament, and subsequently proposed to this Government and accepted by it. If Her Majesty's Government is willing, and feels able to make this decision, it would put an end to the present state of tension; race hatred would

decrease and die out, the prosperity and welfare of South African Republic, and of whole of South Africa, would be developed and furthered, and fraternisation between the different nationalities would increase."

#### MR. CHAMBERLAIN PRECIPITATES WAR.

The refusal of Mr. Chamberlain to declare himself satisfied with the acceptance of his own proposal was much commented on at the time on account of its apparently wanton precipitation of the war; that is to say, it was so criticised by the friends of peace. It is only now that we know that it was equally open to censure on the part of those who believed in the necessity for waging war. We were not ready for war. Our military authorities were pleading for delay. The Boers themselves offered us all the delay necessary, and more besides. But Mr. Chamberlain would have none of it. Nothing would suit him but to hurl at once his informal ultimatum at the head of the Transvaal.

But even this does not exhaust the sum of the culpability of Mr. Chamberlain and his colleagues. For even if it be admitted that Ministers had sufficient reason for rejecting Mr. Kruger's acceptance of the Joint Commission, they still had a means ready to their hand of securing the time so urgently desired by their Commander-in-Chief. The Hague Conference had just closed its sittings. The British Plenipotentiary, Lord Pauncefote, had taken a leading part in framing a Convention for the pacific settlement of disputes threatening to result in war. Lord Pauncefote was at the time in London and was most anxious that the machinery of the Hague Convention should be invoked to avert the war.

#### ANOTHER CHANCE OF POSTPONEMENT.

Arbitration Mr. Chamberlain had refused upon the illogical plea that there could be no arbitration between a suzerain State and its vassal, forgetful of the fact that Bulgarian delegates sat at the Hague side by side with the representatives of the Sultan, and that if a vassal State can make war it can also appeal for arbitration, for the greater includes the less. Lord Pauncefote, therefore, did not propose arbitration, but he thought that the Eighth Article of the Convention, known as the Holls Clause, providing for special mediation, might have been acted upon. After Mr. Chamberlain's despatch of September 8th and Mr. Reitz's reply, negotiations came to an end, and the very situation arose which Article 8 was framed to meet. Article 8 was drafted by the American delegates, and had the hearty support of the British delegates as well as of the Lord Chief Justice of England, who, before the Conference met, had expressed himself strongly in favour of such a method of settling disputes.

Article 8 runs as follows:—

"The signatory Powers agree to recommend the application, in circumstances which permit it, of special mediation in the following form:—In the case of a grave disagreement endangering peace, the disputing States each choose one Power to which they entrust the mission of entering into direct communication with the Power chosen by the other side, for the purpose of preventing the rupture of pacific relations. During the continuance of their mandate, the duration of which, unless the contrary is stipulated, cannot exceed 30 days, the contending States shall cease all direct relations in regard to the question in dispute, which is considered as referred exclusively to the mediating Powers. They must apply all their efforts to arranging the difference. In case of the

actual rupture of pacific relations, these Powers remain charged with the common mission of profiting by every opportunity of re-establishing peace."

"SPECIAL MEDIATION."

If it be objected at once that in the dispute between us and the Transvaal Republic we could not allow the intervention of any foreign Power, and therefore that this Article does not apply, Lord Pauncefote held that the principle involved in Article 8 might be appealed to. The essential principle of Article 8 is that when the original negotiators have done their best, and stand face to face with no appeal left but to the sword, the signatory Powers agree to recommend that a period of thirty days' truce should be interposed between the rupture of the negotiations and the declaration of war, and that during these thirty days new negotiators should be brought in, who would approach the subject with a fresh mind, free from the prejudices or animosities generated by the long diplomatic wrangle, and that those fresh negotiators should apply all their efforts to arranging the difference. During the time when the matter was handed over to those fresh negotiators, all direct relations in regard to the questions in dispute between the disputing States would cease.

Article 7 provides that the acceptance of mediation need not interrupt mobilisation, war preparations, or current military operations. The right to accept or reject the conclusions arrived at by the new negotiators would, of course, remain in the hands of the disputing States. Now, why should not the principle of Article 8 have been adopted in relation to our difficulties with the Transvaal? In view of the unanimous recommendation of all the Powers at the Peace Conference, it would have involved no slight either upon Mr. Conyngham Greene or upon Mr. Secretary Reitz, if the Transvaal Republic on the one side and the British Empire on the other had appointed fresh negotiators. Let us say, for instance, that President Kruger might have appointed Mr. Fischer of the Orange Free State, or Mr. Hofmeyr of our own Colony, while we might on our part have appointed Lord Pauncefote or the Duke of Devonshire, and entrusted to them during the period of truce the duty of attempting to arrive at an honourable and pacific settlement.

LORD PAUNCEFOTE'S OPINION.

Whether such an appeal to special mediation, as Lord Pauncefote believed, would have averted war, is a point upon which men may differ. But there is no question whatever that if Ministers had adopted Lord Pauncefote's suggestion, a truce of thirty days would have been secured during which we might have prosecuted with the utmost energy the task of preparing for war in case the special mediators failed to arrive at a settlement. But so infatuated were the men in control of our policy in Downing Street and in Cape Town that they would not listen to a suggestion which would have secured them the breathing space which they needed to make ready for war. They seem to have recoiled with disgust from every proposal which conceivably might have secured a pacific settlement of the dispute. To read over the Blue Books in the light of these fresh disclosures suggests no other conclusion than that Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Milner were so bent upon provoking war that they deliberately rejected every proposal which might have enabled them to make war successfully rather than face the off-chance of securing peace.

The opportunity of securing the delay begged for by the Commander-in-Chief having been rejected, we shall now see how Ministers prepared for the war which they would neither avert nor postpone.

THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND.

On September 5th, in the same minute in which Lord Wolseley implored for delay, the Commander-in-Chief wrote :—

I do not ask or wish to be informed as to any plans or action of the Government with which it is not considered desirable that I should be acquainted. But our position at present is fraught with serious danger for the following reason: The Government are acting without complete knowledge of what the military can do, while the military authorities are equally without full knowledge of what the Government expects them to do, nor are they given authority to make such antecedent preparations as will enable them to act with the least possible delay. The result is that the Government—under a false idea of the rapidity with which we can act—may bring matters to a crisis too soon.

I submit that it is urgently necessary that our diplomacy and our military preparations should work hand in hand. We are now in danger of giving over the initiative to Mr. Kruger, because our negotiations with him have been conducted without a full knowledge of all the military conditions of the case.—Report Appendix, p. 268.

INTO THE DITCH WITH EYES OPEN.

Upon this point Lord Lansdowne, in his evidence on March 26th, before the Commission, says :—

21207. I venture to say, on the contrary, that we were acting without complete knowledge of what the military could do, and that is shown by the minute of August 12th, which, as I have said, was prepared with the assistance of the Commander-in-Chief and the officials of his department. That minute shows that, whether our position was right or wrong, we did not know what the military position in South Africa was.

The minute of August 12th, to which Lord Lansdowne refers, is a rather damaging document for him to invoke. For that minute is one long series of warnings as to the mischief that would result if the Government did not sanction at once an expenditure of a million sterling to provide transport and to accumulate supplies. Lord Lansdowne

told the Commission that the Cabinet had refused to sanction the expenditure for political reasons, thereby knowingly postponing effective action by a month.

21151. You sum up the situation in paragraph 11, "As matters now stand, it would not be possible to place a mobilised Army Corps and a cavalry division in the north of Natal under about four months. If, on the other hand, all our preparations were complete, this period might be reduced by about one month." That means that the expenditure of the sum of a million was necessary to reduce the time required by one month?—Yes.

21152. And that was what was recommended by your military advisers at the time?—Yes.

NECESSARY TRANSPORT REFUSED.

Sir G. White, the defender of Ladysmith, who was a member of the Army Board which made these urgent representations to the Cabinet as to the purchase of mules and provision of transport, made a significant remark when giving his evidence before the Commission.

Evidence of Sir G. White, February 16th, 1903 :—

14692. I think we were unnecessarily restricted in the question of expenditure for certain things that we asked for. We were met more than once by their saying that there had been no provision made in the Budget; and there were certain things that the Army Board, as I think we then called ourselves, definitely asked for, that we were told we could not get.

14697. At that time there were special matters in which the preparations were defective which your Department then put before the Army Board, and the Army Board backed your representations?—Yes.

14698. But you could not get the money to carry them out?—We could not get the money to carry them out. I am quite ready to say that I think it was the Chancellor of the Exchequer who put so heavy a check upon the Secretary of State for War that it became practically almost impossible for him to get what he wanted.

14699. We have had it in evidence that

up to a date in September, I think it was the 22nd September, sanction was refused to their requisitions?—Yes. I remember one specially which was for transport, and which was negatived on account of there having been a good deal of money granted, I think, as an extra for that particular branch, and that there was no further provision; and we did not get it. I remember it specially, because we sent in a protest.

14700. (*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) Was it land transport or transport by sea?—Land transport.

14701. (*Chairman.*) In South Africa?—Yes.

14702. And these requisitions that you speak of were brought up because you were apprehensive of an outbreak of war in South Africa?—Undoubtedly.

#### WHY?

Lord Lansdowne's account is that the reasons for refusing to grant the money were purely political and not at all financial.

Evidence of Lord Lansdowne, March 21st:—

21210. We had looked the thing in the face, we knew that by holding our hand there was a period of three months which must elapse before the field force was ready to take the field. Were we justified in taking that risk? I submit we were, because

we were told by our military advisers that in the interim the Colonies were not exposed to any serious danger. We were led to believe that during that period of three months no serious harm would come to the Colonies. On the other hand, if we had collected, say, the 14,000 mules which were specified as necessary, can there be any doubt that we should have brought on war sooner than it came, and probably before we could have got the 10,000 reinforcements out to South Africa?

21180. At any rate, our view was that the adoption of minatory measures, at that moment when negotiations were in full swing, would lead to the disappearance of whatever chance of peace remained to us.

21184. It would not have brought on a hasty declaration of war from the Boers if Lord Wolseley's position was correct?—That is a matter of opinion, but what I think is scarcely a matter of opinion is that the successful prosecution of the negotiations would scarcely have been possible if we had taken steps which obviously showed that we had made up our minds to fight.

21185. (*Sir John Jackson.*) Or to be fully prepared to fight?—I think so. I do not think that distinction was one which you could have expected the Boers to draw.

21188. It would not have led to peace?—I imagine that Mr. Kruger declared war when he found we were sending large reinforcements.

Ministers, therefore, knew that their military advisers were unprepared for war, but although they in no way modified their policy on that account, they refused to allow the necessary preparations to be made which would have enabled them to act with effect when their policy had brought about its inevitable result.

But time never seemed much of an object to the Ministry. In their opinion a month more or less did not matter. If there is any force in their excuse that they feared to endanger the peace negotiations before September 5th, there is no excuse for them after that date, for we have it on Lord Lansdowne's own authority that from September 5th he regarded war as inevitable.

21192. (*Lord Strathcona of Mount Royal.*) May I ask when you came first to recognise that war was inevitable?—If I have to give you a date off-hand I should say that war became imminent when the Transvaal withdrew their offer of the five years' franchise on September 5th.

After September 5th, therefore, there was no need to refuse to prepare for war lest it might endanger peace. "War became imminent" on September 5th, says Lord Lansdowne, but the necessary expenditure to secure indispensable transport and supplies was not authorised till September 22nd. Seventeen precious days were wasted, but, says Lord Lansdowne, after all, what is a fortnight?

A WASTED FORTNIGHT.

Evidence of Lord Lansdowne, March 26th.

21225. On September 8th did you not send a definite despatch to the Transvaal withdrawing the previous offers?

(*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) And saying that you would formulate your own policy?—Yes, there was a despatch of that kind on that date.

21226. (*Chairman.*) Would not that have been a reasonable date at which to have given the orders for the expenditure of the money?

21231. If the preparations had been ordered a fortnight earlier, it (the Army Corps) would have been more fit to take the field?—A fortnight would not have cleared you.

21232. But it would have meant the advantage of a fortnight?—Well, it would have meant the advantage of a fortnight.

21233. That is the measure of advantage which would have been gained?—Yes.

But apparently in his opinion, despite the vehement, almost passionate, protests of his military advisers, there was no need for worrying about a mere fortnight.

“YOU CANNOT MAKE UP LEEWAY IN WAR.”

Contrast the *nonchalant* mood of Lord Lansdowne with Sir G. Fleetwood Wilson's remarks on the general principle governing the question:—

6119. What I think is wanted in the way of expenditure for preparation for war is what I should call automatic sequence in expenditure. We will assume that the Secretary of State informs his military advisers that it may become necessary to send an Army Corps at short notice to, say, Asia Minor, for the sake of argument. The next step should be automatic and immediate. The Army Board, we will suppose, would be summoned, and the chief military heads would be called upon to state exactly what was required to make up deficiencies in any shape or form, and that is when the action should be automatic and complete. Whatever is necessary should be procured immediately, and authority to spend the money should be granted at once. In no other way, I think, can you avoid the waste of time which is fatal to the conduct of a successful operation. You really cannot make up leeway in preparation for war.

6122. From the moment that there is a serious possibility of a force being sent into the field there ought to be no waste of time between that moment and the actual moment of departure for fighting, so to speak, in the expenditure of the money which is requisite. That is a matter of primary importance.

On September 8th Ministers ordered the despatch of about 10,000 men from India and elsewhere. They arrived at Natal just in time to stem the tide of the Boer invasion.

The evidence taken by the Commission as to the action of the Government during these fateful fourteen days is almost incredible, and would be quite incredible if it were not given on oath by the Commander-in-Chief, and in no point contradicted by any of the Ministers.

THE PURCHASE OF MULES CANCELLED.

Evidence of Lord Wolseley:—

8786. There was a very interesting and confidential paper published by the Mobilisation Branch of the War Office, called Branch D, dated August 5th, in which it was pointed out that it would take three months from the date of the order to purchase before the transport animals could be landed in South Africa and ready for the troops. That was on August 5th, 1899. This was brought by the Commander-in-Chief to the notice of the Secretary of State. In a paper, dated August 31st, on transport in South Africa, it was explained to the Permanent Under-Secretary that if it were in contemplation to send reinforcements to South Africa, it was of cardinal importance, as a matter of time, that authority to spend money for securing transport animals should be given at the earliest possible date. On September 9th the Quartermaster-General asked to spend money on mules, but on September 16th the Secretary of State declined to enter upon any expenditure in connection with these services at present.

ALL PREPARATIONS FORBIDDEN.

8828. As a general remark, I may say that during all our inaugural preparations for the mobilisation which took place for South Africa we were checked and seriously hampered throughout for want of money. For a considerable time expenditure on pre-

parations for the mobilisation of the Army was forbidden. I have given one or two instances. As early as July 26th, 1899, the Mobilisation Board had urged that the alterations necessary to fit the vehicles sent out from this country with pole-draught and screw-frame brakes should be done in this country, and also that the new harness with the vehicles which would be sent out from this country should be provided here—the cost would be about £17,000. On August 31st the Mobilisation Board wrote that they considered it unwise to postpone any longer this service, and pressed for money required. That was more than a month afterwards. On September 5th the Director-General of Ordnance reported that this work would take from the date of the sanction ten weeks to carry out. He said sanction to these items should be given at once, on account of time required to manufacture and obtain. Yet it was not until September 22nd, 1899, only eighteen days before the declaration of war, that the expenditure was sanctioned by the Secretary of State for War.

#### INCREASE OF ARTILLERY POSTPONED.

8749. None of the wagons or mules or provisions or stores that I mentioned were purchased or sent out there. On September 6th, 1899, I pressed that more batteries of field artillery should be placed on the higher establishment. I suppose you know that we have two establishments for all our troops, the higher and the lower establishment; and the higher establishment, of course, more nearly comes up to the war establishment. I pressed on September 6th that more batteries of field artillery should be placed on the higher establishment, and that, according to my views, as soon as we sent a brigade division to South Africa we should raise another at home to war strength. That was carrying out what you referred to, the principle that underlies the whole of our military establishments, that if you take anything from England you ought to replace it again. The answer I received was that the question should be deferred for the Estimates of 1900. That was postponing it to the Ides of March.

8750. (*Viscount Esher.*) Whose reply was that?—It must have come from Lord Lansdowne. I have not got it here, but it was the official answer I received.

8751. (*Chairman.*) Do you know the date of the answer?—No, I have not got it here.

8752-3. But it was subsequent to September 6th, 1899?—Yes. Then I pressed the point further.

(*Viscount Esher.*) Are you sure it was not 1898, because you see the war began on October 11th, 1899?

(*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) And in September, 1899, you were hurrying troops in from India and the Mediterranean?—I am sure it was 1899.

8755. (*Chairman.*) This question of date is rather important; are you quite certain it is 1899, and that it was the Estimates of 1900, because it seems almost incomprehensible in September, 1899?—I should like to verify it hereafter, but I am rather inclined to think it was correct.

#### THE PRESCIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE OF MINISTERS.

8786. What I feel, my Lord, is that I am justified in finding fault with the refusal to spend money from the very first, and especially at such a moment, and in such a crisis, upon the military preparations required for a war, which all people who knew the Transvaal well, and knew the condition of Mr. Kruger's Government and his rulers, firmly believed, as far as I could judge at the time, to be inevitable. I know that the Government did their best, and I am sure that every Government, no matter who was in office, would do the same, that is to say, they would do their best to avoid the horrible necessity of war, but . . . those measures that they take in a case like that are more creditable . . . to the humanity of Ministers than to their prescience and knowledge and power as Ministers of State, or as Statesmen.

On September 23rd orders were given to Supply Reserve Depôts to prepare to ship 30 days' supplies for Army Corps of 50,000 troops, 12,000 horses, and 15,000 mules.

#### HOW THINGS WERE GOING IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Now it is time to see what preparations for war had been made on the spot.

General Forestier-Walker arrived at Cape Town to succeed General Butler on September 6th—one day after Ministers at home had

come to the conclusion that war was imminent. He found that the troops under his command had "no Field Auxiliary Services, such as bearer companies, field hospitals, and ammunition columns" (13641). Even after September 22nd, when negotiations were broken off, he was hindered in even so small but indispensable a thing as the raising of a force of scouts. General Forestier-Walker says (February 11th, 1903):—

13701. I had got permission with very great difficulty to raise a force of scouts under Colonel Rimington. I asked leave to raise, I think, only 200, and that was refused in the first instance; but afterwards Lord Milner put a little pressure on the authorities, I think, and it was granted. In the first instance for Rimington's Scouts the number was 200, and afterwards Lord Milner himself wired home and asked permission that we might have 2,000 men raised, and that permission was given.

General Rimington's commission was not granted till October 2nd.

NO INFORMATION; NO INSTRUCTIONS;  
NO PREPARATIONS.

According to General Forestier-Walker's evidence, he had received no information as to the outbreak of war (13657). He had no instructions to meet any emergency (13658); no distinct or special instructions from home (13660); nor was he instructed to consider any scheme of defence for the Colonies or anything of that kind (13661). His first information as to the coming of the Army Corps reached him September 29th in a telegram from General Buller (13704). Nothing had been done to prepare for that beforehand at all. There was no scheme for making preparations for the landing of a large force (13715).

"THEY WOULD NOT LISTEN TO ME  
AT HOME."

Evidence of General Forestier-Walker, February 11th, 1903:—

13716. I mean that up to September 29th, when you got that telegram from Sir Redvers Buller, nothing was in preparation at all?—

Except in our own minds. One was not justified in doing anything else.

13724. Still, if the exigencies of the political situation had not prevented it you might have done a good deal by a moderate expenditure of money beforehand, might you not? —Yes, I think we might. I think it is always the case that if you can only be allowed to spend money before war, it will save a great deal of expenditure afterwards, because a General is allowed to do nothing of his own initiative before war.

13725. If the General Officer Commanding on the spot could have dealt with some matters without reference home it would have saved a good deal of money?—Yes, I think it is of the very greatest importance that he should be allowed to do so. That is why I mentioned the question which I had on my mind of Rimington's Scouts, because it was such a very small matter, 200 intelligent men that he could get hold of at the frontier at the time. But they would not listen to me at home when I first proposed it, although I thought it was of the greatest possible importance.

#### THE RESULT OF LACK OF TRANSPORT.

In Natal Sir George White arrived at Durban October 7th, two days before the Boer ultimatum. He found that the troops were deficient in transport—the one point upon which the Cabinet had refused to make any provision when pressed August 12th and September 5th. This deficiency of transport crippled his operations.

Evidence of Sir G. White, February 16th, 1903:—

14772. Was it in your opinion a deficient amount of transport?—I think it was.

14773. You thought so when you arrived? —Yes, when I arrived.

14774. (*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) And if you had had more you could have done much better?—I could have got further. I cannot say more. I think that was too short a supply.

14784. (*Chairman.*) Then the regiments had not got their full regimental transport? —No.

14785. Were these regiments actually at the Cape?—Yes, in South Africa; so far as I recollect, at the Cape.

14786. (*Sir Henry Norman.*) Did the Indian troops of your force bring transport

with them?—No, I think the transport was provided in the country.

14787. (*Viscount Esher.*) You see, Lord Roberts has rather criticised your action for neglecting in the opening of the campaign the great military principle of advancing against the enemy with massed forces while they were still separated. Supposing you

wished to do that, had you the transport to enable you to do it?—One of the reasons, as I have already shown, which would have made an advance in massed forces against a position where it was absolutely in the power of the enemy to move back at any time unwise, was that it would have been paralysed by my want of transport.

The extraordinary and most alarming thing about this Evidence is that even after the event Lord Lansdowne shows no sign of understanding the magnitude of his blunders. To this day he does not appear to realise the supreme importance of instant action when once war was recognised as inevitable.

To dawdle away a precious fortnight on the eve of the outbreak of hostilities for which he knew we were unprepared, still seems to this Minister of the Crown a natural and proper course of action for a Secretary of War. But even this was less excusable than Mr. Chamberlain's rejection of every opportunity of securing the time for preparation for which the military authorities pleaded in vain. To rush into war in any circumstances is to incur a grave responsibility; but to pursue a policy certain to precipitate hostilities, knowing that the Empire is unready, is a crime little short of high treason.

CHAPTER IX.

AT WAR, AND UNPREPARED.

ON October 6th the Government called out the Reserves, and summoned Parliament to assemble on October 18th.

On October 7th the Duke of Devonshire announced that the Ministers had formulated their proposals, and that ample time would be given to the Transvaal Government for their consideration.

On October 8th the text of these proposals, which have never been published, was cabled out to Lord Milner for presentation, backed by a British ultimatum to the South African Republic. It is understood that they insisted upon the acceptance of a scheme that would have cut up by the roots the independence of the Transvaal.

On October 9th the Boers launched their ultimatum, which opened with the proposal—made for the fourth or fifth time—“That all points of mutual difference shall be regulated by the friendly course of arbitration, or by whatever amicable way may be agreed upon by this Government with Her Majesty’s Government.”

Pending such arbitration, the military *status quo ante* the Bloemfontein Conference should be restored and maintained.

On the same day Sir Redvers Buller’s appointment was announced.

On October 10th the Cabinet met and decided to refuse once more the Boers’ appeal for arbitration.

On this refusal being communicated to the Boers, they accepted it as a declaration of war, and on October 13th they crossed the frontier into Natal. The first shots in the campaign were fired at Kraaipan, on the Western frontier, when an armoured train proceeding to Mafeking was derailed.

On October 14th General Buller sailed for Cape Town.

On October 18th Parliament met, and after debate voted £10,000,000 for the prosecution of the war.

The object of this volume is not to discuss questions of strategy or to detail the operations of the campaign.

What is aimed at is to enable the reader to understand how Britain goes to war, not how she conducts it after it has begun.

WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE?

This may be the appropriate place to quote the summing-up of the Royal Commission on the question of the responsibility of the Government and its military advisers for the state of our military forces in South Africa at the beginning of the war.

44. Summarising. . . , Lord Wolseley’s minutes, it will be found that pro-

posals for augmenting the forces in South Africa were, so far as appears from them, put forward on five occasions:—

(1.) On 22nd February, 1896—an increase of one regiment of cavalry, one battery of horse artillery and two battalions of foot; this proposal being advocated chiefly on general strategical grounds.

(2.) On 20th April, 1898—an increase of at least one regiment of cavalry and three batteries of artillery to the Cape Colony, to make the force there complete in all arms.

(3.) On 8th June, 1899, when the actual reinforcement consisted of details—but the mobilisation of an Army Corps in England was advocated.

(4.) On 7th July, 1899, when in addition to the mobilisation of the Army Corps, it was proposed to send 10,000 men to South Africa without delay.

(5.) On 18th August, 1899, when the despatch of 10,000 men to Natal was strongly urged.

45. The additions to the normal garrisons before the War broke out had been far larger than those proposals. Lord Wolseley himself said that they were made “bit by bit” and “on the strong recommendations I made from time to time,” and no doubt he was cognisant of and approved them. But the general impression to be derived from the whole circumstances must be that the special function of the Commander-in-Chief, under the Order in Council of 1895, viz. : “the preparation of schemes of offensive and defensive operations,” was not exercised on this occasion in any systematic fashion.

51. After July, 1899, a Board sat fairly continuously through the War under the name of the Army Board, kept regular minutes, which have been produced, and did, on the whole, excellent work. Its proceedings soon brought to light a serious deficiency in the stores and material required on the mobilisation of an Army Corps, and evidence in considerable detail was given as to the nature of this deficiency, the effect it would have had on the prompt despatch of the expedition, and the means by which it might have been made good. The minutes of the Army Board during the period up to 22nd September, 1899, make it clear that in the opinion of that Board the main difficulty was the refusal of sanction for the expenditure of the money involved, amounting to about £640,000; and in the absence of some explanation of this refusal it was perhaps not unnatural that the military heads of departments should have felt at the time some anxiety in regard to a situation for which they might be held accountable, and should also desire to justify their conduct at length before the Commission. It is, however, equally manifest, from his minute of August 12th, that Lord Lansdowne, as Secretary of State for War, fully appreciated the extent of the deficiency, and the consequence of any delay in the grant of money, and that he brought the whole circumstances before his colleagues. The decision not to sanction expenditure, therefore, was taken by the Cabinet, though Lord Lansdowne, of course, does not dissociate himself from it. And it was justified on the two following grounds:—

1. That in the then existing position of the negotiations with the South African Republic it was not expedient to ask Parliament for a large sum of money and to make open preparations which might have precipitated a crisis. Considerations of this kind are not within the purview of this Commission, and belong to the sphere of general political discussion in Parliament and the country.

2. That the Government had received the assurance of their military advisers that the reinforcements sent to South Africa, together with those which could be added before a field force was despatched, would ensure the defence of the Colonies from serious invasion in force by the Boers.



*Photo by*

FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS, V.C.

*[Lafayette.]*

*[face p. 88.]*



*Photo by*

FIELD-MARSHAL VISCOUNT WOLSELEY.

*[Lafayette.]*

*[face p. 89.]*

52. It is desirable to quote, with reference to this second point, a passage from Lord Lansdowne's evidence:—

21165.—*Q.* Would you now speak to the question of whether the Colonies were made reasonably safe or not, according to your military advisers, by those reinforcements?—*A.* I think there was a great weight of expert advice to show that the Colonies would be safe with those reinforcements; for example, Sir Penn Symons, on July 16th, advised that a reinforcement of 2,000 men would put Natal in an efficient state of defence; on July 25th he reported that 5,000 would suffice to make the defence complete; and, as a matter of fact, we sent more than 5,000—we sent over 8,000. Lord Wolseley, in his Minute of August 17th, begged the Government to consider the advisability of sending to Natal with the least possible delay an infantry division, a regiment of cavalry, and so on—altogether about 10,000 men—and with that force, the Commission will observe, he was prepared to hold the whole of the northern triangle of Natal. That is stated in the following paragraph.

21166.—*Q.* I think if you read that paragraph it would be useful?—*A.* “With such a force as the 10,000 men added to the troops already in Natal the whole triangle I have named could be occupied and held. This would place us in a position to save the railroad tunnel at Laing's Nek from being destroyed, so that if war should take place in the end, by the time the remainder of our Army Corps had arrived we should be able to move upon Pretoria without the serious loss of life which the assault of Laing's Nek, in the possession of the Boers, would probably entail.”

21167.—*Q.* So that at that time the Commander-in-Chief had in view holding Laing's Nek with that force?—*A.* Evidently. Then, again, Sir Redvers Buller, in his memorandum of July 6th, apparently deprecated the idea of sending out as many as 10,000 men at that moment, but in his memorandum of September 5th he asked for 5,000 men for Natal. That is in a minute addressed by Sir Redvers Buller to the Commander-in-Chief. He writes: “I think that to make Natal safe its garrison should be increased by 5,000 men. These need not be equipped with transport at once, as if they were in Natal they would set free the 10,000 men there, who have, I understand, complete transport”; and I think I am perhaps justified in adding to that, that although it appears from these minutes that Lord Wolseley would have liked to have sent these reinforcements sooner than we sent them, he told me on the day that the decision to send the 10,000 men had been arrived at, that he would “stake his reputation that after the reinforcements have arrived we shall be safe as to everything south of the Biggarsberg.” I say that confidently because the statement impressed me so much that I at once wrote it to one of my colleagues; my letter was dated September 9th.

53. There can be no doubt now that the position in South Africa, and especially in Natal, was dangerously weak. In the judgment of an observer well qualified to give an authoritative opinion—Sir John French—the addition to the force in Natal of a brigade of 5,000 men would have turned the scale in the operations after the battle of Elandslaagte: and it is difficult to form any conception of the difference in the whole course of the war which might have been the result. It is useless to pursue speculations of this kind. Lord Lansdowne insists that no such proposition was ever laid before Govern-

ment ; but again it is evident that it is on accurate knowledge that the plans of a campaign must be based.

This leads up to the question as to whether any plan of campaign was drawn up by the War Office before the war began. Upon this subject the Report of the Royal Commission pronounces judgment as follows :—

46. It is perhaps not altogether remarkable, under the circumstances above described, that no plan of campaign ever existed for operations in South Africa. It does not seem an unnatural supposition that a general who is sent out on an important expedition should receive written instructions showing the objective which the Government has in view. Lord Roberts stated that “when Sir George White arrived in Natal he had no instructions in regard to the wishes of the Government as to any particular plan of campaign, nor was he aware of any general plan of operations in South Africa.” From Sir George White and Sir Redvers Buller on the one hand, and from Lord Wolseley and Lord Lansdowne on the other, there is the assurance that no written instructions were given or received. Lord Lansdowne in his evidence expressed the opinion that it was “by no means the rule that a general despatched upon an errand of the kind is furnished with full and precise instructions.” Further, that “upon this particular occasion I cannot see that anybody was prejudiced by the absence of a definite plan of campaign.” Undoubtedly, if provision of any plan of campaign interfered with the discretion of the general once the campaign had opened it would be indefensible, but it is submitted that it is perfectly possible to safeguard the discretion of the general in the field, and yet to supply him with schemes of operations worked out by the most competent officers on the most reliable information, which he can adapt to the changing fortunes of the war.

47. It is difficult to see the object of imposing upon the Commander-in-Chief the duty of preparing “schemes of offensive operations” if something of the kind is not intended. Nor is it easy on any other interpretation to understand the expression in Lord Wolseley’s Minutes of June 8th, 1899 : “The general plan of campaign to be adopted is one that must thoroughly meet with the views of the General Officer selected for supreme command ;” and of September 28th, 1899 : “It is most essential we soldiers should fix upon a plan of campaign.”

48. The only alternative is to rely on the impressions which a General may derive from personal interviews with superior authorities before he starts. That was the alternative adopted on this occasion. It resulted in the neglect for all practical purposes of the work of the Intelligence Division. For instance, on the question of the holding of Ladysmith, opinions had been formed which, whether correct or not in the light of subsequent experience, ought certainly to have been in the hands of officers entrusted with the defence of Natal, and to cite only one other instance of the result of the course taken, we may refer to the plentiful crop of misunderstandings to be found in the statement made by Sir Redvers Buller.

In no other line of life would an agent be entrusted with a difficult and responsible task without some attempt at precise and careful definition of the object in view, and there seems to be no reason why military duty should be a solitary exception.

LORD WOLSELEY’S THEORY OF THE  
FREE HAND.

Lord Wolseley expressed a very emphatic opinion that the Commanding Officer should be allowed a free hand,

Extracts from Lord Wolseley’s Evidence.

8862. The Generals Commanding in the field were in no way, so far as I know, interfered with by any order from home as regards their plans or their operations. One of the

very few instances where even a caution that I can remember was conveyed to officers in the field was sent at the end of September by myself with reference to the proposed forward movement upon Glencoe. I always thought that those forward movements were dangerous, and I pointed that out; but, at the same time, a man sitting at home in his office in England is very chary naturally of trying to prescribe to anybody in the field as to what operations he should do. But at last I thought it was so serious, pushing this force on, that I did send the General Commanding a warning telegram. I warned him against such a position until reinforcements in sufficient numbers had arrived. He was desired to keep a month's provisions always with him at his advanced posts, and subsequently he was told that he should keep two months'.

8933. Take the case of the Army Corps; when the Army Corps went out, was that with any definite scheme of operations?—No; it was sent out to South Africa and placed at the disposal of the General Officer Commanding in South Africa to do whatever he liked with, and it was left to him entirely whether he would operate through Natal or through the Orange Free State.

GIVE YOUR GENERAL CARTE BLANCHE!

8934. No preference was expressed as to the best scheme of operations?—None; I think he was given *carte blanche* entirely, and, if I may say so, when Sir Redvers Buller went to Natal himself, he went there on his own hook entirely, and at his own instigation, and I do not know that I even knew, until he had started, or was about to start, that he was going there.

8935. I was not thinking so much of that particular operation, because, of course, that arose out of the circumstances after he arrived; but he did not go to South Africa with any scheme of operations?—None. He had discussed and talked over with me the relative merits of marching through the Transvaal or through the Orange Free State; these were the two alternative lines of march in operating against the enemy, and these were discussed between us; but it was left entirely to his own discretion.

8936. That was a personal discussion between you and him?—You can call it personal; he was a great friend of mine, and

I believed in him, and we discussed it in the military sense.

8937. It did not take the form of instructions?—None whatever, and I am sure he did not gather from what I said that I intended them as instructions.

9366. If a man were to attempt to control a general in the field like a general in South Africa from home as to the plans he was to follow with regard to a campaign, it would be a fatal system, and, I might perhaps say, an impossible system.

9367. And what was the course followed in your own campaigns, that is to say, Ashanti and Egypt. You went there with a free hand and acted on your own discretion?—Entirely; absolutely.

9368. And that is the course you think is the only proper one to adopt and to follow?—Certainly.

SIR REDVERS BULLER'S COMPLAINT.

Sir Redvers Buller (see *ante*) complained that he had been left too much alone, and that he had no help or guidance from the War Office in framing his plans. On this subject Lord Lansdowne was examined at length.

Extracts from Lord Lansdowne's Evidence, March 26th :—

21234. We have been told there was no plan of campaign prepared in the War Office, and each General, I think, has told us that he received no instructions?—I think it is correct to say that no formal plan of campaign was drawn up in the War Office; on the other hand, it cannot be doubted that the Generals knew perfectly well what they were going to South Africa for. I do not know whether the Commission has taken evidence upon that point, but I am under the impression that it is by no means the rule that a General despatched upon an errand of the kind is furnished with full and precise instructions.

NO PLAN, BUT HE KNEW WHAT HE WANTED.

The objects which we had in view were perfectly well known to Sir Redvers Buller, and as to the means by which those objects might best be accomplished, the only point that was in any doubt was the question of the

line of advance, whether it should be through Natal or by the Orange Free State. As to that I have already given some evidence; but the Commission has probably noticed, that in the view of the Commander-in-Chief, who, after all, was mainly concerned in a matter of that kind, it was desirable that as wide a discretion as possible should be given to the General in command of the force. You will see in Lord Wolseley's minute of June 8th that he says: "The general plan of campaign to be adopted is one that must thoroughly meet with the views of the General Officer selected for the supreme command. There are, practically, only two lines of advance for an army into the Transvaal"; and in his later minute of July 7th, again, after considering the two lines of advance, he says, that "should the Free State help the Transvaal against us he presumes Sir Redvers Buller would not shrink from using the Free State as the line of advance upon Pretoria." I think that shows that what was present to Lord Wolseley's mind was that Sir Redvers Buller would have the widest discretion as to the plan of campaign to be adopted.

#### THE ORIGINAL PLAN OF CAMPAIGN.

21235. I think that is so, and Sir Redvers Buller, in an answer he gave to us, said: "It was well understood between Lord Lansdowne, Lord Wolseley, and myself, that the intentions with which I left England were to land the three Divisions at East London, one Division at Port Elizabeth, and one Division at Cape Town, and to concentrate them upon the two bridges at Norval's Pont and Bethulie, with a view to advance through the Orange Free State. That was the original plan of campaign"?—Quite so.

21236. Then he was asked whether it was not the case that Lord Wolseley said that "there were no instructions given," and that he "went out with a free hand," and he said, "there were no instructions, and I went out with a free hand on the understanding that I was going to do a definite thing"?—That, I think, very correctly expresses the facts of the case.

21237. That is not quite the same as a plan of campaign, which might be formulated, say in the Intelligence Department, or by the highest military authorities in the country before an expedition starts?—That I

think was really a matter for discussion by the soldiers with the soldiers, but I am prepared to say that at no moment did Sir Redvers Buller suggest to me that he was at a disadvantage because he had not been supplied with instructions or a plan of campaign.

#### WHAT GENERAL BULLER EXPECTED TO DO.

He was constantly in communication with the Commander-in-Chief, with the Director of Military Intelligence, and with other members of the head-quarters staff, and I think I am justified in saying that when he left England he did not do so under a sense of any disadvantage, because at his very last interview with me on the 10th October when he took leave of me he told me that he expected to start, that is to commence his forward movement, about two days before Christmas, that it would take him probably one month to pass through the Orange Free State, and after that 14 days to get to Pretoria. Now I do not for a moment suggest that this was anything like a formal assurance on Sir Redvers Buller's part that he saw his way to doing exactly what he then anticipated, but I think it is fair that I should quote it as showing that he had thought the thing out, and that he regarded the accomplishment of his object within those dates as, at any rate, within the bounds of possibility. This interested me very much. I thought I should like to see whether he was able to make good his own expectations, and I jotted those dates down in my pocket book immediately he left the room.

#### THE OBJECT OF THE WAR.

The object of the war was, Lord Lansdowne said, perfectly well understood.

The main object in this case, I suppose, was to compel the submission of the two Republics.

21240. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) To reach Pretoria?—To reach Pretoria, which at that time was regarded as likely to determine the issue of the campaign.

21241. (*Chairman.*) What I conceive was meant was that an expedition would be sent out with a general plan of the campaign, but of course with discretion to the general officer

to apply it as circumstances dictated, but, as I understand it, there were no written instructions whatever?—No, not that I am aware of.

SIR G. WHITE WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS.

General Buller was not the only officer at the front who seemed somewhat amazed at the freedom of action that was allowed him. Sir G. White, for instance, wrote as follows in his statement :—

14720. (*Chairman.*) Had you any instructions before you left home with regard to your proceedings?—None.

14721. I suppose you had conferences with the authorities here in this country?—None that I can recollect. I remember one. Of course I do not know what your Lordship and the Commissioners may have before you ; but the only conversation I can recall was when I went to say good-bye to Lord Lansdowne, and when I asked him to give every consideration he could to an extra ammunition train that I was very anxious to get. I remember his reply to me being, "But your position will be a defensive one."

14722. But written instructions you had none?—Written instructions I had none.

14723. That we were told?—I merely mentioned that conversation with Lord Lansdowne ; I do not think he meant in any way to lay down a system of defence ; it simply fell out, as I have given it to you, in conversation.

14707. I may here mention, as the point has been referred to in the evidence I have been allowed to see, that, previous to starting I had received no orders, except that I was to assume command of the forces in Natal ; and that the General Officer commanding at Cape Town was to exercise his command independently of me. I was not informed of any plan of campaign against the Boers, or asked to operate on any given lines. I therefore considered myself unfettered in meeting the emergencies which I had to face immediately on landing, as I thought best for the preservation of Natal.

LORD ROBERTS' CENSURE.

It will be remembered that General Forestier-Walker was left equally without any information as to the plan of campaign.

Lord Roberts evidently thought this absence of instructions very strange.

Extracts from the evidence of Lord Roberts, December 4th :—

10213. I gathered that you would not have been in favour of any interference from this country after the scheme for the defence of Natal had been decided upon?—Not after Sir George White had taken over command ; I think he was bound to be left to himself. Any plan ought to have been prepared before the war began. He went out to South Africa straight from this country without any consultation as to what should be done when he got there.

10228. It strikes you as strange?—I think it very strange that the authorities should not have talked this question over with the officer appointed to command in Natal, but I think the explanation is, that they never dreamt that Ladysmith would have to be abandoned.

10222. (*Viscount Esher.*) If you had been Commander-in-Chief at the time Sir George White left England, do you think you would have discussed the question of Ladysmith with him before he left?—I think I should have discussed the general situation with him, as far as we knew at the time before he left.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGY.

What I realised after I took over the command of the Army in South Africa, said Lord Roberts, was that indifferent strategy had quite as much, and perhaps even more, to do with our mishaps in the early days of the war than inadequate numbers.

But into these questions of strategy upon which all the military authorities differed, we cannot enter here.

Lord Roberts said (10183), "An initial mistake in strategy has far-reaching effects, and is practically irretrievable." But between him and Sir George White and Lord Wolseley there seems no common ground as to what was good strategy and what was not.

Both Sir W. Butler and General Forestier-Walker agreed in making Ladysmith a base of supplies. Sir George White considered it indispensable to hold on, but Lord Wolseley condemned the defence of Ladysmith

almost as strongly as he denounced the route taken by Lord Roberts for the invasion of the Orange Free State :

1905. His advance by the line he took was, to my mind (I thought so then, and I think so still), the wrong one—that the real line of advance was by the bridges, by either of those, the Aliwal Bridge or the Norval's Pont Bridge, to keep on the line of railway going to Bloemfontein. He then would have been able to feed his army day by day,

all the way he went, whereas, by going by the other line, he had to make that awful march from the Kimberley Railway across to the Bloemfontein Railway, which march, if I may say so, was the cause of the practical destruction of his cavalry and the loss of an enormous amount of transport, and to which I attribute (I have never heard from him that it was the case) the great delay which subsequently took place to the Army when it halted at Bloemfontein, and did not advance.

#### LORD ROBERTS ON OUR DEFECTS OF PREPARATION.

But enough of these disputes of strategists. It is more profitable to read the concise summing up by Lord Roberts, with the wisdom that comes after the event, of the faults of his predecessor at the War Office :—

19183. So far as the War Office is directly concerned, the main defects in preparation, in my opinion, were :—(1.) The selection of Ladysmith as the principal military station and advance depôt in Natal, and leaving it absolutely undefended. Sir George White was forced to hold on to it, for had he abandoned it an immense amount of supplies and ordnance stores, which there was not time to remove, would have fallen into the enemy's hands. (2.) The plan by which General Buller's force was to advance in three columns through Cape Colony towards the Orange Free State. (3.) Having no properly organised Transport Department, the absence of which prevented any movement being made away from the several lines of railway. (4.) The failure to foresee the necessity for employing a large force of mounted infantry. (5.) Under-estimating the possible strength of the enemy, the magnitude of the theatre of the war, and consequently the number of troops that would be required for the long lines of communication. (6.) Neglect to supply the Army with a proportion of heavy artillery, sufficiently mobile to accompany the troops in the field. Guns of this description have always formed part of the armament of an Indian Field Force, and even in a mountainous country like Afghanistan they did good service. (7.) The want of suitable maps.

#### SIR CHARLES WARREN'S TEN POINTS.

Sir Charles Warren began his evidence by summing up, under ten heads, the causes of our defeats :—

1566. I am quite satisfied that if adequate methods had been adopted the large number of 250,000 men would never have been required. Inadequate arrangements, however, existed from the very beginning, and accumulated so rapidly, from the defective organisation of our Army, that it was very soon apparent that a far larger force was required than had been originally anticipated. With an effective organisation of our Army, with efficient troops, and with adequate handling of them (strategically as well as tactically), 150,000 ought to have been more than sufficient (including burghers) for all purposes, and the raid into the Cape Colony would never have been *practicable*. The following points were either ignored or unknown at the beginning of the war :—(1.) The comparative immobility of our infantry as compared with mounted Boers, and the impracticability of working them

efficiently except in long lines of about 20 miles in open country and 10 miles in hilly country. (2.) The great mobility of the Boers as compared with our cavalry and mounted troops. (3.) The power of the Boers to bring long-range guns of heavy calibre into the field, and our own inability to do so at first. (4.) The clearness of the atmosphere, enabling artillery to engage at 10,000 yards range in hilly country. (5.) The accuracy and long range rifle-shooting of the Boers. (6.) The change in system of attack caused by the introduction of smokeless powder. (7.) The inexperience of officers and soldiers in action against troops (Boers) who were individual marksmen. (8.) The general inefficiency of both officers and men for the kind of warfare forced on them by the Boers. (9.) The defects of the Drill Book, which led regimental officers into great error, resulting in considerable loss of life. (10.) The ignorance of all as to the necessity for long lines of attack (necessitated by long range and accurate fire) to avoid enfilade fire. Had all these points being recognised and provided for by the Army at large, I am satisfied that at the beginning 10,000 efficient infantry would have been equal to 20,000 to 30,000 of the infantry we commenced with, and 1,000 efficient cavalry would have been equal to 5,000 of those we had with us. It required hard fighting and severe losses before the necessary lessons were learnt.

“INCOMPLETE AND UNRELIABLE MAPS.”

We set out to conquer two Republics without a reliable map of the country.

On the subject of maps a good deal of evidence was taken. The Commissioners in their Report say :—

It was as to the provision of maps that there has been most general complaint, and there is no dispute that where maps were supplied at all they were, with perhaps one exception, very incomplete and unreliable.

But they add :—

262. The outcry in regard to the absence of good maps was not altogether well-informed. The Intelligence Division statement alleges that “the Department was in possession during the period 1896–99 of all map material of all parts of South Africa affected by the War which was known to exist.” Lord Roberts, while he admits “that a survey of the theatre of war, before hostilities commenced, was practically impossible,” would seem to imply that something more might have been made of existing material. Lord Roberts further agreed in the opinion that “as the probability of war was foreseen about the month of February, 1899, there would have been ample time to prepare all these maps with a little foresight.”

Sir John Ardagh estimates that it would cost £150,000 a year to place the Department on a sound basis to make a topographical survey of the Empire. It is not surprising, therefore, that he, and also Major Hills, considers £20,000 a year as “a modest sum, not all that I think would be eventually granted, but something to build up a real and efficient Survey Department, suitable for Colonial and Imperial military surveying. But,” he adds, “£20,000 a year is such a very large sum in comparison with what is now spent on the Intelligence Department that I had a feeling that if we were to ask for it, it would be scoffed at in the War Office before it ever got to the Treasury.”

The evidence given by Sir John Ardagh, Sir W. Nicholson, Colonel Grant and Major Hills all told the same story. Sir John Ardagh said he had asked for £18,000 for map-making and had been offered £100.

## WHAT MAP-MAKING COSTS.

Evidence of Sir W. Nicholson :—

276. Last year I put forward a proposal for an increase to the staff of my department, which is at present inadequate. That proposal was supported by the Commander-in-Chief, and concurred in by the Secretary of State for War; but on financial grounds it was negatived. I put that as a very moderate proposal. Similarly, I imagine, if I put forward a proposal involving very considerable expenditure, the chances are that unless there was any urgent necessity for it, it would be likely to be postponed until more money was forthcoming.

289. (*Sir John Edge.*) Would you object to telling us what was the estimate of the increase of expenditure that would have been involved if your application for assistance in your department had been granted?—I could tell you on examining the papers, but I imagine £3,000 a year, something approaching that.

135. For possible theatres of war in various parts of the Empire it is an exceedingly desirable thing to do; and if the Treasury would be prepared to let us have, say, £80,000 a year to do it, I should be most glad to undertake it; but if you reflect—for example, take the theatre of war in South Africa—to make a reasonably good map of the Transvaal, the Orange River Colony, and Cape Colony (there is no map of Cape Colony at present suitable for military purposes; we hope they are going to start one) would take five or six years, at an expenditure of about £200,000 or £300,000.

136. Then I may take it that it would probably have been done had it not been for the expense?—Yes; and remember there are many parts of the Empire of which there are no suitable maps.

132. You will find there that it was quite impossible for us to prepare maps before the war unless we had spent something like, I

should say, a quarter of a million in doing so. And even if we had had the money we could not possibly have got into the country in the state of tension that then existed.

Colonel Grant maintained that the suspicion rampant among the Boers since the Jameson Raid rendered it absolutely impossible to attempt to make a map of their country.

828. May I take it that, in your opinion, from 1896 it would have been practically impossible to have made a valuable map, a map valuable for military purposes, of the ground 30 to 40 miles on either side of a main road in the Boer States?—I think it would have been quite impossible.

Major Hills estimated that, with an outlay of £90,000 per year, he could make 150,000 square miles of survey each year. Therefore it would be possible to survey the whole of British Africa in about twenty years.

## THE WAR MAP IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Lord Kitchener's contribution is characteristic :—

160. I have just made a note as regards the provision of maps. The Director of Military Intelligence, Colonel G. F. R. Henderson, who went out to South Africa with Lord Roberts and myself, started immediately on his arrival in Cape Town upon the compilation of a war map from all available sources. That is the only information that I know that would be of assistance to the Commission on that head.

161. Does that mean that there was no map before Colonel Henderson started upon that work?—There was no map before of the Orange Free State. We captured a certain number of Jeppe's maps of the Transvaal at Cape Town, and from those and from all other available sources he commenced to compile a map.

## THE INADEQUACY OF OUR GARRISON.

The following is the summing-up of the Royal Commission on the weakness of the South African garrison at the outbreak of war :—

57. On the one side we have the decision of the Government which limited the additions of men and stores in South Africa for political reasons. On the other, it has been stated by Lord Lansdowne that the garrison of South Africa at the outbreak of the war had received reinforcements, at least as large as the official Military Advisers of the Government had recommended.

We have felt bound to say that the papers appear to us to support that contention. More than the reinforcement of 10,000 men suggested had been sent to South Africa, and the arrangements for the mobilisation of the Army Corps and Cavalry Division, which were to follow, were so complete that no serious delay occurred in their despatch. Whether, if the information collected by the Intelligence Department had been used to greater purpose, it would have resulted in a larger reinforcement of the garrison of South Africa it is impossible to say. It certainly appears now, that with a greater amount of forethought in arrangements generally, in the provision of stores and equipment, and with the addition of, perhaps, another Brigade, the situation in Natal might have been so strengthened that the whole course of the War must have been altered. It was "a dash at Natal" that was apprehended. That apprehension, however, may be said to have been communicated to the Cabinet; it certainly was in the hands of the Secretary of State for the Colonies as well as of the Secretary of State for War. It was an apprehension of which civilians could well take cognisance, and, though undoubtedly it lay with the military heads of the War Office to develop and insist upon the danger which it involved, as indeed, Sir John Ardagh did insist in his Memorandum of 15th April, 1897, we are not prepared to say that in estimating the admitted risks of the policy which they adopted, the Cabinet itself gave due consideration to this very essential point.

#### MISCALCULATIONS.

The popular estimate that ten millions sterling and a single Army Corps would enable General Buller to eat his Christmas dinner at Pretoria does not seem to have been entertained by any of the military authorities.

None of them, not even Sir W. Butler, ventured to predict anything so monstrous as that which actually happened, to wit, that we should have to put 450,000 men under arms to crush the Boer Republics whose whole manhood, including greybeards and boys, did not exceed 70,000.

Lord Wolseley's estimate, that if he had been allowed to mobilise an Army Corps on Salisbury Plain in June the war would have been over by November, is one of the extraordinary prophesies to be found in the evidence.

Hardly less extraordinary was General Buller's calculation that if he left Cape Town on December 23rd he would get through the Free State on January 23rd, and would take Pretoria on February 6th, when, it was assumed, the war would be over.

Compared with these confident calculations of speedy and certain victory, contrast the grim figures of the actual result of the campaign.

#### THE RESULT OF OUR UNPREPAREDNESS.

Instead of being over in six months, the war, which began on October 10th, 1899, lasted till May 31st, 1902; that is to say, exactly two years and 233 days, more than five times as long as the War Office estimate.

The number of troops adequate to cope with the Boers was arrived at in the most haphazard way. Everything depended upon the objective. If Ministers had not intended annexation, a much smaller force would have sufficed. The War Office was directed to prepare a force without having any hint given it as to whether that force had merely to defeat the armed forces of Mr. Kruger, or whether it had to annex the Republics and destroy the Boer nationality. Without knowing what was to be done, the War Office decided to send out a field force consisting of 47,081 men. They had previously raised

the South African garrison, which, on August 1st, numbered 9,622, by two groups of reinforcements, numbering 1,744 and 10,263 men, to a total strength of 21,629. Adding the numbers of the field force to the garrison, the Government calculated that with these 68,610 men they could put the war through. The following figures as to the number of men whom they actually placed under arms in Africa are taken from the Appendix volume of the Report, p. 98:—

Garrison August 1st, 1899 . . . . .		9,940	
From Home—			
Regulars . . . . .	228,171		
Militia . . . . .	45,566		
Yeomanry . . . . .	35,520		
Scotch Horse . . . . .	833		
Volunteers . . . . .	19,856		
South African Constabulary . . . . .	7,273		
			337,219
From India—			
Regulars . . . . .	18,229		
Volunteers . . . . .	305		
			18,534
From Colonies—			
Colonial Contingents . . . . .	29,090		
South African Constabulary (Canada) . . . . .	1,238		
			30,328
Raised in South Africa . . . . .	52,414		
			448,435

The total number of men we had to place under arms was, therefore, nearly seven times as large as the original force with which the Government confidently calculated upon crushing as with a steam-roller the forces of the Boers.

#### THE COST OF THE WAR IN BLOOD AND GOLD.

The cost of the war, which at first was put down at ten millions sterling, is officially declared to have been £228,000,000, or twenty-two times the original estimate.

The return of casualties for the war is as follows:—

	OFFICERS.	MEN.	TOTAL.
Killed . . . . .	518	5,256	5,774
Wounded . . . . .	1,851	20,978	22,829
Died of wounds or disease, or accidentally killed . . . . .	554	15,614	16,168
In hospital and Africa at end of war	291	9,422	9,713
Sent home sick, wounded, and died on passage . . . . .	3,116	72,314	75,430

The number who died on passage is not stated separately.

The number of lives sacrificed, not including those who died on passage home, was 21,942, or exactly 313 more men than the total strength of our reinforced garrison when the war broke out. How many of the 75,430 men

invalided home, or of the 9,713 in hospital on May 31st, 1902, have recovered is not stated, but a large proportion are crippled for life. The total deaths from sickness are given by Lord Roberts as 13,750, and the number invalided home 66,500 (10485).

It is interesting to contrast these figures with the estimated Boer losses which are to be found on p. 445 of the Appendix volume. The return is drawn up by the Director-General of Military Intelligence, Pretoria.

TRANSVAAL.

Killed up to December 31st, 1901 . . . . .	1,540	
Died of disease, etc. . . . .	700	
Casualties since January 1st, 1902 . . . . .	2,400	
	-----	4,640

ORANGE FREE STATE.

Killed up to December 31st, 1901 . . . . .	1,110	
Died of disease, etc. . . . .	450	
Casualties since January 1st, 1902 . . . . .	1,500	
	-----	3,060

REBELS.

Killed and died of disease . . . . .	700	
Casualties (including prisoners) since January 1st, 1902 . . . . .	403	
	-----	1,103

FOREIGNERS.

Killed and died of disease . . . . .	300	
	-----	300
		-----
		9,103
		-----

From this it would appear that if Lord Kitchener's estimate of the total Boer, Rebel and Foreign forces amounted to 95,000, they were almost literally decimated. They lost nearly one man in ten of their entire male population between 12 and 70. The British only lost one in twenty of the troops sent out to South Africa, not one in a thousand of the manhood of the Empire. If the 5,000 Boer women and 20,000 children done to death by the policy of devastation are added to the death-roll of the war, it would appear that as the result of the campaign 56,000 human beings came either to a bloody end or perished prematurely by war-engendered disease.

L. of G.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE EMPTINESS OF OUR ARSENALS.

THE condition of our arsenals, when the long anticipated war broke out, has been carefully reported upon by General Sir Henry Brackenbury, the Director-General of Ordnance. His minute, which by a curious coincidence is dated December 15th, 1899, the day of the battle of Colenso, affords the most appalling picture of the condition of absolute helplessness to which Britain would have been reduced if at that moment any foreign foe had succeeded in establishing himself upon our shores. We literally had hardly a shot in our locker. Yet at that time Mr. George Wyndham was Under-Secretary for War, the same Mr. George Wyndham who, in the debate which preceded the defeat of the Rosebery Cabinet on the question of cordite said: "If they were overwhelmed by some national disaster and it was due to any extent to neglect in the supply of ammunition, the Adjutant-General might not be shot, but the Minister for War would be held responsible for betraying the country."

Before quoting Sir Henry Brackenbury's minute in full, it may be as well to quote an extract or two from his evidence before the Royal Commission as to the state of our military stores at the beginning of the war. In October, when war was declared, General Brackenbury said our equipment was complete.

1594. And that equipment you speak of was for a Field Army under the Regulations of two Army Corps?—Yes, two Army Corps, one cavalry division, and lines of communication troops.

1595. Beyond that there was no provision?—A third Army Corps was provided for, for home service, but not as to anything specially required for foreign service. There was no further provision beyond the peace provision; that is to say, the ordinary stocks kept for use at home.

1596. The third Army Corps was supplied on a peace footing; was that it?—We had the equipment for them to enable them to take the field in this country.

He thus explained how it was he came to write the minute.

1732. You were aware, at any rate, when you took over your present office in February, 1899, of the deficiency and want of supplies?—No, I was not aware of it then. It took me some considerable time to find out exactly what the condition of things was; everybody at the War Office, I think, was under the impression, and Sir Ralph Knox so stated in evidence before the Mowatt Committee, that there was no reserve kept up for war upkeep of the Army, because it was supposed that the Ordnance factories and the trade would supply what we wanted from week to week. The earlier stages of this war burst that bubble. I thought you could get anything you wanted out of the

trade of this country at short notice. I found it was impossible, and it was then, when I saw what the state of things was, that it was borne in upon me that I must put forward that minute of December 15th.

In two months' time, the waste and wear of war had so depleted our stocks that Sir Henry Brackenbury felt compelled to address to the Commander-in-Chief the following minute on our *matériel* and munitions of war:—

SIR HENRY BRACKENBURY'S  
REPORT.

I.

Commander-in-Chief,—

On taking up the appointment of Director-General of Ordnance in February last, I commenced an inquiry into the condition of our armaments and reserves of guns, ammunition, stores, and clothing; and I should have been able to report fully before this, had not the whole energies of my department been absorbed by the war in South Africa.

That war has now disclosed a situation as regards armaments, and reserves of guns, ammunition, stores, and clothing, and as regards the power of output of material of war in emergency, which is, in my opinion, full of peril to the Empire; and I, therefore, think it my duty, without waiting to elaborate details, to lay before you at once the state of affairs, and to make proposals, to which I invite, through you, the earnest and immediate attention of the Secretary of State.

ARMAMENTS.

FIELD ARMY.

*Horse Artillery.*—We had ten batteries of horse artillery 12-prs. on the home and colonial establishment at the beginning of the war, and in reserve only the *matériel* of one battery; and that battery had been converted to an experimental Q.F. system.

In order to send out the *matériel* of one Service battery, as a reserve, to South Africa, we have to arm one of our Service batteries at home with this experimental equipment, and to send its Service equipment to South Africa.

*Field Artillery.*—We had fifty batteries of field artillery 15-prs. on the home and colonial establishment at the beginning of the war, and in reserve the *matériel* of eleven Service batteries, of which two had been converted to an experimental system, leaving only nine available.

Five have been sent to South Africa,

leaving only four. Three are required to arm the three new batteries to be raised this month. There will then be only one spare battery in reserve.

Fortunately eight more are under manufacture and approaching completion, but five of these are appropriated to batteries to be raised in 1900-1.

At the beginning of the war we had three batteries of 5-inch howitzers, and, in reserve, only one 5-inch howitzer, one carriage, and two ammunition wagons. To send out three howitzers to South Africa to replace casualties, I have had to take two from those appropriated to movable armaments of fortresses.

*Gun Ammunition.*—In addition to the 300 rounds per gun with batteries, ammunition columns, and parks, we had a reserve of 200 rounds per gun for each horse and field and mountain gun or howitzer.

The whole of this reserve has long since been absorbed by the demands for South Africa. The whole powers of the Ordnance factories and the trade have been turned on to further supplies, and all naval orders for ammunition have had to be held in abeyance since the beginning of October. We have borrowed from the Navy, and from the Government of India. Nevertheless, I was unable to meet Sir R. Buller's demands for 5-inch howitzer ammunition and 7-pr. ammunition till a fortnight after they should have been complied with.

To complete my orders for ammunition to meet Sir R. Buller's demands, and replace reserves, it is known that the trade are procuring bodies of shrapnel shell from Germany. I have had to deplete the authorised quantities of ammunition for the siege train in order to supply the 5-inch howitzers in South Africa, and to take guns from the movable armament of Plymouth to meet Sir R. Buller's demand for long-ranging guns.

I have received a request from General Officer Commanding, Malta, for 1,000 rounds a gun for the howitzers in his mov-

able armament, a reasonable demand with which it is impossible to comply, the authorised complement being only 200 rounds a gun, and ammunition not existing.

*Harness.*—We had about 500 single sets in reserve, less than sufficient for five batteries.

I have already had to send 800 single sets to South Africa to replace casualties.

*Machine guns.*—The authorised number is 1,224; of these we had only 898, leaving 326 deficient. We have had to draw upon machine guns provided for movable armaments of fortresses to meet South African requirements.

*Cavalry saddlery.*—We had only 500 sets in reserve at the beginning of the war to meet wear and tear of 16,000 sets in possession of the troops.

I have already had to order 600 sets to be sent to South Africa to meet casualties.

*Infantry accoutrements.*—We had about 10,000 sets in reserve to meet wear and tear of 364,000 sets. I have had to send 6,000 sets to South Africa to equip Rifle regiments, and the balance to replace casualties. We have none left.

*Saddlery for Mounted Infantry, etc.*—We had 500 sets in reserve. I have had to order 11,525 sets from the trade to equip troops for the South African campaign. The trade could not supply all we wanted in time, and we have had to go to America.

*Vehicles for Army Service Corps.*—Many of our vehicles are obsolete, and only fit for use on good roads in peace. We have sent, or are sending, all our serviceable General Service wagons, and have had to order no less than 600 vehicles from the trade in this country, besides great numbers ordered locally.

*Mule harness.*—We had 1,700 single sets. We have had to buy the equivalent of 24,700 single sets from the trade.

*Rifles, carbines, pistols, lances.*—These are the only articles in which our reserves are ample.

We have sent 14,000 rifles, 850 carbines, 1,400 pistols and 500 lances to South Africa, and have still good reserves.

*Cavalry swords.*—The authorised reserve was 6,000, but owing to a change of pattern having been under consideration for a long time, it had been allowed to fall to 80. We have sent 500 to South Africa.

*Tents.*—We had an authorised reserve of

5,000 single circular tents, and 100 hospital marquees. I have had to send 17,000 circular tents and 900 hospital marquees to South Africa.

*Camp Equipment.*—We had 2,000 camp kettles in reserve. One single demand from Cape Town is for 5,000. Our reserve of picketing pegs, ropes, mallets, etc., was not sufficient to supply one-fiftieth of the demands from South Africa.

*Small-arm ammunition.*—Our authorised stocks on 31st March, 1899, were 151 millions. I have sent out over 50 millions to South Africa, and am supplying Sir R. Buller, at his demand, with about 3 millions weekly. The Ordnance factories and the trade together can only produce about 2½ millions weekly.

*Hospital equipment.*—We had no reserve. We had only the material for one general and two stationary hospitals in our mobilisation equipment.

We have sent out five general hospitals, and are asked to send out a sixth. We have sent out four station hospitals.

#### FORTRESSES.

*Guns and mountings.*—Our fortresses are chiefly armed with an obsolete armament of muzzle-loading guns, defective in range and energy, and practically useless against ships armed with modern armour. A programme has been approved for substituting modern breech-loading powerful guns for this obsolete ordnance; but the provision of these guns is to be spread over seven years. If the money were forthcoming, we could greatly shorten the period of re-armament.

The existing reserves of guns are—

#### B.L.—

12-inch . . .	2 for	18 guns mounted.
10 " . . .	4 " "	22 " "
9'2 " . . .	3 " "	50 " "
8 " . . .	1 " "	4 " "
6 " . . .	4 " "	108 " "

#### Q.F.—

6-inch . . .	Nil for	32 guns mounted.
4'7 " . . .	Nil " "	53 " "
12-pr. . . .	Nil " "	124 " "
6 " . . .	Nil " "	186 " "

The approved programme includes—

9'2-inch, Mark X. . .	10 for	99 guns to be
6-inch, Mark VII. . .	20 " "	233 mounted.

*Ammunition.*—The ammunition sanctioned is only 200 rounds a gun for fortresses abroad, and 100 rounds a gun for fortresses at home, and there is *no* ordnance reserve, except estimated supply for two years' practice, which is insignificant.

*Movable armament.*—The greater part, about 73 per cent., 459/631, of the movable armaments consists of obsolete guns and obsolete ammunition. There are only 200 rounds of ammunition per gun abroad, and 100 rounds at home, and no ordnance reserve of either guns, carriages, or ammunition, and no provision has been made for new guns, or for reserves of ammunition.

#### GENERAL STORES.

Our reserve of general stores was utterly inadequate to meet the demands. We have had to buy in the market whatever we could get. As an example, we had an authorised reserve of 52,000 sets of horse shoes and no mule shoes. I have to send 35,000 sets of horse shoes and 40,000 sets of mule shoes to Africa monthly to keep the animals shod. I have had to go to Germany and Sweden for horse shoes, and to the United States for mule shoes.

#### CLOTHING.

Our reserves of clothing were inadequate to meet even peace requirements; and before this war broke out I had asked for a reserve to be provided equal to six months' ordinary issues, which would cost £320,000. This demand has received no answer. The whole trade of the country is occupied for us, and the clothing factory has been working to its full power. We have borrowed from India all the helmets and boots they could give us. It has been just possible to clothe the troops sent out, including the 6th Division and drafts; but I am unable, in great numbers of articles, to send out the reserves to South Africa which should be there to meet wear and tear.

#### STOREHOUSES.

The Ordnance Store buildings all over the country are barely able to hold existing stocks. The first need of all is the immediate construction of buildings to increase existing accommodation by at least 25 per cent.

The accommodation at the Clothing Department, both for storage and inspection, is

quite inadequate to the needs of the Army. More ground and more buildings are urgently required.

#### ORDNANCE FACTORIES.

In order to meet the demands of the Army in South Africa, all naval orders in the Laboratory and Carriage Department have had to be put aside since the beginning of October. The whole of the firms manufacturing material of war are employed up to their fullest capacity. The Ordnance factories have been working day and night and Sundays, yet we have only just been able to keep pace with the demands. A great deal of the machinery is obsolete and wasteful, and urgently needs replacement by labour-saving machines.

We have no reserve of power of output in the country. In the event of a war in which both Navy and Army were engaged, it would be impossible to meet the demands for ammunition.

The only way in which the Ordnance factories can now increase their output over peace requirements is by working day and night and Sundays. This is extravagant as regards wear and tear both of men and of machinery, payment for overtime work, and quality of workmanship.

The power of output should be increased by at least 50 per cent. by the introduction of modern machinery and by the erection of additional buildings and plant, not to be used in peace, but as a war reserve of power.

#### CONCLUSIONS.

The above is, I submit, sufficient to prove that we are attempting to maintain the largest Empire the world has ever seen with armaments and reserves that would be insufficient for a third class military Power.

#### PROPOSALS.

The following are absolutely necessary to enable us to carry on a war with a maritime Power, in which both Navy and Army might be engaged :—

1. The most rapid possible completion of our seaport defences on a scale suitable to meet attack by modern ships of war. This includes greatly increased reserves of ammunition stores in those defences.

2. The most rapid possible construction of Ordnance Store buildings sufficient to hold largely increased reserves of stores.

3. The provision of those reserves of stores as storage room becomes available.

4. The immediate enlargement of the area and buildings of the Army Clothing Department, and the provision of a largely increased reserve of clothing as storage room becomes available.

5. The immediate introduction of improved machinery into the Ordnance factories, and the increase of their power of output by 50 per cent. The cost of this will be, approximately, £1,300,000.

It is impossible for me, under the present strain on myself and everyone in my department, to elaborate calculations and make estimates in detail for these requirements. But I submit that that is no reason why work should not be immediately commenced and pushed forward; calculations and estimates can follow. It is of vital importance to lose no time.

It would be absolutely impossible to meet these needs through Annual Estimates.

It is this system under which orders cannot be given for any length of time ahead, which cripples the power of output of the trade. They will not, under such a system, invest money in buildings or plant, not knowing from year to year whether they will have further orders. These needs can only be met by extraordinary provision by loan.

It would be equally impossible to make provision under the interminable delays and references to the Treasury inseparable from the financial system which prevails in the

War Office in time of peace. The case can only be met by a free hand being given to the Inspector-General of Fortifications as regards works and buildings, and to the Director-General of Ordnance as regards armaments, stores, and clothing. It is only by such a free hand having been given to us since the outbreak of war in October that it has been possible to supply the Army in the field, and even so, owing to the want of reserves, we have been too late with many of the most important articles.

I cannot say whether this may cost 10, 15, or 20 millions sterling. I can only say it is necessary to spend whatever it may cost to save us from a situation of peril.

I would ask that a loan of 10 millions be given to commence with, that the Inspector-General of Fortifications be instructed immediately to commence work upon the buildings necessary for stores and clothing department, and the Chief Superintendent of Ordnance Factories upon those for the Ordnance factories, that I be instructed to push on the provision of guns and ammunition for our naval bases and coaling stations as rapidly as possible, and to give orders, in consultation with the Director of Contracts, for as many years ahead as is necessary for the provision of guns, ammunition, stores and clothing.

H. BRACKENBURY,  
Director-General of Ordnance.

December 15th, 1899.

The immediate result of this appalling revelation of the peril of our position was: Her Majesty's Government granted a sum of £10,500,000 to be provided in the three years 1901-02, 1902-03, and 1903-04, together with certain sums which we could get in the Estimates of the year 1900-01 towards these services.

#### THE REPORT AMPLIFIED.

Sir Henry Brackenbury was examined at some length on the subject before the Royal Commission, and to use his own phrase he "amplified" the details of his statement as follows:—

Extracts from Sir H. Brackenbury's evidence:—

##### SHORT IN GUNS.

1899. We had in reserve the material of only one Horse Artillery battery, and that battery had been converted to an experimental quick-firing system. We had only material for eleven 15-pounder batteries, of which two had been converted to an experimental sys-

tem, leaving only nine available, and those were so immediately required for arming batteries which had to be raised in this country in consequence of all our artillery going out to the war, that having sent out five to South Africa, as soon as we had handed over the rest here we had none whatever in reserve. We had to send out to South Africa three batteries of 5-inch howit-

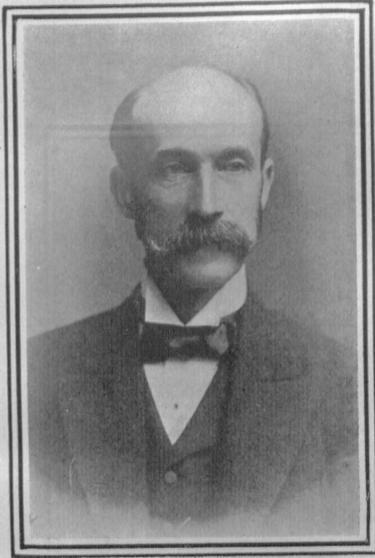


*Photo by*

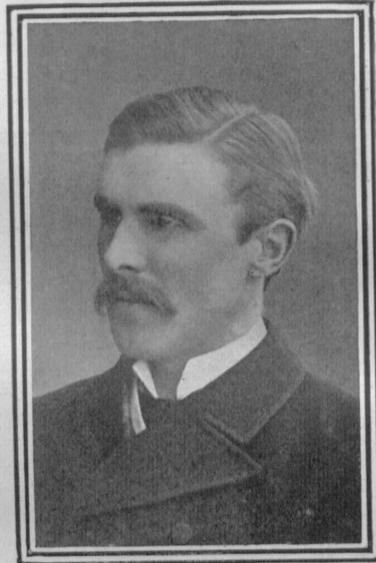
GENERAL SIR H. BRACKENBURY.

*[Russell.]*

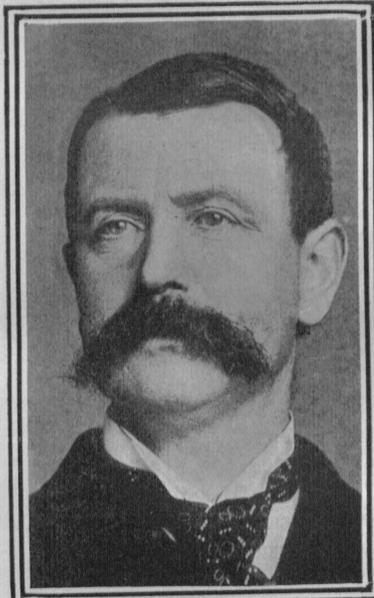
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[Photo by] [Russell.]  
LORD LANSDOWNE.



[Photo by] [Russell.]  
THE HON. ST. JOHN BRODRICK.



[Photo by] [Russell.]  
LIEUT.-GEN. SIR CHARLES WARREN.



[Photo by] [Gregory.]  
LIEUT.-GEN. LORD METHUEN.

zers, and in reserve we had only one 5-inch howitzer. In order to send out three howitzers to South Africa to replace, I had to take two of those appropriated to movable armaments of fortresses. This is a statement of what I had to do on the 15th December, but at a later date we got into a worse condition.

#### SHORTER IN AMMUNITION.

Then of gun ammunition we had only a reserve of 200 rounds per gun for each horse and field and mountain gun or howitzer, in addition to the 300 rounds which were with the batteries, and the whole of this reserve was absorbed by South Africa long before 15th December, and the whole powers of the Ordnance factories and the trade had to be turned on for further supplies. Naval orders for ammunition had to be held in abeyance from the beginning of October. We borrowed ammunition from the Navy, and we borrowed ammunition from the Government of India, and yet I was unable to meet Sir Redvers Buller's demands for 5-inch howitzer ammunition and 7-pounder ammunition until a fortnight after they should have been complied with. I had to deplete the quantities of ammunition for the siege train in order to supply the 6-inch howitzers in South Africa, and to take guns from the armament at Plymouth to meet Sir Redvers Buller's demand for longer range guns.

#### OUT OF HARNESS AND SADDLES.

We had only 500 single sets of harness in reserve, less than sufficient for five batteries, and in the statement that has been given to you it has been shown what was the quantity of harness we sent out during the war. We had to send out 3,448 sets of transport harness alone during the war. We were 326 machine guns deficient of the authorised number, and we had to draw upon the machine guns provided for the movable armaments of fortresses to meet South African requirements. We had only 500 sets of cavalry saddlery in reserve at the beginning of the war to meet the wear and tear of 16,000 sets in possession of the troops, and by the 15th December, 1899, I had had to order 600 sets to be sent out to South Africa, and we sent out to the war 23,249 sets of saddlery, and had 500 sets in reserve. We had about 10,000 sets of

infantry accoutrements in reserve to meet the wear and tear of 364,000 sets. We had already none left, not one in hand, on the 15th December. We had 500 sets of saddlery for mounted infantry in reserve, and before the 15th December I had had to order 11,525 sets from the trade to equip troops for the South African campaign. The trade could not supply all we wanted in time, and we had to go to America, and I may state that later on we had to go not only to America, but to Canada, to France, to Austria, to Germany, and to Belgium to get saddles in time.

#### NO WAGONS.

1600. I suppose the demand for that sort of saddlery was quite unexpected?—Quite unexpected. Many of the vehicles for the Army Service Corps were old, obsolete vehicles, which were all very well just to rub along on the very good roads in this country, but they were perfectly impossible in South Africa. We had to send all our serviceable general service wagons out of the country, and we had to order large numbers of vehicles, and, of course, they take a long time to make. We had only 1,700 sets of mule harness, and we had to buy an equipment of 25,000 single sets from the trade before the 15th December. The only things of which our reserves had up to December, 1899, proved sufficient were rifles, carbines, pistols and lances.

#### NEITHER SWORDS, TENTS NOR KETTLES.

Of cavalry swords the authorised reserve was 6,000, but owing to a change in pattern having been under consideration for a long time it had been allowed to fall to 80. We had an authorised reserve of 5,000 single circular tents and 100 hospital marquees. Before the 15th December we had had to send 17,000 circular tents and 900 hospital marquees to South Africa. Of camp equipment we had 2,000 camp kettles in reserve, and one single demand from Cape Town was for 5,000. Our reserve of picketing pegs, ropes, mallets, etc., was not sufficient to supply one-fiftieth of the demands from South Africa, and I may state that there was nothing in which we found it more difficult to keep up the supplies from the trade than in picketing pegs.

## NO CARTRIDGES.

Then, as regards small arm ammunition, our authorised stocks on the 31st March, 1899, were 151,000,000 rounds.

1602. We sent out altogether 102,000,000 cartridges besides all that went out with the troops. In this country we produced a bullet, Mark IV. This bullet was an expanding bullet. We had every intention of using this bullet, and making it, in fact, the bullet for the British Army all over the world. Up to 31st March, 1899, about 66,000,000 of it had been delivered, which formed part of our stock of 172,000,000.

## THE DOOMED DUM DUM BULLET.

In the hot summer of 1899 we found that when the weather was hot and the rifle was dirty the lead of the bullet was apt to squirt through the opening in the top, leaving the nickel envelope behind. About the same time the Hague Convention passed a resolution against all expanding bullets, but our Government was not a party to that Convention, and they declined to be bound by it; but, nevertheless, it is impossible to avoid a feeling that it had a certain moral effect, and that it was not considered desirable to use an expanding bullet in time of war. The reason why we did not use the expanding bullet in South Africa was not the Hague Convention, however, but because Mark IV. ammunition—our expanding ammunition—had proved unfit to be used in war. Consequently about two-fifths of our reserve of ammunition could not be used. We were driven to great straits at one time, because we had actually got reduced in this country to two or three boxes of Mark II. ammunition, so that if we had had to go to war with a European Power we should have had to use the expanding bullet.

## SHORT IN HOSPITAL EQUIPMENT.

Then, as regards hospital equipment, we had no reserve, and we had only material for one general and two stationary hospitals in our mobilisation equipment, and by the 15th December we had sent out five general hospitals, and were asked for a sixth, and I have stated here, that before the 30th September, 1899, we equipped and shipped from Woolwich five stationary hospitals and sixteen general hospitals, each of 520 beds.

That shows how inadequate our reserves were.

1613. We have no real reserve of power of output in the country, and it caused me the deepest anxiety as to what would take place in the event of a war in which both Navy and Army were engaged, for if in this war, in which only the land forces were engaged, we had, in order to keep up supplies, to borrow ammunition from the Navy, what would happen if the Army and Navy were both to be engaged? It would be impossible to meet the demands for ammunition under the conditions then existing.

## RIFLES WRONGLY SIGHTED.

1777. The Lee-Enfield, with which it was proposed to replace the Lee-Metford, was found to be wrongly sighted. We inquired into it, and the reports proved that this rifle was shooting 18 inches to the right at 500 yards.

1779. When was that discovered?—It was discovered in the winter of 1899, I think in December, when the Imperial Yeomanry were first enlisted.

1777. Meanwhile the whole of the troops had gone out with these rifles, had they not?—No, only about 25,000 reservists. The rest of the regular troops had gone out with the Lee-Metford. The reservists and then the Imperial Yeomanry were the first to have the Lee-Enfield. What we proceeded to do immediately was to make a back sight with a differently placed notch on the leaf, and we sent these out to South Africa to be put on the Lee-Enfield there, so that they could alter their rifles at once. But it was an awful blow just at the moment when we were beginning to take this new weapon into use to find that this mistake had been made.

## NO HORSE SHOES.

1603. Our reserve of general stores was utterly inadequate to meet the demands; we had to buy on the market whatever we could get. As an example, we had an authorised reserve of 52,000 sets of horse shoes, but no mule shoes, and I had before December to send 35,000 sets of horse shoes and 40,000 sets of mule shoes to Africa monthly to keep the animals shod. Later on, this grew to about 100,000 sets of horse shoes and 70,000 mule shoes.

1604. Monthly?—Monthly, and we had

to go to Germany and Sweden for horse shoes, and to the United States for mule shoes. Nobody in this country at first seemed to be able to make mule shoes. Our reserves of clothing were inadequate to meet even peace requirements, and before the war broke out I had asked for a reserve to be prepared equal to six months' ordinary supplies, which would cost £320,000, and that demand had received no answer.

1666. We sent out over a million and a half—1,619,562—pairs of horse and mule shoes, which we had really to go all over the world to get. The question was asked me how far they were drawn from existing reserves, obtained from Government factories or the Arsenal, or purchased from private factories. I think we have shown you what the existing reserves were—how trifling they were.

#### OUR DEPENDENCE ON THE FOREIGNER.

Then the great mass of boots was supplied by the trade, and of the purely warlike equipment we got a great deal more from the Ordnance factories than from any one else. We had to go to America and to Germany for tents. We got a number of tents even from India. Horse and mule shoes we went to America, Germany, and Sweden for. For saddlery we went to Canada, America, France, Germany, Austria, Belgium; and even such things as felling axes we could not get in sufficient quantities in this country.

And so forth and so forth.

#### LORD LANSDOWNE'S COMMENTS.

Lord Lansdowne, on receiving General Brackenbury's Report, wrote a memorandum, dated May 21st, 1900. From this two passages may be quoted—

2128. It is, I think, abundantly clear, from Sir H. Brackenbury's Report, that we were not sufficiently prepared even for the equipment of the comparatively small force which we had always contemplated might be employed beyond the limits of this country in the initial stages of a campaign. For the much larger force which we have actually found it necessary to employ our resources were absolutely and miserably inadequate. The result has been that the Department, even by working under conditions which have nearly led to a breakdown, has been barely

#### NEITHER CLOTHES NOR BOOTS.

1611. Special difficulties arose in regard to clothing, and in order to clothe the Army the whole trade of the country was occupied by us and for us, and the clothing factory at Pimlico was working to its full power and a great deal of overtime. We could not get sufficient helmets, and we had to borrow them from India. We could not even get sufficient boots.

1619. With regard to the reserve of clothing, and necessaries for a force of 25,000 men, which I have mentioned, that had only been raised to 25,000 men in 1898, and it was not khaki; it was red or blue clothing, so that it was not really available for the war. On the 1st April, 1899, money was given for 40,000 khaki drill suits. As to the reservist kits as detailed in the form marked B, that was for 82,500 men, but the body clothing was unsuitable; the great coats, cloaks, field-caps, and so on, were suitable for foreign service, but the home pattern boots were unsuitable for field service.

We were equally refused money by the Secretary of State in the early stage to make any preparation for providing clothing for the First Army Corps, and nothing was done until 22nd September, and then on the 22nd September, £38,000 was given for serge frocks and trousers, and £5,000 for frocks. The exchange from khaki drill to khaki serge caused us a great deal of trouble.

able to keep pace with the requirements of the Army. We had, at the outset of the campaign, to send troops abroad, insufficiently supplied with clothes and equipment, and if we have been able to overtake arrears, it has only been by relaxing our specifications, and by paying extravagant rates. If other complications had supervened, a catastrophe would have been inevitable.

With regard to the question of reserves generally, I urge strongly that we decide, once and for all, to place the Ordnance Department upon a business footing. No large purveyor of commodities could carry on without a stock sufficient to meet promptly the urgent demands of his customers. We have attempted to conduct a huge business literally from hand to mouth.

We ought to decide now to create reserves sufficiently large to enable us to meet the initial pressure of a campaign, and the War Office should be authorized to replenish those reserves without special instructions whenever they have been encroached upon. This is the Indian system, and it works well. A similar system, I believe, prevails in the Navy. Unless we do the same here, we shall

one of these days have a disastrous breakdown. It is no exaggeration to say that if we had this year been involved in hostilities by sea as well as by land, such a breakdown would have occurred. As it is, the Admiralty has complained bitterly that we had to neglect its requirements because we could not afford to neglect those of the South African Army.

A "catastrophe" and a "disastrous breakdown"! Yet five times before the Boer War Ministers had faced both. For Lord Lansdowne was asked—

21282. And do you think that deficiency of stores had been of long standing?—I think so. I think we were probably—as I believe Lord Wolseley said in a memorandum I quoted—better found at the beginning of the late war than we had ever been found before, but that does not prove we had enough.

The year before Fashoda the Admiralty had called attention to the fact that our stock of fittings, bedding and horse gear was quite inadequate even for the despatch of one Army Corps (2829). In April, 1899, a conference was held between the War Office and the Admiralty on the subject. The Admiralty said that for many years they had been trying to get an adequate stock.

EVIDENCE OF LIEUTENANT-COLONEL  
J. S. COWANS, OCT. 23, 1922.

2831. The opinion of the director and the naval assistant to the director of transports was that it was reasonable to predict that the embarkation of the first Army Corps, first Cavalry Brigade, and Line of Communication troops would be completed within a month if the fittings, etc., were ready in advance?—Yes.

2832. But they noted that in one Army Corps, one Cavalry Brigade, and one Line of Communication troops alone there are 15,338 horses, and they pointed out that at that time there were in store fittings for some 9,000 horses; also that the 2,362 water-tanks in store would only suffice for some 9,000 horses?—Yes, the stock was quite inadequate for the despatch of such a force.

2833. Was it also agreed that the expenditure which would probably be requisite for the First Army Corps, the First Cavalry Brigade and Line of Communication troops to provide fittings would be £25,100?—Yes.

2834. And £72,900 for the Second Army Corps?—Yes.

2835. Or £98,000 combined?—Yes.

2836. Of which £51,000 was for stalls, £34,500 for horse gear, and £12,500 for tanks?—Yes.

2839. And then the unanimous finding of the Committee was that "the present stock of fittings, horse gear, etc., is dangerously insufficient and altogether inadequate to ensure the rapid despatch of even one Army Corps, one Cavalry Brigade, and Line of Communication troops"?—Yes.

2843. What happened upon the Report of that Conference?—The Report of that Committee has been submitted, but it has not been approved yet, though I am bound to say we acted upon it. If we had not done so there would have been considerable delay.

2844. You acted upon it?—Yes, we acted upon our recommendations, but they have never been really approved yet.

2845. But at what date did you act upon them?—Directly ships were taken up in October.

2846. But not till then?—No.

The Report of the Royal Commission quotes the following extracts from Lord Lansdowne's evidence. After referring to his admission that our stores were inadequate, the examination proceeds:—

"21283.—Q. Is not that a fact that ought to have been brought before

the Secretary of State of the day?—*A.* All these things mean an enormous expenditure of money, and if the Commission will consider the large expenditure that was incurred during the five years I was at the War Office, I think they will understand that we felt we could not do everything at once.

“‘21284.—*Q.* I mean, without any reflection on individuals, the system ought to have provided, and ought to provide in future, that a deficiency in stores to the serious extent that was brought out by Sir Henry Brackenbury’s inquiry should not occur?—*A.* I do not disagree.

“‘21285.—*Q.* The system had not provided against that contingency as it stood in 1899?—*A.* I am not sure that I should admit that it was the system that was at fault.

“‘21286.—*Q.* What was, then?—*A.* The personal element enters into all those things; you may have a head of a department who is easy-going and does not like putting forward proposals for the expenditure of millions when he knows there are other demands for the expenditure of other millions in front of him.’

“The Commissioners feel strongly that the maintenance of proper reserves for the Army is so vital that no system can be recognised as adequate which does not give an assurance on which the nation can more safely rely than that which is conveyed in the above answers.

“It may be acknowledged that to have dealt promptly and effectually with the matter in the midst of a great war reflects credit on those concerned. What is not so satisfactory is that so far as any cause is assigned for the occurrence of so serious a scandal, no sufficient safeguard is suggested to prevent its recurrence.”

I will bring this appalling narrative to a close by one more quotation from Sir Henry Brackenbury’s evidence :—

1714. I suppose you remember that in 1895, according to the popular idea, we were not very far off a rupture with France?—Yes.

1715. And later on, in 1898, the same thing occurred?—Yes, according to the popular idea.

1716. Have you any reason to suppose that our preparations for war at that time were any better than they were for the outbreak of this war in 1899?—I have no reason to suppose that they were better.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE QUALITY OF OUR ARMS AND ACCOUTREMENTS.

THE deficiency in the supply of munitions of war has been adequately dealt with in the preceding chapter. The question of the quality of the weapons with which our soldiers were sent out to fight, of their accoutrements and of the general equipment of the Army in the field, now comes to be considered.

There are only two branches of the immense administration concerned in the work of taking the troops to the seat of war and of maintaining them there which came in for unqualified commendation both as to the adequacy of their supplies and the capacity with which they were administered. One was the transport by sea, the other the supply of food on land. The Report says :—

249. The transport by sea to South Africa from the United Kingdom and the Colonies of a force much larger than any which had ever crossed the seas before in the service of this or any other country affords a remarkable illustration not only of the greatness of British maritime resources, but also of what can be done when careful forethought and preparation is applied to the object of utilising rapidly in war instruments which are in peace solely engaged in the purposes of civil life. If the same forethought had been applied throughout, there would have been little criticism to make with regard to the South African War.

228. The evidence shows that both in method of distribution and in quality the supply of food was one of the successful features of the South African War.

Lord Kitchener said : (1901) "I consider that the soldier was better fed than in any previous campaign. Complaints were few and far between, and the majority were of a trivial nature, which speaks well for the sufficiency of the ration, and the general quality of the food supplied."

Lord Methuen said : (14312) "I never recollect the food supply and so on being better, or so good as it was in this campaign; from the beginning to the end I have not one word to say against it." Evidence to the same effect was given by numerous witnesses.

Turning from these two bright points, I will follow the Report in its analyses of our shortcomings in other respects.

## OUR ARTILLERY OUTRANGED.

166. The chief questions which have been raised relatively to the equipment of the Army in South Africa with guns at the beginning of the war are :—

- (1) Whether there should not have been long-range guns equivalent to those which the Boers brought into the field.
- (2) Whether there should not have been some quick-firing guns.

With regard to the first point the facts are as follows: (1674.) The Boer ordinary long-range high-velocity 2.95 field gun had a maximum range of 6,800 yards, but with a lighter shell than the British 15-pounder. The Boers also had 120 m.m. howitzers with a range of 7,000 yards. (1680.) They also had four heavy fortress guns, three of which they brought down into Natal and eventually mounted in the hills about Ladysmith. (14665.) These guns had a maximum range of about 11,000 yards and fired a shell of 64 pounds weight.

1674. As against these guns the Natal Army, under Sir George White, was equipped, apart from the naval guns, with 15-pounder field guns, having a maximum range of 5,500 yards and a time fuse available up to 4,100 yards, and 5-inch field howitzers with a range of about 4,900 yards.

Sir Charles Warren observed that: (15850) "The 15-pounder field gun was exceedingly defective in 1900 in Natal because the limit of effective burst of its shrapnel shell was only about 3,500 yards, very little above the limit of Boer long-range rifle fire; the result was that there was no space available for manoeuvre for the guns, and they could not be properly covered by infantry without the latter getting too near the Boer fire. This will account for some of the casualties among the infantry which would have been avoided had there been a longer range for the burst of shell."

Lord Methuen said: (14339) "I cannot think our field gun equalled the Creuzot in range, nor do I think we found the range as quickly or accurately as the enemy. I think you will find most of the commanders agree with me, and none of the gunners do. They think their guns quite as good as the Creuzot, and they think they are extremely good at judging distances."

Lord Roberts said: (10564) "Our experiences in South Africa have shown us that in the way of artillery *matériel* we were considerably behind other European nations at the commencement of the late war. Our field gun, though a good serviceable weapon, was wanting both in range and rapidity of fire, whilst the fact of the enemy employing heavy field artillery against us at the commencement of hostilities, placed us in a difficulty which we could not have avoided without calling on the sister service for the assistance of naval guns."

Notwithstanding this opinion, it would, we think, be unjust to say that the field armament prepared by the Ordnance Department was inferior to that which was in use by other great nations, or that there was a deficiency in the number of guns, though there was undoubtedly deficiency in the reserve.

162. The evidence shows that the quality of the gun ammunition was good, and much excelled that used by the Boers, whose shells, owing to defective fuses, frequently did not burst. On the occasion when their artillery fire proved most deadly, the action at Spion Kop, they are said to have used the British guns and ammunition captured at Colenso.

172. Taken as a whole, the evidence suggests that in volume and effective fire with good bursting shell the British artillery was superior to that of the Boers, although the Boers may have had a few field guns of more modern pattern. (18493.) The reason probably is that suggested by General Marshall, viz., that a large artillery cannot be hurriedly changed without due caution and careful experiments. (20839.) "The Boers, on the other hand, requiring only a few guns, were able to go to the manufacturers, and take whatever was in stock, and of the newest pattern." (20839.) Sir Andrew Noble thought that in this country, as compared with other Powers, there was too much disposition to await before re-arming a finality of invention which "can never be attained."

174. Major-General Sir G. H. Marshall called our attention to the

number (15) of different classes of guns employed in the field in South Africa. (18510.) There was in consequence much difficulty in distributing so many sorts of ammunition amongst the various units operating over a great area and in ensuring that there should be no deficiency anywhere. The difficulty was successfully met, but obviously might easily have led to disasters.

173. That the Boers should have had the idea, which had not entered into the minds of British officers, that great fortress guns could be brought into the field and dragged up steep hills, was attributed by witnesses to the fact that they are a people who are bred from boyhood to manage teams, and understand the art of getting out of them all their power. This skill, like their skill in managing the strength of their riding horses, in utilising cover, in entrenching, in scouting, in living without a regular commissariat, appears to be one of the natural advantages belonging to men who have lived in a not much developed and pastoral country.

On the question of the much-boasted high explosives, the Report says:—

161. In the absence of a fulminate, and consequently of detonation, the lyddite shell appears to have been in the war more alarming than damage causing. (15850) Sir G. H. Marshall said that “the effect of the lyddite shell did not fulfil the exaggerated expectations,” and evidence to the same effect was given by other officers. Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Warren was of the contrary opinion.

FROM STATEMENT BY SIR G. H.  
MARSHALL.

Fresh attempts to make common shell a useful projectile were made when high explosives were brought into general use as shell charges (*i.e.*, about 1895); at the same time it must be noticed that opinions which have at times been expressed as to the utility of high explosive shells for field guns have been based upon little or no knowledge of the results which have been obtained with these high explosives and upon grossly exaggerated notions of their powers.

#### LYDDITE DISAPPOINTING.

In a high explosive shell, such as the French thin-walled one, which depends mainly for its effect on the violence of its burst, complete detonation of the bursting charge is of great importance; if detonation is incomplete, the effect approaches that of a shell filled only with powder. Complete detonation is very difficult to ensure, especially with small quantities of high explosives, unless a powerful detonator, such as a fulminate of mercury one is used, and a fulminate detonator is far too sensitive to be allowable in conjunction with a high explosive shell. Thus incomplete detonation in medium shell, *e.g.*, 4.7 inch and 5 inch, is not uncommon, and is the rule with smaller shell, so that high explosives have not so far

been found worth introducing at all for shells smaller than the 4 inch.

The 50 lb. lyddite shells thrown by the 5-inch howitzers and guns in South Africa have disappointed many officers by their results; a 15 lb. high explosive shell would cause still more disappointment.

All experience has shown that the high explosive shell of the nature used in this country, in Germany and in France have little or no incendiary effect even when they burst amongst dry thatch. Shrapnel is decidedly more effective in this respect.—(*Appendix*, vol. p. 196.)

Lord Kitchener said:—

186. Ample supplies of ammunition and artillery equipment were always forthcoming in South Africa.

And in no case were guns or rifles without ammunition, whilst the artillery equipment, comprising some 600 guns of 17 different natures, was maintained in an effective condition throughout the war.

Lord Methuen said:—

14341. The Lyddite shell did not come up to its reputation, but I always took one howitzer with me in the hills, as it terrified the enemy more than any other arm. I very seldom hit anybody with it.

General Gatacre said:—

16772. Lyddite in its present form appears

to be an over-rated explosive; results were said not to be commensurate with expenditure.

CORDITE VARIABLE.

Rear-Admiral the Hon. Hedworth Lambton, who commanded the Naval Brigade at Ladysmith, said :—

19119. The chief difficulty we had to contend against was the alteration in the power of the cordite, the changes of temperature were enormous; it was constantly well over 100 degrees in the shade, and thermometers were so scarce in the town that I did not like putting mine out in the sun because it might have burst, and I do not know what it would have run up to, and at night it was always cool.

19120. And that affected the cordite?—It affected the cordite tremendously. Between the early morning and the middle of the day, in the extreme heat, the range used to vary 500 or 600 yards, so that you may say that although the distance between any two fixed guns naturally always remained the same exactly, the range was invariably inconstant—it was never the same. It changed day by day and hour by hour.

OUR 12-POUNDER USELESS.

General French in his evidence reported that in his opinion :—

17129. (a.) 12-pounder Horse Artillery gun was of very little value.

(b.) 15-pounder field gun a fair gun, but inferior to the majority of the enemy's field ordnance. It is not up to the requirements of modern warfare.

Major-General Knox in his evidence said much the same thing :—

17643. You think the 12-pounder was a useless gun?—Very; that is the Horse Artillery gun—perfectly useless.

17644. What would be your recommendation with regard to the guns?—I think the guns that they have now at Aldershot, the quick-firing guns, are the ones, and we must have quick-firing guns.

THE POM-POM.

All agreed that the pom-pom seldom hit anybody, but produced a great moral effect.

It was also a first-class range-finder. Sir G. H. Marshall said :—

18521. The bursting effect of a pom-pom is extremely local; for instance, Captain De Horsey, R.N., when he was taking the guns into action, had a pom-pom shell burst between his two feet, and only one piece went into him, and that was the brass fuse that went into his ankle. The burst is very slight. Of course, if the pom-pom itself hits you it is a big bullet of a pound weight, but its bursting charge is trivial, and it cannot be otherwise with only a pound shell.

Evidence of Major-General Sir H. E. Colville, February 26th, 1903 :—

THE BOER SHELLS.

17043. As to guns?—Of course there is no doubt our guns were outranged by the Boer guns. I do not think practically that the Boer long range fire did us much damage. I never remember a case of anybody being even hit by one. It was very alarming at first.

17047. (*Chairman.*) The effect of the long range guns of the Boers was moral rather than actual?—Yes.

17048. How is it that if a shell dropped among you it did no harm?—I cannot explain it. There was the case at Poplar Grove, where the Boers got the range of my naval battery exactly, and they dropped shells into the battery for a good hour. I asked the officer commanding if he thought he ought to change his position, and he said he did not mind in the least, and he stayed there, and they dropped shells among that battery and never even touched a man, a mule or a wagon, or anything else. It was not that they were firing badly, they were firing very well, and they probably thought they were doing tremendous execution, dropping shells into the middle of us.

17049. Was that shrapnel?—That was segment shell.

17050. Did the shells burst?—Yes, they burst.

17051. And still did no damage?—No, it so happened that for a whole hour making good practice they never hit a thing.

17052. I suppose the same thing may have happened with our shells?—I should think so undoubtedly.

17053. That goes against the effect of all artillery fire?—I think the moral effect is enormous.

What Sir H. E. Colvile could not explain Major-General Sir G. H. Marshall, of the Royal Artillery, subsequently made clear to the Commission :—

18549. I can explain that from my own observation of their fire. I have seen the same sort of thing, and there was no doubt in my mind what happened, because I have seen the shells fall. It was due to firing at an extreme range; if you fire at an extreme range you have an extreme angle of descent, and when your shell goes into the ground at that angle, the effect is only upwards. I have known cases of men going to a 100 lb. shell dropped near them like that and picking every piece of the shell out of the hole; it buries itself before it explodes, and it goes in so vertically that there is no lateral effect. That sort of thing continually happened during the War.

THE MORAL EFFECT OF ARTILLERY.

General Brackenbury said :—

1682. I think the moral effect of the Naval

162. Sir G. H. Marshall said that he had received from Artillery officers no complaints as to the cordite, but there was some evidence to show that this material is affected in its power by changes of temperature. (15473.) Sir Redvers Buller said that the cordite was not smokeless, and not so certain or even as it should have been.

RIFLES AND AMMUNITION.

The supply of rifles during the war, says the Report, appears to have been adequate and satisfactory. The defective sighting of the Lee-Enfields which the Report points out was discovered, not by the War Office, but by the Imperial Yeomanry, to whom the rifles were supplied and who first called attention to the matter.

The evidence shows that the Lee-Metfords and Lee-Enfields as used in the field gave, on the whole, satisfaction. (173.) Lord Kitchener, however, said that "the rifle is capable of improvement, and was no better than, if so good as, the Mauser." Several witnesses expressed a preference for a clip arrangement of cartridges, such as that of the Mauser, as securing more rapid loading. The witnesses were not unanimous on this matter, and reasons were stated for preference of the existing arrangement.

There was complaint that the carbine with which Cavalry were armed at the outset of the War was not a more effective weapon, and subsequently during the War rifles were supplied.

IN PRAISE OF OUR RIFLES.

The following is the evidence of some of our Generals :—

General Pole-Carew :—

16614. The rifles were excellent, better than the Boer rifles a great deal; they lasted

guns was very great, so far as our troops were concerned, but I do not think the physical effect of the Boer heavy guns was ever anything at all. They never did any serious harm of any sort, and nothing was so astonishing to me, and I think to many others among us, as the extraordinary moral effect which the presence of these big guns had upon our troops, especially the cavalry.

The theory that the long range guns only had a moral effect was combated by Lord Roberts, who said :—

10569. I will tell you an instance about the moral effect, and it happened, I think, under Sir Ian Hamilton. A volunteer company of Gordon Highlanders were marching in column, never dreaming that they were anywhere within range of the enemy's artillery, and suddenly a shell came amongst them, and eighteen men were killed or wounded in this one company, and that shell was fired from seven miles off, and at that distance there was even more than moral effect.

better, and I do not think there was anything to complain of.

General Stopford :—

16635. The Lee-Metford rifle stood the test of the campaign very well, and proved a thoroughly reliable weapon. There was a

desire on the part of the cavalry for a more effective and longer-reaching weapon than their carbine.

General Gatacre :—

16772: The Lee-Metford proved a good weapon: it is awkward and heavy to ride with, but any strong military rifle must be that. If a safe button pressing instead of trigger pulling rifle can be perfected, a vast improvement should follow in the shooting.

16837. What do you mean by a button-pressing instead of a trigger-pulling rifle?—Instead of pulling the trigger there is a button to press. There is one under trial, I believe. The advantage is that it is necessary to press steadily. If there is a trigger, and a man is jumpy or young, he pulls to get the thing off; but he cannot do that with the button, he must press.

General Plumer :—

18080. I thought the rifle came out very well indeed; I thought it was an excellent rifle; the sighting might be improved, but I think it stood the wear and tear extraordinarily well, and I think at the end on the whole the majority of the Boers would have preferred it to their own rifle. At the end, of course, they had to take it, because they had not any Mauser ammunition, but I think among the intelligent Boers the majority preferred our rifle to their own.

General Hildyard :—

15972. The Lee-Metford rifle was an excellent arm, taken altogether, though the Mauser had an advantage in the clip-loading and sighting.

Colonel E. M. S. Crabbe :—

19737. The '303 Lee-Metford Rifle far exceeded the expectations formed of it by many military experts. It appeared to suffer but little from the sand, and instead of getting out of order its somewhat complicated mechanism withstood the alternate heat and cold, the rain and snow, satisfactorily as a single loader; but the magazine springs soon got weak, and often failed to feed up the cartridges properly. The excessive strain of nearly three years' hard work and constant firing told considerably on the grooves, but this might be expected with any

rifled weapon, and, I believe, applies equally to field guns.

On the question of the clip of the cavalry carbine, opinions differed.

#### CARBINES AND CARTRIDGES.

Brigadier-General Rimington gave evidence as follows (February 5th, 1903) :—

12684. And how were your men armed?—We had the Martini-Enfield carbine, a small, light carbine and a very nice carbine.

12685. And you were satisfied with it?—I would not say I was satisfied. I should like to have had the Mauser carbine with a clip, because I think loading with a clip is so much better than loading with a single loader.

12686. You prefer the carbine to the rifle?—Certainly.

12687. Will you say why?—It is so much lighter, and so much more easily carried on a horse. The rifle is such a clumsy thing, and certainly in England you never could see as far as a rifle can shoot, so I do not see any use in having it so very far shooting. The rifle is sighted up to over 2,000 yards. Not one man in fifty can see anything at 2,000 yards.

Major-General Paget said :—

16518. The rifle is a good rifle; the rifle with a clip is eminently preferable to the magazine.

Major-General Knox said :—

17645. The rifle is a very good rifle. I have not seen the new rifle, the modification with the shorter barrel, and so on, but a better rifle than the Lee-Metford is not wanted, only having a clip loading instead of the magazine; only five cartridges can be put in together by means of a clip, and I believe that has been done, but I have not seen the rifle. It is a better rifle than the Mauser, I think—a better made rifle.

#### SLIDES AND SIGHTS.

Colonel E. E. Carr said :—

19146. The rifle should be more perfectly tested as to its sighting before issue.

The slide should be so arranged that it cannot slip when once raised; this is secured in some foreign rifles.

I believe in charging the magazine with a clip. The present method is too laborious and slow.

19257. As to the rifle?—I have always thought that the slide should not be able to move. At Hythe there is a specimen of every rifle used by any great nation, and many of them have the slide so that you shove it up with your thumb and then it is fixed. Our slide can slip, it can get loose, and instead of being at 600 yards it may be at 400 or 500—it may slip from the very top to the bottom. I think that some of the foreign rifles are better than ours in that way with regard to the slide. A man does not notice that it has fallen down, and he is using the wrong sight. The sighting is not always as perfect as it ought to be when the rifles are issued from Woolwich, or wherever they come from. I had an opportunity of testing rifles with a view to reporting upon them when they had come straight from Woolwich Arsenal, and the sighting has not been right. I remember that with reference to carbines at York once, and I had to report that although they had come straight out of the factory the sighting was all wrong.

#### THE NEW RIFLE.

General French remarked that as the Government is issuing a new pattern rifle to cavalry and infantry, it seems unnecessary to complain now of the defects of old pattern.

Sir Evelyn Wood said (October 29th, 1902):—

4249. I think the service field rifle is good enough, and it is about equal to any Continental pattern but one, which is now being introduced, and is practically very much the same rifle shortened. It is a handier weapon, and enables you to do what we call snap-shooting quicker.

Colonel Thorneycroft gave some interesting information on the subject. He said:—

12472. The long rifle that we had to use is not adaptable for mounted men. A short rifle, of the length of the old carbine, is what is wanted; but it must have the same ranging power, up to 3,000 yards, say 2,500 to 3,000 yards, of the present rifle.

12473. Is that practicable?—Certainly. I fired with one, which has been shown at the War Office, the day before yesterday, February 4th, at the Small Arms factory at Bir-

mingham. I understand that the Government have adopted a new rifle of their own.

12474. And the rifle, you say, should be made in three sizes of stock?—Yes; that is a very important point. If I have to shoot with the same weapon that a man 5 feet 4 inches shoots with, my eye is so near the back sight that the sight becomes blurred, and I do not get the same amount of accuracy in shooting. I want the back sight removed further from my eye by lengthening the stock, and a man must be fitted with a rifle the same as with a pair of boots, in my opinion.

12475. You say it should be "encased in wood with few projections, so that it can be easily slung on the back." What does that mean?—The whole of the rifle should be encased in wood. I may want to hold a rifle in a certain position, and another man may want to hold it more forward, and after firing some time in a hot corner the muzzle becomes heated, and the man cannot grip his rifle any further. The whole weapon should be encased in wood from breech to muzzle.

12476. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) You mean the under-part?—No; I mean all round. That is the new weapon that the Government are going to advocate.

12477. (*Sir John Edge.*) The upper part of the rifle, where the sights are, would not be encased in wood?—Yes, all covered in wood.

12478. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) Otherwise a man mounting suddenly on his horse cannot hold the weapon?—No, he cannot hold the weapon because the barrel becomes so hot that it would burn his hand; and, besides, sitting at the top of a kopje, or in a place exposed to the intense sun of India or Africa, the barrel becomes heated by the sun to start with, and with a few rounds fired rapidly out of it, it becomes almost impossible to hold it. There is no difficulty about casing the barrel.

12479. (*Sir Henry Norman.*) Is that intended to be introduced into the Army generally?—Certainly.

12480. (*Sir John Edge.*) In India sometimes you cannot hold the rifle in your hands, it gets so hot?—I have experienced that.

12481. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) Does that increase the weight?—It increases the weight, but not to any appreciable degree.

THE MERITS OF THE MAUSER.

Major-General Barton said :—

16327. I think the Lee-Enfield rifle is very good. I prefer the pull-off of the Boer rifle—the Mauser—because I think it is a better pull-off. Ours is more in the nature of a hair trigger and a stiff pull, whereas the Boer trigger—the Mauser—gives to the finger gradually until the rifle is discharged.

16328. But you have some criticism as to the sighting of the rifle?—I know from experience that the sighting might be improved, or else the ammunition is uncertain. I cannot say for certain which of the two it is.

16329. But for some reason or another it was not quite satisfactory?—I do not say that merely in regard to the war; I mean that that is our experience.

General Colville said :—

16974. The Lee-Enfield rifle is in my opinion an excellent weapon. Its range was sufficient and its trajectory low enough. For certain purposes, such as the defence of a small isolated post, it is probable that quicker loading, such as that employed on the Mauser, would be an advantage. The quick loading of the Mauser undoubtedly enabled the Boers to pour out a terrific fire at times, but it will be rare for the British Army to act purely on the defensive as they did, and sit in trenches surrounded by boxes of ammunition. Given perfect fire discipline, a very quick-loading rifle is undoubtedly an advantage; but failing this, the supply of ammunition in the firing line is a work of such difficulty that it is doubtful whether we should put into the men's hands the means of expending their ammunition more rapidly than at present.

THE DEFECTS OF THE LEE-ENFIELD.

The longest criticism of the rifle and the Clip *v.* Magazine was given by Mr. J. B. Atkins, the correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*.

20781. In the first place, as to the rifles, do you think the rifle we had was defective?—I would not go so far as to say that, but I certainly found that in the hands of the ordinary soldier it was a slow-firing weapon compared with some others I have seen. For instance, it requires to be filled separately; one puts in the cartridges one at a time, and

I noticed incidentally a good deal of carelessness about that. The cartridges are made up, not in the neat little clips which the Boers used with the Mauser rifle, but in brown paper parcels, and one frequently saw that the brown paper parcels wore away with friction in the man's pouch, and the cartridges would slip out. I often used to see the cartridges lying about on the veldt after an action.

20782. The pouches we have heard were defective?—I suppose they were defective, too.

20783. That may have caused some of it?—Of course. As long as the magazine was being used, it was a rapid-firing rifle, but when the magazine was exhausted, of course the cartridges had to be put in one by one—an operation which takes up a certain amount of time, so that when the magazine is exhausted, for all purposes it is a slow-firing rifle.

IN PRAISE OF THE CLIP.

20784. With the clip?—I should say for a man who is not a highly-trained marksman the Mauser rifle is the best that could be obtained; but in talking to marksmen who had got used to our own rifle I found that they certainly preferred it with its defects. Some day, I have no doubt whatever, we shall have an automatic rifle which will eject its own cartridges, and when using which a man will not have continually to change his position, as we do now. Each time a man wants to reload he must change his position. A man with an automatic rifle, which, of course, has not yet been brought to a high enough state of perfection, would be able without changing his position—and it is essential that he should be in a comfortable position for accurate firing—to fire continually without exhausting and worrying himself. The only question in my mind now is whether in the intermediate state in which we are at present, not having perfected the automatic rifle, the clip is not the best. Of course, the clip is very neat; a man just puts it in and the five cartridges are in place without putting them in individually; on the other hand, there is the weight of the clip; and I have no doubt it will be superseded some day. My only point is whether in the intermediate stage it was not the most handy rifle for the average man.

20785. (*Sir Frederick Darley*.) It has been said with reference to the clip as contrasted

with our system of loading, that if you have the magazine fitted you have it always in reserve, and you can load cartridge by cartridge independently of the magazine; whereas, if you have the clip, you must always fire from your magazine?—That is certainly so, but when we have held our

magazine in reserve and have exhausted it, then it is extremely difficult to fill it quickly enough for rapid firing, and, of course, one might wish to go on pouring a rapid fire into the enemy for an hour or two hours. I admit the advantage you describe, but I think the disadvantages override it.

The Report says :—

#### CAVALRY ARMS.

177. The stock of lances in reserve at the beginning of the War proved sufficient. (1600.) In the case of cavalry swords the authorised reserve was 6,000, but in consequence of the fact that a change in pattern had been long under consideration the reserve had fallen to 80 swords.

Sir John French thought that (17230) “the present cavalry sword is the very worst that could possibly be used for any mounted troops at all.”

Major-General Baden-Powell said: (19945) “the present sword is a perfectly useless weapon, to my mind, whether as a sword or anything else.”

#### THE BRITISH CAVALRY SWORD.

Major-General Brabazon said :—

6861. The sword that our cavalry have got is absolutely useless; it is too heavy and too blunt, and too unwieldy.

6866. The sword does not kill, it does not even hurt. I remember in Afghanistan we got home occasionally, and the Afghans wore a poshteen, a kind of leather coat with sheep's wool inside. It was ridiculous trying to cut them down; you might have beaten them with a cane as well.

6867. The sword did not cut through it? —Cut through it, no; they did not feel it. They did not know you were hitting them, absolutely.

6931. The Sikhs have a beautiful light sword that they can wield just as a man wields a whip. I am a fairly strong man, but I cannot cut with our cavalry swords; they are ill-balanced, heavy, and have a slippery handle.

6932. I think our sword is an infamous sword. That is what I was talking about when I said it was not worth twopence, but of course, with a lighter sword you could, no doubt, do ten times more execution, and keep it as sharp as a razor. Our swords are as blunt as the edge of this table.

6933. (*Sir John Jackson.*) Can they not be sharpened?—They get blunt in two days with the steel scabbard. All the Sikhs have leather scabbards.

#### ITS BLUNTNES.

Major-General Baden-Powell expressed

himself very strongly in favour of having sharp swords. He said :—

19956. But that matter of the weapon being sharp is a thing that really wants more attention in the Army. There are Ordnance objections to it, though I do not quite know what they are. In India I went into that with my regiment; we had so many men trained to sharpen their swords, trained by natives, because in India they are apt to keep their swords very sharp indeed; in fact, the Sikhs have a saying that a thing is “as disgraceful as having a blunt sword.” I had one squadron which I always kept ready for service at two hours' notice in India, who sharpened their swords in that way, but the Ordnance came down and said I should have to blunt them again at my own expense. It is a high art, as it is with the razor, first to sharpen your sword and then to keep it sharp. The way to sharpen your sword is to grind it on various stones, and the way to keep it sharp is to keep it wrapped up in oiled muslin, and that sort of thing; but no soldier has any conception how to sharpen his sword or how to keep it sharp, and the whole success in a fight depends upon that. It is not that these Indians are such excellent swordsmen, but the fact is that when they hit you anyhow, the sword goes clean through what it touches, and so they disable you quickly, even with a half-cut or with a badly-delivered cut.

19957. (*Sir John Jackson.*) What is the objection to having the sword sharpened and kept sharp?—It wears them out too soon,

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before their proper life; it is a more expensive job.

19958. (*Chairman.*) One witness told us that in some of the frontier wars the regulation sword would not cut a poshteen?—No, it certainly would not as it is sharpened by us.

19959. You think that the cavalry sword ought to be able to do so?—Yes.

ITS WORTHLESSNESS.

Lord Tullibardine, who had served in Egypt, added his reminiscences as to the way in which the British Army sword doubled up in the Soudan campaign.

He said:—

20376. We took the old swords up the Atbara, and we had a very severe fight just before the battle of the Atbara, and I saw men using the swords, and they did absolutely no damage; they nearly always hit with the flat. I never saw the men do any harm with the swords at all, while the lances did do damage. The present sword, especially the one we have got in the Household Cavalry, no one could possibly use without falling off, if he really cut with it.

20377. I think everybody agrees that the present regulation sword must be altered?—Yes, you want quite a light sword, and pretty strong at the forte.

CLOTHING.

Of the inadequacy of the supply of Clothing, the Royal Commission reports as follows:—

178. Sir Henry Brackenbury found that the reserves of clothing were inadequate to meet even peace requirements, and asked for the preparation of a reserve equal to six months' ordinary supplies, at the cost of £320,000. This demand was put forward in February, but does not appear to have reached the Finance Branch till May 1899. It was kept back for consideration in the autumn. Meanwhile the War supervened, and that demand became a thing of the past.

Before the outbreak of the War there were in stock complete kits for 82,500 men intended for the equipment of reservists in the event of active service. Of this the greatcoats and a few other articles were considered to be fit for service in South Africa, but the whole of the body clothing was unsuitable for active service in that country, and perhaps in most countries where active service may be expected, because it was not khaki but red and blue clothing.

A BELATED AFTERTHOUGHT.

Lord Lansdowne, in his evidence on March 27th, 1903, explained how late in the day the discovery was made that khaki drill was useless:—

21455. The equipment which was thought good one year was voted to be out of date the next year, and so on. Let me give you just one illustration of the kind of thing I mean; although we had not any large reserves of clothing, we had a very considerable quantity of it in store, and we were immensely proud of ourselves because we decentralised our so-called reserves of clothing. You had all these suits of khaki drill, or whatever the material was, bound up in nice little bundles at the depôts; the reservists were to come in, take down their bundles, and go away on

board ship, and nothing could have been more admirable than this arrangement. At the very last moment my military advisers came to me and told me that the material was wrong, that they must have khaki serge, and all these elaborate precautions proved to have been more or less useless. We had to go to the trade under tremendous pressure to get this material made, with the result that there was delay and confusion.

21456. (*Chairman.*) Do you think that was one of the preparations which were in abeyance pending the money being voted?—No, it was really an afterthought that serge and not drill was the proper material.

21457. I know it came pretty late, but I think it was included in preparations?—I do not know the exact date, but my point is that it was a sudden change.

21458. (*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) I

should like to ask a question upon that; a suggestion of that sort would come from the principal medical officer of the Army, no doubt, and we have it in evidence that it came from him?—It would come from him.

#### GREATCOATS.

The greatcoat was generally condemned.

Major-General Hildyard, when examined February 19th, 1903, said :—

15987. The greatcoats were a difficulty?—The greatcoats were very heavy, and also, when rolled, the Boers made a target of the greatcoat, because when a man lay down the greatcoat showed, and the Boer laid his rifle on the greatcoat, and directly the man moved he shot; directly he saw the thing move he shot, and that is the way he got his man.

15988. What is your suggestion with regard to greatcoats?—I think they cannot be carried.

15989. That is rather hard upon the men at night, is it not?—Yes, you have to put up with it. Eventually the blanket and waterproof sheet were carried, but no greatcoat. When they could be carried with the men in wagons it was done, but, of course, it is a very ponderous way of doing it.

15990. Are a blanket and a waterproof sheet more easily carried than a greatcoat?—Yes, they are lighter, and particularly if you are having wet weather the waterproof sheet is indispensable really.

15991. And it does not become subject to the same disadvantage about giving a target?—No, it is khaki colour.

15992. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) Could the man not unstrap his coat and put it under him, for instance?—Yes, he could do that, but then he would never get away with his coat if he was in a hurry; you cannot use your arm and carry an unfolded coat too.

Major-General Rundle remarked :—

17920. One point that was mentioned about the greatcoat was that it showed, that if a man took cover it was an object?—But they have altered that; it is a khaki coat now. That was quite true, and you might say the same of the Highlanders' kilts, because they only wore the khaki cover in front, and when we retired a company or moved it to a flank they had the whole of the dark kilt showing behind; nothing would induce the

Highlander to put the khaki cover over the whole of his kilt. The same thing, of course, happened with the greatcoat, but that is altered now because the greatcoat is the same colour as the men's clothing and the blanket, I suppose, too.

Colonel Forbes Macbean said :—

19557. The greatcoat was found to be more an encumbrance than a comfort. It is only worn in wet weather (on the march), and after being soaked only adds to the discomfort and weight carried by the soldier, making him quite unfit to move rapidly before the enemy, and great difficulty is found in taking aim when clothed in wet greatcoat and accoutred.

19606. We also heard that it was rather inconvenient in forming a mark for the enemy?—Yes, especially in the early morning; on a misty morning on outpost duty I always made the men take off their greatcoats directly it got light, because you could see a man standing up, or whatever position he was in, directly some considerable distance off, if he had a dark greatcoat on.

#### SHOES.

Colonel Forbes Macbean condemned the Army boot. He said :—

19557. The shoes issued at the beginning of the campaign were very good, but later were of a very inferior quality, and seldom lasted more than a month or six weeks. The Indian-made were especially bad, the soles and heels giving way from the uppers, allowing the sand to get to the feet, and knocking the men up. As a rule these shoes were made too high at the ankle, and to prevent the skinning or blistering of the ankles, had to be cut down. In one or two cases "British makes" were also very poor, and had every appearance of being hurriedly "made up." All shoes as a rule were made too tight at instep, and had to be cut to give sufficient space and ease. The arrangements for provision of clothing to the Army by Royal Commissariat Department were excellent.

#### A MONSTROUS SCANDAL.

A most extraordinary fact was brought out in the examination of Colonel Forbes Macbean. He was asked :—

19627. Is it the case that the men even on trek have to pay for their own necessaries?—Yes.

19629. What necessaries do you refer to?—Boots, spats, socks, shirts, mess-tins and helmets principally.

19630. (*Sir John Edge.*) If a man wears out his shoes or his boots in campaigning over rough country sooner than he would on a barrack square, has he got to pay for the new shoes or boots?—Yes.

19631. (*Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal.*) They must pay for their shoes?—Yes, the men are charged for them.

19637. (*Chairman.*) Does a man receive so many shoes a year?—Not on active service.

19638. In peace time?—Yes, in peace time he does.

19639. (*Sir John Edge.*) So many shoes a year free?—Yes.

19642. (*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) So that during the years 1900 and 1901 the men were actually worse off pecuniarily, being on active service, than they would have been during peace?—Yes, they were worse off from the money point of view.

19655. Any shoes they drew between the time you reached Bloemfontein, and January, 1902, were stopped out of their pay?—Yes.

19664. (*Lord Strathcona.*) Were two pairs of shoes in twelve months the allowance in peace time?—Yes.

19666. Would two pairs of shoes have been sufficient in war time for the twelve months?—No; I should say that two pairs would not have been sufficient; when we were on trek the life of a pair of shoes was looked on as 120 miles.

19667. And yet under any circumstances they would have had to pay for any additional shoes they required?—Yes, at that time.

#### HOW BOOTS PERISH IN WAR.

Lord Roberts specially praised the boots supplied for India.

Colonel Macbean was asked :—

19619. Were complaints made of them in India when you used them before in India?—That I could not say. I think the chief thing that ruined the shoes, especially in the early part of the war, was the marching early in the morning through the very wet grass, the leather seemed to get so very, very soft, and then with the constant kicking of a

man's foot against the scrub and stones the toe went very soon, and they often went at the heel, and then the sand got in.

#### GOOD BOOTS, GOOD MARCHING.

General Colville laid great emphasis upon the importance of good boots for good marching.

17113. (*Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal.*) You stated that in the latter part of the campaign the marching became good when the men had serviceable boots?—Yes.

17114. Were the boots not of good quality?—I think they were of good quality, but the ground was very rough very often, and the men had a great deal of marching, and naturally the boots wore out, and the fresh supply did not come before they were worn out. There were always periods when we were walking about like beggars, and naturally got very sore heels; and there were periods when we got new boots and were comfortable.

17115. It is of great importance that the boots should be of the very best?—Very great.

17116. But you think there was no cause for complaint with regard to them?—No, I think it was fair wear and tear.

#### BRITISH AND FOREIGN MARCHING.

Major-General Bruce Hamilton gave evidence on the marching power of our men, which he said could not equal that of the Continental troops for long distances:—

17462. The infantry always did what was required, and, I believe, could have done longer distances. It was very often a question of boots. On our way up to Pretoria there was great difficulty very often in getting enough boots, and we often had to leave men behind because they had worn through them. The brigadiers had to arrange, and I had to arrange myself, for the supply of boots very often, to send an officer off to bring them back, and the brigade which happened to get the most boots could go on marching the farthest; but the marching was very good, I think, all through.

17463. (*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) Do you think our men are as well shod as the Germans?—That I do not know.

17464. Have you ever seen the shape of

the German shoes?—They seem to wear a kind of Wellington boot.

17465. I refer to the shape of the feet?—Yes, I daresay that has a great deal to do with it. I have been quite surprised at foreign manoeuvres to hear the distances they have gone, but still I think our marching in South Africa was very good.

#### BOOTS LIKE BROWN PAPER.

The most serious evidence against the British boot was that of Colonel Carr, who commanded the 2nd Royal Scottish Fusiliers during the war. In his written statement he tersely reported as follows:—

Boots provided in 1900 were not good. The leather and make was most inferior in this very important article of clothing.

But in his examination he went at some length into details.

19219. As to boots?—The boots were distinctly bad in 1900, and I reported upon that too. I also said if I did not actually name the firm that I could name it if necessary; they were brown paper, at least they were not very much better; they were very bad indeed.

19220. Were those boots that came from England?—Yes, they were very bad indeed, and it was very much remarked upon, because it is such a very important thing for a soldier to have good boots on, and even with the greatest care, unless you managed to get them replaced from your depôt, after a certain number of weeks some men would be almost walking on the ground with their bare feet.

19221. Were they hand-sewn boots?—I am not certain, but I could easily find that out from my Quartermaster, because he had all the details about that; in fact, he had the names of the firms that supplied them.

19222. How did they come to you?—In the ordinary way, through the Army Ordnance Department; they came through the depôts.

19223. (*Sir John Jackson.*) Was it a question of one or more firms?—One firm specially was named, but I think there was more than one.

19224. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) It was the Army pattern, I suppose?—Well, they were in the form of the Army pattern, but they

were not the boots we were supplied with at home.

19225. Not up to specification?—Not up to what we used to get at home; it looked as if the contractor had not been behaving quite fairly, and we were suffering for it.

19226. (*Chairman.*) Was that only one consignment?—No, it was more than one to the best of my recollection. I know I wrote that report about August or September, 1900, when we were at Krugersdorp.

#### THE BOOTS OF THE C.I.V.

Colonel Mackinnon, who gave evidence as to the equipment of the City Imperial Volunteers, said:—

7383. The boots were far and away better than the Army boot; there is no comparison whatever. They cost, I believe, about 15s. a pair, and they came from Nottingham; every man was given two pairs of thoroughly good boots, the best possible boot, in fact, and it made a very great difference to the comfort and efficiency of the regiment. After we had been out several months in the country, I should think at the least six months, we got a new supply of our private boots, and we threw away our old worn-out boots, and the officer commanding the regiment alongside us in our brigade came and begged me to give his men the worn-out boots instead of the Army ones they were wearing, because they were such a different pattern, and in every way entirely different—there was no comparison. I think at another time in raising the Volunteers it is most important that they should have some sort of comfortable boot, and not the ordinary Army boot.

7384. I suppose it would be important that the Army soldier should have a comfortable boot?—Yes.

7385. (*Viscount Esher.*) What is the difference in price?—I believe the Army boot now is about 9s., and our boots were about 15s., but our boots were superlatively good, and they were quite as good as any I should use myself for shooting or anything else. The Army boot is made on a different pattern, and the sides are stiff; it is made, I believe, by machinery. It was very fortunate indeed that the City Imperial Volunteers had this boot—I cannot speak highly enough of it; it was an absolute blessing for us, as

we could see the men in other regiments suffering far worse with their feet than ours were.

CANADIAN BOOTS.

19232. (*Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal.*) Had you any opportunity of seeing the over-sea Colonials' boots?—No, I cannot say that I ever did; although I was with the Colonials occasionally, I was not mixed up with them to the extent of noticing any details of their dress.

19233. Do you consider that the ordinary half boot is better than the long boot with soft leather for the legs?—Yes, I think that the short boot is better.

19234. Even when the leather of the leg is soft you think the short boot is better?—I think the short boot is better.

19235. Because some of the Canadians' boots were of that longer kind, and were said to be most serviceable and to wear well, the quality being good?—Yes, and, of course, I had not a chance of seeing those boots that you are referring to. I might have said that they were better if I had seen them, but I have never seen that particular pattern, and I was not sufficiently mixed up with the Colonials to see those little details of their equipment.

19236. I heard that they were preferred by the mounted infantry very much?—Of course, it was absolutely necessary in some parts of the campaign to have something that would protect you against spear grass; the spear grass is a thing which is maddening if you have not a protection, and, of course, a puttee was a sufficient pro-

tection for that. If you had not been wearing the puttee it would have been necessary to have something up your leg to protect you against spear grass, because it irritates you to the point of distraction.

19237. How long would a pair of those inferior boots you have referred to last?—I do not believe that in hard work, with the rough ground that we very often had, they would last a fortnight.

19238. I have seen some of the Colonial boots that had been in use for six months altogether on the march in hard work, and they were still good?—Had they been marching or riding?

19239. Well, they were mounted infantry, but they had a good deal of marching?—Of course, you see the ordinary regular infantry man is entirely on his feet, and his boots never get a chance.

BOOTS AND SPURS.

The Marquis of Tullibardine complained of the boots supplied to the mounted men. He said :—

20281. The boots served out to the men were very much too heavy, and were conducive to bad riding, as the men practically lost all sensation in their feet, and were slow to get on and off.

He also condemned the spurs, which he said were much too big and sharp for mounted infantry. Spurs were necessary for tired horses, but the rowels might be less severe, and very short necks should have been provided on the spurs for all mounted men.

ACCOUTREMENTS.

The Report says : (180) We heard much criticism of the ammunition pouches which were, after the War had begun, gradually replaced by the more convenient bandolier. The chief defect of the ammunition pouches supplied was that ammunition was easily lost out of them, especially when men ran. Lord Kitchener observed (189) that "our losses in ammunition in this campaign, which in itself proved a source of supply to the enemy, cannot be ascribed to a want of care of the individual soldier so much as to the peculiar unsuitability of the article supplied to him in which to carry his rounds." It was considered that the adoption of the Boer arrangement of bandoliers and of cartridges fastened by a clip would obviate this.

POUCH VERSUS BANDOLIER.

Colonel E. E. Carr expressed a strong opinion in favour of the bandolier.

19215. (*Chairman.*) The pouches were

not satisfactory?—No, they were very unsatisfactory.

19216. And a good deal of ammunition was lost?—Yes, directly the men began to run. I could not state how many rounds

were lost, and I reported upon that while I was in South Africa in 1900, and stated that the bandolier was better, as the weight was taken off the stomach and put on the shoulder, and the men would rather have that. It is also much easier in every way. I have also said with reference to those that came out quite late with drafts, that although they had bandoliers they were not satisfactory, because they had a long flap fastened by buttons, and the consequence was that the buttons did not hold the flap, which would lift up, and as the little receptacles got enlarged by being continually used, the ammunition came out. They are all right as long as every five rounds has a little flap of its own, but the big pouches they wore, pulling on the stomach, were not good.

19217. How many rounds can a man carry in a bandolier?—I think an ordinary bandolier only takes up to fifty or sixty.

19218. Does not a man carry 150 or 200 rounds?—Yes, he does in these two pouches, but he must carry two bandoliers, and there is no reason why he should not. I think two bandoliers would be much more easily carried than those two pouches filled up, and all pulling on the stomach, which means that a man has to make his belt very tight to hold them, and also they did not carry as much as it was necessary for the men to carry, and we found them putting the ammunition into their pockets and haversacks, which I do not think was satisfactory.

#### GENERAL BARTON'S OPINION.

Major-General Barton, in his examination February 20th, 1903, expressed somewhat similar views :—

16361. (*Chairman.*) The pouches that the men have for carrying their ammunition you think need improvement?—I think they need very much improvement.

16362. Did you find that there was great loss of ammunition from them?—The present pouch, the buff pouch, is an extremely stiff, uncomfortable and awkward thing. Personally, I am in favour of the bandolier. Besides, we can barely squeeze 100 rounds into pouches; the men are always required to carry 150, and some generals like to carry even more, and the consequence is that packets of ammunition are always carried either in the trousers pocket or the coat

pocket, and if it is not used it gets knocked about in the pockets, and broken, and that leads to loss, and at the same time there is not very much check on a man. He can always excuse himself by saying it fell out of his coat pocket when he took it off.

16363. (*Viscount Esher.*) How many rounds does a bandolier carry?—I think a bandolier carries 100 rounds.

16364. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) Would you carry it in clips as the Boers did in the bandolier, in clips of five?—No, I do not think so. I think our system is better, because it is not always necessary to use the magazine. I think it is of great importance to have the magazine full. The Boer puts his clip in, and then he has to use up his cartridges, whereas we do not use up the cartridges in our magazine. We fill our magazine, and then take one deliberate shot each time with a fresh cartridge; but we keep our magazine, and if we were suddenly attacked by cavalry we should have our magazine ready. The Boer has not got that; he puts in his clip, and he is then obliged to shoot away one, two, three, four, five cartridges, and then his rifle is empty, and if he is attacked hurriedly at that moment he has got nothing in his rifle. I think our rifle is better in that way.

#### VARIOUS OPINIONS.

Colonel Forbes Macbean said :—

19668. I think the present accoutrements are not very well balanced, and the pouch is not a good one for carrying ammunition in, it is so very liable to drop out and get lost.

19669. You prefer the bandolier?—Yes.

Sir Charles Warren was in favour of clips.

15796. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) As to the pouch belts, if the ammunition was in clips of five, as the Boers had it, would that save the ammunition?—Yes, that would prevent it jumping out.

15797. Would that prevent the loss you speak of?—It would prevent the very great loss; of course, when the clip is broken a little might jump out, but the bulk would be saved and it would be a very great advantage.

15798. Would you suggest that—that the ammunition should be in clips?—I think it would be a very good suggestion.

The Marquis of Tullibardine wrote in his report :—

20281. With regard to equipment, the web bandoliers served out in South Africa were found useless, and were returned to store as they worked loose and lost the ammunition.

Colonel Forbes Macbean concurred in recommending the bandolier :—

19557. The present accoutrements are cumbersome, heavy, and badly balanced, and ammunition was continually lost by falling out of the pouches. Would suggest two light bandoliers, one on each shoulder, and holding 50 rounds of ammunition each. A bandolier waist-belt, with frog attached, to hold 50 rounds (25 rounds on each side or front of the body); this would hold the 50 rounds issued before going into action, and would make a total of 150 rounds on the men.

#### BADLY-MADE VALISES.

The Report proceeds: (181) In the opinion of Sir Charles Warren the knapsack or valise supplied was "an absurdity," and an officer commanding an infantry battalion (Colonel Forbes Macbean) stated that these accoutrements were altogether "cumbersome, heavy, and badly-balanced."

Extracts from Sir Charles Warren's evidence.

15791. You said "The knapsack and valise of the soldier on service in South Africa is an absurdity"; did they carry knapsacks?—No, I had intended to put "knapsack or valise"; I used the word "knapsack," which was the old article.

15792. They carried a valise?—Yes.

15793. Would there be any other means of carrying it without a considerable addition to the transport?—What I allude to is the shape of the valise, and the pressure it puts upon the man; for the sake of carrying about 7 lbs. there are about 40 lbs. put on the man with the tightness of the belts. On one occasion I was asked about it, and I said, "It is much better to have the men simply with what they have got in their breeches

pockets than to put such a valise on their backs, because for the sake of carrying this very small number of pounds you have the man all tied up when he is marching, and most uncomfortable." It was a badly-made valise. I marched with the valise in the New Forest manœuvres, and I know what it is.

15794. You think that the valise is badly constructed?—Entirely.

15795. Has anything been done?—I have seen something about a valise with a hook on each shoulder, so that the weight comes on the shoulder with no pressure, and anything of that kind would be of very great advantage. I think it very important that the men should take something with them, and the officers, too; the officers should carry their clothes with them when they march.

#### ENTRENCHING TOOLS.

182. The "Wallace" spade intended to be carried by the Infantry was stated by most witnesses to have proved too weak, and to have been an almost useless encumbrance in South Africa. Several witnesses represented that the right course was that good tools should be carried close to the fighting-line in light carts.

Extract from Major-General Hildyard's evidence, February 19th, 1903.

16002. Regarding entrenchment and cover, you say that the tool that was carried was not well adapted to its purpose?—No, it was a small, light tool. Personally I was always glad to have some of the tools; they got very rare in the end, but the British soldier

and the company officers would have none of them. The Boers never omitted to pick one up if it was about, and to my mind it was really better than nothing. We were in a great many places where the tool carts could not get up—they were upset—and then personally I was pleased that we had this tool; but it was not a good one.

16003. What was it—a light pick?—A

light spade—a small, heart-shaped spade almost. No pick, so that it was not any good for really heavy work; and I admit it was universally condemned by the company officers and the men.

16004. It was a curious thing that in the Boer trenches we found any number of picks and shovels, and the pick was of very much better tempered metal than ours was, and our men always got hold of it when they could.

16005. Are you speaking of the picks that were served out as good tools to our men when you say that they were badly-tempered metal?—Yes, the entrenching tools; they were not so good as those of the Boers, they did not grip so well.

#### A SPADE TOO LIGHT FOR SERVICE.

Colonel Carr in his statement says:—

19146. The Wallace spade and pick is not desirable. The men hate carrying it, and the tools are therefore lost. It is too light for any serious work. The heavier pick and shovel must be carried for the men when useful digging is necessary.

19254. (*Chairman.*) The Wallace spade you do not approve of?—Well, my experience of the Wallace spade is that the only thing it was used for was to knock tent pegs in, and to dig trenches round when it was going to rain; there was nothing serious about it, because I do not think it would have been any use on the really hard, rocky, stony ground we had out there. The spade was too light, and another thing was that the men were expected to carry it, and they disliked that very much. A man would always take the opportunity of losing his spade if he cou'd. He was found out and punished, but that did not produce the spade, and when you wanted it it was not there.

#### "A BENIGHTED LITTLE ARTICLE."

Major-General Rundle described the Wallace spade (17903) as a most benighted little article.

Major-General Barton was equally contemptuous.

16389. (*Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal.*) In your précis you speak of the Wallace

spade, which you say is useless and cumbersome. Is that the regulation spade, and the only one that is issued to the Army?—It is the only one that is carried by the soldier.

16390. It is issued?—It is carried always by the soldier every day; it is part of his equipment.

16391. And you look upon it as being utterly useless?—I look upon it as a useless encumbrance. It is a very awkward thing to carry and to march with, and it is of very little use on the ground, except it is the softest ground, that has been turned over before.

16392. It is nothing more than a toy spade?—I think so.

16393. How long has it been in use?—It has been in use, I think, about fifteen or twenty years.

16394. And it is quite unserviceable?—There are a great many different opinions on the subject, of course. That is my opinion. I say it is too much of a toy; it is not good enough. It was no use in South Africa.

16395. That is your experience?—That is my experience. I have never liked it.

16295. Is that a question of the design of the spade?—I think it is a poor thing; it is weak, and not suited for the purpose, and it is at the same time a considerable encumbrance to the soldier.

16296. But, apart from its being an encumbrance, you think it is an unsuitable tool?—Yes, I think it is an unsuitable tool for its purpose.

Major-General Talbot Coke concurred.

20215. The small entrenching tool carried by the men was absolutely useless. Full-sized picks, shovels, and crowbars should be carried on mules and in carts for about half of the force—not more than this proportion would be likely to be employed digging at one time.

20216. Do the foreign armies carry entrenching tools in the way you have described?—They carry better tools now than we do; but still I think there was some fault to be found with them, and they are reforming that, I believe. There is no doubt that they should be carried of the full size; there is no such thing as a half-size in a military tool, and what we want really are navvies' tools, picks and shovels.

SADDLERY AND HARNESS.

The Report says: (183) Lord Roberts considered that the saddlery supplied by the War Office (10501) "was of good material and workmanship," but that that supplied locally and from the Colonies "hardly reached the proper standard." Major-General Baden-Powell and Brigadier-General Rimington preferred the Colonial saddle. Several witnesses thought that the cavalry saddle was too heavy. The harness supplied by the Ordnance Department appears to have been of good quality.

Major-General Baden-Powell said:—

19986. The regulation saddle is heavy, and it gives a great many sore backs, and it is cumbersome, and carries a tremendous lot of kit; a man can strap all sorts of things on and weigh himself down.

General Baden-Powell said that he preferred the Colonial saddle, but that when buying it in bulk you have to take great care that you do not get a lot of rubbish shot in upon you.

SADDLES TOO HEAVY.

Lord Tullibardine preferred the regulation to the Colonial saddle.

20383. (*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) The cavalry saddle is heavier?—Yes, but you can alter it to suit the horse's back, and it could be very much lightened by cutting off a great deal of the unnecessary parts—for instance, those burrs in front ought to come off, and the flaps on the saddle should come off, and there should be a small leather guard on the stirrup leathers—simply a sort of slide—as they have in some parts of America, and instead of being made of wood it could be made of steel.

20384. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) When you speak of the Colonial saddle you mean the South African?—I meant the pattern known as the Colonial saddle, or the South African. They varied in weight.

20385. Have you seen the Australian stockman's saddle?—Yes, I know them well, and they are good saddles. The Allan pattern saddle was the best saddle I saw out there. That is Allan of India, the man who supplies the Indian Government. But it was capable of being lightened a good deal, and he was working to present ideas. The wallets we never used, and they were always thrown away or returned. Very much lighter ones might be used.

"USELESS RUBBISH."

Sir Evelyn Wood (4249) condemned the cavalry saddle as heavy and cumbersome.

Lord Lovat had an extraordinary story to tell. He said:—

20736. I thought I would bring up the instance of the kit that was given to us—the unsuitableness of certain kit which was issued. To take one example of the wastage of money in that way: they issued a hay net for South Africa, and they continued to issue it to the end of the war or within a very few months of the end of the war; and also a shoe case. Now, no man ever carried a hay net in South Africa, because there was no hay. When I came home for my second contingent I said, "I do not want any hay nets," but they told me I should take them out, and I did. In the same way no man ever wore a shoe case after the first three days out from home, and everyone must have known that, and they knew it at the War Office. I sent back a report myself on the subject, which was acknowledged. There were several other useless articles, breast-plates, and so on, which were issued with a lot of horse trappings for each horse, which were generally thrown away on arrival in South Africa. There was no good dragging them about in a wagon. That is just an instance of the way money is wasted, through lack of communication from here to the front, or from the front back, or not paying attention to communications.

20737. These unsuitable articles were simply thrown away?—Yes, or returned into store out there. If you were on the veldt when you got a brand new lot of men sent you, you would throw the useless articles away. With the second contingent Lovat's Scouts the useless rubbish was put into store, but as to the third contingent, we dropped a lot of kit; we were trekking hard, and we could not fill the wagons with rubbish.

## BAD COLONIAL HARNESS.

Colonel Sir W. D. Richardson complained bitterly that :—

3444. We never could get sufficient harness ; we begged the War Office to send us harness. I think they had some idea that harness could be obtained locally, but the local harness was absolutely useless, and went to pieces at once. In my experience—and I have been out in South Africa four times before—we always found the Cape harness absolutely useless.

3448. And we used constantly to complain, “What is the good of giving us harness that immediately you put the mules into it goes to pieces?” That is one of the things we want—authority to purchase locally our own harness in future.

3449. I suppose it is correct that you did receive about a thousand sets of harness purchased in South Africa?—I have no doubt we did ; but one thousand sets were not much good for the number of animals we had, while, of course, a thousand sets of bad harness are no good at all.

3450. As a matter of fact, the want of it put you into difficulties?—We were in the greatest difficulty for want of harness at the beginning of the campaign, and it could not be bought on the spot.

## BAD TELESCOPES.

It is the same story in almost every department.

Lord Lovat, speaking on the subject of telescopes, deplored the inferiority of our glasses.

20758. (*Sir John Hopkins.*) With regard to the telescopes, were they the regular stalker telescopes that were supplied latterly?—Yes ; we had a grant of telescopes given us by the Government for the second contingent, and the remainder of the telescopes I bought myself. The Government telescopes were quite useless ; one was a one-draw telescope, which was so weak in power that it was really not very much better than a Zeiss. I do not know what number of magnitude it was, but it was very much worse than the worst ghillie's glass, and the other one when standing up was about 5ft. long, and no man could carry it about. The War Office did help us by giving us telescopes.

20759. What would a good stalker telescope cost?—I should say you could get for £5 a very fairly good glass, what they call a keeper's glass or ghillie's glass, but we had to pay a good deal more at the time, because there was a great rush for telescopes, and we could not even get a great many firms to offer for them.

## THE STORY OF THE PONTOONS.

The Report says :—

195. The Engineer stores in hand at the outbreak of the War were not sufficient to meet the demand. This was especially the case in the important matter of pontoons. In order to meet the first requirements it was necessary to send out, among the rest, some which were described by the Inspector-General of Fortifications as having been “issued for educational purposes, more or less condemned ones, old pontoons.” When these “old instructional” pontoons, after lying for some time in great heat at De Aar, were put into the Orange River at Norval's Pont they began to sink, but the Engineer officers in charge, foreseeing that this would probably happen, had left them to be the last to be used, and had provided barrel piers to replace them.

A large amount of Engineer stores was purchased in South Africa ; complaint was made of great delays when they were ordered from home.

From the evidence of General Sir R. Harrison, Inspector-General of Fortifications :—

## DENUDING ENGLAND OF PONTOONS.

1856. Our stores were not quite sufficient. I did not consider that they were sufficient for the probable requirements of this war.

We anticipated that the war would be a big one. We knew that there were very large rivers to cross, and I thought we ought to have more pontoons, to take one case, than we actually possessed ; and we sent out a great many more ; we sent out, in fact, all we could lay our hands on in the country.

1863. Then were you given a special grant for the purpose?—No, we collected all the

pontoons that were scattered about in the country for instructional purposes, and sent them out eventually to follow up the actual pontoons, to reinforce, so to speak, the pontoons in the possession of the troops.

1866. From reserves?—From the reserve, and there were a certain number issued for educational purposes, more or less condemned ones, old pontoons; any that we could collect we sent out.

1867. But that denuded the country both of its reserves and also of those pontoons for instructional purposes?—Yes.

1868. Therefore, in order to replace them, you had eventually to purchase new ones?—We had to get money and buy new ones. It is rather a long process, because pontoons are not an article of store; you cannot go into the market and buy them; you have to have them made specially; and, therefore, it took time to get them.

#### LEAKY PONTOONS.

From the evidence of Major-General Sir Elliott Wood:—

2173. Then I think the next point you wished to speak to was the Pontoon Establishment?—Yes. Of course, it was an enormous demand to make, the amount of bridging that was required in that country, because we were separated in such an enormous district. Natal wanted a great many pontoons, and they got them. We did excellently, on the whole. I do not think we wanted more than we had, but we might have had great trouble at the crossing of the Orange River, just below Norval's Pont, if we had not made provision with barrel piers, in case the old pontoons that were sent out failed, because we never tried them. We knew they were very old, and we left them to the last to be used. We used the best material first. These pontoons came from Chatham and Aldershot, and had been used for years as instructional pontoons, and when they were put into the river—it is a very fine bridge, the biggest bridge we have built since the Peninsular War, 266 yards, and it was made in a night practically under great difficulties—and before the bridge was used these old pontoons which were put in last began to sink, and we replaced them with barrel piers, and the army crossed—or, rather, a division crossed—without any delay, because we were in advance of our time. I mention that to show the impor-

tance of having behind large reserves of pontoons. It is an admirable pattern.

2174. Would it not have been possible to have tested these old pontoons before they were sent out?—Well, hardly, perhaps; when they were sent out they were probably sufficient for standing in the water for some little time, but they had been out some time in extreme heat, lying at De Aar, in the hottest place you can imagine in South Africa, with dust and sun. A certain number of them did fail; but, on the whole, every need of the Army in the Field was met, and it was a very great need.

#### THE STORY OF THE MOTOR-CARS.

The story of the motor-cars is a fitting pendant to the story of the pontoons. Sir Elliott Wood told the Commission:—

I wanted to start motor-car searchlights, a subject which has been touched upon here. The electrical engineers came out with traction engines to carry searchlights about the country, but later on it appeared absolutely evident that if we could only have motor-car searchlights, and illuminate the lines of blockhouses, we could see where the Boers were at night, or these motor-car searchlights could accompany the columns, and throw their beams across the lines of columns at night, and prevent the enemy breaking back unseen. Well, I had a most excellent offer for motor-cars, the very things that would have suited us, from a French firm, and the prices were good, but it was considered more desirable that the order should go through the War Office, and the War Office did not take this offer, but considered it right to put it out to tender, and get offers in England. They said it would take them six months to supply them, and we never got the motor-cars; but in the meanwhile I, in the country, acting on the orders that I considered I had, started getting together motor-cars, the very things that were taking all this time to get from England.

2161. You did buy motor-cars in the country, then?—A few, but then we had to convert them in our own shops; we had to make them suitable for our purposes. They were just ready when the war ended, and they would have gone into the field, whereas the others from England would not have been ready for months.

## CHAPTER XII.

## AN ARMY BELOW PAR.

THE Royal Commission brings many evils to light, but none so serious as the fundamental weakness of our Army, not merely in numbers, which may be remedied by expenditure, but in brains, which cannot be bought in the market. The Commissioners and the leading witnesses gloss over as much as possible the evidence as to the inferiority of the British soldier. But behind their conventional phrases of eulogy the ugly truth is allowed to peep out—with this result, that on the evidence of our foremost generals the British Army stands condemned not merely as numerically inferior to the gigantic conscript armies of the Continent, but, what is much more serious, as inferior to the rank-and-file of the Russians in physique, to the Germans in intelligence, to both in marching capacity, and to most Continental armies in training. If this be the case with the privates, the condemnation of the officers is almost as sweeping. They are deficient in initiative, lacking in earnest devotion to their profession, imperfectly trained, arrogantly exclusive, and are drawn exclusively from the wealthier classes.

## OUR SHORTAGE IN NUMBERS.

To begin with, the Army, inferior as it is to other armies in quality, is even further behind them in numbers. Our Army Estimates before the war showed an expenditure of twenty-one millions on our land forces, not including the Indian military budget. In return for this expenditure we were supposed to have an army whose real strength differed considerably from its nominal numbers.

1899.	On Paper.	In Fact.
Regular Army . . . . .	249,466	235,602
Distributed :		
At home . . . . .	125,105	107,739
Colonies and Egypt . . . . .	51,204	58,782
India . . . . .	73,157	68,939
Reserves, Militia and Volunteers :		
Army Reserve . . . . .	90,000	81,163
Militia with Reserves . . . . .	129,572	110,826
Yeomanry . . . . .	11,891	
Volunteers . . . . .	264,833	229,854
Channel Island Militia . . . . .	3,996	
Malta and Bermuda Militia . . . . .	2,732	
	<hr/>	
	752,490	
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Sir W. Nicholson, who laid these figures before the Commission, made the following observations:—

“It resulted, therefore, from this organisation that out of a force of

750,000, of whom about 630,000 were normally stationed in the United Kingdom, only two Army Corps and a cavalry division—about 70,000 men in all—were organised and available for despatch across the seas for the reinforcement of any part of the Empire that might be attacked, or for offensive action.

“Moreover, both these Army Corps were an integral part of the Field Army allotted for home defence.

“The first phase of the War in South Africa showed that 70,000 men were inadequate to our needs. We had thus exhausted our organised Field Army, and were forced hastily to build up the Field Army to a total strength of 250,000 men. An army hastily improvised in this way obviously labours under many disadvantages.”

The following is the official return of the actual number of armed men who were employed in the South African War from beginning to end :—

	Non-Commissioned Officers and Men.					Total Officers and Men.
	Officers, exclusive of Staff.	Cavalry.	Artillery.	Infantry and Mounted Infantry.	Others.	
Carrison on 1st August, 1899—	318	1,127	1,035	6,428	1,032	9,940
{ Regulars . . . . .	9,206	22,348	18,426	156,288	21,903	218,965
{ Militia . . . . .	1,691	—	966	42,610	359	43,875
{ Yeomanry . . . . .	1,393	—	—	—	—	35,520
{ Scottish Horse . . . . .	15	—	—	—	—	818
{ Volunteers . . . . .	589	—	—	—	—	19,267
{ S. African Constabulary . . . . .	19	—	—	—	—	7,254
Total from Home . . . . .	12,913	—	—	—	—	324,395
{ Regulars . . . . .	568	3,483	1,029	13,133	16	17,661
{ Volunteers . . . . .	16	—	—	—	—	289
Total from India . . . . .	584	—	—	—	—	17,950
{ Colonial Contingents . . . . .	1,391	—	—	—	—	27,699
{ South African Constabulary (Canada) . . . . .	29	—	—	—	—	1,209
Total from Colonies . . . . .	1,420	—	—	—	—	28,908
Raised in South Africa . . . . .	*2,324	—	—	—	—	*50,090
Total . . . . .	17,599	—	—	—	—	430,876

\* These numbers are uncertain.

It will be noticed that of these forces 256,340 belonged to the Regular Army, 109,048 came from the United Kingdom, as Militia, Yeomanry, or Volunteers; 30,633 came from over-sea Colonies, including a few Volunteers from India, while an uncertain number, probably between 50,000 and 60,000, were raised in South Africa itself.

Out of this total estimated force of 448,435 of all ranks, 5,774 officers and men had been killed up to the 31st May, 1902, 22,829 had been wounded, and 16,168 had died of wounds or disease, or had been accidentally killed in South Africa, and 75,430 left South Africa for England, sick or wounded, including those who died on the passage.

The Report sums up the evidence as to numbers as follows :—

“At the outbreak of the war there were in the Regular Army and Reserve insufficient trained men of an age fit for foreign service to meet the emergency which arose, even when practically the whole Reserve had been used, and for this reason, as well as in order to gratify the desire of Non-Regular Forces to serve, it was necessary, almost from the beginning of the campaign, to invite Militia Regiments to volunteer for foreign service, and to accept the assistance of Yeomanry, Volunteers, and Colonial Forces. Not only as regards trained men and officers, but as regards equipment of every kind, the force which proved to be actually necessary had to be, to repeat Sir William Nicholson’s words, which sum up the whole situation, for the most part “hastily improvised.” The resources of the Empire in men and of the United Kingdom in stocks of goods and manufacturing capacities enabled the Government to meet successfully these difficulties, but there can be little doubt that much of the duration and cost of the war was due to the necessity of this great improvisation.”—(Report, p. 34.)

The mobilisation of the first Field Force of 45,000 men, the Commission reports, “was effected smoothly and with remarkable despatch.” The successive mobilisations of the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th Divisions was effected with even greater rapidity. Lord Wolseley, in a report dated January 30th, 1900, stated that “in preparing, equipping, and despatching this large body of men, the machinery of mobilisation and of embarkation has worked without a serious hitch of any kind.”

“By September, 1900, the infantry reserves proper, including the Militia reserve, were practically exhausted.”

The Report states that :—

“After the end of September, 1900, the only available drafts (apart from Volunteer service companies) to maintain the strength of the Regular infantry in South Africa consisted in the young soldiers who, month by month, attained to maturity, and those who had been invalided home, but were sufficiently recovered to return.”

In order to divert as many as possible of the young soldiers attaining the age of twenty into the drafts for South Africa, steps were taken to stop the normal flow of drafts to India. This was effected by asking men in India whose minimum time of service with the colours was completed to extend their service to twelve years, offering them a bounty of £10 and two months’ furlough. This offer was accepted by 16,600 men.

In order to prosecute the war against the Boers Great Britain was drained of all her trained fighting men. There was at one time only one cavalry regiment left in the United Kingdom.

The Report says :—

“The Regular force at home on April 1st, 1900, consisted of 103,023 ‘effectives’ of all ranks (not including the embodied Militia). This total included the 37,333 immature soldiers, the recruits who had subsequently

joined, reservists who had been found unfit for foreign service, and men who had been sent home sick and wounded from South Africa. These facts justify the statement made by the Marquis of Lansdowne, as Secretary of State for War, in the House of Lords on May 25th, 1900, when he said that these men were 'of course in no sense a field army; they include a large number of young soldiers, men who have not yet reached the age of twenty, and who are therefore not fit to send out of the country on foreign service.'

"We may also here refer to a Minute by Lord Lansdowne, dated October 12th, 1899, in which he recommended the embodiment of thirty-three Militia battalions. In this Minute he wrote: 'It would be a national misfortune were it to become known that after our First Army Corps had left these shores we could produce only thirty-six battalions with nothing behind them but a number of partially trained Militia battalions, and the men who had been discarded from the Regular battalions because they were too young to accompany them on foreign service.'"

To this crowd of 37,000 boys and 66,000 raw recruits, broken-down reservists and invalids, we added 24,130 retired officers and men, paying them a bounty of £22 per head for one year's home service, besides their pay. To such straits were we reduced after one year's war with the Boers.

The Report says :—

"There were also the embodied Militia, the Volunteers and the Yeomanry; but a considerable part of these forces had also gone to South Africa, and there was at home, as also in South Africa, much weakness in trained officers.

"In view of this fact and of the heavy call from South Africa for guns, ammunition, and equipment it is evident that the defence of the Kingdom, so far as it may depend upon an internal well-trained and organised military force, was at this time dangerously weak. The state of things, at any rate, in no way corresponded to the ideal set forth in Mr. Stanhope's Memorandum that, if two Army Corps were abroad there should be one Army Corps at home, partly formed of Regulars and partly of the Auxiliary Forces, complete in every respect, and fit to take the field against invaders."

How serious a position we were reduced to at home, with an exhausted Reserve and no garrison left but boys and invalids, may be imagined from General Kelly-Kenny's remark, that (4627) "it would never do to have anything less than one and a half times the strength we are supposed to send into the field. It would not be safe, I think, to keep an army in the field for a year unless we had one and a half times the strength of the fighting force in the Reserve."

We had, as the same witness frankly admitted (4837), "come to the end of our tether" so far as the Regular Army was concerned, and were only saved by extraneous aid in the shape of Yeomanry and Colonials.

#### THE QUALITY OF OUR RECRUITS.

During the war the Continental newspapers who gibed at the character of the British soldier were held to be animated by prejudice. The indignation excited in Germany by the passage-at-arms between Mr. Chamberlain and Count von Bulow as to the comparative merits of the German and English soldier is still fresh in the memory. The justice of much of the German criticism is now only too frankly admitted by our own military authorities.

#### EVIDENCE OF LORD WOLSELEY.

9113. We have had some evidence that the men were full of zeal and endurance and

pluck, but that they were somewhat lacking in intelligence. Is that a lesson you would draw from the war?—I think the intelligence of the private soldier keeps pace with the

intelligence and education of the people of England.

9114. It depends a little upon the class from which you draw them?—The class you get your soldier from is the same, and has always been the same class. Remember he is the worst paid labourer in England. The wages of the private soldier, so far as I know, are the lowest wages that are given to any recognised calling, and therefore you cannot expect for the pay that you offer the private soldier to get a better class of man than you do get.

9115. You think it is a question of money?—Entirely.

9116. But taking things as they stand, we have evidence that the class from which he is drawn is a low class?—It is not so low as it used to be. It is a great mixture, remember; we get all sorts of classes, but the bulk of the men are drawn from the lowest class.

9120. I think the whole history of our Army for as long as I have known it (and it has been proved to me because I have often brought the thing forward myself) shows that the inducements to men to enlist were not sufficiently high to get a better class of men into it, and that it was most desirable to get a better class of man into it.

9121. And still more desirable under the conditions of modern warfare?—Yes, because I think the soldier requires more self-confidence and more knowledge, and more of that reasoning power which comes from education.

#### EVIDENCE OF LORD ROBERTS.

10329. Have you found in your experience that the illiterate man is as good under discipline as the man who has a little education?—Certainly not. I think the educated men are undoubtedly the best. I am rather astonished to find how many illiterate men come to the Army now—men who can hardly read or write their names.

10330. Then they must come from a very low stratum of the working classes?—They do not seem to. Whether the system of education is bad I do not know, but I am much surprised at the number of men recruited lately who can neither read nor write.

#### EVIDENCE OF GENERAL KELLY-KENNY.

General Kelly-Kenny, Adjutant-General to the Forces, who was Inspector-General of Recruiting in 1897-8, drew up a memo-

randum on the subject, which is quoted in the Minutes of Evidence.

4545. The numbers required to keep our forces full will be far beyond anything our present inducements will procure. It must be remembered that some of our sources of supply are either cut off or seriously impaired. We can no longer depend on foreign legions, the supply from Ireland and Scotland is inadequate, so that we have to fall back for numbers on the waifs and strays in the populous districts of England. The question I ask you to consider is a more vital one than mere numbers—it is the class from which we should try to fill up the ranks of our Army. We as a nation have no actual experience of war under modern European conditions, but we learn from that of others that the individuals of an army in a battle sense are no longer the parts of a machine; on the contrary, European war at present requires to ensure success a high measure of individual intelligence and training, patriotism, and self-respect.

He was asked if our recruits come up to the standard of modern European war requirements, and answered the question in the negative—"I have never been satisfied with the recruits in our Army." When examined before the Royal Commission on this subject, he said:—

4559. As to our soldier, I would say that his mental qualifications are not up to the general run of European soldiers, and the reason of it is that we get them mostly from a class where education is not looked to as much as it is in Germany and in France.

4560. And with physical defects?—Physical defects, owing to a very large proportion of our enlistments being in very crowded places, towns—particularly in Lancashire. I think that would account for it.

General Kelly-Kenny had attended the German autumn manoeuvres, and had formed a very high opinion of their healthy, even appearance (4695):—

I am speaking of one on the frontier of Poland and Russia, the Fifth Army Corps, whom you would not expect to be so good; I formed a very high opinion of their evenness and health; they were healthy lads. I do not think they were taller than ours.

4696. Do you think they compared favourably with our Regular troops?—Certainly.

4785. As I understand you, you are anxious that the British Army should be composed of men from all strata of society?—Yes.

4786. And not from the lower stratum alone?—No.

4787. And that, in your opinion, would tend to strengthen the Army as a fighting body?—It is our only safety.

4809. With regard to recruits, you state that we are badly off for recruits of the proper class, and that you really had to fall back upon the waifs and strays. In point of fact, in your opinion, we require a better type of man, a man better physically and better intellectually than the class of man we get from the lowest classes of the large towns to a great extent?—Yes, I think, as I have said often in the course of my examination, that we would do better to get them from the general class of the population—a mixture of the population—than from the present class. We fail to tap the middle class.

4811. At the present time, as you said, you are getting recruits mostly from, shall we say, the lowest stratum of the working classes in the large towns?—Put it the idle classes; I think that would do; they are really classes generally without regular work.

4812. I suggest that the class from which the Army is largely recruited at the present time is a class of men who find a difficulty in earning a living, men with a lack of independence, who look upon the Army as a place of safety, where they know they will get, at any rate, their bread and butter, and therefore they enlist?—Yes, the great body of them.

4813. You agree that that is the style of men you get?—Yes.

4898. I suppose there is no harm in saying—in fact, it has been said already—that our recruits now come from a class who have not had the advantage, as a rule, of good food in their childhood, of careful bringing up, careful nursing and doctoring, and so on?—That is so.

4899. And, I suppose, it is also a notorious fact that, in consequence of all those conditions, they have been, on the whole, from a class that is more addicted to drink, or with more tendency to drink?—Of course, the lower down you go the more tendency there is to drink.

EVIDENCE OF MAJOR-GENERAL BORRETT,  
Major-General Borrett, the Inspector-

General of Recruiting, explained that he was short in the number of recruits, although the standard had been reduced.

5377. If you have had a decrease in the numbers you have got it is not because you have not reduced the physique?—During the war we reduced the height of the infantry soldier by half an inch, but we have never reduced the chest measurement.

5378. And you think the chest measurement is more important?—Everything; I do not care twopence about the height myself. At the present time we are enlisting men specially, as an experiment, of 5 ft. and over; the height for infantry is 5 ft. 3 in., but we are enlisting men of 5 ft. and over, and I have got about a thousand of them since I was allowed to do this, and I have just received reports from all the general officers, every one in favour of it.

General Borrett dissented from General Kelly-Kenny's low estimate of our recruits.

5374. I suppose you agree that you have not been getting a very good class of men for the Army hitherto?—I do not say that we get, as I have heard people say, the dregs of the population—I deny that—but we get them from the labouring class. The men you see now at the dépôt are generally young, healthy-looking lads of the labouring class, and if you look at their defaulter-sheets you never see a case of drunkenness amongst them; and if you go into the canteen you will hear that the only complaint is that they never drink any beer. I am speaking of England now, and not of Ireland and Scotland. They are not ruffians, they are not the dregs of the population; they are the labouring class.

He admitted that the physique of the recruits was falling off owing to the drying up of the rural population. He said:—

5476. Of course, when you come to recruits enlisted in Norfolk and Suffolk, they are more healthy; but I am sorry to say that every year we get more recruits from the towns and less from the country, because we know that the towns keep getting bigger every year, while the population in the country is getting smaller, and that is rather an unfortunate thing for us.

EVIDENCE OF COLONEL HOWARD  
VINCENT, M.P.

Few living Englishmen have seen more of Continental armies than Colonel Howard

Vincent. He is a Conservative and a Protectionist who sits for Sheffield and looks after the welfare of the Volunteers. But his evidence as to the superiority of the Germans is even clearer than that of General Kelly-Kenny. He was out in South Africa, and he also attended the Russian Armymanœuvres last year.

5487. As to the class of the men, have you formed an opinion with regard to them—the ordinary soldier?—So far as spirit goes, there can be no question it was excellent, and the conduct was extremely good. One hesitates rather to give an opinion, but as your lordship asks me the question I will reply: the knowledge and intelligence which you see, for instance, in the German Army were not present, and the individual rarely grasped, or frequently did not grasp, the situation.

5488. He was quite full of zeal, pluck, and endurance?—He was all for fight rather by arms than by head.

5522. You mentioned that you thought the English private soldier was rather deficient in intelligence, and I think you said you thought the Germans were probably more intelligent?—I am afraid I can have no doubt upon the point.

5523. Do you ascribe that in any measure to the fact that the German private is taken from the whole population—all classes—whereas the British private soldier is taken from a lower class?—Yes, very largely; but I think greater earnestness is implanted into the German soldier from the very first—greater earnestness in his profession. The theoretical instruction, of course, is immeasurably superior in the German Army. The theoretical instruction with us is on a very inferior basis.

5627. The Russian soldier, I take it, is more or less an illiterate man?—Yes, but, of course, the physique is infinitely superior.

5628. Both to the German and the British?—Yes.

5629. The average German soldier is, I take it, a better educated man than the British soldier?—Yes, much better educated, and there is a very high tone about his education; even in the most inferior regiments of the line there is a greater uniformity.

5634. I would say, as a general whole, having been with the German Army in peace and in the field, there is more earnestness from beginning to end. I should not say the French or the Austrians, or the

Russians, but with the Germans earnestness is the cardinal feature, from whatever cause it arises. I would say that earnestness is not the cardinal feature of our people, either in peace or in the field. Courage is, of course, their cardinal feature; but as to the earnestness, I should hardly put it in the same way, except as to football and cricket, polo and hockey.

5635. Perhaps that is accounted for by the fact that the British soldier is from a lower grade of society?—One hesitates always to say anything which might be interpreted as a reflection on the Army, but that construction is, I think, the right one.

#### OTHER WITNESSES.

From Lord Methuen's evidence:—

14228. Then as to the physique of the men?—In the Guards very fine; in the Regulars very fair; in the Militia fair in some battalions, indifferent in others. My remarks are limited up to the time the troops reached Pretoria. When I was at Lichtenburg in the latter period of the war there came a strong draft for the Northampton, and I have seen a good many bad drafts when I was on the staff and commanding the Home District, but I do not think I ever saw so bad a draft as that.

14229. For the Northampton Regiment or Militia?—The Northampton Regiment; I reported it to the Commander-in-Chief at the time.

14230. Bad in physique?—Absolutely wretched, the physique and the general conditions of a man (the moral conditions of a man), in my opinion, go together. That is to say, if you get a wretched set of men like that, you may be perfectly certain that if they get into a tight corner they will not face it.

Major-General Sir Henry Hildyard said (15972):—

“Their degree of intelligence was that of their class; it is not to be expected that men who join, as a proportion do, absolutely illiterate, will develop into very intelligent soldiers. But there is generally a fair proportion, and in some regiments a large number, who are sharp and intelligent, and can be counted on as leaders.”

Major-General Sir Bruce Hamilton said (17469) that the Regulars were “not anything like so well educated, and they were not anything like so good as regards intelligence

as the Boers, or as some of the Colonial troops.”

Colonel Carr said (19166): “I think, con-

sidering the way the men are recruited, their intelligence is certainly up to the standard you ought to expect.”

#### THE COMMON SOLDIER IN THE FIELD.

It is somewhat reassuring to find that the recruit thus obtained from the lowest social stratum of our population satisfies his commanders.

The Report says :—

“76. There was general agreement among witnesses that the morale of the men of the Regular Army, including in that term the qualities of courage, endurance, discipline, and cheerfulness under adverse circumstances, left little or nothing to be desired.

“With regard to physical condition the evidence was less unanimous, but also seems to point to certain conclusions.

“But though witnesses concur in thinking well of the physical quality of the infantry sent out in the first mobilisations, they also for the most part consider that the drafts sent out when the Reservists had been exhausted were of much inferior quality.

“80. A lesson of the war has distinctly been that the British soldier, in spite of the disadvantages under which he is recruited and trained, is capable of profiting by experience, and of becoming, under the discipline of war, a first-rate fighting machine.”

#### HIS OBJECTION TO TRAINING.

But the witnesses all agree that our soldiers being volunteers, refuse absolutely to submit to the severe training to which armies filled by compulsion are subjected. This is another element of weakness in the British Army. First, we have not so many men; secondly, those whom we do get come from the lowest social stratum; and, thirdly, when we get them they refuse to submit to the severe drilling that prevails in conscript armies.

#### EVIDENCE OF GENERAL KELLY-KENNY.

4561. And the difficulties in training them?—The difficulty in training them, inasmuch as it is a voluntary Army. If you train them as Continental nations do, either they will not come to you at all, or if they do come they will leave you—they will either purchase their discharge or desert. We find we have very great difficulty; we cannot press the training as they do on the Continent, and then there is the expense. Except twice or three times within the last twenty or thirty years, we have had no manoeuvres on a large scale—we have had small manoeuvres, and there is the difficulty about money always; but I think the chief difficulty is that we dare not train the soldier to his fullest extent.

4562. Because the Force is a voluntary

Force?—Yes, because it is a voluntary Force. Again, another reason for the want of training is—and I have frequently brought it forward, even this year and last year—that, if you take a battalion of infantry, about one-third of it are constantly employed in work that is not a soldier's work at all, and they practically get no training. That, with the three years' enlistment, to my mind, will lead to something very serious; it will lead to disaster if it is continued, and if something is not done to have a regular system of training in the Reserve for the men who leave the ranks after three years.

4582. He does not care to take that class of employment?—He is enlisted when he has practically never done a day's work, and in the Army the life is not a life conducive to steady work. It is not real work, the drill and the routine and marching, so that when they leave a great many of them do not fall into regular work.

4832. Do you see any particular reason why you do not find the average soldier, the Reservist, good for much else but soldiering?—You yourself suggested the reason. We get them because they cannot get a livelihood; we get them before they have ever done a day's work, the great body of them.

4852. Would it not be possible to arrange that, so that the third of the regiment, re-

quired for that sort of work, should do it, say after the middle of the day, when the stress of the drills was over, and so on?—Do the fatigues, do you mean?

4853. Yes?—They would very soon leave. They will not stay if you work them like that. They will not do both. You will not get them, or if you get them they will leave.

4854. In fact, they will not be overworked?—No.

#### EVIDENCE OF SIR EVELYN WOOD.

4355. Are you aware that in Germany the training goes on all the year round?—Yes, not quite so much as you might think on the face of it, and the German soldier does not serve as long as ours does. He comes up on the 1st of February, and he goes down on the 15th of September of the following year. Although I advocate great attention being paid to the training of our men, it is not possible to add a great deal to it with our men whom you have to coax into the service, as they would not come at all. They would say, "Oh, no, if this is military training I would sooner be a civilian," and our desires with regard to the training of the men are strictly limited by what the recruiting officer tells us is the character of training which would be agreeable to the population, which we hope will come into the Army.

#### THE RESULT OF IMPERFECT TRAINING.

##### EVIDENCE OF LORD ROBERTS.

Lord Roberts opened with a paragraph or two of eulogy:—

10442. The highest praise I can give the Regular soldier of to-day is to say that he is in no single respect inferior to his predecessor, and that in some he is greatly superior. He is more intelligent. He is more temperate. He knows his duties better. He has more self-respect, and he is more readily amenable to discipline.

Then he settled down and described the British private as he found him in South Africa:—

As a fighting man, however, he was not so expert when he first met the enemy as he might have been. His individuality had been so little cultivated that his natural acuteness was checked, and his want of resourcefulness, especially at the beginning of the campaign, was marked. He was the exact opposite of the Boer, especially in

his want of knowledge of ground and how to utilise it, and also in his defective powers of observation. His shooting cannot be described as good. Steadiness and a disinclination to waste ammunition were always observable; and there was no real marksmanship, capable of seizing fleeting opportunities, and attaining good results under difficult and unfamiliar conditions. The shooting at short ranges was ineffective, and at long ranges the distance was seldom accurately estimated. The marching was excellent in the infantry, and the mounted troops did some remarkable performances. But the latter would have been attended by less waste had the men been better horse-masters. It is not sufficient that cavalry or mounted infantry should be able to ride, but they must know how to get the utmost of their horses by good treatment. . . . Our men show very little judgment or skill in the use of entrenchments or cover. Entrenchments planned by the officers, and constructed systematically under their supervision, were generally satisfactory; but when the work had to be left to the initiative of the men, it was exceedingly badly performed. Individual skill in improvising cover, so conspicuous among the Boers, was altogether wanting in our Regulars, whose only idea in building entrenchments seemed to be to obey orders, and not to secure their own safety.

In most of these respects the improvement as the campaign went on was marked; and it was very clear that the men wanted only practice and experience to become first-rate. In the later stages they showed far more resourcefulness than at first; they were not so dependent on their officers, and they seemed to have grasped the spirit of individual fighting. And at the same time their discipline remained excellent. This, I think, is a clear proof that insufficient training, and not any want of intelligence or keenness, was the reason that they still had something to learn when they took the field. Too much attention was given to the maintenance of uniformity and good order, too little to the development of the individual. It was not everywhere realised that the skill and aptitude of the scout and the skirmisher are not less important than the steadiness and precision of the mass.

A man should be taught to ride as an individual, and not as one of a squad, and the same with horse management. Until

the soldier is held directly responsible for, and so takes a personal interest in, the condition of his charger, until he learns to rely upon his own common sense and experience, not merely on the orders of his superior, that this condition is maintained, our horsemanship is sure to be indifferent. Nor is it to be expected that he will excel either as a scout or skirmisher, that he will attend to sanitary precautions, or become a master of his weapons, if he is not accustomed to use his own common sense and to take a personal interest in his own training as a skilled fighting man. . . . A most notable instance is Nicholson's Nek. The stone shelters raised by individual men, or by small groups of men, were almost pitiful; they were so insignificant and badly placed—I heard this from an officer who was there. In the attack the men were even more oblivious of cover than on the defence; and in scouting and on outpost duty it was long before they learned the importance of invisibility. This was certainly not as it should have been. Defiance of danger is a fine attribute, but a force attacking a position, if it takes every advantage of the ground, and takes care not to expose itself, will probably attain its object with half the loss it would otherwise incur.

#### EVIDENCE OF LORD KITCHENER.

173. Our men were not as quick and accurate as their opponents in shooting rapidly, but they had not been trained for this during peace time, and could not, therefore, be expected to excel in what the Boers had learned to practice from childhood. Opportunities were also sometimes lost by the delay which almost invariably occurred before our men opened fire. This I attribute greatly to the strictness of fire discipline which our system of training enforces, and which, I think, should be somewhat relaxed. During the later stages of the war this slowness was corrected, with the result that our fire effect was considerably increased.

The men marched well, but at first the soldier was not good at taking care of himself and looking after his health and comfort in bivouac and on the march, and he was

generally ignorant or quite oblivious of sanitary precautions. He was usually too dependent on his officers and lacked individuality.

The material is very good, but hard work and intelligent training is wanted to render it capable of answering every test. Before the war in all the combatant branches of the Service, mechanical perfection had been cultivated at the expense of individual resourcefulness.

Men who had received training in riding were good horsemen, but the care of horses required much more attention.

It is difficult in time of war to instruct men in horsemanship or in horse management, and for this reason more of our men, I think, should receive careful instruction in horse management during peace time.

#### OTHER WITNESSES.

Similar evidence was given by almost all the military witnesses. Brigadier-General F. W. Stopford (16635) and Colonel Macbean of the Gordon Highlanders seemed to be quite satisfied with the quality of their men.

Major-General Brabazon, however, was an exception. He said (6959):—

“Our troops degenerated most terribly towards the finish, when they got sick of it. I do not think our troops fought too well, you know.”

General Sir Redvers Buller said (15550):—

“The British soldier is very fairly well paid when he is at war, and he generally has more money than he wants, and he usually gambles.”

Sir Charles Warren thus summed up his estimate of our troops:—

15697. Infantry—Eyesight good enough, but nearly useless for want of practice in looking for an enemy. Cavalry—Almost useless at first for want of practice, for want of a good weapon, for want of training as mounted infantry. Auxiliaries—Some very good, some very bad; on the whole, fair.

There is a good deal of evidence as to their ignorance of cooking, their inability to find their way about the country, and their bad horsemanship.

The virtues of Tommy Atkins are admitted on all hands, but judging from the evidence of the officer who led him into battle in South Africa, he is very far from being a “first class fighting man” under the conditions of modern war.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE DEFICIENCY AND DEFECTS OF OFFICERS.

IF the rank and file are recruited from the least educated, lowest, poorest, idlest, and most drunken class of the community, as is vouched for by their generals, the officers are taken almost as exclusively from the wealthy class.

To be an officer in an infantry regiment a man must have £100 a year private means of his own, in a cavalry regiment at least £300 per annum. There is no lack of candidates who possess these independent incomes, but they all come from one class. The poor educated man has no chance.

## EXTRAVAGANCE VERSUS EFFICIENCY.

There was a good deal of evidence given, some of a most extraordinary nature, as to the wanton extravagance in the matter of uniform insisted upon by tradition and enforced by the military tailors.

General Sir A. E. Turner, the Inspector-General of Auxiliary Forces, gave evidence as to the heavy tax which dress made upon the Volunteer officers, who had besides also to provide prizes for shooting at their own expense.

## EVIDENCE OF SIR A. E. TURNER.

The Yeomanry, which has an establishment of 1,196 officers, has a shortage of 416, and that is nearly all in the subaltern ranks; that is a shortage of 49 per cent., and the great difficulty is to get young officers to join the auxiliary forces.

7601. And you do not see any remedy?—It is entirely a matter of money. The uniform is very expensive, even the cheapest uniform, and a man cannot get his uniform under £25 to £40, while in a red clothes regiment £70 to £80 may be spent, and all officers like to be very well dressed, so that the expense hits them very hard. It really is, to a very great extent, a matter of money, because, of course, they serve at an expense, they do not gain anything by serving, except the birds of passage, who hope to get into the Regular army through the Militia or Yeomanry.

7602. Are you speaking of the Yeomanry uniforms?—No, at that moment I was speaking of the infantry Volunteer uniform; of course, the Yeomanry are more expensive.

7604. We hear a good deal about the cheapening of uniforms?—Yes, and efforts have been made, but the officers will not take advantage of them. I speak of Regular officers now. I do not know what the auxiliary forces would think, but the Regulars do not like the idea.

7759. You mentioned an article of clothing, I think a cap, which in Germany would cost 5s. and here £3?—Yes, £2 18s. is the exact sum here.

7760. Is there much difference in the actual intrinsic value of it?—Not in the cap itself, but they put a lot of gold embroidery on our peak, and that is what makes it so expensive. Another reason, if I may pursue the subject of the expense, is that our buttons are most elaborately carved; in Germany the distinction is only known from what is on the shoulder, which we have also, and the buttons are perfectly plain, and that makes a difference of £1 in the cheapest garment we have, the patrol jacket. With plain buttons the price would be £1 less than it is with the elaborately carved buttons.

7761. Do you not think all that ought to be got rid of, the difference in the expense of the button, for instance?—Yes.

7762. If all that was got rid of and all this useless gold lace, would not the dress of the officer be very much reduced in price?—Very much reduced. I may say something has been done; gold stripes and gold embroidery have, to a great extent, been done away with, but it is in the case of a few small things like the cap, and so on, that the expense is caused.

7763. You say the difficulty is that the officers wish to have expensive things?—Yes, but I do not know that they care much about the gold lace on the peak of the cap. They like to have a smart uniform.

7764. But could you not have a smart uniform and well made without all this expense?—Yes; to begin with, we could

have plain buttons, and that would be something. Ordinary plain clothes are not cheaper in Germany than in England, but the difference in the price of uniform is perfectly astounding. An infantry officer's tunic costs £3 10s. in Germany, while here it is £8, £9, and £10; an infantry officer's frockcoat costs £3 10s. in Germany, while here it costs from £7 to £8.

7765. And yet their uniform always looks smart, and they look smartly dressed?—Yes.

7766. I fancy it is only amongst a certain class of officer that the desire to have expensive uniforms exists?—It is so.

7767. If there was a hard and fast line drawn that a uniform was to be of that cheap description, all officers would have to acquiesce in it?—They would.

#### THE SHORTAGE OF OFFICERS.

The Report says :—

108. "There is no subject of more supreme importance to the organisation of the Army than the supply of officers. On this subject we had the advantage of the evidence of Sir Coleridge Grove, who, having been Military Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief during part of the war, could speak with authority second to none. This evidence is not only important in itself, but states the position exhaustively."

They quote his evidence in full. But for our purpose it will be sufficient to say that Sir C. Groves said that "during the eighteen months between January, 1900, and midsummer, 1901, I had to find over 3,000 officers in excess of the normal supply for the British Army." He maintained: "You ought to have with all your Regular forces at home—I say it advisedly—at least twice their present establishment of officers."

9388. I can see no other way, and, as I say, when you think that in this last war I had to put into the Army some 3,000 and odd officers without any qualifications except that they had been, some of them, selected from the Militia and Volunteers by their Colonels, and that others had been selected by Colonial authorities, I think it evidently shows a state of things which, if we are to be prepared for war, calls for serious effort.

He would therefore double the number of officers, especially in the junior ranks, adding, say, 3,000 to 4,000 officers to the Army at a stroke.

9393. (*Chairman.*) At any rate, that is the only way you can suggest for finding trained officers on the occurrence of an emergency?—I can see no other, my Lord.

9394. And the supply, as it stands at present, is a serious danger?—Certainly—well, "a serious danger" is a strong expression, but it is a serious weak point. We cannot consider ourselves properly prepared for war when we have not got the officers we know we shall want in war.

Lord Roberts agreed that more officers were required, but did not approve of Sir Coleridge Grove's drastic scheme. The Report continues :—

108. "The problem being to add to our available resources a large number of properly trained officers to fill the posts involved by any expansion of the

forces in the field, such as took place during the late war, it seems to us obvious that a large expense is inevitable. But we are also clear that there is no point on which it is more certain that to decline to act upon this lesson of the war must entail the recurrence in a similar emergency of the difficulties and dangers which, according to Sir Coleridge Grove, attended our position in this respect on this occasion."

WHY CLEVER MEN DO NOT JOIN THE  
ARMY.

EVIDENCE OF LORD WOLSELEY.

9180. Remember, if I might say so, that the worst paid man in England is the young officer; he gets the work, but he has not got the same pay that my butler has when you take into account what the butler gets in the way of feeding, housing, and clothing. I have been in the unhappy position myself, so I ought to know what it is.

9181. I will tell you the reason why I refer to this small matter of pay, because it is, after all, an important matter for most young men going into the Army. I will put it in this way. A man has got, say, two sons to provide for in life; he has not the means of giving them fortunes; he says to himself, "Jack is a stupid fellow, and Thomas is a very clever fellow." He will start Thomas, the very clever fellow, in some profession where talent will come to the front and where great emoluments and great positions and great rewards are in store—take the law, take any great profession you like, the medical profession or any other; whereas in the Army the inducements for young men to enter are very small indeed as regards their future. Take the London clubs here—they are swarming with officers of about the age of forty, fifty, and so on; they are poor people who have perhaps served in the Indian Army, and have retired on perhaps some £150 to £200 a year, or £300 a year at the outside—and they are very fortunate if they get £300. In what profession is an ordinary hard-working gentleman so badly paid? Therefore the clever men really do not come into the Army. I do not say there are no clever men in the Army, because there are many, but the great bulk of the young men of ability in England do not come into our badly-paid profession, the Army.

THE QUALITY OF OUR SENIOR OFFICERS.

EVIDENCE OF LORD KITCHENER.

174. There appears to be too often a want of serious study of their profession by officers

who are, I think, rather inclined to deal too lightly with military questions of moment.

The junior officers were, in my opinion, better than the senior officers.

The commanding officers of Regular battalions have not taken a prominent part in the conduct and progress of the war.

This is probably accounted for by the fact that they sometimes obtain the command of their battalions at such an age that their powers of endurance cannot withstand the physical and moral strain which the responsibility of command in modern war necessarily entails. This applies also to brigadiers. It was found on more than one occasion that the reputation of officers acquired in peace time, and even in other wars, was not sustained under the more modern conditions of South Africa. I had some difficulty, even with the experience of a year of the war to guide me, in obtaining a sufficient number of competent officers to command the columns in the later stages of the war. The prolongation of hostilities without interruption or rest, and under the continuous moral strain which modern war entails, wears out the individual commander in a remarkably short space of time, and it was often not easy to replace him.

I should like to point out, further, that in the higher ranks also there seems to be a want of that professionalism which is essential to thorough efficiency.

EVIDENCE OF LORD ROBERTS.

10446. I have a very high opinion of the younger officers. The proportion of failures among Commanding Officers and Brigadiers was considerably larger than that in the junior ranks. This I ascribe to several causes.

10447. You mean by Commanding Officers, Commanding Officers of regiments?—Yes. First, as men get older they are often less inclined to accept responsibility, and they lose their power of decision. Secondly, many of those who held these positions in South Africa had had very few opportunities of practising the duties that devolved upon

them during the campaign; and, thirdly, manoeuvres on a large scale were so infrequent that it was impossible to ascertain by this practical test whether the senior officers had kept their knowledge, whether they could handle troops in accordance with the principles of modern tactics, and whether they to a certain extent had retained their nerve.

THEIR WANT OF INITIATIVE.

10523. The principal fault, I think, you have said, that you found with the officers in high command was their want of initiative?—Are you talking of Generals of Divisions?

10524. I was only thinking of something which I had read of yours, where you say: "Whether it is inherent in the British character, or whether it is owing to something faulty in the training of our officers, I cannot say, but the fact remains that surprisingly few of them are capable of acting on their own initiative." Those are your own words?—That is the case; many of them do very well if you can tell them exactly what to do and how to do it, but left to themselves they fail.

10525. Then you also say: "The ordinary routine of military life certainly does not tend to fit an officer to accept responsibility; it has, indeed, served hitherto rather to stifle than to encourage self-reliance, and it behoves us to do all in our power to remedy this defect, and to teach officers to think and act for themselves"?—Yes, I think there is too much red tape and too much finding fault if little mistakes occur; moreover, our officers do not get the chance of command when they are younger men, and they are not put in positions of responsibility as younger men.

10333. We were told also that in our Army the captains are not trained to take the initiative, whereas in the German Army the captains are trained to take the initiative in action. What is your opinion about that

—as to whether captains in our Army, officers of that rank should be trained in that way?—I think the whole of our system of training hitherto—and it has come from the conditions of war in old days—has been too much to treat officers and men like machines. Take the time of Wellington, for instance. A battalion, as a rule, was seldom broken up; the colonel, and majors, and captains, and subalterns, and men were all together; they formed a square if cavalry threatened to attack; they moved as a machine, there was no need for anyone but the commanding officer to think and give orders. The conditions are now completely altered, but it is very difficult to change a system which has been so ingrained in the military training, and to make people understand that cannot go on as before. When a battalion now goes into action and is deployed into line, it very soon becomes so separated that the commanding officer loses all control over it. The colonel himself is of necessity on foot, and is obliged to leave the command of the companies to the captains, while the captains have to trust in a great measure to their subalterns and section leaders. What we try now to make all officers understand is that the most junior and even the non-commissioned officers have responsibilities, and must think and act for themselves. Towards the end of the war they were getting more and more efficient in that way.

10334. I am told that the captains in the German Army are actually trained from the very start, and the captains themselves train the men under them to enable them to take the initiative in case of emergency or when they are scattered as you say?—That is what we are doing now, and, as I have said, the officers responded very well after they had had experience in the war.

10335. And that is one of the lessons of the war?—Yes.

THEIR DREAD OF RESPONSIBILITY.

The Report says:—

98. Officers, where they had received definite orders, led their men with gallantry and devotion. But, as Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener have pointed out, there was sometimes a tendency to shun responsibility. According to some witnesses this dread of taking responsibility pervaded the whole Army. "The corporal," said one witness, "will not do anything for fear of the sergeant, and the sergeant will not move for fear of the captain, and so on, up

to the senior officer in command." There was a very general consensus of opinion that in training and peace manœuvres junior officers were too much controlled and supervised by their superiors, and that this blighted the development of their self-reliance and power of decision. Major-General Sir Henry Colvile said (16974)—"The greatest fault of our officers, as far as my experience goes, lies in their want of initiative, and I believe this to be entirely the fault of their superiors."

Lord Kitchener said (174)—"Officers should be trained to take responsibility. They should be induced to exercise their brains and to strike out ideas for themselves, even at the risk of making mistakes, rather than to stagnate, or to follow the dull routine which at present affects the officers in our service and moulds them into machines of very limited capacity. The habit of acting on their own initiative should be fostered among officers in every way, and I deprecate taking the judgment on an officer in the field for carelessness or for other fault, out of the hands of the general officer commanding, either by public opinion or otherwise. Such action affects officers in a most serious and vital manner by cramping their initiative and by making them shun responsibility, thus depriving them of two great essentials for command."

Sir Ian Hamilton said :—

13941. This training (at Aldershot in peace) was calculated to stunt rather than to develop the initiative of company commanders, section leaders and men.

#### EVIDENCE OF LORD ROBERTS.

10482. (*Sir Henry Norman.*) No examination or knowledge of an officer in time of peace, if that officer has never seen war, will secure his being a good officer on service?—You cannot tell.

10483. And some of the best officers in time of peace have turned out very bad in time of war; they have not had the nerve, the quickness, and all that sort of thing?—That is so. An officer may be a very good company commander, and on service make a very bad battalion commander; or an officer on service may make a very good battalion commander, and yet make a very bad brigadier. What kills officers on service is responsibility; it just depends upon whether a man has sufficient nerve and sufficient power to bear responsibility.

10484. (*Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal.*) But would not the examination embrace all those points?—Examination will not answer for a man being able to incur responsibility. You may have the cleverest fellow in the world, and he may not be able to incur responsibility; that is what weighs men down.

#### THEIR LACK OF KEENNESS.

Lord Roberts, as his manner is, opens

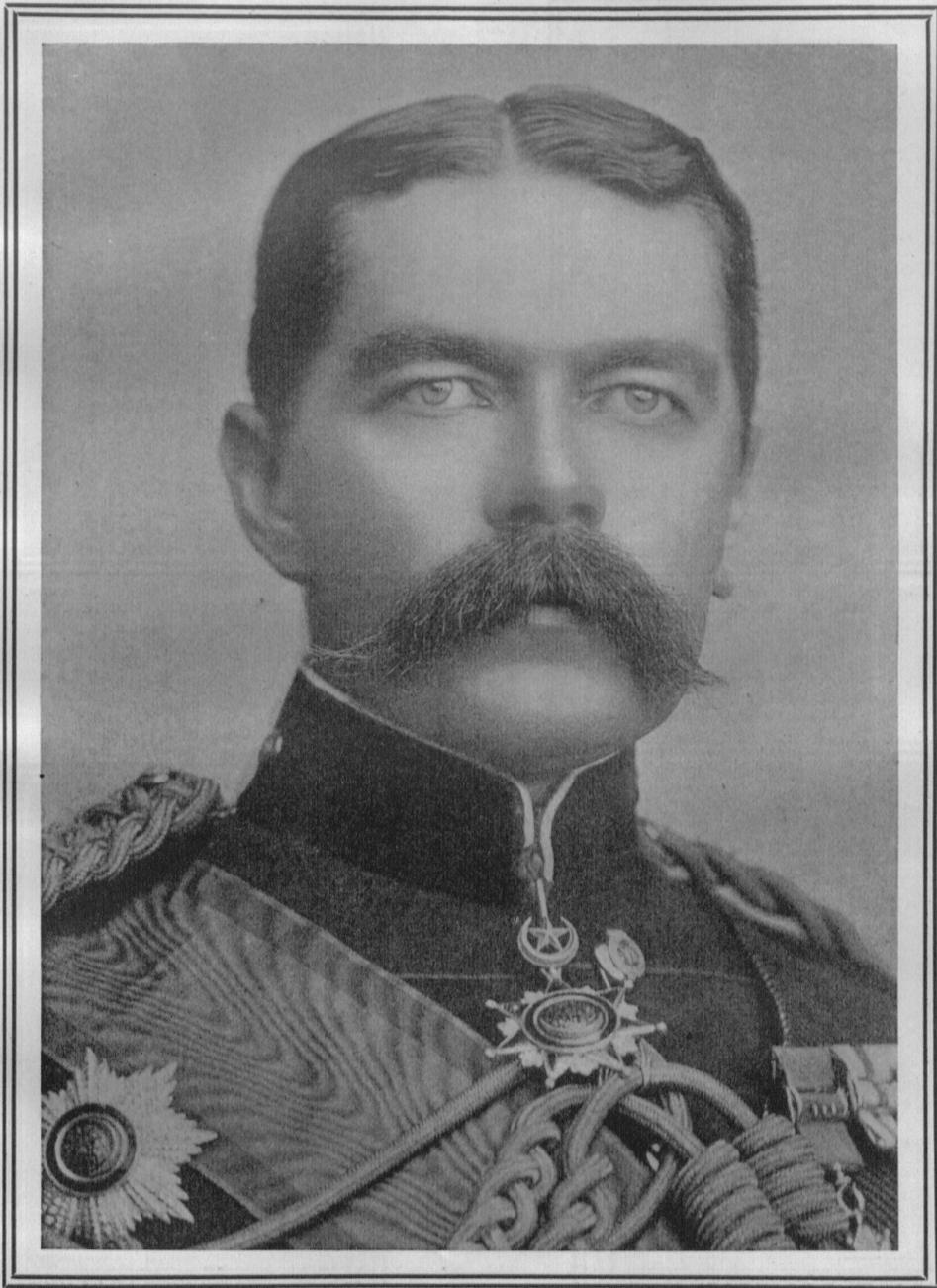
(10446) with a general eulogy of the officer whose "general standard of practical knowledge, of devotion to duty, and of readiness under difficulties was at least as high as in any army which I have known, or of which I have heard." But, after his usual method, he goes on to remark :—

"I should be the last to say, however, that there is no room for improvement. The first point is that officers should take their profession more seriously than has hitherto generally been the case, and that they should be able to instruct their men in every detail of their duty. The second point is a wide knowledge of war, especially in the higher branches, such as strategy, organisation, &c. It can hardly be said that before the war our officers were encouraged to study. Generals and commanding officers were not held responsible for the intellectual development of their subordinates, and very little was done towards raising the standard of professional acquirements. Education in the Army stopped short at the drill books; history was a closed volume, except to those who opened it for themselves; and the officer's mental education, to a very large extent, was a matter which concerned himself alone."

#### SHORTCOMINGS OF THE STAFF.

10450. What I found in South Africa was that, with few exceptions, staff officers could not give me a report of a position or an intelligent idea how the ground lay.

10447. Things in war cannot be too simple or too clear. Moreover, if on every staff



*Photo by*

GENERAL LORD KITCHENER OF KHARTOUM.

*[Bassano.]*

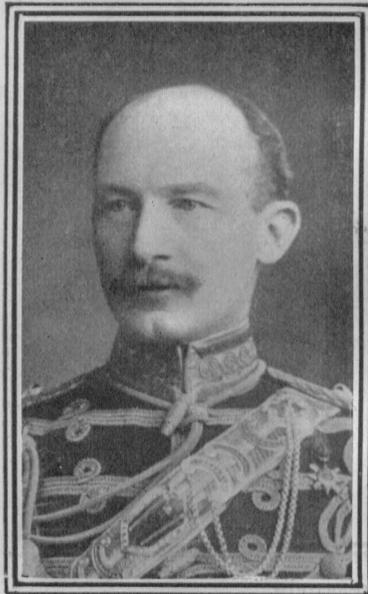
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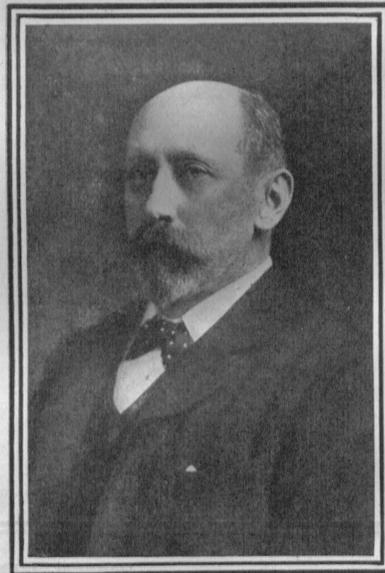
*Photo by* [Gregory].  
MAJ.-GEN. W. R. TRUMAN.



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LIEUT.-GEN. SIR A. HUNTER.



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MAJ.-GEN. BADEN-POWELL.



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SIR JOHN EDGE.

there were officers who had devoted their whole attention to strategy, tactics, and ground, and who were perfectly at home in directing the movements of bodies of troops, and in looking after camps, water, and security, it would be of very great assistance to the Generals. I attribute a great many of our mishaps in South Africa to there being no officers specially trained in Quartermaster-General's work. Those officers who had received previous training, either in active service or at the Staff College, generally did well; but the absence of a definite system of staff duties, leading sometimes to an overlapping of responsibilities, sometimes to waste of time, and sometimes to a neglect of indispensable precautions, was undoubtedly prejudicial to the smooth running of the military machine. Officers were often called upon to take up duties of which they had no previous knowledge; and while it was remarkable in the great majority of cases how quickly they became efficient, the mistakes that were made by the staff had most serious consequences. Many instances of indifferent staff-work might be quoted, and it seems clear that the entire staff should be thoroughly trained; that a definite system of carrying out staff duties should be laid down; and that we should have enough trained staff officers to

supply, in case of emergency, a large army. On such occasions there is no difficulty in obtaining men of such good quality that they very soon become trustworthy soldiers. But staff officers cannot be improvised; nor can they learn their duties, like the rank and file, in a few weeks or months, for their duties are as varied as they are important. I am decidedly of opinion that we cannot have a first-rate army unless we have a first-rate staff, well-educated, constantly practised at manoeuvres, and with wide experience. Brains are even more important in war than numbers; and in an army, which may contain a large proportion of men who are not soldiers by profession, trained leaders are especially important. The provision of such leaders is a point to which we can hardly pay too much attention.

Lord Kitchener confirmed his Chief's verdict. He said (174):—

“The officers on the staff were very mixed. Some were excellent, whilst others had no staff training, and had everything to learn. There was no reserve of qualified staff officers to fill vacancies. The tendency on the part of some generals and commanders to do their own staff work was noticeable, and should be discontinued.

#### WHAT GOOD IS MONEY WITHOUT BRAINS?

Lord Methuen spoke out very plainly as to the mischief of sacrificing the efficiency of the Volunteers to wealth. The following passages from his evidence are very significant:—

14405. Is not one reason why you have to go to the county gentleman who lives close to the company and to get him as an officer, that you want money?—That is perfectly true, but I want brains.

14406. What would be the use of brains if you had not the money?—What is the good of money without the brains?

14407. We have come to a deadlock. Unless those corps get more allowances than they do, it would be a difficult thing to improve them?—Yes, that is what I think.

14408. You could not afford, probably, to get the proper officers?—I quite agree with all that, and I think your rich man in the country, and the country must recollect that if they want an efficient army of Volunteers they must pay for it, and the first thing they have to do is to come down with a good strong hand on those gentlemen with money and no brains, take them out, and get men into their places in whom every man under them will have confidence.

14409. And then it will be for the Treasury to pay?—To pay the piper.

## WHY MEN SEEK COMMISSIONS.

Brigadier-General Sir F. W. Stopford touched upon another side of the same subject. He said (16772) :—

“In any ordinary profession, if a man wishes to get on, he must devote the whole of his time to his business. In the Army this has not always been so, and it has rather been the fashion to consider that all work should be done in the morning, leaving the afternoon free.”

Our officers therefore are little more than “half-timers.”

Major-General Sir H. E. Colvile also made an illuminating remark. He said :—

17012. I think when a boy has to make up his mind what he is going into, if he wants to earn a decent income he goes in for some civil employment; if he wishes to live a nice easy life, with a certain amount of honour and glory and not too much hard work, he goes into the Army, and, having made up his mind that he is not going to make any money out of it, he rather thinks it is his right not to do too much work. That is my impression.

The Army, in short, in this country, unlike the armies of other countries, is largely a refuge for indolent, easy-going, well-to-do youth who want a soft place, who enter the Army for social reasons, and who are immensely astonished and disgusted when they are told they should take their profession seriously, put in a full day's work instead of having a half-holiday every day, and slave at their profession.

## SPARE THE PARTRIDGE AND SPOIL THE ARMY.

It is not only the Army officers who do not take soldiering seriously in Britain. Major-General Sir H. Hildyard told the Commission frankly that he did not see any hope of getting the Army trained for war because of the devotion of the English to partridge shooting! Speaking of the absolute necessity for training troops by real military manœuvres, General Hildyard said :—

15977. One of our great difficulties in the training of our troops and in the training of our staff, and in the training of our officers, was that we had never had really practical manœuvres in England, and very seldom we had manœuvres at all. We tried very hard at Aldershot, when Sir Evelyn Wood was commanding one year, I remember, to arrange manœuvres by mutual agreement; the landlords were willing and the occupiers; that is to say, the farmers were most anxious to see us, but there were people called shooting tenants and shooting syndicates, which absolutely stood in our way, and we were unable to get the ground; and unless the country will give us the power to work over ground under service conditions, with compensation, of course, for all damages, but to go everywhere except into private houses and private parks and places of that kind—unless that full power is given to us I do not see how we shall ever get the Army trained for war.

15978. In England?—In England.

15979. Because of the enclosed nature of the country?—Yes, and on account of the partridges, too, because it applies equally to the open country.

## DEFECTS OF JUNIOR OFFICERS' TRAINING.

## EVIDENCE OF SIR EVELYN WOOD.

4268. The officer should be taught at Sandhurst how to teach his men to kill an

enemy by shooting him. But that he never has been taught up to the present.

4304. Do you think under the existing system the young officer's training is satisfactory after he joins his regiment?—I do

not think it possible that his training should be satisfactory when the moment he joins he is very often put in command of a company because officers of his regiment are away. The week after my eldest son joined the Army he was in command of a company, and he commanded that, I think, throughout the training period of the year.

4305. Does the young officer have much to do when he joins his regiment, compared with what a young man in almost any other sphere of life has got to do?—It depends very much on the regiment; in a good regiment I think a young officer's time is like a recruit's—pretty well taken up.

4306. I suppose a good many days in a week a young officer hardly gets into uniform at all?—In a great many regiments the young officer never gets a day's leave until he has finished all his recruit drill, say in five or six months.

4307. And after that?—And after that he certainly leads an easier time than any young man of his age at business in the City or anywhere else does.

4308. Are you making any changes in that respect in your own district?—It is rather early yet to say.

THE EXCELLENCE OF THE JUNIOR OFFICER.

EVIDENCE OF SIR JOHN FRENCH.

17305. (*Chairman.*) But in actual warfare did you find any lack of initiative in the junior officers?—No, none whatever on the part of the juniors. I found some lack of initiative on the part of some senior officers, such as commanding officers; not so much with squadron officers, they showed more initiative.

17306. (*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) Could that have been discovered in peace time?—I think it should have been.

17307. (*Viscount Esher.*) I suppose that is partly due to the fact that the training of the younger officers has been better than that of the senior officers?—That is one of the

main reasons for it, that the reforms did not begin with the seniors.

17308. They began at a date which has rather excluded the senior officers from having the full advantage of them?—Yes, and no doubt it will get better as time goes on. I was trying to get the blame off the young officers, where I think it is unjustly put, and to put it on what I consider to be the right person.

17309. You think, on the whole, the young officers did extremely well?—Extraordinarily well. I think the country has been much indebted to young officers in this war.

17310. And they showed a practical knowledge of their profession?—Certainly. I do not mean to say that they were perfect by any means, but I am sure that the work they had done before, which I know was extraordinarily arduous, assisted them tremendously. I refer to the time when I was in command of the Cavalry Brigade at Aldershot. It is often said that officers care about nothing but polo and hunting. I have known cavalry officers, several of them squadron commanders, men with large independent means, men who had horses at Melton and ponies all over the place, who would give up hunting, polo, and everything simply to go and have their squadrons out in the morning, and then go into the barrack rooms and lecture them in the afternoon. I have seen them in uniform in barracks very often at five and six in the evening, having been working the whole day. That was the kind of work that was going on in the Cavalry Brigade at Aldershot for some time before the war, and I am sure it had a great effect on the conduct of the war afterwards.

17311. (*Viscount Esher.*) You do not see any diminution in that keenness now?—Absolutely none whatever; but we are so often told that up to the time of the war young officers did nothing and squadron commanders did nothing, whereas their profession was the very first thing they thought of.

Lord Wolseley also bore testimony to the same effect. He said (9183):—

“I think the young officer of the present day is very much superior to what he was ten years ago, and infinitely superior to what he was when I was young myself in the Army. He takes a much deeper interest in his profession. He has to instruct his own men to a much larger extent than he ever had to do before, and in order to instruct his own men he must be instructed himself.

(9184) “I think they might be better trained. I should be very sorry to say that the training was perfect; it has to keep pace with modern inventions as well as modern ideas.”

## CHAPTER XIV.

## SAVING THEM IN SPITE OF THEMSELVES.

THE Report of the Royal Commission does not in so many words affirm the fact that if the War Office and the Government had been left to muddle through with their own resources, they would have been beaten by the Boers. But the evidence is clear that they were saved in spite of themselves by the volunteered assistance of Irregulars and recruits whose services they first disdained and then eagerly welcomed.

They paid Volunteers and Militiamen one shilling and one and threepence a day. They paid the Colonials and the Yeomen five shillings a day. Fifty thousand South African miscellaneous levies cost them nearly eight millions sterling; 29,000 oversea Colonials only cost the Imperial treasury £2,397,137. At home in times of peace the Volunteer costs the country, all told, £6 2s. 6d. against £20 6s. for the Yeoman, £19 8s. for the Militiaman, and £52 for the Regular infantry man. It comes to £84 if you include barrack accommodation and all that.

Of the 448,000 men who stood under arms in South Africa under the Union Jack 200,000 were Volunteers of one sort or another. It was their help that enabled Britain to crush the Boers. Without them we should have been lost. But in face of what discouragements their services were in the first instance pressed upon the War Office, which was too serenely confident of its all-sufficient capacity to put the war through to tolerate the idea of such outside helpers!

When the war began the War Office was quite convinced that it would be able to do the whole thing off its own bat without any help from anyone else. Hence when Colonel Sir Howard Vincent suggested that a picked regiment might be got together out of the Volunteers, he was properly snubbed for his pains.

The Report tells the story thus :—

116. The Commission were informed by Colonel Sir C. E. Howard Vincent (5449) of a proposal which he had made to the War Office in August, 1899, to raise a picked battalion of Volunteers, selected from a group of regiments, or from the whole force, for active service in the event of a war in South Africa. This offer was renewed on October 11th, and again on the 31st, and on November 24th, 1899; and he urged in the last letter that while an opportunity was being given to the Volunteers of different countries, it should not be denied to those of Great Britain. He received (5451) from the War Office an answer to the effect that it would be a mistake to issue regulations for the special enlistment of Volunteers until there was some prospect of their services being required. "There is at present no probability of this."

Black Weck with its three defeats roused the authorities from their fools' paradise. Sir Howard Vincent's proposals were then recalled :—

Then the Lord Mayor came forward with the offer of the City Imperial

Volunteers, and practically that was taken; but, said Sir Howard Vincent, what was done very rapidly, very hurriedly, extravagantly, and, to some extent, badly, might have been done economically and leisurely, and getting the very best officers and men from the whole force ready for the field. . . . All praise is due for the speed with which it was done; but to show how impossible it is to equip men hurriedly together in a way like that, I had to strip the whole of my regiment to give them any belt at all, and practically they went into the campaign with the old belts of my own corps, of which some were good and some were bad. Of course, that was an exceedingly defective way of equipping a regiment for the field, and it had to be done as best it could be done, and that was very hurriedly and perfunctorily indeed.

5454. No doubt it was a period of great stress at that time?—There was great stress at that moment. My only contention is that, if time had been taken by the forelock, and authority had been given three or four months earlier, the Volunteers would have been sent out absolutely fit for the field, and the very best men in the country would have been selected.

Sir Howard Vincent added (5660): As far as I have seen in 1866, 1870, and 1877, in every campaign detail must be thought out when there is no emergency, and if the only way is to improvise on an emergency arising, you may get through—"muddle through," as Lord Rosebery said—as we have got through, but you only get through with lavish expenditure, and with infinite labour and great risk.

The lesson does not seem to have been learned yet. He was asked:—

5653. Supposing the Volunteers were suddenly called upon on an emergency, generally throughout the country, would there not be a great lack of equipment?—A terrible lack of equipment, and I hold very strongly indeed that all those things are matters which cannot be improvised, and which must be maintained.

5654. Do you say there is still a lack of equipment?—There is still a very serious lack of equipment.

115. The force of Volunteers who went out to South Africa from this country during the war (exclusive of numerous members of Volunteer regiments who went in another character as Imperial Yeomen) amounted to 589 officers and 19,267 non-commissioned officers and men, or a total of 19,856 of all ranks. With the exception of the City of London Imperial Volunteers, all these Volunteers went as "Service Companies," to take place in the regiments of the Regular Army to which they were affiliated at home.

The response from the Volunteers dwindled:—

5397. The first time we asked for them we got 10,000, the second time we only got 4,000, and the third time we only got 2,400.

That was not surprising, seeing that Volunteers with good qualification only, received 1s. per day, and served side by side with Yeomen without qualification who were paid 5s. a day.

EVIDENCE OF SIR A. E. TURNER.

7636. (*Chairman.*) With regard to the service companies, was there any idea before the war in the War Office of that use of the Volunteers?—No, none whatever. Just before the war broke out offers were made from two Militia battalions, and ten battalions of Volunteers, and a regiment of Yeomanry, to have bodies ready at the disposal of the Government. Of course, no one in

the world dreamt of the magnitude the war was going to assume, and these offers were simply noted, and I believe, in addition to that, Sir Howard Vincent offered a battalion, but I could not get any record of that. It was not considered then that the Auxiliary Forces, who are mainly for home defence, would be required in the least. It was considered that the Regular Army would finish the war in a very short time.

7637. I want to make it clear about the

organisation; there was no preparation beforehand for the employment of Volunteers?—No.

7638. When was it first considered?—It was first considered after that week of the battles of Colenso, Magersfontein, and Stormberg. The City Imperial Volunteers were offered before.

#### EVIDENCE OF COLONEL F. S. ROBB.

Colonel Robb is the Assistant Adjutant-General.

4404. I should have thought that with regard to the Volunteer Service Companies you had the organisation in the Volunteer regiments to same extent?—No, I am afraid we had not. They were not formed from one Volunteer unit, but one Volunteer company would be formed from a whole district, and the district might have four or five Volunteer battalions, all of whom would furnish a quota towards this one company.

4406. But they came from recognised districts?—Each district formed its own company.

4407. In connection with the territorial regiment?—In connection with its own territorial regiments.

4408. I should have thought that would have given you a basis to work upon?—It gave us a certain basis to work upon, but we had to get an organisation to work them into, and we had absolutely no arranged plan for enlisting Volunteers for the purpose.

4409. That was entirely a new departure?—Entirely.

4412. Was it a measure which you would look to repeating if another emergency occurred?—As an emergency measure I think it could be repeated.

4413-4. And the experience you have now had would enable you to repeat it with greater ease?—Most certainly; we have certainly learnt experience in raising emergency corps.

4415. It is not proposed to formulate that in any way, so as to prepare for an emergency?—I have not heard of any proposal to make it permanent.

4416. That might be done?—There are proposals on foot to create a Volunteer Reserve for men who would undertake such a liability in future.

#### THE C.I.V.'S.: EVIDENCE OF LORD ROBERTS.

10312. Did you see any of the City Imperial Volunteers out there?—Yes, they were with me, and they were a particularly useful body. I put that down first of all to the fact that they were probably picked men—they came from a great number of Volunteer regiments, and they had a Regular Officer commanding the battalion, and a Regular Officer as Adjutant of the battalion—a Regular Officer commanding the mounted infantry battalion, and a Regular Officer as Adjutant of the mounted infantry battalion. I saw them when they arrived in Cape Town, but I did not employ them for some three or four weeks.

10313. You nursed them?—Yes, I nursed them as much as possible. After that they were excellent. As Sir Ian Hamilton will tell you, when we were entering Johannesburg, they were brigaded with the Gordon Highlanders, and they did magnificently. They were extraordinarily intelligent fellows. (*Sir Ian Hamilton.*) They got better and better every day, and at the end they were famous. (*Lord Roberts.*) They were quite excellent.

10321. If you got men a little more intelligent than you usually find the men to be of the class from which the Regulars are now taken you would get over that difficulty?—I should like to have an army composed of men like the City Imperial Volunteers, certainly. I do not know what they would cost, but I should like to have an army of that sort. In a very few months they would be as good as our best soldiers.

#### THE FUTURE OF THE VOLUNTEERS.

Sir Howard Vincent, being asked what has been the effect of the war upon the Volunteer Force (5480), replied:—

I am sorry to say that there was opportunity to make a great deal of it, but, unfortunately, it seems to have been missed. I cannot help thinking, if with deference I may say so, that the teaching of the war was that you want to get the maximum of men with some training to arms with the minimum of trouble to individuals; but since the war the Volunteer service has been made very much more exacting and much more difficult to carry out, and although I have put as good a face upon it as possible, there has been great difficulty in stemming the tide of

resignations from the Volunteer Force, and we have only about one-tenth of the number of recruits in this month of November which we have had in other Novembers before the war. I may say that the Volunteer year ends on October 31st in every year, and the active recruiting begins on November 1st, and resignations are coming in, I hear, from other commanding officers all over the country, in very much greater numbers than hitherto, and recruits are almost nil.

#### THE MILITIA.

During the war 45,566 Militiamen, with their officers, volunteered for the war and were sent out. No Militiaman was sent out without his consent. Only four regiments appealed to—three Irish and one Scotch, the Cameron Highlanders—refused to volunteer for the front. Militiamen were allowed to go when only eighteen years old.

#### HOW OFFICERS WERE CREATED.

They were very short of officers. One battalion, instead of twenty-four, had only eight officers. The War Office authorities, at their wits' end to provide the Militia regiments with officers, accepted almost any educated young man who offered. They gave to these untrained youths 407 commissions in six months. The whole number of Militia officers sent out was only 1,691. One-fourth of these were raw hands. The battalions sent out were 303 short in officers when warned to embark, but by calling untrained youths officers even before they were gazetted Major-General Borrett was able to assure the Commission that in no case did a Militia battalion go out to South Africa short of officers.

#### EVIDENCE OF MAJOR-GENERAL BORRETT.

5259. Some of them certainly went out with officers who had not been gazetted. We put them in at the last moment, and I had not time to gazette them; but I sent them out and out they went.

5260. And they had no training?—No, I said I could not train them; I had nothing to do with training. My business was to find the men and the officers. I thought they were better than nothing, and I had this great point, that all these officers, I knew, went out hoping to get Line commissions.

5321. The junior subalterns were of course quite untrained?—I got them straight from school or their families.

5322. They had no training connected with any Volunteer or Militia regiment?—No, none whatever. I saw some of them perhaps one day, and they embarked two days afterwards for South Africa.

#### EVIDENCE OF LORD WOLSELEY.

9135. As regards the Militia, the material of the Militia is exactly the same material as the men of our battalions as a rule, and all they want is to be better trained, and to be better shots, for they are very bad shots, and they have very little opportunity of learning to shoot: their training is very imperfect,

and still more imperfect as regards shooting. And I would even say, without wishing to be offensive to the officers of the Militia, that throughout the Militia the officers are not as well instructed in military matters as our officers, and therefore a Militia battalion can never be usefully compared to an ordinary Line battalion or a Guards battalion.

## RESULTS: DEFEAT AND SURRENDER.

## EVIDENCE OF LORD ROBERTS.

The Militia were chiefly used at first upon lines of communication, although they considerably improved after a time.

Even as defending lines of communication the Militia regiments caused, as also did part of the Imperial Yeomanry, considerable anxiety to the Commander-in-Chief. Lord Roberts referred (13146) to "the great anxiety I felt in regard to my communications being held in many places by partially trained troops, such as the Militia and hastily raised Yeomanry. . . . Our ill-trained troops often led me into great difficulties—the capture of the Derbyshire Yeomanry at Rhenoster River, the capture of the Irish Yeomanry at Lindley, and in many other cases where there were smaller detachments, both of Militia and Yeomanry, they showed what a danger it was to depend upon troops who were not thoroughly disciplined and properly trained."

## THE IMPERIAL YEOMANRY.

In October, 1899, the War Office were approached by Lord Chesham and other Yeomanry officers on the subject of raising a force of Yeomanry for service in South Africa. But it was not until after the disastrous week which ended in the action at Colenso that assent was given to these proposals.

The force of Imperial Yeomanry who went to South Africa during the war consisted of 1,393 officers and 34,127 non-commissioned officers and men, or a total strength of 35,520. Of these, about 10,000 went out early in 1900, and are usually referred to as the First Contingent. A strength of about 17,000 went out in the spring of 1901, and are known as the Second Contingent. A further force of about 7,000 went out in the winter of 1901-1902, and are known as the Third Contingent.

The Report says:—

139. On the whole the Imperial Yeomanry seem to have done very good service in the war, but to have suffered from the mistake which was made in not organising a system of drafts to maintain the strength of the force, a mistake due, no doubt, like others, to the underrating of the resisting power of the Boers and the belief in the speedy termination of the war. If this system had been organised upon a county basis, a steady flow of selected men properly trained to ride and shoot at home could have been maintained, and the necessity avoided of sending out later 17,000 untrained and unorganised men to receive their education in face of an enemy in some ways skilful, and by this time veteran, though not then very numerous.

## THE FIRST CONTINGENT: EVIDENCE OF LORD ROBERTS.

10373. You thought rather well of the first contingent of Yeomanry?—I think they were excellent after a very short time. Of course, we gave them all the training we could. I kept them in Cape Colony at first, and brought them up by degrees. And they had a good sprinkling of Regular officers with them. We were fortunate in having at their head Lord Chesham, an old Adjutant

of Cavalry, himself a very keen soldier; and many of their Commanding Officers had been Regulars, Cavalry men; and the Adjutants, as a rule, were Cavalry soldiers. I took care at first that they were only used sparingly, but after a bit they became excellent.

10374. Do you think that their training here in England had very much qualified them for scouting duties and patrolling?—No; that is what we are trying to remedy. Instead of a great deal of the ordinary parade work, such as marching past, etc., the Yeomanry

are now instructed in scouting, reconnoitring, taking care of their horses, and finding their way about country.

EVIDENCE OF GENERAL SIR T. KELLY-KENNY.

4761. Is it not possible to get the same class of men in England as the Colonials?—Well, we had; our Yeomen were; that is to say, the first lot of Yeomanry that went out. Those were what I would call the men who went out through patriotism in the end of 1899 and beginning of 1900; but as to the other lots of Yeomanry, and also the other lots of Colonials, for I do not think there is very much difference, I think we had to buy them, and rather dearly, too. With the first lot it was not a question of buying, and they came with a rush through patriotism, but after that it was a question of buying.

4762. You had to pay a high wage?—Yes, we purchased.

THE SECOND CONTINGENT: EVIDENCE OF COLONEL LUCAS.

6541. There have been public criticisms of the men who were sent out with the second contingent?—Yes, but I am not going to say that those criticisms are correct; they are very incorrect. The second force proved itself to be a most splendid force. They had harder fighting probably than the first, and the reports of all the officers commanding those regiments, after the men had had a proper training, were to the effect that they behaved themselves magnificently, and were a very fine force indeed. It was only sending them out before they were trained that was the great mistake—the men were right.

6577. (*Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal.*) Do you consider that, taking all in all, the men of the first contingent were superior both as regards physique and intelligence—in short, men of a better class—than those of the second?—Yes, I do. I think that the first contingent had a larger percentage of men of a better social position, there is no doubt about that, but so far as their fighting qualities were concerned, when they had had the same amount of training, the Reports from those who commanded and were with both Forces were, that the second Force was quite equal to the first.

6578. They were equally brave and courageous?—Yes, and good in the field.

6579. But not with the same measure of

intelligence; not so well educated as a whole?—No; I think you may say on the average they were not so well educated, or of quite so good a social position as the first.

6580. But not taken from the streets as has been said?—No, that is absolutely wrong. How that report got about that we were taking the scum of London was that, unfortunately, one or two of the recruiting stations in London were in a very prominent place in Pall Mall, and people saw all these wretched loafers, who went from one place to another and were rejected, standing about outside, and they were standing about to get what they could out of some of the other men, but these were not the men enrolled at all. If you had seen the men themselves that were enrolled, you would have formed a very different opinion of them.

EVIDENCE OF GENERAL BRABAZON.

6841. The men, to begin with, were, I think, the finest body of fighting material as material that ever left these shores, because they were the bone and the blood and sinew and the intelligence of the country; they were the men that we want in our ranks; the men that other countries have got in their ranks. Of course, they had everything to learn, but from their intelligence they tumbled to it very quickly. But at the same time you must remember that I do not think these untrained soldiers would have stood for five minutes against regular troops. The reason that they were so good out there, for one thing, is that they were irregular troops fighting irregular troops; the Boers were Yeomanry, and, therefore, they met on their own platform.

EVIDENCE OF MAJOR WYNDHAM KNIGHT.

Major Knight was Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General for Imperial Yeomanry.

He said the general stamp of the second contingent was good, but below the first. There were, however, exceptions.

7119. What were they?—The contingents sent from Leicester and Reading were bad, and that enlisted at one of the London offices as the Duke of Cambridge's Own was disgraceful.

7120. They were not up to the standard in the ordinary physical requirements?—They were not up to the standard for the Regular Army, and in many cases they were men who had been previously rejected for

the Yeomanry. Colonel Weston Jarvis can give evidence as to a large number of these men having been previously rejected by another London office.

7121. And some of them had to be sent home for medical reasons?—Yes, a considerable number.

7122. There were, besides the medical reasons, a number of them who could not ride or shoot?—The shooting of those who remained compared favourably with that of the first contingent, but 75 per cent. could not ride. The men of this contingent were much younger than their predecessors, and it was necessary to keep them under much stricter discipline. Many men who had been sent out were too heavy for mounted work, and numbers suffered from organic disease, and could not have been fit for military duty at the time they left England.

7123. You say it was necessary to send home altogether over a thousand men of the contingent?—Yes.

#### HOW THE SECOND CONTINGENT WAS OFFICERED.

The 1901 contingent was sent out without numbers, last pay certificates, or next-of-kin rolls, practically without any of the ordinary documents which accompany a soldier.

7153. The weakest point about the officers of the first contingent was the large number who went home before their men after a very few months in the field. Luckily, there were in most cases better men in the ranks to take their places. As regards the second contingent, it consisted of four formed battalions, two formed squadrons, and 400 officers, and 14,000 men as drafts, this gave a total of about 530 officers (I am not sure about the numbers, not having had any figures to refer to). These officers were selected in England, and were far in excess of the number actually required. They were supposed to have held a commission in some branch of the Service, or to have had "previous South African experience during the War." Instead of being selected by the county Yeomanry authorities, the Yeomanry office in London advertised for them. The result, as seen in South Africa, was startling. Some had never ridden, some had never been in decent society before, some had indifferent records as privates in the first contingent. As an instance, Sir John Sinclair, commanding one of the old squadrons, wrote to me, when they arrived

in the country, and said: "I see with disgust that three of my most inefficient privates have been given commissions in the Yeomanry." And he then gave chapter and verse as to why they were not fit to serve, not only as officers, but in any capacity. The first one was unable to hold his water when he saw a Boer; the second one had fits; I forget what the particulars were of the third one. Many were physically unfit. From memory, I think it was necessary to get rid of over 100 of these officers, and that in one week's "London Gazette" over twenty resigned, or were dismissed. The harm done to the name of the Imperial Yeomanry, and to the officer class generally, was incalculable. Their ideas on money matters were so irregular that it became necessary for the Field Force canteen to refuse to cash Yeomanry officers' cheques. This contingent contained a number of good officers, and a large number of those capable of being made into good officers.

7168. But even that meant a considerable amount of investigation and time and the explanation given in the official letter to the War Office simply is that the time was not available to make complete inquiries?—I think there would have been time for a responsible officer to have seen these gentlemen personally.

7169. Of course, looking at it after the event, everybody will be sorry that that was not done; I am only saying that that is the explanation given?—In some cases these candidates for commissions did not see any responsible officer. I do not think any responsible officer could have given men of that class a commission, or have put their names forward in any way. We put a large number of these officers through a certain set of questions in South Africa, as to whether they had been seen by anybody, and as to whom they had given as reference, and by whom they had been medically examined. These statements were afterwards signed by the officers concerned, and they are at the present moment in South Africa.

7170. (*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) Whom did they see as a rule?—In some cases they saw the hall-porter, who gave them a form to fill up. In other cases they only wrote, and had a form sent to fill up, in a certain number of cases which were very bad, in which the officer was dismissed, or he was told what the case was against him, and

asked if he would like to resign, or to have his commission cancelled; and in most cases they resigned. Some of these cases were extraordinary. There was one man who arrived drunk with his draft—he was one of several who arrived drunk with their drafts. We sent for him and asked him what previous military experience he had. He said he had served in the Imperial Light Horse during the first part of the campaign. Major Karri Davies was staying with Lord Chesham at the time, and he asked him for an official report of this man. He gave it very shortly; he said: "So-and-So is an impertinent, incompetent coward." This man had served as a saddler in the 16th Lancers; he served as saddler sergeant in the Imperial Light Horse; he had never held any executive rank; he could not speak the King's English properly; his only comment when Major Karri Davies' report was read to him was, "Well, he didn't ought to have said that"; he was one of very many who were like that, who, if they had been looked at before they went out, could not have been given commissions. We had another private, a man from the 4th Hussars, as far as we could judge a habitual drunkard.

7165. (*Sir Henry Norman.*) He came as an officer?—These men came as officers. There were a large number of men in the ranks of the Yeomanry and other corps who had got home very early in the campaign—in the case of the Yeomanry, after the regiment, perhaps, had been out for two or three months. The first contingent of Yeomanry practically did no soldiering during the first two or three months. They were on the lines of communication, waiting for a chance of being sent up to the front; at that time it was quiet in Cape Colony, and there was no fighting done there. These men were invalidated and came home, and when officers

were wanted they came forward, and gave as their previous South African experience that they had served such and such a unit during the campaign. Reference does not seem to have been made to the officers under whom they actually served as to whether they were suitable.

7149. Then as to the third contingent there is not so much to be said, because they arrived so late, I suppose?—They practically arrived after the war was over.

7150. You say that on arrival they probably shot better than the other contingents and rode better than the second contingent; but they were far inferior to the first contingent in riding and horse management?—Yes.

The most difficult task that devolved on the Yeomanry staff in South Africa was the getting rid of the large number of undesirable and incapable officers sent out from England.

MAJOR KNIGHT (November 21st).

7185. Of course, as they did not serve you have no knowledge of what their capabilities were?—No, but the man who had been out in South Africa serving as a Quartermaster, and went home, was hardly qualified on his war record to come back again and command a battalion over the heads of all the officers we had out there; it caused a great deal of discontent. There were other cases in the third contingent of officers. There was one case of an officer whose commission had been cancelled in South Africa; we had been asked to give him a commission before, and it was found that he was not a desirable character, and it was cancelled without its ever appearing in the *London Gazette* or his ever doing any duty. He came out from England as an officer in the third contingent, and he had to be sent home. Another of the officers on arrival was taken by the police as an old illicit diamond buying offender.

The Report says:—

129. Colonel Lucas, who acted as Deputy Adjutant-General of the Imperial Yeomanry, stated that on several occasions he urged upon the War Office, after the despatch of the first contingent, that recruiting for the Imperial Yeomanry should not be stopped, but that the Committee should be allowed to raise drafts to maintain the strength of the force. In his opinion, and in that of other witnesses, it was a mistake on the part of the War Office authorities to have declined to sanction this. If the force first sent out had not been allowed to melt away, the subsequent hurried and unsatisfactory raising of further contingents would not have been necessary.

## THE COLONIALS.

The Report says:—

143. Offers of assistance, in the event of hostilities in South Africa, were received from three of the Australian Colonies as early as July 11th and 12th, 1899, and others were received not much later. The total number of "Oversea" Colonials is stated in the official "Return of Military Forces in South Africa, 1899-1902," to have been 1,391 officers and 27,699 non-commissioned officers and men, or a total of 29,090 of all ranks.

146. The Commission received much evidence as to the high qualities and value of the oversea Colonial troops. They were picked bodies of men chosen from among a much larger number of applicants, chiefly of a kind well suited to the conditions of war in South Africa. Officers who had to deal with them in the field all spoke well of their physique, intelligence, courage, instinct for country, and powers of individual action and initiative.

124. Nor was the treatment of the "Oversea Colonials," Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, free from the same unfortunate propensity to belittle. Lord Wolseley, in a Minute of June 8th, 1899, said: "It would create an excellent feeling if each of the Australian Colonies, Tasmania and New Zealand, furnished contingents of mounted troops, and that Canada should furnish two battalions of foot." It appears, however, from Lord Lansdowne's evidence, to which we shall subsequently refer more at length, that, in place of this, the intention was to attach small bodies of Colonials to British regiments.

## EVIDENCE OF LORD ROBERTS.

10346. All the Colonials did extremely well—the West Australians, New South Wales, the Canadians, and the New Zealanders—they all did well, especially those that came out first.

10374. I found the Colonials were so far ahead of our men; they could find their way about the country. They did two things better than our men could do: they could scout and find their way about country. But they were not so good as our men in looking after their horses.

13253. As a rule they did very well. They are very intelligent; and they had what I want our men to have—more individuality. I noticed particularly they would find their way about the country far better than the British cavalry man could do. . . . If they could be trained better they would be still more valuable, for they are most excellent material. Their officers also need to be better trained.

## EVIDENCE OF GENERAL SIR T. KELLY-KENNY.

4757. The Canadians were?—The Canadians were with me in the fight, but they were not in my division.

4758. Had you any opportunity of seeing

the class of men they were, as to intelligence and mental power? Yes, I think they were superior to our men, not perhaps in discipline and training, but in intelligence.

## EVIDENCE OF GENERAL SIR J. FRENCH.

The commandants of the Australian Colonies assembled at Melbourne, on the 1st of October, and went into the whole question, and suggested 2,500 men, mostly mounted, from Australia; but just as they had sent their report in to the Minister, a cable came from home saying that they were only to supply a certain small number, and that Infantry were most desirable, and Mounted Infantry and Cavalry the least so. That was rather opposed to the views of the commandants out there.

8031. The commandants thought that mounted men would be most suitable?—Yes, especially our mounted men in Australia, who are accustomed to ride across country, and find their own way for a hundred miles.

8048. And what was the strength?—From this return the total for the whole war would be for New South Wales, 6,945 officers and men, and 6,104 horses, and six 15-pounder guns; Victoria, 3,757 officers and men, 4,081 horses; Queensland, 2,370 officers and men, and 2,704 horses; South Australia, 1,432 officers and men, and 1,411 horses; West

Australia, 1,129 officers and men, and 1,088 horses; Tasmania, 749 officers and men, and 664 horses; an additional lot of 250 Bushmen sent from New South Wales, embarked on the 1st April, 1902, and are included. That made a total of 16,632 officers and men, and 16,052 horses, and six guns from Australia. I can hand this return in.

8142. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) The first two contingents, I think, did go on Imperial pay?—Imperial pay only, do you mean?

8143. Yes, the first two contingents?—No; they got 4s. 6d. a day, of which the Imperial Government contributed 1s. 2d.

8144. (*Sir Henry Norman.*) Was 4s. 6d. a day paid to the privates of the first contingent?—Yes.

8145. Was that ever altered or increased?—As a matter of fact, the latter ones got 5s. a day.

8155. And they were serving alongside the British soldier while they were receiving that high rate of pay?—Yes.

8156. Did you hear at all that there was any inconvenience from troops serving together in whom there was such an immense difference in regard to pay?—There might be on the part of the Imperial troops, but, as a matter of fact, we did not give our men that higher rate of pay in South Africa; we gave them the Imperial pay in South Africa, and they got the rest when they came back.

EVIDENCE OF LORD WOLSELEY.

9133. I have answered you as regards the Colonial contingents; I think they are superior to anything we have got, or anything the Army has got, so far as I have been able to judge.

9134. Then you do not agree that they would not have stood against Regular troops?—I think the Colonial contingents would have fought anybody, but I should not extend that same expression of opinion to the very large bodies of men we sent out from here. I think we picked them up from the highways and byways; they were neither able to ride nor shoot, and we sent them out by hundreds, and almost by

thousands. I think those poor men would certainly not be able to stand against any Regular troops.

EVIDENCE OF SIR A. P. DOUGLAS.

10158. Do you recollect what is the total number of men in the contingents who went to South Africa?—6,343.

10159. And the population of New Zealand, I think, is between 700,000 and 800,000?—It is 866,000, I think, now.

10160. That is really the largest proportion, I think, from any colony; from New Zealand they sent a larger proportion of men?—Yes, we sent out a great many, I know.

10041. The rate of pay was 4s. a day, was it not?—Yes, for the first three contingents; in fact, the first four contingents were enrolled at 4s. a day, but after that, from the fifth contingent up to the tenth, by instructions from the Imperial authorities, in accepting the services and laying down the rates they fixed 5s. a day for privates and for the other ranks proportionate rates.

EVIDENCE OF GENERAL O'GRADY ITALY.

8422. From Canada the total number sent of all these contingents together numbered 351 officers, 7,012 of other ranks, and 4,832 horses.

8412. They differed from the three preceding contingents; the first and second contingents and Lord Strathcona's regiment the Imperial Government paid nothing until they took them over in South Africa; the Canadian Government and Lord Strathcona continued to pay the difference between the British rates and the Canadian rates.

8413. But the third contingent?—The third contingent was paid for entirely *ab initio* by the British Government.

8414. As well as the fourth?—As well as the fourth.

8415. (*Chairman.*) And paid at the same rates?—They were paid at the same rates; they were all paid at the Imperial Yeomanry rates; the Imperial Yeomanry rate was the scale.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN LEVIES.

The South African Irregular troops, of whom there were from 50,000 to 60,000, were a very mixed lot. There were some of the best and a great many of the worst. They cost £7,727,324, or more than thrice the sum

paid to the oversea Colonials, who, although only half as numerous, were twice as useful.

#### THE NATAL.

Of the Natal Colonial troops General Sir Redvers Buller spoke with moderate enthusiasm:—

15485. Do you make the same remarks about the Irregulars?—The Colonials who shot well, shot well, but the Colonials who did not shoot well shot remarkably badly.

15486. They most of them shot well?—A proportion of them.

Major-General Sir C. E. Knox said (17708) that a large number of the Colonials, Kitchener's Scouts, and a lot that were raised at the end of the war, merely loafers from Cape Town, were quite as bad horsemen as the Yeomanry were. They were, he said, riff-raff picked up at Durban and Cape Town, people off ships. On the other hand, Lieutenant-General Sir Archibald Hunter spoke very highly of the Natal Volunteers, who were all (14570) excellent material, being of Scotch extraction in the first place, and accustomed to horses and to arms.

#### THE IMPERIAL LIGHT HORSE.

Sir Archibald Hunter's enthusiasm, however, boils over when he comes to deal with the Imperial Light Horse. He thus describes this crack corps:—

14571. You are speaking now of the irregular corps raised in Ladysmith?—Yes. Then the other force was the Imperial Light Horse; they were the picked 1,200 men out of about 12,000 refugees from Johannesburg; all the British refugees from Johannesburg were well-to-do men; they were all men getting big wages; they were either mine owners or mine managers, or electrical engineers, experts of one sort or another; many of them were men on the Stock Exchange, lawyers, doctors, solicitors, and very few of them were engaged in trade—shopkeepers and suchlike; and they were all men who had either in prospecting, or as contractors, or as wood merchants, or in one form or another, done a lot of transport riding to and fro; they were the pick and the cream of the intelligent men who were going out to South Africa, and naturally, physically, they were very fine. The first time I ever saw them was on the first day I arrived at Pietermaritzburg. It was the first day they had ever been on parade as a regiment; up to that time they had only paraded as squadrons under their squadron leaders; it was the first day that Colonel Chisholme had ever had them under his command. Sir Walter Hely Hutchinson drove up on to the ground, as he wanted to see them, and he asked me to go round and look at them. I had not long come from a

tour abroad, where I had seen nothing but the picked Guards of Sweden, Denmark, Russia, Prussia, and Saxony, and there was nothing I saw on the Continent then, and nothing I have ever seen here, except the Irish Constabulary, that could put a patch on them. You can tell "men" when you look at them. Every man was a picture of manhood; he was beaming with intelligence. They were a lot of very highly educated men; there were ten, I should think, or twenty of them with incomes of £10,000 a year; I should think over 100 that had over £1,000 a year of their own; they had been in the enjoyment of that, I mean, in Johannesburg. For a long time I do not suppose there were over 200 or 300 men who ever touched their pay; they all put it back into the regimental funds. Out of those regimental funds Government allowed, I think it was, £35 for a horse; they gave £45 for their horses. If there was anything to be procured for love or money, they got it. They all had Zeiss glasses; not a single British officer had a Zeiss glass unless he got it out of his own pocket. But they had them as a corps, and their physique, their intelligence, their morale, and their knowledge of the country were all excellent. Amongst them were men who talked Dutch, Kaffir, and Basuto, and they had every element of success in them, and they were a

great success, a most undoubted success. They were the finest corps I have ever seen anywhere in my life.

MAJOR-GENERAL PLUMER.

18113. (*Sir John Jackson.*) Did you find the Colonial troops better educated, as a rule?—I found that they varied very much. Do you mean in the way of their being able to read and write, and so on?

18114. Quite so?—I found that they varied very much. The New Zealanders, I should say, were better educated than most of them. I think, throughout, the New Zealanders were a better class.

18115. Were they a better class than the Australians?—Yes.

18116. And the Canadians?—I only had one battery of Canadians, and they were certainly very good men; but as compared with the Australians, I think the New Zealanders were the better class.

THE AUSTRALIAN BUSHMEN.

EVIDENCE OF MAJOR-GENERAL KNOX.

17730. Did you look upon them as intelligent and good soldiers, and especially good mounted infantry?—Certainly, the first lot of Bushmen from Australia and New Zealand; there were two batches, and with regard to the second lot I cannot say anything. I never had any with me after the first lot.

17731. But so far as came within your own observation?—They were very hard men to deal with; great drunkards, and that sort of thing; they had not much idea of discipline,

but they knew what you wanted to do, and they would do it, but they would do it their own way.

17732. And they had intelligence too?—Yes, but they were a handful rather to take care of; if we got into town, for instance, they would play mischief, but they were just what you would imagine Bushmen from Australia and New Zealand would be. They had no idea of discipline.

17733. Still, they were a very useful set of men?—Excellent, and Strathcona's Horse was a very fine regiment.

The men who raised the Imperial Yeomanry received little help from the War Office. Colonel Lucas, for instance, speaking of the first contingent of Imperial Yeomanry, said:—

6493. That force was entirely equipped and clothed by the Committee or by the commanding officers of Yeomanry. The War Office could not supply us with a single article of any sort or description.

6494. (*Sir Henry Norman.*) Not even arms?—I am referring to the general equipment and clothing; arms they supplied—that is to say, the rifles and bayonets. The new pattern rifles first supplied we discovered were wrongly sighted, and attention was drawn to this, and it was thought that it was not the rifles but the bad shooting of the men. However, the men's shooting was so bad that it could not be right, and, on having the rifles tested, we found that the sights were absolutely incorrect, and you could not hit a haystack with them. They were subsequently called in for adjustment.

After praising the high qualities of the Colonial troops, the Report says:—

“They, however, require training and discipline, and in order to acquire this they should have trained officers, and some period of time to exercise before being placed in the field as opposed to regular troops. It is not fair to expect that men straight from the plough or stockyard will at once acquire habits of discipline, and become of value, simply because they can ride well, and are very intelligent and resourceful. The free life they live which enables them to be of so much value is in itself antagonistic to that rigid discipline which is to all soldiers so essential.”

Finally, in summing up the evidence as to the extraneous help given by the irregular and voluntary forces to the Regular Army, the Commission reports as a most remarkable fact “that out of the considerable number of officers who were concerned in the organisation of irregular corps during the war, and were examined by the Commission, not one was able to say that he had been invited to place his experiences on record, or was aware of any steps being taken to so formulate the procedure as to prevent in the case of any future emergency some, at least, of the uncertainty which existed on this occasion.”

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE MEDICAL SERVICE AND ITS EQUIPMENT.

IN the South African, as in all other wars, disease claimed more victims than the bullet. The returns do not enable us to discriminate between those who died of wounds or those who died of disease. But (10485) Lord Roberts in his evidence says that 13,750 died in hospital from sickness in two years and a half out of 448,000 men. In the Crimean War in seven months 10,053 died out of a force of 28,939 men. The importance of sanitation in the first place, and of good medical service in the second, is obvious. Unfortunately in both respects the evidence before the Royal Commission proves that we were as badly equipped in this as in almost every other department of military administration.

Prevention is better than cure. Therefore the first thing to discover is whether adequate measures were taken to secure the soldiers from falling ill, by drinking foul water, by camping in unhealthy sites, by neglecting latrines, and by any other causes of war-engendered disease.

## THE PREVENTION OF DISEASE.

On this subject the Royal Commission has a good deal to say. The following are the passages in its Report relating to the subject:—

209. Our attention was called by Lord Roberts and other officers to the hiatus which at the time of the war appeared to exist in the Army system with regard to sanitary matters, such, *e.g.*, as the selection of healthy sites for camps or water supply. These matters are supposed to fall within the province of the Army Medical Corps, but often have been by no means properly attended to. Surgeon-General J. Jameson said (11730) that "If sanitation had been understood, not alone by our own officers, but by the rank and file and the military officers, commanding officers, I think it would have saved thousands of lives," and some striking evidence upon the same point was given by Professor Ogston. This witness called our attention to the fact that the German Army Medical Corps have an elaborate system for testing the water supply wherever troops arrive and closing impure sources, but that in South Africa almost nothing of the kind was done. In other matters, such as the regulation of camp latrines, he contrasted unfavourably the British system with the German. These statements were confirmed by General Sir Charles Warren, who said (15813):—

"From the purely medical point of view, the skill, zeal, and devotion to duty of our medical officers during the war is beyond all praise. From the sanitation point of view there is much to be desired. It never seems to be clear whether a camp is located according to strategic requirements or not, or to what extent the question of sanitation is to be considered. The result is

there were grave defects in the position of many of our camps. The duties of medical officers ought to be more clearly defined and their responsibilities laid down."

After calling attention to specific instances of disregard of sanitary considerations, he added :—

"In the open plains the mounted troops frequently occupied the best ground before the infantry came up, and the infantry were bivouacked where horses had been. I have always found that in such cases there is sickness. I am convinced that typhoid fever does not belong of necessity to an army in the field; its presence is usually a sign of neglect of some kind. Wherever real sanitary precautions are taken typhoid fever is at once reduced to a minimum. If there had been efficient sanitary regulations in our army, and if they had been attended to, I think that three-fourths or four-fifths of our losses from typhoid fever would have been avoided. I consider that our regulations have been retrograde in late years. It is impossible that a provost-marshal can look after such matters. His duty ought to be to look after others, and see that they do their duty, and not do the duty himself. The whole sanitary service requires recasting. It ought to be automatic, so that on starting a camp or bivouac anywhere things should go straight."

Lord Roberts (13174) thought that there ought to be a special service of sanitary officers. (13173.) He gave as an instance of the need of this that he found hospital tents pitched upon one of the chief sources of water supply at Bloemfontein.

In the opinion of one civilian witness, the result of the system before the war was that "there is a general shirking of taking any responsibility of that kind, taking any initiative and daring to do anything that is not already laid down in the regulations." Consequently, even when a site was obviously unhealthy, he considered that officers in the Army Medical Service would hesitate to take the necessary steps. Surgeon-General Sir W. Wilson desired, like Lord Roberts, that special sanitary experts should be attached to the Army, on the ground that their opinion would have "greater weight than of the ordinary practitioner." He even desired for this purpose "men of European reputation, whose opinions cannot be set aside"—a somewhat large requirement.

It was suggested by Sir Charles Warren that the sanitation of camps and bivouacs should be jointly in the hands of the medical officers and Royal Engineers, and that their responsibility should be defined. He considered, also, that while there was an outbreak of fever the officers concerned should be liable to be tried by court-martial unless they could show that they had taken all precautions.

EVIDENCE OF SURGEON-GENERAL  
JAMESON, M.D.

Surgeon-General J. Jameson was Director-General of the Army Medical Service from 1896 to end of 1901 :—

11728. What would you say, generally, were the lessons to be learnt from the war, so far as the Medical Department is concerned?—The great lesson to be learnt from the war, in my opinion, is greater attention to details as regards sanitation, with a view to preventing enteric fever, not only to assist medical officers, but in a greater degree to

assist military officers and the men themselves. The men themselves require education as regards sanitation. They look upon it in a great measure as they look upon all our recommendations—as fads. They take no care about the water—the character of the water. I may mention that we did what was never done in any other war before. After great trials with various kinds of sterilising filters, we adopted one, which we had subjected to a great trial with good results. . . . And it has been reported to me that in a great many instances the men would not use them.

11729. They would not have patience, I suppose?—They would not have patience.

11730. So that you think the great lesson to learn from the war, so far as the Medical Department is concerned, really is sanitation?—Sanitation is the great lesson. If sanitation had been understood, not alone by our own officers, but by the rank and file, and the military officers, commanding officers, I think it would have saved thousands of lives. Under ordinary circumstances one would have boiled water, but in the veldt you cannot get material to boil water. And another thing, too, even if you had the material, my experience is that the men will not drink boiled water. I have been boiling water for twenty years for troops, both in India and Egypt, and I never stopped enteric fever by it.

EVIDENCE OF SURGEON-GENERAL

SIR W. WILSON, M.B.

Sir William Wilson was the principal medical officer in South Africa :—

3790. Was there any special provision made for the chance of an outbreak of enteric in South Africa?—Yes, I always looked forward to it, and feared it. At first all that was done was that Pasteur-Chamberlain filters were sent with the troops, but the supply failed; every company was supposed on going out to carry its own filter, and the company officers were supposed to see that the men got filtered water from the Pasteur-Chamberlain filters, but so many troops went out that the trade was not able to supply them.

3791. It was necessary to send troops to the front who were not supplied with filters?—Yes.

3792. Would the Pasteur-Chamberlain filter in your opinion have been a protection?—It would if it had been used.

3793. Of course if they did not use it it would be no protection?—Yes, but the British soldier is very curious. I have known him have a pipe of good water and a pipe of bad water alongside each other, one of them being marked unfit for drinking and the other good, known to be good and probably sterilized, and yet he would just as likely take the bad.

3794. Do you mean from not paying any attention or wilfully?—If you ask him, he says he has seen the notice that the one is

for drinking, but the other looks clear, and he does not see why he should not take it. I have known a soldier force a native sentry at Pretoria to drink out of a stream while there was a standpipe of good water alongside of him.

3795. In such a place as South Africa, the Orange Free State, and the Transvaal, in your opinion you cannot rely upon boiling for the troops?—You can only rely upon boiling in the stations, but when the troops are moving you cannot boil. You have to watch the troops constantly that they do use the boiled water; they have a great objection to the boiled water, as they say it is insipid and they do not like it.

EVIDENCE OF PROFESSOR ALEXANDER  
OGSTON, C.M.

Professor Alexander Ogston is the Professor of Surgery at Aberdeen University, and Civilian Surgeon with the Forces in South Africa.

11090. After describing the precautions taken by the Germans to prevent the use of foul water, &c., Professor Ogston said :—In our army in South Africa, regarding the water supply, nothing of that kind was done, almost, perhaps not at all. There were no sentries put over impure sources. There was no indication by which a thirsty man could learn that a pure source was within his reach. The water supplies towards the front were not tested chemically or bacteriologically, and measures to secure their being cleaned and kept clean were not instituted. They did sometimes post sentries over them, but I suppose the sentries were not trained in sanitary matters, and probably did not know what to do, because the men would drink water and wash things where it was not quite right for them to do it. The water-carts were not regularly disinfected, and they were sent under drivers who filled them at the most convenient places, which were not always the most desirable places . . . Regulations existed, but in our army in South Africa, from want of a proper sanitary staff such regulations were very ill attended to, and often not at all. One would camp where a previous expedition had passed, and there was nothing to mark where they had had their slaughter-house or their latrines, and we would camp on the very ground that

had been occupied by them. When we arrived unexpectedly at any place there was no one whose duty it was, or at least who found it possible from want of underlings, to look after the situation of the latrines. I remember on one occasion we arrived at a place just outside Kimberley, where we were a considerable time, with a number of sick men suffering from diarrhoea and the initial stages of typhoid fever, and hence constantly requiring to go forth, and for three days and two nights there were no latrines whatever dug there, and the men went out fifty yards into the veldt, and what with the heat and the dust storms, and the floods, all this was washed about, and, of course, it disseminated disease.

11000. That, I suppose, increased the risk again if they were not careful about disinfection?—It did. One could see some of the orderlies, from lack of knowledge, washing their kettles in filthy puddles and scraping them with the infected earth around, and although careful instructions were issued to them and posted up in the buildings, wherever a building was available, there was no staff to compel attention to them.

10997. Were they careful about disinfectants?—Disinfection, one might almost say, was absolutely unknown. The men knew nothing about disinfectants, they did not even know which were good and which were bad. They had no training in keeping themselves disinfected; in fact, it seemed to me that many of them looked upon it as a species of cowardice if they attended to such things as avoiding infection—a sort of shirking of duty. The hands were not disinfected, the utensils that the patients used for typhoid evacuations, and so forth, were not disinfected; when they were emptied out into pits they were not disinfected, and the wards were not disinfected. In one hospital made to contain fifty-three beds, and which accommodated fifty-three cases, almost exclusively of typhoid, the only source of disinfection for the orderlies was one enamelled basin containing creoline and water, which was placed in the verandah at the exit from the hospital, and this they might or might not use, as they thought proper.

10998. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) Was this a field hospital?—No, this was a hospital in Bloemfontein. They had no idea of disinfecting. The sick and the typhoid cases were sent down to the base, when they were

able to be moved, many of them still suffering from diarrhoea.

#### EVIDENCE OF DR. A. D. FRIPP.

Dr. Fripp was a civilian doctor with the forces in South Africa.

11812. And as to disinfectants in the different hospitals, it was said that in one hospital all that was there of disinfectants was contained in an enamelled basin as you entered the passage?—"Disinfectants" are not under medical charge at all, you know. It is under the barrack charge; they have to provide disinfectants. We only use the carbolic acid and those things for professional work; but for all sanitary purposes as disinfectants it is a barrack supply, and if there is any deficiency it ought to be considered due to them.

11822. Upon whom did the responsibility really rest for that state of things; that is to say, for not coping with those difficulties? One of the things that I should like to be allowed to speak openly about here is the fact that all the senior officers, from the principal medical officer, who was the most charming, delightful gentleman (Sir William Wilson) but from him downwards, through all the senior officers, they are impressed with a sort of feeling, first of all, that their service is looked at askance, that their branch is secondary; and, next, that they must not approach any general commanding officer, and certainly not if he has got a title, without their knees chattering together with alarm and fright; they must not think of advising him that it really would be for the good of the army if a camp was not pitched on a certain proposed site, because it is covered by stinking horses in various degrees of decomposition. My impression is that Lord Roberts would have been only too delighted if somebody had warned him by saying to him: "I am sure such and such a site is already fouled by the enemy's camps; don't you think, my Lord, it would be better to put your camp a little further out?" But there is a general shirking of taking any responsibility of that kind, taking any initiative, and daring to do anything that is not already laid down in the regulations. And I daresay that that general fear has a good deal of foundation in what has happened to individuals who have dared to exceed regulations in the past.

11863. Our profession can be of enormous

help to the combatant ranks if only they will realise how much we can do now to prevent disease; that is the great point, and therein lies the hope of our being able to help our country to win its next war.

11864. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) Sanitation?—Sanitation and hygiene, of which they do not understand the merest elements. Tommy does not understand it because he is not taught it, and he is not taught it because the officer looks askance at it and regards it as just a fad. With regard to that, our Advisory Board, through the Director-General, has recommended the Secretary of State that the combatant officers shall be educated in the elements of hygiene, and I think that is a most essential point. If only the combatant officer can be interested in just the elements of hygiene and sanitation, then he will see that his men obey the elementary laws of personal health as to boiling the water, and so on, when it can be done. It is, I fear, useless talking of boiling all the drinking water with mobile columns or out on picket duty; it never could be done. It can be done in any considerable garrison or standing camp or large hospital, and there it should be done; but it was not, at least not during the first year of the war when I was in South Africa. That is a point where the medical profession can be of great use, and may strengthen the hands of the Commander-in-Chief, if only he will let us help to prevent disease. And then, what we cannot get him to see—I am not speaking personally of the Commander-in-Chief in the late war, but what we cannot get the authorities to see is the *strategic importance* of it, which comes out very prominently if the figures are examined. If you look at the number of patients sick in Bloemfontein, and then calculate how much it cost the nation to put each of those men at the front, I believe it works out at about £100 a man, and they went sick by scores and hundreds, as you know, from a disease which was to a large extent preventable. Then, again, just consider how much sooner Lord Roberts' hands would have been free to move from Bloemfontein, and dash after the Boers up towards Johannesburg if it had not been for that heavy epidemic; and if he had been able to make that move forward earlier it would have saved the nation a considerable number of men, and a correspondingly large amount of money.

11865. (*Chairman.*) What was there to prevent the Director-General of the Army Medical Corps from dealing with that problem years ago? It is not a fresh idea to you?—The quaking of the knees, I think. There is not the faintest doubt that that was a disease from which the responsible medical officers all suffered; they were all afraid to go to their commanding officer and ask for an interview and make suggestions. I mean that they were afraid to go to the head people, they would only dare to go up through the channels which the Regulations gave them the right to apply through.

11866. You received every encouragement, did you not, from the Army authorities when you volunteered to go out in the first instance?—Yes, every encouragement.

11868. But how about physicians? Do you know whether many physicians volunteered to go out?—I do not know whether they actually volunteered, but they would have been delighted to go if they had been asked.

11869. Were they encouraged to go?—Certainly not in the early days. I cannot speak of what happened after the time I left England. All I can say is that I was looked upon as a crank for taking a physician out with me. One comment that I remember was: "Take as many surgeons as you like, but, my dear fellow, the one thing that our officers do understand is the treatment of enteric." Well, they do not; at least, they did not. They do now that they have had an enormous experience, but they did not understand how even to write its name down in the slightest cases, because they called it "simple continued fever," unless it had very marked symptoms; and they allowed that man with simple continued fever to go about and infect other people, and the other people so infected may have the acutest enteric.

11870. And that was during the earliest stages of the war?—Yes. They threw cold water on physicians, but they allowed me to take one. Dr. Washbourne came with me, and was of the greatest use. He was afterwards appointed consulting physician to the forces by Lord Kitchener, and I am sorry to say he has since died. Another thing they did not understand among modern methods was the enormous practical advantage of having steam disinfectors at each large hospital. An enteric sheet or blanket or anything used by an enteric patient, especi-

ally if he has soiled it with the discharges from either end of the alimentary canal, is most highly infective, and will give the disease to the next patient who uses it unless it is previously disinfected. The modern and most simple method of disinfecting it is by means of the steam steriliser. I took one out, and was roared at for taking it, but very soon they sent them out to as many of the hospitals as they could get them to. Similarly, all the excreta from typhoid patients ought to be destroyed in some way. At first they did not make any systematic efforts to destroy them, and that is the chief reason why the disease spread so rapidly and so widely.

11965. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) I gather from your evidence that one great medical lesson to be learnt from the war is the necessity for good sanitation?—Yes, I think so undoubtedly.

11923. You also touch on the strategic importance of hygiene and sanitation. Had you, so far as you know, in South Africa any officer who was told off for sanitation alone, in connection with Army matters?—No, I did not meet one, and I was told, and have always been led to believe, that such posts were done away with just before or at the beginning of the war. I was told that in the Regulations it was laid down that there was to be a sanitary officer for each headquarters' staff of a certain size, each head of a division, for instance, but that it had been decided not to fill up the appointment.

EVIDENCE OF SIR CONAN DOYLE.

Sir A. Conan Doyle said :—

20620. It was very strongly borne in upon me over that epidemic that any breach of sanitary law ought to be made a military offence; the soldier never recognises anything except a military offence. You may argue with him, and give him advice, and he will not do it; but if they had made the drinking of foul water (and I have seen the soldiers drink from the puddles by the way-side) a military offence, they would not have done it. No efforts were made to cut the thing off at the fountain-head, so as to prevent the men getting enteric; when they did get it, every effort was made to cure them, but no effort was made to stop them getting it, and, as far as I know, right through the war there was no military order against drinking foul water, and no precautions of that sort were

taken. We wanted preventive medicine very badly, I think, all through the campaign.

20621. (*Chairman.*) Precautions were taken in certain cases; we had at least one witness who told us that precautions were taken in his regiment?—I think it depended very much on the Colonel; I think if he liked it was done, but there was no general order, I am convinced, as to boiling water.

EVIDENCE OF LORD ROBERTS.

Lord Roberts was of the old school, sceptical about sanitation :—

10288. You cannot help sickness; that is what kills men more than anything else in war.

10289. But even then officers could be trained to take care, for instance, that men did not drink water that was not fit for them?—That is a very difficult question. I have heard it talked about a great deal; but it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to arrange for in war time, more especially when on the march. The first thing on reaching the halting-place is to send out pickets, some two or three miles off, or cavalry a still further distance off. How is it possible for officers, however careful they may be, to see what water the men in such cases may have to drink? I am in favour of taking every practicable precaution, but those who know war will, I think, bear me out when I say that no efforts on the part of officers could prevent soldiers at times drinking impure water.

10290. But still, a great many casualties would be avoided, of course, by having good officers, who would not lead their men into wrong places?—I do not think a six-officered company would make it any more efficient as regards drinking water than a three-officered company.

EVIDENCE OF SIR CHARLES WARREN.

15813. It is possible that sanitation is not yet clearly understood, and that scientific and medical opinions are not in unison. On the following points, however, there can be little doubt :—(1) Sufficient attention was not paid to the necessity for preventing men washing so close to drinking water as to allow of the dirty water running back into reservoir or stream. (2) This is particularly the case with regard to wells. In all cases wells ought to have their mouths raised, so that it is impossible that dirty water can run

back into them. (3) Water should be drawn off by taps and cocks and not by dipping buckets, whose bottoms are often very dirty. (4) The camps require sweeping up constantly. Dirty straw and refuse should not be allowed to lie about, or be thrown into corners, but ought to be burnt. (5) Men should not be camped or bivouacked where horses have been picketed. There was an entire absence of regard to such considerations in camps hastily formed.

15817. But is there no officer on the staff whose business it is to select the site of a camp?—Not that I know of. I wrote in the very strongest terms of the position we were placed in after the relief of Ladysmith near Ladysmith. I pointed out that it was

a place which was supposed to be a typhoid fever ground, and our men in a fortnight were down with typhoid fever. Of course they might have had it just the same whether they had been placed there or not, but there are my reports upon the subject, and of the medical officer of my division, saying most strongly that we should not be encamped upon that particular spot of ground.

15818. Still you were encamped there?—Yes, we were, and very shortly afterwards the whole of my division was subject to typhoid fever.

15819. Was it for strategical reasons that you were placed there?—I do not know; I was not told.

Surgeon-General Jameson said (11706) that a sanitary officer accustomed to bacteriology should be attached to every corps. It came out in evidence that the sanitary officers had been suppressed by the Duke of Cambridge in the eighties, because he held that every medical officer was a sanitary expert.

#### THE CARE OF THE SICK AND WOUNDED.

The Royal Commission took a good deal of evidence as to the inadequacy of the medical staff—sanitary experts or otherwise—for coping with the exigencies of the campaign. They report:—

199. In the case of medical officers, indeed, the strength, it is stated, had actually been diminished in the process of cutting down estimates, and while the Army had increased their number had decreased. When the South African War broke out what happened was as follows. The whole, practically, of the Army Medical Corps *personnel*, officers and men, was exhausted in supplying the First Army Corps and in manning the base hospitals and stationary hospitals which, in consequence of the great area over which the operations were spread, were much in excess of the number calculated in 1888. When, therefore, the troops equivalent to the Second Army Corps followed, there were no longer any officers or men of the regular service to supply them fully.

216. The strength of the Army Service Corps and its Reserves having been calculated like other Army Services with reference to the despatch abroad of a much smaller force than actually went, was quite inadequate to meet the requirements of the war.

214. The evidence may perhaps be said to leave the impression that the Army Medical Service as a whole had not, either as regards *personnel* or equipment, been maintained at the high standard which in so vital a matter is essential. We do not mean by this any reflection on the devotion or ability of individual members, nor do we overlook the improvements in equipment to which Sir W. Wilson and Colonel Gubbins have testified. But the service was weak in numbers, and the opportunities of gaining experience in the practice of modern methods were denied—while it seems clear that, at any rate in the early part of the war, perhaps owing to accumulations of stores at home, medical supplies were not always of the newest pattern, and parts of the equipment were comparatively antiquated.

Much the most important evidence as to the inadequacy of the Army

Medical Service was given by Professor Ogston, who was able to give a comparative estimate of the adequacy of our arrangements owing to the fact that he had made a special study of the medical service in the German and Russian Armies. He declared that the Russian Medical Service was much better equipped than our own, and their doctors much more skilled.

The Germans also were far ahead of us in most of their sanitary arrangements.

EVIDENCE OF PROFESSOR OGSTON.

THE STRENGTH OF THE ARMY MEDICAL CORPS.

Professor Ogston maintained that the Medical Corps ought to be 5 per cent. of the strength of the total force. He said :—

11152. Suppose you have 100,000 men in the field, you will have 20,000 of them ill in a year, and to provide against that it is necessary to have somewhere about 5 per cent. of the strength of the force connected with the Army Medical Department.

11155. But you consider 5 per cent. has been proved by the experience of other nations to be necessary?—Three per cent. is decidedly too small. It means a catastrophe either threatening or occurring.

Surgeon-General Jameson did not agree with this estimate, as will be seen from his evidence :—

11562. What number of men and officers, total included, would you have considered before the war was the proper percentage for the number of men sent out—2½ per cent. you told us just now?—Yes.

11563. You adhere to that?—Yes, I adhere to that, under favourable conditions.

11541. Do you consider that that is sufficient?—That depends a good deal upon what is required, and it depends a great deal upon the country you are operating in, and the amount of disease, of course.

11542. But take it under the most favourable condition?—I think that (*i.e.*, 800 non-commissioned officers and men) would be a fairly good estimate for an Army Corps.

The Report says :—

In any criticism made upon the Army Medical Service in the field in South Africa, it must be remembered that the task set to them far outstripped the largest expectations which had been formed before the South African War, with regard to what was expected from this as from other of the departments of the Army. Surgeon-General Sir W. Wilson said :—

“The officers I had did everything that was possible; they were few in numbers. For instance, I had been supplied with *personnel* to look after two Army Corps, say, 80,000 men, and we had not enough to look after that

11564. What was the percentage actually employed, including voluntary aid and everything else? Now you can look at that table?—The greatest was 4·23.

11565. That is very considerably in excess of what you think would have been required?—Yes.

11566. And yet you would not be prepared to say that there was a greater number of the Army Medical Corps, plus voluntary assistance, than was really required, would you?—No, I do not think I would say that, under the circumstances.

11567. Do you not think under those circumstances that you would now rather correct your figure of 2½ per cent.?—Well, it is certainly not too liberal.

EVIDENCE OF LIEUT.-COL. WILSON.

Lieutenant-Colonel E. M. Wilson, Deputy Assistant Director-General of the Army Medical Department, was asked some searching questions :—

11316. Supposing that the force in South Africa had been limited to two Army Corps, and that the war had been fought with two Army Corps, do you consider that your establishment would have been sufficient to have coped with the war?—It would not have been sufficient; but the difficulties would have been very much less, of course.

11319. It is the fact that your particular department is really organised for peace purposes and with no view to war? Is that what I am to understand?—That is the case;

number even ; but instead of that, we had 250,000 men to look after, besides camp followers. The work was scattered all over half a continent, and I really do not think that anyone at home knows the amount or the greatness of the task."

Lord Roberts, with reference to the same point, said (10485):—

"I think the medical department suffered under, perhaps, greater disabilities than the other Army departments. It was very far from being prepared for expansion, and yet, within a few months, it was called upon to provide officers, non-commissioned officers, orderlies, and nurses for an army three or four times the size of that for which its establishment had been estimated as sufficient. It had been calculated that it would be enough to arrange for medical aid for 4 per cent. of the troops employed in war, whereas it turned out that the calculation should have been for 10 per cent. Nevertheless, had it not been for the sudden outbreak of an epidemic, which is inevitable in war, the department would, in all probability, have proved equal to the occasion ; and that the outbreak should have reached dimensions with which we were unable to cope was due, rather to the arduous character of our operations, and the nature of our lines of communication, than to want of efficiency and zeal on the part of the medical officers and the assistants. It was impossible, under the circumstances, to give the medical supplies precedence on the railway and to bring up reinforcements of *personnel*."

The medical service had been cut down, and "the orderlies, many of whom were mere untrained privates brought in as makeshifts, were not always good." One witness (General Rundle) said "the medical service was overworked, undermanned, and underorderlied." Professor Ogston's verdict, which is quoted in the Report, is that (10996) with regard to the men employed as orderlies, that although there was no lack of zeal and devotion, many of them were quite untrained, and that most of them were "absolutely ignorant of anything like what was required for attending on the sick. They were utterly unaware how to deal with a sick man, . . . and hence, in spite of all their goodwill, they failed from the want of this training." They were, he said (11004), not accustomed by their previous discipline to the discouraging work of attending on the sick, and knew nothing about disinfectants.

#### MEDICAL EQUIPMENT.

The Report says :—

210. Evidence as to medical equipment was also taken both from Army Medical officers and civilians. Our attention was called by the official witnesses to the fact that till the year 1897 the medical equipment "was very obsolete, some of it dating back to the Crimean War. In that year a committee inquired into the matter, and in the result of their report it was thoroughly revised and brought up to date." "It would," said Colonel Gubbins, "have been a perfect scandal if we had gone out with the equipment as it was before."

There appears to have been a difficulty before the war in obtaining proper accommodation for storing medical instruments and drugs. All medicines had to be kept in damp cellars of the Herbert Hospital, and to a great extent became useless, until a ward in the hospital was devoted to their storage. "The instruments were suffering, and the medicines were perishing." Surgeon-General Jameson, who was then Director-General of the Army Medical Service, said that he had made frequent representations with regard to this matter, but that the necessary funds were not conceded, apparently for the same reasons as those which led to retrenchments in regard of the medical *personnel*. It is, however, probably true, as Colonel Gubbins pointed out,

that, in a country like this, where almost everything can be obtained rapidly, it would be a mistake to store up great reserves either of articles like medicines or of those like hospital beds. He said: "Medical supplies are perishable articles, and, as to ordnance supplies, we might not go to war for twenty or thirty years, when they would be obsolete. I may mention as an instance, that there was a pattern bedstead brought out in the time of the Crimea called the 'Macdonald.' We have got it in our hospitals still and we cannot get rid of it. I worked a table out some years ago to determine, judging by the normal waste, when we should get rid of it, and I think we found that it would take 1,100 years to work off the present stock."

Surgeon-General Sir W. Wilson, who was principal medical officer in South Africa from the beginning to the end of the war, said (3590) that the surgical instruments used in South Africa were "very good," and that the medical officers were liberally supplied with the most modern class of instruments. (3711.)

On this point he is contradicted by the evidence of the civilian doctors.

#### EVIDENCE OF PROFESSOR OGSTON.

11027. You say in the *prelis* of your evidence, "The quantity and quality of the equipment prepared and supplied to the hospitals, field hospitals and bearer companies, were defective, and generally they were antiquated and badly organised."

#### NO SPECIAL INSTRUMENTS.

11014. There were no microscopes; there were no special instruments. If a man suffered from a suppurating ear there was no means of diagnosing it in those field hospitals.

11027. There were no serums for the treatment of disease there in any of the hospitals from Wynberg outwards. Those are important, and should not have been wanting in a modern Army Medical Department. There was X Ray apparatus at Wynberg, but there was none at De Aar, for instance, there was none at Modder, there was none at Kimberley, and there was none at Sterkstroom. That was a thing that in those hospitals was absolutely necessary. They got out of order, and they did not know how to use them. They had not instrument-makers or electricians, as they have in the German army. There are instrument-makers attached to every force in the German army, who repair and look after those things.

#### BAD LAMPS.

11030. Have we no such men attached to our forces?—I believe we have none. There may be one at Netley, but they are not a recognised part of every force. As

regards equipment, I thought that everything was very antiquated. The lights in the hospitals were inadequate for the purpose of nocturnal operations, and they were utterly inadequate for searching for the wounded in the field—old feeble oil lamps, and candles in lanterns of certainly not the most modern construction, instead of the better sources of illumination that should have been introduced.

11031. What is the modern lamp you would suggest?—On the Continent they use and try in the army all kinds of modern lamps, paraffin lamps, acetylene lamps, and such better sources of illumination. I do not think such a thing existed anywhere in our forces. It was absolutely impossible to perform satisfactorily an operation by night with the equipment that was provided, say, at Modder River.

#### OLD-FASHIONED APPLIANCES.

11033. I think that the instruments and appliances for the treatment of them according to modern antiseptic ideas were limited and inadequate and old-fashioned. The sterilisers were too small for the work that had to be done. They might have sterilised an instrument or two, but not the number that one requires in doing such operations as often had to be done there. The irrigators for flushing wounds with antiseptics were too small.

11045. Splints were often wanting and very deficient.

11046. Deficient in quantity and quality, and other apparatus was wanting. In most places extension apparatus was not provided.

11049. And in your view such instruments

should have been provided?—Certainly. I have no hesitation in saying they ought to have been provided. Dressings were often wanted, but that might have been a question of the difficulty of supply; and even as to drugs and stores, which I note are stated to have been pretty well provided, that was not my experience.

11050. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) Do you mean such things as absorbent wool?—Often our stores ran short, and very short. Sometimes we had no splints save bits of zinc a foot or two long, quite too short for the treatment of a fractured thigh with a gunshot wound. We had just to manage with those as well as we could, but it was not what it ought to have been. We sometimes ran rather short, decidedly short, of our antiseptic dressings.

#### ANTIQUATED DRUGS.

11051. Such as absorbent wool?—Such as absorbent wool, and so on, and even of such drugs, at some parts I witnessed, as calomel, which was wanting at Warrenton; and that is an instance of others which I cannot at this moment precisely specify. Another thing is that the drugs were badly designed. They were provided evidently according to a formula that was out of date. That refers to the drugs and surgical and medical stores, and they were not forwarded in such a way as to be of the best service to the sick and wounded.

11052. (*Chairman.*) I wanted to know about the form in which the drugs were carried?—The drugs seemed to me also to be arranged on antiquated ideas. They were such as you would have found fifty years ago in a chemist's shop, but not such as you would find nowadays, bottles of tinctures and effusions, and that sort of thing, instead of the compressed tabloids that are used elsewhere.

11072. That is all you have to say with regard to equipment, is it not?—I should like to say something about the first dressings. Sometimes the first dressings were utterly unworthy of England.

#### MURDEROUS TRAINS.

11083. The trains in South Africa were as well done as care and zeal could manage, but they were not what they should have been. They were dreadful things for a man with a bad fracture, or even for a patient badly

ill with fever, to go down some hundreds of miles in; and I suppose you have been told that nearly all the cases of typhoid, which were transported when seriously ill, either died or had very dangerous complications, perforation or hemorrhage, from being transported in those trains.

11084. (*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) Was that from shaking?—Yes, the shaking and the total inadequacy of them. The hospital trains were good, but even they might have been improved in many respects with regard to the shaking. The other trains that were used to carry the sick and the wounded (and only a small proportion of them were carried in the hospital trains) were very badly arranged for the purpose. There were convoys of sick with dysentery and diarrhoea, and even typhoid fever, sent down by them, and sometimes there was no water in the train, sometimes even orderlies were absent. The carriage latrines were utterly unsuitable, no water even sometimes in them, not disinfected, and sometimes the wounded were transported in improvised trucks. Hardships must occur in war, but it made one very sad to see a man getting his leg and his elbows and his head knocked about in a springless truck when he was ill and suffering, and, perhaps, wounded. It was very terrible to behold. Sometimes those trains were sent away without food for the sick and wounded.

11087. (*Chairman.*) In Germany and Russia they have those trains provided ready in times of peace?—They have those carriages provided and ready, and I have seen them; so that if trains had to be improvised they could be better done than in our country where we would have to get them hastily made.

11088. We do not possess any such, not even the model of such a carriage, so far as you know?—The ambulance wagons were not suitable to South Africa. They were old wagons . . . and not the best . . . They jolted and were old-fashioned. They were not nearly so good as those used in the Russian and German Armies and were even inferior compared with the Cape wagons.

#### NO HOSPITAL HUTS.

11104. The stretchers were the same old stretchers we have known such a long time, and might have been improved upon, I think. The field hospitals furnished by

private individuals were very much superior to the English. There is one other point, as you ask me, that I think I should emphasise: In the German Army, in time of peace, they provide huts on well-known, well-studied systems, capable of being packed into boxes and carried, and put up anywhere; and those huts, which are of all sizes, are taken out in their field manoeuvres and elsewhere, and in a campaign. England had not one of those, and there was the very greatest want of them, as the storms of rain, with lightning, blew down sometimes the whole of the tents in a hospital where the wounded were lying, and we had to pick them grovelling out of the mud with the aid of the illumination of the lightning; so that that state of matters compared very badly with what might have been the case if we had been provided with proper huts. Of course, they would have required to be made in time of peace, but had even one or two of those been sent out we could have examined our wounded with very much greater advantage to them. Operations would have been possible of a style antiseptically that was quite impossible in the circumstances which existed, and for the treatment of very bad cases, both wounded and sick, they would have been invaluable. The Germans possess all of these.

11105. (*Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal*.) You are of opinion that much of the inefficiency in the treatment of the sick and wounded during the war in South Africa was owing to the antiquated methods in existence at the commencement of the war in the Army Medical Department?—Yes.

11106. You consider that sufficient attention had not been given to assure that the medical officers were well instructed in modern methods both as regarded surgery and medicine?—I do.

11107. And you think that it would have been quite possible to have done so here, as it is done to a large extent in Germany?—Quite possible.

EVIDENCE OF SIR FREDERICK TREVES.

Sir Frederick Treves, the famous surgeon, confirmed the evidence of Professor Ogston. He said he could not say the medical instruments were "entirely antiquated," but they were "certainly antiquated, and we were carrying about with us instruments which I

should have thought would only be found in museums."

BAD AMBULANCES.

12046. Have you any suggestions to make about the ambulances?—Yes; it is not a practical thing for a country without roads. The Boers had good ambulances, but an English ambulance is hardly fit to transport the sick; it is impossible for a well man to sit in it almost when it is moving rapidly.

12047. We have had some evidence about it; the authorities stick to their own ambulance, and give reasons for so doing?—If you want a wagon that can be driven at a trot over a series of walls, or practically over churchyards, and that will come out unbroken, the English ambulance will do it, but it is a rough affair. Given a good road, of course, it is all right, and it can carry a large number; but later on I think you will find that the evidence was given in favour of light carts, such as the Indian two-wheeled tonga.

12055. There is no equipment in the Service for following a cavalry column.

12056. It must be a light cart, of course? It must be a two-wheeled cart, and the orderlies must be mounted, and there ought to be a saddle provided, so that a sick man could be brought home on a horse. There is, I believe, such a thing used in India.

12057. Was there no equipment of that kind in South Africa?—No, not with us, and there is nothing in the Army Medical Service; there is no wagon equipment beyond the regulation ambulances. It is most desirable that there should be a recognised medical outfit for a rapidly-moving cavalry column.

12180. (*Sir Frederick Darley*.) Doctor Fripp told us there were no means of washing the utensils?—That matter is a long way behind. I had to report upon hospitals in which I myself actually witnessed the washing up of all the plates, dishes, knives and forks in the sink in which the bed-pans were washed out, many of the patients having typhoid fever. It is positively incredible.

"USELESS CHEMIST SHOP."

12149. (*Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal*.) It has been said that the medicines were sent in a clumsy and bulky form, and not at all like those that are in use to-day, such as tabloids, and other concentrated

preparations; many of them were sent in bottles and in liquid form, for instance?— Yes, we took about medicines that were in bottles in the most cumbersome form, and that had been in the bottles for twenty years possibly. It is really a serious complaint; we had to drag this useless chemist's shop all over the country, packed up in the most ludicrous and extravagant way. Tabloids, or any such concentrated preparations as are used now would have put the whole outfit into a twelfth part of the space.

#### EVIDENCE OF THE OFFICIALS.

Surgeon-General J. Jameson explained that they had to use up the old stock, but :—

11800. There was very little sending out of the old stuff.

11801. You had tabloids?—Yes, tabloids chiefly.

#### TABLOIDS GALORE.

11802. Capsules, and all those things?— Yes, and everything of that kind.

11803. And very little of the old kind?— Very little, hardly anything. Of course, there are some things you must send out. You will not please the ordinary private soldier with the tabloid; he wants a dose of physic. You will not content him, I mean, with the tabloid. You have to study rather the character of your patient, give him a good dose of black draught, and he will thank you a good deal; but give him a tabloid and he will think, "A small thing of this kind is no use."

11804. We have had evidence here that the medicines—a certain proportion of them—sent out were very old-fashioned?—I do not think it could have been so. As compared with the small quantity that existed and the amount of medicine that we sent out, it could only have been a fraction.

11805. And with regard to instruments—all appliances required in surgery and such things—the same has been said, that they were by no means up to the standard of to-day?—I can only say that Mr. Makins expressed quite a different opinion, and I take Mr. Makins to be as high an authority as any person who gave evidence.

Sir W. Wilson was even more emphatic.

3863. Do you think you had everything in a compressed form that could be had in that form?—I think we had everything in a

compressed form, and in that way we were well astride with the times. We were well up to the times in the medicines and drugs.

But even the official optimist has to call attention to one serious defect.

#### NO PYJAMAS.

Sir W. Wilson said :—

3650. The wounded men, of course, they all ought to have pyjamas. When a man comes in, at present there are no clothes for him, although he may be deluged with blood, but according to the regulation there are no clothes to put him into. I remedied that very early by calling on the Red Cross to give me pyjamas, and they used to supply every one of these field hospitals with generally one hundred pairs. After a short time the Ordnance did it for me as well, but in the first instance the Red Cross did it; I called on the Red Cross to give all the field hospitals pyjamas, and it was absolutely necessary. The men came in wounded; "dirty" was no name for them when they came in as they were covered with lice; they had only one suit of clothes, and never getting out of it, they were covered with lice picked up on the veldt, and it was absolutely impossible to do anything for these men lying in their own clothes. I called on the Red Cross very early in the campaign to send me pyjamas, and the Red Cross complied.

3651. The hospitals, as a rule, were provided with pyjamas?—They were; the Ordnance took it up when they found what I was doing, and they supplied them, too.

3652. That seems rather to be a matter that had never been considered before?—I do not think it had ever been considered before; it is a very elementary matter, and it struck me early in the campaign.

3653. One would have thought that it would have struck somebody at home, and found its way into the regulations?—I do not think our men were ever so dirty as they were in South Africa: they were covered with lice.

3995. I think that the present hospital tent is an atrocious pattern. I do not think it could be worse—the ordinary hospital marquee.

#### PROFESSIONAL JEALOUSY.

Professor Ogston called attention to the extent to which the professional jealousy of

the Army doctors paralysed the efforts of the charitable.

11075. I think they were jealous of the Red Cross Society from the very first, and impeded its usefulness as well as that of other voluntary agencies.

11076. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) Who did that? Who were jealous?—The Army Medical Department.

11077. There was even an order issued that no Army medical officer was to apply to the Red Cross Society for anything, unless it had been sanctioned by his superior authorities. That of itself was almost prohibitory.

11078. In your *précis* you also say: "The Army Medical Department were unprepared to deal with such questions as have arisen in all large wars, as, for example, the organisation and utilisation of volunteer-aid societies, such as the Red Cross and Good Hope Societies, whose usefulness was thus paralysed," and then you say: "The employment of women and others as volunteer nurses and as aids in attending to the sick and wounded; the employment of volunteered aid in the form of hospitals and ambulances; many scandalous things resulted from the want of preparation to deal with such matters"; what is the sort of preparation that you suggest?—I think there should have been, as in Germany, a Commissioner appointed by the War Office, whose sole function was to organise voluntary aid. . . . All that was entirely wasted in this war, and the people did not know what to give. If they gave goods, the chances were that they were ill selected and were laid aside, and if they gave money the chances were that it went to the Good Hope Society or the Red Cross Society, who were paralysed by want of organisation in connection with the Army Medical Department, and the money was really almost thrown away.

EVIDENCE OF SIR FREDERICK TREVES.

HIDEBOUND WITH RED TAPE.

11971. The first point you mention is that the Army Medical Service suffers from over-organisation?—Well, I think, that is perhaps the most striking fault in it. It is very elaborately over-organised. It is almost strangled by the mechanical elements introduced into it. Its administration has been elaborated to such a degree that it is almost

unworkable as it stands on paper. I think the success of the work in Natal depended upon the fact that the military-medical organisation was entirely thrown aside.

11972. Would you explain exactly what you mean by its being so organised as to be practically strangled?—By the immense amount of detail to be carried out in obtaining transport and equipment and in moving, the enormous number of forms to be dealt with to obtain what was necessary to be obtained, and, in fact, if in the rapid moving of a column the positive instructions were carried out the hospital would be paralysed—it would be impossible to keep on its work. The length of time taken to obtain the supplies and transport and the like would be such as to paralyse its movement.

11974. If you had been an Army surgeon, in all probability, instead of being able to perform operations, your whole time would have been spent in signing documents?—Entirely—in seeing that everything tallied, and that each stretcher was accounted for. I should never have seen a patient, and it would have been impossible to do so.

NO SUGGESTIONS ASKED FOR.

When Sir W. Wilson, the Chief Medical Officer in South Africa, had given evidence as to the lack of pyjamas for wounded men, he admitted that the subject had never been considered by anyone before the war broke out:—

3840. Supposing that three months or six months before you had received a sort of provisional intimation that your services might be wanted, and you had been told to turn over in your mind what you would specially like to recommend should be sent out in view of the conditions of the country, do you not think you might have made a great many useful suggestions?—I would.

3841. That is to say, supposing the authorities had exercised in that one department the foresight which civilian men of business exercise in their businesses, some advantages might have been gained?—I always thought that I could have made some suggestions.

3842. Of a valuable character?—I believe so, but everybody else might think that they could make others.

3843. But any competent medical man

could have made valuable suggestions?—  
Yes.

3844. And as a matter of fact no sugges-  
tions were asked for?—No.

3845. And no opportunity given for

making suggestions?—None; I was told:—

“Here is the Army Corps and here is the  
number of bearer companies and field  
hospitals; here you are.” I got it on  
paper.

It is always so. Whether the object is to kill or to cure, “No suggestions”  
were asked for, and those who volunteered them were usually snubbed for  
their pains.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TRAGEDY OF THE HORSES.

IN the whole Report there is nothing so typical of the worst faults from which our Administration suffers as the hideous and revolting tragedy of the torture to death wholesale of hundreds of thousands of horses. War is ever cruel to horses, even the best managed war. What the worst managed war means can be read in the Minutes of Evidence and statistical returns of the Royal Commission.

Here if anywhere in the whole field of preparation for war do the salient defects of our people come out into bold and gruesome relief. The unnecessary suffering inflicted upon the noblest of our animal servants was due to sheer ignorance, stupidity, lack of preparation; and these qualities appear to have been displayed from the highest to the lowest. The story of our horse supply suggests that the thinking apparatus was somehow left out of the organism of the Empire. The lessons of experience availed us nothing, for there appears to have been no memory. The impressions left on the sensory nerves in one department of the Empire appear to have no means of communication with the central office. The phenomenon reminds the spectator of some of the results displayed in the vivisection of frogs, when the operator severs the nerves which enable the extremities to communicate with the brain. There seems to exist no receptacle for pooling the fruits of experience, no central depository of ascertained knowledge. The result was to the taxpayer many wasted millions, to the dumb creatures whom we collected from all over the world to help us in the field an inconceivable sum of inarticulate agony, much of which was avoidable.

To begin at the beginning, the provision for the supply of horses was inconceivably meagre. Nothing is so calculated to make the reader despair as to read the evidence given by Major-General Truman as to the idea which prevailed in the War Office as to the number of horses which would be required in any war in which the Empire was involved. This removes the question from the category of party controversy, for this fixed idea was accepted alike under Liberal and Conservative Administrations. The following questions and answers from Major-General Truman's evidence (February 6th, 1903) are quoted, not from a burlesque, but from the Blue Book.

ONLY 25,000 HORSES WANTED.

12855. I suppose it had been anticipated before the war broke out that if ever we went to war there would be very considerable demands upon your Department?—Yes; that was the basis on which supplies were to be furnished, settled in Mr. Stanhope's time.

He authoritatively represented and considered that 25,000 horses would be sufficient in the event of war, and we were only prepared to meet that estimate.

12856. Your normal purchases in time of peace were about 2,500?—Yes.

12857. I suppose you knew that if we went to war at any time and with any Power

there would be a very considerable demand upon your Department for the purchase of horses?—Yes, but my instructions were to assume that 25,000 would be required.

12862. And your view, and the view generally in the War Department, was that it would not be necessary to go to the Continent to buy horses in time of war?—That is so; it was thought we could get all these horses that were required in the United Kingdom.

12863. And therefore the abnormal character of the South African War had not been anticipated in any way?—I do not think it had, as I was not allowed to buy, although I was ready to do so.

12867. When you were told that 25,000 animals would probably be required for a

war, did that contemplate that there would be no more required, and that there would not be constant wastage during the war?—I do not think that was taken into consideration; they thought 25,000 the outside number.

12868. To see the war through?—Yes, I think that was the idea.

12869. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) Do you mean the idea with respect to the South African War?—No.

12870. You mean any war?—Yes; that was the idea of Mr. Stanhope.

12871. (*Sir John Edge.*) It was not your idea?—No, it was not.

12872. It was an idea that had come down to you?—Yes. I forget what year it was; it was when Mr. Stanhope was in office.

The wastage of horses in war is estimated by the War Office at 5 per cent. per month or 60 per cent. per annum. In the Crimean War the wastage was 80 per cent. In the South African War it was 120 per cent. per annum. Yet successive Secretaries of War since 1888 and successive Commanders-in-Chief accepted the theory that 25,000 horses would see any war through!

The figures supplied by the Quartermaster-General (Appendix volume, pp. 258-260) show that in the South African War, although our antagonists all told, men, women, and children, did not exceed the population of a single London borough, we had to buy 518,794 horses and 150,781 mules and donkeys. 347,007 horses and 53,339 mules were done to death in the war, besides 13,144 horses and 2,816 mules and donkeys lost on the voyage. So far from being able to supply all the horses that were needed from the United Kingdom, we had to scour the world to replenish our stock. Of the 518,794 horses bought for the war, only 84,235 were supplied by the United Kingdom, South Africa supplied 158,816, Australasia 23,028, Canada 14,621, the Colonial contingents brought 28,904. Great Britain, therefore, supplied 84,235 horses, India sent 8,611, Greater Britain 233,980, making a total for the Empire of 318,215. Of the remaining 200,000, 109,978, or more than one-half, came from the United States, 64,157 from Austria-Hungary, 26,544 came from South America. Mules were purchased in Spain, Italy, Cyprus, and Uganda.

The horses cost, freight included, £16,935,022, or nearly £33 per head, the mules £4,787,868, or £32 per head; the total expenditure on horses, mules, and donkeys being £21,722,890, or twice the whole amount voted to defray the cost of the war on October 19th, 1899.

The figures as to the trek oxen employed in the war are incomplete. 150,000 of them were employed in the first fifteen months (3391); of these 70,000 were reported as "died from exhaustion," killed or captured, or otherwise done up. There does not seem to be any evidence as to their cost.

#### THE VERDICT OF THE COMMISSION.

The following is the finding of the Royal Commission on the subject:—

186. The salient facts are:—

1. That on the basis of Mr. Stanhope's Memorandum it had been always calculated that in the event of the despatch abroad of two complete Army

Corps, with a Cavalry Division and line of communication troops, 25,000 additional horses would be required for mobilisation, and to meet the wastage of a war.

2. That it was assumed that all these horses could be obtained in the United Kingdom by means of the reserve of registered horses, established in 1887, which amounted to about 14,000 horses in the spring of 1899.

3. That the normal duties of the Remounts Department were confined to getting from dealers in the United Kingdom about 2,500 horses to meet peace requirements, and that the strength of the Department, which was not materially increased even during the war, was based upon this routine work.

4. That there was no system of obtaining and tabulating in time of peace information as to horse supplies in foreign countries with a view to the contingency of a great expansion in requirements, such as that practised in the Indian Army.

5. That no steps were taken, in view of the possibilities of a war in South Africa, to ascertain what animals could be got from abroad until the middle of July, 1899, when officers were sent to certain countries to inquire as to the supply of mules.

6. That consequently when a great number of animals had to be procured from various countries by officers despatched for that service, the purchasers, for want of previous information and system, were much at the mercy, in many cases, of the vendors, and both in the matter of prices and the quality of the animals purchased, the transactions were in many cases less satisfactory than they might have been.

187. The Commission having considered the mass of evidence taken by the Court of Inquiry, and in other investigations with regard to the proceedings of the Remounts Department and the Yeomanry Committee in the purchase of horses, were convinced that it would be a waste of time to investigate afresh the individual transactions and questions of personal conduct to which much of the attack is directed. The former inquiries have shown that there was much exaggeration in the allegations of scandal, and more especially so far as the Government Remount Department was concerned, and the Commission sees no reason to dissent from the judgment delivered by the Court of Inquiry acquitting General Truman from personal blame. But that only means that the attack failed where it was directed against a subordinate official. The Inspector-General of Remounts could do no more with the organisation with which he was furnished; his functions were strictly limited, and his staff even more so. It was inevitable that when a department so equipped, and with no provision for expansion, was called upon to largely extend its operations there must be some lack of system. But this is an instance, unfortunately not the only one, in which those really responsible, namely, the men, soldiers and civilians, charged with the duty of adapting the machinery of the War Office to the requirements of the Army, failed in the foresight necessary to provide against a great emergency. It is no doubt true, as urged by the Court of Inquiry (paragraph 234 of their Report), that "the demands were of unprecedented magnitude"; but it is incredible that anyone who gave any thought to the matter could imagine that in the event of any war which necessitated the mobilisation of two Army Corps—and that we have been persistently told was the standard of preparation—it could have been possible for the Inspector-General of Remounts to continue to buy in a "leisurely way, through accustomed channels, from recognised dealers," and thus supply not only the first demands, but the wastage of war.

It is unnecessary to labour the point that in the matter of remounts

preparations for war were inadequate, or that the same state of things must not occur again.

The chief cause of the loss of horses in the war was that they were for the most part brought from distant countries, submitted to a long and deteriorating sea voyage, when landed sent into the field without time for recuperation, and there put to hard and continuous work on short rations.

189. In the earlier part of the war there was great pressure for horses at the front, and no well-thought-out system for the establishment of base depôts and advanced depôts to which sick horses could be sent to recover, and for pushing up fresh supplies of horses to replace those which required rest. The provision of sufficient depôts earlier in the campaign would, said one witness, "have saved the lives of thousands of horses." At a later stage in the war a system was introduced. So far as possible, horses were kept with gradual exercise at depôts for about a month after landing before they were put into the field, and arrangements were made for sending overworked horses back to depôts to recover. Then, as one witness said, "We were never allowed to work them to a finish; directly a horse got bad, overworked, at the first station we touched these horses were sent back, and fresh ones were issued. That was the proper system, and we were all right; a horse then went back, and was resuscitated, and was probably fit for work again in a month; but in the beginning we could never get any fresh horses, the horses were ridden to the end as long as they could carry a man, and directly they fell they were left to die on the veldt."

We have received a certain amount of evidence with regard to the relative merits of horses from different countries. No horses seem to have been more useful than those derived from the London Omnibus Companies, used for artillery.

190. The arrangements in the field at first suffered not only by reason of the great pressure, but for want of a special central officer charged with the control of the whole system of remounts. There appears to have been an entire absence also of well-thought-out forms and manuals for the guidance of officers at the different depôts in the field, such as those used in the Indian Army. In fact, the real complaint against the Remount Department does not so much relate to its purchases of horses during the war as to the fact that, from first to last, there was not the symptom of an idea in any one who was responsible for its organisation that in time of war there would be necessity for expansion.

So far the Report. Some very instructive evidence was given by Colonel T. Deane, C.B., late Director of the Army Remount Department in India.

#### THE NEGLECTED EXAMPLE OF INDIA.

Extracts from the evidence of Colonel T. Deane, February 6th, 1903 :—

13044. The only things I can say are with reference to what I observed in the administration of the Remount Department at home and in South Africa, in comparison with our system in India, and there are one or two points that occur to me which might perhaps be of use if I were to refer to them.

13045. If you please?—I think that one thing is notable, and that is that the Remount Department in England appear to have no mobilisation manuals as we have in India.

We have to prepare mobilisation manuals, or field service manuals, as they are called, which are of great value to refer to in the event of operations occurring. We have to draw up tables showing the requirements of all the units in the service from a regiment to an Army Corps, or anything further showing the requirements in the horses of a particular force that might take the field, how many would be required to place the field army on war strength, what measures should then be taken to supply the depletion whereby the other units of the service make good that strength, and then, lastly, casualties. Reference to those tables when war begins

is, of course, of very great value. I understand there is nothing of the sort in England.

THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION.

Another thing that occurs to me as being likely to be useful in future is the preparation of tables showing where you can best get horses. I take, for example, the manuals prepared in India. There is a record where horses could best be secured in South Africa, the exact localities, how many could be secured, from whom, of what class, at what price, and in what time. I think that had those tables been referred to at the commencement of the war they would have been of great value.

13046. You had them in India?—Well, I had them here in these manuals.

13047. As part of the Indian system?—They are part of the Indian system; they are on record there. That shows at once what could be obtained.

13048. You mentioned South Africa. Was that as an illustration, or was it the only place?—As an illustration. That is a matter of administration in the Director's Office of the Remount Department in India.

13049. Did you only refer to South Africa, or did you have the same information for Australia?—We had the same information for almost every locality—for Australia, for Persia, for Arabia, and in some cases for North and South America; for Spain, for Italy, in regard to mules for Cyprus, and other places. It is the duty of the Director to collate and prepare those tables. The information as a rule is obtained through the intelligence branch of the Military Department in India, but, if it is not on record there, reference is made direct to the Governments concerned. We have always found that the Governments concerned were only too ready to supply us with every information.

13050. When you say the Governments, do you mean the Governments of the Colonies?—Yes.

13051. But not the foreign Governments?—And foreign Governments, too—all. For these manuals we obtain every information we can collate likely to be valuable in connection with the supply of a large number of horses. Of course, in India we do not want to purchase at such distant localities as North and South America; nevertheless, we have them on record. Then those tables are

referred to, and you know exactly where to get your horses.

NO INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF REMOUNTS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

13070. When I first arrived in South Africa I asked who was the Inspector-General of Remounts in the country, and I was informed that there was none. That was the first thing that appeared to me to be very strange in comparison with the way that matters are conducted in the East.

13071. Would you not have wanted a central authority at one of the ports of landing?—There were four ports—Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London, and Durban. The first thing, I think, that would have occurred to a Director- or Inspector-General, if he had been out there, would have been that a very large reserve was necessary at those four seaports. Mobilisation tables would show, if they had been consulted with regard to the casualties as they then proceeded, that at least 100,000 horses would have been required between these four places—that is, during the first six months of the war. That was the only method by which you could send fit horses to the front—that is, giving them a little rest and acclimatisation. As they went to the front they had received none; they practically went from grass on to the trek, and the consequence was that the majority of them died before they did much work.

NO ACCLIMATISATION.

The right system is that of having large depôts at your seaports. Then again, I think the advance depôts is another question that might be referred to; the advance depôts, of course, are those in advance from the base where horses are issued. There were two sorts of depôts advanced from the base, and one was called the issuing depôt and the other the resuscitating depôt. They might have all been called resuscitating depôts, because the horses that reached the advanced depôts were in such very poor condition as to be mostly unfit for work for any length of time. Then, again, a point which struck me, if I may refer to it, was that the English war tables show that the arrangement of remount affairs in the field is in charge of the Director of Transport, who has also control of the veterinary service. As a matter of fact, he was in charge of

neither one nor the other, and very rightly, because it was impossible for him to control both in addition to the vast transport service. The control should have been placed in the hands of the Inspector or Director of the Remount Department, and I think that he should not have been under the rank of Major-General.

#### HORSES SENT UP ANYHOW.

13073. That was one of the points, I think, on which an improvement might have been made. Another point I venture to refer to as having struck me as very strange was the method by which horses were sent to the front. The horses were put in trucks almost anyhow, and they were taken out for food and water at various halting places. In India we keep horses on board the trains sometimes for a week or eight days perfectly easily, because the trucks are so made that the horses can be fed and watered on board of them. There was no such system out there, and the consequence was that the horses had to be taken out at various landing-stages on the way, which, of course, involved a very great deal of time, trouble and risk. I see that Colonel Howard has since adopted the Indian system of placing the bars in the middle of a truck, with a place in the centre for forage, water, and attendance, which is a very simple and inexpensive one, but that is one of the matters in connection with which a director with authority and weight in the country would probably have been able to carry out what was required.

#### IGNORANT OF THEIR A, B, C.

13074. Probably a good many of those things nobody would have foreseen before the war; as you say, it is easier to be wise after the event?—Well, I think, with all deference, anyone who had gained experience, certainly an Indian administrative experience, would have known those points, as the a, b, c, of the work. Perhaps you will think that is rather strong language, but it occurs to me to be so.

13075. What I meant was, that nobody foresaw the magnitude of the operations we were going to undertake in South Africa; that was the case as it was put before us?—I think, probably, not during the first six months, but I think that towards the end of six months it was apparent what large requirements would have to be met,

#### IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN FORESEEN.

13076. But you were arguing, as I understood it, that in the first year of the war you wanted these large reserves and reserve depôts, and so on?—I think in the first six months it might have been foreseen.

13077. But not from the very first?—The great thing, I think, is to have these printed field service tables and manuals, with all these instructions, drawn up in peace time. I think it is a great defect not having very clear and plain instructions laid down about purchasing operations. Great complaints have been made about the inexperience of purchasing officers; but the fact of the matter is that there were no printed instructions for purchasing officers, and those are of very great value. If they are carefully and well drawn out officers should very seldom make mistakes. It is much better to have a man of business capacity, who will attend to instructions in the purchase of horses, than what is generally supposed to be a good eye for a horse.

#### THE HORSE BUYER'S COMPLETE GUIDE.

13078. Have you instructions for purchasing officers also?—In the greatest detail, always drawn up, so that a new officer who is handed the printed instructions gets a book in which everything is laid down which he has to do—depôt instructions, advance depôt instructions, issuing depôts, and so on. As to the advance depôts, for example, for horses that go to the front, there are descriptive rolls in connection with them, showing how long they have been bought, how long they have been in the country, and what price has been paid, but none of those were issued in South Africa, so that the officer in the advance depôt did not know where the horses had come from, how long they had been in the country, or what had been paid for them, or anything of that sort. All these little matters are drawn up in printed tables and manuals for field service requirements in India, and I think they are of very great advantage in time of peace, and more so in time of war.

#### NO RESERVE OF HORSES.

13079. You see no reason in the conditions of service in the home departments why the same thing should not be done?—Certainly not. I think it is here more necessary still. Of course, one of the drawbacks of the home

service is that the remount establishment is a very, very small one, much smaller than it is in India, and in the next place they have absolutely no reserve of horses except those registered. I understand that Lord Stanley's Committee has proposed a remount scheme involving a cost of £200,000, which is a very small amount indeed for this country, considering its requirements, and I hear that £7,000 is likely to be provided, which, of course, will be of very little use.

13080. £7,000 out of £200,000?—Yes. I venture to think that on the Indian system some reserve of horses is necessary in this country. If you want remount officers of training and experience, as recommended, you cannot procure them unless you have some reserve, where they are to be trained, and 2,000 horses is really very little.

#### NO STAFF OF OFFICERS.

There is another thing I venture to refer to, because it has been mentioned in the report of the Court of Inquiry on the administration of the Army Remount Department, and that is the necessity of giving the Director or Inspector-General a staff of adequate strength for his organisation. If I had been asked to undertake the arrangements during the past war I should have been very sorry to have attempted them without five or six staff officers of very good business capacity, and I think that would have been very little. I observe in one of the reports that up to May, 1900, the Director had one officer, and one small room or two small rooms to conduct his business in. That business involved the expenditure of over thirteen millions of money. Lord Roberts telegraphed immediately on arrival

in South Africa that he could do nothing in that country without a mobile army; mobility depended upon horses, and therefore the Director or Inspector-General of the Remount Department under the Quartermaster General was mainly responsible for the successful operations of the war, in my humble opinion.

#### AN ABNORMAL WASTE OF HORSES.

13081. I understand your evidence to come to this, that these defects which you have spoken of led up in the actual operations of the war to the horses being sent to the front in a condition in which they were not fit for service?—Quite so.

13082. And, therefore, that the loss, which was abnormal, resulted from that cause?—Quite so. The estimates of the losses during the Crimean campaign were 80 per cent., while the losses during the past war were 120 per cent.

13084. We had a table given to us to-day which showed that out of 518,794 horses that were provided the expenditure during the campaign was 347,007?—Yes.

13085. That is entirely abnormal, and outside all your tables?—Entirely abnormal; the percentages worked out in the Indian table are worked out on a series of past campaigns in European countries, but there is nothing approaching that, I quite admit. Still, it is of use to have tables and instructions on record for all these points, and they should be printed and collated in peace time.

13086. You put it down chiefly to the cause of the horses having been worked when they ought to have been waiting to be acclimatised?—Quite so.

When the horses were landed, they were in many cases handed over to men who did not know how to handle them. The horse artillerymen alone appear to have been good horsemasters. The Colonials, strange to say, were no better horsemasters than the others. The Report says:—

146. There is a general agreement of evidence that they were excellent riders, but deficient in horsemastership or care of horses. Lord Roberts said: "It was pointed out to me, generally, that the Colonials did not look after their horses. Our own men were not over-careful, but the Colonials were less so." This was attributed in the case of the Australians to the plentifulness of horseflesh in their own country, and in this respect South African Colonials were stated to be superior.

Upon the question of horsemastership the Report says:—

82. Horsemanship, and still more, horsemastership, were matters of great importance in the war. The horsemanship of the regular cavalry appears to

have been good, though, very naturally, not equal to that of some of the Colonials who had been used all their lives to riding. It was generally agreed that the Royal Artillery knew how to take good care of their horses, and some, though not all, of the witnesses said that this merit belonged also to the regular cavalry. Lieut.-General Sir John French said that "the horsemastership of the cavalry is very nearly all we can desire." He said also, however, that stable management is better understood by the cavalry than the care and feed of horses in the field. Most of the witnesses were of opinion that the horsemastership of the mounted infantry, much of the Yeomanry, and part of the Colonials was not good. The great loss of horses during the campaign is no doubt chiefly due to their rawness of condition when brought into the field, but must also be attributed in part to the inexperience of great numbers among the men who used them.

#### GENERAL RIMINGTON'S EVIDENCE.

Some interesting evidence on the way in which horses should be treated in war was given by General Rimington (February 5th, 1903).

12663. And you think that the question of horse-management is one of the first things in a campaign?—Absolutely the first thing—it is 75 per cent. of the campaign so far as I can see.

12751. The waste of horses very much arose from neglect of that, I suppose, during the war?—A man who is accustomed to horses will look after his horse. I had one trumpeter who had three horses in the war; he was two years and nine months in it; he had two killed under him, and the third he had at the end of the war. He was a good horsemaster, and that is the difference between a man who is used to horses and a man who does not care for horses.

#### THE HORSE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE MAN.

12668. (*Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal.*) You do not mean that there should be any disregard of the health of the men?—I disregard the men's health completely compared with the horses. A man can speak up for himself, and will no doubt do so and go to the doctor, but the horse cannot say anything.

12669. But cannot you combine both care for the horses and also for the health and condition of the men?—My men were always fit and well. I put the horse first; he is the most necessary thing.

12670. No matter how the man may suffer?—No, I would let him walk for a week, or ten days, or anything.

12671. I do not quite understand what is meant by this statement which appears in

your *provis*, "With all mounted troops extreme severity and absolute disregard for the men's health, feelings, or safety, is necessary in this respect"?—Yes, the horse is the first thing, absolutely. You must look after that. You may make your men walk until they are thoroughly tired and can hardly keep their eyes open.

12672. But you can do both, can you not?—When you have once got the men to understand that the horse is the first thing, then you can; but I look after the horse first—the man looks after himself.

12673. But the horse would not be of use without the man?—We found that there were plenty of men; we never were short of men, we always were short of horses.

12674. Still the life of the man is to be thought of?—What is the life of a man? A man's life is nothing in war. You do not care whether men are killed or not as long as you attain your object.

#### HOW TO MANAGE HORSES IN WAR.

12652. Would you just read your six points of horse management?—" (1) Horse management was strictly attended to by the officers," that is to say, they went to the stables, and so on, and saw that the horses were cared for. " (2) Grazing was always resorted to at every possible chance." The moment a man gets off his horse he throws the reins over the horse's head, and the horse stands and grazes, which makes him quiet for dismounted work and so on, and he is also nibbling whenever the man is dismounted. " (3) The men never allowed to

sit on their horses at the halt." That was a great fault with most troops, and wants some legislation. I mean to say that we ought to try and get a rule about that in future, that a man should never sit on his horse at the halt. The ordinary cavalry soldier does; he gets into a habit of it at the riding school.

12653. And it is to rest the horse that he should dismount?—Yes, of course. Then "(4) always made to off-saddle at every opportunity, even for five minutes." Our saddles were light; we had not much on them, and it was no trouble to the man to unlace the girth. We had no breastplate or crupper. The man could just slip the saddle off the horse on to the ground, and it was just by the horse, so that he could slip it on in a moment. In retreat from Sanna's Post my men were all off-saddled while the Boers were pressing us. When I came back I found these men had off-saddled their horses, and were watering and feeding them, and the Boers were pretty near, and things were pretty tight. But the habit was a good one.

12654. That was pushing it to extremities?—Yes, I was rather annoyed, because I thought we should not get away. I thought it was playing it rather too fine. Then "(5) the kit carried on the horse reduced to the minimum." That is absolutely necessary with any mounted operations; you cannot do anything if you have a heavy kit on the horses. We had saddle and waterproof, and whatever we could get away off the horse we did. We just carried a carbine and 100 rounds of ammunition, and, except the carbine, it was the ordinary shooting kit that a man would go out in to shoot buck.

RIDE UPHILL, NEVER DOWN.

12662. (*Chairman*.) Then you have one more point.

(6) They were made to dismount down (never up) hills. That is a very necessary thing. It is no good taking the man off the horse when he is going up hill. It is rather an advantage for him to ride up hill, because the saddle gets well shifted back, which is a good thing. . . . A horse does not mind going up hill.

12662. You think that a good system, and enabled you to keep your horses in good condition?—Yes, our horses were in good condition all through.

In the printed *procès* of his evidence General Rimington wrote :—

I found throughout the war, with all sorts of troops and all ranks, that care of horses comes naturally to very few men except those brought up from boyhood with horses.

As a rule, all other soldiers only do what they are compelled to do, and at best regard the care of their horses as a very weary and irksome necessity.

This points to the fact that in the future we must, as far as possible, pick only men brought up with and accustomed to horses as recruits for the mounted branches, and this is especially necessary with a three years' service system.—Vol. II., p. 585.

NO ONE CARED TWOPENCE.

Major-General J. P. Brabazon, November 21st, 1902, said :—

6908. But I did notice one thing throughout the whole campaign—I really believe, although I say it, that I was the only man, certainly the only General Officer, who tried to stop the abuse of horseflesh. I never saw such shameful abuse of horseflesh in the whole course of my life as existed throughout the whole campaign, and not an attempt was made to check it.

6909. But with what troops was that?—With all the troops, more especially the irregular ones, because the cavalry, I must say, knew better, and their officers knew better, but one never saw an irregular man go, except at a gallop—he thought that was the normal pace for a horse; if he rode into Pretoria to get a tooth-pick or a glass of beer, he would gallop his eight or ten miles there and back. The horses were abused in every sort of way, and there was no attempt made to check it. I tried my little best, both with draught animals and with the mounted troops, but I could not do much—I was shocked, I was horrified. We might have saved at least 25, if not 50, per cent. of our animals if proper care had been taken of them. But that must come from the head; everything filters down from the top, from the head, and I do not think that from the very tip top of the whole lot they cared twopence how horses or draught animals were abused.

A TRIBUTE TO SOUTH AFRICANS.

Sir Ian Hamilton, who was examined on February 12th, 1902, said :—

13941. Throughout the war I was struck

by the fact that the Colonials rode better than our regular cavalry soldiers. Concerning horsemastership, I must confess I did not see much to choose between cavalrymen, mounted infantrymen, oversea Colonials, or National Scouts. The only class of men I met who were constantly and eagerly on the look-out for a chance to ease their horses and give them a bit of grass or a drink of water were those South African Colonials who rode their own horses.

#### THE RESPONSIBILITY OF OFFICERS.

Colonel A. W. Thorneycroft on February 5th:—

12423. Then the men were pretty good horsemasters?—They were good horsemasters when they saw the absolute necessity of it. They were careless at first about it. A Colonial is accustomed to have a kaafir clean and groom his horse; he has not been accustomed to go and do the work himself. They dislike a lot of stables, but they saw the absolute necessity of it, and, under the supervision of the officers, they loyally carried it out to their great benefit.

12424. Were the officers responsible?—The company officers were responsible to me that the stable duties were properly carried out on all occasions, and the consequence was that it was a great assistance to the regiment that this horsemastership was carefully looked after.

12425. I suppose a great deal of the efficiency depends upon that?—It depends entirely upon the care of the horse with a mounted corps like mine. A man is quite useless if he is dismounted.

#### HOW LORD METHUEN MENDED MATTERS.

Lord Methuen, February 13th:—

14219. Will you now deal with horsemastership?—The artillery were the best horsemasters in my force, the cavalry next. The Yeoman and the Colonials seemed at first to have an idea that I had a limited supply of horses always ready for them at a moment's notice. After I made them march on foot for some little time they seemed to realise the value of riding, and in time became fair horsemasters.

14220. Does that mean you made them walk because they were not taking sufficient care of their horses?—Yes, when I found a great many of them knocking the horses up,

I formed them into a company and attached them to the Loyal Lancashires, and told them they could walk with them. There were not so many of them on foot next time. We have in peace time to make the Colonials and Yeoman understand what a horse can do if properly tended, for at present they have very little idea of saving a horse or nursing a tender one back.

Sir R. Buller said:—

15494. The horsemastership was bad, and the horsemanship was not too good on the part of the cavalry, and not nearly good enough on the part of the mounted infantry.

#### ALWAYS SHORT OF HORSES.

Major-General A. H. Paget said:—

16509. The provision of sufficient depôts very much earlier in the campaign would have saved thousands of horses.

16510. These depôts were instituted later in the campaign?—Yes.

16511. And when they were instituted did they, to some extent, meet the difficulty?—No; up to the very last we were short of horses.

16512. Then were the horses better acclimatised?—No, things remained practically in the same state up to the time I left, and that also appears to have been the case, from the reports I had, after I left, from various staff officers.

16513. There never had been really time?—No, there had never been really time to get 4,000 or 5,000 horses, and to keep on always having 4,000 or 5,000 horses in hand for issue. As soon as they were landed they were sent out. I will give you an instance that came under my notice. On a march in the direction of Phillipsville I saw two mares drop premature foals in front of me, and I heard that there were nine cases on one march.

16514. Those mares ought never to have been sent up?—They had all been driven in from the neighbouring country, and they were just passed out to the troops 300 or 400 at a time.

16515. They were South African horses?—Yes, but nobody went into the question of their quality; they simply took a section of 400 horses and gave them to 400 men.

16516. They were not horses that had been imported from Europe?—No, these were local horses.

HORSEMASTERSHIP BENEATH CONTEMPT.

Major-General Sir R. Pole-Carew said:—  
16594. As to horsemanship and horsemastership, with regard to the mounted infantry, it was excessively bad.

16595. Are you speaking of both?—Both. The man was so busy riding that he had really no time to look, and in horsemastership they were beneath contempt. I think that is the fault of our system entirely. To begin with, every British infantry regiment is spoilt when it goes on active service by taking out of it the best men, because it is necessary to have the most intelligent men and the most intelligent subalterns and captains. They are picked out, and form a mounted infantry company. When we first began they allowed mounted companies to act with the regiments from which they took them, but that was very soon knocked on the head, and practically the best men and officers were taken away from the battalions to form mounted infantry. Well, they have had no training as a rule; there is a certain amount of training at Aldershot, but as a rule those men are very quickly disposed of, and those who come on afterwards have had no training whatever in either horsemanship or horsemastership, and I think the system is absolutely wrong. I think the mounted infantry are most important, and I think a body of mounted infantry ought to be properly formed.

LITTLE ELSE THAN MURDER.

16610. As to the numbers and quality of the horses, it was a matter of amazement to most of us how the country and the Quarter-master-General here managed to supply the number they did; it was perfectly marvellous, and I am quite certain no other nation could have done it. The quality at first was good, but they destroyed such an enormous number of horses by waste and by want of care, and by one thing and another, that afterwards the quality became very bad, and in the case of the Argentines it was little else than murder; the Argentines they sent were soft-hearted brutes, and I saw it time after time myself—they looked good enough, but the moment they were asked to go at a pinch they stopped dead.

“OFFICERS OF ALL RANKS” IGNORANT ABOUT HORSES.

Sir Charles Warren gave some interesting

evidence upon the subject of the way in which the horses were mismanaged and done to death.

15778. As to horses, I think you agree with what we have had a good deal of evidence about, namely, that they were sent too soon to the front?—Oh, yes.

15779. That was a cause, or one of the chief causes, of the waste of horse flesh?—Yes, and the want of knowledge of horsemanship. I think the officers of all ranks are not sufficiently taught about horses, and I think if every officer could shoe a horse, and know something about the ways of a horse, things would be much better.

15780. (*Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal.*) You say that many of the horses sent out from Austria, England, and the Argentina were not worth their salt?—When they arrived.

“A GREAT WANT OF CARE.”

15781. Do you consider that the condition of the camp at Green Point, where a great number of the horses were sent, was satisfactory?—I did not see sufficient of that to say, but I think there was a great want of care generally in looking after horses. It was not realised in the least that horses are so delicate; I do not think it has ever been brought before officers that horses in their habits are quite as delicate as human beings, and require the greatest care. On one occasion when I had special tanks with water for the horses in Natal several officers came to me and said it was utterly unnecessary. The horses had been brought into the dams, and they churned up the mud with their feet, and then drank that stuff, and, of course, they were all sick. Horses require pure water as much as human beings, but that is not brought before the minds of officers, and they do not realise the importance in a campaign of horses having good water. Directly you give them good water the horses begin to mend. On several occasions I have been told the horses are off their feed, and I have said, “Well, we must see about their water”; and when we have arranged about the water, and given them good, clean water, they have picked up at once. It was not the fault of the food.

“FEW OFFICERS” UNDERSTAND HORSES.

General Gatacre thought that our horsemastership was fair.

Lieutenant-General Sir John French said :—

17129. Few officers or men understand how to feed horses on maize, barley, or wheat, which were often to be found in the farms; they either overfed them, thereby impairing their digestions and giving them Laminitis, or refused to risk this evil, neglecting available supplies. Towards the end of the campaign officers understood better the moderate use of unaccustomed feed, and how to keep horses fit on whatever supplies were available. At the commencement of the war (December, 1899), excepting a few companies furnished by regiments stationed in South Africa, the men of the mounted infantry could scarcely retain their seats at a trot over rough ground, and were entirely ignorant of the first principles of the care of horses. After three months or so, they improved in riding, but few ever became good enough riders to be fit for scouting work. Units also improved in horsemastership as the campaign progressed.

#### AN ART UNTAUGHT IN THE ARMY.

Major-General Sir C. E. Knox (March 11th, 1903) reported in his *présis* of evidence that the horsemanship of the regular cavalry and artillery was good; of the mounted infantry indifferent; a large body of infantry were mounted at the last minute at Orange River who had no idea of riding nor even of saddling a horse. Yeomanry, first batch good, second most indifferent.

With regard to horsemastership, with the exception of the Royal Artillery, all branches were indifferent. I attribute this to our training. The system we adopt is to train a man to ride a horse, but to omit altogether to teach him how to keep that horse in such a state of health and strength that the utmost can be got out of him. It is much like teaching a man to ride a bicycle, or to drive a motor-car, without at the same time thoroughly instructing him in the manner of repairing and keeping his mount in order.

The recognised system we have always trained on as regards mounted infantry was that their horses were only means of conveying them from point to point, and the style of horsemanship was nothing, whereas it makes a very great difference to a horse whether his rider sits like a sack of oats or distributes his weight in a proper manner.

I consider horsemastership is an art untaught in our Army.—Vol. ii. App. p. 662.

In his evidence he expanded this idea.

#### FIRST AID FOR HORSES.

17578. Did you think they were not sufficiently taught to ride even for purposes of mounted infantry?—No; the idea always was that all a mounted infantryman wanted to do was to be able to sit on a pony, and if he could sit on a pony and get from place to place that was all we wanted him to do, but that was not the case, because after a very short time of that sort of riding they had no ponies to sit on, and they did not know how to take care of their horses. A great number of them did not know how to put a saddle on a horse. With that sort of man riding on a horse it did not last very long; on a long march a man riding in that sort of way very soon gives the horse a sore back, and when the horse had a sore back the man did not know what to do with it, so that the horses went from bad to worse.

17579. The mounted infantryman ought to know something about horsemastership?—It is the first thing; if you take a motor-car and send a man out to drive it, he may drive it very well, but if anything happens the man is done, and I look on the mounted infantry in exactly the same way. The first thing to teach them is a little bit of veterinary practice—first aid to the horse—and then how to look after him and take care of him and how to feed him; they do not know anything about that, and the cavalry are much the same.

Major-General Rundle (March 11th, 1903) was asked :—

17885. And the horsemastership was not so good?—The horsemastership was very bad.

17886. Throughout?—I think so. Not of the Colonials, of course; the Colonials understood the animal of the country, and treated him accordingly. But the horsemastership of the Yeomanry was very indifferent, and it was almost impossible to get the men to get off their horses when they halted; they would sit upon them for half an hour unless somebody told them to get off.

#### HOW 5,000 MARES AND FOALS WERE STARVED TO DEATH.

One of the worst horrors of the war was the starving to death of 5,000 brood mares

and young horses at Burghersdorp. Lord Tullibardine, who told the story to the Royal Commission, only seemed to be impressed by the thought of the money lost. Of the wanton misery inflicted by doing to death by the slow torture of starvation of these mares and foals he says nothing.

20751. Another point on the subject of wastage of public money is not remounts, but it is a branch of the same thing; in some of those departments there seems to be no sort of interchange of orders or responsibility in carrying out work. For example, about 6,000 horses, mares, and foals were near a place called Burghersdorp, and there was no apparent reason that they should not all have been used for His Majesty's forces. They were good mares and young horses; there were few absolutely fit to ride at once without training, as the mares in South

Africa, although broken to harness, were never broken to riding. These mares were all kept in this place, and apparently no one seemed particularly interested in the matter, and the remounts had them in charge; they were left to run over two or three small farms, and they gradually pined away and wasted from lack of food. No one was allowed to take what they wanted of those, and at the end of the war these 6,000 horses had diminished to about 700 or so. I only wished to quote that as an example of the way in which many things were not looked after, and through lack of officers to supervise and lack of system, thousands of pounds were thrown into the sea.

20752. (*Chairman.*) Were these captured horses?—They were cleared off farms; I have seen perhaps 1,500 or 1,200 sent to this farm in one drove.

#### THE LEGEND "UNMOUNTED MEN PREFERRED."

Few things attracted more attention during the war than the telegram to the Colonies deprecating the dispatch of mounted men. On this subject the Report says:—

To complete the misunderstanding a telegram was sent which was capable of being interpreted—and was, in fact, interpreted—to mean that mounted men were not wanted. The explanations now given by Lord Wolseley and Lord Lansdowne show that it was not intended to discourage contingents of mounted infantry, and that it was recognised that the Colonies could supply good material for a force of that description. That being so, it was at least unfortunate that the desire to discourage a distinctively cavalry contingent was given so much prominence, or was not explained in clearer language.

The Report goes on to say that when, on October 3rd, Mr. Chamberlain sent cablegrams to the Colonial Governments accepting these offers of help, the following sentence was inserted in the dispatches to the Governors of South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria:—

143. "Firstly, units should consist of 125 men, secondly, may be infantry, mounted infantry, or cavalry. In view of numbers already available, infantry most, cavalry least serviceable."

Upon this the Report comments as follows:—

"This recommendation certainly appeared to convey an intimation that infantry would be more useful than either mounted infantry or cavalry, and therefore to argue a misconception of the conditions of warfare against the Boers of South Africa."

Then, after quoting the evidence of Lord Lansdowne and Sir Redvers Buller (see below), the Report proceeds:—

144. The idea then seems to have been not to discourage the Colonies from sending mounted infantry, or men capable of being turned into mounted infantry, but to discourage them from sending troops armed and equipped as regular cavalry.

Both Lord Lansdowne and Lord Wolseley admitted that the telegram in question may have been rather unfortunately worded so as to convey a wrong impression of their meaning.

It does not appear to have had any practically bad results.

## NO COLONIAL CAVALRY WANTED.

Extracts from Lord Wolseley's evidence, November 27th, 1902 :—

8855. But the Colonies also said that it rather discouraged them, in the first instance, to receive those instructions?—I cannot imagine that, at any time, there was any wish to preclude mounted infantry, or even to demur to mounted infantry being sent out. It was cavalry that was always in my mind.

8856. It was a little unfortunately worded?—It was if it conveyed that impression.

8857. (*Sir Henry Norman.*) Do you not think it would have had a discouraging effect on the Australians? I speak of those especially, because they are very fond of riding, and they would not make very good infantry soldiers; they are not accustomed to march, but they are accustomed to ride, and I presume it had rather a discouraging effect. But they took the bull by the horns, if I may say so, and went mounted?—Yes.

8858. (*Lord Stratheona and Mount Royal.*) May it have been from a feeling that there might be difficulty in getting the horses in sufficient numbers, or in the transportation of them at the moment—may that have been the feeling which induced this message to be sent?—I know there was a difficulty about horses, but I cannot go beyond that. I do not think there was ever in the minds of any authority at the War Office any wish to diminish the number of mounted infantry; but certainly against cavalry there was, because it would be a second-rate cavalry, which would be of no use to one out there at all.

8859. But the home Government would have had difficulty in providing horses for them?—No doubt they would have.

8860. And the authorities here may have thought it would be difficult to get the horses from the Colonies at the moment?—No doubt.

8861. (*Viscount Escher.*) So far as I understand, what it meant was, not so much that you preferred infantry, as that you did not desire cavalry—irregular cavalry—to be sent out to Africa?—That was the whole pith of it—that we did not want cavalry.

## LORD LANSDOWNE'S EXPLANATION.

Lord Lansdowne, in his evidence, quoted, by way of explanation, a statement which he

made on February 13th, 1902, in the House of Lords. He then said :—

21136. "It is put in this way, that the Colonies offered mounted troops, and that we snubbed them and said that we did not want any. That story is repeated in every military debate. I ask your permission once again to remind the House of the actual facts as they occurred. We sent out with the first troops that went to South Africa more than the usual proportion of cavalry" (I was so advised when I prepared that speech). "We also arranged that with each battalion of infantry there should be a company of mounted infantry, and when the question of making use of the Colonial troops came up we began by accepting the services of three small bodies of Colonial mounted infantry. That in itself is a proof that we did not set our faces against the employment of Colonial mounted troops. Then came the moment when from all over the Colonies offers of assistance, mostly in general terms, were received by the War Office. It was necessary to send some kind of answer to the Colonies at once. We consulted the General who was to have the chief command in the field, Sir Redvers Buller, and in consultation with him it was determined that we should inform the Colonies, who were at that moment offering in some cases cavalry, in others artillery, and in others infantry, that at that particular moment infantry would be most serviceable and cavalry least serviceable. Cavalry and mounted infantry are different things. The reason infantry were asked for was that it was proposed that we should attach small bodies of Colonial soldiers to the units of Imperial soldiers already at the Cape. It was a proposal very much approved at the time by the Colonies, and it was a reasonable one. At that time we were dealing altogether with a force of not more than 1,500 Colonial troops. A short time after, when the question of larger Colonial contingents was being discussed, I find that we took 4,700 mounted men from the Colonies, as against 2,400 unmounted men. It is, to say the least, a gross exaggeration to represent the then War Office as having repudiated the offers of mounted troops from the Colonies."

## SIR R. BULLER'S SUBTLE REASON.

Extracts from the evidence of Sir R. Buller, February 17th.

The explanation submitted to the Commission by Sir Redvers Buller had better be given in his own words.

15277. "I was sitting one day on a Committee at the War Office when I was told that the Secretary of State wanted to see me. I went into his room, and he had in his hand a paper (I think it was about the end of the first week in October; I am almost sure it was in October), and he told me that he had received from the Colonial Office an offer to send Colonial troops, and a conversation ensued as to them. I was not shown the paper, and was not given any accurate figures, and it was rather a casual conversation, but I gathered that the point in his mind at that moment was what he should pay them. I further gathered that his intention was to accept men from the Colonies, but to say that the English Government would only pay them at the rate they paid their own soldiers. At that time I was looking forward to arriving at the Cape and finding myself in a hornet's nest, and the only card I had in any sense up my sleeve was my conviction that the action of the Boers, if they did go to war, would drive out of the Transvaal, out of Johannesburg especially, and also partly out of the Free State, a very large number of very useful fighting Englishmen, who would probably be rather bitter, and most likely be immediately anxious to take up arms against the Boers. I had always calculated that

they would give me a force of from 8,000 to 10,000 men, which would be a very effective mounted force. I had at the time also in my own mind calculated that I should have enough saddlery, and I did not want to mention this idea to Lord Lansdowne. The price in South Africa for mounted men had formerly always been 5s. a day, and I did not believe myself that I should get these men under 5s. I wanted to pay them 5s. a day, and, to avoid being tied to a less sum for the Colonial mounted men, I told Lord Lansdowne that so far as I was concerned I should be quite satisfied if he would take all the infantry that the Colonies would send, but that I did not think there was any necessity for taking a very small detached force of cavalry. My idea was that all the Colonists could ride, and that I could mount them and turn them into mounted infantry and pay them all alike, 5s. a day. I have only gone into that explanation because it meets the point that has been raised. Q. And you recommended these words: 'Infantry most, cavalry least, serviceable'?—A. Yes, I remember quite well saying that cavalry would be quite useless. Q. But you did not mean by that to exclude mounted infantry?—A. No, it was cavalry I had in my thoughts all the way through, because I know what irregular cavalry, if I may say so, our Yeomanry are. As cavalry they are of no use; they are very good mounted troops, but they are no use as cavalry."

#### UNTAPPED SOURCES OF HORSE SUPPLY.

It is rather startling to learn on the authority of the Earl of Scarborough that when the Remount Department was scouring the planet in wild demand for horses there was an ample supply of horses close to our door. It was not, said Lord Scarborough (7283), "until the spring of this year, when we got an official circular from the Quartermaster-General's department asking us to report on what resources were left. That, of course, was after they had gone to all parts of the world to get horses, and as a matter of fact we found that in March, 1902, as far as the North of England was concerned, there was a large supply of serviceable horses and cobs still available." Another very curious fact was brought out about the horses in the evidence of Veterinary-Colonel Duck, the Director-General of the Veterinary Department, who also confirms Lord Scarborough's statement as to the possibility of buying horses in England. The right kind of horses were not purchased because Colonel Tollner feared to be laughed at—a sensitiveness which probably cost the taxpayer many millions.

EVIDENCE OF VETERINARY-COLONEL  
DUCK.

3217. We practically knew before the war what would be required in Africa. We knew, for instance, the class of horse that would be of use in Africa, and we knew the class of equipment that was required. I might say that I had already served six years in Africa myself.

3218. At what date?—I was employed in the Gaika and Galeka War, in the first Secocoeni War, in the Zulu War, in the first Boer War, and afterwards in Bechuanaland, in the Bechuanaland Expedition, under Sir Charles Warren.

3219. Were you consulted as to the class of horse that was required in South Africa?—No, but I went to General Truman myself and explained to him at the outbreak of the war my experiences of the big English cavalry horses, Drury-Lowe's regiment, the Lancers, the King's Dragoon Guards, and the Inniskilling Dragoons in the first Boer War, pointing out to him that the big English cavalry horse was utterly unsuitable, and recommending him to buy a smaller, more compact, better bred horse. I also had frequent conversations with Colonel Tollner, the principal purchaser, pointing out to him what I considered was the right class of horse to send out, and he told me, "You may be right or wrong, but if I bought the class of horses you suggest they would all jeer at me."

3220. That class of horse was not adopted?—No.

3221. Did you warn them against any particular class of horse?—I warned them against the big English cavalry horse, so nice on parade in England, but utterly useless in Africa.

3222. And did you warn them against any foreign horses?—No, I suggested the class of horse generally that I thought would be suitable in Africa from my experience.

3277. (*Sir John Edge.*) You say that you advised Colonel Tollner that he should buy a smaller and better bred class of horse?—I advised General Truman generally about the cavalry horses and mounted infantry horses, and I also had several conversations with Colonel Tollner, because I knew him very well. I had served with him in the Remount Department myself before, and I recom-

mended him to buy, consistent with the amount of weight required for the artillery, horses as close to the ground as he possibly could.

3278. But was there a market in which you could have bought those horses?—Yes.

3279. Where was the market where you could have bought those horses, required, say, for the First Army Corps and for the mounted infantry?—The market is in England. We have nothing to do with the provision of horses; we are not supposed to have anything to do with the provision of horses.

3280. What I want to come at is this: You made that recommendation, which I daresay was a perfectly justifiable one; but are you certain that there was a market in which horses of that quality and description could have been purchased?—I think I may say yes.

3281. Can you tell us where that was?—In England.

3286. I only ask you because you suggested to Colonel Tollner that he should purchase that class of horse, and he said, if I remember rightly, he would be jeered at if he purchased them?—Yes.

3287. It is one thing, of course, to suggest to buy an animal of a certain height, and so on, and another thing to be certain that you have a market in which you can buy them?—Oh, they were to be got.

3288. Later in the war, when there was an enormous number of horses to be purchased, do you think that horses of that particular description could have been found?—Yes, in sufficient quantities.

3289. Where?—Well say, for instance, in Wales; they are a smaller class in Wales, the cob horse.

3290. Do you think there are in Wales a sufficient number of horses to have supplied the demand that had to be met by sending to Canada and the United States, Hungary, and all over the world?—Oh, no.

3291. Then I want to come to this: You cannot suggest where they could have gone on buying horses to supply the wastage in the war—horses of the description you mention?—I do not see why they should not have been just as easily obtainable as the larger ones, and at the same places.

3292. We will come at it in another way. Can you tell me the total number of horses

that were purchased for the purposes of the cavalry and mounted infantry between the end of September, 1899, and the conclusion of the war?—I think those horses could have been obtained as readily in England as the larger ones.

The remarks made by General French on the subject sum up trenchantly the conclusions of most intelligent officers.

(17312) I think that the whole question of supply of horses in war ought to be taken up and thought out, owing entirely to our system of leaving everything of this kind alone till war actually occurs; the remounts we got were most unsatisfactory.

EVIDENCE OF GENERAL FRENCH.

17321. There was a difficulty in getting horses accustomed to the food, was there not?—Very great difficulty, but remounts were often received in a terrible state.

17322. That was owing to the exigencies of the war, I suppose?—Yes, and the necessity for having horses up and using them at once, which probably could not have been avoided. It was certainly nobody's fault out there, and I do not believe it was anybody's fault here. I think it was the fault of the system, and that something ought to be done at once to consider the question of remounting mounted troops in war.

17323. (*Sir George Taubman - Goldie.*) Would you say that we had an insufficient horse supply for the original number of troops intended to be sent out, the Army Corps and Cavalry Division?—An insufficient reserve.

17324. Yes?—I certainly think we had.

17325. Insufficient for the wastage of war?—Certainly, we had no reserve at all.

17329. There was no provision in Natal for the wastage of war?—Not in my time. I was only there a little time.

17330. But still you would have seen it. There was no provision made at the time you left Natal?—None whatever. We were losing horses very fast. I think that the horse power of the whole Empire ought to be utilised and economised.

17331. (*Sir George Taubman - Goldie.*) And organised?—And organised.

17332. (*Viscount Esher.*) When you commanded the Cavalry Brigade at Aldershot under Sir Redvers Buller, was it then clear to you that the system was a bad one?—Absolutely clear.

17333. You knew it before the war?—Perfectly well. We all knew it.

17334. And you knew that you would be face to face with considerable difficulty from such a cause?—Yes, everybody talked about it; for a long time it had been patent.

But as usual nothing had been done to mend it.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE WAR OFFICE AND ITS MANY MANSIONS.

THE War Office may have been deficient in brains, but it certainly was not lacking in the variety and superabundance of its local habitations. The multiplicity of the widely scattered buildings in which its staff was lodged was typical of the organisation of the unco-ordinated administration of the British military system.

Sir Ralph Knox, late Permanent Under Secretary for the War Office, lamented plaintively (1260):—

It was most awkward to be found in the position of entering upon such a campaign as that which has just been carried to a successful issue, in a series of offices very badly constructed and separated from one another by distances which made conference almost an impossibility, and at all events involved always enormous waste of time.

He was asked, as he was concluding his evidence, to give offhand the various addresses of the War Office. He could not do it!

1427. It may be an advantage to have on the Notes the addresses of the various scattered buildings in which the War Office did its work before the war?—It could be very easily given.

1428. You cannot remember them at this moment?—I cannot. Pall Mall, Winchester House, Queen Anne's Gate, Queen Victoria Street (there are two or three places in Queen Victoria Street, different buildings), Horse Guards, and some others.

1429. (*Chairman.*) We can get a complete list?—Yes, Lord Esher will well remember it; I think he used to pay the rent.

Lord Esher, however, did not respond to the suggestion that the late Permanent Under Secretary of the Board of Works should come to the rescue of the late Permanent Under Secretary of the War Office. The information sought for was subsequently handed in, and appears in the Appendix volume, from which it is extracted here as a historical curiosity.

No. 46.—LIST of the BUILDINGS in which the VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS of the WAR OFFICE were housed in the Summer of 1899.

War Office, Pall Mall	Central Branch.
	Military Secretary's Division.
	Adjutant-General's Department (except
	Inspector-General of Cavalry).
	Quartermaster-General's Department
	(except Remount Subdivision).
	Ordnance Department.
	Chaplain-General.
	Finance Department (part of).
	Contracts Division.

Winchester House . . . . .	Finance Department (part of).
Horse Guards . . . . .	Inspector-General of Cavalry and Staff. Department of Inspector-General of Fortifications.
	Finance Department (one branch).
Woolwich . . . . .	Finance Department (some clerks).
Pimlico . . . . .	Finance Department (some clerks).
66, Victoria Street . . . . .	Remount Subdivision.
5, King Street, Westminster . . . . .	Veterinary Division.
Grosvenor Road . . . . .	Royal Army Clothing Department.
18, Queen Anne's Gate, and 12, Carteret Street . . . . .	Military Intelligence Division.
18, Victoria Street . . . . .	Army Medical Department.
Clarks at Chelsea Hospital, Army Ordnance Department, &c., as at present.	

The Finance Department, it will be noticed, is sprinkled about as with a pepper-box, and occupied offices in Pall Mall, Winchester House, Woolwich, Pimlico, and the Horse Guards.

TOO MANY OFFICES SPOIL THE FINANCES.

With so many offices each occupied by a staff of diligent clerks the War Office might have been expected to have managed the financial side of the war in style. So far from this being the case we find in the Report of the Royal Commission the following scathing condemnation :—

238. On the financial side there does not seem to have been any adequate preparation for a state of war. We desire to call attention to the following passage in Sir G. Fleetwood Wilson's Report to Lord Kitchener :—

“ The flaw has been the absence of any financial authority at headquarters with time, knowledge, and power to treat financial questions as a whole. There are many matters in which large savings can only be effected upon general lines. If a Financial Adviser had been appointed at the beginning, instead of towards the end of the war, he could have prevented excessive charges from arising, instead of merely curtailing them when large and unnecessary expense has already been incurred. He could have established a system for watching and controlling expenditure, and could have systematised commandeering. He could have seen that the use of Army money for Colonial railway purposes was confined within limits. He could have secured reasonable rates from the Natal Railway, and have pointed out with authority that specie could be obtained at less expense. He would probably have arranged that supply accounting was conducted upon defensible lines, and that Telegraph and Intelligence Accounts were not allowed to get hopelessly into arrear; and if he had not been able to prevent the ordnance difficulties from arising he could have checked them at an early stage. Also, he would have been able to apply to questions now arising the knowledge gained throughout the whole war. He could, above all, have relieved the Commander-in-Chief of a volume of work which should not fall upon him. My experience in South Africa has convinced me that it is desirable that in future wars a Financial Officer should accompany each Army Corps, and a Financial Adviser of high standing be attached to the staff of the Commander-in-Chief.”

It is certain that there was in the first months of the war, as shown in Sir G. Fleetwood Wilson's report, and the subsequent inquiries made by a War Office Committee, a serious mismanagement of ordnance business and a waste of public money. He was, therefore, brought to the conclusion

mentioned in his report to Lord Kitchener, that the waste of public money which took place on this occasion was "attributable to insufficient preparation and organisation before hostilities, lack of forethought in demanding stores, neglect to make full use of ordnance workshops, and to serious errors in regard to items when comprehensive demands were put forward."

#### THE WAR OFFICE NOT ON BUSINESS PRINCIPLES.

The question why the War Office cannot be run on business principles was very effectively answered by Major-General Sir C. Grove, who gave his evidence on November 28th, 1902 :—

9470. There is nothing, of course, that one has seen or heard more often lately than the advantage of running the War Office on business principles—it has been a sort of cry all round. I have tried, and I did before this cry when people talked of the want of business organisation of the War Office—to think out what business principles meant, and to see how far they could be applied to the War Office. Well, now, if you take business principles; if you try to gather them from the habit and practice of our large business institutions in this country, our railways, our banks, our mines, or anything else, you do find that there are a certain number of governing principles which run through all of them. The first of these is, that all these bodies are managed either by one individual, or by a board of partners, or proprietors, or directors, who have control over the whole of that particular business undertaking, over its administrative arrangements, its executive action, and over its expenditure and finance. That I think you may say is universal in all our large business institutions. The second is, that that board, and especially the chairman of it, is more or less permanent or semi-permanent; its members and its chairman are not altered at short intervals. The third is that, their interests are, to a large extent, bound up in those of the concern that they administer; and the fourth thing is, that they know perfectly well what it is the object of their business and of their company to do, and they know to a considerable extent the extent to which they want to do it. A manufacturer, for instance, knows pretty well what his output, under existing conditions, will be, and if the business improves he puts up further machinery, and prepares for a larger output, knowing clearly what he is aiming at; a railway company, or a tramway company, works in a similar way. And you have, you may say, four main principles:

First, the complete control centred in one board; secondly, more or less permanency in that board; thirdly, its interest being identical with the concern; and, fourthly, a clear knowledge of what the concern is intended to do. Now, when you turn to the War Office, you find that almost all these things under our present arrangements are absent. How is the control of the Army managed? First of all, it rests, or is supposed to rest, with the Commander-in-Chief, but you have probably had quite enough evidence before you, without my going into it, to show you that the command and control exercised by the Commander-in-Chief is of a very limited nature, that it does not go very far, and is subject to complete veto, or change, at the wish of the Secretary of State. The Commander-in-Chief may put forward a proposal with regard to the administration or the organisation of the Army, which has been the result of considerable thought, and the Secretary of State has simply to write at the bottom: "I am unable to approve of this," and initial it, and the matter is closed. Therefore, it cannot be said that the control by the Commander-in-Chief over the Army is a real one. Then you come to the Secretary of State, whose control is much more real, and in whom much more power centres, but he himself is subject to an irregular, an informal sort of control by the Treasury, which can review a good many of the actions he has done, and stop a great many of the actions he wants to do. There is again a body whose functions, I think, have never been clearly defined, the Cabinet Committee of Defence; and, lastly, there is the Cabinet and the Government itself, and the consequence is that you have proposals and plans for improvements, and changes, wandering up and down, and backwards and forwards between these

various bodies, with the result of a great loss of clearness of action and quickness of doing business, and, very often, of things getting smothered, or mixed up more or less with other things from which they should be kept separate. Therefore, that directness of control which you have in a large business institution is completely absent from the War Office. The permanent element is also, to a great extent, absent. The Commander-in-Chief only holds office now for five years, and the Secretary of State, the Under-Secretary of State, and the Financial Secretary change office with the Government. Now, I think I am right in saying that within the last thirty years the War Office has had either ten or eleven Secretaries of State, and the other Parliamentary officials as well; or, in other words, the average duration of the Secretary of State's official life is three years, and, of course, if the average duration is three years, in a good many cases it has been less, and sometimes considerably less. Therefore, the most important person in the whole institution is changed on an average every three years, and, not infrequently, in a less period. Well, now would the London and North-Western Railway Company, or would any institution change its head once every three years? I doubt whether it would. I do not say that it may not be necessary under our Constitution, but I say, that if it is so, it is hopeless to think of running the War Office on business principles, because this frequent change of head alone is in violation of one of the chief of those principles. Then you come to the fact that the Secretary of State, although, no doubt, anxious to do everything that can be done for the Army, is swayed by a good many other considerations; he is pulled by a good many strings in every way, and a good deal of his time has to be devoted to matters that are not Army matters. His interests are not absolutely bound up with those of the business, in the sense that the proprietor or the very large shareholder is; and, lastly, you come to what, to my mind, is the most important thing of all, and that is, that neither now, nor at any other time that I can remember, has the country really made up its mind what it wants its Army to do, and in consequence what Army it wants to have. It is quite true that there is a minute of the late Mr. Stanhope's which has more or less occu-

ried the ground. That minute has, however, always been one that has only been half acted upon by the Government and the various Secretaries of State for War who have held office since it was drawn up, and moreover, it has never been made public, it has never received, if I may use the phrase, the approval of the nation. The country, at the present moment, does not know what Army it wants, and it does not know what objects the Army which exists is expected to fulfil. Until that is done, until we arrive at making up our mind what we want our military machine to do, it seems to me not very much use going into detailed questions of the particular organisation of a Division, or an Army Corps, or anything else. We want to begin at the beginning, and to reason out, and think out, what we consider under normal conditions should be the Army which this country is to keep up, or, if you like to put it so, what shall be the duties which that Army should be prepared to fulfil—it may be put in that way—and in that case, the military experts would very soon be able to work out what Army is wanted. How little this is being considered you can judge from the simple fact which is before us, that when, at the present moment, as far as I know—of course, I am not at the War Office now, and only speak from outside knowledge—what we still call the scheme of two Army Corps for foreign service and three Army Corps for home defence still holds the ground—and, as far as I know, that is the only authoritative pronouncement on the part of the Government as to the Army the military authorities should be prepared to produce—at the very time the Secretary of State is promulgating a scheme for six Army Corps. Which is it to be? And how are the military authorities generally, the Secretary of State, the Commander-in-Chief, and the various officials under them, to work with any requisite clearness and definiteness, proceeding gradually up to the end which they aim at, until they knew what that end is? The very first requisite, to my mind, in any War Office reform, as it is called, or any alteration in our system, is by the assembling of the strongest possible Commission that can be got together, or some similar means, to determine what shall be the Army which in normal peace times this country shall maintain, and, as a necessary corollary and consequence from that, what shall be the Army it is to put into the field in

war. That seems to me the preliminary to anything else. Let us give up this wandering on in a fog, as we have done for years and years, getting a little bit here and a little bit there, but with no definitely laid down, clear and clean plan to work up to a previously

determined upon and settled organisation; and the first thing I think we require is for that point to be determined. When that point is determined, then the other things can go on.

#### NO CO-OPERATION BETWEEN ARMY AND WAR OFFICE.

Sir Redvers Buller read to the Commission some notes which he had written down to explain what he thinks of the War Office administration. The paper was preceded by one or two pertinent questions which rose out of Sir Redvers' criticism of the failings of our Army, or, rather, of its officers.

#### EXTRACTS FROM THE EVIDENCE OF SIR REDVERS BULLER.

15498. The real gist of the criticism I should like to make. There is nothing you tell them to do that they do not know how to do if they are fairly well taught, but they do not know what to do when the moment comes because they are never allowed to have an opportunity—either officers or men—of exercising the slightest amount of independent judgment before they get on the field of battle.

15499. And in that respect you would wish to see the training altered?—Very much.

15500. (*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) How would you alter the training? The way I should begin to alter the training would be to abolish the War Office as it stands, and there really to my mind lies the true crux of the question. As long as the War Office exists as it is the Army is tied up in red tape, and the principles of the War Office are nothing but red tape. That instruction is forced down through every rank in the Army.

15501. (*Chairman.*) You speak with considerable experience of the War Office?—Yes, I know the War Office well; I have been twenty-five years there, and I have sat at the desk of every clerk in the War Office and gone through his year's work with him.

15502. Would you explain what that means?—Upon this matter I wrote down a few words, as I thought I could make it shorter if I wrote it beforehand, and I think it will fully explain my meaning:—

“In the interests of the education of officers the reorganisation of the War Office is an urgent necessity.

“It is essential there should be a standard organisation of staff work and a standard pattern of staff duty, which officers should look to and learn from. Those standards ought to be found in the War Office. They are not to be found there now, nor ever have been in the past.

“No one who studies the inception of the late war can fail to see how seriously the situation was affected by the want of some sort of intellectual equipment for the Secretary of State.

“On the other hand, the Army suffers seriously from the interference of the civilian officials with the authority of the Commander-in-Chief. . . .

“It would be difficult to over-estimate the advantage of this training. The great defect at present throughout all ranks of the Army is the want of a sense of the paramount importance of co-operation. I believe this defect to have its origin in the natural resentment of officers against the stringent and inelastic system of red tape and regulations within which they are pent and against which they chafe.

"Such restrictions necessarily promote rebellion rather than co-operation. All ranks are possessed by the notion that authority is stupid and exists mainly to be outwitted. Officers acquire the idea that it is meritorious to exceed, outstep or evade orders. This works infinite harm. Every mess-table has its stories of how so-and-so snubbed, confuted, or ridiculed the War Office with success.

[3] "There is scarcely one officer in a hundred who has been taught any rule which would guide him in deciding how to act when confronted by the problem so frequent in war: 'I have my orders, but what ought I to do?' If he does not evade the problem by inaction, it is a chance if he acts aright; because, owing to his defective training, he acts on the wrong impulse. He does not ask himself how he can best further the operation as a whole, but how he may most plausibly excuse himself, if taken to task.

"Our officers and men as we recruit them are deficient in 'hunter's instinct'—too highly civilised, if you will. Some special training to make good that deficiency is now needed. The fundamental principle of this training should be that everyone must understand that he has to fight for the main chance, and not for his own hand. The system of the War Office teaches exactly the reverse. The root of reform must be found there."

#### RED TAPE IN EXCELSIS.

When giving evidence on the state of the hospitals, Sir Redvers Buller suddenly reverted to his charge against the War Office and its cast-iron regulations:—

15577. As I am on hospitals, may I tell one story, a very short one, which shows the defect of our military arrangements and the defect of our military education. It happened to me at Ladysmith. I was endeavouring at the moment to provide for the evacuation of the Intombi Hospital, which had 2,500 patients in it, and I had created a temporary hospital out of the old barracks at the other end of the town. There was very great difficulty about bedding; there was much of the bedding they did not like to bring out of the old hospital. Everything in Ladysmith had been taken to Intombi; and I went round the new hospital one morning and found that a good many of the fever patients had no beds—nothing but one blanket to lie on. I swept Natal with telegrams, and got a train up by the end of the week with as many mattresses as I could possibly get—bought, begged, or borrowed. As I was going to church on Sunday morning I saw the wagons coming from the station with these mattresses, and I sent and found out that

they were the mattresses for the hospital. I did not go to the hospital again until the next Monday week, eight days afterwards, and there was exactly the same situation that I had seen ten days before; the men were all lying there without beds, and I said to the doctor in charge, "How is this? Where are those beds?" His answer was, "We have not got any, sir." I said, "I saw them come last Sunday week. Why have you not got them?" He said, "I have not got them." I then said, "You have your own transport, why do you not send for them?" "I sent for them, sir." "Why have you not got them?" "They would not issue them." And the fact was this, that according to the War Office Regulations in a garrison, hospital-bedding is a barrack-supply, and is accounted for by the barrack-master, but in the field it is supplied by the Ordnance Department, and for the whole of those eight days the head of the Ordnance Department and the head of the Barrack Department in Ladysmith had been fighting over which of the two should take these beds on their books and issue them to the hospital, and during that time the patients had been kept on the ground. That is War Office training!

#### THE DAWKINS COMMITTEE AND ITS RECOMMENDATIONS.

The Dawkins Committee sat recently to discuss how best to put the War

Office on a business footing. The Report thus refers to what has followed their recommendations:—

279. The Committee summarised their conclusions in paragraph 131 of their report. Among these is the following:—

“To establish a War Office Board on a permanent basis, with clearly defined duties and powers, which, acting under the authority of the Secretary of State, and without in any way detracting from the individual responsibilities of the Commander-in-Chief and of the Military Heads of Departments, would control and supervise the business of the War Office as a whole.”

We have been supplied by the War Office with the following statement of the steps taken by the Secretary of State in connection with this recommendation:—

“The recommendations of the Committee have been accepted, and the War Office Council has been adapted, under its present designation, to meet them. The Council has met regularly at fixed dates during the last fourteen months, and its members have the power of individually bringing forward, for discussion by the Council, matters of importance.

“The recommendations of the Council will, as heretofore, be subject to the decision of the Secretary of State.

“The Army Board continues, but its members are permitted the right of initiating the consideration of important subjects.

“In order that the work of the Office may be properly supervised and controlled with the view of securing combined action of the various branches and of preventing delays, an Executive Committee of the War Office has been appointed, of which the Permanent Under-Secretary of State is chairman, and its members a senior representative from each of the Civil and Military Departments. This Committee has met twice a week for the last fourteen months.”

280. It appears to us that there is still a weak link in the chain of authorities in the loose definition of the position and duties of the Army Board, and that the recommendations of the Dawkins Committee can hardly be said to have been carried out until the permanency on which it insisted is more fully secured. The Secretary of State, in referring to the War Office Council, clearly means to represent it as being the War Office Board of the Dawkins Committee, but it seems to us to fail to secure the permanency of the arrangements described. The constitution of the War Office Council is, as we understand, to rest, as heretofore, on a memorandum by the Secretary of State, which he can himself revoke. We do not think that this was the intention of the Dawkins Committee, or that there is any reason why this particular form of constitution should be maintained. The issue of an Order in Council would give the whole arrangement a more correct status and a larger measure of permanency.

#### WHAT LORD ROBERTS THINKS ABOUT IT.

The present Commander-in-Chief expressed a very strong opinion concerning the practice of Mr. Brodrick in ignoring the old Army Board, which is strictly military, and is presided over by the Commander-in-Chief, and in bringing everything before the Army Council.

10773. At the War Office Council I imagine that those who represent the Civil side would take a free part in the discussion?—Yes.

10774. So that the Army Board was the Board in the War Office which would give a distinctly military opinion on any subject that was brought before it?—Yes.

10775. And we were told that the subjects that were dealt with by it during the war were principally military subjects?—They were.

10776. I understand that now they have also the duty of looking into the Estimates, but I suppose they would examine the Estimates from the same point of view?—Yes, from a military point of view; but the fact really is that the War Office Council takes up all the questions that used to come before the Army Board. I think, myself, it is a pity, but it is a fact, and this year even the estimates were not taken up by the Army Board. We were on the point of considering them when Mr. Brodrick ordered the War Office Council to do it. I said to him, "We have not yet considered the Estimates," and he said, "Never mind, we will do it here instead." The War Office Council, practically speaking, usurped the work of the Army Board.

10777. We have found a good deal of difficulty in understanding the different functions of the different Boards at the War Office, and even in finding out whether the members understood the difference. I suppose it is the fact that they have been continually changing?—Yes, they have in this way—that the War Office Council takes up all sorts of little trivial matters and things which the Army Board could settle, and used to settle. But the War Office Council meets every Monday now, and the agenda is prepared by Mr. Brodrick's secretary on the Civil side, and all these questions which the Army Board would take up are brought up there, as well as important questions, so that there is no work left for the Army Board to do. I am going to have an Army Board to-morrow, but it is to consider some questions that have come up from the Advisory Board of the Medical Department. I have never had any questions to put before them; they are all taken up by the War Office Council; even a question as to whether the Rifle regiments should have a brass button or a black button was brought before the War Office Council, or whether the braid of their coats should be red or black was brought before the War Office Council—matters which I think might conveniently be settled by the Army Board.

10778. You think that those matters would be better brought before a Board

representing the military opinion of the War Office, and a collective opinion obtained there?—Yes.

10779. And that could be done by a Board formed in the way that it is formed of the heads of the different departments, under the presidency of the Commander-in-Chief?—Yes.

10780. Now would not a collective opinion of that sort be of great value?—Yes, I think so. I think that the officers who form the Army Board would speak much more openly, and be much more free under the presidency of the Commander-in-Chief than they would be at a Board under the presidency of the Secretary of State, where the Commander-in-Chief was only a member, such as the War Office Council. I think the Army Board should assemble and do as it did before, and only those matters come up to the War Office Council which are of supreme importance.

10781. We have had various opinions expressed as to the way in which the military opinion should be given its proper weight. One argument is that the Commander-in-Chief should have a right to give his opinion in a form and under conditions in which it must come not only before the Secretary of State, but before the Government. Another form is the one which you have expressed here, namely, that the War Office should be divided into sections, each section being under a head who has a distinct responsibility for his section. I want to suggest to you whether a third way which has been actually in operation, though not with its full effect, namely, that you should have a Board, representing all the military departments, and all the military opinion of the War Office, to give a collective opinion, would not have great merit and advantages?—You mean the Army Board, in fact.

10782. Yes, but to give it a position in which it would be its duty on all great military subjects to collect the whole military opinion, and to express it authoritatively?—Yes, I think that would be a very good plan. What I object to in the War Office, as it exists at present, is the system of concentration. The Army Board, which was the only place that the military heads had to express an opinion, has really been knocked on the head by the War Office Council.

## WHAT THE COMMISSION THINK ABOUT IT.

The Report says :—

278. We are confident that nothing is more fatal than to overload with a mass of details a Board to which is to be entrusted decisions of the highest importance, and we cannot help feeling that upon this rock many War Office reforms have been wrecked. If there were a clear definition of duties, not only might there be room for both Boards, but the authority and usefulness of the higher of the two, the War Office Council, would be increased by its relief from routine and restriction to matters of first-class importance.

## SIR REDVERS BULLER'S OPINION.

As usual Sir Redvers Buller has an opinion, and expresses it with his customary vigour. He maintains that the Secretary of State badly needs intellectual equipment.

EXTRACT FROM SIR R. BULLER'S  
EVIDENCE.

15641. But at the present moment the Secretary of State has no information whatever. The late Secretary of State, if I may say so, tried to meet this difficulty, in my opinion, in entirely the wrong way. He reduced the power of the Commander-in-Chief, and divided all the great officials into separate heads, so that he never had a chance of getting at a military opinion that was the combined opinion of them all. He formed the Army Board to do that, but as long as I was in the War Office the Army Board was not allowed to consider any question except a question submitted to them by the Secretary of State.

15642. And in that way it ceased to be of practical use?—It was no use, and I fear I might go further. This Committee that has just been indicated by Mr. Balfour will have exactly the same end, because it is the wrong thing. What is wanted is not a committee of the Cabinet to control or to inspire the Secretary of State, but an office in the War Office to assist him. Except the one telegram to me, of which I do not impute to them the slightest knowledge, where in all your inquiry have you found the least proof of the work of the so-called Committee of Public Defence? Are they wanted? No! If the Cabinet does its duty, they have no occupation. If the Cabinet neglects its duty, they have no power. What is the use of giving them an office?

15643. (*Chairman.*) You want the collective opinion of the military officials at the

War Office?—Yes, I want the collective opinion of the Army officials to be given in and to be reconsidered by an authority that will sift it properly, but that is not the case at present.

## SUPPORTED BY A CIVILIAN.

Extract from Sir G. Fleetwood Wilson's evidence :—

6075. In your opinion, it would be well that the Army Board should meet?—I think that it would be better that many of these subjects should be thoroughly threshed out before a proposal is put up to the Secretary of State in regard to them, and I think it would be well to have a free discussion on these points before that.

6078. You say that the subjects considered by the Army Board would be essentially military subjects, discussed in the presence of military members, by whom a collective opinion would be come to, and then that collective opinion would go to the Secretary of State?—That is so.

6079. What is the alternative? As I understood it, the alternative is that each department brings up a subject to the Secretary of State direct?—Yes, to a large extent that is so, and I think that in consequence of the Army Board not meeting regularly there is a great increase of minute writing, and there is a tendency for one branch to act independently of another. . . .

6089. Then you think it is a great advantage that on all these military subjects there should be that collective opinion before a definite proposal comes to the Secretary of State?—Yes, certainly, I think it is a great

advantage that there should be an interchange of ideas in regard to every proposal between the great military heads, and I think it is a very expeditious way of conducting the business. Obviously the alternative is to circulate a great number of minutes.

OPPOSED BY MR. BRODRICK.

The Secretary for War differed from (21596) the views of Sir R. Buller and Sir Fleetwood Wilson on the following grounds:—

It is very difficult for a body of officers sitting under the Commander-in-Chief not to feel themselves bound to ask for the extreme amount. Secondly, there is also great difficulty in getting officers of high rank to express opinions discordant from each other and from the Commander-in-Chief. Military subordination is at the root of the whole of their thoughts and feelings. Now, at the War Office Council matters are conducted differently in the last two years. In the first place, all the subjects discussed are discussed face to face with the civilians; and the one thing to which I have chiefly directed effort since has been to bring soldiers and civilians to discuss questions face to face in their earlier stages.

LORD ROBERTS'S SCHEME.

10737. The great blot on the War Office organisation and administration, in my opinion, is that the Secretary of State, owing to his being responsible to Parliament for everything that goes on in the Army, considers himself obliged to attempt more than it is possible for any one man to do, however capable and however hardworking he may be, the result being that his time is taken up with more or less trivial matters, while important questions which demand

much thought and study are either delayed or indefinitely postponed. Up till 1895, when the present system was introduced, all the military departments of the War Office were under the control of the Commander-in-Chief; an arrangement abandoned on the ground that it was impossible for any one man to command the Army, and also to carry on the work of the departments satisfactorily. Assuming this view to be correct, how is it possible for one man to be responsible for all the military departments (even if three of them are under the subordinate control of the Commander-in-Chief), besides the whole of the civil branch of the War Office, including finance, and, in addition, attend to his duties as a Member of Parliament and a Cabinet Minister? I should like to see the War Office divided into three branches—Military, Spending Departments, and Financial—each with a head who, while acting in consultation with each other, would be responsible to the Secretary of State. The Military Branch should comprise the offices of the Adjutant-General, Director-General of Mobilisation and Military Intelligence, Director-General Army Medical Service, and Military Secretary. The Spending Departments would include the offices now under the Quartermaster-General, Inspector-General of Fortifications, and Director-General of Ordnance, the head being an officer of recognised administrative ability, and without any political functions. The Financial Branch should be as at present. This sub-division of labour and responsibility would, I believe, greatly simplify the work now devolving on the Secretary of State and the Commander-in-Chief, and give them more time to devote to the more important problems of military efficiency and Imperial defence.

LORD ESHER'S PROPOSAL.

To the General Report of the Commission Lord Esher appended a note which contains the only constructive proposal put forward by any of the Commissioners on the subject of the War Office.

NOTE BY VISCOUNT ESHER.

I have signed this Report in which I generally concur, but I desire to add the following observations:—The main defects in the organisation of the War Office, elicited by the evidence, are, first, the want of co-ordination between the branches of that Department, and the consequent weakening of the

influence of the Secretary of State with his colleagues in the Government; and secondly, the absence of a proper system of inspection, ensuring that the military policy of the Secretary of State, sanctioned by the Cabinet and by the votes of Parliament, is carried into effect.

When the Secretary of State has made unsuccessful attempts, from time to time, to obtain the assent of the Cabinet to expenditure necessary in the interests of the country, his efforts have been weakened by his failure to show a consensus of military opinion in favour, as the First Lord of the Admiralty continually does, of the policy which he recommends.

The condition in 1899, as disclosed in Sir H. Brackenbury's Memorandum, of our Armaments, of our Fortresses, of the Clothing Department, of the Transport of the Army Medical Corps, of the system of Remounts, shows that either the Secretary of State was culpable of neglect, or that he was in ignorance of the facts.

### I.

In order to secure co-ordination between the branches of the War Office, and to strengthen thereby the hands of the Secretary of State, the only practical remedy would appear to be the establishment of a Council or Board on the lines of the Admiralty. It is worth while to remark, in this connection, that administration by a "Board" has been found to work successfully in every great commercial enterprise, in the Government of India, at the Admiralty, and—if the Cabinet may not inaptly be designated a Board—in the Government of the Kingdom. Two important underlying causes have contributed to the evolution of this kind of administration. First, that discussion in council is the most successful method of obtaining a right solution of difficult problems; and, secondly, that a collective appeal to external opinion, whether in the shape of the Treasury, or Parliament, or the public, carries more weight than the dictum or arguments of one man, however ingenious and however capable.

The administration of the Admiralty has often been favourably compared with that of the War Department. There cannot well be an inherent superiority in sailors to soldiers as administrators, nor in the choice of First Lords of the Admiralty to Secretaries of State for War. Further, the Board of Admiralty have appealed more successfully both to Chancellors of the Exchequer and to Parliament than has the Secretary of State for War, and although this may partly be accounted for by the greater consideration attached, properly, to the needs of the Navy, it is not the sole reason for the greater facility with which that Service has obtained large grants of public funds; for in addition to money voted it has invariably secured a higher degree of public confidence.

In face of these facts it may truthfully be contended that the sound administration of the Admiralty results from the system under which the First Lord determines all naval questions in council with his principal advisers, after formal discussion, and is thus enabled to approach the Treasury, the Cabinet, and Parliament with the force of professional opinion behind him.

The Board of Admiralty is composed of the First Lord, the First and Second Naval Lords, the Third Sea Lord, the Junior Naval Lord, the Civil Lord, the Financial Secretary, and the Under-Secretary of State.

A War Office Council might be constituted to comprise the Secretary of State, the Adjutant-General, the Quartermaster-General, the Director-General of Ordnance, the Director-General of Military Intelligence, the Financial

Secretary, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, and the Under-Secretary of State.

The administrative work of the Admiralty is distributed in departments under the control of the members of the Board, and the work of the War Office could be divided in a similar manner. To the Adjutant-General should be assigned the movements of troops, the framing of military regulations affecting discipline, training, military education, promotion, and appointments. All the subsidiary branches controlling these matters should be subordinate to that officer. The Quartermaster-General should control, with one exception, the spending departments of the Army. The Inspector-General of Fortifications, the Transport, Commissariat, Clothing Departments, the Army Medical Department, should all be subsidiary branches of his department. The Director-General of Ordnance should be responsible for armament. The Director-General of Military Intelligence should have no executive functions, and that important officer's duties should be limited to the framing of schemes of defence, the initiation and working out of changes from time to time, as necessity requires, in the organisation of the Army, the preparation of maps, and the collection of military information in all parts of the world.

It may be said that the advice of these officers is at the service of the Secretary of State under the existing system, but more than this is required.

Discussion in the presence of the Secretary of State, if possible agreement, or an acceptance of the decision of a majority, are essential elements in the military administration of the War Office, if the Secretary of State for War's policy is to carry, among his colleagues and in Parliament, the weight which attaches to the views of the First Lord of the Admiralty.

A marked characteristic of the Navy is the loyalty of naval officers to each other, and to their chiefs; while in the Army, from the junior ranks upwards, a spirit of criticism has become a military tradition, which is mischievous to the Service, and may take years to eradicate.

In addition to the advantages of administration by council, already referred to, may be added the probability that agreement, or loyalty to decisions once taken, in the highest places, may gradually tend to produce a similar state of feeling throughout the body of Army officers.

## II.

It will have been noticed that it is not proposed to include the Commander-in-Chief among those forming the Army Board or Council.

Since the death of the Duke of Wellington the position of the Commander-in-Chief has been gradually becoming more anomalous, until a crisis was reached in the year 1899, upon which it is unnecessary to dilate. The speeches of Lord Lansdowne and Lord Wolseley upon their mutual relations in the House of Lords will not readily be forgotten.

The tact of the Duke of Cambridge, and his position as a member of the Royal House, just rendered possible a system within the War Office which subsequent arrangements have proved to be impossible, if the efficiency of the War Department is ever to be established.

The only practical remedy is the abolition of the office of Commander-in-Chief, as recommended by the Harrington Commission, and the appointment of a General Officer Commanding the Army removed from the War Office into a distinct building, possibly the Horse Guards, with a new definition, by Order in Council, of his duties and responsibilities. He might be entrusted with the discipline of the Army, but his principal functions should be those of

an Inspector-General of His Majesty's Forces, and he should be responsible to the Secretary of State.

His position would be analogous to that of an auditor in the region of finance. He should have to certify annually in writing as to the actual efficiency and condition of whatever military organisation has been settled by the War Department and by Parliament. That is to say, if two Army Corps, or three, or six, are the large units agreed to by Parliament, he should certify annually that they are efficient and complete. Further, he should report and certify as to the condition of fortresses, ordnance, magazines, clothing, stores, equipment, hospitals, etc., and he should be held responsible for the accuracy of his certificates.

Hitherto, the Secretary of State has been forced to rely upon the chiefs of departments whose duty it is to organise those departments for information as to their efficiency, with results at once misleading and dangerous. The object of the change suggested is to give the Secretary of State an Inspecting Officer of the highest rank and military qualifications, whose principal functions would be to keep him informed of the actual condition of an organisation for which that officer was not himself responsible. The importance of such a check or audit cannot well be exaggerated.

One advantage which would accrue to the military organisation of the Army by the abolition of the Commandership-in-Chief should not be overlooked. Under the existing system a soldier appointed to that office, except he has reached the final stages of his career, is practically shelved after a tenure of five years. Reappointment is a course of procedure undesirable for many obvious reasons. The Admiralty here again may be taken as a model, for there is no naval command so clearly superior to all others that after his tenure of it an officer need be removed from the active list while still fit for service.

In the Army, on the other hand, were an officer in the prime of life appointed Commander-in-Chief under existing conditions, his further employment would be a matter of considerable difficulty. This is a point worthy of careful consideration.

To summarise, therefore, these recommendations, they are briefly:—

First, to recognise the War Office Council, and to define more clearly their functions, as an advisory and executive Board, presided over by the Secretary of State, in whom, however, final responsibility to Parliament must be reserved.

Secondly, to decentralise internally the War Department, by a re-arrangement of duties, under the respective members of the Board, abolishing the cross jurisdiction now existing.

Thirdly, to abolish the Commandership-in-Chief, and to appoint a General Officer Commanding the Army, responsible to the Secretary of State for the efficiency of the military forces of the Crown.

## CHAPTER XVIII,

## THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE GUILT.

THE Report of the Royal Commission sets forth the facts clearly enough. But it abstains from any attempt to apportion among the accused their respective share for the various high crimes and misdemeanours of which undoubtedly some person or persons must be guilty. What the nation wants is to have the responsibility brought home to the individual culprit. Who is to blame? Unless that question is answered the innocent will be confounded with the guilty. It may, of course, be contended that no one is to blame, that it is all the fault of "the system," which appears to be the political counterpart of the lodging-house keeper's cat.

It may also be objected that the persons who lie under the heaviest indictments, the Colonial Secretary and his High Commissioner, have not had an opportunity of being heard in their own defence. Due allowance must, of course, be made both for the system and for the imaginable defence which Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Milner may have to make for themselves. But taking the evidence reported by the Commission as it stands, what does it prove?

In the first place its publication proves one thing that is very much to our credit. No other nation, except possibly the United States, would have had the courage to publish such a damning exposition of all its sins and shortcomings. Probably we also would have shrunk from trusting the world with such a revelation but for the "silver streak" and our floating ramparts. Nevertheless, we have done it. We have had Commissioners who did not fear to probe the wound, and who did not shrink from publishing their diagnosis to the world. That at least is to the good.

In the second place it must be reckoned to our credit that although this war cost us £228,000,000, there is not, so far as we can see, a single suggestion that any of our officials, from the highest to the lowest, were guilty of corruption or dishonesty. The astounding story of the doings of Mr. Jansen, a broker whose exploits in fleecing the Empire are recorded by Sir G. Fleetwood Wilson, stands by itself. That Ministers blundered badly, and spent millions foolishly, but it seems to have been done in sheer honest stupidity. And that also, it must be admitted, is to the good.

In the third place it is also clear that however indefensible the policy of the Government may have been, those citizens who believed in it did display a very creditable spirit of patriotic devotion in coming to the rescue of an incompetent Administration and in so saving it in spite of itself. It is, of course, superlative folly to talk of the self-sacrifice of Colonists who, for five shillings a day, all found, took a free ticket to and from South Africa, in order to enjoy the fierce delight of battle as if there was anything specially heroic about it. The risk of being killed was very slight, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the whole force were killed in battle—it was a risky adventure with the glamour of glory around it. Still, when all that is admitted, the rush to the front was the one redeeming feature in a story of otherwise almost unrelieved gloom.

Further, it is only just to recognise that the system which had grown up for many years may properly be held chargeable with many of our shortcomings, and that it would be unfair to hold the Administration which chanced to be in office with the entire and exclusive responsibility for every defect and deficiency in the army and our armaments.

But when all is said and done in mitigation of judgment there lies a heavy burden of collective and individual responsibility at the door of every minister, a responsibility which it is now possible somewhat roughly to apportion.

#### THE ACQUITTED.

Before undertaking this task it is a pleasanter duty to indicate those cases in which we have from the Royal Commission not so much a verdict of Not guilty, as a declaration, Well done, thou good and faithful servant.

The first to be thus honourably acquitted are the officers of the Intelligence Department, who were abused for ignorance and who are now proved to have shown extraordinary prescience and to have furnished the Cabinet with the most exact and accurate information as to the Boer armament and plans. To Sir John Ardagh and Major Altham and their colleagues are due not merely the thanks of Parliament but the public, and formal expression of regret that their good work should have been shamefully misrepresented, and they themselves so cruelly calumniated. The second of the accused who has been triumphantly vindicated by the Royal Commission is General Butler, Commander-in-Chief in South Africa before the war. The long series of warning despatches which he sent home would, if they had been attended to, have averted the series of disasters which have befallen us, of which we have by no means seen the last. It is now proved that General Butler knew the facts, thrust them persistently and insistently upon the Government, and as a reward was recalled, snubbed, ignored, and calumniated. To-day, however, there is no general's name on the Army List which shines with such lustre as that of a courageous, far-seeing statesman as that of General W. F. Butler, now commanding at Devonport.

He knew the truth and told it to unwilling ears. We are only beginning to realise what the refusal to listen to his faithful warnings has cost the country and the Empire.

The Royal Commission did not enter into questions of policy. They returned no verdict for or against the justice of our grievance against Mr. Kruger. They have collected no evidence that does not bear upon the preparations for war and the conduct of military operations. Hence the conclusions which they draw are untainted by political or party prejudice.

#### THE CHIEF OFFENDER.

Nevertheless, there can be few who read their Report and the evidence on which it is based who will not be driven irresistibly to the conclusion that the one man who, above all others, must bear the responsibility for letting loose upon the Empire the innumerable evils of a war for which we were unprepared is Lord Milner, the High Commissioner. Of Lord Milner personally no one can speak without respect, and no one who knows him personally without affection. That in each and every step of his South African policy he was animated by the purest spirit of patriotism, and that he sincerely believed he was following a course dictated by the duty which he owed to the Empire, is questioned by none. But that in no way alters the central fact of the situation. He was placed in supreme power in South Africa to act for Britain. He was our eyes and our ears. He was our brain. We trusted him absolutely to

see the truth, and to make it known. The very confidence which his honesty and disinterestedness begot in the minds of his countrymen doubled his responsibility to see clearly and speak straight.

Unfortunately he did neither. Or rather, if he did one he did not the other. For he either failed to see that his policy would precipitate a war for which we were utterly unprepared, in which our foes would have us at a disadvantage all round their frontier, or, seeing it, he sedulously concealed that knowledge from his countrymen. Whichever alternative is selected leaves him equally guilty. He had the full advantage of the old *P.M.G.* formula, which was invented when he was in Northumberland Street—that of giving your able man on the spot a free hand, and turning a blind eye to his shortcomings. We trusted him blindly, and wilfully or unintentionally he misled us as cruelly as if he had invited us to camp on a slumbering kraken in mid-ocean by assurances that the monster's back was *terra firma*.

There was a man in South Africa who saw and who spoke. He was a trained soldier and one who had a natural instinct for divining the truth of political problems. He attempted to warn his Government and his countrymen of some—not by any means of all—of the immeasurable calamities which an attack upon the independence of the Transvaal would entail. And when Lord Milner heard of it he waxed exceeding wrath and rebuked his man of war, and wrote unto him that he entirely demurred to what he said. And it came to pass that the demurrer of Lord Milner was accepted by the rulers in Downing Street, and the faithful warning of General Butler was imputed to him for treason and all manner of disloyalty. But when the war broke out, behold it was discovered that General Butler had not even disclosed one half the evil things which the policy of Lord Milner had brought upon the Empire.

It reads like a modern rendering of the familiar scene in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah, in which Micaiah, the prophet of the Lord, and Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, stood up together before King Ahab and prophesied against each other as to the result of the war with Syria. Micaiah was cast into prison, and Ahab, puffed up with the assurances of the lying spirit in the mouth of Zedekiah, went forth to death on the smitten fields of Ramoth Gilead. We also have had our Ramoth Gilead in South Africa. Upon the head of Lord Milner, more than upon that of any living man, lies the burden of all the innocent blood shed in the land that was given him to rule in peace and prosperity. He was on the spot. He had a free hand. We believed he could see what kind of a wall we were running up against under his guidance. And as a penalty for our faith in him and our reliance upon his judgment, we have been saddled with this war, with its corollary in this Report which exposes us to the scorn and derision of the world.

Lord Milner stands apart, conspicuous and alone, as the man who, with the best of intentions, brought upon the Empire the greatest disaster that it has had to suffer in the memory of living men.

#### THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CABINET.

Leaving the High Commissioner in his sad and bad pre-eminence, we come next to the Cabinet. Lord Rosebery was undoubtedly correct when he wrote, whatever be the departmental responsibility of a particular minister, that in no way diminishes the collective responsibility of the Cabinet. The Cabinet was in constant session. It was appealed to, and gave its decision at every stage. It was the Cabinet that chose to negotiate through its mouth-piece as if it wielded the thunders of Jove, whereas it knew accurately the doleful meagreness of its resources. It was the Cabinet which apparently

believed that the Boers did not mean fighting, and that the most ordinary preparation for an obvious eventuality was both impolitic and superfluous. It is the Cabinet, in a word, which is severally and individually answerable.

No doubt that is true, and individually and collectively every man whose name figures in the list of "the Accused—first Category," is responsible for all the miscalculations and lack of preparation which are exposed by the Commission.

But although all are jointly or collectively responsible, certain members must be signalled out as sinners beyond the rest. It would, for instance, be absurd to hold, say Mr. Akers-Douglas, as equally responsible with Mr. Chamberlain for the wrecking of the negotiations which provoked the Ultimatum. Nor could the Lord Chancellor rightly be saddled with the same responsibility as that which weighs upon Lord Lansdowne.

If we were to attempt to discriminate between the collectively guilty so as to arrange in order of demerit the ministers specially responsible who have been proved guilty of neglect of duty, ignorance of facts, and miscalculation of the problem they engaged to solve, they would follow each other thus:—

1. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies.
2. The Marquis of Salisbury, Prime Minister.
3. The Marquis of Lansdowne, late Secretary for War.
4. Mr. Arthur J. Balfour, Leader of the House of Commons.
5. The Duke of Devonshire, President of the Committee of Defence.
6. Mr. George Wyndham, late Under Secretary for War.
7. Mr. Brodrick, Secretary for War.

There are others, as, for instance, Lord Blagden, who, as Sir M. W. Ridley, Secretary of State for Home affairs, was so utterly amazed at the discovery of the fact that the Boers rode horses, that it was quite evident he had never taken the trouble to read the Memoranda issued by the Intelligence Department, as to the men whom the Cabinet sent forth our army to fight.

Read the following extract from Major Altham's evidence, and try to estimate the culpable ignorance of a Minister of the Crown, who did not know the Boers were mounted men.

599. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) Was it known at any time previous to the war that the men you calculated, the 48,000 men mentioned on page 3, would be all mounted men of the Boers?—Certainly; it was a well-known fact that the Boers never fought except mounted.

600. Then it was thoroughly understood what the mobility of their force was before the war?—Entirely so. There is a chapter in the handbook called "Boer Organisation and Tactics," which gives a *résumé* of their action in previous wars, and lays great stress upon their mobility. I think we specially point out that the difficulties that Sir George Colley got into were chiefly due to the want of mounted troops.

But Lord Blagden is a venial offender compared with the others.

#### THE GUILT OF MR. CHAMBERLAIN.

The guilt of Mr. Chamberlain, so far as the evidence before the Commission goes, can be very definitely described:—

1. He, being Colonial Secretary, and charged by the Government with the negotiations with President Kruger, did, in March, 1897, make certain demands upon the Transvaal Government, which, in the opinion of the Commission, would, if refused, have been followed by war, without taking any steps before sending off his despatch to insist upon the reinforcement of our garrison, which were then dangerously low. Further, that after he had sent

off his despatch, he allowed nearly a month to pass before he informed the Secretary of War of what he was after, and even then that he did not give him any clear and distinct warning that his demand on the Transvaal might have to be enforced by war, but rather concealed and misrepresented the nature of his despatch. And, lastly, that even then, when he admitted that his despatch might provoke the Boers to make an attack upon our territory, he was so utterly ignorant of the strength of the Boers, that he considered British South Africa would be amply safeguarded against danger if the strength of our garrison was raised from 6,300 men to 8,000!

Nota Bene, that Mr. Chamberlain is estopped from pleading ignorance of the Boer preparations, for he expressly admits in his letter to the War Office that he had seen and read and was much impressed by the reports of our Intelligence officers as to the strength of the Boer force and the extent of their armaments.

2. That he, being Colonial Secretary, conducting negotiations which the British General Commanding-in-Chief in South Africa warned him would certainly result in war, misled his colleagues in the Cabinet, and in particular his colleague, the Secretary of State for War, by professing a belief that peace was assured, and by stating "he saw no occasion for reinforcements" he thereby secured the rejection of the earnest entreaty of Lord Wolseley, the Commander-in-Chief, for the immediate strengthening of the South African garrisons as late as the middle of August.

3. That he, being Colonial Secretary, and in that capacity having prevented the reinforcement of the South African garrison, did wantonly and mischievously make a speech at Highbury so insulting in tone and menacing in its message that it was accepted in Pretoria as a direct threat of war, thereby making war inevitable, for which he was officially informed we were not locally prepared.

4. That he, being Colonial Secretary, charged with negotiations on which peace and war depended in South Africa, did wilfully refuse to inform himself of the actual facts of the military position on the frontier, when that trusty and well-informed officer General Butler, fresh from his South African command, returned to England, by refusing to send for the said General Butler or to administer any questions to him as to the vital facts of the situation which the Colonial Secretary was handling.

5. That he, being Colonial Secretary, was at the beginning of September officially informed by Lord Wolseley, Commander-in-Chief, that it was urgently necessary that hostilities should be postponed for at least a month in order that hurried preparations might be made to strengthen the garrisons in our imperilled colonies, did, nevertheless, wilfully and perversely reject the opportunity that lay ready to his hand: (1) of securing such postponement by accepting the Boer offer to agree to the appointment of a Joint Commission as to the new franchise law which he had himself proposed; or (2) of invoking the principle of special mediation suggested in Article 8 of the Hague Convention, by which a month's respite could have been secured, during which reinforcements might have been hurried up. And, further, instead of securing the needed delay by diplomacy, he did actually precipitate a collision by breaking off negotiations and formulating his own proposals to be enforced by an ultimatum. And, moreover, although he was well and precisely informed as to the weak state of our garrisons and the backward condition of our preparations, he hurried forward negotiations without, so far as can be ascertained, taking any steps to urge his colleague, the Secretary for War, to make all necessary provision to give effect to his policy by force.

On these five counts Mr. Chamberlain is found guilty by the Report and Evidence published by the Royal Commission.

## THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LORD SALISBURY.

*De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*

## THE CULPABILITY OF LORD LANSDOWNE.

The culpability of Lord Lansdowne consists in—

1. That he, being Secretary of War, officially responsible for the sufficiency and efficiency of the military forces of the Crown, did allow our armaments to be in a state so insufficient and inefficient that three months of war with two small Republics emptied our arsenals and exposed us to grave peril of national and imperial disaster.

2. That he, being Secretary of War, was guilty of criminal negligence in omitting to inform himself of the elaborate detailed information supplied by the Intelligence Department, notwithstanding the repeated warnings of his military advisers, with the result that it was not until three weeks before the outbreak of war he woke up to recognise the fact that the Orange Free State would certainly take the field against us.

3. That in the spring of 1897 he, being Secretary for War, was warned by the Colonial Secretary of the existence of the Boer armaments, and also of the despatch of demands which might provoke an invasion of Natal, but took no adequate measures to reinforce our garrisons.

4. That although, on September 5th, he as Secretary for War became convinced that war was inevitable, he not only made no preparations to meet the Boer attack for seventeen days, but, on September 16th, actually cancelled an order for 1000 mules which were urgently needed for purposes of transport.

5. That when the British general, late Commander-in-Chief in South Africa, returned to this country in August, and reported himself at the War Office, he took no steps to ascertain from him the truth concerning the military situation in South Africa, but allowed him to depart after asking only two questions upon points of comparatively unimportant detail.

6. That after war was declared he, as Secretary of War, took no adequate measures to provide adequate reinforcements for the army in the field, and discouraged every proposal made by volunteers to strengthen the forces operating in South Africa until the threefold defeat in December roused him from his fool's paradise.

There are many other counts in this indictment, but these may suffice.

## THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.

The Duke of Devonshire was President of the Committee of National Defence.

It is proved by the evidence taken before the Commission—

1. That in that capacity he took no pains to keep himself informed before the war broke out as to the needs of national defence, and did thereby lull the public into false security.

EXTRACTS FROM THE EVIDENCE OF SIR  
W. NICHOLSON, HEAD OF THE  
INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT.

120. Has the War Office nothing to do with the Defence Committee?—I know

nothing about the Defence Committee of the Cabinet, except that the Duke of Devonshire, I believe, is President of it.

121. Have you ever been called upon to attend one of its meetings since you took office?—No.

122. Do you know if it meets at the War Office? Has it ever met at the War Office since you took office?—It may have done, but I should not hear of it. I think it may have met once or twice.

123. But, at any rate, you, as Director-General of Military Intelligence, have not been summoned to attend any of its meetings?—Nobody attends it, so far as I am aware.

124. Not even to give information?—Many papers, or a good number of papers,

have gone from my Department on which the Secretary of State has noted, "This must be considered by the Defence Committee of the Cabinet," but I have never attended it.

EVIDENCE OF GENERAL KELLY-KENNY,  
ADJUTANT-GENERAL.

4712. I have only one more question: Have you ever been called before the Defence Committee of the Cabinet?—Never; I do not know anything about it.

2. That he, being President of the Committee of National Defence, did not take the trouble to see General Butler on his return from South Africa and ascertain from the late Commander-in-Chief what were the actual facts of the situation there.

3. That since the war, he, being President of the Committee of National Defence, took no steps to press upon the Secretary of War the need for securing the preservation of the organisation used to supplement our armies in the field.

THE IGNORANCE OF MR. BALFOUR.

1. That he, being First Lord of the Treasury and Leader of the House of Commons, was so ill-informed as to the state of our armaments as to mislead the country into a state of unjustifiable confidence by declaring in 1896 that the British Empire was in a state of unparalleled efficiency as a fighting machine.

2. That he, being the Leader of the Conservative party and a Minister of the Crown, was so culpably ignorant of the official reports of the Intelligence Department as to declare publicly at Dewsbury after the war broke out that ministers were as much surprised at the Orange Free State joining the Transvaal as if Switzerland had declared war in support of President Kruger.

THE SHARE OF MR. GEORGE WYNDHAM.

1. That he, being Under Secretary for War, by his speeches contributed to conceal from the public the true state of our armaments, and did nothing whatever, so far as can be perceived, to rouse his chiefs to recognise the gravity of the situation.

2. That he took no steps to possess himself of the information which General Butler on his return from South Africa was anxious to impart.

THE COMPLICITY OF MR. BRODRICK.

1. That he, being Secretary of War, in the later stages of the campaign and afterwards until October, 1903, took no steps to secure or preserve either the organisations for utilising the irregular forces of the Empire, or of collecting and recording the experience gained by the war.

FROM THE EVIDENCE OF LORD ROBERTS.

13316. (*Sir John Hopkins.*) Of course, there is a vast amount of information now in people's heads in connection with all these

questions, which should not be allowed to perish?—And I hope it will not be.

13210. Have you been asked by the Defence Committee of the Cabinet to state in writing your views as to what may be

called the military lessons deducible from the war?—No.

13211. Have you ever had any instructions at all from the Defence Committee of the Cabinet since you have been Commander-in-Chief?—No.

EVIDENCE OF COLONEL DEANE.

6677. Do you agree with Colonel Lucas that for the future it would be an advantage if there was a nucleus of trained officers?—I think it would be highly advantageous if it could be so arranged. I think it would be advantageous also if there was a sort of Yeomanry Staff Corps, as has been suggested by the Yeomanry Committee—that is to say, that out of the large number of officers who are now returning, most of whom are seeking for military employment, and are unable to get it, at least those who have done well in the field, should be asked whether they are willing to serve, and that their names should be registered. I do not know that there is any system of the sort in force, although it has been recommended.

6678. Is there no record kept in the office now?—That is a matter for the War Office. We have not been asked to do anything in that direction, although it was recommended. I do not know what they are doing in the War Office in the matter.

6698. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) How would you suggest keeping up a staff of officers for the Yeomanry for future war service?—I would suggest their names being registered as willing to serve abroad, and inquiries being made as to their capabilities in the past, and their names being placed on a sort of Staff Corps. That was the proposal of the Home Yeomanry Committee that was originally assembled, and I think it was a very good one.

EVIDENCE OF GENERAL KELLY-KENNY.

4418. Has anything been done in that case to make a more permanent arrangement?—There is also an idea on foot to form a Yeomanry Reserve, but no regulations

have as yet been framed, because we really have not legal authority to create such a Reserve, and the Bill has only recently been framed—in fact, it only came into my hands yesterday—which forms the basis of any Reserve force of that nature. I cannot say yet what form that Reserve will take.

EVIDENCE OF SIR JOHN ADYE.

12288. All the points I have touched upon to-day, and a great number of details concerning each of them should, I think, be embodied in a hand-book or in instructions for officers concerned in raising corps; for instance, we should fix, if possible, the rate of pay; we should certainly fix the establishment; we should also consider the question of terms of service, the question of recruiting expenses, and there are the standards of age, and height, and so on.

12289. Has anything been done in that direction?—I do not think so.

12290. You have had a great deal to do with it, but you have not been asked for any report on the subject?—When I returned I suggested that I should write a detailed report on the subject, and I believe the military authorities approved, but I think there was some difficulty about how I should be paid while writing it. I was to have been employed, but some hitch occurred, and, although I have got a great amount of material which I could put into the shape of a report, I have not rendered one at present.

12291. Because it has not been required of you?—Yes. I did mention the matter when I came home and I was told that it should be done, but I have not been employed to do it. I think also a handbook, or short instructions for Commanding Officers of Irregular Forces, would be very useful, giving them hints as to accounts and discipline, and as to one or two small elementary returns, how to make them out, and how to correspond with their superiors, how to answer a telegram, and small hints such as seem very elementary but are very useful for a man who has not had experience of that sort before.

2. That he, being Secretary of War, has, according to the evidence of the Commander-in-Chief and of General Redvers Buller, so centralised everything as to set up a state of congested centralisation in the War Office, detrimental to the interest of the army.

3. That he, being Secretary of State for War, has done nothing to increase the staff of the Intelligence Department. The Commission Report says:—

257. The full strength of the office in 1899 is said to have been 18 officers, and in October, 1902, when Sir William Nicholson gave evidence, it had been increased to 20 officers. That it was undermanned for the work of preparation for a great war will scarcely be denied.

EVIDENCE OF SIR JOHN ARDAGH.

4966. I should very much like to see the Intelligence Department improved or modified or expanded so as to resemble in some degree that institution known as the Great General Staff. In its present size it is quite impossible that the work appertaining to the General Staff could possibly be done by the number of officers and men employed in it.

4972. You mentioned the comparison with the General Staff in Germany, which has been referred to by previous witnesses, and the discrepancy, I think, is very large. I think it was stated that there were 150 officers in the General Staff in Germany, whereas in your office there were about 20 officers?—Speaking from memory I should say that the General Staff in Germany was about 250, and that our officers in the Intelligence Department amount to between 20 and 25.

4972. When I said 150, that was the distinction made by Sir William Nicholson. He said there were 250 officers on the General Staff, but 100 were occupied, he thought, with business that did not come in the category of business of the Intelligence Department?—Quite so.

4973. So that the comparison was between 150 and 20 or 25?—Yes.

4974. Did you ever make representations for an increase of the staff in your Department?—Frequently.

EVIDENCE OF MAJOR ALTHAM.

562. Do you consider that your staff is sufficient for all your purposes?—No, undoubtedly I consider it inadequate.

564. I may say that in the German army, in the German General Staff, there are forty-eight officers doing the work that is done by Colonel Lake's mobilisation division and my sub-division, and yet the whole of our permanent staff amounts altogether only to eight officers. And our work is really much bigger; we have a much larger empire to defend, and the problem is much more complicated in every way.

573. When you put forward your demand for an increased staff, are you telling the Secretary of State frankly what you think

should be the proper organisation for your branch, or are you merely asking for what you think you may get?—Personally I have asked for what I think I may get.

574. Do you not think that on the whole it would be fairer to the Secretary of State and to the country generally to put quite frankly what you think you ought to have?—Yes, perhaps so, but as a matter of practical politics I think we generally find it is better to ask for what is possible. At present they have only got an addition of two officers to the thinking department of the Army.

EVIDENCE OF GENERAL SIR W.  
NICHOLSON.

364. But you are strongly of opinion that your staff requires strengthening?—Yes, the staff requires strengthening. It compares most unfavourably with the General Staff, which does the same work, for example, in the German Army. I cannot give you the exact figures, because I could not get the paper which I drew up on the subject; but so far as I remember, to do the same work which we do with 20 officers, they use, I think, in Berlin, something like 150; and similarly in France, the French War Office staff, with the same duties, is very much larger than ours. And it is not as if the problems before them were in any degree more complicated than the problems before us, but the exact reverse, because we have an empire so large and so exceedingly varied in its conditions that our defence schemes, mobilisation schemes, and so on, are much more intricate than they are with a country like France or Germany.

18280. We have had a good many witnesses before us who have been concerned in these various organisations, and we have often asked them whether they have ever been invited to give the result of their experience, and we have, I am bound to say, not found many affirmative answers. Would not that be a natural step to take in the War Office?—That is so. I may say that in one case I proposed that the question of the Colonial forces used in South Africa, their organisation, equipment, and so on, should be considered, and a scheme drawn up for

future use, but owing to financial objections the proposal was negatived.

18281. Would there be much financial difficulty in simply drawing up a scheme?—It would involve the employment of a capable officer for about six months, I suppose.

18282. (*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) And any large staff with him?—No, no staff.

18283. (*Sir John Jackson.*) It would not cost a thousand pounds?—It would cost much less than that.

18284. (*Chairman.*) Still, I suppose a good deal of the difficulty that arose at the time, and of the criticisms that have been made of the organisations of various kinds, arose simply from the fact that there was nothing to guide those who undertook the work?—I think so; but whether they could have done better—whether, for instance, the Yeomanry Committee could have done better than they did, I cannot say; it is very difficult to say. They were doing things in a great hurry, but if they had had regulations or a record of past experience no doubt they might have done better.

18285. (*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) It was not only a question of the Yeomanry, but with regard to the South African Colonial Corps and with regard to Volunteer contingents, and so on; if there had been something to put before them, past experience to go upon, surely they could have done better?—I am sure they could have done better.

18286. (*Chairman.*) Do you think there is any prospect of your department taking that matter in hand?—I should be delighted to take it up if I could only get any increase of staff, but at present we are exactly *in statu quo*, and my work has very much increased with the creation of a Committee of Imperial Defence, while my staff remains the same.

18287. Your staff remains the same as when you last came before us!—Yes.

18288. (*Viscount Esher.*) I thought Mr. Brodrick said the other night that he had given you an additional staff?—A reference to the estimates published just lately would shew that there has been a decrease in the

amount allowed for my department to the extent of £300 for next year. This, of course, is not really a decrease, because the Permit Office, which is under me, and cost a thousand pounds a year, has come to an end, so that I have a net increase of £700.

18289. And what will that provide you with as regards numbers in addition?—It will provide me with no additional numbers. What has happened is this. When I put forward my proposals at the end of 1901 they were warmly supported by the Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary of State. Then the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not listen to them. Then I brought them forward again with some slight additions about last October, and again the Commander-in-Chief strongly supported them, but they were referred to a committee consisting of Lord Hardwicke as president, Mr. Chalmers, of the Treasury, the Accountant-General, and a retired officer of Engineers, Major Darwen, and this committee began its sittings, I think, in October, and I do not know what they are doing now. The report is not ready.

18290. (*Chairman.*) Is that a War Office Committee?—An inter-departmental committee at the War Office.

18291. Is the Treasury represented?—Yes, by Mr. Chalmers, of the Treasury, but from what I can learn their conclusions will be such that I shall be quite unable to accept them.

18296. (*Chairman.*) This is the reference we have in our mind to the Secretary of State's statement in the House of Commons: "I can only say that it is perfectly true that the additional amount put down in the Estimates for intelligence this year is only a sum of £3,000; but that is by no means the measure of what has been done"?—I don't know at all what the Secretary of State meant by saying £3,000. I looked with anticipation to the Estimates, and was surprised to find that there is £300 less.

18297. Instead of £3,000 more?—Instead of £3,000 more.

The *Times* correspondent and historian of the war, Mr. Amory, after describing the inadequacy and the incompetence of the improvised intelligence staff in the field, was asked:—

20448. What is the general inference you draw from all that?—That neither did the Government as a whole nor the War Office value intelligence enough before the war, nor did individual generals attach sufficient importance to their intelligence officers in the field, or run enough risks to get intelligence.

General Sir W. Nicholson had already told the Commission that there was (379) no trained intelligence branch of staff officers in the British Army for service in the field.

One result of this absence of intelligence of any kind was thus described by Mr. Amory:—

20493. I do not know that there is any good in giving instances, but the fearful staff muddling was in everybody's mouth, and with regard to many of the things that went wrong you invariably heard people say, "The staff was so hopeless," or "We were never told this." At the Battle of Ladysmith the staff work went to pieces very badly, Other instances besides Ladysmith were Stormberg, Modder River, and the loss of the Waterval convoy, and there were many other unfortunate incidents with regard to which bad staff work had a great deal to do.

20494. (*Viscount Esher.*) Is it your view that there are not enough staff officers, or that they are not properly trained in peace time?—That they are not properly trained, and that you want one school of training, a real general staff school, and that rather comes to another point—that there was a lack of co-operation between our different forces very often, because there was no *esprit de corps* of the general staff, and each general had a natural tendency to play for his own hand, and his staff officers, instead of looking at the end from the point of view of the army, were his own personal adherents, and magnified the quarrels that there were, and the selfishness.

#### THE STORY OF WATCHIT HILL.

General Buller (15522) insisted urgently and repeatedly upon the great need of providing some "intellectual equipment" for the Secretary of State for War. It does not appear that his remarks had any special reference to Mr. Brodrick or Lord Lansdowne. But the need for some kind of intelligence, with or without the capital I, is obvious in every page of the Report of the Commission. As an illustration of the kind of thing that happens owing to the absence of intelligence, let the War Office take the story of the artillery range at Watchit Hill as it was told by Major-General Sir G. H. Marshall.

18600. Then as to efficiency in gunnery. The training in gunnery for efficiency in fire effect in war should, of course, be of paramount importance. This cannot be attained without annual practice under service conditions as far as possible, and this again cannot be done without good ranges. This does not seem to have been thoroughly appreciated. It is no doubt difficult to obtain convenient artillery ranges, but those we have should be utilised to the fullest extent and nothing allowed to interfere with the firing rights when acquired. I would like to give you an instance of what I mean in that respect; it appears rather vague, but I will give you a concrete instance. Some six or seven years ago I was commandant at Okehampton at a practice camp there for the Field Artillery. It was practically our only

training ground for Field Artillery, and we had about thirty square miles of ground there on Dartmoor, which we leased from the Duchy of Cornwall, and we had firing rights over the whole of that. I was extremely anxious to get a range of over 4,000 yards; we had no range of over 4,000 yards, and there was one point from which I could get a fine range of over 6,000 yards, if necessary, called Watchit Hill. I was unable to fire from Watchit Hill, because there was a farm in the way, and I made every exertion to get that farm bought by Government, and at last I succeeded in getting that farm bought right out, and therefore I was able to fire from Watchit Hill over this farm right away for any distance, and we were all overjoyed at having got such a fine range. We had no sooner done that, however, than the War

Office made an agreement with a village behind the range altogether not to fire from this Watchit Hill, and that agreement exists to-day. We had bought the farm, and we might have been practising these long ranges before the war. I represented it over and over, and over again, but there it is; there is Watchit Hill, and we have the right to fire from it, but the War Office have chosen to make an arrangement in spite of my protests with these Belstone parishioners.

18601. (*Sir John Edge.*) In rear of the firing line?—Yes.

18602. (*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) On account of the concussion?—I do not know on what ground.

18603. They must have put forward some ground?—I presume so, but I am not aware of the reason.

18604. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) How far was the hill from the town?—It is a little village called Belstone, and I should say it is about a mile.

18605. So that the concussion could not affect it?—It cannot affect them; it is about the same distance as our ranges are from the

large town of Okehampton, and there is no reason whatever for their objection.

18606. (*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) Did you never hear on what ground it was done? There must have been something put forward?—No, I was shown the draft of the agreement which they were making, and against which I protested strongly.

18607. (*Sir John Edge.*) Had the War Office forgotten you had got the range when they made the agreement with the village?—No, because the agreement was sent to me for my remarks.

18608. (*Chairman.*) Is it a lasting agreement?—It is an agreement that can be terminated; it was to be terminable at six months' notice on either side.

18609. So that it is in the hands of the War Office now?—Yes, and we have been going on for six or seven years trying to induce them to give us that.

18610. (*Sir John Edge.*) Possibly the War Office may not think a 6,000 yards range is required in the country?—But they had bought the farm for the express purpose of giving us this extra range.

As an example of how not to do it this story of Watchit Hill would be difficult to beat.

As Mr. Brodrick has been shifted from the War Office to the India Office, the justice of the indictment charging him with indifference to the need of intelligence in the Army may be regarded as endorsed by his chiefs.

It is a curious and significant fact that with the exception of Lord Milner none of the men most responsible for the war and its misadventures remain in the offices which they held when the war broke out. Lord Salisbury is dead, Mr. Balfour is now Prime Minister, the Duke of Devonshire and Mr. Chamberlain have resigned, Mr. Wyndham has gone to Ireland, Mr. Brodrick has been pitchforked into the India Office, and Lord Lansdowne is Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Balfour, so far from realising the gravity of the verdict passed upon him and his colleagues by the Royal Commission, appears to believe their censure has raised rather than impaired the confidence which they can command in the country.

CHAPTER XIX.

HOW DO WE STAND NOW?

EVERYONE will agree with Sir Coleridge Grove that the first thing to be settled is what kind of an army we want, and what we want it to do. The Stanhope standard of 1888, to which reference is made by Sir C. Grove, was, until this Commission reported, practically unknown to the general public, not even to General Roberts, the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief!

It no doubt appears to be incredible that the Commander-in-Chief should not be familiar with the accepted definition of British military requirements drawn up by his predecessor in command, but the fact stands on record.

In Lord Roberts' own evidence we read :—

13221. I suppose it has occurred to you that the question of a reduction of military expenditure is likely to become some day, perhaps very soon, a very important question?—Yes; but what strikes me is, that it is very desirable before any question of either increase or decrease is raised, the nation should pretty well determine what the Army has got to do.

13222. Whose function do you think it is to define what the Army has got to do?—I suppose the Cabinet.

13264. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) The present organisation of the Army is based upon Mr. Stanhope's five propositions, is it not? It has been stated here that the public have never been made aware of those propositions, or on what basis it is that the Army is at present organised?—I cannot tell you why they should not know it.

13265. It has been stated here by a very high officer, Sir Coleridge Grove, that the scheme propounded by Mr. Stanhope has never been placed before Parliament, and that the money they have been voting has been in effect voted in the dark?—*I do not know really what Mr. Stanhope's propositions are!*

Sir Redvers Buller in his evidence (15638) pleaded for the appointment of an advisory board, one of whose first duties would be to tell the Commander-in-Chief what really is the Army that he is to maintain, and for what purposes that Army is required. "I was twenty-five years in the War Office, and every year we asked that last question, and we never succeeded in getting it answered, except once, and then it was answered wrongly."

The question which the perusal of the preceding narrative leaves upon the mind is whether, after all the costly and ruinous experience of the war, there is an army in these islands upon which we can rely to discharge the duties for which £27,000,000 are voted every year.

The answer is not very encouraging. Lord Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief, says plainly :—

10292. In estimating what the strength of our Army should be you must calculate what its requirements are. If you send a force abroad, say 70,000 in India and 30,000 or 40,000 to the Colonies, you have to keep them up to the established strength by drafts, and this you cannot do without

a certain fixed establishment in this country. That is the way to look at it. When a reduction in the strength of the Army is proposed, the responsibilities which the Army has to meet must be considered. *I doubt whether our existing responsibilities can be met by our Army at its present strength.*

General Sir Kelly-Kenny, Adjutant-General, is equally despondent :—

4639. If we declared war to-morrow, I suppose the first thing we should do would be to send an army to attack some of the enemy's possessions, and *I do not know where we would find it.*

The Royal Commissioners in their Report are only hopeful as to the future. For the past and for the present they are in despair. They say in their Report :—

155. "But the true lesson of the war in our opinion is, that no military system will be satisfactory which does not contain powers of expansion outside the limit of the regular forces of the Crown, whatever that limit may be.

"If the war teaches anything it is this, that throughout the Empire, in the United Kingdom, its colonies and dependencies, there is a reserve of military strength which, for many reasons, we cannot and do not wish to convert into a vast standing army, but to which we may be glad to turn again in our hour of need as we did in 1899. In that year there was no preparation whatever for utilising these great resources. Nothing had been thought out either as to pay or organisation, as to conditions of service, or even as to arms. Even here in England it was to be "an experiment." The new force was not to be discouraged, but it was allowed to equip itself, and it was denied anything beyond the barest complement of trained officers.

"We regret to say that we are not satisfied that enough is being done to place matters on a better footing in the event of another emergency. No doubt changes have been introduced with regard to the training of Volunteers and Yeomanry, but this again is a controversial topic, which has been referred to another Commission, and one which need not be pressed in connection with the point we desire to make. It must be recognised that no amount of training which can be enforced will convert Volunteers or Yeomanry into Regular troops. But Volunteers and Yeomanry proved themselves of value in the late war under an organisation which was improvised for them in the face of the enemy. Where is that organisation now? So far as we can learn nothing has been done to collect systematically the valuable experience of the officers who worked that organisation, certainly nothing to formulate that experience, to embody it in handbooks, or to create a framework which would be ready for prompt and effective action. Doubts and difficulties surround us when we attempt to imagine the British Empire as a great military Power in the sense of our Continental neighbours. But our Inquiry inspires us with much confidence in the strength and unanimity of the loyalty of the Empire, and of the value of that loyalty if properly used within the limitations which circumstances impose."

The answer to the doubts and difficulties which perplex the Commission when attempting to imagine the British Empire as a great military Power in the sense of our Continental neighbours is that the imagination of man should not attempt the impossible. It is unimaginable that the British Empire as we know it can ever be a great military Empire. The whole value of the Commissioners' observations on this head lies in the concluding phrase. We also are inspired with much confidence in the strength and unanimity of the loyalty of the Empire and of the value of that loyalty "if properly used within the limitations which circumstances impose."

These limits are much narrower than General Sir T. Kelly-Kenny, for instance, appears to believe. We must give up all idea of sending armies to

attack the possessions of other Powers. A voluntary army counted by thousands can no longer masquerade as a fighting force in presence of Continental armies based on universal compulsory service which are counted by the million. The lesson of the South African War is that we have to choose one of two things—Conscription, or a policy of much stricter non-intervention than we have hitherto practised. All notion of entering the lists with our Army against any great Power must be dismissed as midsummer madness. The reason why is written at large across the pages of this Report.

So far from having an army adequately equipped for waging war against Russia or Germany or France, we have not, despite all our expenditure, got an army which, in the opinion of its own officers, is to be trusted even to defend our own shores from invasion.

The evidence of Lord Roberts is quite conclusive on that point. The italics of course are editorial. He said:—

10368. My opinion is that if we are going to trust the Volunteers and Militia, we are bound to have them properly trained: and if the patriotism of the nation is not sufficient to let them go to camp often enough, we must have some other system by which we shall have properly trained officers and soldiers. *It is impossible under the present system to rely upon the Volunteers as they are now, or upon the Militia.* Some change must be made; either they must have more training, or we must use some other means to create an Army.

10371 You would not like to see a Militia regiment attacking the enemy in the way you described?—Not without more training than they have at present.

10372. And that applies still more to the Volunteers?—Yes; there is no disguising the fact that *you cannot trust them as they are at present trained—it is impossible.*

10397. Then you said that at present you could not trust the Volunteers and Militia. I suppose that would mean for service abroad or in the field?—*Well, I should say for service at home, too.*

10398. Would you say that they were inefficient at the present time for home defence?—I think they are inefficient mainly because the officers are not sufficiently trained to command the men, and the men themselves have not had sufficient training.

10399. Then you do not consider it a satisfactory establishment in the meantime for that purpose of home defence?—No.

As it is with the Volunteers and the Militia so it is with the Yeomanry. General Sir T. Kelly-Kenny said:—

4665. They are intelligent men, and the first lot of Yeomanry did very well in Africa owing to their intelligence, and owing also to the time, as they had a very long time to prepare; but for a European war, as I say, if we were to send an army out of the kingdom, first of all we would have to appeal to the Yeomanry to come, and secondly I do not think they would be very much use when they got with the Regular Army.

4666. Abroad?—They would not be of use to fight in line against European troops.

Again he said, speaking of the Yeomanry:—

You cannot send a Yeoman abroad, and you must fall back on Volunteers as we did before. In a European war I cannot imagine anything more fatal than to depend on such a system. I do not mean a war like the Boer War, but a war that would be very sudden in its inception and execution, and to depend upon Volunteers would, I think, be fatal.

That, then, is our true position? Note Sir T. Kelly-Kenny's answer to a

question asked him about the Army with all its regular and irregular forces. He replied :—

4876. I think that the country has an impression that this paper army is an effective army; but it is not.

Lord Roberts told the Royal Commission :—

“ Since I became Commander-in-Chief the Army at home has, with my concurrence, been organised in six Army Corps, of which three Army Corps, with three Cavalry Brigades, are intended to be eventually available at short notice for service abroad, and the remainder to be in readiness for home defence. Owing to the war in South Africa, and the large force still quartered in that country, this organisation has not yet been completed.”

Everything is still in the future. The war has depleted our reserve. There is no evidence of an improvement in our recruits either in number or in quality. The evils of our organisation condemned so frankly by our highest military authorities remain unabated. Are we living in a state of false security?

That seems to be the opinion of the Adjutant-General of the Forces. Take the following extract from his evidence :—

4857. I think before the war we had a very large paper army, had we not?—Yes.

4858. Our forces at home, in India, and abroad?—Yes.

4859. And our Militia and Yeomanry?—Yes.

4860. And I think our Volunteers were always before Parliament, too?—Yes.

4861. Do you not think that tends to give the nation a sense of confidence which is not justified?—Yes, false confidence.

4862. False security?—Quite.

4863. Do you not think, perhaps, the first military reform wanted until some form of compulsory service can be produced, is that the Estimates should be based solely on an absolutely effective army?—Yes, I think that is the first point to settle—that the Regular Army must be made perfect before we spend much money on the others.

4864. And that we shall not have put forward large numbers of ineffective troops, untrained troops, and troops without transport or equipment?—Certainly.

The question whether the present strength of our Army is adequate to our needs is one upon which much evidence was taken, but the net effect of the testimony of all the authorities is to leave us still very much in the dark. The evidence of General Sir W. Nicholson, the head of the Intelligence Department, is anything but reassuring.

EVIDENCE OF SIR W. NICHOLSON,  
MARCH 12, 1903.

18245. The war conclusively proved, therefore, that Mr. Stanhope's Memorandum did not make sufficient allowance for the general needs of the Empire.

It is apparent that contingencies are not unlikely to arise in the future which may again imperatively demand the despatch of a large organised force for the protection of imperial interests or possessions across the seas.

Under the six Army corps scheme three

Army corps and three cavalry brigades will be available for despatch across the sea. The sufficiency of this force to meet possible demands for reinforcements and expeditionary action is a matter for the consideration of the Government. On the other hand, the numerical strength of the regular and auxiliary forces which would, with our existing establishments, remain in the United Kingdom, after the despatch of this force, is believed to exceed what would be needed to defend the United Kingdom under existing strategical conditions, provided the auxiliary forces were efficient.

From the surplus thus left, and from the Colonial forces, it would no doubt be possible in time to improvise such additions to our field army as circumstances might demand. But it is impossible to foresee whether time would be available to allow of such forces being equipped, organised, and sufficiently trained to meet regular troops in the field. It would be wise, therefore, to carry out these processes in peace time, and thus adjust the general organisation of the land forces of the Empire to actual war needs. It is believed that this could be done without augmenting their existing numerical strength.

THE PRESENT ARMY INADEQUATE.

18246. That shows the establishment in 1899, and refers to the purposes for which the Army was organised under Mr. Stanhope's Memorandum and at the present time?—Yes.

18247. And the material remark that you make is that the war has conclusively proved that Mr. Stanhope's Memorandum did not make sufficient allowance for the general needs of the Empire?—Certainly.

18248. But are you of opinion that the present organisation will?—I am not of opinion that the present organisation will. I think it is inadequate.

18249. Would you explain why?—Under the present organisation we have three Army corps—say, 120,000 men—available in the event of the most serious war we are likely to be engaged in for reinforcements or for offensive action outside the United Kingdom. The question has been gone carefully into in my department, and I am of opinion, instead of having 120,000 men available for reinforcements or expeditionary action, we should have at least 200,000 men.

THE VITAL QUESTION STILL UNSETTLED.

18310. (*Sir Frederick Darley.*) Are there three Army Corps at the present moment ready for immediate service?—No.

18311. Are there two?—I should say about one and a-half is ready. It is not so much the men that are not ready, because in the course of next month I fancy they will be almost up to strength—at least the units will be up to strength—because the Army is in excess of the establishment; but there are

certain things which have not yet been fully completed, such as transport arrangements and the vehicles, and harness, and the arrangements for horses, and so on.

18312. How soon may the nation anticipate that there will be three Army Corps ready for immediate service?—I should imagine by the end of six months.

18294. If I might explain, I put forward my proposals for the military needs of the Empire, but I have never had any decision about them; and it is no good my going into the question of how this large force is to be raised until I have ascertained from the Government that they accept the conclusions put forward.

18295. That is, of course, one of the points you imagine that the Defence Committee are going to settle?—I hope they are going to settle it.

18271. If I understand you, you say you practically want 80,000 more men than you have got?—Yes; but that is the minimum. I should like to have many more.

EVIDENCE OF LORD ROBERTS,  
FEBRUARY 10, 1903.

13364. (*Viscount Esher.*) How many men have we got in South Africa at the present time?—We shall have, when the regiments now under orders for home leave, about 27,000.

13365. And you say the Army is rather over its strength than under?—Rather over than under.

13366. As to these Army Corps which are under the new organisation, will they be complete shortly when we get these regiments back, with the exception of 27,000?—Yes, practically speaking.

OUR SIX ARMY CORPS.

13367. They will cease to be what people call paper Army Corps, any of them?—The 5th and 6th are composed almost entirely of Militia and Volunteers; there are very few Regulars in them.

13368. It was never intended that there should be?—No, they are chiefly Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers. The first will be complete, and the Second will, in a measure, be complete; the barracks are not ready at Salisbury Plain; but the troops will be in the country somewhere.

13369. And to which did the term "paper

Army Corps" apply?—I daresay until the troops returned it applied to all of them. Seventeen battalions of infantry are now under orders for home; twelve have started, and five will leave shortly, and the balance left in South Africa will be about 27,000 men.

13370. And that will not disturb the Army Corps system?—No; but the corps will not be quite so strong as they would be if more battalions were at home.

13371. (*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) Will that enable you to complete the Third Army Corps?—The Third Army Corps is in Ireland; that will be practically complete.

13372. So that you will have three Army Corps complete when these come home?—I think so, except as regards cavalry; more of this branch are being kept in South Africa than has hitherto been considered necessary in proportion to the other arms. There will be in South Africa eleven regiments of cavalry to eighteen or twenty battalions of infantry, which is a very large proportion.

13373. (*Viscount Esher.*) Is your First Army Corps complete now?—It will be complete when the battalions now on their way home arrive, except as regards the cavalry.

13374. Is there not a Fourth Army Corps?—The Fourth Army Corps is the London one.

13375. Is that complete?—It is practically complete, except as regards cavalry.

13376. Then the Second Army Corps is the Salisbury Plain one?—Yes. It includes Portsmouth, Plymouth, Dover, as well as Salisbury Plain.

13377. That was very weak when Sir Evelyn Wood gave evidence here, but is that very different now?—Yes, in a very few weeks it will be very different.

13378. And the Third Army Corps is in Ireland?—Yes.

“NO RESERVE TO SPEAK OF.”

13269. In your evidence at Question 10243 you said: “Before the war the force readily available at home for expeditionary action abroad, was, in my opinion, inadequate, and efforts are now being made to remedy this defect by increasing the Army Reserve, and adding a Third Army Corps to the two previously organised for such action”?—Yes.

13270. In your opinion is it now adequate?

—It is a question as to what the Army may have to do. Before the war I suppose the Government never dreamt of having to send out 250,000 to South Africa.

13271. You say it is inadequate for any expeditionary action abroad, not merely for South Africa?—Yes, “before the war,” I said.

13272. Is it adequate now, putting South Africa out of consideration for the moment?—We have not got any Reserve now to speak of; our Reserve is almost depleted, and we shall require some time to recuperate. We had a Reserve of 80,000 Regulars before, and about 20,000 to 30,000 Militia; but now the Regular Reserve has come down to considerably less than half. At the present moment we are certainly not in a satisfactory condition.

NO LACK OF NUMBERS. (DECEMBER 4, 1902.)

10661. The normal military establishments amount to about 950,000 officers and men. [This includes all Irregulars, Volunteers, etc.—ED.] To these must be added about 14,000 Colonial troops, paid by the War Office, 4,000 paid by the Foreign Office, and 4,000 by the Colonial Office, besides the Native Army or India, numbering about 150,000. The Colonies also maintain a force about 89,000 strong, and the Channel Islands a force about 3,000 strong. The total, therefore, is 1,214,000. We cannot complain of want of men, but a considerable portion of them are insufficiently trained and organised, and would be at a serious disadvantage if opposed to the troops of the Continental Powers. Our main deficiencies are a lack of officers for the Army Reserve, Militia and Volunteers, and an insufficient number of troops liable to foreign service in the event of a serious war. I trust that these deficiencies may be made good by the patriotism of the mother country and its over-sea possessions—possibly also by the adoption of more attractive and elastic terms of service in the auxiliary forces at home and abroad. Efficiency is the main object to be aimed at, and the problem is how to secure efficiency without undue interference with the conditions of civil life. If we cannot obtain the force which we require for the defence of the Empire under the voluntary system, we may have to fall back upon conscription; but I would not adopt

the latter alternative until every effort had been made, and every expedient tried to provide for our military requirements at home and abroad by taking full advantage of the patriotic spirit which was so apparent during the late war.

#### THE IMPENDING SHADOW OF CONSCRIPTION.

It will be seen that Lord Roberts here adverts reluctantly to the possibility of having to resort to conscription.

The Royal Commission pronounces no judgment upon the subject, but Lord Esher records his opinion that Sir G. Taubman-Goldie's proposal for the universal military training of all our male youth at the age of seventeen is the only alternative to conscription. Lord Roberts, when examined upon his allusion to the possibility of a resort to conscription, explained that his remarks pointed to some sort of conscription for the home Army. The only way of escape, he went on to say, from a contingency which he regarded with dislike was for employers to show sufficient patriotism to let the men be trained for a certain number of weeks every year.

Do you think it is probable, he was asked, that you could get a practical agreement among the whole of the employers? He replied: (10381.) Perhaps, if they were threatened with conscription themselves they might do it.

#### LORD WOLSELEY ON COMPULSORY SERVICE.

Lord Wolseley frankly expressed his preference for universal military service on the Swiss system, but said that the only real practical, business-like alternative was to adopt the American plan of enlistment and payment (9209-10) which would give us the finest army in the world. Being further questioned, he replied:—

9211. If you put the question to me in that broad way I must think of other things besides the Army. I think the fact of compelling every hale man to go through a military training is of the most enormous benefit to any nation from an Imperial point of view, from a national point of view. I think it is impossible to estimate the great value to a nation which is given to it by every man being put through a sort of military mill, as is the case in Germany.

9212. Or in Switzerland?—Or in Switzerland.

9213. Do you approve of the Swiss system?—In Switzerland it is in a less severe form.

9214. You think it is a good one?—Yes.

9215. And that it might be more adapted to our country?—Perhaps.

9216. And do you think it would be sufficient for this country if it were adopted?—It would be an immense improvement.

#### CONSCRIPTION FOR THE MILITIA.

Lord Roberts regarded conscription for the foreign service Army as out of the question, but admitted (10403) that we could have conscription for the Militia. Subsequently he expressed some doubts as to whether this was practicable:—

10661. While I am in favour of making the Militia liable to foreign service in time of national emergency, I regard it as very questionable whether that force can be materially increased in strength or raised to a high state of efficiency without having recourse to a compulsory Ballot Act not admitting of the purchase of substitutes. At the same time I recognise the difficulty of inducing the nation to consent to any form of conscription, and of enforcing

compulsory military service in a country where no machinery exists for identifying and registering the movements of the population. Nothing is easier than to draw up a theoretical scheme for raising any given force by conscription, and I have had such schemes prepared in the case of the Militia. But in practice we should find it difficult to obtain the men without interference with the labour market, and without causing a good deal of social disturbance and ill-feeling. At present, therefore, I am hardly prepared to advocate compulsory Militia service.

Major-General Sir E. R. Turner, Inspector-General of the Auxiliary forces expressed himself as adverse to conscription for the Militia :—

7678. Do you consider that conscription in any form would be desirable for the Militia?—I do not think it is necessary. I have been a great many times with the German Army attached to the Staff, and I have seen a great deal of conscription in Germany. There it is suited to the institutions, the temper and the constitution of the country, and it is a most admirable system for a country that is coterminous with another country which may attack it, but I cannot consider that it is necessary for the defence of this country, because our food supply would fail if our fleet were destroyed, and it would not then be any use if we had an army of 2,000,000 men. The Navy, moreover, is our safety in the British Islands; and, therefore, I think we should be saved from conscription or compulsory service. Moreover, I do not think it is suited to the temper of the country, but that is a matter of opinion.

The great advocate of conscription before the Commission was General Kelly-Kenny, but what he wanted was conscription for the Regular Army. The Militia Ballot would not satisfy him :—

4847. Putting conscription for the moment on one side as impracticable, do you think that the Militia, made up to 200,000 men by ballot, would be practicable and useful?—It would be both practicable and useful, but it would not supply an army to take the field, and it would not be highly enough trained; neither would it assist the Adjutant-General in finding garrisons for India and the coaling stations. I could not send one of them out.

#### THE CASE FOR CONSCRIPTION FOR THE ARMY.

General Kelly-Kenny argued stoutly in favour of conscription for the Regular Army, although he would limit the conscript army to home defence—*at least at first*. The following extracts give the case for conscription as stated by its strongest advocate :—

##### EVIDENCE OF GENERAL KELLY-KENNY.

4697. Do you see any alternative, except a conscript army in some shape or form, to our present system?—No, I do not see any alternative.

4698. You can make no suggestion?—I see a very great difficulty, even if Parliament would consent to it, in having a conscription army, inasmuch as there is the difficulty of expatriating citizens, and I do not think we could do it; but what I think we might have is two armies—an army for home and to take the field in any part of the world in case of a war. The home army would be the conscription army, and I think the other

army would have to be a highly paid army to go to India and to coaling-stations and abroad.

4702. On the chance of our ever having to make an attack and fight a European army, I think we must have a conscription army.

4745. Would there not be great opposition to the carrying of it out, and constant opposition after it had been carried out?—Of course, that is a political question, but I should say that it would be quite the reverse, and that the people in the country and Parliament would be astonished that they had not done it before.

4746. You think it would be received almost gratefully by the people?—I think

very gratefully, particularly so if we escaped from some disaster through it.

4747. I suppose when you think they would receive it gratefully you assume that the foreign army would not be included in the conscription?—The Indian Army certainly not, except to fight; I suppose if we had a war on the frontier of Russia we would have to send out an army, and of course that would be an army from home. That would be calling up the Reserves and sending out an army wherever we liked as long as there was war.

4748. But for all ordinary service and small wars, such as we are constantly having in India and in Africa now, you would not employ the conscription army?—I should not certainly to begin with; I would aim at it in the end, but I think it would help us, it would make it more palatable, to avoid taking those liabilities at first.

4749. Would you keep the non-conscripted army always on foreign service, or would you let them have a turn at home?—The voluntary army would all be for foreign service.

4750. Entirely?—All.

4751. Do you think troops would remain as efficient if they knew they were local Indian troops, or local troops in some colony or another, and had not their turn at home as an army which serves all over the world and takes service in England?—I would rather have it the other way, but it is a choice of evils.

In reply to further questions, General Kelly-Kenny expressed grave doubt as to whether any increase of the pay of the soldier would attract the men we needed; the drudgery of military service was irksome to them. He said:—

Yes, the more you increase the pay, of course the better it will be; but, as I said

before, to fill the Army, to fill the ranks, I do not see any reasonable amount. I think 5s. a day would be an unreasonable amount to give. I think the country will have to judge, and the Commission will have to judge, when the breaking-point comes in, whether you can go on increasing the pay or beginning conscription.

4893. How do you reconcile that view of yours with your view that conscription would be popular in this country?—Because I think conscription will improve the education of the people.

4894. I think we shall get, as I say, a better class of men, and that the men will get better educated, and will submit to military training, which will finally affect the physique of the whole nation.

4896. They will have to submit to military training under conscription, of course, but, as to its popularity, if they do not like it now, why should they like it then?—They will like it when something good comes out of it. I think the men themselves will like being well educated, and they will like being associated with a better class of men.

4897. Their superior education will bring home to them the national obligation.

4953. I understood you to say that you looked upon it as almost hopeless to have an efficient and effective army, both to meet the requirements abroad in case of war and for the protection of the country here, without having conscription for home and a better pay for the Volunteer Army going abroad?—Yes, for home and foreign expeditions and foreign wars. I said that, and I adhere to it.

4954. You cannot point to anything else?—I cannot see any other solution of the difficulty.

4955. Otherwise it is really hopeless, you think?—Yes, I think so.

#### POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES TO CONSCRIPTION.

The question of providing recruits of the right quality and in adequate numbers was much discussed. Two schools of opinion find expression of the views in the Evidence. The first is the school which looks primarily to numbers and would seek above everything else to develop the auxiliary forces. Major-General Turner is the chief representative of this school:—

7657. It is of great importance to the country, then, to maintain the numbers of the auxiliary forces?—Of the greatest importance, because unless we want conscription I think there is no other way of meeting the Imperial responsibilities.

7658. But you will have a difficulty in keeping them up?—Great difficulty.

7659. And the only suggestion you have to make is this increase in the grant?—That would do it, I think.

The other school belittles the auxiliary forces, ridicules the idea that irregulars can ever hold their own against trained troops, and insists upon the ideal of a smaller but perfectly trained force that is capable of going anywhere and doing anything. Of this school Lieutenant-General Sir Ian Hamilton is the most eloquent representative. He is all for quality. "The soldier of the future, selected, trained, and educated as he might be in a voluntary enlistment army, should stand, in fighting value, as far above local levies or armed populace as a mailed knight of the Middle Ages did in respect to the peasants of the Jacquerie."

#### THE IMPOTENCE OF IRREGULAR TROOPS.

It has often been assumed that if the Boer War proved anything, it showed that the untrained civilian who could ride and shoot could hold his own against trained soldiers. But the Generals are altogether of a different opinion. Rimington's Guides were among the best irregular troops raised in South Africa, but their Commander stated in the strongest terms that they would have been nowhere against Regular Cavalry:—

12727. Though for scouting and fighting against Boer Mounted Infantry my Guides were all that I could wish for, and though later I found no difficulty in galloping at and storming, carbine in hand, any temporary Boer position with them, I am positively certain that they, being untrained in shock tactics and having no personal weapon, would have had no chance whatever against well-trained, well-mounted, and well-led Regular Cavalry half their number. I say this after being engaged, when in command of these men, on approximately 120 days. Later I commanded the Inniskilling Dragoons, and found that though for individual shooting and scouting they could not compare with those born and accustomed to the veldt, and able to get information from every native, well-mounted, well-trained Regular Cavalry in action were worth double their number of Mounted Infantry (whether Boers or British). I wish particularly to draw attention to this, as since I came back to England I have heard many individuals express opinions which show that they had no conception that such was the case, and it appears to me that there would be a very rude awakening if Mounted Infantry attempted to hold their own against Regular European Cavalry trained say, for instance, on the German system.

Even the Colonials are said to have been inferior to Regulars when used as mounted infantrymen. Lieutenant-General Sir Ian Hamilton told the Commission:—

14049. The Australians were possessed of so much individuality themselves and initiative that they would get off their horses and go and take a place. But still if I was going to make a serious attack and drive it home, there is nobody like our own regular mounted infantry drawn from British infantry regiments. Greatly as I value the Australians, the Australians would be the first to say it, and the Canadians, too.

#### THE VALUELESSNESS OF UNTRAINED VOLUNTEERS.

Reliance upon the volunteers, the Generals one and all declare, is reliance upon a broken reed—until the volunteer is trained. Lord Methuen told the Commission:—

14371. The harm done now is that there are a number of volunteers in this country who are not of much good, both officers and men, and what we

should wish to see is a good volunteer force in this country, not so big as it is at present, but absolutely reliable. What we do not want to see is this: If you remember, in Queen Elizabeth's time, when she went down to Tilbury, there was a Lord de Vere, who had seen a good deal of fighting in Flanders, and when she had gone down all the line, she said: "Now, Lord de Vere, what do you think of this array?" "Well," he said, "Madam, I am not thought a coward, but I am the biggest coward here; I am only thinking what foreign troops would do with these men if they came across them"; that is what we fear about the volunteers—that you will have a number of men on paper, and you will think there are a great many valuable men, but one fine day when put on the ground, they will not be found of the value they ought to be

#### QUANTITY VERSUS QUALITY.

Sir A. Conan Doyle expressed succinctly what many others expressed at greater length when he said he would prefer to have half the number if he could have twice the quality. Sir Ian Hamilton said:—

13953. That raises the question whether you would like to have a smaller force more highly trained rather than a larger force not so highly trained?—Personally, I would sooner have a smaller force highly trained. I think that the margin of efficiency has been so enormously increased, and the difference between the highly-trained soldier and the poorly-trained soldier, especially with these modern firearms, is such that it would pay best to have a man who would take the full advantage of his weapons and of the ground.

Lord Methuen gave evidence in the same sense:—

14370. We have heard a good deal of evidence on the question of brains *versus* numbers; supposing you were organising an army at a fixed sum of money, would you rather have an army say 100 per cent. strong, as our army is at present, or would you rather have it 60 per cent. of thoroughly trained men, with the money spent on training rather than on the increase of numbers?—I prefer 60 per cent. thoroughly trained men.

14371. You attach more importance to brains than numbers?—Von der Goltz says quite clearly in one of his books: "This is the time when we have big armies, but you mark my words, that the nation that will do the best is the nation that can produce a small army, but absolutely good," or words to that effect, and I am perfectly certain that what we want is a small army and thoroughly good.

Sir Ian Hamilton even went so far as to say that if you improved the quality of your troops you could reduce the numbers of your forces.

Major-General Sir R. Pole-Carew (16590) thought brains of more importance than numbers, except in a European war, where it was necessary to have numbers.

#### THE DEMAND FOR INTELLIGENCE IN THE RANKS.

Every witness concurred in the opinion that in future wars more reliance must be placed upon the intelligence of the individual soldier. To secure this it was necessary to draw our recruits from a better-educated stratum of society than that which now takes the King's shilling, and to train them more intelligently, so as to develop their brains. Speaking of the present rank and file, Sir Charles Warren said they possessed excellent qualities:—

15730. In fact, they only wanted instruction?—It appears to me that what they wanted was instruction.

Speaking of the difficulty of persuading the ordinary soldier to make an intelligent use of cover, Lord Methuen was asked:—

14226. Would the class of man you get as a recruit for the army have

intelligence enough—he has plenty of pluck—to take up that idea?—As I said, to a certain extent, but you would never expect him to have the cunning and shrewdness of the Dutchman, or of our Colonials from New Zealand and Australia.

14227. And to get a really satisfactory Army from that point of view you would have to go to a more intelligent class?—Yes.

#### THE LACK OF INTELLIGENCE AT THE TOP.

Judging from the evidence, the need for intelligence is quite as much felt at the top as at the bottom of the military hierarchy.

General Sir Redvers Buller was very strenuous in his demand for an intellectual equipment from the Secretary of State, and the great benefit the intellectual equipment would be is that you would get what is very much wanted—a military policy for the Army. We have no office of military policy at the moment:—

15523. (*Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*) Would you define what you mean by “military policy”?—By “military policy” I mean first a certain amount of looking ahead beyond the idea of the moment.

“A certain amount of looking ahead” is conspicuous by its absence in the narratives of most of the witnesses. What is wanted most of all is to evolve a brain for the military forces of the Empire. It was supposed that the Defence Committee of the Cabinet had provided this organ. It is clear from the evidence of many witnesses that the old Defence Committee performed no such function. It remains to be seen whether the new Defence Committee will be any more satisfactory.

#### THE NEW DEFENCE COMMITTEE.

Mr. Brodrick gave the Commission a very rose-coloured account of this new body. He said:—

The new Defence Committee, as I think the Commission knows from the statements in Parliament, has, as I think, the great advantage of combining with members of the Cabinet the most influential representatives, experts, of the two services, and it also calls in as occasion needs representatives either of the India Office or Colonial Office, or any other Department affected. The effect of the deliberations of this Committee may be very extensive. It is obvious that their decision, so far as a decision of any body of men can govern it, must govern our preparations both by land and sea. So far as my Department is concerned, nothing which has been hitherto resolved upon as our force either for defence or for offence abroad can be regarded as settled, as apart from the deliberations of this Committee. But, of course, as was explained by the Prime Minister, the functions which he assigns to the Committee are deliberative and not executive. He does not favour the Committee being used (as the old Committee was) as a means of discussing Estimates, at all events until they have dealt with the much more pressing question of what will be the policy of the country in a variety of contingencies which must be submitted to them, and on those questions of policy depend perhaps more largely than anything else what the Estimates for the year will be. I do not think such a state of things as existed in 1899, as shown in the evidence before the Commission, could again exist. I think that the Committee of Defence would make it their business at a very early moment of the negotiations to call upon the Commander-in-Chief to inform them what were his plans, what would be his requirements under a variety of circumstances; and I imagine that the establishment of the Defence Committee on the present basis is the best guarantee that the country could have that we shall not again be placed in a position of doubt under such circumstances:—

21739. (*Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal*).—*Q.* It would be within the province of that Committee to inquire into anything that the Commander-in-Chief might put forward, that would be entirely in order?—*A.* Yes, every member of that Committee has the same power of initiative.

It remains to be seen what use they will make of this power of initiative. Up to the signing of the Report of the Royal Commission, its members had evidently heard no evidence that convinced them that the new Defence Committee had decided any of the vital questions upon which the future of the Army depends, and not only the future of the Army, but the future of the Empire.

The only member of the Commission who made any definite proposal was Sir G. Taubman-Goldie, who appended the following note to the Report of the Commission.

NATIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION.

*Note by Sir George Taubman-Goldie.*

I have signed the Report, as I accept and concur with it generally; but, with the approval of my colleagues, I desire to attach a note on two matters with which the Report deals, but on which it does not pronounce definite conclusions.

The first relates to the office of Commander-in-Chief. In this matter I agree generally with the Note of Lord Esher. The second and far more serious defect in our military preparations for the war was in not having a sufficient number of trained men to furnish (by voluntary effort in a national emergency) the large reinforcements demanded both by the wastage of war and by the vast area of the operations. In close relation with this defect was the lamentable insufficiency of trained officers. Our Report deals with the facts and results of these defects. It does not pronounce definitely how they might have been remedied. I believe these questions to be still vital to the security of the United Kingdom and of the British dependencies, and the remedy which I submit is National Military Education. Although prepared to furnish a detailed scheme, it is not possible in this brief Note to do more than roughly sketch a general outline, as follows. After two or three years' interval to allow of the perfecting of existing Volunteer Cadet Corps and the general creation of others throughout the country, every physically sound boy of 17 years of age, not serving in the Navy or the Merchant Service and unprovided with a certificate (from the appointed military authority) that he is an efficient member of a volunteer cadet corps, would have to serve for a term in national cadet schools—officered, as are Woolwich and Sandhurst, by officers of the regular army. The length of the term—whether six, eight, or ten months—is a question for expert inquiry; but our evidence shows that, for boys of the age of the junior gentlemen cadets of Woolwich, it might be far shorter than the time now needed to convert an infantry recruit into a trained soldier. For instance, Sir Evelyn Wood (*Q.* 4355) says: "Although I advocate great attention being paid to the training of our men, it is not possible to add a great deal to it with our men whom you have to coax into the service, as they would not come at all; they would say, 'Oh, no, if this is military training, I would sooner be a civilian,' and our desires with regard to the training of the men are strictly limited by what the recruiting officer tells us is the character of training which would be agreeable to the population, which we hope will come into the Army." But assuming the maximum term to be eight months, probably a very large proportion, consisting of the most intelligent and of those who had only just failed to secure previous certificates of efficiency, could be discharged as

efficient after three or four months, thus diminishing the amount of tent, hut, or barrack accommodation required, which is the first material difficulty arising in any scheme of general military training. Much may be done to meet this difficulty by billeting and similar methods; just as undergraduates, for whom there is no room in college, are boarded out. But it may be confidently anticipated that the system of exemption certificates for efficiency would vastly reduce the numbers annually presenting themselves at the national cadet schools; for, with such an inducement, volunteer cadet corps would spread throughout the country and bring the efficiency of their members up to the standard. Assuming that a balance of 100,000 uncertificated boys would annually join the national cadet schools, it is clear that a large number of trained regular officers would be required for the work, who would be available for active service in a national emergency at home or abroad. This would meet Lord Roberts' objection to an increase in the present number of officers with each regiment, on the ground that they would not have enough to do. My suggestion is that officers should not be permanently attached to the national cadet schools, but that each regiment should furnish a quota of majors, captains, and subalterns in annual rotation. In proposing this plan of national military education, I do not wish to depreciate an alternative scheme—the Swiss system—which has received considerable public support. But it seems to me that the former would be as effective and not open to many of the objections which, rightly or wrongly, have been raised to the Swiss system. For instance, it has been said that military service, even for short periods, extending between the ages of eighteen and twenty-three, would seriously interfere with the avocations of young men during the most decisive period of their lives. Again, at that more advanced age, it would be difficult to prevent any tendency to acquire alcoholic habits; while stringent regulations, as at Woolwich and Sandhurst, would be practicable with boys of seventeen. Again, at this younger age, it would be easier to trace identity and residence through the School Board lists. Again, boys of seventeen are far better fitted for instruction and discipline than at a later age. Finally, there has appeared a natural prejudice against the Swiss system on the part of many who take a warm personal interest in the Militia and Volunteers, on the ground that its introduction would lead to the abolition of these valuable forces. The scheme of National Military Education would not tend to supplant the Militia or Volunteers, but, on the contrary, would make them both more popular and less costly, as the men joining them would not have to undergo the tedious drudgery of training as recruits, and these branches of the service having only a very limited period for training would thereby gain greatly in efficiency. This advantage would be equally felt in the Yeomanry, in which too much of the limited time of recruits has to be occupied in learning to shoot and in preliminary drill. The same consideration applies to the existing difficulty of obtaining suitable recruits for the regular army, and would also obviate the necessity for a substantial increase in the rate of pay. I cannot deal here with a score of minor obvious objections to the scheme, beyond saying that most of them can be overcome, and that the few which prove insuperable must be accepted as the less of two evils; but I wish to meet two leading objections which will certainly be raised. The first is that it would add to the national expenditure. If it were so I should still urge it, because the true measure of our military and naval expenditure should be our national security. I am convinced, however, that the system would result in a great diminution of expenditure by permitting a large reduction of the number of men serving with the colours in the regular

army, as well as in many other ways. I regret that space will not allow of my entering into details on these points, or urging collateral advantages, or dealing with the complicated question of providing drafts for India and the Colonies. The second leading objection is that the nation will not submit to any such scheme. It seems a sufficient reply to recall that, prior to 1870, the same objection was raised, with the same confidence, to the proposals for a system of national civil education. I have said nothing of the moral, social, mental, and physical advantages of the scheme, because the business of the Commission is confined to our military preparations. Moreover, these immense indirect gains to the country have been abundantly expounded by the advocates of all plans of general military service. But such gains are nevertheless germane to this Note, inasmuch as their prospect will tend to overcome any prejudice against the adoption of national military education, if not in the form that I have suggested, then in some other form. Indeed, I regret deeply being compelled to put forward any definite plan, which may savour of presumption, especially in the didactic form necessitated by extreme conciseness. But no other course was open to a member of the Commission convinced, as I am, that this particular defect in our military organisation has cost the country no less than a hundred millions sterling, that it was a principal indirect cause of the outbreak of war, that for some months it left the United Kingdom practically denuded of trained soldiers, and that it produced the most perilous international situation in which the Empire has found itself since the days of Napoleon. Only an extraordinary combination of fortunate circumstances, external and internal, saved the Empire during the early months of 1900, and there is no reason to expect a repetition of such fortune if, as appears probable, the next national emergency finds us still discussing our preparations.

Sir Frederick Darley and Sir John Edge say that "We have signed the Report, with which we concur, and only desire to add that we agree with Sir George Taubman-Goldie's suggestion that every boy not disqualified by infirmity should be compelled to undergo a course of military training."

Sir John Jackson expresses the opinion that if a few months prior to the outbreak of hostilities the War Office had had (as suggested by Sir Andrew Noble, Q. 20840) a sum of, say, ten millions at its disposal to be spent only with the consent of the Cabinet, but without the publicity of Parliament, preparations could have been made which would have reduced the cost of the war—even if it had not prevented the Boers from declaring war—by probably not less than one hundred millions sterling.

We close our examination of the Report and the evidence taken by the Commission with profound uneasiness. Our military estimates have risen to thirty millions sterling per annum, a larger sum than suffices to provide France and Germany with their armies of millions. But it is evident that those who have the spending of this enormous sum are far from satisfied with the results.

Although we spend more money over our Army than our Continental neighbours, we have to show for the greater expenditure a smaller Army, of lower intelligence and very inferior training.

That is not a satisfactory result. And the worst of it is that there is not any reason to believe that if we doubled our military budget and introduced conscription we should be any stronger than we are to-day. It is brain and character that we want, and these things unfortunately can neither be improvised nor bought in the market-place.

## POSTSCRIPT.

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Since this abridgment of the Report and the Evidence has concluded, Lord Esher was offered, and declined, the post of Secretary of State for War, to which Mr. Arnold-Forster was then appointed. On November 7th, 1903, the following announcement appeared in the papers :—

“The Prime Minister, with the King’s approval, and after consultation with the Secretary of State for War, has appointed a Committee to advise as to the creation of a Board for the administrative business of the War Office and as to the consequential changes thereby involved.”

The names of the Committee are :—

Viscount Esher, K.C.B. (Chairman) ;  
Admiral Sir John Fisher, G.C.B. ; and  
Colonel Sir George Sydenham Clarke, R.E., K.C.M.G.

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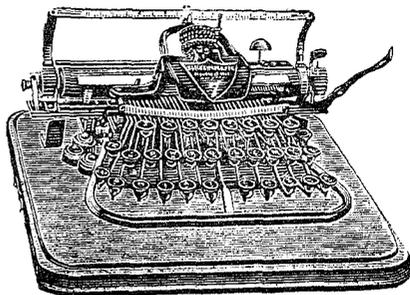
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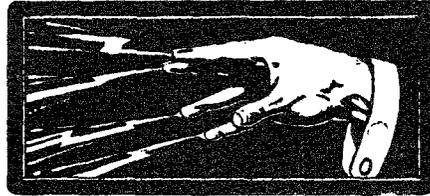
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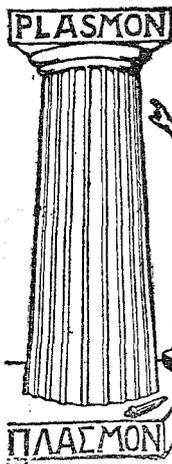
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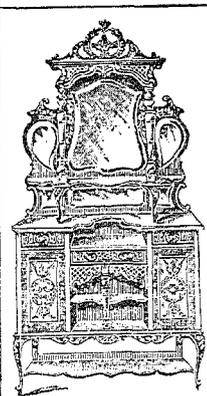
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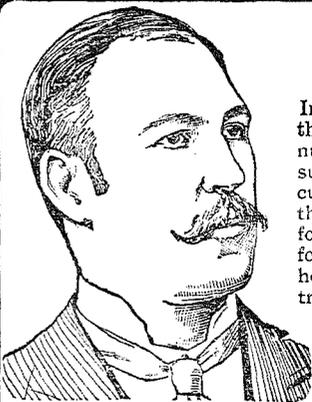
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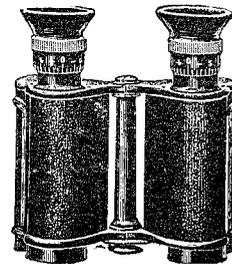
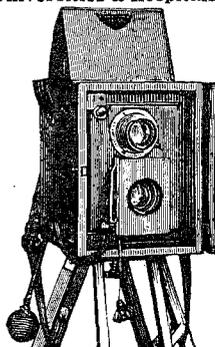
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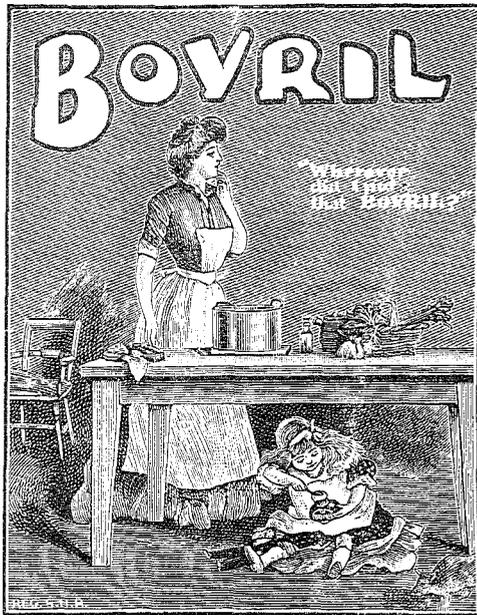
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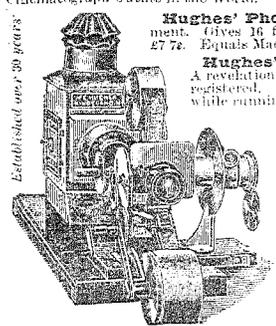
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