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The Training of our Seamen

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Friday, February 12, 1892.

ADMIRAL SIR J. E. COMMERELL, *N.C.*, G.C.B., in the Chair.

THE TRAINING OF OUR SEAMEN.

By Vice-Admiral the Honourable Sir EDMUND R. FREMANTLE,
K.C.B., C.M.G.

"THE training of our seamen" is my theme, and, if I may judge by the lectures which have been given here, as well as by recent articles in the "*United Service Magazine*," from the pen of Officers of distinction, it is a subject of very general interest at the present time, when a change, which has been in progress for the last fifty years in the Fleet, by the substitution of steamers for sailing ships, is approaching its inevitable conclusion; our men-of-war being now all but universally mastless and sailless steamers, dependent upon machinery alone for their means of locomotion.

The present importance of the subject is, then, my reason for taking it up, and not because I have any fad or hobby of my own; it is probable that I can say little that is new, but I trust that I may say much that is true, and which will be acknowledged as such by my brother Officers. In my view, the principal writers and lecturers who have dealt with the training of our seamen have lived far too much in the region of sentiment, and have seldom condescended to look facts in the face, so that their contributions, however interesting, have had a reactionary tendency, and this, I think, is unfortunate. But I propose dealing with the views of others more fully later; it is more to the purpose at present to explain my own standpoint, which is simply that, while I yield to none in my respect and reverence for our old naval heroes—and the conditions under which they developed their seamanlike skill are an interesting study—I consider that the path of wisdom is rather to look forward than backward, that there is neither maunliness nor profit to be gained by "crying over spilt milk," and recognizing that "The old order changeth, yielding place to new," it is our duty to endeavour, in the training of our seamen, to adapt them to their environment.

Intimately connected with the subject of training is that of numbers and organization.

It is obvious, for instance, that, if we require more boys or men in future, the system of entry and training must be altered or modified, while the question of the organization of our ships' com-

panies is, to a great extent, the further training of our men-of-war's men after they have left the training ships, and cannot, therefore, be overlooked; my subject, accordingly, divides itself into three heads:—

- I. Numbers required for peace and war service.
- II. Organization.
- III. Early training.

The latter is, of course, the important point, and the one with which I propose specially to deal; but for the reasons given above it cannot be dissociated from the other two, on which it, in great part, depends; if, however, it is objected that my proposals with regard to numbers and organization are somewhat sketchy, it should be remembered that I am only dealing with them incidentally, and as a frame to my views on training.

Let us now look into the question of our available personnel. Have we an active and reserve force sufficient to enable us to man all our ships, mercantile auxiliaries included, in case of a maritime war? Shall we be able to do so in 1894, when the ships to be provided under the Naval Defence Act are completed?

Before answering this question I should like to say that I am no alarmist, and that my theory always has been, and is still, that the modern man-of-war being a complicated machine, highly trained Officers and men are absolutely necessary, so that I should aim at having our first line thoroughly efficient, and that I should consider a large and generally inefficient reserve to be neither necessary nor desirable.

Given, I thought, a war well begun by ships properly manned and disciplined, and as the war proceeded the gaps would be filled by volunteers from the merchant service and men with a predilection for a sea life, and I called to mind how our Navy had increased in the great French war from a total of 45,000¹ men in 1793 to 140,000¹ in the later years of the war, and how, in more recent times, the American Navy, which had only numbered 7,600² in 1861, with 1,457 Officers of all grades, in 1865 numbered 51,500 seamen with 7,600³ Officers, curiously enough the exact number of the seamen four years previously.

These considerations are consolatory, but there is the reverse of the medal. The seamen-gunners and torpedoists we now require cannot be recruited from the mercantile marine, as seamen could formerly, and the Americans had no navy to oppose them, whilst other maritime nations have now much better organized reserves than they had 100 years ago, so that I propose to shortly examine the numbers composing our present force, reserves included, and to see whether there are reasonable grounds for considering it insufficient.

This is not the place for going into details, especially with regard to Officers; but, lest it should be supposed that I have overlooked

¹ James, "Naval History," vols. i and vi.

² Professor Soley, in "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War."

³ Admiral Porter, "History of American Civil War."

this part of the question, I say at once that I do not share the views of those who complain bitterly of the dearth of Lieutenants, even advocating a large increase of their numbers with a corresponding addition to the half-pay list, my reasons being that it is most important that all our Officers on the active list should be kept efficient by constant service; that no other Power has any such reserve of naval Officers—France especially having but a bare sufficiency for peace service; and that we have in the Officers of the Royal Naval Reserve a most useful body of men, numbering, according to Mr. Forwood, “758” in 1891, 86 of whom had served, or were serving, their twelve months in men-of-war.”

In my view, the first demand of a great naval war would be for younger and more active Officers, and I would point out that in the American Civil War one of the first steps taken by Congress was to retire many of the older Officers and to pass a law by which “Commanders became Admirals by a single step, and junior Officers became First Lieutenants of ships in which they were serving as Midshipmen.”²

Leaving the Officers, then, let us turn to the men, and let us look at the numbers in the Estimates for 1891–92.

These Estimates show an active force of 71,000 Officers and men, of whom, in round numbers, 2,000 are pensioners or borne for shore service, 4,000 are Coastguard, 14,000 are Marines, 7,000 are boys, 4,000 Officers, and the remainder, or less than 40,000, are petty officers and seamen, under which heading stokers are included.

If we continue our investigations to the next page we shall find our Reserves stated at 26,568, of whom, in round numbers, 21,500 belong to the Royal Naval Reserve, 845 being Officers, 3,000 are seamen and marine pensioners, and 2,000 are Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers, making, with the 71,000 of the active force, a respectable total of 97,548; but from this must be deducted the 2,000 Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers, whom the Admiralty have handed over to the Army, the country being unable to find a place for them among its naval defenders! Making this deduction, we have, in round numbers, a total of 95,500, while France has, according to our veteran Admiral of the Fleet Sir Thomas Symonds, even deducting the *Infanterie de Marine*, a total of nearly 158,000. But this is not all. Our present Royal Naval Reserve has never been called out, and both its available numbers and the individual value of the seamen of which it is composed, as men-of-war's men, are somewhat problematical.

I am myself a believer in the Royal Naval Reserve—that is, I think better of them than most naval Officers—though I consider that they would prove of most value when serving in the mercantile cruisers, which are the ships that many of them would be familiar with; but two facts must always be remembered in connection with the Royal Naval Reserve. The first is, that the number of stokers or firemen in the force is infinitesimal, and the second is, that, practically, we cannot

¹ Mr. Forwood, speech at Liverpool, in “Times,” 13th January, 1892; the Estimates give the number as 815.

² Professor Soley, “The Blockade and the Cruisers.”

increase their number beyond that at which it stands at present. Mr. Forwood,¹ indeed, estimates that it might be increased by 10,000 men; but in the same speech he tells us that, in spite of three-quarters of a million increase in the tonnage of the British mercantile marine in the last fifteen years, the number of British seamen has diminished by 20,000. Practically, then, our only reserve is of doubtful value, and cannot be increased, while we have no reserve at all of stokers.

In our active force, Vote A, we have, it is true, our 4,000 Coast-guard, the Marines on shore, and men in harbour and gunnery ships, but these would certainly not be more than sufficient to man all our available ships, even at the present time, and in 1894 we should be unable to do so, though the Admiralty are preparing, to some extent, to meet the difficulty by increasing the entries of boys. No doubt some of the Royal Naval Reserve would be available, though I omit them from my calculation for the reasons above given.

We are then forced to the conclusion that our present system does not give us a force large enough for our requirements, and that, admirable as it is in many ways, some change is necessary. This is the universal opinion of naval Officers; the quality of our present active force is admirable, but it is inexpansive; its quantity is insufficient, and our reserves are inadequate.

Sir Thomas Symonds,² in a recent letter to the "Times," speaks strongly on the point, quoting the opinions of Lord Alcester, Admiral de Horsey, Sir A. Ryder, and Sir A. Phillimore in support of his views. It is true that these opinions were given in 1884, but, if they were correct then, they are, *a fortiori*, held now that the matériel of our Navy has been so greatly increased.

Admiral of the Fleet Sir Geoffrey Hornby is still more explicit on the same subject, his second article on "The War Training of the Navy," in the September number of the "United Service Magazine," last year, beginning with the following words:—

"In view of the considerable increase of matériel that the Fleet will receive two years hence, and the large additions that will assuredly be required so long as the activity of the mercantile marine continues to increase at its present rate, it may be well to consider how the personnel to man and form a reserve for that fleet is gathered and trained.

"The mercantile marine can give good Officers for such a reserve, but it can no longer give the goodly supply of seamen that constituted the naval strength of the country so long as the Navigation Laws were in force."

"The 34,400³ petty officers and seamen of the Navy and the 24,500 that are promised on paper from the Coastguard and Royal Naval Reserve are small numbers wherewith to meet the waste that a war must cause." Further, the Admiral of the Fleet says that our petty officers and seamen of that reserve, "though good individually, are destitute of organization."

¹ Speech at Liverpool, "Times," 13th January.

² "Times," December 31, 1891.

³ The Admiral does not include the stokers.

I have quoted Sir Geoffrey at some length, as his opinions naturally carry great weight; his proposal for a reserve is "to train young men in large numbers, so that when thoroughly disciplined they may overflow into the mercantile service as reserve men, bound for a certain period."

The consideration of his proposals will follow more naturally later, but it is clear that in his view the present system fails to give us the numbers we require, and that he is dissatisfied with both the quantity and quality of our reserves. That this opinion is shared by the Admiralty to some extent is shown by the Manning Committee recently formed, and by the remarks of Mr. Forwood, previously referred to.

My proposals are as follows:—Seamen boys to be entered as at present, but to serve only for seven years in seagoing ships, from the age of eighteen.

Stoker boys to be entered at the age of seventeen at the barracks, for one year's training in gunnery drills, gymnastics, boat sailing, pulling, and a preliminary course of stoking. To serve for seven years, from the age of eighteen, similarly to the seamen boys.

Both classes to have the option as far as possible of joining either—

(a.) Coastguard and Harbour Defence Force.

(b.) The Royal Naval Reserve.

My idea would be to develop a harbour defence force to man harbour defence vessels, gunboats, and torpedo-boats, some of which should be stationed at various ports round the coast, as the French are doing. As the Admiralty have decided that the defence of the naval arsenals is to be entirely in military hands, the harbour defence force for Portsmouth, Plymouth, &c., would be under the orders of the General, though its discipline would of course be under the Admiralty. I confess that from this point of view especially it appears to me that it would be of advantage if the garrisons of the seaport towns were mainly naval, and under the naval Commander-in-Chief.

I have stated that I should like to give the men their choice of the Coastguard and Harbour Defence Force, or the Royal Naval Reserve, but it would probably be advisable to limit the former to 10,000, and if there were too many volunteers, the Admiralty would of course select the best men. Men choosing the Coastguard and Harbour Defence Force to serve for a further period of seven years, at the expiration of which time either to stay in the Coastguard or in the Reserve for eight years, or to be discharged.¹ Men choosing the Reserve to serve for a minimum of five years, with the option of continuing in the Reserve until the age of forty.

¹ From the remarks of several of the speakers in the subsequent debate, it appears that my meaning was not clearly expressed. I intended that each boy on joining should serve for a minimum of twelve years, from the age of eighteen, as at present, seven under the pennant and five in the Reserve, but, if after the seven years at sea he elected to join the Coastguard and Harbour Defence Force, he was to re-engage for seven years, or a total of fourteen years from the age of eighteen.
—E. R. F.

Scale of pay, drills, &c., for the new Reserve to be assimilated to that of present Royal Naval Reserve, which I should propose to call the Royal Naval Mercantile Reserve.

Pension to be much as at present to those completing time in Coastguard, and graduated for those completing all their time, either partially in the Coastguard and partially in the Reserve, or wholly in the latter.

A selected number of young men, not exceeding 10 per cent., promising to make good petty officers, gunnery instructors, or warrant officers, to be allowed to volunteer for a second seven years in the Fleet, and to complete time for pension if of good character, or to be allowed to join the Reserve to complete their time; if doing the latter, pension to be equivalent to those completing time after the first seven years in the Coastguard.

The Marines to remain at about their present strength, 14,000.

In order to carry out this system, it would probably be necessary to increase materially the entry of boys, and to raise the number from 7,000 to 10,000 under training. I have no data on which to calculate the number of boys which would require to be entered to be trained as stokers. On the one hand, we have at present a very few stokers in the Coastguard, and practically none in the present Royal Naval Reserve. On the other hand, with the system of boy entry I propose, and even with the entry and training in gunnery as now carried out, the waste will become less, whilst in the industrial employments of the country stokers are plentiful, and a stoker requires a less period of training than a seaman. I should say, therefore, that to increase the number of boys entered for stokers by one half more than the present entries would be sufficient to supply the waste, and allow of a certain number overflowing into the Coastguard or the Reserve.

It is evident that if these proposals were adopted we should have too many seamen and stokers in the barracks, and it is essential that our seamen—and as I now call them I refer to the whole number so called in the Estimates, which includes stokers—should have as much experience at sea as possible. How is this to be done? My suggestion would be to withdraw the Marines from seagoing ships, and, if necessary, from the First Reserve (Coastguard) ships, filling their places with seamen, boys, and stokers; the latter would form a fourth watch, as suggested by Mr. Harry Williams, Chief Inspector of Machinery, thus allowing each watch of stokers to work on deck alternately.

As there are over 4,000 marines now in seagoing ships, and 2,500 more afloat, we should thus have a fair margin, enabling us to give our seamen and stokers as much sea experience as at present. The Marines would still assist to man the purely harbour defence vessels and the mobilized ships, the Admiralty regulating from time to time the number, if any, to be employed in the Coastguard ships. It might be advisable to leave a small detachment in each ship for marine servants and special sentries.

These proposals are of course open to objection. I shall be told

that I am withdrawing the Marines from the sea, and generally substituting younger and less perfectly trained ships' companies than we have at present, but I would answer that if we are to have a reserve some sacrifices are necessary, that our crews will even then be composed of more experienced men than those of the French, German, Italian, Russian, or, I believe, any foreign Navy, while it is evident that service afloat is more necessary for the seaman and stoker than for the marine. I would also point out to any of my sailor critics who are so strongly in favour of masts and sails as necessary to ensure smartness that, if more training and drills are required for our younger crews, it will serve to keep up their interest in their work, and to smarten them up generally.

I have not attempted to estimate the expense of these changes. There would doubtless be some considerable increase in the expense of the training service, and larger reserves must cost more money, but, if efficiency is the result, this is practically of no consequence. My contention is that we urgently require a reserve, and, if so, we must pay for it. I would point out, however, that our present system practically gives us no reserve, while at the same time the pension list for seamen and Marines has been increasing of late years at the rate of 12,000*l.* to 15,000*l.* yearly. The pension list would of course decrease in future years, should my suggestions be adopted.

My principal aim and object has been to form a reliable Naval Reserve; it is true that, though a commencement would be made at once by allowing men of more than seven years' service to go into the Reserve, little effect would be produced for some years, but even ten years hence the Reserves would probably amount to 5,000 or 6,000; and I should hope that in fifteen to twenty years the Coastguard and Harbour Defence Force would number 10,000 instead of the 4,000 present Coastguard, while the new Royal Naval Reserve should be double that number. This Reserve would, of course, be in addition to the Mercantile Royal Naval Reserve, with which I do not propose to interfere, and with a Reserve force of 30,000 men-of-war's men and a total naval strength of personnel of more than 120,000 men we should, I consider, be amply provided with men at the outbreak of war.

It may be asked, "Why is it necessary that we should make such changes and sacrifices now, we have done well enough without them hitherto?" My reply is, "Look around you. We have seen of recent years entire nations in arms, till Europe has been turned into an armed camp. While this feverish activity was confined to armies, we could afford to look on complacently, and, fortunately for us, sailors cannot be so easily improvised or trained, whilst, however numerous the 'inscripts' or naval conscripts of foreign Powers, they were of little use without sea experience and vessels to fight in."

The latter cost money, limiting directly the naval ambitions of our possible enemies, but it is evident that, now that the principal European Powers have reorganized their armies, they are turning their attention to their navies, so that even since our Naval Defence Act was passed, and perhaps partially as a reply to it, France, Italy,

Russia, and Germany have been spending large sums in increasing their naval force, and already it is clear that we must reconsider our naval programme in order to preserve the proud position necessary for us of mistress of the seas.

This, however, is not my theme, but it is evident that our position when the Naval Defence Act was passed is not that of to-day, and that we can no longer rely on a small number of men forming a standing navy with a very limited reserve. Even a war with France alone would strain our present resources, and we have the authority of the First Lord of the Admiralty for the statement that we should aim at nothing less than having a naval force equal to that of any two Powers, say France and Russia.

The above outline of what I should propose for our personnel is, I am conscious, very incomplete, but I am satisfied that it fairly represents the direction in which we must move, and though my subject is the training of our seamen, this must depend in great part on the system of entry and the time spent under the pennant.

Turning, then, to the training of our seamen, the system which I advocate is one which is suitable to boys who will only spend seven years man's time in the Navy as part of the seagoing force, except in the case of specially selected men; but, before going into details on this subject, I propose to deal shortly with the question of organization, which depends closely on our system of entry, and is also intimately connected with early training. Organization, it is evident, must be affected by the time to be served under the pennant, and though this should more logically follow than precede early training, as the latter is the most important point and my immediate subject, I prefer dealing with organization first.

In the article by Sir Geoffrey Hornby,¹ from which I have already quoted, the Admiral of the Fleet advocates a plan for naval regiments or permanent crews, which he believes would be of advantage in making more close and permanent the connection between Officers and men and increasing efficiency through the confidence engendered by long association. It is a fascinating idea, but it would undoubtedly be difficult to carry out, and while it would have some advantages, as the Admiral himself sees, it would be likely to lead to specially favoured regiments.

There are also general objections to the regimental system as regards promotions, which have been a great difficulty in the Army, and there are, it seems to me, other and simpler ways of improving our organization. The Marines, for instance, are an example of *esprit de corps* acting without this stimulus, of which we have all seen examples when detachments from different ships are brigaded together ashore. The Admiral advocates the regimental system so as to obviate the strangeness of Officers and men to each other and to the ship when newly commissioned. This, however, is now being met to some extent by the system of skeleton crews in ships forming the Fleet Reserve, and I should be glad to see this principle carried further by every ship ready for commission having her Captain nominated to her as is

¹ "United Service Magazine," September, 1890.

done in the German Navy, who should be on full pay without command money.

My further suggestions on this point would be that the seamen's barracks should be made as home-like as possible, in this respect following the example of the Marines. I would also reduce all terms of service abroad to two years, as is done by the French and Germans. To attain to some continuity of system and to obviate the great waste of time and efficiency while a new ship's company were hulked abroad at Malta or elsewhere on recommissioning, I should like to avoid recommissioning abroad altogether, but, so long as a ship is fit to continue in commission without a thorough overhaul, I would change Officers and men as their time expires, and keep the ship in commission "as a going concern," to borrow the language of the business world. This is the system at present adopted with the Channel Fleet, and I fail to see why it should not be applicable to all stations. It would necessitate, no doubt, constant drafts going to and from their stations, but this is the case now, and a ship recommissioning abroad usually leaves one-third of her crew on the station as being less than eighteen months from England. I would also advocate the ships being changed from one station to another frequently, as there is no doubt that ships long stationed in unhealthy climates frequently become infected.

It seems to me that the above proposals would have the following advantages:—

- (a.) It would retain ships abroad which are in good condition, thus avoiding the expense of sending them home, or having everything pulled to pieces to satisfy new Officers.
- (b.) We should escape the loss of efficiency when all Officers and men are alike new to their ship.
- (c.) The danger to discipline now incurred while a new ship's company are hulked for months and the ship is having a thorough overhaul would be obviated.
- (d.) Officers and men would be more contented, as the period of service abroad would be shorter, and they would feel secure of not being kept away from England on an unhealthy station for more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ years at most, instead of any time between 3 and $4\frac{1}{2}$ years as at present.

In other respects than those I have referred to, our organization appears to me to be satisfactory, and this is, I presume, the view of most naval Officers, as, except Sir Geoffrey Horaby, no change is proposed by those who have written on the subject of the training of our seamen.

I now come to my third head and subject proper, which involves the important point as to the system on which our boys and young seamen should be trained. Is our present plan of boys' training ships, with brigs attached, satisfactory, or in what way should it be modified? Is training in masted ships advisable or necessary in the present state of the Navy? Is a training squadron of masted ships performing evolutions under sail a necessity, should it be increased so as to train more men in old-fashioned seamanship, or, on the other

hand, should it be abolished as an anachronism unsuitable to the requirements of the present day? These are points which have been warmly debated in this theatre, and in the pages of the "United Service Magazine." Sir Geoffrey Hornby¹ has given his high authority in favour of training in sailing ships; while Captains Noel² and C. Johnstone³ have followed suit in urging strenuously the necessity for the retention of masts and sails as a means of training.

Here, then, we have a most experienced Officer of high rank, backed by two talented Captains on the active list, pressing for more old-fashioned seamanship training—and their views must be treated with respect. On the other hand, we have Chief Inspector of Machinery Mr. Harry Williams⁴ and Captain FitzGerald⁵ apparently (for the latter, as usual with him, writes in a humorously extravagant vein) arguing that seamen and stokers should be interchangeable, and that the stoker-gunner or gunner-stoker is the man of the future.

Now, I wish to approach this subject without prejudice, and, as I began my lecture by saying, I am not aware of having any fad or hobby of my own on the subject, but I claim to look facts clearly in the face, and I decline to be led away by false sentiment to make a move in the wrong direction.

The old question, so often raised and so differently answered, is What is seamanship, and who are seamen? The simple answer should be, in my opinion, that a seaman is a man inured to the sea. It follows as a corollary that he must be an adept at the handicraft necessary to enable him to live on the water. He must accordingly be able to manage his ship or boat or the machine in which he floats.

But ships and boats have varied, and will continue to do so, though, according to the mast-and-sail advocates, it would almost seem as if nothing was a ship which had not masts, and was not propelled by the wind, and no one was a sailor who had not served in such a ship. According to this view, it would mean that sailors have only existed in the last five centuries, and that they are about to perish out of the land. The narrowness of this definition needs only to be stated to be appreciated. In my estimation, those who managed the triremes, and knew how to propel them by oars at the rate of 8 or 9 knots,⁶ were sailors of their day, and their glory has departed. Captain Mahan⁷ tells us how much discussion there was as to the tactics and management of fire ships in the days when Rupert and Monk fought their bloody actions with De Ruyter and Van Tromp; yet this skill, too, is a lost art. Later, again, there was a time when,⁸ "through

¹ "United Service Magazine," August and September, 1890.

² "R.U.S.I. Journal," 1889, No. 149.

³ "R.U.S.I. Journal," July, 1891, No. 161.

⁴ "United Service Magazine," June, 1891.

⁵ "United Service Magazine," April, 1891.

⁶ Dr. Warre's Lecture, "R.U.S.I. Journal," 1876, vol. xx.

⁷ "Influence of Sea Power upon History."

⁸ Mr. Walter's account of Anson's voyage, when speaking of the accident to the Spanish flagship off the Horn.

the negligence of an Officer of the watch," it was not considered extraordinary that a ship's masts should be rolled over the side; yet Officers of the watch in sailing ships of our days have known no such responsibilities.

Captain Noel,¹ in defining seamanship, says, truly, "It is the science in which our sea fishermen excel, and which makes them the independent and hardy race whom none can fail to admire" . . . "it must be instilled into us in our youth, and can only be instilled by constant sea work—constant battling with the elements;" and then, leaving this firm ground, he goes on to quote Sir Geoffrey Hornby as affirming that this seamanship, which in the premiss has nothing to do with sails, can be learnt "only with the help of the teaching power of sails."

With this view I entirely disagree. Sails are, or rather were, an essential part of seamanship; but seamanship no more depends upon sails and sail power than upon a knowledge of machinery in a steamer. Sails were, in fact, only the machinery of a certain age. The best sailors were always the men of most general knowledge and adaptability, while the inferior men were content to be able to work the systems with which they were familiar.

A short yarn will best illustrate my meaning. Some fifteen years ago, when I commanded a Coastguard ironclad, a chief officer who was in charge on the forecastle, though full of zeal, was unaccountably slack in carrying out orders, and I sent for him, after some difficulty in getting the preventer main-brace manned. His answer to me: "Beg pardon, Sir, but I am not accustomed to these here square riggers," explained the matter. He had served all his time at sea in Coastguard cutters, and was, probably, as good a seaman as we had in the ship.

The subject is an interesting one, and I feel inclined to dwell on it; but I will only state my opinion, that seamanship may and will exist entirely without regard to sails, of which I give the following illustrations:—

It was seamanship which enabled the late Sir William Hall (Nemesis Hall) to bring his frail craft safely to China by "undergirding the ship" in the first China war.

It was seamanship which Captain Kane displayed when he took the "Calliope" safely to sea, in the face of the hurricane at Samoa, which we all remember.

Seamanship was shown in putting together and fitting out the sternwheel gunboats "Herald" and "Mosquito" in the Zambesi by Officers and men of the East Indian squadron in 1890; and Lieutenant Keane (now, I am glad to say, promoted to Commander) has shown the possession of seamanlike qualities in navigating his command safely in the shallow waters of that river, and in keeping his ship in good condition, and his men in fair health, notwithstanding many difficulties about the supply of naval stores and provisions.

This is true, the advocates of sails may say, and fairly satisfactory as regards Officers who, after all, learnt their seamanship in

¹ "The War Training of the Navy," July, 1891, "United Service Magazine."

masted ships; but for the men we want gymnastic exercises aloft to give them self-reliance, activity, nerve, courage. There is something in this argument, but both the Captains to whom I have referred agree that sham drills are of little use, and that there must be real sailing and dependence on sails.

That this is possible now in the Service they cannot show. Captain Noel gravely assures us that the training squadron in which he served had covered a distance of 55,432 miles,¹ of which 32,210 miles, but little more than half, were under sail! He proposes a new training squadron of faster steamers in which the sail power must perforce be a farce.

Captain Johnstone² argued in this Institution last year in favour of masted ships on foreign stations, as "in certain cases the peace occupations of the Navy can be performed as well under sail as under steam." "This was certainly not my experience in the East Indies, and if it means anything it entails the substitution of slow steamers with good sail power for efficient modern cruisers, a policy which was attempted fifteen years ago, and which has been wisely abandoned by the Admiralty as being discreditable to the naval power of the country, and a source of danger in case of war.

It would almost seem as if these Officers had entered the Service fifty years ago, had then closed their eyes, and like "*l'homme à l'oreille cassée*" of Edmond About had woke up with horror to find sails discredited, when the fact is they have themselves taken no small part in the gradual change that has taken place. Their arguments would, in my opinion, have been much more apposite had they been given to the naval world fifty years since, when the change was being initiated, than at the present day, when it is nearly completed. The shifts that they are put to, to which I have above referred, shows the weakness of their case; but I should like to speak with more respect of the strong advocacy for the old seamanlike training by Sir Geoffrey Hornby. This is not only on account of his rank and reputation, but because he logically accepts the fact that the old training of a sailor, if it is to be a reality, must be carried out in sailing ships. His proposal is³ that the Admiralty should build or acquire "small clipper ships of 800 to 1,000 tons," to sail to Australia, refit, and come home again, the crews to consist of 250 to 300 men, 50 of which to be Officers and instructors. "24 of these clipper ships would train 4,400 young seamen" yearly, he tells us. Now this is thorough, and if the old seamanship is to be galvanized into life again, this is the way to do it. But any one can see the objection to such a course: there is the expense, the taking away of 6,000 seamen from the active Fleet and placing them in non-fighting ships, where they would be in danger of being taken prisoners in case of war; but, besides these obvious objections, whilst they were learning their seamanship, there could be little man-of-war routine, and no gunnery or torpedo instruction, so that I think the gallant

¹ Captain Noel, "R.U.S.I. Journal," 1889, No. 149.

² "R.U.S.I. Journal," July, 1891, No. 161.

³ "United Service Magazine," September, 1890.

proposer must himself see that his suggestion has no chance of being adopted.

To me it appears that such a scheme, even if it cost nothing, would do more harm than good, while from its lack of real preparation for a modern man-of-war's man's duties it would be most unpopular. I wish to speak with all respect of the plan, as something similar occurred to me some years ago, though further consideration has convinced me of its impracticability, but if so we must resign ourselves to gradually giving up the old seamanship, as it has in fact given us up. This brings me to the masted training squadron. In my view, a cruising squadron is distinctly a good thing, both from a naval and a political point of view, and so long as we have suitable masted ships, I see no harm in its being retained as at present. At the same time, if I have gathered aright the opinion of naval Officers, both those of high rank and junior Officers, as it is worked at present, everything, gunnery, discipline, cleanliness, being sacrificed to sail drill, I consider it a mistake, and I doubt whether we should not do better by following the Germans in forming our training squadron of mastless vessels. I am in no hurry to make such a change—it will come soon enough, and the transition should be as gradual as possible; but I deprecate any attempt to put back the hands of the clock, and I would rather step forward to meet the change which, however unpalatable, is inevitable.

Our Cassandras will reply that, if this is so, our seamen in the future will be very inferior to those of past days. I confess that I fail to see this, and I have some reason for the faith that is in me. The first ship that I went to sea in, in 1849, was the "Queen," a first-rate, Sir W. Parker's flagship in the Mediterranean, a sailing ship, of course, and she had a smart ship's company. Now I picture to myself fifty of the best seamen in the "Queen" as I remember them falling in on the quarter deck, and on the other side fifty of our best men in the "Boadicea," my late flagship in the East Indies, and I try to compare them. First let us look at them as sailors, as Sir G. Hornby, Captains Noel and Johnstone understand the term, and I have little hesitation in saying that the worst of the fifty "Queen's" would probably be a better sailor than the best of the "Boadicea's;" but let us look at them as men-of-war's men, and I have no doubt as to the "Boadicea's" being the best; they would be better trained and disciplined, know their work better, be infinitely superior in intelligence, cleanliness, and discipline, and even in physique.

I do not think that I make any mistake here, and to what is this due? My reply is: to better training, more system, more attention to food and comforts, more education. Can we not, to use Sir Geoffrey Hornby's words, "continue to shape in the same factory where we have approved the manufacture,"¹ and thus arrest the decadence prognosticated?

But while I refuse to take a step backward, there is no reason or

¹ "United Service Magazine," September, 1890. Sir Geoffrey says "first" factory; I have altered the word to "same," as with the context my meaning might not be intelligible.

common sense in making sudden changes as proposed by Mr. Harry Williams and Captain FitzGerald, who may be reminded that there are still sailing ships being built, and that the art of management of vessels and boats under sail is still necessary to any one calling himself a sailor; so that I can scarcely take their proposals seriously that early education should be precisely the same for seamen and stokers. It may be that in time this might be advisable, and we might begin by training boys to be "all-round men" as they propose, but even so it would probably be advantageous to differentiate them into seamen and stokers as soon as they went afloat.

This brings me to the question as to whether stokers should be combatants, and I think that, bearing in mind that the following are the proportions of seamen and marines to stokers in our mastless ships, they certainly should all be drilled in gunnery, and all stokers 1st class should be T.M.; they would then, of course, be classed as combatants. It is not necessary here to allude to the question of the Officers.

Name of ship and class.	Exclusive of Officers.				Percent- age of of non- combat- ants to combat- ants. ¹	Total comple- ment.
	Seamen.	Marines.	Total combat- ants.	Stokers, non-com- batants. ¹		
"Admiral" class.						
"Howe".....	227	65	292	126	30	525
Belted cruiser.						
"Immortalité".....	226	72	298	114	27·7	490
"M" class.						
"Medusa".....	75	21	96	87	47·5	219

Having examined various theories, I propose now to sum up our requirements for a modern man-of-war's man. These I should put much as follows:—

- (1.) Habit of a sea life, sea legs, sea stomach, &c.
- (2.) Physique, activity, hardness, power to stand considerable changes of climate and of enduring prolonged spells of exceptionally hard work.
- (3.) Efficiency in boat work, anchor work, and general seamanlike knowledge of the day.

¹ As my original percentages appear to have been misunderstood, I have now given the percentage of stokers (who are now non-combatants, but who might be made combatants) to the whole fighting force—seamen, marines, and stokers—who might take part in an action, say as a landing party, exclusive of Officers. There are, of course, necessarily many more non-combatants, and the table does not profess to give the proportion of non-combatants to combatants generally. The whole complement is given for reference.—E. R. F.

- (4.) Efficiency in gunnery and torpedo work of all descriptions.
- (5.) Education, intelligence, trustworthiness.
- (6.) Alertness, readiness of resource, quickness of decision, in fact, the many qualities which are included in the expressive word "smartness."
- (7.) Knowledge of stoking and work in the engine-room.

Let us now examine our present training system for boys, and see how far it meets these requirements. This is generally acknowledged to be admirable, the present regulations having been drawn up by experienced Officers, and issued by the Admiralty as late as January in last year. They may accordingly be considered quite up to date, and, though very elaborate, are very practical.

I do not propose any material change in the system of training in the training ships except in two particulars, to which I will refer presently; but in view of the number of boys under training, which I propose to increase from 7,000 to 10,000, at least four more training ships are required in addition to the "Caledonia," recently established at Queensferry. They might be placed as follows:—one at Liverpool, one in the Tyne or Humber, one at Greenock, and one in Ireland, either at Belfast or Kingstown. This is absolutely necessary, as our present training ships are already overcrowded. The entry regulations and standards appear satisfactory, and they must depend to some extent on supply and demand; the only suggestion which I should make would be that, if possible, the educational standard should be raised from Standard II to Standard IV.

I have no remarks to make as regards school and gunnery except that, as gymnastics form a preliminary to the gunnery courses and that I attach special importance to the gymnastic exercises, if necessary, the time for their being more fully carried out might be taken from the gunnery.

Let us now look at the seamanship instruction of the boys 2nd Class and 1st Class, of which I give the following condensed summary of the Regulations:—

Seamanship Instruction for 2nd Class Boys.

First Instruction	(1.) Bag and hammock.
	(2.) Parts of the ship.
	(3.) Ships' fittings.
Second Instruction	(1.) Boat pulling.
	(2.) Parts and fittings of a boat.
Third Instruction	(1.) Bends and hitches.
Fourth Instruction	(1.) Monkey topsail.
	(2.) Masts and yards.
	(3.) Standing rigging.
	(4.) Sails.
Fifth Instruction	Semaphore, flags, and pennants.
Sixth Instruction	(1.) Lead and line.
	(2.) Compass to some extent. Sailing cutter instruction.

Seventh Instruction	(1.) Knotting and splicing.
	(2.) Blocks.
	(3.) Rope.
Eighth Instruction	Compass and helm.
Ninth Instruction	Brig model, running rigging, &c.
Tenth Instruction	Mat and sennit.
Eleventh Instruction	Anchor model.
Twelfth Instruction	General <i>résumé</i> .

Seamanship Instruction for 1st Class Boys.

- (1.) Tailoring, signalling, sailmaking, *seamanship*.
- (2.) Boat pulling.
- (3.) Boat sailing instruction.
- (4.) *Exercise aloft*.
- (5.) Swimming.
- (6.) Signals for signal boys.
- (7.) Instruction for call boys.

I would remark here that for the 2nd Class boys only two out of twelve instructions, which I have marked in italics, entail going aloft or knowledge of masted ships, and of the seven heads (or five if we omit specialities) into which the instructions of the 1st Class boys are divided, only one entirely and one partially have reference to masts and sails. Even then, if these instructions were omitted altogether, I do not think we need fear that either the instructor or the boys would find their occupation gone.

Sail drill, I may remark, is only carried out during seven months of the year, April to October included, and I doubt whether even this amount will be found advisable at a northern station like Queensferry or Greenock. The principal suggestions which I should make in regard to the above instructions are (1) that preliminary instruction in stoking with pebbles should be substituted for exercise aloft, say every third day, or when the weather was not suitable for work aloft; and (2) that more attention would be paid to gymnastics. The latter is most important, and I am convinced that the greatest advantage to the physique of our boys would be gained by the course being more thorough than it now is. If necessary, I would even give up gunnery to gymnastics, for the time when a youth will receive most benefit from the course is during his boy's training, when he is well fed and has regular hours. I am, I believe, right in saying that, at present, only one gymnastic instructor is allowed to each training ship, and that he is not always very efficient; there should be at least four. A commencement in this direction was made by the Admiralty in 1888, and Lieutenant-Colonel Fox, the Military Inspector of Gymnasia, informs me that he has trained seventy-four men as instructors for the Navy altogether. This is obviously insufficient, as every large mastless ship should have at least two. Lieutenant-Colonel Fox's lecture at Aldershot in December last is well worth reading, and I extract the following from the report in the "Broad

Arrow" of December 19th: "Some of our sports, said the Colonel, have a tendency to develop only one side of the body; in gymnastics they sought to improve both concurrently, to sharpen the soldier, to teach him how to hold and use his weapons, to walk, run, jump, and climb, and keep him up to the mark without growing stale. . . . It would, he believed, develop self-reliance, determination, and courage in the presence of danger, stimulate the spirit of dash and combativeness, and ensure precision in action."

Of the good effect on the physique of the men, Lieutenant-Colonel Fox gave proof in a squad of the 1st Northamptonshire Regiment, "who had been attending the gymnasium forty actual working days. Their average age was 19 years 2 months; average height 5 feet 5½ inches. On commencing the course the average measurements of the men were:—Chest, 32½ inches; forearm, 9½ inches; upper arm, 10½ inches; weight, 8 stone 13 lbs. They had shown, up to the present time, an average increase of 2½ inches round the chest, ¾ inch in the forearm, ¾ inch in the upper arm, and 5 lbs. in weight." With such facts before us, following on systematic gymnastic instruction, I venture to think that we have more than an equal substitute for sail drill and work aloft, physically at any rate, and I should be glad to see the Admiralty direct the regular practice of gymnastics, not only to a much fuller extent in the training ships but also in the Fleet. The fact is, that the value of work aloft has been much exaggerated; there is not much "useful work," in a mechanical sense, done in pulling at a rope on deck, and it is well known that the smart upper yard men were often kept there too long, not unfrequently for an entire commission, by Commanding Officers who were naturally loth to relieve them by others less active and well trained. I know in the "Agincourt," where we were constantly changing men, that I found, on inspection, upper yard men who had held that exalted position, as I must admit with much credit to themselves and to the ship, for four years! But when this was the state of the case it is evident that the beneficial effects of upper yard work aloft must have been confined to a few, and that the many got on as well as they could without it.

Before leaving this question of training ships, it has been pointed out to me that the seamanship taught is of too old-fashioned a nature, and I would suggest its being modernized to suit our present requirements, rigging being simplified and splicing wire rope being taught, for instance.

A question intimately connected with training is that of the training brigs, and one is reluctant to touch that palladium of old-world seamanship, for they make such a pretty feature on a bright summer's day as they go in and out of Plymouth Sound "in flashing bravery," their white sails contrasting with the deep green of Mount Edgecumbe. But alas! the poetry of the Navy has departed, and, from a sober, common sense point of view, I feel bound to condemn the training brigs. If our object is to make old-fashioned sailors there is nothing to find fault with in the present arrangements; the sailor must be taught to depend on his sails, and there is no more to

be said; but this teaching is unnecessary now, and it must be remembered that the boys seldom spend more than six weeks at most in the brigs, on which the instructions remark, "that merely working the brig, though excellent practice for the Officers and necessary for the safety of the vessel, is of little use by way of instruction."

The use of the brigs is to accustom boys to the sea, to give them sea legs and sea stomachs, and some idea of life in a man-of-war. It is of little use from a purely seamanship point of view we have just seen, and the brigs are certainly primarily intended to teach the boys, and not the Officers who may happen to be serving in them. My contention is that the old-fashioned seamanship which is learnt in the brigs is of little value; they are very cramped, so that few boys can be embarked at a time, and frequently bad weather forces them to take shelter if at sea, or to remain in port if in harbour. At Queensferry, for instance, I think difficulty will often be found in entering or leaving the firth, so that cruising in a sailing brig connected with the "Caledonia" will be unsatisfactory.

In my view as much sea work as possible is essential, but that there are many objections to a sailing vessel, to which I have alluded. I suggest, therefore, that the present sailing brigs should be replaced by small-powered steamers, with plenty of sail power and good accommodation, such as the "Penguin" class. These vessels could accommodate more boys, could go out and keep the sea more regularly than the brigs, and be more efficient generally. I would have only three or four in the engine-room complement, as the boys should be taught to work the engines and learn stoking, thus following the training now instructed to be carried out by the junior executive Officers. From this point of view, I should myself prefer the "Kingfisher," which is now being sent to the Mediterranean to relieve the "Cruizer," having her engines left in her, and to be worked similarly.

I have now finished with the boys, but we must follow them somewhat into sea-going ships before I close my lecture. In the first part, under the heading of Organization, I advocated shorter commissions as tending to greater comfort and efficiency. Routines are a large subject on which I can only touch lightly, but I think some improvements could be made on the present meal hours if the dietary were also amended to allow of a good evening meal. On board mastless ships, of which our modern Navy now generally consists, it is most important that anything and everything which tends to keep our men cheery and lively should be encouraged. Gunnery, torpedo, and other drills should of course be made as smart as possible, boat sailing, boat racing, rifle shooting should all be looked upon favourably by Commanding Officers. Our men should retain their sailor-like smartness under the new conditions. Whether it is hands or watch fall in, the sea-boat's crew, manning a boat in harbour, watertight doors, or anchor work, if the work is smartly done, generally against time, as Admiral Colomb remarked, the best part of a sailor's education will be maintained, and they will remain as distinct from soldiers as—well, as they are now. I would also advocate generally

more frequent and shorter leaves, while every opportunity should be taken of giving the men recreation ashore, and joining in such games as cricket and football. Even in tropical and unhealthy climates day leave should always be given. Consuls and other officials are too apt to consider our men as untamed animals who are sure to get into trouble, and when there would be no idea in certain ports under the British flag of confining soldiers to barracks, it is a common custom to request that no leave should be given to seamen. This is, I think, unfair to our men, and it has a tendency to make them think that they are expected to be uproarious, and to act accordingly. Another question intimately connected with comfort is that of the canteen. Though very general, at present no place is allotted for it, and, accordingly, whether there is one or not is at the option of the Captain. There should always be a dry canteen, I think, though the Captain should have power to close it temporarily in case of irregularities. The present system of distributing the boys in the men's messes is not a good one, and with the larger number we should have in each ship they ought to be in separate messes, under a good 2nd class petty officer.

I have not hitherto alluded to the ratings of our men, and there might be much to be said on that subject, but I have no space in this lecture to touch on it beyond this, that I have a strong opinion that much that is optional in the matter of gunnery and torpedo is a mistake; every man-of-war's man should *ipso facto* be a seaman gunner, and the A.B. and T.M. should be granted together. From this point of view, I consider that the new arrangements by which every A.B. is sent to a gunnery ship and put through a course of gunnery which lasts a month a distinct advantage, and I am glad to hear that only 10 to 18 per cent. fail to qualify as seamen gunners. It is not popular with the gunnery Lieutenants and instructors, naturally, as they have occasional bad characters to deal with; but it was clearly wrong to allow the gunnery and torpedo-ships to take all the good men and to leave all the worst characters in the receiving ships. Now, however, that we shall have many more seamen gunners, it is evident that some will be rather inferior, and some further differentiation of their qualifications is advisable.

It has been suggested that a rating of captains of the gun 2nd class should be established for this purpose, and these men would be useful to take charge of Q.F. guns, which now form so great and important a part in the armament of our ships.

These are details, but all such details are important.

I have now come to the end, and, if some of my remarks have been somewhat controversial, I claim to have endeavoured to treat this important subject without special bias, and solely with a view to the future efficiency of the Service to which we have the honour to belong, and which is so necessary to England's welfare. In many cases I have borrowed the views of others, for I have been at some pains to get the ideas of other Officers who are interesting themselves in this all-important question, so, while I acknowledge their help, I make little claim to originality. But I claim to have looked at the

subject from a large point of view, having set before me the words of Professor Soley,¹ who has written much on naval subjects, that "the primary object of a navy at all times is to maintain itself in all its branches, matériel, personnel, and organization in the most perfect state that is possible of readiness and efficiency for war."

Before I sit down, I should like to recapitulate the following points on which to elicit discussion and opinion.

- (1.) I consider our present "personnel" to be inadequate, and I propose to establish a Naval Reserve of men-of-war's men by a system of modified short service. Is this necessary or practicable?
- (2.) I object to recommissioning abroad, but I propose commissions abroad to be continuous, as in the Channel Fleet, so long as the ships are in good condition, and that Officers and men should be relieved after two years' service.
- (3.) I propose that boys should go through a short course of stoking in the training ships, and that more attention should be paid to gymnastics.
- (4.) I propose that stoker boys should be entered at seventeen, and trained at the naval barracks for one year, also that all stokers 1st class should be T.M. and combatants.
- (5.) I propose to substitute roomy steamers with good sail power for the present training brigs, all necessary stoking to be done by the seamen boys.

Admiral Loxa: The subject, which we are so much indebted to Admiral Fremantle for bringing before us, is, as he says, one of great importance. I need not say anything about the aspect of affairs abroad after what the gallant Admiral has said in his lecture. If we look at home we see the question of the hour is "free education" and "provision for the aged." Now I think that bears on the subject in this way. It shows that our statesmen and our electors are convinced that the sound training of the individual citizen is absolutely necessary to the health of the body politic. There is no exaggeration in saying that the maritime power of England is the right arm of the British Empire. If that power be suffered to decay from any cause whatever, the British Empire, such as we have known it, will cease to exist. If that be agreed upon, I think we must all acknowledge that no more important subject for our statesmen and our sailors could be brought before us. I have endeavoured to get at some facts as to the numbers of our merchant seamen, but, I regret to say, some of the volumes being missing, I have been unable to get a comparative statement of the number of seamen that were in this country available in 1841 and those in 1881; those abroad in foreign-going ships in 1841 were 183,156, the corresponding number in 1881 being 130,587 from the United Kingdom.² The Navigation Laws having been done away with, it is obvious that those who govern the country should see that a proper provision of seamen is maintained. Then we come to the proposal made in this paper for enlarging the Navy. We are told by the First Lord of the Admiralty that our Navy is to be of sufficient strength to enable us to hold our own against two foreign Powers. We can also see by what is published in various directions that the naval war of the future will probably commence very suddenly, and that very severe blows will be

¹ "The Blockade and the Cruisers."

² From Census Papers.

struck almost immediately. Now I think that is a most important point in considering this subject. We have heard about the great expansion of the Fleet of the United States and our own in past times, but we cannot, I am afraid, derive much consolation from that, because at the present day, this country not being an aggressive country, it is exceedingly unlikely that it will strike the first blow. What we have to look to is that some one else will strike a blow at us very hard, and we must be prepared for that. I think, therefore, what the lecturer states here, that we should consider that "our first line should be thoroughly efficient, and that a large and generally inefficient Reserve is neither necessary nor desirable," is a very important statement. Now we come to the proposal for enlarging the Navy. The first point that the lecturer places before us is that he considers our present personnel to be inadequate, and proposes "to establish a Naval Reserve of men-of-war's men by a system of modified short service. Is this necessary or practicable?" I think there is no doubt that an extension of the personnel of the Navy is necessary; that it will be practicable I have no doubt. Our statesmen will see to it. But the principal proposal that is put forward here, if it is meant to apply to the whole Service—I am not quite certain whether it is—is one to which I can hardly give my adhesion, seeing that it would substitute a shorter period of service for that which is already in force.

Admiral FREMANTLE: It is for the whole Service.

Admiral LONG: There is an entirely new force mentioned here, the "Harbour Defence" force. I am not quite aware what it means, but I think, as I cannot agree with shortening the period of service, it behoves me to try and propose an alternative. I think we shall have to face this fact, that we must enlarge the Navy. In this matter there is some solid ground of which we can all be certain, and that has been alluded to by the lecturer very strongly. That solid ground is that people who are to be seamen must have as large experience at sea as possible. That is a most important point. If we are to have a Navy the men must have experience at sea, or they will not be efficient. This proposal involves the withdrawal of a certain number of men, and the substitution for them of the same number of other men. I am afraid we cannot say that we shall be so much the better for that. We should not have any more men at sea, and what we want is more men at sea. It seems to me the whole pension scheme might be very well looked into. We throw away our people prematurely. You tell a man at the age of forty, when he is most highly efficient and one of the best men, perhaps, we have in the country, "Good bye, there is 35% a year for you; we shall only call you out when war breaks out." At the same time we are to pay other people for defending the ports. It seems to me that these men would be the very men you want for defending the ports. I do not know that it will be unpopular with them, but, of course, that is the question.

Admiral LINDSAY BRINE: It was arranged that they should do that when they were pensioned.

Admiral LONG: I am very ignorant on the subject, I confess. Then there is the question of the Royal Naval Reserve. Before I came here, I was looking up a discussion that occurred some sixteen years ago, and there were some very interesting remarks by the late Admiral John Crawford Wilson on that subject. He said that in order to provide an increased force you must enter about one-third the number of boys every year.

Admiral FREMANTLE: One third more?

Admiral LONG: If you wished to enlarge the force by 10,000 men, you would have to enter about 3,000 boys every year to maintain that number. He also said, like Sir Geoffrey Hornby, that, owing to the Navigation Laws being abolished, the merchant service is no longer a training ground for the Navy, but the Navy might advantageously become a training ground for the merchant service. Of course, for anything of that kind to be carried out practically, it will require the consent of the ship-owners. I know nothing about what they would think about it. Admiral Wilson said that he considered one year was as much as it was desirable to train a boy in a training ship. He said we should train about 3,000 boys per annum one year, then turn them into merchantmen, and let them take their chance, and you would then gather out of the merchant service, when you wanted them, such men as were fitted for your purpose. That was his proposal, similar

in principle to Sir Geoffrey Hornby's, hence worthy of careful attention.¹ There is another point. I think the complements of all our ships at the present are cut down to the lowest ebb. All of us who have ever been Executive Officers know that when you have men on your sick list, and there always is a sick list, you have not anybody to fill up the vacancies; you are obliged to make one man do two men's work. I do not see why, in all our ships of sufficient size, we should not enlarge our crews, so as to be able to abstract a portion of them when war broke out. The larger crews you have, the more men you have afloat under discipline, the better, I believe, for the Service. Then, considering the very arduous nature of the naval service, and the great portion of it which has to be passed abroad, it would be very advantageous if it were an understood thing that people would be employed on foreign service for the first part of their time, and for the last part of their time would be employed nearer home. In the first place they would be the better men during the last part of the time, and they would form a strong element to depend upon in the case of war—a most important point. It would also suit the men better, for, after being fourteen years at sea, they might be married, and they would prefer to be in England. I think something might be done in that way, and by the aid of a progressive pay, to make the Service much more popular. I am told a great many men are taking their discharge at the end of ten years. They do not get any pension: they go into civil employment, where the pay is better. There is one thing the gallant Admiral says about shortening the period of foreign service, and I think that is very important. When we consider how important our men are to us, we must remember that keeping men for a long time in very hot tropical climates is undoubtedly a very bad thing. This fact has been recognized on the West Coast of Africa, and I think perhaps it might receive further recognition; for instance, upon the West Coast of Mexico, and such places, if people are kept there for a long time, they are very apt to feel it in after years. It takes it out of them. Then I come to recommissioning abroad. I am not sure, as far as my opinion goes, that I should ever recommission abroad. I think ships are just as available, whether on the passage home or out, and I do not see why the ships should not come home. One of the things I have heard as a reason for not doing that seems an exceedingly weak one. I am told that after the ship comes home they will pull everything out of her, but I do not see why they should be allowed to do that.

Admiral FREMANTLE: I did not propose to recommission abroad. I say never recommission abroad. Keep the ship back.

Admiral LONG: Yes. I understand that Admiral Fremantle then proposes that boys should go through a short course of stoking in the training ships, and that more attention should be paid to gymnastics. In that matter I should go heartily with the lecturer. He then proposes that stoker boys should be entered at seventeen, and trained at the naval barracks for one year; also that all stokers 1st class should be T.M. and combatants. I think that proposal also would carry my entire assent. Last year when I was out with the squadron, I noticed that a great many of the stokers were practically boys, entirely undeveloped, and very inexperienced, and had that squadron, as might happen some day or other, been called out for actual war, those boys would not have had sufficient stamina to stand the work. They could not do it. The work would be very arduous. It behoves us to take care that our stokers are men, at all events, well grown, strong, and capable for their work, and that table certainly shows that they should be combatants. If we look at a ship as she is in action, there are only three things going on on board. First, there are the men who are stoking; secondly, there are the men who are handing up ammunition; and, thirdly, there are those who are firing. Those are the three things we want to pay most attention to. The lecturer then proposes "to substitute roomy steamers with good sailing power for the present training brigs, all necessary stoking to be done by seamen boys." I should agree with that. I think when we look at sailing vessels compared with the fast steamers of the present day, as I have said before here, it appears to me

¹ See lecture by Captain J. C. Wilson, July 2, 1875, and discussion on Lord Brassey's paper of February 18, 1876.

that the motion of a sailing vessel is so different to the motion of a fast steamer that we can hardly say that a man who has been brought up entirely in a training ship would be thoroughly efficient in a steamer. The other day the Comptroller of the Navy went out to Malta, and it was remarked how many of the temporary crew from the "Aurora" were sea sick. I do not wonder at all at that, because I myself, although I have spent a great deal of time at sea, though I have been round the Horn in the roughest weather, still if I got into one of those steamboats that go dashing against a head sea, I cannot say that I, too, should not suffer. I think the main requirement of the Service is that the men should have as much sea experience as possible, that you should keep the men at sea, and have plenty of them, also that service during peace should be regarded as training for war, all men having their turn at each duty.

Admiral BOWDEN-SMITH: It appears to me that the most important part of the interesting paper we have just heard read by Sir Edmund Fremantle is that portion of it which he devotes to the entry and the time served by our men. I understand the reason for wishing to make the proposed changes is to create a greater Reserve; he thinks that by making the changes he proposes we shall get a larger number of men in time of war. Of course it must be obvious to all of us that our Reserve is at present very small. Other nations are increasing their navies, and I noticed in the "Times" of yesterday Vice-Admiral Hollman, of the German Navy, in introducing the Budget, referred to this question, and proposes to increase the personnel. If I do not go quite with Admiral Fremantle in what he proposes, it is probably because I have not given the question so much consideration as he has. I understand his proposal is in future that both the seamen boys and the boys who enter as stokers shall be entered for seven years only, instead of twelve, as at present, and I would like to ask him what the result would be, supposing at the end of seven years those men decided to leave us altogether; we should neither have a Reserve nor the real thing. And, I think, many of those men would leave us: they would be twenty-five years of age, they will probably not be quite settled down to a seaman's life, they will have visited perhaps American and Australian ports, where they will see high wages being earned, and get ideas into their heads that they might do better, and we should lose them altogether.

Admiral FREMANTLE: I do not propose to let anybody leave the Navy; he must go into the Reserve five years after the seven years as a minimum.

Admiral BOWDEN-SMITH: Then I did not quite understand the gallant Admiral aright. I thought the proposal was that we were to engage the boys at the age of eighteen, and they were to serve seven years.

Admiral FREMANTLE: As a minimum the men must serve seven years, and then go into the Reserve for five years.

Admiral BOWDEN-SMITH: I am very glad to hear that is your proposal. That would be twelve years, as at present. With regard to the second part of the proposal as to their volunteering into what is called the home service, I prefer myself to see the men taking their turn in sea-going ships, as at present. With regard to the men who are to enter the Mercantile Marine Reserve for a further period with a minimum of five years, I do not quite see what greater hold you would have over those men than you have over the present Naval Reserve. I presume they can leave at the end of the time, if they wish. I am rather afraid my friend Admiral Fremantle is copying the short-service system of the Army, a system I cannot approve, and, as a citizen and a ratepayer, I would like to say a few words about the soldiers after they have been discharged. I happen to know that in this great city in which we live a large proportion of the unfortunate people who are out of work in our streets are men who have been in the Army, and are now, or have been, Army Reserve men. I do not say this on my own authority only, but on the authority of a committee of experts (voluntary, of course), who state that probably about one-sixth of the able-bodied men who are destitute in London at the present moment are the unfortunate Army Reserve men. I do not wish it to be implied for a moment that I think a man should get anything but good by going into the Army. He ought to be improved by the discipline, and by being subjected to the influence of such Officers and non-commissioned officers as we have in the British Army; but when a man gets out of

regular civil employment in these keen days of competition for seven years, and tries to get back into it, he finds it difficult to get a berth. In the St. James's district, where they estimated that probably one-sixth of the able-bodied destitute men were ex-soldiers, they also remarked that out of the 1,200 people that applied for relief in 1891 there was not one single able-bodied man who had been in the Navy. Our present system is so good, and works so well, and gives such satisfaction, that I should be very sorry to see it interfered with, and we must go in some other direction to establish our Reserve, which doubtless requires to be increased. With regard to the men who leave the Navy before they get their pensions, even those men you see are educated and trained, so that after we have finished with them they remain good and useful citizens, and are able to maintain themselves, and keep off the rates. There are just three other matters the gallant lecturer has mentioned that I should like to refer to, in which I entirely agree with him. The first is the importance of the extension of gymnasiums and gymnastics; secondly, the extension and development of the dry canteen system; and thirdly, the shortening of the period of foreign service. With regard to the gymnasiums, I am quite surprised that more has not been done already. Now that masts and sails are practically abolished, I look upon gymnasiums as quite necessary. They ought to be established at all our naval stations abroad, as well as at home, the Cape, Simon's Bay, Hong Kong, Malta, and such places. The men could use them for recreation when instruction is not going on, and after they are once built they will be little expense to the country; indeed, the only expense would be the gymnasium instructors, and they should be borne on the flag-ship's books, and could, if necessary, take their turn of sea-service. With regard to the dry canteen, I am sorry to gather from the lecturer's remarks that they are not always provided. Accommodation for the canteen is a very great comfort to the men, and I should also like to see all possible games provided for the men when afloat. Anything that makes a man happy or contented on board ship is a good thing. By all means give them plenty of leave. But I think the lecturer will agree with me, that in some places in the East Indies, such as Aden and Trincomalee, for instance, there is hardly anything for the men to do but to go into the liquor shops and drink the vile concoctions specially prepared for their consumption. Then, as to shortening the period of service abroad, I believe that would be a popular and good change. Possibly we could hardly expect the Admiralty to relieve men every two years on such distant stations as China or the Pacific, but three years ought to be the outside, and I think they might even extend the two years system to Flag Officers.

General DENNE: Admiral Bowden-Smith alluded to my unfortunate Service, with regard to the number of wandering Reservists, and I quite agree in what he said. I often cannot walk from here to my home without meeting three or four old soldiers, but I think Admiral Bowden-Smith is wrong in comparing it with what would be the case if Admiral Fremantle's Reserve was established for the Navy. There are some men who enter the Army without any other means of earning a livelihood, and whilst they are in the Army the profession of arms teaches them nothing which is serviceable to them as citizens afterwards, except a certain amount of discipline, which, I am afraid, is hardly enough inducement for employment. But surely if Admiral Fremantle's plan is carried out for a large Naval Reserve, those Naval Reservists would be quite a different stamp of men, and they would all get employment during the time they were Reservists; for, being educated seamen, there would be always work for them. I do not, therefore, think it would be the same as Admiral Bowden-Smith alluded to with regard to the Army, and I think you must have a large Reserve for the Navy, as we must have one for the Army. At the present time we have 80,000 Reservists for the Army, and you have very few indeed for the Navy. Therefore I think you can hardly compare them one with the other in their present condition.

Admiral FIELD, M.P.: I rise with great diffidence amongst my brother Officers, but some observations that fell from my friends Admiral Long and Admiral Sir Edmund Fremantle, and also from Admiral Bowden-Smith, seem to call for some notice from myself. Admiral Long seems to intimate that statesmen might do a great deal in dealing with some of these questions that have been brought before us. My humble opinion is exactly in accord with his own as to their

power to do good, but I beg to assure him that they have very little initiative as far as my experience goes, and that it is more important that pressure should be brought to bear upon them by discussions in places like this, than that it should be left to the initiative of statesmen in the House of Commons. The members of the House of Commons are our very best friends, and I am certain that no expense that might be recommended by naval Officers of authority—I mean such as I see around me here—would ever be grudged by that House. I have never known a vote ever questioned where any necessity has been shown for any increase of expenditure in any particular department. I remember very well having a discussion with a prominent Radical—Admiral Commerell knows him quite well—before the Naval Estimates came on, one day. I said, "Now we are going to have a naval hornpipe to-night, and I hope you will not interfere with us." What was his reply? He said, "My dear Field, I would give you another million, anything you want, for the Navy, though you must take it out of the Army." I had much sympathy with that feeling, though I said I did not join with him quite in desiring to take anything from the Army, but I did desire a large increase of naval expenditure. I beg to assure Admiral Long that you never would have had a Naval Programme at all if it had not been for the pressure brought to bear by distinguished naval Officers outside the House of Commons, as well as by a few modest naval men who are inside it, and by the assistance of the press and public meetings in the city of London. Therefore, if you want anything out of the Government, they are like a ripe orange—you must squeeze them to get the juice out. Discussions in this theatre are of enormous value, because they tend to shape opinion: they tend to enlighten our leaders, and may possibly bear good fruit in the near future. I only rose because I have thought a good deal upon this question, and I challenged more than once our heads in the House of Commons, because I have said, and said last year, it seems to me the question of managing the Navy, when we have got the Naval Programme carried out in its entirety, has never been properly faced by the responsible Admiralty Officers: and all that they have done, and all that they did last year, when the Naval Estimates came on, was to give us a contemptible increase of about 2,000 men and boys, of which, I believe, about 1,000 might be set down to the training ship in the north of Scotland, I have always felt that much more might be done in the way of making preparation to form a Naval Reserve of a superior class, to prevent our seamen, at expiration of their ten years, going away from us. In that respect I have much sympathy with what has fallen from Admiral Fremantle, but I am utterly opposed to his view, and agree with Admiral Bowden-Smith in his objection to shortening the term from ten to seven years. When you are dealing with boys you can do what you like with them; the State makes a bargain with them, or with their parents rather, on their behalf, and you can very well lay down the principle that they shall serve ten years from the age of eighteen, and at the end of ten years, if they do not re-engage, they shall then enter the 1st Class Naval Reserve for another five years, or for as long as you like—that is a mere detail.

Admiral FREMANTLE: I mean seven years afloat, and afterwards another five years.

Admiral FIELD: I have always held that we ought never to allow these valuable men to go altogether, and I have always felt that the payment of 2d. extra to these men when they re-engage was a contemptible increase, when you look at what a magnificent man a seaman is at the end of ten years. But we are not considering that so much as whether these men should be engaged to go into our Naval Reserve or re-engage. If you want to create a Naval Reserve of these men, then to raise the pay might be a mistake; but you can do what you like with them when you engage them as boys. I used to be told that the ten-years men, when they did not re-engage, went into the London Fire Brigade. You want to retain them, and to enter them in your first-class Naval Reserve. I am strongly of opinion that the short-service pension which is now allowed by the Regulations, but which he rarely gets, should be a man's inalienable right to demand, if he does wish to re-engage; at the end of ten years from the age of eighteen; I think the short-service pension is little short of a fraud as at present worked: it is never made use of; no man gets it, if he is sound in health and limb. Admiral Long

said he was not aware of the number of *bond fide* seamen in the merchant service. I have looked a good deal into this question, and I understand the number is diminishing year by year; that, two or three years ago, there were not more than 40,000 *bond fide* seamen coming up to the word "seamen" in the merchant service. That is a terrible falling off. I am one of those who have been doing a little in a humble way to try and arouse the authorities in the House of Commons, who ought to be interested in this question, by last year drawing attention to the great waste that is going on in our reformatory and industrial school ships. I would beg, with all respect, to call the gallant lecturer's attention to that point. If we can by any means in our power find a method by which we can do something to repair the terrible waste in the merchant service by infusing new elements of better trained lads into that service than are now received from the shore, we shall be doing good, because the more we can improve the *moral* of the mercantile marine, the better it is for the Imperial Service, inasmuch as we shall be able to draw from it in time of war. I will ask the gallant lecturer to pay a little attention to this subject of the industrial and reformatory school ships of the nation. They are all managed by voluntary committees; but I have found, on examination and inquiry of the Captains of the ships—for they are commanded by naval Officers, and therefore they are entitled to our sympathy—that these ships practically do not do the work they are intended to carry out. Not more than 40 per cent. of the boys in these ships go to sea at all, and the ships are never full. There are, I think, close upon 3,000 boys in course of training on board these thirteen ships. What I say is this, that no boys ought to be allowed to be committed by law at all to any ship; but the ships ought to be manned from the land industrial and reformatory schools; in other words, the ships and the schools should be affiliated together; the ships training the superior class of boys for the mercantile marine received from the land schools. We all know that there are boys who may be eager to go to sea; but when they come on board an industrial school ship, having been committed by the magistrates, anyone can tell, at a glance of the eye, that they will never make sailors: they are poor, weakly lads, picked up from the gutter, real objects of pity. They are often boys who deserve our sympathy: they have committed no real crime, but they have done what many of us have perhaps done in our youth. I am for improving that system, and, having called for a Parliamentary Return for what the result of five years' work has been in all those ships, I find the waste going on is terrible. We have a right to demand that these boys shall be made some use of for Imperial purposes, seeing that the nation pays the larger part of the expense of their training. The private subscribers are scarcely worth mentioning: large annual sums are paid by the Treasury, and it is by those grants chiefly that these ships are maintained: and if more attention were paid to the boys in them, they would form a valuable body, coming forward year after year, and so impregnating the mercantile marine with better material, which would react beneficially upon the Imperial Navy. I came here as a listener. I am always grateful for any information I can pick up in this room, or by any other method, and I do my best to support the policy which is initiated by my brother Officers, who know so much more about these subjects than I can pretend to do. I am only one member out of five who endeavour to do our duty in the House of Commons, and I beg to assure my brother Officers here if they want any good done for the Naval Service these discussions will greatly contribute to the end they have in view. The Government in my humble judgment will never take the initiative in the House of Commons alone, unless it is backed up and driven forwards by naval opinion.

The CHAIRMAN: I think we are hanging upon one point a little too much; I think Admiral Fremantle wished to dwell more upon the education of the boys as we govern them, and the Army as we govern them, than on the plan of getting them.

Admiral LINDESAY BRINE: One word on the question of Reserves. There is a point, I think, perhaps the lecturer did not sufficiently dwell upon in speaking of his scheme of establishing a good Naval Reserve, which is this, that we have established a good Naval Reserve out of our own pensioners from the men who take their pensions at thirty-nine and forty years of age, between that time and the age of

forty-five; these 1st Class Pensioner Reserves are a most valuable body of men; and when a plan was drawn up some years ago, as to the best way of utilizing our Reserves, it was found that between the ages of thirty-nine and forty-five, we had several thousands of first-rate trained men-of-war's men. These men can be either used on board ships, or they can be employed in our ports. I do not think sufficient weight has been given to the importance of seeing that instead of these men being thrown away, as somebody has said, when they get their pension, they really become our most valuable reserves. None of us can quite tell what value to place on our 1st or 2nd Class Mercantile Reserve. They may turn out very good men, but it is possible that in time of war they may in some respects fail. One thing we know, and that is that about 5,000 of our best 1st Class Mercantile Reserve are men many of whom have filled positions as mates of sailing ships, are and always will be ready for service, as they are chiefly employed at our seaports. We are certain of obtaining these men in the event of war, and they are first-rate men. We are also certain of getting about 5,000 good pensioners. Thus it may be expected that we should have 12,000 or 13,000 good seamen immediately available, and we can rely upon them to start with. What will happen after that none of us can say.

The CHAIRMAN: I will just say one word about the question which Admiral Brine has started about the Reserves. The other day we wanted 100 men to take up excessively good positions at Portsmouth in the harbour ships, and out of these 9,000 excellent men between the ages of thirty-eight and forty-five we could not get 100.

Admiral BRINE: They would be obliged to come in case of war. They would not volunteer: they do not want to come, but in case of war they have got to come.

The CHAIRMAN: A volunteer is worth two pressed men.

Admiral COLOMB: Were they to have full pay?

The CHAIRMAN: We offered to engage them for two years and, if they remained for two years, to pay them for their clothes. The question which Sir Edmund Fremantle has raised is, of course we know, impossible to be argued out in an afternoon, but I must say I think we have got to face a fact—it may be a very unpalatable one to a great many of us; it is a very unpalatable one to me—and that is, that as masts and sails have passed away, the training of the men in that line who worked them will have to pass away too. We know very well that in former days we always looked amongst the upper yardsmen for our petty officers and best men; and why was it we looked there? First of all, we always picked out the youngest, smartest, and most promising men to put there. Having put them there, the necessity of going aloft quickly, and of obeying command immediately, made them smart, well-disciplined men. These men on the upper yards have had to look danger and death in the face pretty often, and that has made them self-reliant. I am very much afraid that what Sir Edmund Fremantle says is perfectly true, that some of your very smart Commanders of line-of-battle ships, when they got good men, did not like to part with them. The Commander of the "Queen" says, "No, I am not going to let my upper yardsmen go, because the 'Caledonian' will beat me next exercise day." There is no doubt that was the case, but at the same time I believe and hope it was not general; and if you could look back to the services of our old warrant officers at the present day, you would find that those men had been upper yardsmen, they had done their duty as young men in that position, and they had gained discipline and self-reliance, and have done their duty up to the end. There is one other point I wish particularly to dwell upon and in which I agree with Sir Edmund Fremantle only partially, and that is, I do not think it would be a safe thing, looking at what has happened in the Army, to go even to the fringe of short service. It is not generally known what it costs us to bring up and feed our boys; but, allowing for the waste of those who turn out not worth keeping, and there are a good number of them, it costs over 250*l.* per head. Now, is it wise for us (it is after all a matter of cash) to take and educate a boy to the tune of 250*l.* and then to let him go at the end of seven years? I think you will find the waste in the future will be very great. I have no doubt in the world the Naval Exhibition may bring us good boys at the one end, but I am

quite certain it will put off a number of good ten years' men at the other. Everybody in London seeing that fine body of men, so well disciplined, so well ordered, such sober, fine-looking men, why they would snap at them, and you would find hardly a man who has been up from either Portsmouth or Plymouth, and has taken part in the Naval Exhibition, who is not already suited, when his ten years are up, to a billet. I am very glad for them, but I am very sorry for the Service, because I think we shall lose more than we can spare. Sir Edmund Fremantle is very much pleased with the education of the boys in the training ships. Now, I think he is a little inconsistent about that, and I will tell you the reason why. Look at that list! He tells us you must do away with masts and yards and topsails, and yet he approves of training a boy upon a monkey topsail. What is the good of half those "bends and hitches"? I went on board the "St. Vincent" once or twice at hours when they did not expect visitors, and I saw the number of useless things that they were teaching these boys. I said, "Halloa, what have you got here?" "Oh! we are just teaching the boys to turn in a dead-eye cutter-stay fashion." The cutter-stay fashion was done away with before I entered the Service, and that is fifty years ago. They complain that the time given to education is not sufficient, and yet they are teaching these boys all these obsolete things. I do not think that education satisfactory, and, though it was revised only two years ago, I say tear it up and start a new one. As far as the brigs are concerned, when I was at Portsmouth, the very first application I had was, "Have you any objection to letting one of the tugs tow the brig out of the harbour on Monday morning and tow her into the harbour on Friday night?" I said, "Most decidedly not. If she gets ashore once, the Lieutenants and boys will take jolly good care they don't get ashore a second time. Getting out of and into the harbour is about the best part of the week's work," and I am convinced you will all think that. I will say no more. We have heard a most excellent paper, and if you do not wish to continue the discussion, I am sure we shall be very glad to hear what Sir Edmund has to say in reply.

SIR EDMUND FREMANTLE: Before I answer the various speakers who have taken part in the discussion, I should like to make one or two corrections. I thought perhaps somebody might challenge my statement about the Officer of the watch being afraid of rolling the ship's mast over the side. It sounds rather strange. The fact was I was quoting from memory of a very old account of Anson's voyage, by a Mr. Walter, written in 1748; his actual words are, speaking of the Spanish Admiral Pizarro's flag-ship going round the Horn, "being off Cape Horn and going before the wind in very moderate weather, with a swelling sea, by some misconduct of the Officer of the watch, the ship rolled away her mast, and for the second time he was obliged to put back to the River Plate." I also made a mistake as to the percentages. Admiral Brine was sharp enough to see that; the percentages are liable to be misunderstood, and I propose to alter them.

ADMIRAL COLOMB: It depends on whether you take the percentage of the whole.

ADMIRAL FREMANTLE: Eighty-seven is about 45 per cent. of the whole amount; it is 90 per cent. as compared with the sailors and marines, that is, the percentage of non-combatants to combatants is right, but the percentage of non-combatants to the whole amount is not correct. Admiral Long made some remarks about the difficulty of getting statistics as to the merchant seamen. That is true enough. It is extremely difficult to get any statistics, and when you ask the question you are told that the fact is that many Norwegians, Danes, Germans, and other good people enter themselves as if they were English, although you can see clearly enough by their manner that they are not. There is no machinery, I believe, by which the Board of Trade can tell us what number of English seamen we have. Mr. Forwood talked of increasing the number by 10,000 in the Naval Reserve, but we heard from Admiral Field that he did not think there were more than 40,000 British seamen altogether in the merchant service, and my own impression is that that is pretty correct. Admiral Long criticized somewhat my proposal about enlarging the Navy. He agrees that it should be enlarged, but he does not give us any account as to how exactly it should be done, except, as far as I can make out, that we should have more ships, and spend more money. I think we

want a very largely increased Reserve, and if that is the case, we must have something a little different from what we have had hitherto. That has been the only idea, more ships and more money. What we really want is an expansive Navy, and not so much an expensive one; that is my idea. There has been a misunderstanding by several speakers, including Admiral Long, as to recommissioning abroad. I distinctly said I do not approve of recommissioning abroad. Therefore I do not think there will be more recommissioning abroad, but on the other hand decidedly less. Technically, there will be very much less; Captains will be relieved every two years, and other Officers every two years. [A Member.—How about the Admirals?] It might be a good thing also to relieve Admirals in two years. As far as discipline is concerned, it will be a very good thing. As far as political requirements are concerned, it would be a bad thing. As far as discipline is concerned, as in the Channel Fleet, it is an extremely good thing to relieve the Admiral every two years, and it would be a great mistake to have him there for three years; but you must recollect that, whether in the Mediterranean or on other foreign stations, there is a great deal of political work which is done by the Admiral, and, from a political point of view, the Commander-in-Chief is better for being kept there longer; but in all other respects I should say distinctly that two years is long enough for fish, flesh, or fowl, which includes the Admirals, of course. I do think it would be a very good thing to constantly keep ships going as a going concern. People's ideas are such that, when a new Captain and a new crew come to a ship, he always wants to pull everything to pieces. I have myself experienced that when a man is leaving he considers that his ship is in a very good state; all is going on first rate, in fact. I might mention the "Hoadicea" as an instance; she steamed 12 knots all the way from Colombo to Aden; she did more than 12 knots up the Red Sea, and therefore could not be in a bad state. When, however, she arrived at Malta to recommission, everything had to be pulled to pieces to satisfy the new people, and we have heard since by the papers that she was in a very bad state. I do not deny that it is satisfactory with regard to the machinery to have it taken out and examined from time to time to see what state it is in, but this is frequently done on change of Officers when it is unnecessary; and if the instructions said it was not necessary, and that you were not allowed to do it in the middle of the commission, the responsibility is not yours. The ship has been running very well, we will suppose, and pulling her to pieces is unnecessary and expensive, and does not tend to efficiency in any way. I should like to avoid that. Admiral Bowden-Smith appears to have particularly misunderstood me as to the question of men leaving after seven years. If anybody will read my lecture carefully, he will see that a man is bound to serve twelve years from the age of eighteen as a minimum; he has seven years under the pennant as a minimum, and then he must go for five years into the Reserve, after which he is free. I propose to offer him a somewhat easier service for the next seven years if he chooses to re-enter for that time at the expiration of his first seven years. Therefore I take every man for a minimum of twelve years. I also want to get some men for fourteen years, and I hope to get some for twenty-two years, and my idea was that 10 per cent. were to enter with a view of going on and becoming petty officers, or continuing their service to complete for pensions under the pennant. I do not advocate short service as it is generally understood. It is very natural after what has taken place in the Army, where a great deal has been sacrificed to short service, to say do not let us have the same in the Navy. Admiral Bowden-Smith himself says that none of our ten years' men, who, if you please, do not get any pension at all, or any reserve pay, or anything else, do not come on the rates. Why not? Because they have a profession. But I am proposing to put people in the Reserve who will get a month's training, which the Army do not. I propose to pay them a retaining fee, and they have their trade after that, and the fact remains that the ten years' men do not come on the rates. It is no use talking about copying the Army: I would copy anything that is good. It is a very common thing if anybody has any objection to anything to set up a prejudice by saying, "Oh, the Germans have got it, or the French have it: we do not copy the Germans or the French." The fact is, there is nothing original under the sun,

and every idea that I have in my head, and I believe most of the ideas in most people's heads, have come out of somebody else's heads. The two years system I believe to be perfectly practicable abroad; at all events, I can never see why the Germans can change their men, why the Frenchmen in Madagascar can change their men, and say exactly to a month or two when the exchange will come, and yet we cannot do the same. Three years is supposed to be the time, but it very often gets very near to four years. I fail to see why we cannot relieve people every two years. It would be a good thing for the health of the men. Some of the Captains on the East Indies station whom I see present here will corroborate what I say, viz., that in the third year of commission in a tropical climate the men break down very much, and that many a good man might have been saved to the Service, and to himself and his wife and family, if the ships had been sent home in two years instead of three. Admiral Field also misunderstood, to some extent, the time of service, and spoke a great deal about industrial school ships and reformatories. There is no difficulty at this time in getting boys, and therefore I do not think that question arises. Admiral Lindesay Brine said if we wanted a Naval Reserve, we could get it from the pensioners of the Navy, that is, from men after they have reached forty years of age. He said he would get several thousands; afterwards he said 5,000.

Admiral LINDESAY BRINE: I thought so.

Sir EDMUND FREMANTLE: It may be so, but we heard from Sir Edmund Commerell that when he wanted them in peace-time, and offered a very fair inducement, he could not get them.

Admiral LINDESAY BRINE: That is only as volunteers, but these men are obliged to come. Their addresses are known; they are paid by Paymasters, and they can all be got in case of war.

Sir EDMUND FREMANTLE: But I maintain they won't be of much use. As a rule, sailors, on board ship, after the age of forty, are generally looked upon as very old fellows. We think everybody is young who is about fifteen years younger than ourselves, but I think if you were to poll the ships' companies in Her Majesty's Navy, and ask them about people over forty, they will tell you they were rather old for the trade. That is entirely corroborated by Sir Edward Commerell. If you take 90 per cent. of the men over forty, you will find, on their part, a great reluctance to go into sea-going ships, and if they were forced to go, I doubt whether you would find them as efficient as you would like. I prefer younger men myself; if it is a good thing to have these men at the age of forty, it must be a very much better thing to have some Reserve men at the age of thirty. I should like to have them if I can. Sir E. Commerell addressed himself to the "fringe of short service"—a very good expression! I admit it is a "fringe," and many people do reasonably object to the "fringe of short service," and to that I plead guilty; but I think they are a little frightened by the name, and that some modified form of short service, if people would only think it over, will be a very great improvement on our present system, which is really, although thoroughly efficient for a moderate Navy, not thoroughly efficient for a very large Navy, and we must have now, as I have endeavoured to show, a very large Navy. There was a letter in the "Times," written not very long ago, by "Au Courant," and he actually argued that, as we have very few seamen, we must have small ships; that we cannot afford to man big ships. I think that is really putting the cart before the horse, and if that is to be the result of our having a sort of standing Navy of this kind, it will be dangerous for the best interests of the country. Before I sit down I should like to refer to a point which, to my astonishment, has been very little referred to. I rather challenged criticism as to the training of our men. I did not say that I would keep on the "monkey top-sails" or "bends and hitches." I proposed to modify that. I think it is a matter of detail, but I pointed out that even according to the present view of the training Officers of the Admiralty, that if you take away those two subjects which I have italicized, there will still be a good deal of seamanship left. I should like to see the list modified considerably in certain details. I did expect to be directly challenged as to what our sailors were to be in the future. Two lectures have been given in this Institution recently, and received with great approval by many distinguished Officers, in which it was

said that everything was going to the bad rather faster than usual, that everything would have gone to the bad absolutely when masts and sails were finally abolished.

Admiral BOWDEN-SMITH: When that question was brought before the Institution the majority of opinion was decidedly against masts and sails.

Admiral FREMANTLE: The snake may be scotched, but it is not killed. I received a letter this morning from a distinguished Officer whose opinion I value very much. I will not mention his name, but he said he would go so far as to paraphrase the expression of a French philosopher, and say that, if masts and sails did not exist it would be necessary to invent them, to ensure the efficiency of navies. He does not tell us how he is going to invent them. Therefore, I maintain that those people who wish to retain masts and sails, and make that entirely the foundation of our training in future, are bound to say into what ships they will put them, and where they will put them. I do not know if there are any Home Rulers here, but it is rather like the Irish Home Rule Bill. Before the Bill comes out they say, "Oh, we are going to make a Bill so that it shall be all right, and the supremacy of the British Parliament will be maintained." So it is as to the sails. Everything is all right. "We are going to keep masts and sails, we are going to have the maritime supremacy of this country maintained," but they cannot tell you how it is to be done. Directly they bring their little Bill on the table they find a great difficulty. I am very much obliged for the kind way in which very many of you have spoken of my lecture. I did not expect it to be received with general approval, but I do wish people would look into the question of short service, upon which I think we have dwelt a little too much, while, on the other hand, we have dwelt too little on the question of training. My proposal is made after great consideration, and I have overcome some prejudices in making it. I have stated that the first line of defence was the most important thing in my opinion—that is, to have our ships well manned, well armed, well disciplined, well officered—rather than to have a large and inefficient Reserve. At the same time, on looking into the matter, I was very much impressed with the fact that we have not got enough people, and I do differ certainly from Admiral Long and others, who seem to put on one side that question, to throw overboard the short service, and say, We won't have anything to do with short service. In that case you will want simply a larger and more expensive peace Navy, and I am sure you are asking for a thing which is not exactly reasonable, and which you are not likely to get. Therefore, I ask people to look with a little less prejudice upon a proposal for creating a Navy which shall give us a more reliable reserve in case of war. It appears to me, as regards the short service, that the Army, the very people who ought not to have adopted it, did adopt it, and that the Navy, who really ought to have adopted it, as the men have a profession to fall back upon, have not tried it.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sure you will empower me, in your name, to return our hearty thanks to Admiral Fremantle for his most excellent lecture.