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The Military Training of Boys

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Friday, July 5, 1889.

MAJOR-GENERAL A. J. LYON-FREMANTLE, C.B., Deputy
Adjutant General for the Auxiliary Forces, in the Chair.

THE MILITARY TRAINING OF BOYS.

By Major A. V. FORDYCE, Commanding 1st Cadet Battalion Royal
Warwickshire Regiment.

WHEN the Volunteer Force was first established, cadet companies were attached to over 200 volunteer corps. In 1883 these had dwindled down to twenty-two, and although since that year they have slightly increased in number, there are only about thirty now existing.

No cause has ever been assigned to the decline of these useful adjuncts to adult corps, but I venture to suggest that as the requirements of the War Office from volunteers became more and more exacting it was found necessary to devote so much attention to the adult or grant-earning portion of the force that the interest in the cadet companies gradually lessened and eventually caused their premature decease.

It is also possible that many Commanding Officers of adult battalions who were excellent leaders of men had not the patience, tact, and special experience necessary for the successful training of boys.

Such, however, was the condition of the Cadet Force in 1883, when agitation for the extension of the movement was commenced. Correspondence was opened with the War Office, the Press took up the matter, and in one or two places those having boys at their disposal commenced drilling them and in some cases actually went into camp. In 1884 and 1885 tents were lent by the authorities for the encampment of one of these unauthorized corps, and the boys were semi-officially inspected (in 1884 by a Militia Adjutant and in 1885 by the General Officer Commanding the Northern District).

Continual applications were made to the War Office to give official sanction to these corps on somewhat novel lines and thus to establish their legality. But the ways of the War Office are slow, and June, 1886, came before regulations authorizing the raising of battalions of cadets under independent commands, *i.e.*, independent of volunteer battalions, were issued, the first result being the recognition of the principal unauthorized corps under the official title of the 1st Cadet Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

It is needless here to go into the details of that long and arduously

contested struggle, for the weariness of fighting was soon forgotten in the pleasure of the victory.

I might just add here that eight weeks after the official recognition, the initial battalion recruited up to 250 strong, went under canvas for eight days, and was officially inspected at the close, by Major-General the Hon. J. C. Dormer, then Deputy Adjutant-General for Auxiliaries at the Horse Guards, and Major-General C. F. T. Daniell, then commanding the Northern District. How the new battalion acquitted itself under these trying circumstances will be best illustrated by quoting from a letter shortly afterwards sent to the Commanding Officer by General Dormer, which said, "Since I have seen your battalion I have done nothing but praise it."

This new departure was intended to provide an opportunity for those who had pointed out the shortcomings of the old system to show that their theory would be equally good in practice.

It will be necessary to go somewhat minutely into the details of the organization of the cadet battalion before alluded to, as until February last it was the only one, and an experience of three years is a fair standard from which to judge of the probability of these battalions being successfully worked. Before doing so, a few words as to the necessity for their establishment from both a social and military point of view will not, perhaps, be out of place.

In our large cities and towns, with their ever-increasing population, the provision of a suitable and healthy means of recreation for working-class lads after working hours, is becoming a question of considerable importance. In every one of these large towns the manufactories, shops, and offices turn out into the streets thousands of growing lads, full of life, spirits, and energy, capable of being most usefully employed if rightly directed, and equally liable to be mis-directed into channels of vice, crime, not to say public danger.

These are the future fathers of another generation of men and women. These are the future electors, who, by the vast majority of their votes, will have the final voice in the selection of our Governments or the fate of our country. How necessary is it then that these young men should have their energies properly directed at an age when it is easy to form the character with a permanent personality for good or ill; how necessary is it that their moral, mental, and physical culture should be one of the problems most carefully considered by the best minds in the country!

The advocates of the cadet system claim that service in a cadet battalions must be of immense value, not only to the lads who serve in them but to the country at large. In these battalions they learn self-respect, subordination, punctuality, smartness, and most of those qualities which are so essential to success in life, and even if their term of service be short, say, twelve months only, who can tell what its result may not be on their future life and conduct?

One point I should like to mention, illustrating in a small degree what this battalion has done in Birmingham. When first formed, nearly all the cadets wore round their necks the loosely-knotted woollen scarf so much affected by working lads, but from the example

set before them it is now a matter for reproach to any lad to come on parade without a clean collar and necktie. This is but a small thing, but I think it is good evidence of a desire for personal cleanliness and self-respect given to the lads by their familiarity with the smartness inseparable from the conduct of a well-disciplined battalion.

Instead of finding their only amusements in the unquestionably dangerous attractions of the streets at night, the lads belonging to a cadet battalion find they have an object in life apart from the mere drudgery of daily labour.

Leaving work, they hasten home, smarten themselves up, go to their drill-hall, where they are sure to find either instruction or pleasant companions to accompany them to cricket or football, or whatever may be in season, or they remain in the drill-hall reading the papers provided, playing at bagatelle and other games, exercising their muscles on gymnastic appliances, or practising shooting, signalling, first aid to the wounded, or the many other things incidental to a well-conducted corps. How much better this than to hang about street corners, dirty and untidy, smoking short clay pipes, indulging in rough horseplay and worse language, a nuisance to themselves and every passer-by!

So much from a social point of view, and from the military side I think the case is quite as strong.

Most of these young men have during their service obtained a soldierly instinct, and the majority join one or the other branches of Her Majesty's Army.

Out of 500 who have passed through the ranks of the 1st Cadet Battalion Royal Warwick Regiment, 80 per cent. have continued their career in either the line, the militia, or the volunteers, and hardly an evening passes but some stalwart young fellow, resplendent in his new uniform, comes down to be admired by his old comrades.

The Army will perhaps derive, directly, less advantage from these battalions than the militia and volunteers, but many of those who first join the latter forces eventually find their way into the former.

I think the Army will gain one thing from the spread of cadet battalions. They will get a class of recruits who will not desert. The lad who has served four years in a cadet battalion knows something about a soldier's life, and if he adopts it professionally it is most probably because he has become imbued with a military spirit.

Colonel Keough, who has recently given up the command of one of the smartest battalions in the British Army, the 2nd Suffolk, suggested to me the other day that by arrangement with Officers Commanding line regiments it might be possible to utilize cadet battalions as a satisfactory means of supplying what is becoming so serious a deficiency in the Army of to-day, viz., trained non-commissioned officers.

He thought that smart youths who intended to make the Army a profession might be specially looked after while in the cadet battalion, on the understanding that after four years' service they should (if found to be competent and otherwise suitable) be transferred direct to a line battalion, with prospect of early promotion and the certainty

of a career before them. This would probably require some modification, but I think the idea is an exceedingly good one.

It must be borne in mind that the members of these cadet battalions are not composed of the sweepings of the slums, but the members are all working lads or clerks who are in a position to pay a moderate entrance fee on joining, and are personally inspected and approved by the Commanding Officer or Adjutant before enrolment. I think this obligatory payment is the weakest point about the whole movement. It does seem to me to be monstrous that these young men should have to pay a premium on their patriotism. Whatever may be done in the future to establish these battalions, I do trust that the principle of compelling an entrance fee from willing recruits should be made unnecessary.

There is no doubt that service as cadets inculcates a love of Queen and country, and a boy who has served as such must be infinitely superior and of much greater value to all with whom he is connected than one who has not been similarly trained. The opinions of the General Officers who have officially inspected the 1st Warwick Cadet Battalion have invariably been of a most favourable character, and I need only add the names of Generals Sir Gerald Graham and F. A. Willis to those previously mentioned as sufficient proof as to the value of those opinions.

It has frequently been noticed that many thousands of young men prefer cricket, football, and other sports to volunteering. It has occurred to me that this is because such early facilities are offered for the practice of those games that by the time the lads are old enough to join the volunteers, their preference for field sports has been so confirmed that volunteering is quite put on one side. I think the extension of cadet battalions will be likely to remove this to a great extent, and while not causing the young men to neglect cricket, &c., will place volunteering on equal terms at the start.

I take a somewhat strong view as to the moral obligation on every young man to join the volunteers to learn his drill, and to be able to take part in the defence of his country if called upon, and I think in very gratitude for the absence of conscription, the youth of the country should take this easy way of performing a public duty. If young men thoroughly learn their drill from fourteen to eighteen, they are never likely to forget its lessons, and the physical advantages of drill to growing lads are so obvious that I need do no more than mention them.

The experimental battalion is authorized with a strength of 400 in four companies. The following table will give the details of the establishment as adopted by the Officers of this corps:—

Details of Establishment of 1st Cadet Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

	Field Officer.	Captains.	Lieutenants.	Surgeon.	Quartermaster.	Chaplain.	Sergeant-Major.	Staff-Sergeants.	Colour-Sergeants.	Sergeants.	Corporals.	Drummers.	Privates.
Staff.....	1	1 ¹	..	1	1	1	1	3 ²	..	1	1	..	70
"A" Co.	..	1	2	..	..	..	..	1	1	4	6	2	70
"B" Co.	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	1	1	4	6	2	70
"C" Co.	..	1	2	..	..	..	..	1	1	4	6	2	70
"D" Co.	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	1	1	4	6	2	70
Band.....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1	1	..	20
Signallers	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1	1	..	8
Ambulance.....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1	1	..	6
	1	5	6	1	1	1	1	10	4	20	28	8	314

Total, 400.

Every recruit on joining pays an entrance fee of 5s. 6d.; this actually covers the cost of a pair of trousers, leggings, belt, frog, and pouch, and these articles become the personal property of the cadet, and as they have to be kept up at his own expense, this plan saves the corps the constant expense and trouble of changing clothes, which is so necessary with fast-growing lads.

The other articles of equipment are full and undress tunic, collar-badges, helmet and fittings, Glengarry and badge, and valise. These remain the property of the battalion. The recruit is encouraged to buy a great coat, and these can be supplied second-hand at 3s. 9d. each. Nearly all the cadets supply themselves with haversacks, water-bottles, and great coats for marches out. The uniform is exactly the same as that of the line battalions of the territorial regiment to which this battalion is attached, with the substitution of silver for gold, and the lettering on the shoulder-strap, which reads—

1
C. B.
WARWICK.

The cost of the outfit is as follows:—Tunic, new, 8s. 6d.; second-hand, 4s.; undress, 2s.; valise, 5d.; Glengarry, 8d.; badges, 7d.; helmet, 1s.; but the plating of fittings costs 2s. each, and the centre-piece of helmet plate, 4d. Total cost, maximum, 15s. 6d.: mini-

¹ Adjutant.² Armourer-sergeant, Quartermaster-sergeant, Orderly-room sergeant.

num, 11s. 6d. If the authorities would allow cadet battalions to wear brass ornaments and buttons this would be reduced to 13s. and 9s. respectively. As they give no pecuniary grant, this I think should be permitted.

The age on joining must be over fourteen and under sixteen, with the following chest measurements:—

	Chest. in.	Height. ft. in.
14 to 15	30	5 0
15 to 16	32	5 2

The average height in the Birmingham battalion is 5 feet 4½ inches.

A camp has been held for eight days each year since the formation of the battalion. Every cadet who goes to camp pays a sum of 5s. towards its cost, and in return receives 6s. worth of admission tickets. The cost of a camp for 250 boys would be about 100*l.*, but advertising and the necessity of providing attractions to ensure a good attendance of the public costs another 40*l.* Last year the rations were good and sufficient, and cost 9d. per head per diem. Tents and camp equipment have always been lent by the Government, but no money grant has been made, neither allowance for Adjutant nor for staff sergeants.

The battalion is armed with short-stocked Sniders and bayonets. These arms when supplied are plugged with lead to prevent them being fired from. This appears to me to be a needlessly childish regulation, and takes away considerable charm from membership in a battalion. Cadet corps, as distinguished from cadet battalions, are allowed to fire, firing arms being supplied to the extent of 20 per cent. of the strength. General Daniell, lately commanding the Northern District, quite recently promised that we should be placed on a similar footing, but I fear the regulation issued a few months ago applied to cadet corps and not to battalions, as I have heard nothing more about it. Why young men of sixteen to eighteen should not be allowed to practise firing under proper supervision is beyond my understanding. It is most desirable that firing arms and ammunition should be issued to cadet battalions.

At present we hold on loan eighty Martini cadet rifles—a splendid little weapon—which the Victorian Government has supplied to all cadets in that Colony. But the Australian Governments have recognized the vast importance of training their youths for the future defence of those Colonies, and have not thrown every difficulty in the way, such as has been done in certain official quarters in England.¹

There is an excellent brass band in connection with the battalion, under a very experienced and efficient bandmaster. The age clause does not apply to this, as it is manifestly impossible to train musicians only to discharge them directly they are trained. Other members leave at seventeen, or after the next inspection subsequent to their attaining that age. This is a regulation which requires modifica-

¹ Valuable information about the Australian cadets will be found in an article by Dr. R. W. Dale in the April number of the "Contemporary Review."

tion. Permission should certainly be accorded to keep sergeants till eighteen. There is a well-appointed ambulance, which proved its efficiency by saving the life of the Adjutant, who last camp was frightfully injured, his horse having bolted, smashing his right thigh and knee against a gate. This Officer (a Captain in the Militia Artillery) was appointed to the battalion on the recommendation of the General Officer Commanding the District, and up to the time of his accident deserved no small share of the credit which the battalion has earned for smart drill. No allowance being made to the Adjutant accentuates the kindness of this Officer in taking so efficiently, an honorary post.

The annual cost of the battalion is estimated as follows (this estimate being based on the result of three years' experience):—

<i>Receipts.</i>		<i>Expenditure.</i>	
	£		£
Officers' subscriptions (when all appointments filled)	25	Rent of headquarters	20
Honorary members, estimated 100, paying subscriptions of 21s.	105	Gas	10
Proceeds of annual entertainments and other minor sources of income	20	Cleaning	5
	150	Recruit instructor	10
		Orderly-room sergeant	10
		Care of arms	5
		Postage, printing, binding, &c. ..	10
			70
		Renewal of uniform	50
		Balance to meet contingencies and fluctuation in income	30
			150

It is proposed to meet the cost of maintaining the battalion by electing 100 honorary members who will each subscribe a guinea annually.

I have purposely refrained till now from any expression as to the necessity for any financial aid from the Government, and while I could say a good deal, I will simply remark that if the battalions prove a success, there is a moral obligation on the Government to relieve from serious financial responsibility those who have taken the initiative in demonstrating their practicability and usefulness. This principle has in a small way been recognized, and early in this year several sums of money which had been paid to the Government by the Officers of the Birmingham battalion for rifles and stores were returned.

The Officers are appointed in the same manner as ordinary volunteer Officers. By an oversight in the wording of the regulation it reads, "Officers may be adults." This surely should have been "must be adults." Up to the present, I have never recommended any gentleman under seventeen for appointment. Officers hold honorary commissions or appointments. The reason for this has never been

¹ I consider it is unreasonable to expect Officers to pay towards the cost of maintaining the battalion in addition to their personal expenditure, which, apart from uniform, cannot be less than 10*l.* per annum.

² This is likely to be increased after two years.

apparent to me—Officers of cadet battalions have as much responsibility, and quite as much expense, as other volunteer Officers, without receiving any Government assistance, and however much it may have been desirable to make some distinctions when cadet corps were only attached to volunteer corps, there certainly can be no sound reason why Officers of cadet battalions should not be granted substantive commissions. It will, at any rate, cost nothing, and there will be no "Treasury fiend" to satisfy.

There is a great deal more in this than appears. The difference may be slight, but it is sufficient to constantly drain cadet battalions of their best Officers, and the authorities would only be showing a grateful appreciation of the way in which this movement has been brought to a successful issue by making these honorary commissions substantive. Questions are apt to arise when cadet and volunteer battalions are brigaded together. This has, in fact, arisen when a substantive Major of volunteers had to be brought out of the spectators to command a combined force of cadets and volunteers, there being a substantive Captain in command of the volunteers, and an honorary Major in command of the battalion of cadets, the field-day being got up by the cadet battalion during their own camp. I very strongly hope that the authorities will strictly enforce the regulation respecting examination of Officers of cadet battalions.

Regarding the staff of the battalion, it will have been noticed that the orderly-room sergeant, recruit instructor, and armourer-sergeant are paid nominal sums which but very inadequately represent the value of their services. All the other drill instructors, including the sergeant-major, render their services gratuitously. Some are ex-sergeants of the line and some ex-volunteer sergeants. They are a very painstaking set of men, and cheerfully perform their necessary duties at a great expense of time, which is highly creditable to them.

If there is one way more than another in which the assistance of the Government would be desirable, it would be in the supply of at least one good instructor.

It has been suggested to me that if a cadet battalion could supply a fixed number of trained recruits (say fifty every year) to the local volunteer battalion, then one instructor could be spared to the cadet battalion without any additional cost to the Government.

The weekly routine of drills, &c., is as follows:—

Monday evenings.	"A" and "B" Companies.	Company drill.
Wednesday	"C" and "D"	" " "
Tuesday	Recruit drill and signallers.	" " "
Thursday	Non-commissioned officers' class.	
Friday	Recruit drill and buglers' practice.	
Saturday	Ambulance detachment, band practice, and recruit drill; also in the drill season a battalion drill every alternate Saturday afternoon.	

An orderly Officer, sergeant, and corporal, with three sentries, are

detailed for duty each week. In camp the routine is precisely similar to that of adult battalions.

I think I have now given as full particulars of the constitution and working of a cadet battalion as will be necessary, and I should like to mention some possible developments of the movement which with the generous assistance of the authorities may greatly increase the usefulness of this new medium for the military training of boys.

In my battalion there are about sixty cadets (all over sixteen) and four Officers who can ride. I have proposed to give these, in addition to their ordinary instruction, a thorough training in transport duties, so that should it ever become necessary for the local volunteer battalion to take the field we could at once place at their disposal the necessary trained men, and as I also purposed to obtain from the owners of suitable vans and horses a promise for their use in case of need, we could practically find them the whole of the required transport.

As these young men grew too old to remain in the cadets, then a volunteer transport company of adults could be formed, and this scheme generally applied throughout the country would once and for all put an end to anxiety on the score of volunteer transport. I might mention that on several occasions we have gone on route marches for two or three days, when all our transport work has been efficiently carried out by these cadets.

Another and far more important possibility presents itself to my mind.

There has been of late considerable talk about the necessity for some form of conscription, and the Adjutant-General when at Birmingham some few months ago was terribly taken to task for having boldly advocated it. I fail to see that all this vituperation has served any good purpose; at all events a mere statement that the country will not have conscription at any price does not remove the necessity for something to be done to enable us to hold our own in the misty but undoubtedly dangerous future. It is, then, with considerable trepidation that I venture to make a suggestion which appears to me to be at the least worth some consideration as providing for a national military training at the least cost and inconvenience to the country.

I would suggest that cadet battalions be formed in every town and village district in the country, and that every lad on leaving school at fourteen should serve in one till he is eighteen. He should not attend less than thirty drills per annum, these drills to be held in the evening, and not to exceed one hour in duration. Supposing that 1,000 of these battalions, averaging a strength of 500 each, were formed on the lines laid down in this paper; they would cost at the outside 10,000*l.* to 15,000*l.* a year, and by that means half a million of lads would be annually trained in drill and discipline at an age when they would be least likely to forget it, and when it would be impossible for them ever to lose the great physical benefits which such a training would be bound to give them. The next generation would be an infinitely better one morally and physically, and by a proper

extension of the movement I venture to say that we should have many of the advantages of conscription without any of its unpleasantness.

It is sheer nonsense to say that because a man or boy learns his drill he is therefore made to love war and fighting. If a declaration of war meant that every man should take his place in the fighting ranks, we should find this country much less likely to rush into war than they are now, when all the dangers and hardships have to be endured by our gallant Army and auxiliary forces, while the so-called peace-lovers sit at home with their hands folded and their pockets buttoned up, bemoaning that men should kill one another. Yet while these selfsame lovers-of-humanity-in-general take very good care to safely lock up their houses at night, and religiously hand over to the police any unfortunate robber who may invade the sanctity of their homes, they would leave their country defenceless and helpless, its rich stores at the command of the first Power which chose to step in and seize them.

Universal peace and good fellowship is one of the prettiest phrases possible to perfect, but till human nature puts an end to its trivial domestic quarrels it is hopeless to expect that nations will put aside theirs. To train boys to the use of arms and in discipline is not to brutalize their natures, but to give them a valuable training in obedience and loyalty attainable by no other means.

I most sincerely trust that the reading of this paper, under the presidency of the executive head of the Volunteer Force, will be productive of some good. To a certain extent this new departure in placing the practice of military drill within the reach of all well-conducted boys is still in the region of experiment, and I think it to be only fair that those working so hard to ensure its success, and to make the military training of boys general throughout the country, should receive all reasonable assistance at the hands of the authorities. I do not refer so much to monetary help as to the other points which I have mentioned, the importance of which can only be felt by those who are daily brought face to face with the difficulties which arise through their absence from the Regulations. From the last and present Deputy Adjutant-General for Auxiliary Forces I have always received the kindest consideration; but I cannot at times help a feeling that the War Office authorities seem a little afraid of giving too much encouragement to this movement, lest it should grow to such an extent that the Government will have to do more for it.

Well, it is growing, and if it is a good thing, it is well it should grow. If it is not a good thing, then it should never have been commenced. But give this young movement room to grow in, and give it such facilities for growing that it will grow straight and robust, and be a means of lifelong blessing to thousands of the working lads of this country.

The CHAIRMAN (Major-General Lyon-Fremantle): I am authorized by the Adjutant-General of the Forces to express his great regret that he is not able to be present this afternoon to hear this paper read, and I am further authorized by him to say with what extreme interest he looks upon this cadet movement.

He considers it is not only to be very greatly to the advantage of the boys that they should be early trained in habits of discipline and self-respect, but he considers that, indirectly, it will be of great advantage to the Army, because, no doubt, many of these boys, after having undergone a certain amount of military training, will eventually enter into the armed forces of the country, either as volunteers or as militiamen, or as soldiers. For all these reasons he takes the greatest interest in the movement, and he is prepared to do anything he possibly can to advance it. But I am afraid that I must say, as Deputy Adjutant-General of the Auxiliary Forces, that there is very little chance of our being able to ask Government for money in support of this cadet movement, because all the money we can get we want for men who will be able at once to take their part in the defence of the country. So that we must hope that when the great advantages and usefulness of these cadets are once thoroughly understood, the different large towns and cities will be interested enough in the movement to enable the cadet corps to support themselves. I am afraid, however, that I cannot offer any hope of Government monetary support for the cadet movement. Major Fordyce is a gentleman very well known in connection with the cadet movement, having been for a considerable time the Commanding Officer of the Birmingham Cadet Battalion, and I am quite sure we are all interested in the statements he has made as regards the cadet movement at Birmingham. If Sir Gerald Graham, or any other gentleman who is interested in this subject, will offer a few remarks upon the paper, we shall all be very much interested.

Lieut.-General Sir GERALD GRAHAM, V.C., G.C.M.G., K.C.B.: I regret to see such a small attendance this afternoon, as I am convinced that this is a subject of very great importance—I do not think its importance can be over-estimated—I mean the military training of the youth of England, of which this forms a fraction. When this great question comes to be fairly grasped by the public, I am sure they will give great credit to Major Fordyce for what he has done in the formation of his cadet battalion. He has had no assistance that I know of, or very little, from the Government, though I am glad to see in one part of the paper mention of some money having been returned by the Government. It is certainly an unusual thing, and shows some recognition of the value of the cadet battalion. Major Fordyce has, by his own energy, raised this battalion, and kept it going, even so far as to supply and to organize its transport, so that his battalion can march out with its own transport. He proposes that in this manner “a volunteer transport company of adults should be formed, and this scheme, generally applied throughout the country, would once and for all put an end to anxiety on the score of volunteer transport;” but of course that is a large question. He gives another important suggestion: “that cadet battalions be formed in every town and village district of the country; that every lad on leaving school at fourteen should serve in one till he is eighteen.” Well, this also opens a very large question—that of the military training of the whole youth of England, but I am afraid we have no power of making such service in any way compulsory. It would be the greatest benefit to the youth of England if they could be trained in that way, and I have always been of opinion that in Lord Wolseley’s speech at Birmingham he did not mean to advocate general conscription throughout the country; but what he wanted to point out was the immense advantage that military training gave. The general conscription, of course, enforces military training, but if we got the military training without general conscription, as is here advocated, it would be of the greatest possible importance. This opens up the whole question of free education being granted. Instead of demanding fees for education, such as we give in Board schools, when the question of technical instruction comes forth, we might make it a condition that instead of paying fees the youths should undertake to qualify themselves for service as defenders of their country—that they should undertake to drill in the manner pointed out; that the State should not make it compulsory, but should make it a sort of bargain. They should say: “Here you have the advantage of education free and of technical instruction such as you need, and in return you must undertake to qualify yourselves to serve as soldiers if you should be called out. We make it a condition of giving you free education; if you cannot accept that condition then you must pay.” Some such arrangement might possibly be made, otherwise I do

not see how we could carry out that scheme, as we could not make it compulsory. It appears to me, although the Government, as General Fremantle observes, could not be expected to give any financial aid, yet the Government might, at all events, withdraw all obstruction to the training. And there is one point that Major Fordyce remarks on, that they are served now with rifles which are plugged with lead, so as to make them unserviceable for firing. General Fremantle observes that the Government can only give aid on the supposition that these youths, when they leave the battalion, shall be qualified to enter the ranks. Of course firing is one most important part of the education of a soldier, and if they were allowed to practise wherever they can, and given rifles with that object, when they attained the age of sixteen to eighteen, it would obviously be of immense use, and increase their value as soldiers very much. They should be trained at an early age. I confess I do not understand why obstacles should be placed in the way of their getting training when they desire to have it, so that I think, at least, what might be done would be to withdraw the injunction against using these rifles for practice. There is another suggestion of Major Fordyce, that Government should supply at least one good instructor. That involves a question of money, therefore I do not think it is likely to be granted. I can only say, in conclusion, I have had the honour of inspecting Major Fordyce's battalion at Birmingham, and I was greatly struck with the smart, alert look of the boys. I think it is quite a marvellous transformation to see how, with a short military training, the boys taken out of the streets can become smart-looking lads, all alert and prompt and obedient, and with a feeling of self-respect. Anyone seeing those boys must be convinced that, without the question of making them soldiers, they are vastly more valuable as citizens after they have undertaken a certain amount of military training than they were before.

Major FORDYCE: I should like to say, with respect to firing, that the Government do not prohibit firing, but they won't supply firing arms—they prohibit firing with the arms supplied by them. To meet that difficulty the Morris Tube Company have very generously, for the last two years, lent us eighty of their Martini cadet rifles. I have had one brought here to-day. These rifles are the same as are supplied to the cadets in Australia by Government. They are sighted to 500 yards, and we use the small Morris tube cartridge. You can have cartridges for outdoor use up to 500 yards range, though they carry further than that: they are perfectly accurate up to 750 yds. The most ludicrous part of the whole thing is, that before we can send a team to Wimbledon, we have to go to a volunteer battalion and borrow a couple of rifles. We then put the selected team on the range with the borrowed big Martinis. In spite of these difficulties, one of them took a first prize, while a file of cadets came out third or fourth in the Public Schools' Competition. All the practice they had had was with the small rifle. I do not think they fired twenty rounds with the big Martini before they went to Wimbledon, but, nevertheless, they came out very well indeed.

The CHAIRMAN: Then they fired with the big rifles?

Major FORDYCE: Yes. I went on the range myself when they had the selected rifles, and each man fired twenty rounds.

The CHAIRMAN: Each boy!

Major FORDYCE: At the request of the General Officer lately commanding the Northern District, we call them young men. It gives them more self-respect. I have got in the habit of generally calling them men. I think I very carefully eroded, in this paper, saying much about the question of financial aid from Government, because I do not suppose it will come yet. The Volunteer Force did not get it at first, but I strongly believe that, sooner or later, public opinion will compel the Government to take this movement up and have it properly carried out, or else stop it altogether. If it is a good thing, it is well it should go on and grow; if it is not a good thing, it should be stopped. It will be, no doubt, a matter of a good many years before that time arrives, but I am confident, if the movement survives, the Government will have to put it on the same terms as the Volunteer Force, with a much smaller capitation grant. It will be done in some way or other. Mr. W. H. Smith, when he was in the War Office, actually had approved a scheme by which we were to have 5*l.* for every recruit who joined the Regular Army after serving

two years in our battalion, and that would have been carried if Mr. Smith had not gone out of office : at any rate, Mr. Smith was quite prepared to do his utmost for it, and it is a very important thing to have a Secretary of State on your side. I have not pressed it now, as I think it is premature, but there are other things which will cost no money which will have a very great influence upon this movement, and those I would respectfully ask the head of the Auxiliary Forces to kindly consider. There is one thing about the Officers' commissions. There is a considerable amount of doubt as to what position the Officers will hold. On one occasion General Daniell, commanding the Northern District, placed me in command of a brigade, jointly composed of a battalion of cadets and a detachment of adult volunteers. I saw the question that might arise out of that, and I voluntarily asked General Daniell to request a Major of the volunteers to take my place, so as to avoid any question. I can quite understand at one time it was desirable, when the cadet corps were attached to volunteer corps, to have some distinction between them ; but in our case we have to go through the same correspondence, we have to do everything in the same way and pass the same examination, and yet the result is that, directly we get a good Officer of the cadets, the other volunteer Officers say, "You had better come to us, and we will give you a commission." By that means we have lost most of the good Officers we have had. I do not grudge giving Officers to the volunteer service, but I do not like to lose every good one we get. No doubt a proportion of them will go to the volunteer forces in the ordinary course, indeed, one of my Officers has won a commission in the Engineers after serving in the infantry militia for two years. He began his career with me, and had no idea of military work at all ; he went from me to the militia ; from there he went to a commission in the Royal Engineers, so that he is doing very well. We have sent several Officers to ordinary volunteer battalions. It would cost nothing to give Officers of cadet battalions substantial commissions, and I think it might be very gracefully conceded to us, after the three years' work we have had. At any rate, I will leave the matter in General Fremantle's hands, and I have no doubt he will do what he can for us. There is one other point to which Sir Gerald Graham has referred, viz., transport. Several times I noticed General Fremantle said to me, "We get all the money we can for the men who are ready to do work when they are wanted ; consequently, it is of no use asking for money for your battalion, because its members will never be of any use to us as cadets." I venture to suggest, if there were some little more encouragement tendered, they might be made of immediate service. As I say in the paper, I can find sixty cadets, all over sixteen, good riders, and I am giving those cadets a good training in transport duty. They will be immediately available to supply local volunteer battalions with transport if wanted, and as they would have very little marching to do, lads of sixteen to eighteen would be quite as competent to ride on horses or on the commissariat vans as the men ; so that from that point of view our battalion, at any rate, is in immediate possession of everything wanted to find transport enough for, at least, two volunteer battalions. So that we are not altogether useless should you have occasion for our service, and I think they might be used in that way without causing any prejudice. I do not know that there is any other point. My opinion has been so thoroughly expressed in the paper, that I do not think it wise to take up your time by going over it again.

The CHAIRMAN : How much do these rifles cost ?

Major FORDYCE : I think under 3*l*.

Mr. MARRES : 50*s*., in quantities.

Major FORDYCE : It is a very perfect little weapon.

The CHAIRMAN : The Victorian cadets, in Melbourne, have got them.

Major FORDYCE : In Melbourne the Government have taken up the cadet movement, and are training every lad they can get hold of to form a defence for the Colony. They support them financially, and have armed them with these rifles and bayonets, and as fast as the lads arrive at a suitable age they are drafted into the adult corps.

General Sir GERALD GRAHAM : At what age ?

Major FORDYCE : As low as twelve. There is a most interesting paper on that subject in the "Contemporary Review," by Dr. Dale, who has just come back from

Australia. He has expressed the opinion in that paper that unless we have a very great increase in the volunteer service some form of conscription will be necessary in this country, and he suggests a way out of the difficulty by encouraging the formation of cadet battalions, getting the men trained, because they never forget what they learn during these four years. I am sorry General Daniell is not here to-day, because he has inspected our corps three or four times, and he can tell you, better than it would come from me, what he has seen of the drill of the battalion. In his absence I think I may safely say this, that their drill is quite equal to that of an ordinary volunteer battalion, and in their guard duties there is just as much earnestness and seriousness, if not more, than in most volunteer corps. I thank you very much for affording me an opportunity of expressing my views. I hope the result of the afternoon's discussion will be that this movement will get well talked of in the Press, and that a public spirit will be aroused in a large portion of the population to support the movement.

General ERSKINE: When Major Fordyce sent the paper to the Council, I was requested by my coadjutors to look through it to see whether it was desirable that it should be read. I perused it with a very great deal of interest, and reported favourably of it to the Council, and it was through that, that it was put down on our list of subjects to be discussed in this theatre. I observe in the opening paragraph of the paper Major Fordyce says, that at the commencement of the volunteer movement there were 200 cadet companies formed, attached to over 200 volunteer corps. I have not had an opportunity of going through the statistics to see whether that is correct, but I presume it is. All I can say is, that having been connected with the training of the Volunteer Force at that period, everything was done to encourage the formation of cadet corps. The rule was to have them attached to volunteer corps, and they got by that means indirectly a great deal of assistance, which, as I gather from this paper, they have not at the present time. When they were attached to regular corps, the volunteer instructors belonging to those corps gave assistance to the cadets, and such an arrangement would, I presume, be a very great benefit to a corps such as Major Fordyce commands. [To Major Fordyce.] I think I am right in gathering from what you say, that you have no connection whatever with the volunteer corps of the county?

Major FORDYCE: Not the slightest.

The CHAIRMAN: There are only two corps like that; all the other cadet corps are corps belonging to volunteer battalions. There are only two corps, one of which is Major Fordyce's, which stands by itself, and the remarks you are making are quite pertinent, because a great many people think we had better go on working on the same lines as when you (General Erskine) were Inspector-General, and have the cadet corps attached to adult battalions.

General ERSKINE: It answered very well in those days, but this is a new departure.

Major FORDYCE: The others apparently were not successful, because they died away.

The CHAIRMAN: A good many died away, certainly.

General ERSKINE: It is very difficult to assign the real cause for the cadet corps falling off. I cannot say myself what it can be; but I think it is hardly true that the original system was a bad one. It may have been from want of proper local support, and, at all events, from some remarks made by Major Fordyce, there seems to be a little rivalry between the cadet corps and the volunteer corps that are raised in the same town.

Major FORDYCE: I did not intend to convey that there was any rivalry.

General ERSKINE: About the Officers?

Major FORDYCE: It was simply the question of the Officers of cadet battalions receiving honorary appointments, honorary commissions.

General ERSKINE: I do not see myself how you can give a substantive commission to an Officer who does not command a real fighting force.

The CHAIRMAN: There would be a great deal of difficulty about it, at all events.

General ERSKINE: It would be a new departure.

Major FORDYCE: It is done so in Australia.

General ERSKINE: Probably we have a great deal to learn from our Colonies, and I do not mean to say the thing is impossible: but, at all events, it is a new idea to us soldiers. I did not quite gather whether Major Fordyce meant that the raising of training corps was to be compulsory, or whether they were to be formed on the same basis as his own battalion.

Major FORDYCE: Naturally, we should like to see it made compulsory, but we do not believe the country is ripe for that at present.

General ERSKINE: No, I think not, because that would be verging very closely on conscription. If you are to take young men under eighteen and say, "You must turn out and be drilled and trained as soldiers," that is coming very near to calling upon those that are over eighteen for military service, and I think the public would hardly see the difference between the two if that were broached. I do not want to criticize your paper at all in an adverse spirit. I consider it is an excellent paper. I have read it with the greatest interest, and I am quite sure that if more gentlemen would follow Major Fordyce's example, and form battalions such as his, it would confer a very great benefit on the country. I think that a capitation grant for cadet corps is not to be thought of at the present time; but there are several ways in which the Government might give indirect assistance to these corps, and I dare say the authorities would not be indisposed to do what is possible. Certainly, I quite sympathize with Major Fordyce when he speaks about plugging the rifles that are issued to these young men. No doubt it is a thing that they do not approve of, and I think they might very well be trusted with rifles without plugs. The old cadet corps had their small rifles, from which they could fire.

The CHAIRMAN: I think they paid for them: these are served out for nothing by the Government.

General ERSKINE: Why should they be plugged?

The CHAIRMAN: Because they are not serviceable; they are not safe. They are very cheap, and they are not safe, and therefore they are plugged, so that the arms should not be fired off. The cadet battalions get them for nothing.

General ERSKINE: If they are not proved, that is a very good reason for plugging them.

Major FORDYCE: Most of the rifles we have are ordinary Service rifles.

The CHAIRMAN: But they are condemned rifles. They are what we call unserviceable rifles; that is the reason we have endeavoured to prevent your practising with them. Although this meeting has been such a small one, yet I am quite sure it won't be a useless one, because we shall have this paper printed, and we shall have the excellent remarks of Sir Gerald Graham and of General Erskine. Every word which has fallen from these Officers has been extremely to the point. General Erskine has hit off exactly one of the problems which we are thinking about very much now, and that is whether it is wiser to attach cadets to existing battalions, giving them the advantages, as General Erskine has pointed out, of the organization, and of the Officers, and of the sergeants of an existing battalions, or whether it is better that they should be formed into battalions by themselves, like Major Fordyce's. Well, I am bound to say there is a great deal to be said in favour of the cadet corps attached to the volunteer battalions, but as Major Fordyce wished his corps to be independent, it has been given a fair trial, and so has the Manchester corps been given a fair trial, and there is no doubt that under that system a very considerable amount of efficiency has been reached. If it can be extended, we shall be very happy indeed to extend it; but I do not see any strong prospect of its extending on those lines in other large towns at present, and I do see that every now and then a cadet corps is attached to an existing volunteer corps with very great advantages. Take Salford: it was a long time before we could get a battalion of cadets under weigh there; at last we got the Commanding Officer of the volunteer battalion at Salford (a very fine corps) to take it up, and the Salford Cadet Corps, after having languished very much, is now doing very well indeed. Therefore, I think there is a great deal to be said in favour of cadet corps being attached to existing battalions.

Major FORDYCE: It never was an independent command.

The CHAIRMAN: It was existing in a sort of half-and-half way. They were being drilled, although perhaps not quite legally drilled. Now they certainly could not

have been formed into a battalion by themselves without the assistance of the volunteer Commanding Officer. I only mention that among other instances in which, as General Erskine has very pertinently said, there are certain advantages in attaching them to the existing volunteer organizations, and profiting by the Officers and non-commissioned officers of the adult corps. But we do not in the least want to do anything to check the movement of forming volunteer battalions by themselves in the large towns, where it can be done entirely under local support. With regard to the honorary Officers that Major Fordyce has alluded to, I am afraid honorary rank must be considered as not giving actual military power to anybody. Of course if this cadet movement develops itself and attains larger proportions, the whole question of honorary Officers, and the whole terms of service might be reconsidered; but at present I think we must leave things as they are, and hope that the public spirit of the country, and the excellent results that have followed from the exertions of Officers like Major Fordyce will bear good fruit, and will eventually lead to a very large development of this admirable plan of drilling and instructing the youth of large towns.