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ARMY REFORM BASED ON SOME 19TH CENTURY LESSONS IN WARFARE.

By Major-General C. E. WEBBER, C.B., p.s.c., late R.E.

Wednesday, February 20th, 1901.

Captain Sir J. COLOMB, K.C.M.G., M.P. (late R.M.A.), in the Chair.

WHEN a writer feels himself very full of his subject he is apt to find a difficulty in selecting a title. Such has been my case, and the title I have given to these few remarks may appear too ambitious. I confess that it has been a difficulty. If those matters to which I shall allude in this address could be regarded as texts to other papers by the many students of war who belong to this Institution, my attempt would indeed be fortunate; if I can secure the careful attention of such authorities to the vital questions which I propose to raise, I shall be more happy; and if this arena of discussion may be regarded as the best place where such matters of vital importance can be practically considered, and if those whose duty it is to guide the country in such matters should co-operate and condescend to learn something from our members, I shall be rewarded.

SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF WAR.

Broadly stated, my contention is that the scientific study of warfare during, at any rate, the latter half of the nineteenth century, has lagged far behind the advance in knowledge which the world has made in the same period; and that so far as the preparation for war has been concerned, while science has been improving the *matériel*, the organisation of the *personnel* and the instruction in its use to the best advantage, have not kept pace with that improvement. There can be no question whatever that, about the middle of the century, science, as having anything to do with warfare, had fallen into disrepute. The existence of a science of war which in some way meant the laws which governed the game, was tolerated. An officer who ventured to speak of "scientific warfare as an application in war of scientific knowledge" was laughed at.

There were many causes for this. Even Napoleon's methods were not understood by his Army as scientific, although unquestionably he was

a man of science. The inevitable deadly save-trouble period of peace encouraged those who leant on tradition. Economy always intervened to "let well alone." While civil life was acquiring knowledge and applying it by leaps and bounds, military life went to sleep.¹

This was quite natural. Industry and commerce could put each advance of science to the test. Only occasionally did war give an opportunity for testing the old military machine, and then, so far as England was concerned, the tests were against enemies armed with the weapons of the previous century. The Crimean War had only the effect of standardising the experience gained against an enemy no better prepared and equipped than ourselves.

At that time commenced the period of framing many regulations, and of sealing patterns. Since then standardisation has weighed on, and influenced, every stage of military advancement. Those who have been responsible, while rightly clinging to the everlasting principles of warfare, have wrongly also clung to antiquated applications of them. The inevitable tendency to this has only (in some countries) been checked by the almost accidental elevation to positions of authority of men of scientific minds.

Curiously enough, one of the most scientific writers that non-military ranks have lately produced is a civilian, M. de Bloch, of Warsaw.² Before compiling my notes for this paper I had not seen his work, but I now warmly recommend its perusal to my audience. His chief object is to show that war is too suicidal to be possible. He believes that "the end of war is in sight," and "those who are preparing for war and basing all their schemes of life on the expectation of war, are visionaries of the worst kind, for war is no longer possible." He believes that in view of "the future of war, not fighting, but the prospect of famine; not the slaying of men, but the inevitable bankruptcy of nations, and the break-up of the whole social organisation," will prevail, through what he believes to be "common sense," to prevent nations going to war. The thesis of his very remarkable book is that war has become impossible "except at the price of suicide." At the same time, he "does not for a moment deny that it is possible for nations to plunge themselves and their neighbours into a frightful series of catastrophes which

¹ The adoption of the war-game as a means of instruction of officers and non-commissioned officers, may be pointed to in refutation of this statement, but if there is anything which can be described as unscientific it is the manner in which it has been used for purposes of instruction.

The so-called war-game is as unlike war as are our manoeuvres, only it is less practical. In its very absence of resemblance to the reality in respect of the surface of the ground, it begins the instructions of the tyro at the wrong end. When he applies what he has learned he is bound to be misled by the unreal conditions represented by the flat surfaces on which he was taught.

I remember playing the first game ever seen in this country, against Major von Reardantz, the Prussian Military Attaché (I had learnt it in Berlin), before a very distinguished audience; Generals Cameron and Lennox were the umpires, and then the opinion was expressed of its being more suitable as an assistant to the expert than to the student.

² "Modern Weapons and Modern War," by I. S. Bloch.

would probably result in the overturn of all civilised and ordered government."

The weak side of all his argument is, that he will not admit of an appeal to precedents in the warfare of the past. At the same time, he explains that he does so because he believes that precedents no longer hold good in face of the vast powers which science has placed within the reach of man to apply to warfare, and in view of what he calls the social and economical changes made in life by "the modern industrial system."

But in view of the preparedness of other European nations, would any one of them be justified to trust, on M. de Bloch's advice, to the effect of "common sense" on their neighbour, through the fear that the social organism might be dislocated? Have we not seen all Europe stirred up by venal and gutter newspapers, and the honest wish of sober-minded men, to regard with impartiality the conscientious beliefs of their neighbours, almost obliterated, under the influence of passionate appeals to sentiment? If any question ever arises which will make a European people imagine that war is unavoidable, M. de Bloch admits that their "rulers will shut their eyes to its consequences."

It is not sufficient then to submit evidence, however plausible or elaborate, to prove that nations without bitter experience will be deterred from quarrelling for economic reasons, or because the cost of the apparatus of war is too scientific, and therefore prohibitive. If M. de Bloch could get European nations in times of peace to recognise the inevitable truths which he has with immense labour collected in his work, and to act on them, and to disarm, or reduce military expenditure to a minimum essential for police work, he would be the greatest benefactor to mankind that has yet appeared.¹

Writers who agree with M. de Bloch argue that warfare has become impossible on account of its destructiveness. They, however, build their arguments on the organisation, equipment, classification—in a word, on the standardisation—of European Armies as they exist. They do not sufficiently study the question from the historical point of view. History would tell them that whenever destruction of human life in warfare became excessive, science intervened to save the waste of life, and, by altering the conditions, so helped the nation that was alive to what science could do, that it secured the preponderance of a peaceable policy, and for a while peace was maintained until new conditions arose.

European Armies are now existing on a traditional system of organisation which keeps them in a state of uncertainty as to its soundness. But the nations are just as likely to fall out and fight as of yore. For a time they may be held back by the evident truth of what M. de Bloch reminds them, but suddenly, or by degrees, some one Power will realise that their standardisation is faulty, will correct it, and with science as the true handmaid of warfare, will overthrow the others.

¹ I have often thought that if M. de Bloch could get all the War Offices in Europe to exchange their title for that of "Peace" Office, he might, in the end, attain his wish. Our own War Office has to legislate so largely in the direction of "peace at any price," I always call it in my own thoughts, the "Peace Office."

As to the British Empire, it has found, so far as its land forces are concerned, that the old patterns, slightly improved, have sufficed in her little annual wars. The instinctive power of self-organisation in the race is always saving her from a bad fall. The sea frontier and the Navy are a factor for the production of well-founded confidence up to a certain point, but beyond that point the want of common sense in our rulers (I include all estates of the realm clothed with any responsibility) is ghastly, from the point of view of the ordinary laws of self-preservation. On each occasion during the past century a serious war has found the country unprepared. It cannot be said that we have not had plenty of lessons on which to base Army Reform.

BUSINESS PRINCIPLES.

Journalists and magazine writers, amongst them members of our Legislature, for instance, reiterate that the way to reform the Army is by introducing "ordinary business principles" into the working of our War Office, and that they (the business principles) have only to be followed in order to provide an efficient Army.¹

I have no hesitation in asserting, as emphatically as I can, that in the *civil* administration of our public departments, whether for postal, naval, military, revenue, or legal requirements, the men employed are as good as any in the world, and that they do their work in an efficient and industrious manner which is second to none. I will add, they do it on far more accurate and scientific business principles than are to be found in ninety-nine out of a hundred of the great private businesses with which a great public office can be compared. If those writers, and would-be public guides, would make this conduct of public business a study, they might realise that to this very attempt to follow the lines of the practice of civil business in time of peace is due many of the miscarriages and much of the useless waste which occurs when war breaks out.

One great difference and reason for this contention may be mentioned here, namely, that a military administration in time of peace is preparing for an eventuality which only occasionally, and generally suddenly, arrives, and which, when it does arrive, appears in a form and from a direction, perhaps, quite different from the one that has been anticipated. When it does come, it is conducted under conditions to which ordinary business principles are wholly inapplicable. Those writers to whom I have referred seek to saddle the peace administration of our civilian military departments, so far as the creation and production of *matériel* of war is concerned, with the failures which occur in war, forgetting that *only* when war breaks-out can the efficiency of the machine be tested. The probability is that the actual *business* connected with this production and supply is as faultless as can be.

¹ In the *Nineteenth Century* of July and August will be found remarks by several business men as to how "the lessons of the war" illustrate their views on the subject of preparing for and conducting war on what they call "ordinary business principles."

When, however, they add that you can build up the *personnel* of an Army in time of peace, on the ordinary business principles of civil life, namely, through the incidence of "personal responsibility," "payment by results," and "promotion by merit," they are talking nonsense, unless they engage to provide a real war between fairly even-sided combatants at least once in two years.

AMATEUR WARFARE.

How indignant many of us are when we are told that we are a nation of *amateurs* in warfare; and yet there is some truth underlying this indefinite charge. I think, on the other hand, it can be shown that this very suggestion has equal foundation when applied to Continental Armies, with their compulsory service, and that there is more "amateurism" underlying their use of compulsory service than would be generally supposed. The nineteenth century experience of the compulsory service system is not altogether favourable.

Allow me to give one example of justification for the expression "amateur." The way in which Parliament has shown itself in the past careless of the manner in which the money they vote for military purposes is wasted, is strikingly exemplified in every measure which pretends to facilitate military manœuvres of a real character, so long as they withhold access to private lands off the public roads, etc.

It is one of the strongest evidence of the responsibility being entirely on the people's representatives, for the accusation against us in respect of real training, that we are "*amateurs*." Over the natural and artificial features of the land which we call "home" the soldier may never be exercised. It is an illusion to believe that the Military Manœuvres Act of 1897 was any real improvement on the previous Acts. I do not refer to the 3 or 4 areas, such as Salisbury Plain, over which troops can be trained all the year round. Not one of these areas is representative of 90 per cent. of the surface of the United Kingdom.

Now this is a thing that a plain business man *can* understand. What would he say if told that this Army is never in time of peace exercised, "across country," as the fox-hunter would call it?

HEDGE-ROW WARFARE.

If you take any 6-inch map and lay on it in any direction a straight edge 6 inches long, you will find that in the open country the line will cross from 5 to 11 fences; the largest number will be found in Ireland.

In spite of Dr. Conan Doyle's assertion in his letters to the *Times*, these fences will not oblige an invading enemy to keep to the roads.¹

¹ When Napoleon invaded a country, the high roads were devoted to the wheeled traffic, with a front of 3 to 5 vehicles, the infantry marched in open column on each side with a double company front, the cavalry marched outside the two infantry columns with double squadron fronts. How the *gros* of an invading army should march from the coast to London, leaving the roads to the heavy wheeled traffic, has been studied and settled in every War Office in Europe except ours.

The doctor has told the public that the fenced or enclosed nature of the surface of the United Kingdom "makes invasion impossible." He had just returned from a country (South Africa) where the conditions of the natural and artificial features of the surface of the land are (so to speak) at the other extremity of the scale and from this one observation he drew his rash conclusion. The European war student (I have discussed it with not a few) knows that the enclosed nature of this country is in favour of the attack, and not of the defence, and that no pure defence is possible until all the fences in front of a position have been swept away—a condition which every improvement of the projectile has emphasised.

Who will deny that our Army is controlled by "amateurs" when it is understood that in not one of our military districts¹ is there an enclosed area over which the General can give tactical lessons to teach his battalions, batteries, and companies what they would have to do in war?

Who will answer for the disasters that must inevitably follow against an invading enemy who knows and understands his advantage, namely, that he will be opposed by a force which has never had real field training across its own country? It is no use saying that it would be as new to the invading enemy, and that he would lose his way, as in a labyrinth. The leaders who invade this country will take care it is not new, and the alleged difficulty of troop guiding and leading in any given direction across an enclosed country is an idea only worthy of the town-bred writer, who never dared in his life to trespass off the high road.

I have hundred of times asked soldiers, and civilians, if they have ever considered this anomalous condition of things. Those who have realised its importance have invariably shirked the answer, and sheltered themselves behind "violation of private rights," "cost," "injury to fences," "cultivation," etc.; and now we have a civilian doctor, who has been for a few months in South Africa with an ambulance, presuming on

¹ In March, 1872, the House of Commons had before it maps of the United Kingdom, showing Mr. Cardwell's depôt centres and the districts attached to them, 49 or 50, if I recall it rightly. There is no record if Mr. Cardwell's advisers realised the need to train the recruits outside the barrack square or field, over the enclosed country within reach of the depôt, or, if Mr. Cardwell, being advised that powers should be obtained over (say) 1,000 acres of enclosed land, near each of these depôts, urged his Government to include powers for that purpose in a Bill; or, if Mr. Cardwell did so, if his colleagues in the Cabinet declined to urge it in Parliament.

² When an Instructor in Topography at the R.M.A., 35 years ago, I devised a way of teaching Cadets to follow straight lines right across the enclosed country in the neighbourhood of Woolwich when making military sketches, a full description of which will be found in Vols. XIV. and XV. of the Professional Papers of the Corps of Royal Engineers. It was this teaching that enabled the Woolwich Cadets to give many points in rapid field sketching to Major Pettley's picked pupils amongst the Sandhurst Cadets. Thirty years ago I worked out the routes for six columns to march from the south coast on London without following the roads, which were left to the heavy wheeled traffic.

his celebrity as a story-writer, and telling his readers that the "bug-bear of invasion is for ever passed" because hedgerow defence is more than ever effective with modern arms. Exactly the reverse is the case.

Hedgerows, fences, or walls are stepping-stones, to the attack, and a disadvantage to the front of a defence. This example shows how open we lie to the accusation of being "amateurs." Those who are responsible, namely, the civilians, some in our Legislature, have been for twelve months telling the British officer that he is not educated enough. In the *Times*, of the 21st December last, a writer endorses a criticism that because our young officers "do not read enough history," they are inefficient as teachers of field training. What is the effect on the Army of this "amateur" control? Are not all regulations drawn up, and all patterns sealed, in time of peace, for manœuvring on roads, and never across country? ¹ Does not this condition affect every lesson in tactical teaching with (so-called) field exercises and all the equipment, and everything upon which millions are spent in time of peace, only to be chucked aside, and too often (as I have seen) wantonly wasted in time of war?

Have not several military authorities stated that our failures in South Africa are due to the "absolute novelty of the conditions"? Is not this a very damning statement, if it is true that they were new (which it is not)? Or, if not being new, is it not more damning to have organised, trained, sealed, and regulated an army and its equipment, unfit to deal efficiently with those conditions?

Will the same authorities (a defence committee composed of civilians), say, when we have to fight over a closely enclosed country, that the failures (inevitable as they will be) are due also to the "absolute novelty of the conditions"? Only, then, as the conditions are always before them and not out of sight of Parliament as they have been in South Africa, will such a statement of a leader of the House of Commons² "that the Government had not adequately realised "that we had in South Africa to meet an enemy entirely mounted" be so meekly accepted.

A MANŒUVRE BILL.

That faint efforts have been made to increase the powers to use the surface of the country for a military training ground is shown by a Military Manœuvres Bill which the Secretary of State for War brought forward in 1900. It is hardly credible, but it is a fact, that it was thrown out in the House of Commons by the Standing Order Committee, on the ground that no notices had been served on owners or maps published of the areas.

It is true that if the Bill had been made general, *i.e.*, had given the Secretary of State for War power to make an order for the compulsory use

¹ On the unpractical nature of our manœuvres, see page 27 of a red pamphlet, called "A National Question, Army Re-organisation," published by Blackwood.

² Mr. Arthur Balfour at Manchester on the 10th January, 1900.

for military manœuvres of any lands in the United Kingdom, it could not have been rejected on a mere technical point; but it is marvellous that, at a moment when the country was crying out for the reform of the War Office, because of the alleged inefficiency of the Army, a measure which is at the A B C stage of efficient technical training, should have been wantonly cast aside by its representatives. Will anyone tell us that if even £20,000 a year had been spent in compensation for damages, while training soldiers and horses away from the roads, during the last twenty-eight years, it would not, in the year 1900, have been repaid to the nation with compound interest by the saving of hundreds of lives and of millions in means of transport of men, guns, projectiles, and *matériel*?

Although our home training ground is different (as I have pointed out) from the veldt and the mountains of South Africa, still, would not the intelligence of men and horses have been more accustomed to natural conditions; would not their eyesight have been quicker, and would not their familiarity with country surroundings, and with unmacadamised¹ ground have been very different from that of the town-bred, barrack-square, and barrack field-trained lads whom we landed last year in South Africa? Would not the practical exigencies of clothing, equipment, and transport in war, have been better understood and prepared for by practice? And would not living and cooking in the open, in rain, wind and cold, have been encountered with less waste of men and animals? In the rural areas of the United Kingdom (small village enclosures excepted) there are probably at least 1,200,000 miles of fencing surrounding enclosures of one kind or another, whether hedges, ditches, railings, walls, or banks. Agricultural depression has deteriorated the state of repair of these to a degree little realised by those who do not observe such things. Owners and occupiers no longer have spare cash to allow of these being patched in more than a very perfunctory way. Many of them would welcome the compensation, instead of resenting the intrusion.

Again, the conditions of peace service have much to do with a lukewarmness of the professional soldier to the scrambling across an enclosed country, and the consequent wear and tear, the mud and wet, and the deterioration of what goes to make up barrack-yard and high-street smartness. The personal efficiency of an officer can be more easily tested by his knowledge of and adherence to regulation. Payment by results, and promotion, *i.e.*, advancement in the Service of officers, is, at least at home in time of peace, the reward, not so much of the efficient field training of his men, for which there is little opportunity, but of intelligence shown in saving and economising in something, or in being able to express himself eloquently on theoretical propositions which are probably impracticable in war.

¹ The macadamised surface of these kingdoms in the rural areas is about $\frac{1}{25}$ th of the whole.

PROBLEMS.

May I turn to another side of my subject, and in a few words attempt to lay before you one or two of the teachings which it appears to me we may find in the experience of the century which has just closed. A study of its warfare must bring something home even to the meanest intelligence, which will lead to the impression that great changes have been gradually effected in the conditions. The extent and nature of these changes have been the subject of gradual development, so gradual that it is a question of great interest to the observer how far modern Army Administrations have kept pace with them.

One object of these remarks is to turn the thoughts of the reader to those changes of the conditions of warfare which have been brought about by the use of smokeless powder and by the increase in the range, quantity, and intensity of missiles or projectiles. The writer believes that the effect of these changes or developments is far greater than the conservative student of war is at present ready to admit. Moreover, he believes it can be shown that seventeenth and eighteenth century organisation, training, and comprehension of what are understood as the "arms" of the Service which has governed most of the alterations and been the foundation of most of the improvements in the art of warfare during the nineteenth century are no longer sound. He also believes that the organisation and tactics, built up on conditions a century old, will break down when put to a real test, and that the training founded on them is obsolete.

Except to remind my audience, it would be needless to remark that the fundamental object of warfare, no matter what the scale on which it is conducted, namely, to strike and disable the enemy, has held, and will always hold, good, and that the best leader is he who knows how to organise and use an army with the greatest disadvantage to his opponent and with the least to himself.

Of the blow, or battle, in which one army disables another, history gives innumerable examples, but we need not go behind the last century for them. Long study of these, and of what happened before and after them, is necessary to realise their import and teaching.¹ As in the "ring," they have sometimes begun as mere feints; at other times each side has intended to fight it out; but whether the arena has been the Peninsula, the Crimea, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Turkey, or even the Transvaal, the strategy and tactics have all had the object of disabling the opponent by one or more blows, and thus to cause him to yield.

History shows how avoidance of the blow, or attempts to neutralise it with the object of delaying its effects, or the attempt to make war less disagreeable, have been oftener consequent on political considerations

¹ The Army was told lately at Aldershot that the best way to get a taste for the scientific study of the art of war is to begin with reading fiction containing military narrative. The same kind of reading is guilty of the popular idea that artists' pictures of battles are like the reality.

than on the true issue which should lead, as quickly as possible, to a situation in which one side or the other must give in.

The immediate question is, how far the means of administering the blow, and the manner of dealing it or of giving a counter-blow, remain the same as they were at the beginning of the century. Has the ballistic effect of the appliances remained the same? Or, has the *main-d'œuvre* altered? Or have the conditions under which it can use the appliances or weapons been changed?

Any small change in the vital energy and intelligence of the man and of the horse may be left out of consideration. There is little, besides the existence of railways, in the features of the surface of a country; whether natural or artificial, which has altered. But when we come to the appliances for disabling an enemy's *personnel* and *matériel*, we find that these have advanced in their development, and in extent, in a degree fully equal to the march of science and intellect. How far the intelligence of the soldier and of his leader has also advanced, so that all that science offers him is utilised to its fullest extent, is an object worthy of the investigation of any thinker. In considering the subject, it is as well more particularly to emphasise that there is no mystery in what is known as "drill," or, in the objects in view, by those who teach it, or in the training men to move in combination without confusion, or to manœuvre. The ordinary professional soldier is apt to allow the lay mind to imagine there is something lying behind what is called "soldiering," which he cannot understand. Is not the expression "There is nothing like leather" of military origin? The only thing that it is difficult for the lay mind to grasp is, the effects of military training in time of peace on the results expected from an army in time of war. Many soldiers even do not grasp it.

In the beginning of the century the man, whether horse or foot, who directed a projectile from his shoulder was one whose chief mission was to get at his opponent with a bayonet, and very often he succeeded while strictly adhering to the drill which he had been taught. Many tacticians of that period rightly believed that the projectile part of his work was secondary to the combat with the *arme blanche*.¹

THE SOLDIER ON HORSEBACK.

From the earliest times the cavalry soldier was essentially a man who fought and disabled his enemy while sitting on the back of a horse, or else he delivered a physical blow in a combined charge, when man and horse struck against man and horse. The horseman in war was probably at his zenith as the most powerful arm of the military services, when,

¹ An old soldier of the 86th in the Indian Mutiny naively expressed this to a comrade, when the regiment was being re-armed with rifles, to replace "Brown Bess," and they were being taught musketry during the intervals of fighting. "Mushketry, bedad! what's the use of mushketry? The 86th boys niver pulls the trigger till they git the bay-net into thim pandies, and sure thim they ca-n't miss."

between the fourth and seventh centuries, the horse-bowmen were more numerous in battle than any other "arm," and when their numbers most frequently decided the day. Later on it became necessary to clothe the horse with armour like his rider. As time went on, the value of the horse was more prominent as a means of giving mobility to the musketeer and to the scout. The great Napoleon's tactics temporarily rescued cavalry from the subordinate position to which those of the eighteenth century had relegated it. As the range and precision of projectiles have increased, the rôle of the man who fights sitting on the horse has again narrowed. When cavalry is used as "mounted infantry" the whole theory of his existence as a separate "arm" disappears, and his training, organisation, and "oneness" with his horse, is less appropriate. Can it be said that the cavalry of European Armies is not far more a peace organisation for purposes of military pageant and spectacle, or for police duties, than for war? I have heard it said that a German officer who accompanied our forces in South Africa spoke most disparagingly of our cavalry. I have heard the same from our own officers.¹

South Africa, with its absence of enclosures, is the ideal area of warfare for the mounted soldier, as the United Kingdom, on account of the density of its intersection by fences, is the reverse.

Whatever the mounted soldier may be called in the future, the title "cavalry" will be likely to tie him down to the traditions of the nineteenth century. These traditions prescribe the sub-divisions, heavy and light. For the *raison d'être* of the heavies we have the example of the charge of the Heavy Brigade at Waterloo, of the French cuirassiers at Wörth, and of the Germans on the 16th August, 1870. Is there a cavalry officer who has been under modern rifle fire who thinks these can be repeated?² With all the experience we have had, we send dragoons out to live on the veldt with lance, sword, pistol, and carbine, riding 20 stone, on a horse which, it is true, can carry the weight on parade, when well fed, groomed, and when he stands in his stall twenty hours out of the twenty-four. Ask the same unfortunate animal to live and work under the conditions of warfare in South Africa, that ideal country for the mounted soldier, and no wonder our foreign critic goes away with a self-satisfied air as to our inferiority.

It is certain that the Armies of the twentieth century will have men mounted on horses who carry a long rifle. All the useful conditions of so-called cavalry life in time of peace may be grafted on to

¹ Some letters I wrote to the *Times* in the winter of 1899-90 over the signature of "Swastica" referred to this question, and, I think, showed that man and horse, after a year in South Africa, may become on active service as serviceable cavalry (using the term as it is popularly understood), under the faulty conditions of their equipment and mounting, as can be found in any Army.

² In the Mutiny, during the pursuit of the Gwalior contingent, after the action at Calpee, I witnessed a charge in the open maidan on a large group of kneeling and standing infantry, firing from muzzle-loaders with bayonets fixed, by a squadron of that (then) splendid regiment the 14th Light Dragoons. When the charge had passed on, there were a few dragoons on the ground, but not one foot-soldier had been touched.

a squadron organisation of such units, but the man himself must be¹ what Lord Dundonald described, shortly after his return from South Africa, a soldier, who should be:—

1. A first-class rifle shot.
2. A good walker.
3. Able to stick on his horse.

If to this may be added that he must be clothed and equipped so that he has not first to think (to the detriment of training in time of peace that is worth the name) of spoiling the "spit and polish"; that he must thoroughly understand his horse, and how to feed, water, picket, and ride him, so as to utilise the animal's energy to the highest degree; that his present 'riding-school teaching is only effective in exhausting the physical energies of himself and his horse, and plays up to the imagination of our military artists, then the practical "soldier on horseback" is correctly described.

There are other conditions of weight, equitation, and shoeing, which no doubt Lord Dundonald had in his mind; but all that need be remarked is, that the unit thus described is diametrically the opposite in most respects to the cavalrman of European Armies.²

PROJECTILES FROM VEHICLES.

Let us come now to the artillery. Here again, at first in the history of its use, there was an interchange of projectiles, only at a greater distance than between muskets. The men who used the gun mounted on wheels, were, for instance, in India, in John Company's days, personally armed only with a sword. If armed with a short-range carbine it was rarely, if ever, used except when fighting in entrenchments, and then only

¹ There is a military correspondent of the *Times* (I wish I knew his qualifications), from whom an essay appeared on "Mounted Infantry" in the issue of 11th January.

According to his lights, wedded to the organisation of the nineteenth century, he ventured to write about the mounted rifleman as another "arm of the Service." A great many of his remarks were excellent, but he utterly misled his readers, who have not thought that the distinction of being carried instead of walking, is no true or scientific division of the men who fire from the shoulder.

² A question to be asked is: Have those whose duty it is to advise nations read the century's lessons in war aright? For instance, have they admitted that that part of the art of war which employs the cavalry of European Armies for scouting or charging in an enclosed country has almost disappeared, and that it has gradually become unpractical to regard it as an "arm" of the Service? Is the *métier* of a man whose business as a scout is to use his eyes and brains (not to kill, unless attacked), whether he is mounted on a horse, or a mule, or a bicycle, or an automobile (if we read Lord Dundonald aright), fulfilled by the cavalry soldier, either individually, or organised and equipped as he is understood by the European War Offices. There is no use saying that Continental Armies still use the cavalry they now have in their manœuvres and scout and charge and form a screen with it, and call it an "arm." The arguments as to the cavalry, *quâ* thé cavalry, of the nineteenth century being an obsolete "arm," cannot, I submit, be answered, and the sooner we make up our minds to sift the question without prejudice to the very bottom the better.

in the last resort. The artilleryman's orthodox means of saving his gun and himself from capture was to limber up and be off. Governing his classification as horse and foot artillery was a condition which was as much decided by the limits of mobility of the man on foot or of the man on horseback as by the weight of the projectile. Between the Peninsular and Crimean wars the scientific study of artillery tactics had almost disappeared.¹ The infantry general regarded the artillery officer as a specialist.

The lessons to be learnt from the American war in the sixties were obscured by special conditions, chiefly due to the growing inequality between the North and South, both as regards war material and supplies. In the Austro-Prussian War, the lessons of the effects of the use of the breech-loader on one side only were limited. The effects of large projectiles within the fire zone were most evident by the cutting down by shot and shell of half the young trees in the wood between Chlum and the Bistritz. In the Franco-German War, leaders were learning that there *might* be zones of fire in the open which no troops could cross without being almost annihilated. In Turkey, the Russians, on account of the high trajectory of rifle fire, were able to traverse ground, which, with the present trajectory, it would be folly to attempt.

The examples afforded by the wars of the century are of ever-varying degree and innumerable. But one thing is clear, that the width of the zone for projectiles of all sorts, the density in the air of the missiles, the facilities for "searching the ground" whether with weapons which are used from the shoulder or from the vehicle, has been multiplied (assuming the old range of the musket as 100 and of the gun as 1,000 yards) by between ten and fifteen. Besides, there is the factor of difficulty through the use of smokeless powder in locating the points whence fire emanates. The eye no longer helps. The ear alone remains to guide the combatant, and even this aid might disappear if the discharge of a projectile could be effected without noise.

What does all this mean in war, and what effect will it have on the mind of the practical student who searches deeply after cause and effect, and who feels that the safety of nations depends on the conclusions come to and on these conclusions being acted on? May he not with advantage, as a preliminary, study what (for instance) would have occurred in Belgium when Napoleon and Wellington faced one another in 1815 if their forces had been armed with the weapons of the present day?

¹ As an example of how little the use of artillery was understood by the leader of that time, it is interesting to remember that at Boomplatz, in the fifties, the opening attack on the Boers was by rifle fire at a range of about 300 yards which was a distance which the riflemen could just cover at the double when their blood was up. The mounted Boer rifleman had a muzzle-loading weapon, and, although his aim was good, the discipline of the British infantry, the short distance to be covered by the man running on foot with a bayonet on his weapon, the narrow zone of fire and its thinness (so to speak) obliged the more mobile force of Boers to fly. The projectiles of Sir Harry Smith's two field guns hit no one.

May he not reasonably speculate on the results of the invasion of Bohemia in 1866, if at Königrätz Edersheim's cavalry had been mounted riflemen handled by a Stuart of Confederate fame, and if 2,000 engineers had during the previous night fortified the Tummel-platz? May he not ask himself, if the flank march against the French right on the 18th August, 1870, could have succeeded the same evening, and if it had not, could the Germans have maintained another day's fight, as well as their line of communications? But it will be said that these questions are problematical. The answer is that all deep study of war presents problems which cannot be logically solved, but which in the light of the advance of science will teach grave lessons to those who make them the subject of exact (or scientific) study.

THE "ARMS" OF THE SERVICE.

Now as to these so-called "arms," which propel projectiles, are they—the so-called, artillery and infantry—not, unquestionably, one "arm"? The leader who first appreciates this, so I contend, will win. It is likely that we shall not cease, in our lifetime, to call the one an artilleryman and the other an infantryman; but as range and rapidity and accuracy of fire are all a question of degree, must we not be prepared to organise and train the forces which use projectiles to disable the enemy, as one "arm"?

An alliance between firing from the shoulder and from wheels, as regards equipment, has been already effected with the Maxim gun—both as regards enlistment, organisation, and training. The old empirical separation of "arms" having the same object must disappear.

The fact of having to ride, or drive, or care for a horse, is no sound distinction between the (so-called) artillery and infantry soldier. The intelligence of the men we enlist, as it grows with the spread of education, as to understanding the simple mechanism of the rifle which he carries or of the small and large rifle on wheels which we call a gun, and their working, cannot be classified by the grant of a penny a day in pay, more or less, or, by the difference in cost of a yard of red or blue cloth.

The real scientific division is between the man who has the qualifications to allow of his being trained to shoot accurately from the shoulder, and the man who does not possess them. Every man who is entrusted with a weapon to shoot with from the shoulder should be a *real* rifleman. All men who cannot so qualify should be artillerymen, or if associated in a battalion with riflemen, should be Maxim men, or machine-gun men. It does not matter what is the graduation in range, etc., it must be recognised that a projectile weapon, whether carried on a man's shoulder, or carried on wheels, and pulled into action by men or animals or traction engines, is a weapon having one object, and that all tactics must be governed by the effecting of that object. The recognition of a graduation in the shooting efficiency of the rifleman who is distinguished between the "marksman" and the inferior shot already exists. Just as with the weapon on wheels, there is a material graduation, as in the Colt gun, Maxim gun, so-called "pom-pom," field artillery light and

heavy, guns of position, and so on. It is a well-known fact that a man with all the qualifications for becoming an efficient rifle shot may never be able to lay a gun, and *vice versa*. The ballistic effect of the projectiles, will be in proportion to the efficiency of the weapon, and of those who use it; and to their organisation as bodies more or less mobile, all having the same object in view.

Now, as to the influence of the factors of this ballistic effect on tactics.

The misuse of the expression "frontal attack" (chiefly by war correspondents) leads to misunderstanding. In one sense, there is no such distinction, every attack is frontal. If it is not in the nature of a surprise to the attacked the effect varies according to circumstances. One thing is certain, namely, that an attack, unless the attacked is unprepared, is now as sure of failure as would have been Alva's if he had marched his army straight across the glacis and up to the ramparts of Bois-le-Duc, expecting to take the place. The sapper and artilleryman ask, But what about "preparation"? The answer is: Admitted, "preparation" may pave the way for a frontal attack, just as in a regular siege it prepares for the assault of a breach; but the question follows: When the objective is, say, 2,000 yards off, and the intervening space cannot be reconnoitred or there is not time to sap across it, when a deadly zone of projectiles skimming the surface intervenes, what experience, what estimate of the *élan* of men striving to get within bayonet touch of a defender, justify the attempt, even if the chances of success were tenfold greater than they are? So-called preparation by a rain of missiles of all sorts and sizes and at various ranges, will soon be found out by a thoughtful defender and he will reserve his own ammunition to destroy the personal attack.

After the Crimean War the military engineers Burgoyne, Todleben, and Brialmont saw the dawn of great changes and hastened to adapt the more exact science of fortification to meet its exigencies. Their minds were fifty years in advance of their time, but still the writer well remembers that the general balance of opinion in the sixties was that "the attack had gained."

Let me particularise a little.

I claim that the word "*cavalry*" is obsolete as descriptive of an "arm of the Service." Its usefulness as a title could only be justified by its antiquity, and it cannot compete with that of "*mounted rifleman*."¹

The word "*infantry*," in its strict sense, means a foot soldier, no matter what may be his *métier*. It should not be confined to the units of a so-called infantry battalion.

The word "*artillery*" is a misleading expression, unless it embraces generally all means of discharging projectiles. In such a sense the word

¹ As George Chesney pointed out 25 years ago, the skilled rifle marksman, trained to ride and care for his horse, is the essence of military efficiency concentrated in one unit. The writer has a vivid recollection, when the audience separated after that lecture, of the commiseration expressed by well-known military experts for Chesney's presumption in trespassing into a field of which he was supposed, as an engineer, to have no knowledge.



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"*gunner*" is equally applicable to the present infantryman and artilleryman.

Assuming that any combatant organisation which is not suitable to the act of war, *i.e.*, the time of battle, either on a small or large scale, is wasteful and therefore unscientific; then, it is wasteful of energy, physical and mechanical, to place a rifle for use in the hands of men who cannot be taught to use it with fair skill, say, up to 1,000 yards; that is about 50 per cent. of the men who are enlisted into the Line. It is wasteful in action to use that man-energy to carry excavating implements, to dig trenches, or build cover (beyond what he can do with his hands). It is wasteful of the energy of that 50 per cent. who should be serving weapons on wheels to require them to carry a rifle or ammunition on the person. Projectiles discharged from the shoulder by men who are not marksmen are wasted. It is wasteful of the energy of the man—"the engineer soldier"—who has to use explosives, to dig trenches, or build cover in action, to require him to cripple his limbs with the rifle and ammunition of the rifleman, the use of which will divide his attention from concentration on those duties which are his special *métier*.

These remarks are supported by the practice in the past, with the men (*i.e.*, the artillery) who serve weapons on wheels which have horses or other means of traction. The field gunner of the present has his carbine carried for him in battle, and in European warfare he is rarely ordered to carry excavating implements, or exhaust himself with digging trenches. It is illogical to say that every man should carry a weapon with which he can shoot from the shoulder, in order to "give him confidence." Enough confidence would be given by the possession of a bayonet-sword stuck on a long revolver.

If confidence is only acquired by having the use of a weapon of similar range and effect as that of your opponent who is firing at you, where would be the confidence of the infantry soldier under artillery fire, or of the artilleryman under infantry fire? The confidence of the soldier is derived from other conditions than those subject to the size and range of the projectile that is directed against him. Scientific tactical training means teaching individuals and small units how to act under the fire of all sorts of projectiles. Confidence logic has piled on to the back of the modern cavalry horse a lance, a sword, and a carbine, so that the rider may think he is ready to meet any contingency.

No practical example will suit the frame of mind of objectors who have, what may be called, "attack on the brain," and who, amongst other things, have never taught their men that to retire skilfully is as important as to attack intelligently.

The leader, as I have already said, who attacks, *i.e.*, moves to the attack, with men (not clothed in impenetrable steel) across country resembling a glacis is—well—it is not hard to give it a word. Should it not be elementary knowledge that his justification will depend on the frequency of what may be called "the stepping-stones" and the existence of irremovable impedimenta between him and his objective? These "stepping-stones" will be either natural or artificial cover, or the same artificially improved as cover during the advance.

During that time, each unit according to his *métier*, should be devoting all his energies to one object, not to several objects, namely:—

- a. The long-range wheel gunners (or artillery) to disabling the weapons on wheels of the defence.
- b. The most skilled of the shoulder-gun men (or marksmen), to scouting, thus drawing and keeping down the fire of the opponent scouts, and indicating the positions of the intervening "stepping-stones."
- c. The engineers should immediately follow them in *very* open order, excavating or improving cover at the "stepping-stones" or points so indicated by the scouts. The commander would concentrate all his available engineers on this part of his battle-field, so as to have at least as many of them as of other infantry.
- d. As the cover was made it should be occupied by the rest of the riflemen, who would continue to advance from cover to cover, and to reinforce the scouting line.
- e. As the riflemen advance, their places would be taken by the light guns on wheels (such as Maxims), the machines to be dragged by men, or, if necessary, to be carried in pieces and put together under cover. These, particularly if they were used with shields, should be able to get within about 800 yards of the objective.
- f. Within that 800 yards of the objective the possibility of further approach would entirely depend on the density, ballistic effect, and nature, of the fire of the defence, and on the natural and artificial features intervening, the advantageous use of which, by the attack, the defenders had not had time to neutralise.¹

The same procedure would have to continue until the distance allowed of a final rush. It seems to me that once such a closing on the defenders were possible, it would matter little whether a man used a clubbed rifle, or a bayonet, or a pick, or a shovel² with which to strike the defenders.

A careful study, for instance, of the tactical action of the three arms at the battle of Borodino will, I think, show how entirely the conditions of the incidents of a battle have changed, and how the conditions which gave rise to the resemblance between the battle at close quarters possible then and a pugilistic encounter, have disappeared.

The view of the question which the writer suggests points to a great change in the organisation of units, and their tactical training

¹ On p. 473, July, 1900, of the *Household Brigade Magazine*, Dr. Maguire quotes Generals Ferron, Rhone, and Skugarevsky as to the probable losses to be expected in the last advance towards the objective. With 100 men defending, the loss of the attackers starting with 637 would be 537 men while crossing the zone of fire between 800 and 50 yards.

² There is no reason why the engineers' pick or shovel should not be capable of having the sword-bayonet fixed to it, when it would be as formidable a weapon as the *arme blanche* of the rifleman.

in combination, which is emphasised by the ever-increasing dispersion of men and guns under fire, and the effect it has on command and direction. Already the shadow of these changes is seen in the allotment of Maxims to infantry battalions. Must not that change be extended and half the men in the battalion carry rifles which require marksmen to use them, and the other half be attendant on Maxims? What weapons on the person the Maxim-men or the men who serve rifles on vehicles should themselves carry remains to be considered. Sound truths, and not prejudice or tradition, must guide that consideration; at any rate, they will not require long range portable fire-arms. The ballistic effect and accuracy of the fire of a company of infantry would thus be multiplied by, at least, as 5 to 1. Half the company being lightly armed can carry more ammunition. The means of bringing ammunition up to the firing line requires re-modelling. Bicycle builders can now make vehicles with low wheels for man traction which will carry thrice the load for the same weight. One-eighth of a battalion may with advantage be devoted to this duty.

Lately, that "the defence has gained enormously" is on the lips of soldiers. The speaker believes that the balance remains as it ever was, and that the success of scientific attack against scientific defence and *vice versa* will depend on the intelligent use of up-to-date means, and as ever on the *esprit* and the training of the soldier. But if either the one or the other is unscientific, all the *esprit* and training will not prevail.¹

As it has ever been, the tactician will try to "turn" what he cannot attack. Moving on interior lines (unless the two forces find themselves moving on parallel lines as Sout and Wellington once did) the defence *must* for a time have an advantage, which is reduced only by disproportion in numbers when the attacker's objective is the defender's base or some great metropolis.²

¹ He does not believe that the training should be to make use of *esprit* in a way destructive to confidence in the science of the leader.

² Even if the British riflemen outside Ladysmith had been mounted and their mobility been equal to that of the Boers, the political condition, by which the holding of that town became a necessity, would have still neutralised the British advantage after the disparity in numbers between the contending forces outside Ladysmith had disappeared.

In several respects the series of apparent mistakes by both the contending parties in Natal are instructive, and might be brought home to the minds of an interested public. Whatever may have been the faults of the initiative on either side, they are clearly local and personal, and it is a vast pity that the British people had been led by thoughtless Army reformers to attribute them to conditions which can be altered wholesale, and which are not present in the peace administration of any Army in Europe. Although most of the conditions in South Africa were widely different from those in European warfare, the lessons bearing on the subject under consideration, namely, attack of positions defended with modern weapons cannot be too carefully studied. Only now have the detailed official reports of the attacks on the Boers outside Ladysmith been published. The popular story-book narratives that have been printed are not written in such a way as to enable the military student to arrive at anything but approximate conclusions. The despatches are not more helpful to him.

The writer of articles in the *Times* on the last French Manœuvres fairly exposed the unsoundness of the tactical theories upon which their movements for attack were based. Given a position, covering a place which is the objective of, say, an invading army, it is certain that its capture by direct or by flank attack, when the defending force can change its front more rapidly than the assailant, is impossible except by sap. The defender of a position chosen by himself should be able to make absolutely sure of preventing an assault getting within, say, 800 yards of him. The invader's strength will then lie, in threatening the objective along another line of advance, in his advantage in having the initiative, and to that extent in the choice of ground. If his choice in these respects is sound, the accidents of the surface of the country will give immediate strategical and tactical advantages, will neutralise the power of the defence, and so on, but the fire zone of the defender will always oblige him to move along exterior lines, the length of which may be beyond the day's marching powers of his force. Mobility of those who use projectile weapons is therefore more essential than ever for attack. It must be possible to move over at least *twice* the distance in the 24 hours than can be done on foot by the defenders. Thus we can understand the value of the horse bowman of the early Middle Ages, and we come back to the need of mobility for attack of the forces which kill with missiles, and can realise the uselessness of the "aim" the chief *métier* of which is to strike from the back of a horse. However much we may have been struck by the advantages of the mobility of the Boer rifleman in defence (4 to 1 as against the British rifleman on foot), the lesson was incomplete because he rarely took advantage of his mobility for actual attack, as he might have done. In Natal we had a striking example of a mobile force acting on interior lines against a slowly moving force acting on external lines.

Tactics in principle will be always unaltered, but their practice as a guide to organisation must be fundamentally revised. The sooner the better for the safety of this Empire.

The chessboard control by the Commander-in-Chief over a battle has disappeared. For instance, the battle of Waterloo was fought within an area of $3 \times 3 = 9$ square miles. It would now occupy an area of $9 \times 9 = 81$ square miles. With this change the story-book and illustrated journal descriptions of battle have no reality. The old conditions (let us imagine), it is true, could be restored by depriving both sides of their ammunition. Can any of my hearers realise that we shall never again hear of the commander, from his point of vantage, guiding the artillery preparation, the infantry attack, and the cavalry dash at the shattered battalions or disabled guns?

The future proportion and varieties of size in the rifles carried on wheels (or guns), is the next question of vital importance, and its study must be stripped of all the empirics which have grown out of the old-fashioned classification. The experience taught by peace manœuvres here and on the Continent is rapidly becoming obsolete. Smokeless powder is an active cause. The well-directed hail of projectiles cannot be too heavy, or too dense, or too searching, or too wide in its range, if it

has to stop an attack, or if it has to destroy a defence. Its moral effect when used as a deterrent *only*, has been grossly exaggerated. Only dim glimpses, discerned by few, were given by the Transvaal War of what the projectile duel of the future will be like. The would-be Army reformers have only scratched the surface of the question, and if they are listened to, we shall be only where we were.

THE ENGINEERING ARM.

The attention and energy of those who kill with projectiles, whether with a weapon held to the shoulder or carried on wheels, must not be diverted in battle from their one all-important work to do other work for which the engineering arm is designed. The heavier the weights that have to be dragged into action over ground which is found in Europe, the more (what may be called) scientific means must be in the fighting line. The provision and working of these is clearly the work of the "engineering arm," not of the arm which uses the weapon. Whether prejudice or parsimony is the motive, the opposition which they create to the obvious steady increase of the active sphere of the "arm" which *uses all the other forces of nature to disable or help to disable an enemy*, must fall before the common sense of the world. The work in our small wars, in our peace manœuvres, and even the work done by Jack on shore, all tends to obscure the importance of this proposition.

If those who oppose these views do so on the ground that mobility is the true indication of the dividing line between the so-called "arms," as regards "cavalry" and "infantry," and that weight of *matériel* is the guiding factor that distinguishes between those two so-called "arms" and "artillery," and that every fighting unit should also be equipped and trained as a military engineer, and such it is conceived would be their contention, then there is a fair field for discussion, and all the speaker wishes at present to urge on his hearers is, that he has put a case before them which is eminently ripe and fit for discussion.

If these views are sound, then all the organisation and tactics of modern arms, based on the practice of one hundred years ago, is hopelessly behindhand.

OBSTRUCTION.

The great "save-trouble" kind of administration of Armies in time of peace too often takes refuge behind specious claims on behalf of something which is not, but which it calls *esprit de corps*. The same vicious spirit panders to those with whom economy is the first object, and who are very powerful. Half the Army reformers do not know what they want. The other half do not know how to get at what they want. Herein lies the strength of the position of the "how-not-to-do-its," who do not want real Army reform. Their task is comparatively easy, because of the difficulty the man in the street has in appreciating the true meaning of the term "ordinary business principles," as applied to a military administration in time of peace. His difficulty, and the opportunity for mysti-

fyng him, lies in the appreciation of the exceptional conditions of the case. As I have already remarked, the exceptional nature of the condition in an Army administration is, that while it ought always to be improving it is preparing for something, namely, warfare, which, while being the single object of its existence, yet only occasionally arises, and which, while it should always be anticipated as if it was near at hand, often appears from a direction and in a way quite different from reasonable expectation.¹

AN ADVISORY BOARD.

I may be asked, Where is Army Reform to begin? I was much struck by some words in a letter which appeared in the *Times* on Christmas Day, signed "Sick List." "The great and all-important reform required" (he wrote) "lies outside and not inside the Army. . . . There can be no real efficiency" (he added) "until the national spirit is awakened." In other words, until the nation tells Parliament that it must have real efficiency in return for what it pays, until Parliament realises that no professional responsibility is at present possible, and that it cannot be had until an independent board or body to advise them is created, then only can the nation be sure of knowing what is wanted.

I would ask, Where does there exist in our Constitution any individual or body charged with responsibility to the nation to advise authoritatively, apart from all questions of party politics, and finance, as to the military (Army and Navy) requirements of the Empire?

Can a War Office, ruled by a party Minister, be independent of party politics or considerations, and can the whole truth ever reach the ears of Parliament and of the country through him?

Can a so-called Defence Committee composed of civilians, whose minds have never been trained to war, and who exist only by the support of a Parliamentary majority be trusted for one moment as competent advisers?

In a country like Germany, where there is a "General Staff," those who compose that body are in a situation quite different from anything that now exists in this Empire. In the first place, their Chief is the Sovereign; whose headship of the Army is real and carries with it a responsibility to the Fatherland. Nothing resembling the conditions of their responsibility to the Sovereign exists here. In the second place, their task is smaller and less complicated than it would be if they were dealing with the widely-varying circumstances of the British Empire: In the third place, in countries where there is compulsory service, their responsibility is also, through the military hierarchy, to every individual who serves. This

¹ In spite of the so-called "Army reformer," the writer has absolute faith in the doctrine, or whatever it may be called, namely, that it is only by all that is embraced in the expression *esprit de corps*, an Army can be held together ready in time of peace for real warfare; but he sees too much in principle sacrificed in time of peace to a civilian conception of what *esprit de corps* means, and, also, too much of the results in action to be expected from *esprit de corps* of the conditions based on old experience, which lessons the century has reversed.

creates a direct responsibility to the National Army, which is the strongest visible power in the State.

Months ago, I advocated the creation of an advisory body, as permanent, and as independent as the Judicial Bench.

- a. It must be absolutely independent of Parliamentary parties, and of administrative departments.
- b. Its composition must be of persons in whom the nation has entire confidence.
- c. It must have nothing to do with administrative or executive (War Office and Admiralty) duties. As soldiers and sailors its members would have risen in the Service to positions in which they would have gained the confidence of the nation, and would have become acquainted with the working machinery of the naval and military administrations.
- d. The appointments should be by the Crown, subject to confirmation by Parliament, and *quam diu se bene gesserit*.

The chief duties of its members should be :—

- e. To gather into their hands and bring within their ken by means of an intelligence bureau all the strings of information as regards our Navy and Army and all the forces for defence of every part of the Empire, whether existent or possible, and similarly, of the forces of other countries.
- f. To study all the conditions of defence and all the possibilities of warfare, within and around the Empire.
- g. To live, as it were, always as if war was imminent, and always just beyond the political horizon, and as if the consideration and preparation for it were vital to the existence of the Empire. In this latter respect, having no responsibility for executive or administrative duties, their minds would not be subject to the paralysing effects of military administration in time of peace.

The responsibility for its recommendations must be to Parliament and not to the Cabinet that may be in office for the time being.¹

Their channel of communication with Parliament must be directly through Parliamentary representatives, so that if desirable, matters necessarily confidential (these would really be very few) may be confided to a small number of persons.

For this purpose a standing Joint Committee of both Houses should be appointed, in which both parties would be represented, through whom

¹ "This is the point (the means of defence) at which every Cabinet of our time has failed of its duty. There may have been Governments that have considered the subject of defence; there has been none which has inspired the nation with a reasonable confidence in the success of its endeavours."—Spencer Wilkinson in "The Nation's Awakening."

Sir Frederick Maurice in his "National Defence" states :—"But it (the Government) cannot and will not act because of our party system, until the public at large, the body of the voting electorate, realises what the danger is. This then is the danger, that whilst the only men who know what the real needs of the country are cannot act, the public who determines everything does not know."

all communications from this constituted body of Military Advisers, or Military Board, should pass (I use "military" in the general sense).

It would be preferable, of course, if the spokesman of the Board could appear before Parliament and make his own statements. The possibility of this is a Constitutional question. The members (say three) of this Board must be as independent of the Government of the day as the Bench. I suggest three because the relative range of subjects and their difficulties, as between Army and Navy, is as 2 to 1; therefore, there would be two soldiers and one sailor. My reasons for this proportion are, that naval preparation and administration are much more easily understood and maintained in a state of readiness than those for land warfare.

For example, as the scene of operations of naval warfare is on the sea, and as the combatant units are ships, the practice in times of peace resembles that in time of war much more nearly than is the case with the land forces. It does not require the professional mind to understand how imitation warfare is much less real on land than on the sea, and, consequently, though each requires careful study in time of peace, that study has to deal with much more intricate questions when probable war on land is being considered.

These proposals seem very drastic, but I have never yet been able to hear of any other which will fully meet our case. The Admiralty and the War Office would continue their executive functions and carry out the policy which Parliament, acting on the advice of this independent Board, will have then to define. A large saving in expenditure would soon follow, because numberless economies which might now be effected but for vested interests would at once be tackled, and, if any interest felt itself unfairly treated, it would have an appeal to the highest authority, advised by a body which would only have the safety of the Empire to consider. For example, the enormous retired list would be gradually reduced, because the first policy of this Board would be, to recommend the reduction of the professional military element to an essential minimum, *i.e.*, the numbers of those in the public service who engage to give their whole time to military life; and gradually substitute for the great Civil Service which permanently holds office and runs the Admiralty and War Office, naval and military men who have served professionally and with distinction in the active permanent lists, in all grades and ranks.² This policy would be rapidly appreciated by the

¹ When I wrote this I had not read "The Great Boer War" by Dr. Conan Doyle (see p. 531 of that work), where he proposes "to decrease the number of the professional soldiers."

² Much that has been massacred in late years of the military prestige and tradition of the Army, upon which an Army lives more than on pay and rations, would be restored. To a Board, such as I describe, could be imputed no insincere motives when its measures tended to encourage the true military sentiment, instead of injuring it by what I have already referred to as the demands of the so-called business man. For example, the misapplication of military titles to special occupations, which, however essential to the existence of an army in the field, have no function to perform in disabling the enemy, would soon disappear. The vice of over-regulating and of scaling patterns in excess, inherent to an active peace administration of soldiers by civilians, would be checked and money saved.

Colonies, because they would have the best authority which the country could produce responsible for the military recommendations. The Colonies and dependencies would then better realise their obligation to help in maintaining the means for military offence both by sea and land. As I have described, so I submit, the experience of the late century points out how "Army reform" should be begun. Not, by "sweeping out the Augean stable" (a favourite expression) of our public offices, which any thoughtful man will realise must do as they always have done under the conditions of civil control, guidance, and organisation, subject to party exigencies, but, by telling the nation honestly what is required.

OFFENSIVE DEFENCE.

The history of the century indicates in every way that there is a latent national spirit, which has only to be roused to show that *if* the Regular Army were to be employed entirely outside these islands, the defence of the soil, *if organised and trained in time of peace*, may be left entirely to the manhood of the nation, a million of whom would form a Territorial Army under the guidance and control of the men who have passed out of the ranks of the Regular or Professional Army into the Reserves.

When Lord Salisbury, on 9th May, 1900, told the Primrose League at the Albert Hall that "what we have to look to, what we have to determine, is, how is the manhood of this country to be utilised for the preservation of the Empire," he probably had in his mind the words attributed to Nelson: "England expects every man to do his duty," or, as the *Times* put it on 17th May, 1803: "We shall fight . . . for our laws, for our fields, for our existence . . . *for all*, and it is not to be doubted *with all*."

These after all are empty words, unless the duty of every man is laid down before the emergency arises. It does not matter that Lord Salisbury had the sufficiency of defence by the Navy in his mind, at the same time qualified by the admission that we must have "troops" in sufficient numbers to make the enterprise of any enemy that would attack us absolutely hopeless. His words admit that, while conscription, in the Continental sense, is outside practical discussion, it is feasible that every male shall be so registered in time of peace that his place in the service of the defence of the fatherland is automatically, as it were, defined, and waiting for him to enter into, in the event of his being thrown out of his employment. In other words, that, while all those who bear arms shall do so voluntarily, the service of all those who, either from want of will, want of training, or for other reasons (some physical), are not engaged to fight, and who are thrown out of employment, or, who have no employment, shall be appropriated by the State, at a fixed minimum rate of wage with a free ration.

Only a very few people have, during the nineteenth century, allowed their minds to dwell on the state of things that would exist, not only in these kingdoms, but also in the colonies and dependencies of the Empire, if the so-called "command of the sea" were only temporarily weakened.

The Duke of Wellington never, in his old age even, lost sight of the increased facilities for invasion which were offered by sea transportation with steam-power. Facilities, far beyond his conception, have been continually added since his time. Every other European nation has organised for defence against invasion in a way so that every resource of the fatherland, whether physical or mechanical, is at once available at the call to arms. This Empire, the wealthiest, and in some respects the most practical of all, has no corresponding organisation except on paper.

ORGANISATION OF THE NATION.

The general proposition which I wish to submit, and for the submission of which I have for some years been waiting until the public mind was ripe for it, may be described in a few words, and I claim that it is the most scientific system of national defence which is suitable to the race.

It is based on the fact that for every one man required to fight, that is to say, to use some weapon for disabling an enemy, two or three men are required to execute the necessary works in a civilised country threatened with invasion, or after invasion takes place, also to help in maintaining order, to keep going all the great national public services from which reserve soldiers have been drafted to the fighting bodies, and to look after the vast population of women and children, who would be unavoidably left in an unprotected condition. Those two or three must be obliged to serve. I doubt if it will be for a moment disputed that a million of volunteer fighters are available. If I am also right in the previous contention, it means there must be two or three millions of workers whose service the State can claim. Whether this is conscription or not, it is different from the drilled and armed population of Continental countries. Clearly, whatever identifying badge these men may carry, they will not be combatants, and they will have to understand that, so long as they do not take up or use arms, they will not be regarded as such. There will be no resemblance between them and the *franc-tireurs* of the war of 1870, who were guerillas. Into the fighting line they must not be sent, and on the approach of an enemy they must be withdrawn, and their unfinished work, if any, must be carried on by the military engineers, who will form part of the combatant million.

At the same time it is evident that any of their work, which, for instance, is applied to the clearing of the population and supplies from an area immediately threatened, or to the preparation of defensive positions, will be carried out well in rear of the line of country or coast in the occupation of combatants. You will see, my contention is, that the application of conscription, as understood on the Continent, is shown by our own nineteenth century lessons, to be unscientific, so far as the Anglo-Saxon race is concerned. By adopting compulsory service for the fighting line, we should lose all the advantages of voluntary service. For

instance (apart from the transportation), could any of the Continental Armies have provided, in 1900, 200,000 voluntary soldiers for South Africa?

DEFENCE WORKS CORPS.

A careful examination of the census returns of 1891 shows that very little assistance is to be obtained from its figures, when it is desired to estimate even approximately the number of males who would be available, on the following assumptions, namely:—

1. That the married men, not already engaged in the fighting military forces, *i.e.*, Regulars, Militia, Volunteers, and Yeomanry, shall, *if thrown out of employment*, remain with their families, and shall at once report themselves to the civil local authority where they are domiciled, for, either, employment *locally* to replace men who have been called out, or, to be enrolled as special constables for the preservation of order.
2. That all unmarried men who have not engaged in the Regular Army, or in the ranks of the Militia, Volunteers, and Yeomanry, shall, *if they are thrown out of employment*, report themselves for Defence employment.
 - a. In the case of men who are registered voters, to the District or Urban Council in the Parliamentary division in which they are registered.
 - b. In the case of men who have no registered domicile, to the same local authority nearest to their last domicile.

CENSUS RETURNS.

The absence of distinction in the summary table attached to the General Report (Vol. IV.) between the sexes and ages in the classes and orders of the occupied and unoccupied in the total population (which may now be expected to provide a total of about 19,596,000 males) is fatal to any exact estimate of the number of unmarried and widowed males in the respective classes. The number in each class include both sexes and all ages, so that any attempt even to estimate the number of single men between, say, 20 and 60 years of age in the occupied and unoccupied classes respectively is defeated. Again, in the occupied classes, in which are included professional, commercial, agricultural, industrial, and domestic occupations, there is not the faintest indication in each, which suggests the proportion of women and young persons under 20, to men over 20. What is still worse for our purposes, of the 22,000,000 who come under the head of "children or adults with no specified occupation" there is no analysis whatever.

It is only consistent with the whole of the legislation of the nineteenth century, which has, in its dislike of so-called militarism, deprived itself of even the statistics which would enable the nation to take stock of its strength for purposes of defence.

A very approximate estimate of the single men in the population between 20 and 55 gives 5,277,000, or, say, 4,000,000 when the combatant defence forces are filled up by men between 20 and 40 who are physically fit. If half of these are by degrees thrown out of employment, the 2,000,000 required to execute the necessary works, for defence, and arising out of a state of war, are available. It is certain that the process of diminution of employment would be gradual, and the incidence would vary widely in different localities, also, that the weakest physically and the least desirable morally would be the earliest to come under the obligation to serve. Consideration of this condition shows it to be unavoidable under my scheme, but when contrasted with the entirely opposite conditions in connection with compulsory military service it has this advantage, namely, that those of the community who would become, if the nation was at war, the soonest a source of danger, if only from having nothing to do, would be first brought under control. Of course, this is only a collateral advantage. The scheme is fundamentally the opposite to compulsory military service as it is understood in Continental countries.

LEADING AND CONTROL.

As to the nature of that control, and as to the work to which these 2,000,000 would be put, those destined to exercise that control require more organisation, ear-marking, and defining, in time of peace, than the mere registration of the individuals. For some time I have been engaged in advocating the development of a system, which is the offspring of a far earlier scheme in the same direction, namely, the Engineer and Railway Volunteer Staff Corps. I do not know that this body of officers, composed of well-known members of the Institution of Civil Engineers, have ever done more than receive commissions, which confer military rank and entitle them to wear His Majesty's uniform. They all have field rank, they have nothing to command, but their names appear in the Army List.

In the census of 1891 we find amongst the professional classes 135,000 persons under the head "others." From these my scheme would enlist 45,000 professional men, drawn from the several engineering societies, from the surveyors, and other professional bodies who are engaged in connection with constructive or outdoor works of one kind or another. Add to these 5,000 from the legal and teaching professions, and we have 50,000 gentlemen who should, if not already on the lists of active combatant units, be engaged in time of peace to come forward to take charge of, superintend, and control, the 2,000,000 workers.

Thus the manhood of the nation in these isles would provide:—

<i>First</i> : The Regular, or Professional, Army (over 20 years of age):—	
<i>a.</i> In India, the Colonies, and Dependencies	90,000
<i>b.</i> At home, ready to go anywhere, including 20 per cent. Reserves	100,000
The men under 20 years of age may be estimated at	10,000
	200,000
<i>Second</i> : The Militia, Volunteers, and Yeomanry, for home defence, including their Reserves	
	1,000,000
<i>Third</i> : The above-described Defensive Works Corps	
	2,000,000

These figures are naturally subject to revision, but the scale gives an idea of the scheme.

In any case, the second, *i.e.*, the home defence army of 1,000,000 men must have a military organisation and equipment which will enable 200,000 men to be under arms at a week's notice, and the remainder at intervals within two months.

The third is the Service with which every unmarried male *must* serve if he has not voluntarily engaged in either the first or second. There the compulsion begins and ends.

The registration and organisation of these Defence Works Corps in time of peace will require careful study.

The second and third will be repeated in every colony and dependency of the Empire.

I cannot conclude my remarks with better words than those spoken in this room nearly 17 years ago by the late Sir Charles Nugent, K.C.B., R.E.:—

“When I reflect upon the issues involved, I am lost in amazement at the indifference of the public. To what is this indifference to be attributed? It cannot be to want of information, for this subject (Imperial Defence) has been placed before them over and over again, here and elsewhere, under every aspect; it cannot be to any inherent difficulty in the subject, for it is devoid of professional technicality, and so simple that a child may comprehend it; it cannot be that it is without interest to all, and more to the civil than to the military portion of us.”

The Rt. Hon. Sir CHARLES W. DILKE, Bart., M.P.:—The paper which is before us is very largely concerned with a matter into which I do not propose to enter. It is one which, no doubt, will form the staple of any discussion which may take place this afternoon. I refer to the new view which is taken in this paper of the engineering side of the Military Service and the immense development which the author proposes to give to that side. I will point out to those present how very novel are these proposals with regard to the engineering side of the Military Service. The author of the paper has suggested that it is wasteful of the energy of the men to require the engineer who has to dig trenches or build cover in action to cripple himself with the rifle and ammunition of the rifleman. He proposes, therefore, to absolutely extend

and develop that division between the man who carries entrenching tools, for example, and the fighting soldier, which is reproached to us by all foreign observers as one of our defects. In every other Army of the world it has been thought necessary that the fighting man should carry entrenching tools. In our own Army that is the theory, but it has not always been the practice, and the fact that it has failed to be the practice in some cases in South Africa is undoubtedly spoken of by all foreign critics as one of the main causes of the special difficulties which we have met with in that country. The author proposes, as I say, to distinguish absolutely between the engineering side and the fighting side of the Army, although in one foot-note he seems to me to depart from his own principle by suggesting that "There is no reason why the engineers' pick or shovel should not be capable of having the sword-bayonet fixed to it, when it would be as formidable a weapon as the *arme blanche* of the rifleman." I think those are matters about which I am not at present converted by what has fallen from the author, but they are matters, no doubt, on which others will speak. They form the main basis of the paper, and no doubt they will be thoroughly and adequately discussed. The author goes very far in suggesting that the attention and energy of those who kill with projectiles must not be diverted from their important work to do other work for which the engineering arm is destined. He suggests that very many more people are required, in the event, for example, of an invasion, to perform the engineering duties than to perform the duties of fighting in the field. He considers that for every one man required to fight, that is, to use some weapon, two or three men are required to execute the necessary works, and he says that the great majority are to be non-combatants—that on the approach of an enemy they are to be withdrawn. Those are matters which I shall not discuss. I admit frankly that they are the main points in the paper, and I shall leave their discussion to others. I should not have risen to speak this afternoon but for the fact that the paper incidentally contains one or two important suggestions which deal with the whole relation of the Army and Navy to Parliament, and which I think deserve some attention from you, Sir, and from the other Members of the House who are present and who have given some attention to these subjects. There are two other matters in the paper which I may leave to others who are more competent to deal with them, but they ought to be dealt with to-day by someone. The author deals with the question of mounted infantry and cavalry, and one especially of the technical questions which has been most discussed of all those arising out of the present war. He is absolutely against the existence of cavalry as such, and in favour, as I understand, of the conversion of all cavalry into mounted infantry. I should like to say that, as a civilian, I am not converted upon that subject. The author's own statement later on in his paper, that the conditions of South Africa are peculiar conditions, that we must not allow ourselves (as some of us have said in this room before in the discussion which took place with Sir Frederick Maurice in the Chair, when we discussed the Lessons of the War), that we must not run the great risk of allowing ourselves, to argue from the South African case to the case of all future wars. There can be no doubt, I think, that as long as the conditions of Continental warfare are what they are and what they will still continue to be for a very considerable time, at all events, we should be making a mistake if we converted all our cavalry into mounted infantry and ceased to have any troops that could perform cavalry duties as such in the future. But others who are more competent will, no doubt, also discuss that question. The matter which I think we Members of the House of Commons ought to take up is that which we may be more competent than soldiers perhaps to discuss. You, Sir, are both a soldier and sailor and also a Member of the House of Commons, but those of us who are politicians and interested in preparation for war ought to deal with those matters in this paper which concern the very large questions which lie at the base of the whole of the future management of the Army in this country. The author, like most soldiers, and no doubt with good reason, does not think very much of the House of Commons, but I am sure he would wish to be just towards that assembly, and therefore I suggest that his first observation upon the matter is hardly, perhaps, fair. He attacks us with regard to the Manœuvre Bill. He says :

"It is hardly credible, but it is a fact, that it was thrown out in the House of Commons by the Standing Order Committee, on the ground that no notices had been served on owners or maps published of the areas," and he then speaks of the Bill as having been wantonly cast aside by its representatives. You will remember, Sir, what I remember what occurred with regard to that Bill in two successive sessions. The Standing Orders of the House of Commons are not a matter in which we have any power or authority at all. Where Bills touch private lands they are subject to the provisions of the law which are laid down for us and not by us, and no individual Member of the House of Commons has any authority whatever in regard to those questions of law. But with regard to the substantial matter, I am bound to say that the independent members on both sides of the House of Commons did very warmly press the matter on the consideration of the Government, and the Service Members of the House, several of whom I see here to-day, took a most keen interest in pressing that Bill on the Government; and certainly no reluctance was shown by the House of Commons generally towards proceeding with the Bill. We rather complained of the leaders of the House for not attaching sufficient importance to the Bill, but at all events great pressure was brought to bear by the House itself on the Government to proceed with it, and the proceeding with the Bill and the carrying of it were the result of the efforts made on both sides of the House of Commons towards the Government. But that is a small matter as compared with the very great one which is opened by the proposals of the author with regard to the future relations between the Services and Parliament. He proposed, as I understand him, that the War Office and the Admiralty should in fact be confined to small executive functions, and that the direct relations of the two Services with the elected representatives of the nation in the House of Commons—he says nothing about the House of Lords—with the representatives of the people in the House of Commons should be conducted by means of a Board, the spokesman of which would appear before Parliament and make his own statement. He would be a permanent representative of the Admiralty or of the War Office, as I understand, who would directly represent to Parliament the views of the Admiralty or the War Office, and the Admiralty and the War Office departments would continue as executive departments only and carry out the policy of Parliament. He goes on to say what a large saving of expenditure would be the result. What does he mean? How would this proposal work? Take for example the Admiralty. Supposing this proposal was considered by Parliament as a whole, or supposing that it was referred to a committee of the House of Commons, as is the case in several other countries of the world—for example, in France, where the Army and Navy Estimates are each referred to a committee. Supposing that committee took, as I think it would take, with regard to the Navy, the view that our present standard of ship-building was insufficient, and that a large increase of the Fleet was necessary in the present conditions of the world, who is going to be responsible for the expenditure? Who is going to shape that expenditure into the combinations of the Government and make it a portion of the Budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer? I confess I do not see how it would be possible either for the House of Commons as a whole or for any committee of the House of Commons to take so enormous a branch of the national affairs out of the hands of the Government of the day and deal with it without respect or regard to the Admiralty in the case I have put, or to the War Office in the other case which the reader of the paper has put. The proposals do not seem to me to be practical proposals. In no country in the world has anything of the kind prevailed. The authority actually passes from the minister and the department to the Parliamentary Assembly. In France, as I have said, and in some other countries, the Army and Navy Estimates are referred to a committee. In France you have the reporter of each of the two committees who is a person whose opinion (with the opinion of his committee behind him) goes for a good deal in detail. The minister appears before the committee, the minister and the committee together thrash out the details to the Budget, and they generally come to some sort of agreement. They seldom differ sharply, but they fight on details. They do not fight on the general principles

of the Army or the general principles of the standard to be adopted for the Fleet. There is there all the time what the reader of the paper does not seem to contemplate as existing in this country in the future, the ministerial responsibility, just as there is here. The Minister of Marine in France and the Minister of War discuss the question with the committee, give their evidence, assist the committee by giving their facts, and they remain responsible and the budgets for war or for the marine as ultimately presented to the House, are still, although they may be modified in detail, the budgets for which these ministers are responsible. I cannot but confess that I fail to see that the reader of the paper has thought out his suggestions on this subject. How would it be possible for the War Office or the Admiralty to come to a committee of the House of Commons to make their proposals while the duty of the Admiralty and the War Office would become merely executive duties? And how could the policy of Parliament be imposed on the departments? It seems to me it is a suggestion quite in the air and not worthy of the consideration of those present—that it has not been thought out in detail. But it is a matter of such importance that I thought it ought not to pass in this paper without some notice, because I am certain that nothing can be more deserving of the attention of those who are assembled here to-day.

Colonel T. MYLES SANDYS, M.P. (late 3rd Bn. Loyal North Lancashire Regiment) :—The remarks that I venture to offer to-day upon the able paper which has been laid before us for our consideration are only justified by the fact that I am a Member of Parliament who takes some interest in this most important question, and that I have had the good fortune to have some years' military service and experience abroad and at home. The point upon which I think we shall all agree is contained in the final paragraph which was quoted by the lecturer from the words of another authority :—"When I reflect upon the issues involved, I am lost in amazement at the indifference of the public. To what is this indifference to be attributed? It cannot be to want of information, for this subject (Imperial Defence) has been placed before them over and over again, here and elsewhere, and under every aspect; it cannot be to any inherent difficulty in the subject, for it is devoid of professional technicality, and so simple that a child may comprehend it." Well, Sir, I do not know that it is so simple that a child could comprehend it, for the lecturer, in the admirable paper he has read to us, has dealt with this difficult question in a manner which I confess has, in the short time before one for its consideration, completely taken one's breath away. I do not mean to say there are not a great many valuable suggestions in the views expressed, but they are questions of such far-reaching extent, and involve consequences so great should they not be based upon the correct principles attained by the experience of nations in war, that we may well pause before we express a decided opinion upon questions of such importance. The first point, and perhaps the most important point in the whole scheme, is the question of how, and where, we are to begin our Army reform; and it is to that point especially I would venture to address a few words, without, however, going into details as to armament, or the plan suggested for obliterating the lines which are the recognised lines of demarcation between different arms of the Service. But with reference to Army reform, it does seem to me that what we have to do is to concentrate our minds upon the bed-rock of the military machine, because unless the system which shapes our military-working machinery is itself correct in its working, we cannot expect that its effects will be good. I have given some little thought to this matter, as the lecturer perhaps may be aware, and it seems to me that where our military administration fails, is that a civilian element is allowed at the War Office to interfere too much in the military detail working of our Army system. What we want is that our Army shall be thoroughly and entirely administered by the best military experts that can be furnished from our Army, and that the man in whose hands the reins which control the working details of the entire military department should be placed is the Commander-in-Chief, who seems to be the man who should guide the whole military machinery. It may be said that it is an essential part of our Constitution that our military administration shall be subordinate to the

civilian administration. I say, well and good ; that is a constitutional principle we are all most ready to accept, that is to say, that the Secretary of State for War is responsible to Parliament for the efficiency of the Army as a whole. But because he, a civilian Minister, is supreme and controls the military administrator, who, as I say, should be the Commander-in-Chief, it does not therefore follow that there should be subordinate civilian officials in the War Office empowered to hamper the working of the military men who should control their own departments. I will point out exactly what I mean. There is an official in the War Office called the Permanent Under-Secretary. He has always been a civilian, he has had no military training whatsoever ; but the Secretary of State for War, however able and conscientious a Minister he may be, is subject to the changes of administration, while the Permanent Under-Secretary remains for ever, and his influence over the War Office is like the dead hand that can control the activity of any too zealous administrator within the War Office. Then, again, we have a Financial Secretary to the War Office, until now a civilian who has been trained for the most part in the Treasury, and who, therefore, accepts the endeavour of the Treasury to usurp the control more or less of every one of our public departments. What need have we in the Army for a Financial Secretary ? The first thing I would suggest for improvement in Army organisation is, to get rid of the Financial Secretary altogether, as an endeavour has been made to make unduly prominent, and there is already the Auditor-General for Accounts. What should be done is, that the money which Parliament votes for the Army should be handed to the military authorities, and they should lay it out and keep a proper record of how the money is expended, and this record should be considered sufficient. We do not require a Financial Secretary, because there is an Accountant-General, with an experienced staff of people under him, to attend to this matter of Army expenditure and account. That, however, is a detail of interior economy. But an important question is, how the Commander-in-Chief should be advised and supported in his position of supreme commander. We cannot take a better example than the sister Service. The Board of Admiralty is composed almost entirely of sailors—of the best men in the naval profession—and the First Lord has the advice of these naval men, so therefore the administration of our Navy, we shall all agree, leaves very little to be desired. Let us bring the same principle into the administration of our Army. Let the Commander-in-Chief be, so to speak, a military copy of the First Sea Lord at the Admiralty, and let him have a board of advisers under him, probably composed of the Adjutant-General, the Quartermaster-General, the Military Secretary, Head of Intelligence Department, Director of Artillery, Inspector-General of Fortifications, and an officer of high rank at the head of "Supply," which is what we want very much to separate from the combatant branches and others—in all, perhaps, some seven or eight officers, heads of departments of the Army—each responsible for the efficiency of his department to the Commander-in-Chief. There the Commander-in-Chief has his military Board, of which he should be the President. That Board could advise him on the working of each of their departments, and each year it should be part of the duty of the Commander-in-Chief, who, in a military sense, should be responsible through the Secretary of State for War to the nation for the efficiency of the Army, to embody once a year in a document addressed to the Secretary of State for War, his views upon the requirements of the Army in order, needful for a state of efficiency, and that document he should submit to the Secretary of State for War ; and the Secretary of State for War should himself, with his own remarks, lay the matter before Parliament, or before some body deputed by Parliament on their behalf to consider it or recommend thereon, which recommendation should be adopted and put into practical form by the Secretary of State for War in consultation with the Commander-in-Chief, through whom all military information should reach him with regard to the Army. This, I take it, would cover the ground which the lecturer has put before us in the scheme for an Advisory Board, the only difference between us being that, instead of this Advisory Board of eminent persons who, perhaps—I may be pardoned for using such an expression—would have to be got together in a hurried way, we should have the firm experience of officers of

great knowledge, in whom the country would have confidence, headed by the Commander-in-Chief, the picked man of the whole of the British Army. His reports should pass, through the Secretary of State for War, to the Cabinet and to Parliament, embodying the whole military experience of the best men we can find. That, I take it, is the way in which the administration of the Army and the first reform of our present unsatisfactory state of things should be set in motion. With regard to details as to armament and so forth, defence, and how to organise the civil population, the limits of time at my disposal will not permit me to enter upon it on this occasion, but I am glad to have had the honour of laying before this meeting this short expression of my views in this matter, which may, perhaps, help a little in the consideration of how to approach a difficult subject of this great importance.

Colonel W. CAREY, C.B. (late R.A.) :—My excuse for standing here is that I have considered this subject of Army reform, and have even gone so far as to send some remarks on the subject to the heads of the Government and the Commanders-in-Chief, both Lord Wolseley and Lord Roberts. The paper, I think we all agree, is exceedingly diffuse, and goes into so many things that I must leave most of them, and go to what I consider really to be Army reform. The reform of the Army means that we should be in a position to put two or three hundred thousand men into the field at a moment's notice. The lecturer has told us that we have $5\frac{1}{4}$ millions of men available, or with deductions, 4 millions. I look upon it that we have 4 millions. My *datum* is this: I consider the population of Great Britain to be 40 millions. If I take one in ten to be an able-bodied man, that gives me in the whole kingdom four millions. But I am told and understand that the able-bodied men of the kingdom may be taken as one in eight, which would give us another two millions, and probably is not far off what the lecturer states. But the thing is, How are we to get hold of that four millions of men and make them available? We have the Armies of Europe—Germany, Austria, and France—all able to put three millions of men in the field, if not four millions, and Russia can put about six millions. We, as our lecturer tells us, from economy, in piping times of peace go to sleep and do nothing. There is one thing we have to remember. The law of the kingdom declares that every man is available for the defence of the country, and I conclude for the defence of the Empire. If every man can go abroad, why cannot they be regulated in such a way that we can get them at a moment's notice? I should just like to say one or two words about the Regular Army. The lecturer states that our Army is to be 100,000 men, but that is reducing the permanent Army from what it is at the present time. I understood that we had 180,000 men available, or two army corps always ready. The author wishes to have a million, and the thing is to make it up out of the Reserves. The great stumbling-block to us is the present short-service system. The men are discharged after twelve years' service, and very few are allowed to extend their service, and they are thrown out as too old. If you take it that they enlist from the age of 15 to 18, that brings them when they leave the Army up to 30. Men then are in full vigour, and even up to 40 are in the prime of life. A good many men are perfectly physically fit at 60. General Moltke worked up to 80, and our Commander-in-Chief himself is close on 70. But still all these men are cut out of the Army, and we cannot put our hands upon them. If this Militia law is to be acted upon, let us alter the system of discharging the men straight off in that wholesale way and not allowing them to come back, and let us have them back as vacancies occur, to give us their services again as they gave them to us before. It suits them to get pensions, and you would be giving some encouragement to them, and you will get experienced soldiers. Besides that, why not make use of our Militia? Embody the Militia, but in place of embodying 100,000 men, embody 500,000 men. Tell your Militia regiments that for every two Regular regiments serving abroad one Militia will go abroad for several years, and thus learn discipline. Discipline is the great stumbling-block in our Militia service at the present moment. If these Militia regiments go abroad for six years, and get a regular training in foreign service, you will get a reserve force which will be worth something. Militia officers will feel that they are part of the Regular Standing Army officers, and the cry about having no officers will disappear. You must remember that every

man who has once enlisted ought to be available for service at a moment's notice, and consequently on being discharged with annuities, pensions, or anything else, the men should be noted as medically fit for active service or for home service, so that at a moment's notice we might be able to lay our hands on bodies of men who had served in the Army before, and thus obtain an Army within six weeks or two months such as our lecturer says we ought to be able to obtain.

Admiral E. FIELD, C.B. :—As a naval officer, I do not care to make even one observation on a military question; but there is a naval element in this paper, and it is because of what has fallen from my old friend—and you, Sir, will have a useful word, I have no doubt, to say upon the general question later on—with regard to this new Advisory Board he proposes to establish, that makes my soul burn, and I feel like Mr. Fox, who, when walking over the gravel path in a garden, saw a snail, and could not resist the attraction of stamping his foot on it, and accordingly made a most undignified circular movement. My gallant friend says here most truly that there can be no real efficiency until the national spirit is awakened. That is true—in other words, until the nation tells Parliament that it must have a really efficient return for what it pays. Why, bless my soul! Sir, the military element have more representatives in Parliament than any other class of society. They have a hundred soldiers, of sorts, in the House of Commons. I said “of sorts” designedly, but there are only two modest sailors left now since I have left the House. There were three. But my modesty is not such that I will not raise my voice against this absurd proposal of a military Advisory Board. I use the word “military” to mean both naval and military. I see that this famous military Board of three is to comprise two officers of the Army and one sailor—two soldiers because the Army has so many more branches than the Navy—and the Navy, he says, is so much more easily administered. That I won't dispute. There are to be two soldiers and one sailor! Therefore the one sailor must be the most talented sailor that can be found, and I say that that most talented sailor is required at the Admiralty. Take one of the most talented naval officers out of the Service and put him on this Committee, and he will be dominated by soldiers! I object to be dominated by soldiers! I have to remind my gallant friend that all our institutions rest upon our sea power, and yet he proposes that this Board, which is to be formed to advise the Government and House of Commons, and to give evidence before the Committees of the House, will have two soldiers on it and one sailor! And he expects me to swallow that! Why, Sir, I would use strong language if ladies were not present, but they might be frightened. I have no language strong enough to use in opposition to this absurd proposal. We want the best man the Navy can produce in the Admiralty, and I affirm that those who have to administer the Department are those who ought to advise the Government as to what is necessary. This new creation of my gallant friend's mind, this wonderful Board of three—well, I know there is not a sailor who will support it, and I hope there is scarcely a practical soldier who will believe in it, although it emanates from a high military authority. I agree with everything that fell from Sir Charles Dilke on this question, and I am thankful he is in the House of Commons when there are so few sailors there who can speak on behalf of my Service. In him we have a friend who will never allow so absurd a proposal as this to appear on the floor of the House. I have nothing more to say, except to protest against this ridiculous proposal, and I hope it will be destroyed as I would crush a snake.

Captain H. M. JESSEL, M.P. (Late 17th Lancers) :—As one of the officers “of sorts” in the House of Commons mentioned by my late colleague Admiral Field, I venture to address you on this occasion. I am sorry to intrude myself upon you, because I am sure that what I am going to say would have been much better said by my friend Colonel Dickson, who is here, and who commanded with such distinction one of the Cavalry Brigades in South Africa. But what has chiefly brought me upon my legs is the attack upon the cavalry by the lecturer. He seems to say more or less that the days of cavalry are over, and judging by the experience of the South African war, that there will never be any use for them any more. Well, Sir, I think the lessons of the war have proved the exact contrary. The march of General French to relieve Kimberley was one of the most

brilliant events of the war. It is true that their horses have got to carry very great weight, but that seems to me more an argument for getting rid of the weight on the horses' backs, and devising some other method of carrying the kit of the men, than the abolition of the cavalry. There is one other point in connection with this subject which I would venture to lay before you. A large number of Yeomanry have been sent out to the war, and they have been used more or less as mounted infantry. It is now proposed, I understand, by some high authority, to convert the whole of the Yeomanry in this country into mounted infantry. I hope and trust that before a decision is finally arrived at some consideration will be given to the other side of the case. We who have had some little experience of the Yeomanry know perfectly well that we get men to join because of the cavalry spirit; they are trained up in the traditions of the cavalry. I may say, of course, that this has nothing to do with mounted infantry, but I can assure you, and all the officers who have come back from the war will tell you, that the men who have enlisted as Yeomanry have been the most efficient mounted infantry. It is very much more difficult to train a man to be a cavalryman than it is to be a mounted infantryman, and surely if you can train him to do the higher work it is much easier when he has to learn mounted infantry work, to have a man who already knows the cavalry work. Then again, mounted infantry fall off as regards scouting. The cavalry soldier is the eyes and ears of the Army. The whole essence of the two is different. A man to be a cavalryman has to be thoroughly trained in looking after his horse; the mounted infantryman regards his horse as a machine, something like a bicycle, with which to get about in the country from one part to another. It seems to me that we must keep up our cavalry, and must also have mounted infantry, bodies formed here at home of regiments, and not companies gathered from here, there, and everywhere. I was talking on this subject the other day to some distinguished officers who have come home from the war, and they said that to increase the mobility of cavalry it would be most useful if they had with every brigade half a battalion or a battalion of mounted infantry. The mounted infantry would be able to keep up with the cavalry, look after the stores and baggage, and provide a guard over the camp while the cavalymen were in the field. I am only too glad to be able to say a good word for my old force, in which I was so proud to serve for some years. Then the lecturer talks about Army reform, and asks how we are to begin it. As has been already pointed out, he has advised the creation of an Advisory Board. I am sorry my friend Colonel Sandys has left, because he talked as if the creation of an Advisory Board was some new thing. Why, Sir, we have at this present moment an Advisory Board. The Commander-in-Chief has a Council composed of high officers to advise him, and my humble opinion is that the quickest way of getting Army reform would be for the Commander-in-Chief to be relieved of the position in which he is at present, of only being *primus inter pares*, and reverting to the position in which he was before the order creating the Army Board came out. The position now is, that the Commander-in-Chief, instead of being absolutely responsible for everything that goes on in the Army, as he used to be, is only one of a number. In principle the Adjutant-General, the Quartermaster-General, the Inspector-General of Fortifications, can all go direct to the Secretary of State without informing the Commander-in-Chief. Well, gentlemen, most of us here are or have been soldiers, and we perfectly well know how pernicious it would be in a regiment if the major, the squadron commander, or the company leader could go to the general without informing his commanding officer. It seems to me that the very essence of Army reform must be that the Commander-in-Chief should be the sole adviser of the Secretary of State for War. It appears to me that before long Lord Roberts will himself see that. In answer to a question in the House of Commons we were told that he took the position of Commander-in-Chief under the old conditions, and he himself will, I am sure, see that the present system is not practicable. Officers should be responsible to the Commander-in-Chief, and the Commander-in-Chief should be responsible to the Secretary of State for War. There is only one other point, and that is, as to how we are to get the men for the Army. There is no doubt that after this war there

will be a great difficulty in getting men to supply the place of those who return to civil life. After the excitement of war has ceased, and when we are in times of quiet, we who are friends of the Army will have to take great care that the interest that is now shown in the defenders of this country should not cease. But above all, there is one point which I think should be borne in mind. The standard of comfort of the civil population of this country has increased enormously within the last few years, and the Army authorities do not do enough to make the soldier comfortable at home. I go as far as to say that the state of many of our barracks is a positive disgrace; the lighting, the system of cooking and the manner in which the men's meals are brought to them, and in many other ways, we are behind a great many of even the fifth-class military Powers in Europe. It is of the utmost importance to us, who have to appeal to voluntary agencies to get our men, to make those men as comfortable as possible in our barracks. I believe that the comfort of our men will be one of the main incentives to getting recruits. I hope that in the Army, although we may look forward to having a better uniform in the field, there will be no great reluctance to having one smart dress for the soldier. The German soldier has five different sorts of kit, and in this country, where the uniform excites so much respect for its historical traditions, it nowadays enables us to obtain a large number of recruits. We are told that on account of the South African war the whole of the Army must be put in khaki. That is a great pity. I think we should make a mistake by taking all our lessons from one war in one particular place. The Germans are devising a sort of grey costume for their soldiers. What I do hope is, that in the first place the authorities will see to the comfort of the soldier at home, and secondly, that, while providing a good workmanlike dress for the field, they will not lose sight of the importance of having a smart dress for the soldier in time of peace.

Mr. LEEDHAM WHITE :—I am one of many civilians who take a sympathetic interest in the Army. I was struck by the last paragraph of the very able paper read by General Webber. He quotes an authority who expressed wonder at the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the public for Army reform. I do not think that the cause of this is far to seek. I have been repeatedly told by working-men among others that they would warmly advocate reforms in our military system and even face the possibility of some sort of compulsory service if they were told on competent authority that such measures were necessary. But at present military opinion speaks with an anything but united voice on these matters, and until we are clearly told by some large and powerful body of military experts, speaking on behalf of the Army with entire unanimity, what reforms they think are wanted, and especially whether compulsory service is or is not in their judgment necessary, we shall make no impression on the British people. I believe that the depths of patriotism of our nation have never been sounded, but it is useless to appeal to that patriotism until the experts to whom we look for light and leading can agree upon and frame a programme for us who do not profess to be experts, which we can boldly set before the people. Supposing that such a programme were to include some sort of compulsory military service, I venture to make a suggestion for consideration. It is much easier in our country to set in motion an old law than to pass a new one, and though admitting that ballot for the Militia is a clumsy way of attaining our ends, it may perhaps be the best practical means of doing so. I would therefore suggest revival of the Militia Ballot, allowing one important addition to the exemptions which now exist, viz., exemption on production of a certificate of efficiency in the Volunteers. It is thought that this would somewhat benefit the Militia, especially if the Militia were no longer made a feeder to the Regular Army. But it would have an even more important result. It would drive shoals of young men into the Volunteer Forces in order to escape ballot for the Militia, and then the Government could raise the whole standard of efficiency of the Volunteers and convert them into a force really adequate for home defence. It would also indirectly compel employers of labour—and I speak as one of them—to give their employees greater facilities for military training, and this is a most important matter. I should like to say a word in conclusion as to the foolish assertion which I have heard made, even by soldiers, that even were compulsory

service universal in our country it would damage trade. As one somewhat familiar with manufacturing opinion in Germany, I do not hesitate to say that German manufacturers are pretty well agreed that one great factor in the huge development of German industry is the excellence of their working-men, who have acquired, through military service, smartness, intelligence, and amenability to discipline, in which our labourers and mechanics are somewhat deficient. I am not assuming that we require to pass everyone through the military mill as in France or Germany; but from the abstract point of view the British working-man, and his employer too, for the matter of that, could get only good from it. The British working-man is a good fellow as it is, but if he were passed through the military mill he would be an even better one still.¹

Colonel J. B. B. DICKSON, C.B. (late Major-General commanding a Cavalry Brigade, South Africa):—I had no intention of speaking this afternoon, but having been called upon by name to defend the reputation of the cavalry, I have much pleasure in saying a few words. My friend General Webber in his interesting lecture quotes a German officer as having spoken disparagingly of our cavalry, but General Webber might use the same argument to disparage our mounted infantry or any other branch of the Service. During the time that I had the honour to command a brigade in the Cavalry Division during some eight months of almost daily fighting no disasters occurred to it, no surrenders took place. You say you heard very little of the cavalry. Well, in the capture of Bloemfontein, Kröonstad, Pretoria, and other towns you will find on inquiry that what contributed most to the fall of these places were the long flank marches and turning movements of the Cavalry Division which, carrying out the orders of Lord Roberts, almost invariably worked round in rear of the towns or positions before the arrival of the main army. Then, again, I doubt if the cavalry of any other nation would have attempted and successfully carried out the march to Barberton, where the country was pronounced by experts to be quite impossible for mounted troops. With regard to the arming of cavalry with only a long rifle, I am absolutely opposed to the proposition. Sir Charles Dilke's remark that this South African campaign is an exceptional war is very much to the point. We may no doubt derive much advantage from its lessons; we must not forget that the Boers though mobile and mounted had no cavalry to oppose ours. There have been several occasions when our cavalry have charged the Boers, and almost invariably with success. In my opinion, one of the lessons to be derived from the campaign is that the want of cavalry on the part of the Boers has been fatal to their success. It has prevented them from following up the advantages they have frequently obtained. The dread that the Boers have for the *arme blanche* has paralysed their initiative; whilst, on the other hand, I would submit that the value and adaptability of British cavalry have been clearly demonstrated. It has, with its horse artillery only, moved over thousands of miles unsupported by other arms, sometimes making sweeping reconnaissances, sometimes with a brigade dismounted holding positions against superior forces of the enemy, whilst another brigade moved round and turned the position, taking town after town, reminding one of Lord Peterborough's campaign in Spain.

Sir HENRY HOWORTH, K.C.I.E., F.R.S., M.P.:—Perhaps you will tolerate another civilian for a minute or two. I spent many years in the House of Commons with you, Sir, and have written something on this subject, and I should like to say a word or two to try and bring back this discussion, from what I think are rather dissipating tendencies, to the real issue before us. I think my old friend General Webber has been a little ill-used. He has read a paper full of every kind of suggestion, a great many suggestions which are very fresh and new to some of us, and although no doubt there is the possibility of a critical attack being made upon particular phases, I think we shall all agree that it has been an admirable peg upon which we can hang a very good discussion. What I am afraid of is that opportunities of this kind, which so seldom occur, may be lost. What we everyone of us feel is the absolute necessity for some change, and we ought to be thankful to those who propose something definite and do not merely act as critics.

¹ Were Ballot for the Militia revived, no substitutes should be allowed. The people will never stand compulsory service if any class distinctions are made, or if the rich man can buy himself out of his obligations to serve his country.—L. W.

A good deal has been said about a consultative council which is to assist the Commander-in-Chief with its advice. I do not think myself it would be quite practicable in this country, but it must be remembered that in France they have an exactly similar council consisting of seven general officers, five of whom command the army corps, and two being without actual command at the time. I do not quite think it would work here. What I feel to be the great need of our Army is the want of responsibility somewhere. I do not care very much where you attach that responsibility, if you can get anybody to be responsible. I have raised the issue often in the *Times* and I have been always answered in the columns of that paper and in the House of Commons when I have asked questions, to the effect that the matter was one in which the Secretary of State divided responsibility with the Commander-in-Chief. Now, we want to attach it to somebody, either to the one or to the other. When you come, however, to the practical question of how you are to apportion and fix the responsibility when you insist on having a civilian Minister who is the Parliamentary mouthpiece of the Army and a separate man who has to be responsible for internal discipline and internal administration, the difficulty in this country is stupendous. For this there are two reasons: in the first place, because of the existence of the House of Commons itself with its continued criticism; and, in the second place, because we have to provide an Army such as was never provided before by any nation, except our ancestors in military matters, the Romans; that is to say, we have to provide an Army not merely to fight in England but in India or South Africa, and may be in Canada; for work in so many countries with so many varied conditions we ought to have a separate Army in each which is trained on the spot, which has an Intelligence Department attached to it on the spot, which has horses ready salted and acclimatised, and which do not therefore die immediately we send them out from this country in thousands. An army on the spot ready to face the conditions of the climate and the conditions of warfare in any part of the world cannot, it seems to me, be supplied ready-made from a centralised bureau. It seems to me that whatever reform you have in this country you will have to decentralise one or two of the great commands. We shall have to depend a great deal more on locally recruited armies than we have done in the case of two or three of these great dependencies. We are getting them in Australia, but we ought to have had them at the Cape. It was an outrageous disaster for this country that when we began this war there was not a single map or plan of Natal or the northern part of Cape Colony worth the paper it was printed on. We ought to have had these maps years and years ago, and they would have been made if we had had part of our general staff out at the Cape and had had a portion of our Army not only doing service at the Cape but prepared by local knowledge to face a war which was inevitable, a Local Intelligence Department and staff provided with trusty scouts, guides, etc., etc., as well as local information. I have discussed these matters with German officers, and they all point out that the conditions we have had to face are entirely different from the difficulties I have pointed out now. With Continental Armies it would be quite possible and easy to concentrate the whole responsibility in the hands of a commander-in-chief, to put him in Berlin, or in Paris. He would simply have to control a great territorial army within a ringed fence which could be managed and controlled by very simple rules. Yet it is remarkable that in no Army known to me is there a Commander-in-Chief at all except the Sovereign. When you come to face what we have to face, and what the Romans had to face in old days, viz., to fight under different conditions in almost every part of the world, to have great dependencies which must be protected, and where at any time we may have difficulties, it is impossible, it seems to me, to make a centralised command, as could be done in Germany, France, or Russia. Sir Charles Dilke is a good friend of the Army in the House of Commons. He is always moderate and judicial when he talks on this subject, and never gets up to speak without getting a hearing. He has the active sympathy of the men there who care most for the Army, but I sometimes wish he would propose some definite changes instead of devoting himself so completely to criticism. I was very glad to hear him emphasise once more the mistake that would be made if we made this war at the Cape a measure of the wars

that we may have to face in future. People forget that Napoleon fought a war in the Tyrol in which he was absolutely baffled by a few mountaineers for years. The Russians for years encountered a mere fragment of mountaineers in the Caucasus under Schamyl, their great chief. And what did the marshals of France do against the armed Spanish peasants in all parts of the Peninsula? This kind of thing is an exceptional incident in war, and if Napoleon after he came back from Egypt, where he had to face an entirely new condition of things in the Mamaluke cavalry, against which he fought, had remodelled the whole of his cavalry, and had operated against the Hungarian and Polish horsemen, whom he met at Austerlitz with a cavalry modified according to the special conditions he had met with round the Pyramids, we should have thought him stark mad. It seems to me we must beware of taking all the lessons from this particular war in Africa and importing them into Europe. We have learnt much that is universally true, but some of our lessons are only locally instructive. I think Colonel Dickson and my friend who is an ornament both to the House of Commons and the Yeomanry, who criticised General Webber about the cavalry, somewhat misunderstood him. I did not hear General Webber say a word in the way of disrespect of the cavalry. What I heard him say was—and having written a great deal about cavalry in a history in four volumes devoted to the most wonderful cavalry that ever overwhelmed the world, I cannot help agreeing with him in much that he said—that he urged that the old-fashioned cavalry, the sort of cavalry which our greatest cavalry general, Cromwell, commanded, the heavy cavalry which won the battle of Naseby, the heavy cavalry that fought so well at Waterloo and Wörth, that kind of cavalry is doomed. ("It has gone.") It has gone, exactly. That was all I understood my friend, General Webber, to say. I believe cavalry will be a great arm in the future, but it will be cavalry armed with rifles and carbines rather than lances and swords. You will perhaps pardon me these scattered remarks. My friend Admiral Field, on my right, is a breeze in himself. Whenever we were dull or downhearted in the House of Commons he raised our spirits immediately. He has a habit of talking so pleasantly until he talks us away to the other side of the Channel, and I thought we ought to tack back to the very serious position which we have to face. I wish sometimes there was less criticism and more definite and useful suggestion made. If I may slightly alter an old proverb, I would say that Growler is a good dog but Holdfast is a better. I am sure we ought all to be very grateful to General Webber for giving us an opportunity of partially sifting a very difficult issue.

Colonel R. H. VETCH, C.B. (late R.E.):—At this hour of the afternoon I do not propose to discuss in detail the interesting paper we have heard read, because it is one actually bristling with argumentative propositions, and I shall make my remarks as brief as possible. When I see such an unusual attendance of members and ex-members of the House of Commons present, I feel it is an opportunity that should not be lost for the members of this Institution to speak out; and I am inclined to believe that my old friend General Webber, in proposing his Advisory Board, was not altogether serious, but he has certainly thereby managed very dexterously to catch many of our representatives in the House of Commons. Now, Sir Charles Dilke has scoffed at the remarks of the lecturer on the Advisory Board—and, for myself, I believe such a Board to be quite impracticable—but he has not attempted to meet the difficulty on account of which General Webber's Advisory Board was proposed. I quite agree with the last speaker that this is a very important question. The point is that, whether you have the present constitution of the War Office with a Commander-in-Chief as one among many to advise the Secretary of State, or whether you make him, as he was a few years ago, head of the military side, subject only to the Secretary of State, in each case you still have the great difficulty of Party Government. How are you to get the views of the Commander-in-Chief properly communicated to the House of Commons? Sir Charles Dilke did not help us in that difficulty. How are you to get the interests both of the Army and of the Navy properly represented to the House of Commons? If the Commander-in-Chief represents to the Secretary of State for War certain wants of the Army, the Secretary of State for War may say:—"That is all very well, but we have not got the money." When the War Minister goes for his annual requirements to the

Chancellor of the Exchequer, he is told :—"No, I cannot give you more than so much." That being the case, what is to be done? How is the House of Commons, how is the country to know that the Estimates presented to it do not represent the requirements of the Services? That is a point on which I think we want some information from gentlemen of the House of Commons—how can we get a step further? For myself I see no practicable way of doing it as long as we have Party Government in England, and the Services are dealt with on Party lines. I look forward, however, with a bright hope to a future time when we may have an Imperial Defence Council composed of statesmen from our own Government and the Governments of the Self-Governing Colonies, which will not be subject to the House of Commons, but which, with the assistance in the Council of high technical advice both from the Army and the Navy, will be in a position to lay down authoritatively what is necessary for the defence of the Empire, and to have estimates prepared; which will also have power to apportion the cost between the different parts of the Empire on some defined system agreed upon. Such a Council would be in touch with the Foreign Office and with the political necessities of the day. Then each Colonial Government and the Government at home would have a Bill presented to them by the Imperial Defence Council, which Bill might be accepted or not; but whether accepted or not, the Parliaments and the people would know all about it, and that is the great point. If Parliament really know what is wanted and refuses the money, it will be done deliberately in the face of the authoritative opinion of the Imperial Defence Council, and we shall know for what reason. But how the real state of affairs can be brought to the knowledge of the House of Commons is a point on which we are very much in the dark, and are desirous of being enlightened; and I am sure we should be glad to hear from any Members of the House of Commons a few words on this subject.

Lieut.-Colonel E. GUNTER, *p.s.c.* (late East Lancashire Regiment):—I was about to make some remarks similar to those of the last speaker, but, as he has spoken, I will simply second what he has said in this way: I do not think that any paper on Army reform can be considered complete unless it deals practically with the questions of the day, and one of the most practical and difficult questions is, how to find the number of men necessary for an efficient Army. The lecturer says that there are a large number of men, Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers, which he reckons at a million, available for Home Defence. I venture to think that it is a mistake to lump the Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers in that way. I think that the basis of any strong Home Defence must be our Militia. Our Militia must be raised to an adequate strength to enable it to carry out its duties as a defensive force, but it must be completed with artillery and transport, and it must be properly organised in Divisions equipped and trained. I do not think that you can put the requisite number of Militia at less than 200,000 or 250,000 of thoroughly trained men. Now, as far as our experience goes, we cannot get that number of men, and we shall not get them by the system of voluntary enlistment. If we could get them by the system of voluntary enlistment which has been allowed to be in force for so many years, well and good; but if not, I think that the ballot for the Militia in a modified form should certainly be put in force. It would not be a great hardship to enforce it. The numbers of Militia recruits to be furnished annually by each county should be based upon the population of the county, each being required to furnish its quota. Then, if by a certain date the numbers required were not forthcoming voluntarily, the ballot should be put into force in that county. All the recruits should come in together at a certain time of the year, the early period of the year, not as at present at different times in different parts of the country. It is a fact that sometimes a man is a Militiaman in one county at one time of the year and later on he is a Militiaman in another county, and therefore, for two men on paper, you have only one man in the flesh. The main thing is, under proper precautions and with very few exemptions, to put in force what, I consider, and a great many officers consider, necessary to bring the home Army up to its requirements, *viz.*, the modified Militia Ballot Act under such restrictions as may be necessary. I think, with Mr. White, that every man within certain ages should be liable to be drawn unless

he is an efficient Volunteer, of course exempting such men as clergy in actual office and some few others. I do not think my artillery friends would much relish the idea put forward by the gallant lecturer that when a man is not good enough for the infantry he should be relegated to the artillery. Artillery is an advanced science; you require very good men for gunners.¹

Colonel G. B. B. HOBART (late R.A.) :—I rise because no artillery officer on the active list has risen to make any remarks upon what the talented lecturer has said. General Webber being one of my best friends in the Army, I am very sorry to criticise anything he has said, but it would be wrong if somebody in the artillery did not take exception to those remarks in which he has given an inferior position to that important branch of Service. I am sure General Webber did not exactly mean that, but he did appear to imply that a marksman with a gun on his shoulder must be superior to the man with a gun on wheels, and in fact to any other branch of the Service. Cavalry and infantry officers have already defended themselves, and artillery officers must, therefore, stick up for their own branch of the Service. I feel certain the audience would not agree with General Webber if he means to infer that artillery service, whether horse, field or garrison, is to be learned in a hurry by anybody who is not good enough to hold a gun on his shoulder. In the present war the artillery has been second to none, as the whole British public recognises, and I am sure the lecturer would not wish to put a difficulty in the way of recruiting for the Royal Artillery by lowering the status they have always held with credit.

Major-General WEBBER, in reply, thanked the meeting for a patient hearing of a paper on subjects so wide in their bearing on Army reform, and so open to criticism. He had listened with much interest, but did not think Sir Charles Dilke and some of the speakers had quite gathered the meaning and direction of his proposals. Sir Charles took him up on the question of the personal load of the engineer and artilleryman, with a rifle, bayonet, and ammunition, being non-essential. He (General Webber) did not say that these men should have no weapon, but he had deprecated their having a weapon the use of which would tempt them away from the work for which they were specially trained. Sir Charles Dilke applied (perhaps regardless of the meaning) the expression "fighting soldier" and "fighting man" to those who "kill with projectiles," and did not seem to admit that those who kill and disable, or who assist in doing so, by means of all the *other* forces of nature, are also "fighting soldiers," and, like the clever debater that he is, used the speaker's proposal to engage a portion of the non-combatant population in works of Home Defence to support an argument against something the paper, if carefully read, will be found not to contain. Sir Charles Dilke, Captain Jessel, and Colonel Dickson will, he hoped, read again his remarks as to the soldier on horseback of the future. They suggest that he drew his conclusions about cavalry, namely, as organised and equipped in European Armies, as a separate "arm of the Service," from South African warfare; whereas, if anything should be clear from his paper, it is that he refers to South Africa as the ideal ground for so-called cavalry, and that his allusions to South Africa as the field from which he has gathered his "lessons" are almost *nil*. The frequent reference to "mounted infantry" in the discussion as being the same as the "mounted rifleman" leaves his arguments entirely untouched and unanswered. To repeat, the speakers wholly overlooked the fundamental groundwork of his propositions. They never touched on his contention that whether mounted or on foot, whether using a rifle from the shoulder or carried on a vehicle, all those who deal with projectiles constitute the same "arm," and that the proper sub-classification is that which allocates the use of the rifle fired from the shoulder to men capable of being trained to so skilful a use of it, whether they are foot or mounted soldiers, that the useless waste of small-arm ammunition under the present system shall disappear. Colonel Bertie Hobart implied that this classification meant relegating the artilleryman to an inferior position. General Webber failed to see that, because the use of a rifle is

¹ It was so late in the afternoon that it was quite impossible to enter into the many debatable questions involved in the lecture.—E. G.

relegated to a skilled marksman from the shoulder, the skill and prestige of the man who works the rifle carried on wheels are depreciated. The engineers might equally complain that, because his classification of their duties in, and their share of, the work of an attack of a position, prescribes that their whole attention should be devoted to providing cover for the riflemen, therefore there would be something *infra dig.* in the rôle which he allots to them. He was surprised that Colonel Dickson suggested that the "scouts" to whom he referred in his programme for an attack of a position are mounted. Colonel Vetch was the only speaker who seemed to grasp the meaning of his description of the need for, and duties of, an Advisory Board, not, as Sir Charles Dilke said, to "the House of Commons only," but to Parliament. He could quite understand that our legislators, who pick up their views of military matters anyhow, or anyhow, view with suspicion the suggestion of being advised. It almost leaves on the mind the suggestion that exact information is not palatable to them. It is very difficult for them to realise that they can ever get at the truth except by conflicting evidence, as to fact. They are so accustomed to expect only part of the truth on any subject from the Government in office, that they do not believe that any board of professional men could be brought together whom they could depend on for advice. His proposition made no suggestion that the body, which he suggested should be brought into existence, ought to control or supervise the administration of the machinery or the expenditure by the War Office and the Admiralty, any more than a consulting engineer decides on the use to which his advice is put by a Board of Company Directors. How does the proposal affect the responsibility of the Minister who controls the expenditure, or of the Commander-in-Chief or Board of Sea Lords who carry on the business of each department? At present there is no source from which Parliament can obtain advice as to the military policy it should dictate to Ministers, which is now vitiated by party considerations. Not a single speaker has tackled that absolute fact, or combated his contention that it is a disastrous condition of things. If Colonel Sandys will really concentrate his mind on the bed-rock of the military machine, he will, General Webber thinks, see that such a consultative and advisory independent Board as is described would speak with no uncertain voice to the nation as to the civilian control under which our military departments subsist, and that the nation would insist on that advice being taken. All who have passed through the mill of departmental life admit without hesitation that, with an absolutely autocratic Commander-in-Chief, independent of Ministers and only responsible to Parliament, uninfluenced by Party politics, we should have all that is needed to eliminate, the innumerable disabilities to efficiency, to the prevention of waste, and to the creation of the best military sea and land machines. Subject to human fallibility, this would provide the "ordinary business principles" which the man in the street cries out for. But the idea is repulsive to all our institutions, and would not be accepted for a moment. And yet, while Parliament denies this facility, it leaves the nation in the dark to fumble about as to the why and the wherefore of half the miscarriages and breakdowns of a machine, which (to use an engineer's term) hardly ever "runs with a full load." The speaker added that, if he may have the opportunity, he hopes to submit a separate paper, going in detail into the functions of such an Advisory Board, when, perhaps, his meaning may be more clearly driven home, and when his contention may be seriously understood and discussed. His friend Admiral Field's consideration of his proposition, he regrets for the admiral's sake to say, was paralysed by the suggestion that one admiral is, in deliberation, as strong as two generals. He hopes he is not too bold in thinking that his paper of to-day deals only with the preliminaries of his views on Army reform.

The CHAIRMAN (Captain Sir J. Colomb, K.C.M.G., M.P.):—My main duty in rising is to propose, what I am sure you will heartily endorse, a hearty vote of thanks to General Webber for his suggestive and instructive paper. I agree with some of it and I disagree very strongly with a great deal of it. As regards his proposals respecting an Advisory Council, I am in thorough accord with Sir Charles Dilke. The real truth is that, however much we recognise the evil of Party Government and resulting expense and wastefulness, when we come to practical

arrangements we have to acknowledge it. An Advisory Council such as is proposed in the paper would in effect be, as Sir Charles Dilke has forcibly said, simply to deprive those who must be responsible for the Government and the expenditure of the country of all responsibility. That is a state of things that could not be allowed within the Constitution. I am bound to say I do not despair of finding, within the Constitution, a way of getting out of the want of continuity of policy and the pursuance of principle in our naval and military arrangements, as time goes on. I may say I think what Colonel Vetch said with regard to an Imperial Council is in the direction of the ultimate true solution of the difficulty. I may also say, if I may presume to give an opinion on a mere technical point, that I cannot see anything in the present war tending to alter the character and necessity of cavalry as an arm. I can quite see that everything is pressing towards a greater proportion of infantry being mounted. I cannot see that we are taught any reasons for supposing that cavalry as an effective arm is doomed. I think we are all greatly indebted to the lecturer for putting a paper so full of suggestion before us, and to get the value of the paper you have to read it very carefully rather than listen to it once. My broad objection to the paper in principle is this, that I think the author lays far too much stress upon arrangements for the hedgerow defence and the internal defence of this island. He says that the Duke of Wellington recognised the increased facilities for invasion provided by steam, and then he goes on to state that facilities far beyond the Duke of Wellington's conception have been continually added since his time. My conviction is exactly the opposite. In the Duke of Wellington's time men's minds were confused altogether about the consequences which would follow the introduction of steam, and what has happened since is simply that the economic condition of the country has changed, and not naval principles. For the purpose of our invasion it is necessary for any Power or combination of Powers to have a sufficient number of ports sufficiently quiet in which to collect at leisure and embark a vast army, to concentrate undisturbed the great flotilla outside them, for the forces must proceed from different ports of issue and to disembark the army free from naval interruption. But the economic conditions of this island are now such that these operations would be impossible, unless we have ceased to have commercial existence. The part that interests me in all this question of Army reform most is the consideration that, after all, our military arrangements must be subordinate to and dominated by one fact, viz., the necessity of maintaining, for economic reasons, our sea power. My gallant friend Admiral Field was very strong upon the fact that two soldiers and one naval officer should be on the Advisory Board. I do not care about individuals, whether they are naval or military men, but what I feel very strongly is that we have to recognise that we are a sea Empire, and that we cannot stand in the future unless we can combine all the resources of the Empire for standing solidly together to secure the control of our sea communications, which means command of the whole seas. That being so, it must be recognised that the Army is the necessary weapon of offence, and Army reform must be based upon that fact. The Army is an arm to strike enemies over sea, not to defend the hedgerows of this country.