Adjourned Discussion

General Sir Frederick Stephenson In the Chair G.C.B.

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whatever about our having the command of the sea, as far as such a thing is possible to be made mathematically certain. Sir Lothian Nicholson thinks that it was to be regretted that such a paper as Admiral Colomb's had been read, because the Press will publish it; and the public will only hear one side of the question, because the paper will be given in full, and the discussion will be condensed. But the very *raison d'être* of Admiral Colomb's paper, from its first paragraph, is that certain statements had been made in a former paper, written by an Officer on a detail of one branch of military science, viz., arming batteries with quick-firing guns. A great part of that paper went into the fundamental rules upon which the whole armed force of this country are to be employed in war. I myself, when I heard the arguments, thought them beyond measure unsound, and to indicate that that Officer was not very well acquainted with the history of the wars which this country has been engaged in during the last two centuries; and I very much regretted that it should go forth from this Institution without some reply; but I felt that we were then discussing quick-firing guns in batteries. But the opinions expressed in that paper have gone forth to the country, and I think it was quite right that they should therefore be discussed here. Now, with regard to the value of the past history of the Navy as a guide to the future, we should recollect that, included in naval history, the Army has got a very glorious history. I should like to trace that glorious history of the Army through its annals. I would go back as far as the war of the Spanish succession, which rendered immortal the name of Marlborough. There was an English army on foreign soil. How was that army supplied? That army was supplied because we had obtained the command of the sea at the Battle of La Hogue. Go on to the next great war—the Seven Years' War. The brilliant exploit of General Wolfe, which ended in the capture of Quebec, was rendered possible by our having the command of the seas, to maintain which large fleets blockaded Brest and Toulon. The Battle of Plassy was won by Clive; but this would never have been fought if Admiral Watson had not been there with his fleet to protect and co-operate with the army. In the next war the great operation of the Army was the defence of Gibraltar, which Admiral Colomb has referred to. Look at the wars of Napoleon. The brilliant expedition to Egypt was only possible on account of the command of the seas having been previously obtained by the Battle of the Nile. I need not dwell on the Peninsular War, which was rendered possible by the absolute command of the sea having been confirmed at Trafalgar. These are facts in which I think our friends of the Army must recognize that those brilliant achievements which have distinguished their Service so greatly for the last 200 years have been possible because we held the command of the sea.

[The discussion was then adjourned to 4th March.]

Monday, March 4.

ADJOURNED DISCUSSION.

GENERAL SIR FREDERICK STEPHENSON, G.C.B., in the Chair.

Lieutenant-General Sir GERALD GRAHAM, V.C., G.C.M.G., K.C.B.: Sir Frederick Stephenson and gentlemen, whatever may be the merits of Admiral Colomb's interesting paper as a sample of sound reasoning, there can be no question as to its ability, and as to its having proved most valuable in eliciting expressions of opinion from competent Officers of both Services, though I think the public will naturally attach more importance to the opinion of a naval Officer who differs from Admiral Colomb, as all have more or less hitherto, than to that of a military Officer like myself. I think that all who wish well to the defences of the country, and I include the gallant Admiral, although an adversary, have reason to feel grateful to Lord Carnarvon for the admirably clear statement he made at this Institution at the previous meeting, and that we may feel some confidence in the decision of a Commission of which he

was President. Although I disagree utterly with the gallant Admiral's conclusions, I cannot resist a certain feeling of admiration for his perfect confidence in the power of our Navy to keep the command of the sea under all circumstances as its indefensible right and attribute. This, however, seems to me very much as if a General started with a plan of campaign—the phrase is rather in bad odour just now—the successful execution of which depended on his winning every battle. “Rule Britannia” is a very fine song and we have often joined in the chorus, but when we meet in this Institution we ought to put sentiment on one side and look facts soberly in the face. I should like to hear from Admiral Colomb what this ideal command of the sea means under present conditions, and according to his theory of defence by a moving navy. What fleets would be required to secure our coasts, communications, and commerce against the greatest probable or possible combination of naval Powers? What would it mean in money outlay and annual expenditure? Finally, is it practicable or only a dream? We know on the best authority that at present we should be decidedly inferior to a combination of two great naval Powers; nevertheless, Admiral Colomb bases his whole theory of Imperial defence on our being everywhere superior at sea. With this assumption of conditions which do not exist, Admiral Colomb regards the fortification of our arsenals, dockyards, and coaling stations as unnecessary, for, far from being factors of strength to our naval power, they weaken it by taking money which ought to be expended on the fleets. In short, the Navy is to undertake the defence of the United Kingdom and of our lines of communication and commerce, and it is too confident in its invincible power, according to Admiral Colomb, to need any reserve, so that, as clearly stated by General Erskine, all our land defences may be dismantled and our reserve forces of militia and volunteers disbanded. I was glad to hear this condition frankly adopted by Captain Penrose Fitzgerald, R.N., though the gallant Officer's statement was received as an excellent joke, as it emphasized what Sir L. Nicholson called a “*reductio ad absurdum*,” though I cannot say if this was the point Sir Lothian had in his mind. We may be on the eve of a very critical epoch in our national history, and the mind of the country, and therefore of Parliament, seems at last awakening to the dangerous state of our defences, and we must consider the probable effect on the public mind when it is known that an eminent naval Officer, speaking with weight and authority on the naval armaments of the Empire, gives it out as his deliberate opinion that our policy of defence for the last thirty years has been utterly wrong. I may be mistaken, and sincerely hope I am, but I cannot help fearing that this paper may do harm by obstructing the efforts of patriotic statesmen like Lord Carnarvon, who ardently desire to bring the pressure of public opinion to bear on the Government to complete the defences of our ports and coaling stations. When the public sees its naval and military experts at loggerheads on the first principles of defence, it does not care to go into the merits of the arguments; the effect on the British taxpayer is to make him button up his pockets. I trust, however, that John Bull will, on this occasion, keep his eyes open and see what the arguments of the gallant Admiral lead to. The average English citizen reads his daily paper, but does not have a very clear conception what a coaling station means, and if Admiral Colomb tells him it is quite unnecessary to fortify it he may say, “Well, the Admiral must know more about naval wants than a mere military man, therefore let us save the money.” If, however, the same man is told that to follow out the Admiral's views, the citizen army, of which he is justly proud to be a member, must be distanced as useless, he gives up his faith in the Admiral at once, at least on this question. I have only time to touch on a few points in Admiral Colomb's paper, and he has frankly invited the severest criticism. I may be allowed to express astonishment that with so bad a case so good a paper has been produced. The Admiral has given us leave to fire away, and no doubt he will stand heavier shot than I can bring to bear against him. I trust, however, that nothing I may say will be held inconsistent with the respect I feel towards the Admiral and the courtesy which is his due. It is surely a somewhat strange argument against the fortification of a port that once you begin you don't know when to stop, that as Admiral Colomb's naval friend, of whom I desire to speak in terms of the utmost respect, puts it, “there is nothing between a light battery and a first class fortress.” It would almost seem as if the two gallant Officers, in their desire to run down the fortification of ports,

had wandered somewhat into the hazy regions of philosophy, and started a new theory of evolution analogous to that of the development of species, by which we learn that man has, by imperceptible gradations, been evolved out of a mollusc. Given an inollusc, and by process of development you must get the man if you wait long enough; or, as here stated, given a light battery, and in process of time it will develop into a first class fortress. Further on, the gallant Admiral seems troubled with a yearning after an ideal fortification, and on page 5 he writes, more, I hope, in sorrow than in anger, "No one has yet discovered or invented a fortified port capable of maintaining itself for all time against a sea attack." Certainly not. But is that a reason for abolishing fortified ports? This is logic with a vengeance—"No fortifications are perfect; imperfection is undesirable; therefore have no fortifications at all." I am afraid that even Her Majesty's ships and guns, down to our swords and bayonets, are not perfect, yet we must continue to use them. Admiral Colomb tells us that "fortification of ports is but an inefficient substitute for their naval defence." Now I beg to demur to this statement altogether, as fixed fortifications never can be regarded as a substitute, efficient or inefficient, for moving naval defence, which is what the Admiral means. On this mistaken premise the Admiral infers that as we propose a naval increase we should logically propose a fortification decrease. I would, if I might do so without offence, beg to suggest the prefix "il" before "logically." The gallant Admiral frequently appeals to logic, but he will excuse me for saying that he is not always logical in his statements. Thus, at one part of his paper he states that he draws "a distinction between the defence of the port against attack and the defence of the communications of the port," yet, further on, in the cases of Plymouth, Singapore, &c., he falls foul of the fortifications for not protecting the communications, which is surely no duty of theirs. He will not allow that five French battle-ships lying off Plymouth could bombard the Dockyard, even if it were totally unprotected with fortifications, because of the presence of ten English battle-ships at Brest, 200 miles off: yet in another part of his paper he admits that Malta Dockyard, supposing it were undefended, might be got at and destroyed in a few hours by a couple of dashing cruisers. One remarkable feature in this, noted by Captain Fitzgerald, is that the Admiral seems indifferent whether Plymouth is destroyed or not. On this point Captain Fitzgerald has already bombarded the gallant Admiral, and therefore I will say no more. He is compelled to admit that, "but for her fortifications Gibraltar would not now be our possession," yet goes on to assert that under present conditions they are useless. This seems to me playing fast and loose with the historical argument. Surely if naval history teaches us anything it is that our fleets were constantly losing local command and regaining it. If these periods of loss were short, the ports, if fortified, held out; if long, they fell; and by the Admiral's statement the periods for relief of blockaded ports would be much shorter with steam, so that fortified ports would have better chances of holding out. The gallant Admiral has endeavoured to show that the fortifications of Singapore are useless. Captain Stone, followed by Captain Fitzgerald, have ably shown the fallacy of his reasoning, but I feel on safer ground in quoting the opinion of Admiral Sir Vesey Hamilton, who stated in May last, at a lecture given by Admiral Colomb, "The great thing I had to fear when I was in China was this, that until the guns for the ports were sent out the Navy had to defend the ports of Singapore and Hong Kong. Now that Singapore and Hong Kong have got their guns and are defended, the Admiral in China is left free to defend his commerce." No more authoritative statement is possible. It comes from an eminent naval Officer, with all the weight of authority due to experience and the responsibility of command. He states distinctly that when ports are defended the Navy is free to protect the commerce, and I would wish that wherever Admiral Colomb's paper is read, this plain tale of Sir Vesey Hamilton's should be read also. One word more as regards the historical argument. Like Sir Lothian Nicholson, I cannot help fearing that the experience of former naval wars is an unsafe guide for the future, and much as I admire that spirit of confidence in the British tar, which has carried our flag victorious over every sea, I cannot help seeing some danger in it. The storage and protection of motive power must now control naval strategy, and I leave it to naval Officers to tell what a complete revolution steam has caused in naval tactics. History tells us that overweening

confidence has frequently led to national disaster in another generation. The glory of Frederick the Great was dearly paid for at Jena, and that of Napoleon the First at Sedan. Before I sit down I wish to add my protest against the notion which this paper rather tends to encourage, that there is any spirit of antagonism or unfriendly rivalry between the Army and the Navy ("No, no"), that the Army should be represented as in some way supplanting and robbing the senior Service. I do not admit that any such feeling exists in the Service to which I have the honour to belong. We are all proud of our Navy: we regard it as our first and most important line of defence. My experience has been that when we are serving together we do so heartily, and without jealousy or rivalry, working together as good comrades for the honour of Old England, and our wish, as that of all true Englishmen, is to see our Navy strong, and, if possible, mistress of the seas as of old.

Sir JOHN COLMAN, K.C.M.G., M.P.: In the few minutes which are allotted to each speaker it is really very difficult to cover the ground and at the same time avoid being misunderstood. I think the best hope of accomplishing the duty of discussing, without being misunderstood, in so short a time, may be to find some point on which we are all agreed. I believe that we are all agreed, at all events, upon this, that the title of the paper is the "The Relations between Local Fortifications and a Moving Navy." Now, of course, we may stray very far away from that; but there is another point upon which I think we are all agreed, soldiers, sailors, civilians, and all alike, that our moving navy must be sufficient to do its work. Then my next point is, what is that work? I think it may be thus shortly described—that its work is to paralyze the power of a hostile moving navy to do us great and serious mischief. Therefore the main issue raised by the paper appears to me to be this, to endeavour to elicit discussion, and, if possible, to scientifically determine what are the relations of our local fortifications to a hostile fleet, the power of which to do us great and serious mischief has already been paralyzed by the sufficiency and efficiency of our moving navy? Before dealing with the paper itself I would say a few words in attempting to criticize the criticisms that have been offered. In the first place, it is pointed out by our gallant friend General Erskine, that if we command the sea certain things will happen; but I take commanding the sea to mean that our moving navy is able to do its work, and if from the fact that the Navy is able to do its work, invasion is impossible, we cannot help it; and if public opinion, as the General said, won't believe it, even if true, we cannot help it. What we really have to do in this Institution is to endeavour to get at the facts and the truth. Then our excellent friend Sir Lothian Nicholson drew a very gloomy picture of the result of our moving navy doing its work; in other words, commanding the sea; he pictured the militia and volunteers twiddling their thumbs. That we cannot help. I must agree with him entirely in this, that our soldiers in this great Empire must do their work, but I assert they cannot do their work unless the Navy does its work first in commanding the sea. He said that as a military man he could give no opinion upon naval affairs, and he next, very kindly and good-naturedly and most courteously, hitched up his trousers, metaphorically speaking, proceeded to take the weather gauge of the meeting and to pronounce a naval dictum, which he afterwards explained—that the Navy had no history. Well, I understood him perfectly to mean that, in his opinion, we could not now rely upon history to instruct us with regard to modern naval war. I am sure he won't take it personal if I venture to think, in my own humble way, that he is entirely and absolutely wrong in that sense. I say, Sir, that steam has no more obliterated the teachings of history in the Navy than it has in the Army, and that the influence of steam in extending the area and possibilities of military warfare in land operations is quite as great as the influence of steam on sea operations. In obliterating the teaching of naval history, is he therefore prepared to obliterate military history? Now I come to the next speaker, who rather surprised me, Captain Stone, who said he did not advocate locking up our Army in detachments all over the world, but he did advocate all those places being impregnable. I confess I am puzzled at this declaration of the speaker. How can you get detached impregnable local positions without detached military forces? And I say that they will be locked up forces if we do not command the sea. The next matter I come to is this. He indicated in rather a depreciating way that we

must abandon the attempt to command the sea, for he said the command of the sea was a very large order. Well, Sir, the British position in the world is itself a large order and makes very large demands, and if we are to preserve our position in the world we must not shrink facing the demands that our position makes upon us. Then we had my cheerful friend Captain Penrose Fitzgerald, who plaintively informed the soldiers that in war they would not be in the hunt. I heartily agree with him, if Captain Stone's view be adopted, because they will have no horses unless the Navy commands the seas. Not a drummer boy can be moved. All I can say is, that the Navy is the covering force for the transport of the Army. Now, I come for one moment to a speech that was listened to, as it ought to be listened to, coming from the source it did—from Lord Carnarvon, and I confess that I thought it dealt more with the special question submitted to him in 1879 than with the question we are discussing here. I think it was unfortunate that a noble lord of his eminence should have publicly announced in this theatre that this Empire had in war only two things to do: one being to protect our own shores—the shores of these islands, and the other the protection of commerce. I protest against any Englishman leaving out of account the duties and responsibilities of this Empire with regard to her frontiers over sea, and our great Indian Empire. Lord Carnarvon, in concluding, apologetically remarked that if my brother's and my own views prevailed, we should require an enormous fleet. I should like to read to the meeting what Lord Carnarvon's opinions were, as Chairman of the Commission, as evidenced by the Report of that Royal Commission of 1879. Here is the Report. It speaks of "the necessity of maintaining, not only a fleet sufficient in number and in power to give *absolute security* to the sea-board of the United Kingdom, but also to provide fast vessels, so stationed as to be ready at the commencement of hostilities to deal with the enemy's ships in more distant seas. We, the Commissioners, feel bound to express our opinion, on looking to the action of other countries, that the strength of the Navy should be increased with as little delay as possible." I call the attention of the meeting to the words "*absolute security*" by naval means. Lord Carnarvon, in 1879, as head of that Commission, demanded a fleet sufficient to provide "*absolute security*" for our shores and for all our maritime wants. I will only say that, to take the reverse side of the picture, if you do not provide that fleet, this, to my mind, is certainly true—this Empire is gone, and the moral effect alone of the fact that your command of the sea is gone will extinguish all margin of possible profit, which means the closing of your factories, the shutting up of your industries, the cessation of the operations of your Stock Exchanges, your shops, and your counting houses. I say distinctly, in my humble judgment, it comes to this, that if your moving navy is not able to do its work, the position of some forty millions of people in these islands will be the position of so many rats in a trap. I agree with my brother in his main contention, and I think his paper was called for, because I am one of those that for many years have felt that while on the one hand in the past we were absolutely neglecting to give any local protection at all to our naval stores at different points, on the other hand, we have now swung round, and we are now too much tempted to spend too much money on, and to over-do local defences. I am not prepared to go quite so far as his paper appears to me to indicate, but I can quite conceive, putting myself in his position, and looking at the necessities of the time, that really in order to raise a distinct and clear discussion you would have to push your advanced posts of argument perhaps a little further than you might otherwise be inclined to do. Therefore I say, that while I agree absolutely in his main contention, he does go a little further than I myself am prepared to go. If we exclude all else but actual war-ships from the conditions of war I think I might be prepared to accept almost an extreme view; but I am not prepared to exclude from the conditions of maritime war all else but war-ships. I look at local means of defence, at naval bases, and coal depôts, as necessary to prevent the destruction of the docks, coals, and stores of our war and mercantile ships by raiders, because I think raiders are in this case your primary danger, and also the facility that steam gives for the rapid, certain, and sudden movement of troops from mercantile ports. I have said already I do not think steam has altered the conditions of naval strategy, but I think it has extended their application; and what it has done, and what I think is the most serious

modern element affecting our defensive position is this, that it has opened up and added to the problem of maritime defence, and has increased the power of improvised attack outside moving war navies. We, I think, of all nations must recognize that fact. I will take the case of Singapore, and I will point out that while I quite agree with the contention of the lecturer that it is useless to defend Singapore unless you are prepared to defend the local waters around it, I say that taking his illustration of the secure Singapore, and the colliers being captured outside, that is not so bad a position as the coals in Singapore being destroyed and the coals outside being captured also. I am bound also, in dealing with this question, to mention one illustration of history which I dwelt upon many years ago, namely, the case of the Mauritius. The Mauritius was held by the French years after the Battle of Trafalgar. It was found that it was a hornet's nest from which privateers issued, and it was determined by the Governor-General of India that this must cease as it was ruining trade. We really commanded the sea, and the Duke of Wellington, then Lord Wellesley, was sent to Ceylon with a large force of troops for the purpose of seizing the Mauritius. Admiral Rayner, I think, commanded the fleet to cover the advance of these troops on the Mauritius. A difference between the Admiral, who declined to go, and the General, who was ordered to go, brought matters to such a state that they had to abandon the expedition altogether, because the Admiral did not agree with it. So the ruination of our commerce in that sea went on; but later the naval authorities in the district found they must root this place out, and they sent a purely naval attack against the Mauritius, with a result that was terribly disastrous. Years afterwards we made a combined military and naval attack; we took the place. I point that out as showing that in all these matters in connection with naval bases you come at last to a combination between the Army and the Navy. That is very briefly my view. I cannot venture to detain you much longer, but looking at the duties and responsibilities of our whole Empire, and seeing what the action of the British public is, and that Parliament will not open its eyes, we are bound to fulfil the primary condition of our existence, that is to maintain the command of the seas; but having that, we are not to run away with the idea that we have then discharged all our duties and obligations. What I am most concerned in disputing is the exaggerated proportions of the modern doctrine of local fortifications for the release of our fleet. I think our true safety lies in this: that our docks, stores, coals, and oilings must be locally secured against raiding attacks, that our Fleet must command the sea by being strong enough to paralyze the power of hostile war fleets, and thus to secure the release of our Army for defence of our frontiers abroad and for descent on the enemy's coasts.

Major WALKER, R.E.: I shall be glad to be allowed to join in the congratulations to the lecturer for his very able paper—a paper, in fact, so able and so clever that it has almost persuaded Admiral Colomb himself against his better judgment. I will read the two last lines of Admiral Colomb's lecture, in which he says: "It is a mere instinct with me which admits light batteries at the entrance of our ports. I cannot, when I face it, reconcile their existence to my reason." In his lecture Admiral Colomb has constructed a keen logical weapon for the overthrow of fortifications; but he has not convinced us. In his last lines he admits light batteries for the defence of commercial ports. I think that he has written two lines too many in his paper. In a previous page Admiral Colomb says there is nothing between a light battery and a first-class fortress; so that we are to have a first-class fortress for the defence of every commercial port! What, in Heaven's name, then, are we to do for the defence of Plymouth? I think that is a point that Admiral Colomb ought to answer. Then there is another point. General Erskine stated that the lecturer practically amounted to this, that we must disband our land forces and dismantle our fortresses. The lecturer dissents from that; but Captain Fitzgerald told us in very forcible language that, "You are out of it; you are not in the hunt, you soldiers. The first shot fired by a volunteer in anger means not the commencement of the decadence of the British Empire, but its complete destruction." That, I think, is letting the cat out of the bag rather as to what the meaning of the lecture is. It means practically the complete destruction of fortifications—that we do not want any fortifications. Now, although another gallant Admiral told us that we had a glorious military history, I do not think that that glorious

military history will make up to us soldiers for having lost all present usefulness and all hope of future distinction, which we have lost, if Admiral Colomb's lecture is sound. Captain Fitzgerald put it very plainly. He said, "You have India; you are a *dépôt* for India; but you are nothing else; you are merely a *dépôt* for the defence of India; that is your only hope, your only *rôle*, for the future is to defend India." I admit that the defence of India is a very glorious task, but it is not the defence of the British Empire. We have sailed with the Navy all round the world; we have, in company with the Navy, swept the seas around the world in the acquisition of the British Empire, and I do not think we want to give that up yet. I think Admiral Colomb has rather created a structure which he then proceeds to demolish, and in the ruins of this child of his own imagination he has hoped to bring down fortifications also. He says Captain Stone's third line of policy is this: "The third line of policy is that sketched by Captain Stone, if I rightly apprehend him, namely, the dispersal of the Army all over the world in detached garrisons;" and then at a later part of the lecture the Admiral gives us his own views. He says, "There remains the third function of fortification, namely, the protection of the stores—the protection of the *dépôt* proper, and not the shell of it—from the sudden surprise and destruction which might be effected in a short time by a small force." Then he goes on to say, "The original claim for the local defence of our coaling stations did not go further than this." But supposing that Captain Stone did make that proposal, did propose that policy—I did not clearly catch what Captain Stone said, but I believe he said he did not intend that—but supposing he did intend that as being the one line of policy, has anybody adopted it? Have the authorities who are responsible for the defence of the Empire adopted it? Certainly not. There is no such idea. The defence that is now being carried out is practically a minimum defence. We have actually adopted Admiral Colomb's own idea altogether. We have no other idea; we dream of nothing else. I do not imagine that the fortifications of coaling stations are to go stalking over the sea and contending with the enemy's cruisers. I contend the defence of a coaling station is to be what Admiral Colomb wishes it to be—purely local defence for the protection of the stores and of the stations themselves. There are some other points I should like to mention. There is a minimum defence, and when Admiral Colomb speaks of a large expenditure on gigantic works of defence, I very humbly think that he must have had in his mind the British line-of-battle ship, which is the only gigantic defensive work that I know of, the only one that can at the present moment cost any very large sums of money. Our work does not cost very large sums of money, for the very simple reason that we do not get very large sums of money to spend upon it.

Captain FITZGERALD: Where do the 16,000,000*l.* go against our 12,000,000*l.*?

Major WALKER: It is impossible for me to answer that point without notice. I have only been able to pick out a few points, and, for reasons that will be obvious from the position I hold, I have carefully avoided figures. I might have been told that I was trenching upon things with which I had no business to interfere: therefore I must ask Captain Fitzgerald to allow me not to quote figures. Take Singapore. Captain Fitzgerald has pointed out that Admiral Colomb assumed too much when he assumed that a squadron, after having coaled, had exhausted all the benefits that can possibly be obtained at Singapore. Captain Fitzgerald pointed out that there would remain a large quantity of coal still safe. I am trying to get at the relations between fixed fortifications and a moving fleet. You have there a quantity of coal: your fleet coals up, and, I presume, would have to go away to carry out their proper business. You evidently intend that the fleet is to go away from Singapore; but if there are no fortifications there a fleet cannot go away: the fleet must stay and protect the coal. On the other hand, if the port is protected by a few light guns, the fleet will be at liberty to go away and follow its own vocation of protecting commerce; and although the enemy's cruisers may, and no doubt will, interrupt the supply of coal, still they cannot destroy the coal already existing in that port.

Captain FITZGERALD: May they not take the coal with them?

Major WALKER: That I leave naval Officers to say. My point is that there will be some left to protect, and you must have something to protect it. That is the

minimum defence; but there must be some defence, or you will lose your stores. I am now looking at it from a naval point of view only; but is there nothing on the sea except Her Majesty's Fleet? Is not the primary reason of the existence of Her Majesty's Fleet the protection of the trade routes and of commerce? And if the fleet goes away and leaves Singapore undefended, what will happen? If it leaves it defended, then a commercial vessel, chased by cruisers and hampered by the enemy, will run into Singapore and obtain shelter under its guns. Will it not be better, when Her Majesty's ships come back to Singapore after their cruise, to find instead of a line of blackened hulks along the shore, a line of trim merchant vessels lying at anchor safely under the guns? I think there is a case in which the existence of fortifications does free a fleet. There is another question—about Malta. Admiral Colomb admits the necessity for the fortifications of Malta: he admits the importance of the dockyard of Malta, and he appears to me only to object to its being any further strengthened. I so read the paper. There is a very small amount of work being done at Malta at a very small cost. The fact is—and I think I may say so much without saying anything wrong, or revealing any secrets—that the opinion of every Officer who is officially, or ever has been officially of late years, resident in Malta, is that this slight increase is not only a good thing but an absolute necessity, if the place is to be defended. Then can you for a moment say that this slight addition shall not be made to a fortress to bring it up to equality with modern armaments simply because it now needs a large fleet to take it? I do not think it does need a large fleet to do it any damage. There is another point about Malta. It is said that no port could ever resist an attack from the sea. Upon that I will simply name Cronstadt and Sebastopol. Again, Admiral Colomb asserts no attack is possible where there is any fear of interruption from the sea. I take the Admiral's own instance—Tobago—where an attack was successfully made under cover of a fleet; but can you say you will never lose the command of the sea locally to some extent, as you did at Tobago? There, again, is the case of Trincomalee. Then there is the case of Gibraltar. Surely the case of Gibraltar is clearly in favour of fortifications. We regained the local command of the sea, and Gibraltar was relieved: we lost it again, and Gibraltar was again attacked. Now, had not Gibraltar been fortified it must have fallen. The possession of a fortress does *not* follow the command of the sea. The French held Malta for two years after we regained possession of the Mediterranean—and Malta is an island. If Malta had been on the French mainland how long would they have held it? If Malta had been to France what Gibraltar is to Spain the French would have held it for ever. We could never have regained it simply by regaining the command of the sea. I may say, in conclusion, that the question which strikes me as being one of common sense simply amounts to this. You say we want the command of the sea. We all admit that the British Navy is our first line of defence, and it must be made as efficient as possible. What does the command of the sea mean? Is it possible that anybody can stand up here and say that he believes that a fleet can be made so strong that it shall at all times, in every sea, off every port, on every trade route, be invariably superior to all possible attack? If it be, Admiral Colomb's case is proved; but I say common sense answers "No;" and I say that my contention is proved by the fact that now, in time of profound peace, we are in a condition in which we are admitted—not by general opinion, but by the opinion of experts, of people who know, to be behindhand—to be so much behindhand with our Fleet, that it needs a sum, variously estimated, from 12,000,000*l.* to 100,000,000*l.* to put the Fleet on an equality with what? With the Fleets of any two Powers—supposing that we have two Powers combined against us?¹

Colonel FRASEN, C.M.G., R.E.: There is one point on which all seem to be agreed as fully as we are all agreed on the importance of strengthening the Navy, namely, on the patriotism that has animated the lecturer in bringing forward the subject. At

¹ Since the lecture the Fleet has been declared *officially* to require an expenditure of 12,400,000*l.*, beyond the ordinary expenditure in the next four years, to bring it up to its proper relative strength; and does even this satisfy naval Officers? Where then is Admiral Colomb's perfect Fleet?

this stage there is less to be said, because naval speakers have expressed dissent from what, if an old friend will permit me to say so, are the more startling eccentricities to which he has given way. I will not, therefore, touch on more than one or two points. First, as to the origin of the defence of naval ports. Admiral Colomb seems to think that we adopted the practice from want of thought and have stuck to it through obstinacy. That line of argument would, I think, be equally applicable to the creation of the British Navy: we borrowed the ark from Noah; and since then we have borrowed ironclads from the "Merrimacs" and the "Miantinomas" and other monsters:¹ and we all go on building ironclads of new types, knowing full well that they are destined to be obsolete. We do this, not to cover our past follies, but because we do not know what on earth to do better to anticipate the future. I confess I think the simpler solution of both these questions is that defended ports and ironclads are the outcome of our necessities and, in the development of species, they mark this "survival of the fittest." The lecturer has based his arguments on naval history. There are few things history will not prove or disprove, and I should like to touch on one example he quotes, all the more pertinent because it is one that has happened in recent times and with ironclad fleets. He points out that in the war of 1870-71 an Admiral on one side, with all the freedom of an undefended base, and with an enormous naval preponderance of force, was prevented from bombarding a town on account of the presence, I should have said absence, of a very inferior hostile fleet, 700 miles away. Now, if a General on land were under similar circumstances, similarly deterred, we should, I think, say that General was "unfortunate." I am quite prepared to admit that there may have been naval reasons for the Admiral's inaction that a landsman cannot fathom. But if there are, then I venture to say the teaching of history in this case is this, that the best way of strengthening the British Navy would be so to reduce its strength as to secure to it that preponderating influence over all superior forces that, judging from this example of history, an inferior force seems to possess: I say to reduce its strength; because if an inferior force can always restrain a superior force from taking action, then you will best strengthen the British Navy by so reducing it that it will always exercise the restraining power over its superior enemies that this fleet of Germany is said to have exercised over the French. In fact, according to this example, a small fleet of ships at the Hebrides will protect Great Britain and Ireland. I only mention this as an example of the teaching of history. I think you fancy I am not an interpreter of history. I agree with you in this instance at all events. Rather than accept such a conclusion it would, I think, be a race between you and me and the lecturer to throw this particular Admiral to the whales and to send history to Saturn, a place where I am told a dépôt has lately been started for conclusions which have ceased to agree with our own. Some people have been trying, I will not venture to say to frighten the Admiral, because in his case that would be impossible, but they seem to have made him "very uneasy in his mind, with gruesome pictures of vast fortifications round London, of a vast line of fortresses round these again, and so on to the coast, the whole defended by vast armies of the Continental type; and, worst of all, of a simple-minded Chancellor of the Exchequer led into wrong paths when he ought to be following what, we agree with the lecturer, is the better way." Now most of us know a bogey when we see it except, apparently, the lecturer, and I venture to say this is a very pronounced bogey indeed. It reminds one of certain figures one sees at fairs, that are put up for the express purpose of being knocked down again. The inventors of this bogey have drawn on their imaginations for their facts. Those who govern this country have all the facts before them. I only wish to goodness the public were as cognizant of these facts as the Government must be. If they were, I think the interest in the strengthening of the Navy would exceed all other interests at present. No doubt the Government, with every means of judging the

¹ Defence on land and sea has alike undergone great changes since 1862, but the fortifications of Portsmouth and Plymouth are at least as efficient for the defence of those places from attack as are ships of the "Warrior" class to take a place in the line of battle.

merits of the question, and with a weight of responsibility which we have not, will best decide what measures are to be taken on land, and what is to be done at sea. If I may venture to make one broad criticism on this admirable lecture, in which, if there is a good deal of quartz, there is not a little gold, it is this: you do not improve the case of the self-evident and the unanswerable by piling up arguments which, on the authority of naval speakers, appear to be not only answerable but in their opinion untenable. And to the bogey-mongers I should like to say, you do not heighten the effect of a picture by throwing dust in the eyes of those whom you wish to admire it, and to be influenced by it. I next come to the remarks made by a most genial speaker and already noticed by others. Captain Fitzgerald has settled a little side issue, namely, that connected with land defence. He has pronounced authoritatively, *ex cathedra*, that we are "not in it." Well, it would be uncourteous to say that there is a difference between assertion and argument, but let us see what he asserts. We do not want to set up a bogey, but to state as fairly as we know how the contention that he and others have put forward as unanswerable. It is, I think, contended, first, that invasion is absolutely impossible unless and until our power at sea is completely and once for all destroyed past all recall; second, that no one will take the trouble to invade us because they can starve us out. We all agree that when the Navy is put in the supreme position in which we desire to see it, then we may hope the seas will be as safe as in peace-time, and the idea of invasion will be absent from our minds; that in the meantime if our Navy be gone completely and past recall our Empire will have gone with it; in which case there will be little left to live for, not to say to fight for. And it would only remain for the "unfittest" half of our population to set to work and die off at once. I am not a panic-monger, but, while I think the contingency of invasion to be remote, it does seem conceivable in a state of things considerably removed from such a dreadful cataclysm as the entire annihilation of the British Navy.

Captain FITZGERALD: No.

Colonel FRASER: That is a very fair difference of opinion. We have been told that in these questions the appeal is to history: to history let us go. At the beginning of this century we were supposed to be supreme against the fleets of the world. We had fewer rivals to oppose us; less territory and fewer seas to hold than now; no coal to think about, and relatively to our strength a larger number of ships to be "everywhere." At that time naval affairs entered much more into the life of the people in this country than they do at present. The population of these islands was about half what it is now, and yet the people of England thought it necessary to maintain a total of something like a million of fighting men. If in the opinion of our forefathers at that time invasion was possible, are we wise in coming absolutely to the conclusion that it is entirely impossible now? As regards the military possibility of the operation, the greatest master of war the world has ever seen thought it feasible; and the General who defeated him has recorded his agreement in that opinion. What were the conditions in 1805? Armies were slowly organized, more slowly concentrated by road. The northern coast of France was not then provided as now with great artificial harbours. The floats that it was intended to use were little better than those in which Cæsar and the Tenth Legion successfully made the passage: and the difficulties owing to their being dependent upon wind or oars were very considerable. What is the state of the case now? The north of France is provided with vast and commodious harbours, the last of which was opened, I think, only two or three days ago, and in those harbours there are always great numbers of steamers that can, as the lecturer has pointed out, move with a certainty that was unknown before steam, and can cross in a few hours, while we all know the rapidity of modern mobilization. Lastly, the lecturer has given it as his opinion that Napoleon's failure was due to Villeneuve's want of nerve. It may be so, and that if the great leader could have inspired that broken reed, as he inspired his soldiery, the attempt might have been made; but there is one lesson that we cannot, I think, draw from history: it is that what the incapable have failed to perform in the past the capable will alike fail to perform in the future. If we disband, as Captain Fitzgerald suggests, I think we increase at once the temptations to invasion, and invasion itself will be possible with largely reduced numbers, while we should be incapable of those offensive returns by which our

Empire was won, and by which alone we can close with an enemy we cannot starve.

Captain FITZGERALD: I never suggested disbanding.

Colonel FRASER: In the event of certain contingencies, I would ask how do we stand at this moment? Are you prepared, or are you not, at once to safeguard Britain, to secure the Greater Britain, and to hold our trade roads everywhere at sea? If you are, why do you, as we think rightly, ask for an augmentation of the Navy? If you are not, what are you going to do for some years to come? Are you going to palisade England with a floating boom of ships and leave our commerce to our enemies? In such case, while you save us from them we stand to lose the Empire by which we live. I do not presume to say how you will do the best you can to safeguard us everywhere; but you will doubtless try. Meantime this is not, I think, the moment for putting aside the terrestrial string to our bow; nor until we get a bigger basket should we put all our eggs into one. While we put our faith in the British Navy I think we ought to keep our powder dry on shore. Finally, is it so certain that nobody will take the trouble to invade us because they can starve us out? There is a wide difference between the starvation that would follow your annihilation, and the ups and downs of a protracted war, in which our commerce may often be interrupted as it has been before. This country, where economic laws now impede cultivation, can, at need, feed a larger population than in 1805. Unless all our ports are effectively blockaded neutral ships can come in. While the success of blockade running, even if for a moment we come to that, points to the influx of much food at the worst. The starvation bogey has, I think, been exaggerated. In the autumn we have six months' supply in this country to carry us through the winter. It has been suggested we should have bread, but our people could not buy it. In such case, not to take higher ground, it would be cheaper for us to put the Poor Law machinery into motion rather than to pay five times five millions and hand over our Empire, including the British Navy. If Nelson has a successor he will lead you sometimes to Copenhagen—to Aboukir—to Trafalgar. Doubtless you will have ships in narrow seas as well; and we would expect you to beat your enemy as of old; but none of us, not even the most inexperienced, can predict with certainty the result of every naval fight; because none of us know which ships and what methods will prevail. We have to think of the stakes that other people will be playing at. Each side will strike with its strongest arm. We cannot crush, say France, on land, on account of her immense armies, nor can we starve her out. On the other hand, the capture of London would terminate an otherwise interminable war, would transfer our Empire to our enemies; and last, but not least, among the moral factors that control the acts of men, such a dramatic success might be attempted as the only means of perpetuating the dynasty of a dictator.

Admiral the Right Hon. Sir J. C. D. HAY, Bart., C.B.: I have learned so very much from my friend Admiral Colomb on former occasions that perhaps he will forgive me if I cannot on this occasion thank him so much for his paper, at least for the information it contains, as I would have expected if I had not heard the paper. The advantage of the paper has been the discussion which it has elicited, and, I believe, that was the object he had in view. My gallant friend began his paper with a historical fallacy, because he speaks as if an invasion was something which could not possibly be anticipated. I would only say that the shades of William the Conqueror, or Henry Tudor, or Dutch William would contradict that assertion. I believe that this country has frequently been successfully invaded, and that it might be invaded again. I am one of those who think that it is open to invasion and that such a thing is possible—I hope it is not probable. I may say that when I seconded Sir Frederick Smith's motion in the House of Commons against the expenditure of 14,000,000*l.* on fortifications, which I think was a very considerable sum, whatever Major Walker may say, I did so, not on the ground that I did not think it desirable that Portsmouth or Plymouth should be fortified, although at that time I did profess that the forts would not probably be completed or armed for a very long time, and I believe I was tolerably accurate in that supposition, but it was because I thought that Fife or the Black River in Essex, or Foveusey Bay, could not be defended by the forts at Portsmouth, and that a great fleet is necessary for the protection of our shores and for the prevention of invasion. I understand Admiral

Colomb's paper to mean this. If the amount of money to be spent is limited, first of all complete your fleet. I go with him as far as that. But to say that fortifications are useless is against that ancient history which my gallant friend referred to, but as to which he, in the meaning in which he uses it, is in my opinion wrong. When Lord Nelson or Lord St. Vincent blockaded Cadiz, why did they not destroy the Franco-Spanish fleet? Because Cadiz was fortified. Why did Lord Hood take possession of Toulon—though an ignorant Secretary for War and First Lord of the Admiralty who were civilians did not support him when he had possession of it—why did he make that the base of his operations for a considerable time? Because he had got at the French fleet, and because the fortifications of Toulon were not at that time manned to oppose him. As soon as they were manned to oppose him he was turned out of Toulon and lost his base of operations. I agree with the last speaker that what we want is a strong Navy, and I disagree with him in thinking that you cannot get a sufficiently strong Navy for the purpose. I think he stated that at the beginning of the century we had conceived it necessary to have a sufficient fleet. We had, on the average, 146 sail of the line always at sea, or ready for sea, in addition to a number of others which were not available. And when we were not superior to the whole of Europe we took possession of the Danish fleet in 1807, and then made ourselves superior to the whole of Europe, and a very good thing too, I think, and I am glad it was done. It made us superior for the rest of the war, and if we had done it earlier in the war, if we had kept Toulon and had seized all the fleets that might have been opposed to us, as we did the Russian fleet in the Tagus and the Danish fleet, we should have had the command of the sea as we had from 1807 until about 1810. I am not entirely hopeless that the country might rise to a great spirit of indignation, and may say that for every battle-ship which is opposed to us we shall have one here—that we shall have ship for ship against everything that could possibly be brought against us. The gallant Officer who preceded me seems to think that their days are numbered; in the meantime other people have got them, and we must have them also whatever they cost. I agree that until our fleet is made sufficient for that purpose we had better not spend money largely upon new fortifications. Those that we have ought to be armed. Those coaling stations which have been recommended to be fortified should be fortified against raiders and cruisers, and the sooner the better. I trust that when my honourable and gallant friend the lecturer stands up to reply he will put on a penitential sheet, or will, at least, tell the meeting that he has been humbugging them.

General Sir J. LINTON A. SIMMONS, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.: The paper which has been read to the meeting by Admiral Colomb is one of very great interest, but I think he has gone a step beyond what his conscience would dictate to him as the proper thing. He has done it, I have no doubt with the best of intentions, to elicit discussion. But the question as it stands at present is one which is rather of an academical than of a practical character. My reason for saying so is this. If the fleets of Great Britain are sufficient to maintain absolute supremacy on the seas in all parts of the world, so that it would be impossible for hostile ships to come near us and annoy our ports, and levy contributions from our towns, and destroy our coaling stations and commerce, then I say we want very little more. The Army would in that case have to defend our land frontiers in India, Africa, and America, depending upon the Navy for the safety of their communications, and would not be necessary for the defence of these islands. But I should like to ask, Is the fleet in that condition? (No.) You all say no; and I believe myself it is in a very unsatisfactory condition for the performance of that great function. Having lived in a naval port for some years, I have observed that the Commanders of ships of war, even in peace-time, when they are not compelled to keep the sea in all sorts of weather, and have not an enemy to meet, are very glad on coming into port to find a dock in which their ships can be refitted and repaired before going to sea again. The wear and tear of ships of the present day is very great. That is the experience that I have gained from living in a naval port for four years; ships of the present day require constant attention and of such a nature that the repairs cannot be done by the ships' companies themselves, but must have the machinery for effecting them. That being the case, coaling stations are not only of use for coaling purposes but they are re-

sitting stations, of the greatest importance to the Navy. Setting aside the question of coal, if a hostile cruiser could get into a port in which you have the means of repairing ships, and could destroy those means, it would seriously affect the efficiency of the Navy. For instance, let us consider the Mediterranean. A ship that wants repairs in the Mediterranean has only one port it can go to for them, namely, Malta. If Malta does not exist as a repairing port, where is the nearest port? It is in Great Britain, in the United Kingdom. Can you afford to be sending your ships home all that distance to get those repairs which are necessary? If you are compelled to send your ships these long distances to be repaired, you will require many more ships to keep up a blockade or to observe an enemy's ports. Now, with regard to the sufficiency of the Navy for the purposes which I have indicated, and for which it ought to be maintained, we have the strongest evidence as to what is necessary. A Report has been published within the last few days, signed by Admirals Sir William Dowell, Sir Vesey Hamilton, and Sir Frederick Richards. What is it that these Admirals, not discussing in this theatre, but having a due sense of responsibility, having studied the subject closely, and seen a great deal of evidence—what is it that they report? And remember that the Blue-books contain only extracts from their Report; there are probably many things in the Report itself which cannot be published to the world. It is very difficult to discuss these questions fully in public, because there is a vast deal of information which cannot be placed before the world. I say this advisedly, having been a member of the Commission of which Lord Carnarvon was President. We were for a long time occupied in taking evidence, some of which was given to us under a strict bond of secrecy, which is possibly the reason why that Report has not been published.

SIR J. C. R. COLOMB: I quoted from the published Report which appears in the Appendix of the Colonial Council.

SIR LINTON SIMMONS: But I believe the whole of the Report has not been published. I was not aware until Lord Carnarvon alluded to the passage in that Report respecting the Navy that any part of it had been published; certainly the evidence on which it was based has not been published, and I suspect that similarly a great deal that was before these Admirals could not properly be published. It would be as unwise to publish the facts upon which the defence of this great Empire depends as it would be for the Germans to publish all the schemes of attack and defence across their frontier upon which their great system of defence has been determined. I will go back to the recommendations of the Admirals. They say: "It is not necessary to point out the incalculable mischief that so enterprising an enemy might inflict in even that short time (that is about thirty hours), and how imperative it is to complete the military defence of our great commercial centres without further delay." Towards the end of their Report they say: "It would be far more in consonance with the requirements of the nation by the provision of an ample fleet to render invasion an impossibility, than to enter into costly arrangements to meet the enemy on our shores, but under the conditions in which it would be possible for a great Power to successfully invade England nothing would avail her, as the command of the sea being lost, it would not require the landing of a single man upon our shores to bring her to an ignominious capitulation, for by her Navy she must stand or fall." Now, I believe myself that the Navy is the first and most important line of defence. We can do nothing without it; everyone in this country must be of that opinion. But I do not quite subscribe to the opinion that because the Navy might have been worsted for a time in any particular sea the country is to be invaded or reduced to subjection by starvation. I believe that our Navy will be distributed in various parts of the world. It will not be all in one great fleet, and one great battle will not decide which is to be the prevailing Power at sea. Supposing a fleet blockading Brest or Cherbourg, or any other port, were worsted, and it is quite possible that it might be worsted, because it would be fighting under unfavourable conditions in comparison with the enemy, whose ships being in port would be free from wear and tear and not liable to loss, whereas the blockading fleet would be subject to the raging of the elements and to accidents, and would be kept continually at hard work with a large amount of wear and tear going on—supposing under those circumstances that this fleet were worsted, it does not follow that all the other fleets of Great Britain in other seas should be worsted likewise; and it does not follow if there are naval

ports secured by fortifications, for the time that those fleets could not find their way into them and that they could not be brought together and reinforced; so that there is no reason why we should not resume the supremacy, that is to say, provided that we have a sufficient number of ships. But, in the meantime, while this assembling of the fleet was going on we certainly might be exposed for a time to great danger on the shores of England. This danger may be of various sorts. If it were intended to subjugate the country, a force of from 150,000 to 200,000 men, or perhaps more, might be required; but what should be said of an invasion with 10,000 men, accompanied by such measures as those which would have accompanied the invasion had it taken place in the time of the First Napoleon? I looked up, the other day, what Napoleon himself stated with reference to this question. He said: "The *canaille* of all nations are nearly alike, I would have made such promises as would have had a great effect—the proclamation that we came as friends to relieve the English from an obnoxious and despotic aristocracy, together with the proclaiming of a republic; the abolition of the monarchical form of government and the nobility; the declaration of the forfeiture of the land of such of the latter as should resist, and its division amongst the partizans of the revolution; and a general equalization of the property, would have gained the support of the *canaille*, and of all the idle, profligate, and disaffected in the Kingdom." If 10,000 men were disembarked on the coast of England, their numbers might be magnified tenfold. I do not mean to say they would bring about a revolution, but if revolutionary documents such as Napoleon designed were scattered broadcast throughout the country, and all sorts of promises made, I think some of the gentlemen who frequent Trafalgar Square would only be too delighted to throw in their lot with the invader. The whole of these questions depend on the possibility of the Navy doing the work which the gallant Admirals describe as their duty. The Admirals in their Report said: "That the Channel Fleet (so called) should, supposing the enemy to be a great maritime Power, be of sufficient force to blockade the fleets of such Powers in their ports or to bring them to immediate action should they put to sea." That is the first requisite, but what does it imply? It is just as necessary, I presume, to blockade (speaking subject to correction in the presence of so many Admirals) not only the fleets in the home ports of the Powers with which we may be at war, but their fleets also that may be in the China Seas, in the Mediterranean, or on the coast of Africa, or anywhere else. This involves a very large force, and then there is another thing: history tells us the enemy's fleets have not always remained in their own ports, and it is possible for a large fleet to be detached before the commencement of war to a neutral port, in which case they could not be blockaded, because by doing so you would bring upon you the hostility of the Power to whom the port belongs. (No.) If you attempt to blockade a ship in a neutral port you are liable to bring upon you the hostility of the neutral Power. (No.) Whether that be so or not this Channel Fleet will have to be of immense dimensions; the Admirals state in the proportions of five to three of battle-ships alone to blockade the enemy's fleets, which I take to be the object wherever they may be. Therefore it would be a fleet, the duties of which will extend beyond the Channel, even to the Chinese Seas. That is the first batch of vessels required, namely, the so-called Channel Fleet. The Admirals then go on to say: "There should always be an effective Reserve Squadron, absolutely confined to home waters, sufficient to hold the Channel and protect the coasts and commerce of the United Kingdom." That is a rather large order; it evidently points to the possibility of the blockading squadrons not having been successful, and that hostile fleets may be on your coast, otherwise this Reserve Squadron would be of no more value than it is contended the fortifications for the defence of harbours are, because, in fact, if your blockade be perfect, the enemy can never come near the coast to bring this Reserve Squadron into action. Then comes a third lot: "in addition to the district coast defence ships which would be necessary for active local defence on the coast of Great Britain, Ireland, and the Channel Islands." The above constitute three requirements. The fourth is: "that there should then remain available a sufficiency of battle-ships and swift cruisers to reinforce our squadrons abroad to the necessary point of superiority with reference to the requirements of each station, for the formation of detached squadrons and convoys for commerce and troops over and above the number required for home and

Mediterranean service." That again is a pretty large order. And, fifthly, "an ample reserve to meet the waste of war." Now I do not mean to say any one of these five requirements is not necessary, but this I do say, that I believe, subject to correction, that your fleet at the present moment scarcely fulfils the first of these conditions, and before you get these five requirements complete, years must pass and a vast expenditure must be incurred. The Navy has been let down to that low point that it would require a long time to bring it up to the strength considered necessary by these three Admirals, men of great experience, who having before them the reports and opinions of other Admirals have, under the weight of responsibility cast upon them, stated their opinions to the country; it is of importance that this should be borne in mind; at the same time, and certainly for the years that must elapse before the fleet can be brought up to this strength, I cannot subscribe to the theory that fortified coaling stations and defences for large mercantile ports are not necessary. The lecturer has made allusion to Gibraltar. What are the facts? It is quite true that the Army alone cannot hold it for any great length of time without support. We, the Navy and Army, must work together. The communication with Gibraltar can only be secured and its revictualling carried out by the Navy, but in the absence of the Navy the Army can hold it as long as the provisions for its garrison last. What was the use of Gibraltar on one memorable occasion? After the Battle of Trafalgar Admiral Collingwood took his fleet in there: he was very glad to find a port near at hand where he could refit and repair. The converse happened with Admiral Dumanoir, who made his escape after the battle with four or five line-of-battle-ships, and was met by Sir Robert Strahan on his way to his port 600 or 700 miles distant. If he had had a port under his lee, or within 200 miles, he would have got into it in safety and so preserved his ships. What happened as regards Malta? It entered into Napoleon's designs to get possession of it. He went there, and in the course of two or three days the garrison got frightened, or rather there was treachery in it, and they surrendered; but if there had been a British garrison there no doubt Malta would not have surrendered, and it would have been secured to Nelson during his operations against the French Admiral. These are points which have to be borne in mind. Then, again, reference has been repeatedly made to Singapore. I think the necessity for the defence of Singapore by fortification is evident, it being very distant, in a position in which trade concentrates, where there is necessarily for commerce a very large accumulation of coal. I know at one time there were 140,000 tons of coal collected there merely for commercial purposes; well, a large dépôt like that is of great use to the Navy as well as to the commercial marine. If there were some moderate defence there to keep off such a squadron as is likely to attack it, Her Majesty's ships having coaled there and gone to meet their enemy, might feel assured that on their return they would find not only coal but machinery to repair their engines and assist them in putting their ships into a proper state of efficiency. I think these are grave considerations, and I may say this with respect to Lord Carnarvon's Commission, that it endeavoured, under the deep sense of responsibility which rested upon them, to minimize the defence of coaling and refitting stations to the utmost. We had to consider, in the case of every port which was proposed to be defended, the nature of the attack to which it would be exposed, and the means available in the place for the assistance of the troops. That was done most amply in the case of all those ports, and I believe the defence of each was minimized to the utmost. It is not a question of millions of money, and diverting these large sums, as has been stated, from the Navy. The amounts proposed to be expended were not so very large, and I believe that the expenditure that was recommended is absolutely necessary, not only for the ships of the Navy, but still more if possible for the commercial marine. I do not know that I have much more to say on this subject. I think perhaps you may consider I am riding my hobby-horse to death in saying it, but it appears to me that the whole of this discussion points to one thing: we in the Army and you in the Navy are two separate departments working for one purpose, that purpose being the defence of the Empire. We are all deeply interested in it. I should be very sorry to say one word, or see anything done by military men which would derogate from the efficiency of the Navy, or retard its being made much stronger than it is. But my experience in years past has been that there is a pulling and hauling on the part of the two Services to get

as much as they can out of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. We see the defects of our Service, naval men see the defects of theirs, and we each try to get as much as we can, and it is our duty to do so, to make our respective Services as efficient as possible; but I do not think that there is that combination of the two Services for the one great object that there ought to be, and I believe the true method, by which alone the measures that should be taken for the defence of the Empire as a whole can be properly settled is that there should be a Minister for Defence, for War if you like to call him so, and that the two Departments shall be subordinated to him; one Cabinet Minister and two others, not necessarily Cabinet Ministers, subordinate to him, each responsible to the country for the efficiency of their respective Services. I have been attacked as to my ideas being Utopian, but I am happy to see that a good many provincial papers have taken up my views. My idea is this, that the question ought not to be a political question; and that there should be a few good men, whether you call them Commissioners or whatever you may choose to call them, under a Cabinet Minister, who will consider such questions and work them out as a whole. If Imperial defence had been properly worked out as a whole, this discussion would not have taken place, because the question raised by the lecturer would have been under the sense of responsibility attaching to each individual who had assisted in working it out. Then I go a step further, and say that the Minister under whom such a project had been elaborated ought in some way to assist in seeing that his project is carried properly into effect. A question was asked by Sir John Adye in a letter to the "Times," whether it was reasonable to place an ex-Minister as an assistant to a Minister in office. I can only say from my heart that I believe it is unreasonable to suppose that the public men of England have not sufficient patriotism in them to work upon a non-political question, involving such vital interests to the Empire, in perfect harmony. All that I can say is, having served on Lord Carnarvon's Commission where there were men of divergent politics representing different political parties, that we worked in perfect harmony and brought our Report to an unanimous conclusion.

General SMUTE, C.B.: As I am Vice-Chairman of the Brighton Branch of the Naval Volunteer Defence Association, and having taken a considerable interest in this subject, I am extremely glad to have heard the very able lecture of my gallant friend, in most of which I fully concur, though I feel that he somewhat rode his hobby to death. The Army and the Navy, since the days of our being so closely associated in the Crimean War and up to the present time, have become more than sisters. We are twin sisters, and most affectionate sisters. Now, as regards what the gallant Admiral has advanced, I also am perfectly satisfied that the defensive wars of this country will, and indeed *must*, be fought on sea and not on land. I am perfectly satisfied, however, that the Army and the Navy must work hand-in-hand if England is to remain a first-class Power. The fact is, I am satisfied that this country will never be invaded. It ceases yearly more and more to be self-supporting, and thus partial investment seems more and more its chief danger. Now I do not for a moment deny that it is perfectly possible to invade England. I know of 50 miles on our south coast where I could select three or four places where with perfect certainty you might throw 200,000 men on our shores, either as one army or by army corps, at spots sufficiently contiguous to be able to give immediate support to each other as one army, covered of course by an inshore squadron, or squadrons carrying heavy and long-range guns, and provided the weather was moderately fair. But the conditions necessary to such invasion would render invasion an absurdity. Why should an enemy invade England? The conditions necessary would be similar to those that occurred in regard to our invasion of the Crimea, viz., that our enemy must have as complete a command of the British Channel as England and France had of the Black Sea when they landed at Old Fort. And what would that imply? It would imply that our Navy was utterly shattered, that our commerce had been destroyed, that our food routes were cut. It being so, why should any country invade us? In these democratic days, with semi-starvation you would have a Commune in London and revolution throughout the country. Your army of defence would be threatened by the enemy in its front and rebellion in its rear. Our country bankrupt, our population starving, we should be at the mercy of our foes. Why, then, should they waste men and money on

invasion? If we are starved we must go down upon our knees, and no doubt our enemy would be able to demand any terms that he thought proper, including the giving up of the remainder of our fleet and an enormous indemnity, with Dover and the Thames and Medway as a material guarantee, and if the Channel Tunnel be completed, then with a perfect communication with the Continent. But as regards the gallant Admiral's able lecture, I must make this strong observation in opposition to what he has said. The Navy must be thoroughly and efficiently coal-fed from shore-protected depôts in every part of the world, giving our ships thorough freedom of action; our military ports and large commercial ports must have permanent and good defence. With regard to ingress and egress from those ports, I admit that that must be entirely dependent upon the Navy. We should have battle-ships equal to any combination that is likely ever to occur, and cruisers, not according to the number of cruisers that other nations have, but cruisers in proportion to the vast quantity of merchant shipping, on the defence of which our very existence as a nation depends. Then, gentlemen, though a soldier, I say leave the Army for the present as it is, and use your energy to make our Navy as strong and efficient as possible.

Lieutenant-General Sir JOHN STOKES: It is a great presumption on my part to rise to address this audience, but there is one point which I do not think has been quite brought out. I think we are all agreed that the Navy ought to be our first line, and as strong as it can be made, and that in order to bring it up to that point it will require a great many years' work. Admiral Colomb in his paper deprecates spending money on fortifications which might be better employed in increasing the strength of your Navy. But those fortifications which are asked for, for the defence of our coaling stations and our commercial ports, would not involve a very great expenditure, even if spread over a comparatively short time. Many years must elapse, as I say, before our Navy can be placed in the state which it should occupy in order to maintain the command of the sea, and until that object be attained you want your fortifications in order to defend your depôts on shore, and, therefore, as an interim measure, I say let us have the fortifications. In this discussion, comparing present times with past times, I think it may have been said before, and better perhaps than I can say it, that in former wars our fleets and cruisers were self-contained. They could go to sea and remain months at sea, and could hold their own until they were absolutely driven back by being dismasted by storms or during action. In these days you cannot keep the sea; you must go back for coal, and you must go back to refit. I think that point, combined with the other, shows that we ought to have protected stations, in which our ships can find what they want.

Sir LINTON SIMMONS: I omitted one point of very great importance, and, therefore, with your permission, will add a few words to what I have said. In 1803, at the conclusion of the Peace of Amiens, our total naval and military expenditure was 22,590,757*l.* In 1814, as the result of the war, our naval and military expenditure got up to 71,686,707*l.*, and we paid loans or subsidies to foreign States to the extent of 8,412,578*l.*, making a total of 80 millions for the war expenditure for the year, being the expense we had to submit to in order to maintain our position. Last year our total military and naval expenditure was 30,785,657*l.*, being an increase of only 30½ per cent. upon what it was in 1803, while the population had increased from about 16 millions to 37 millions, or 131 per cent. The charge per head of the population for warlike expenditure in 1803 was 29*s.* 5½*d.*, as compared with 16*s.* 7½*d.* in 1888, or 44 per cent. less, so that we are very much less taxed now for military and warlike purposes than we were in the early part of the century. The imports and exports in 1803 were 62½ millions, and in 1888 the imports and exports amounted probably to not less than 850 millions, carried in ships, the value of which was close upon 150 millions, representing, therefore, 1,000 millions as the value of British property traversing the sea annually at the present time, of which an average of about 150 millions is afloat every day in the year, being the value of British property upon which an enemy would have to commence operations. These amounts do not include coasting trade. If a penny on the pound were levied on the 1,000 millions of British property traversing the sea annually, it would amount to 4 millions of pounds. Sixpence on the pound would go a long way to give the country all that is required, or a penny on the pound for six years; and it

is worthy of consideration whether, as long as our policy is of a peaceful nature, any Power would seek a quarrel with us if we are true to ourselves and are so prepared during peace as to give us under Providence a reasonable certainty of success. The fact should be well pondered by every Englishman that the warlike expenditure in 1814 was about 4l. per head, and that by raising it to 1l. a head for a few years during peace it is not improbable that we might escape war altogether and continue in peace, without the prospect of having an overwhelming war expenditure forced upon us.

General Sir R. HUME: At this stage of the discussion there is very little left for any of us to say that has not been said already, either in favour of or in opposition to the lecturer's opinions, but I think, at the same time, for one or two minutes we are justified in getting up to express our concurrence or disagreement with the views that the lecturer has so ably laid before us. If I had spoken earlier I had many very brilliant ideas which I should have laid before the meeting, but so many other Officers have anticipated me that I should not be justified in taking up your time in repeating those ideas. I would merely remark that almost the first point of Admiral Colomb's lecture is the dispersal of the Army all over the world, and he goes on to say, "I will endeavour to show cause against this." As long as our Empire is constituted as it is at present, and I hope it always will be, with large detached foreign possessions and Colonies, it is impossible that we can maintain the Empire unless our Army is largely dispersed all over the world, and I myself cannot conceive a Navy so strong or so ubiquitous as to enable us to dispense with some defences for our garrisons and for the inhabitants of those places that we occupy on the sea coast at a distance from England. On that account I would say that, granted of course the first broad contention that we must have command of the sea, I think that the Navy will be supported and assisted in maintaining that command by the local defence of the positions which we must occupy all over the world. The lecturer, in what has been to me a most interesting and most important lecture, says, towards the end of it, that the moving navy must be either in command of the sea or fighting for it. When the moving navy is entirely in command of the sea, our land fortifications and defences are of relatively minor value to what they will be when the Navy is fighting for it, but when our Navy is fighting for the command of the sea, I maintain that our land defences will be of very great importance. I simply stood up, Sir, to occupy a few minutes in saying that I concur entirely with the lecturer where he says that we must have the command of the sea, but I do not agree in many points, which I have not time to allude to, in the manner in which he considers our naval supremacy should be maintained.

Admiral Sir ERASMUS OMMANEY, F.R.S.: The observation I wish to make is this, that, assuming I had command of the Channel Fleet in war-time, nothing would make me feel more happy than to know that the approaches to our naval ports and arsenals were defended impregably, so that I could have free action to operate against the enemy in all parts of the Channel. With regard to the history quoted by the lecturer, I differ with him very much, because I think, so far as history goes, it shows that fleets have seldom succeeded in attacking fortresses. With regard to the advantage of fortifications, I would quote Malta, for instance. Defended as it was in former days, no ship could enter Valetta harbour exposed to the raking fire of Fort St. Angelo and the cross-fire from other batteries without being sunk; therefore, this important island succumbed only after blockading. Much stress is laid on the relief of Gibraltar by the fleet of Lord Howe during the celebrated siege by the combined forces of France and Spain, but previous to the appearance of this fleet, the garrison of Gibraltar had nobly repulsed the formidable attack of our enemies on the Rock by land and sea. This impregnable fortress has proved a tower of strength to us as a naval depôt and a base of protection to our commerce with the Mediterranean and Morocco. I, therefore, think that our ports should be sufficiently fortified. I wish to point out that Admiral Colomb has made one oversight with regard to the operations of the French Fleet during the Franco-German War. The reason why the French Fleet remained inactive was owing to the seamen being sent to Paris, where they were employed in manning the detached forts when Paris was invested by the German Army. I merely point that out and will say no more at present, unless we should have to go over the ground

again. I think we are extremely obliged to Sir Lintorn Simmons for bringing forward that Report on the recent naval manœuvres so conspicuously before this meeting, and I think every naval Officer must endorse the opinion expressed by that Committee. I was very glad to hear Sir John Colomb point out the importance of the Island of Mauritius. I know it well, it is the Gibraltar of the Indian Ocean. I would emphasize as strongly as Admiral Colomb the importance of maintaining our supremacy at sea. I say, let us have two strings to our bow, let us have the forts as well as a formidable Navy, and when the emergency arises I hope that the Army and Navy will have "a pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together."

Lieutenant-Colonel FEATHERSTONHAUGH, R.E.: Captain Penrose Fitzgerald challenged the Army to answer this question. He said the "Times" had remarked that if the Navy is as it ought to be, no more is required. Well, Sir, I would just allude to what occurred at Berehaven. There we had one Admiral blockading another Admiral, and we must suppose the first Admiral was in command of the sea. What happened? The Admiral blockaded broke out. The place I was at was about thirty-six hours' steaming from Berehaven, and as soon as we heard he had broken out we calculated he might be with us at five o'clock on a certain morning. He arrived at seven o'clock, and if he had been a fast going mail steamer crossing the Atlantic he could not have performed a more rapid or more perfect voyage. These ships, Sir, that broke the blockade touched at every commercial port in the kingdom—Liverpool, Aberdeen, Leith, the Tyne, the Tees, and I do not know where else they did not go, and there was not anybody able to stop them. I mentioned that to a distinguished Officer the other day, and what did he say to me? He said, "We do not intend to defend the commercial ports." There is another cat has jumped out of the bag. The Navy may win a victory off the Downs, but in the meantime every port in the kingdom is to be smashed to pieces. Is this meeting to approve of that idea, and would the country like such a state of things?

Captain FITZGERALD: May I be allowed to repeat a short quotation I made at the last meeting, as there seems to be some misunderstanding about it: "If the Navy is made thoroughly competent for its work no other defence for these islands, or for the Empire at large, will ever be called into play: if the Navy fails us no other defence will avail to avert crushing disaster."

General HARDING STEWART: It is now so late that I will not detain the meeting more than two minutes. I wish to speak about commercial harbours. But, before saying anything on that subject, I must say that I admire the way in which Admiral Colomb has attacked us Engineers. He has, I believe, done it with an object, and I think he has gained that object entirely: although he has not proved his case. I think, however, that he cares but little about that. During his lecture, about the end, I observed that he made one important admission. For, after decrying fortifications and saying they were *not necessary*, he admitted that the coaling stations ought to be secured by fixed defences from capture by a *coup de main*. That is, however, all that we Engineers want to do. He then went on to speak of commercial harbours and to say that they need not be defended by fixed defences. (Admiral Colomb here dissented by gesture.) The Admiral has unquestionably decried the use of fortifications for the greater ports, and I am sure that he altogether yielded their use for the smaller ports. At least I understood him so. But, whatever may be the drift of this lecture, I want to point out that Admiral Colomb has, on a previous occasion, written some very admirable notes and memoranda on the attack by cruisers of these same commercial ports, and he has proved to us that some local defences must be provided for them. We must, in fact, have what has been very properly called "the minimum of defence" both fixed and floating for these ports, and that, I think, is all that the War Office desires and, at any rate, all that the War Office can get from the country. Unless we have a small amount of fixed defences at our commercial harbours we may have our commercial fleets burnt at their anchorages. I really trust that what the gallant Admiral has said against fixed defences may not go the round of the Press, nor cause the public to object to, and the influential people in the commercial ports to come forward and decry the use of the moderate amount of fixed defences which we Engineers now desire to see provided for those ports.

Admiral Boys : We have listened to one of the most important lectures and one of the longest discussions that I recollect in this theatre. My remarks will be very short. Admiral Colomb prefaced his paper by asking members to "give it him hot," and I think to a certain extent he has had it pretty hot from some of the speakers. He refers to history to prove his case, but I think history is not altogether on his side. If instead of going back 300 years he had gone back as long as history records, he would find that there actually had been invasions and descents on the United Kingdom to the number of seventy, and forty-two since the commencement of the tenth century. It is our duty to prevent the possibility of number forty-three. We have had a good many opinions here from naval Officers on this side of the Channel on this matter of blockading the enemy's fleet; I think naval Officers on the other side of the Channel have also an opinion, and I heard it stated lately that when the subject of our blockading their fleets in their harbours with our fleet, as it now exists, was mentioned, it was received with a doubtful smile. They think and they venture to state that with a very little help it is not impossible that they might be able to drive our ships into our harbours and blockade them there. That is not a position to be contemplated with any satisfaction. I must say I agree with Admiral Colomb, as many others do, in his endeavours and his advocacy to increase the fleet, and in such numbers as are considered requisite for the duties which it ought to do; but if he proposes to leave our commercial harbours and our arsenals and our ports generally without any land defence whatever, I cannot agree with him.

Mr. R. N. PENROSE FITZGERALD, M.P. : Would Sir Lintorn Simmons, who has given us the most vital important statistics I have ever heard on this question, kindly, if possible, add to them the statistics of the value of the food supply imported by sea into this country in 1803, and the value of the food supply that is imported into this country in 1888 or 1889? I ask it purely for use possibly in another place, as it would be most valuable information.

Professor LATGHTON : At this late hour I shall limit myself to very few remarks. I had meant to touch on the general subject of the lecture, but my opinion having been so fully expressed, more especially by Sir John Colomb, that there is scarcely room for me to say anything more, but on some of the historical allusions made by the lecturer and other gentlemen, a few words from me will, perhaps, not be altogether out of place. Admiral Boys said that this country has been invaded forty-two times; and Sir John Hay pointed out that in past times the country was successfully invaded by William the Conqueror, by William III, and by Henry Tudor. This last can scarcely be counted as an invasion; but in any case, there was no fleet to oppose it; so also with regard to the instances referred to by Admiral Boys. But as to William the Conqueror's invasion, Sir John Hay has overlooked the fact it was delayed in Normandy for three months after the army was ready; it was waiting—we are told—for a south-west wind; a south-west wind in the Channel in July, August, and September! The statement is absurd. It was waiting because the English had a powerful fleet at the Isle of Wight; and until that fleet was broken up, the Duke of Normandy could not risk the passage; when the fleet was no longer there, he crossed and effected the conquest. William III's landing can scarcely be spoken of as a foreign invasion: his fleet was commanded by an English Admiral, Herbert; and the English fleet which was assembled at the Gunfleet to oppose him had been won over to his cause. No opposition was offered by it, and the Prince of Orange had reason to believe that none would be offered. I think Admiral Colomb's argument is a very strong one; that with the Navy in command of the sea an enemy cannot undertake the operation of an invasion. It seemed to me in the course of the discussion that many of the speakers have not realized the power of a fleet in a flanking position, threatening to act on the rear, or to interrupt the operation of landing, on which Admiral Colomb has laid such stress. It is, as Admiral Colomb has pointed out, a matter of historical fact, a matter of common experience extending through all ages—not a matter of the last fifty years, but from the beginning of history—that no commander, if he is wise, will undertake a territorial attack as long as his operations may be interrupted by a fleet even considerably weaker than his own. Admiral Colomb mentioned two distinct cases in which a commander had violated this principle.

He might have gone further, there have been others. There was one as far back as 1217, when the French fleet, in great force, bringing reinforcements to the Dauphin in England, ignored a comparatively small force at Dover. What was the result? This small force fell on the rear of the French fleet, and annihilated it, off Sandwich, simply because it caught the French fleet in the most unfavourable position in which a fleet can be taken. Another instance occurred in 1759. The lapse of more than 500 years, and the enormous changes in the details of naval war, had made no difference in this fundamental principle of naval strategy. M. de Conflans, sailing from Brest, attempted to conduct the operation of taking on board an army, and that while such an enemy as Hawke was free to act on his rear. Hawke made a hawk-like swoop, and demolished him. These are two instances. I am not sure that the Battle of the Nile was not another. At any rate it is certain if by possibility Nelson had had with him the frigates that he ought to have had, if he had had one ounce less energy than he actually did have, the French fleet would have been caught in the ideal position that Admiral Colomb has pointed out, and have been made an example of to all ages. It was pretty well so as it was, but it might have been much more.

Captain FITZGERALD: Is not that an example of territorial attack when the attacking fleet had not command of the sea?

Professor LAUGHTON: The French fleet was destroyed.

Captain FITZGERALD: They conquered Egypt.

Professor LAUGHTON: The fleet was destroyed, the communications were cut, and the army was left in a mess from which not even the genius of Bonaparte could extricate it. There is just one more word I have to say. A good deal has been said about Gibraltar. It has been pointed out that the fortifications rendered its defence possible in the war of American Independence; that without the fortifications it could not have been held. It seems to me that it would have been a good thing for us if there had been no fortifications, if the enemy had been free to come and go. What possible good was Gibraltar to us for the four years the Spaniards were besieging it, from 1779 to 1783? Some 6,000 or 7,000 soldiers were shut up there, and the fleet was obliged at all risks to relieve them. What was the use of it? It was defending nothing; no property, no route; we had no interests in the Mediterranean, absolutely none, but because the strong fortress was there, and it would be dangerous in the hands of an enemy, we were obliged to retain it. For that we sacrificed our American Colonies. In 1781, when Darby was fitting out a large fleet to relieve Gibraltar, the blockade of which was maintained by the Spanish fleet, De Grasse was at Brest fitting out a powerful fleet for the West Indies. Darby would not interfere with De Grasse, for fear that if he made any attempt to do so, De Grasse would go south and join Cordova, and the two fleets, the French and Spanish combined, might prevent the relief of Gibraltar. He, therefore, drew back and waited at Cork till he understood De Grasse had sailed for the West Indies, and thence to the coast of North America. The action with Graves off the Chesapeake, the surrender of Cornwallis, and the loss of the American Colonies were the direct results.

Admiral COLOMB, in reply, said: Some of the speakers have pointed out that possibly my chief object in reading a paper, which certainly seems to have presented numerous anomalies to the audience, was raising a discussion. Now, with the help of our gallant Chairman, whose name was sufficient to bring the large audience together, we have had, I think, one of the very best discussions on any paper which has been read in this theatre. For my own part, the only fault I have to find with the discussion is that I have not been hit hard enough—perhaps I should not say hard enough, but close enough. That my friendly adversaries have not got out their daggers and their fists and come at me, but they have stood far away with their long lances, or with weapons of still greater range. What I mean is, we have been discussing a purely scientific paper, with the title "The Relations between Local Fortifications and a Moving Navy," and yet I am satisfied that when we come to read the discussion side by side with the paper hereafter, we shall see that we have said very very little indeed concerning those "relations." I must instance in saying that, and I do it of course with great diffidence, what Lord Carnarvon said, as showing that truly the points of the paper have seldom been grasped by the audience.

It has happened to me before this to read a paper here, to have it warmly denounced by a brother Officer, and to find that Officer saying to me after some little time, when I had asked him to re-read the paper, that he had re-read it, not once but twice, and that a veil had been removed from his mind, and that he saw the position I had put before him in an altogether new light. Now, when you have to put a great deal into an hour's paper, your words have to be so very accurate that they will not bear paraphrase. The moment you come to paraphrase you are nearly sure to go wrong. Most of the speakers have mentally paraphrased a great many of my sentences and misapprehended them. But, coming back to what I said about the instance of Lord Carnarvon showing how the real points of the paper have not been grasped, we must remind ourselves that Lord Carnarvon probably has thought of those things more than any of us here present. As the Chairman of the Royal Commission, he must have had the whole subject very much before him. What is the gist of my paper? I took as my texts certain theses which were put forward by a previous lecturer. What Lord Carnarvon has done, if you come to read his speech carefully you will see, is to reassert all those theses which I was discussing, but without considering it necessary to support his re-assertion by correcting a single one of my historical references or a single one of my illustrations. He said, towards the close of his speech, that the object of fortifications was first to free the Navy; *secondly*, to preserve ships so as to enable them to be repaired; *thirdly*, to supply coal to the ships; and *fourthly*, to deter the enemy's cruisers. Now these are exactly the four points that Captain Stone put forward, and those are exactly the four points that I used, historical and hypothetical illustrations, to combat, in order that we here, a naval and military audience, might get to the bottom of them and see whether it was actually so. Sir Lothian Nicholson flattered me in the strongest way when he said that this paper that I wrote would have a great influence on public opinion. Well, I do not deny that it may have a great influence on public opinion, but what Sir Lothian Nicholson said was that what would give it that influence would be the fact that it was read by an Officer like myself. Now I am quite certain of this, that any little influence I might have does not come in any way from me personally, it comes simply from the facts that I collect and put forward; and if it be the case that this paper is to have an effect upon public opinion, it will have it because I have endeavoured, even as an advocate, to put forward the truth. It is perfectly true that for the purpose of discussion I have put what appears to me to be the logical truth very distinctly, and as closely as I can, and also in such a way as to excite the opposition which I am happy to say has been excited. But I am sure of this, that the real discussion on this paper will take place hereafter. We have only started it now. We have to recollect this. And here again I must refer to what Sir Lothian Nicholson said. He pointed out that it would be an evil if my paper appeared in the press in anything like a complete state, and that the discussion in opposition to it, which he rightly judged would be in opposition to it, should appear in a garbled state. But all that has been said in opposition to me has been said year after year and month after month for 23, 24, or 25 years steadily. It is the first time, as far as I know, that the general view of the relative functions of fortifications and the Navy has ever been challenged. Why did it become to me so important to challenge it when I heard the opposite view distinctly stated by Captain Stone in this Institution? It is because, unless the Army and Navy come together in this way and discuss these points, where our functions are likely to overlap, and arrive at something like conclusions about them, we are doing what Sir Lintorn Simmons said we were doing, what I myself feel we are doing very often, that is, having a sort of game of pulley-hauley with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. But I am so satisfied with the cordial relations between the two Services as to believe that we want nothing to bring us together and to make us see our parts perfectly clearly but the continuation of the sort of discussion we have had here. Every one of us, I should think, must have had some new thoughts, some new suggestions, as to how far the Navy goes in these matters, and how far the Army goes; and what would happen to the Army if the fortification bills went up and the moving navy bills went down, and *vice versa*. If the Army were relieved from the pressure which now lies upon it—and it is a great pressure that providing heavy garrisons for heavy works—how could it be advan-

taged? If it were ascertained that the Navy could do the things which Colonel Maurice told us of, and that naval people all knew it? Colonel Maurice told us, and this is another reason why my paper was read—what is absolutely the fact, that the Navy steadily repudiates, and has for years repudiated, this defence question, and it has distinctly said: "We will not have anything to do with places like Singapore, or Aden, or Colombo, or the Cape: we will wash our hands clear of it. It is your business in the Army to do all this, our business is elsewhere." Now that point in the naval mind is one of my principal objects of attack. I do not think that it is true: I do not think it possible that the Navy, whatever it may have done in former days, can shake from its shoulders this question of the defence of the ports. My gallant friend Colonel Steward, speaking of the commercial ports, said that I thought they could not be defended by fortifications, but I have never said that, and have never thought that of the ports themselves, only of the shipping frequenting the ports. If you examine my paper you will see that all through it I admit the plain patent fact that any port which you can close, any port that you do not care about keeping your communications open with, can be made secure with fortifications; and you can make it so secure that, like the hall-door of your house, it is the very last place that the burglar will think of going to. But the whole point of my paper is the difference between a port which you can close and a port which you must keep open. The point of it is that with regard to the coaling stations, these ports are, every one of them (I may except, perhaps, Bermuda), ports that the Navy must in some way keep open, because from them and to them flows the life-blood of the Empire. It has been constantly said by many speakers that I recommend the leaving of the ports defenceless: the idea of leaving the ports defenceless never crossed my mind. But I say that ports are defended—and that history shows it distinctly down to the other day—from heavy attacks by the threat of these attacks being interrupted from the sea, as was so excellently put by Professor Laughton; that the entry and exit to them must be protected by a naval force, a floating force, a moving force, and cannot be protected by anything that is fixed. As it is necessary for you to provide this moving force, it then becomes a question whether behind that moving force it is necessary to go to any very great expense in the matter of fixed fortifications, submarine mines, and what not. The mistaken point that most of the speakers have had in their minds is that where there were no fortifications there was nothing. But that has not been in my mind, and that has never been in my brother's mind, who, as far as I know, was the earliest of all to raise the question of the defence of the coaling stations. If you will read his first pamphlet on the "Defence of our Commerce," published, I think, in 1867, you will note that he was always thinking of open ports kept open by naval force, and that he never had the slightest notion of heavy fortifications. He wanted a good garrison; he wanted special port defence vessels, and there in his diagram you have these port defence vessels, not defending the place itself, but the surroundings of the place, keeping the communications with it open, guarding the commerce where it was concentrated from the attacks which were most likely to be made upon it. And so you must recollect that when speaking of fortifications not being effective, I mean they are not effective for a port which must be kept open, because they will not keep a port open. I am sure that every military man will agree with me there; fortifications alone will not keep a port open. If you can afford to allow a port to be closed, all right, go on, spend what you like; but if it is a port you must keep open, we ought to go to work to keep that port open to provide the necessary force for keeping it open, and I think it stands to reason that if we keep the port open, we defend it. I cannot see that there is anything on the other side. If you provide a naval force sufficient to keep the port open, the enemy cannot touch that port. I am giving, of course, but a general reply. The time has gone on so long that I am sure those speakers who would like to be answered separately will excuse me from going closely into what they have said, and I think there is the less reason for me to do that because the paper will be found, if you study it closely (for I do myself the credit of saying that it is most carefully written), and go into it side by side with the criticisms that have been offered, there will be a great deal more agreement with me than there appears to be at the present moment. At the same time, I must admit, as I admitted at the

beginning, that for the purpose of raising discussion I have pushed the theoretical scientific question, I think, perhaps as far as I can push it. The practical outcome of it is a matter that I have not touched upon in the paper, but that is chiefly what has been discussed in this theatre, mistaking, I think, the tendency of the paper. I regret, of course, that the scientific question has not been more thoroughly discussed than it has been, but I feel sure that the discussion will go on in our minds, and that we shall come to some definite conclusions about it. You must recollect that such a paper as this has been in my mind ever since the Estimates were moved for last year, when there was a vote on a loan of 3,000,000*l.* for fortifications side by side with a reduction in the Naval Estimates of 900,000*l.* That, I may say, was the moving spirit behind me, and I do believe that if this audience were called upon to pronounce upon a similar proposal now, it would not be carried. There is just one question which I might mention. It was put forward by Sir John Stokes, the very old argument that as the Navy was weak, and as the Navy could not at the present moment have the command of the sea which we desire for it, we had better go and spend the money on fortifications on that understanding. The chief reason adduced why we should take that course appeared to be the question of time. It is held that we could provide fortifications more quickly than we could the necessary naval force. I altogether differ from that. My impression is, if it is a question of time for the defence of the coaling stations, we can more readily get merchant ships fitted up with whatever guns can be had, than we can mount the same guns on land. And these guns, so mounted, are not only competent to protect the port, but to protect the shipping which make the port. That is the argument. I do not mean to say how that is. I must thank you, Sir, very heartily, for taking the chair during the discussion of a naval subject of this kind. I give myself credit for policy in asking you, Sir Frederick Stephenson, to take the chair. I felt this, that if you took the chair and read my paper before taking it, which you did, it would be certain that I should say nothing in that paper which would be hurtful to the feelings of the sister Service. I knew very well that if you were in the chair we should not get hotter than we need get, and I felt that your presence in the chair would bring together a large military audience, and would give a guarantee that I was not, as some speakers do really seem to think, putting the Navy against the Army, which is the very last thought in my mind. What I have said in the paper, and what I must repeat now, is, that I am afraid that if the Navy and the Army do not join together in these discussions and come to definite conclusions as to their relative positions under the changed circumstances of warfare, a great deal of money will be spent, and, as the public say, they will get nothing for it. But if the Navy and the Army can thus settle what their functions are to be, even the Ministry of Defence, which Sir Lintorn Simmons is so anxious to have, would become not a necessity, for we should have settled all the points which the Minister of Defence could settle, before he was appointed to his post.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, at this late hour of the evening I shall confine myself to very few remarks indeed. In the first place, I think the gallant Admiral may be satisfied on one important point, and that is the vital importance which we all of us attach to the supremacy and the most thorough and complete efficiency of the Navy. I think that is a point upon which we all agree, and I need hardly satisfy his mind upon that point. I only wish that one half this feeling were prevalent throughout the country at large, which is awaking at last, we must all be glad to see, from the indifference, not to say the apathy, with which it has viewed the important and vital question of the national defences of the country. There is one other point upon which I hope the gallant Admiral may also be satisfied, and that is that the requirements of the Army for carrying out these national defences are not likely, I should hope, to interfere with the claims which the Navy may make upon the public purse. The Navy, of course, are entitled, and I hope they will get it, to the first and the fullest consideration; but there are also some points upon which I think also the Army may have some slight claim as well. Gentlemen, with regard to the reply the gallant Admiral has made, I think it may possibly qualify to a certain extent the impressions that existed in the minds of those who spoke with regard to the subject of his lecture, for he now tells us that he is perfectly alive to the necessity of a certain amount of defence to our ports, our arsenals, and our

coaling stations. Now that, I confess, I understood was the very bone of contention, it is the very subject I understood of his lecture; however, I am very glad to find by this expression of his opinion now in his reply that we are all at one upon this. It is unnecessary almost to dilate upon the absolute importance of the defence of our arsenals, our ports, our coaling stations, and, I should like also to add, of the principal of our commercial ports, certainly towards their sea fronts. With regard to the coaling stations, by putting them in a proper state of defence, we surely keep the Navy from the necessity of protecting them to a very considerable extent, and we give the Navy thereby a freer hand to act upon our lines of communication, instead of detaching certain vessels to hang about these coaling stations, which for the time being are perfectly capable, or should be made perfectly capable, of defending themselves. I think, however, in this respect there will be no wish to make any claim upon those funds, which, I hope, will be almost, if not entirely, devoted to the efficiency of the Navy. I have only one thing more to do, and that is to ask you to allow me to convey to the gallant Admiral our very sincere thanks for the able manner in which he has drawn up his paper. I think we are excessively indebted to him for it. I think also we are still further indebted to him for this, that in bringing forward his paper, he has done so in the most disinterested and broad-minded spirit. He has wished under no circumstances to cram his views down our throats; on the contrary, his object has been to elicit and draw forth the freest possible discussion upon all points, and I think, considering the very full attendance which he has had at his lecture, and at this adjourned discussion, he may be fully satisfied that his wish has been thoroughly carried out.