

This article was downloaded by: [University of North Carolina Charlotte]  
On: 14 August 2013, At: 02:15  
Publisher: Routledge  
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954  
Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## Royal United Services Institution. Journal

Publication details, including instructions for  
authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rusi19>

## The Land Forces of Australia

Lieutenant-Colonel R. Elias

Published online: 11 Sep 2009.

To cite this article: Lieutenant-Colonel R. Elias (1890) The Land Forces of Australia, Royal United Services Institution. Journal, 34:152, 205-228, DOI: [10.1080/03071849009417899](http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071849009417899)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071849009417899>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is

expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

# The Journal

OF THE

## Royal United Service Institution.

---

VOL. XXXIV.

1890.

No. 152.

---

Friday, January 17, 1890.

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR WILLIAM D. JERVOIS, G.C.B., C.B., late  
Governor and Commander-in-Chief, New Zealand, in the Chair.

21.5.90.

### THE LAND FORCES OF AUSTRALIA.<sup>1</sup>

By Lieutenant-Colonel R. ELIAS.

THE time is steadily and surely approaching when the "defence forces" of the Colonies of Australia, each of which was at first just a kind of watch-dog at the door of its own particular colony, will have attained, in common with Australian institutions generally, to a state of development entitling them to throw off their provincial status and character, and become national, *i.e.*, when these forces will be consolidated into an Australian army under one commander.

It is no doubt right still to call them "defence forces," their chief duty being the defence of their colonies; but circumstances might arise which would cause them to combine with other troops of the Empire in operations neither strictly colonial nor exclusively defensive; as indeed we have already seen, when New South Wales sent a contingent to Egypt.

Everything is growing and expanding very fast in Australia, and the military forces are no exception. It would be a great mistake to try and hurry the growth; it will come of itself. Each defence force when first instituted consisted of only a few guns on the most vulnerable part of the coast near the capitals of colonies. Now, besides coast and garrison artillery, there are in each of the larger colonies—

Field artillery,  
Engineers,  
Infantry,  
Mounted rifles,  
Cavalry,  
Cadet corps.

<sup>1</sup> The term Australia may sometimes include New Zealand. It is not easy to see yet to what extent New Zealand and other islands may be incorporated into any large defence system.

The infantry consists chiefly of militia, which may be called the "regulars" of Australia; there are also volunteers; and in addition, there are rifle companies and rifle clubs (they are called by different names) in which men at any rate learn to shoot, although they have no regular military training; some of these, however, become consolidated into volunteer corps, and individual members of them frequently join the volunteers and militia. Of cavalry there is certainly not very much, but still a nucleus on which to form larger numbers if required. A certain portion of the artillery and engineers are "permanent," i.e., what we should call "regulars" in this country.

Then there are in some of the colonies a naval brigade and naval artillery volunteers, who, as they sometimes parade and drill on shore, may be mentioned here. And the very excellent bodies of police, both foot and mounted, would make most valuable troops in case of need.

Belonging to all these branches there is arising a generation of local Officers, endowed with much natural ability and energy, who give a great deal of time to military duties, and take great interest in them.

Many Australian Officers have within the last two years been over here to spend some months in the study of military matters, at Aldershot, Shoeburyness, and wherever else anything of military interest was going forward. In the next two years we may expect a much larger number to come.

The general organization of all these forces is based upon that of the English Army; but there are differences, and differences which bear more or less directly upon that most important point in all armies—discipline.

In Australia, as we know, everything is democratic; there is therefore no such gulf recognized between the social standing of Officers and that of their men as in England and other old European countries; moreover, many men in Australia serving as private soldiers in the militia and volunteers are pecuniarily independent. It is needless to enlarge upon these two considerations; their importance is at once apparent; and it is also at once apparent that the old rules, regulations, and traditions with regard to the behaviour of Officers towards their men and the maintenance of discipline generally must be in some respects altered and modified to suit the altered and modified circumstances.

When a number of corps met in the capital of one of the large colonies a few months ago, for the purpose of carrying out some field manoeuvres in the neighbourhood, the Officer and men (all ranks) of one of them—mounted rifles, I think it was—entertained at a grand dinner the Officers and men of all the country corps then in the capital, to the number of about 100; the idea of giving the entertainment, said the newspaper where I read the account, having originated altogether in the ranks. This incident is interesting as an illustration of the pecuniary and social circumstances of Australian private soldiers.

A good many years ago Sir Frederick Weld,<sup>1</sup> speaking in Australia on the subject of discipline, expressed the opinion that the Anglo-Saxon race is naturally impatient of control, and the colonists perhaps even more so than the home members. Well, I dare say this opinion was perfectly correct at that time; but, I think that if Sir Frederick Weld were to see the different Australian defence forces now, he would modify that part of it about the colonists. At any rate, I have lately been informed by an ex-Commandant of one of the largest colonies, that he never found his men otherwise than most amenable to discipline.

The question of keeping order in a manner different from the old system (when we had long service in England) is by no means peculiar to colonial troops. Here is a paragraph on the subject which, it appears to me, it would be advantageous to quote, from the Prize Essay of the Royal United Service Institution, 1889:—

“The private soldier of to-day is a very different sort of man from the private soldier of even thirty years ago; his mental qualifications are of a far higher order, he is better educated, has more respect for himself, and is altogether of a more independent character, by which is meant that he is more capable of acting alone, and far more capable of understanding why under certain circumstances he is required to act in certain ways. Of course this development and progress has not been, and is not, altogether without its dangers. Where organic unity is required, individuality cannot be allowed to remain unchecked; consequently the problem of to-day is even a harder one than that of former years; for, recognizing an increased individuality, this quality has to be guided and controlled without being stifled.”

Directly I read the above paragraph it struck me that, although not specially intended to apply to colonial corps, it did nevertheless apply to them very significantly; for the members of them certainly possess much intelligence, education, and individuality; and it is worthy of remark that owing to short service and the changes and modifications which have followed in its train, European armies do not differ so much in general character and organization from a highly trained militia as the old long service armies did; and, again, owing to the gradual growth and development of late years of a large portion of the Australian forces from a simple volunteer movement into a well organized militia as the backbone of the inland forces, there is a most decided, and still growing convergence in the organization of European and Australian troops; they are from different starting points gradually assuming a more uniform character. This in itself is no small matter for congratulation; for as long as there remains any chance of troops from different parts of the world having to act together the advantages of uniformity in organization, arms, ammunition, equipment, and training can scarcely be overrated. Unity and uniformity should be the great aim of all the Australian forces.

<sup>1</sup> Premier of New Zealand in 1864; afterwards Governor of Western Australia; and, later, of Tasmania.

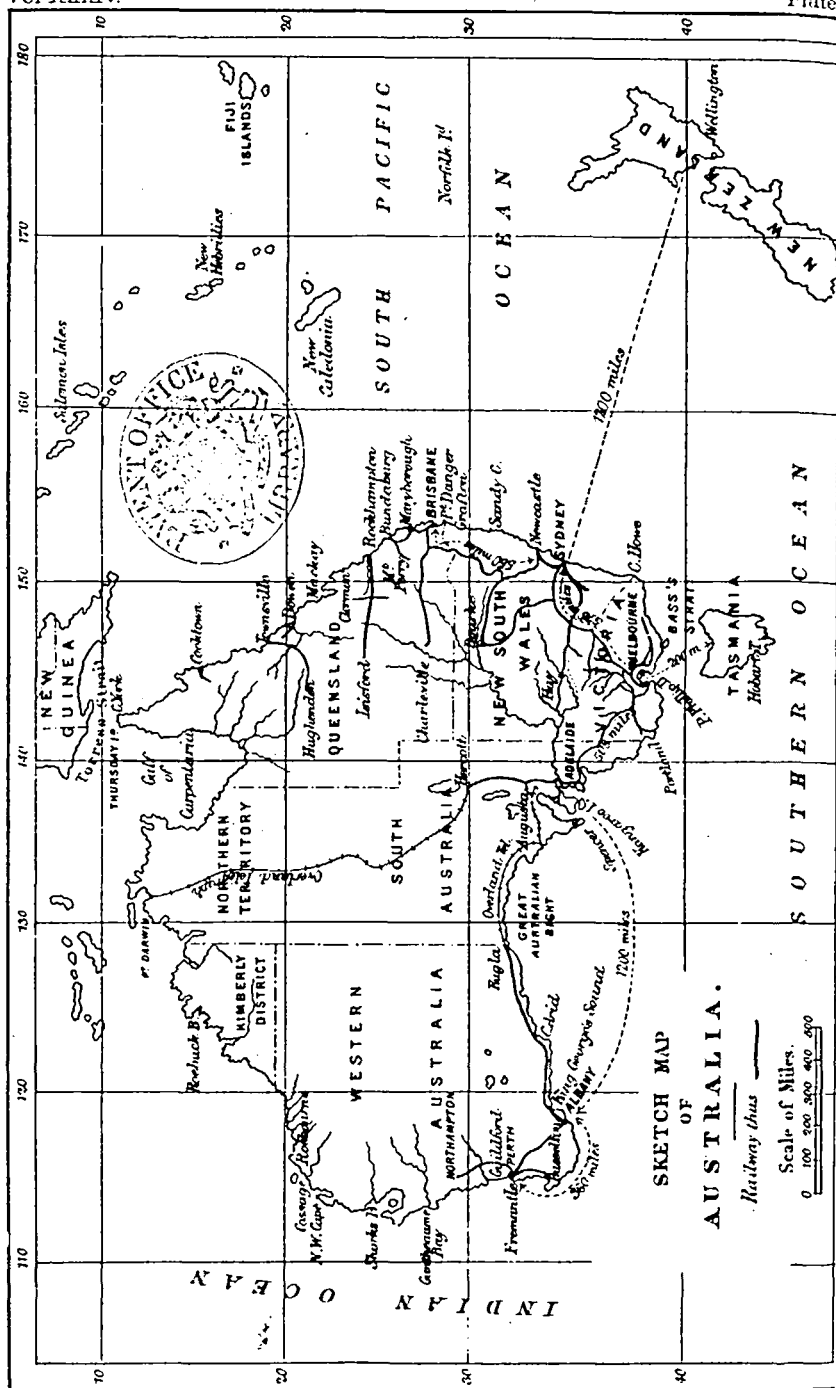
We hear much of "*esprit de corps*," and up to a certain point it is beneficial; but it contains a great danger; if the idea is not struck broadly and boldly we get on the wrong side of that line which divides "*esprit de corps*" from petty jealousy of one's neighbour corps. I have seen two private soldiers engage in personal combat simply because one had white facings and the other yellow. I know there are some who maintain that such an occurrence shows an excellent spirit. I confess I am not of that opinion. The "*esprit*" should be on a large scale—in the present case, the honour of the Australian army—perhaps the Imperial army. To pull together as members of one National or one Imperial force is a higher aim, and more conducive to concord and to success than anything to be expected from the promotion of a species of emulation nearly akin to jealousy between the parts.

The best way to counteract any narrowing tendency, should such exist, would be to bring together the forces of different districts, and, if possible, of different colonies, in numbers as strong as possible for manœuvres and encampment. As it is, the forces of each of the larger colonies of Australia turn out annually for at least a week's continuous training; but as yet only each force in its own colony. It would be most advantageous to all if the forces of different colonies could meet and be brigaded together. But how is this to be effected? At present there is no code under which an Australian body of troops could in time of peace be governed outside its own colony; but, assuming that this is an obstacle which legislation in the not very remote future will remove, there still remains the fact that distances in Australia are very great. It might not be impossible, however, to bring the troops, for instance, of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia into camp together at some convenient spot in Victoria. Several combinations of this kind might be made, the colonies taken three and three together, as the mathematicians say. Tasmania might easily be included; but New Zealand, I fear, would be too far off. The journeys by rail or sea, embarkations and disembarkations (train or ship), would all be capital practice, and most useful military experience. This is merely a suggestion of what perhaps might be done even before the amalgamation of the present defence forces into an Australian federated force.

With regard to the distances, it may be advisable to give a few of them approximately:—

	About
From Perth to Albany, by sea . . . . .	360 miles.
„ Albany to Adelaide, by sea . . . .	1,200 „
„ Adelaide to Melbourne, by rail. .	508 „
„ Melbourne to Sydney, by rail . .	576 „
„ Sydney to Brisbane, by rail . . . .	550 „
„ Melbourne to Tasmania, by sea. .	200 „
„ Australia to New Zealand, by sea	1,200 „

The general interest taken by Australians in military affairs has within the last year or two increased enormously. If we look back only a few years at Australian journals, records, books of various



descriptions, and lectures delivered, some in England and some in Australia, we shall find there very little, and usually nothing at all, about any naval or military matters whatever. But now it is very different. Many of the daily papers—the “South Australian Register” for example—have every now and then capital articles on military matters and defence, to say nothing of accounts of parades, field days, reviews, &c., and letters and paragraphs of varying degrees of knowledge of the subject, ability, pugnacity, and patriotism—but all admitting the absolute necessity for being in a position to offer a sturdy self-defence in case of need. And all are now becoming convinced of the fact that, in order to have a really effective militia, some strenuous training, including a period of several days in each year of continuous training, with troops living and messing together, is quite indispensable.

Occasionally only we find expressed what I may perhaps call the old style of opinion, like the following (from a colonial newspaper):—

“Too little account is made by purely military critics of our unprofessional soldiery, and of the motive springs by which a nation, when a great need impels, will rise to the occasion,” &c., &c., and the American War is quoted as a brilliant illustration of “eager volunteers after a very brief period of drill, but inspired by a cause, being able to fight battles which, for the skill and valour displayed, have never been surpassed in ancient or modern times.” Well, as we all know, a study of the events of the American War by no means bears out this writer’s ideas, but, on the contrary, exposes the great drawbacks and losses experienced by want of training; and the Australians of to-day are perfectly well aware of this, and are not in the least likely to be misled by such a flimsy, frothy paragraph; they know that if the troops of any European Power should land in any part of Australia, these would certainly not be unprofessional soldiers; and that the Australians destined to meet such an attack would have the great advantage of being on their own ground, with which they are familiar; but that to act in concert, and to turn that knowledge of the ground and locality to account, is impossible without training and practice.

Many of the inhabitants of South Australia are so impressed by the advisability of providing a fairly trained and disciplined force with a reserve, that a serious movement was made a few months ago to bring in a law for a measure of compulsory service by which every able-bodied young South Australian should pass through the ranks of the militia. There were several meetings and lectures on the subject. At a meeting of the Adelaide Literary Society the question was debated, “Should military service be compulsory in the Australian colonies?” There was a large attendance, and the affirmatives carried their point by a large majority. “The volunteer system,” says a leading article in the “South Australian Register” (8th July, 1889), “has been tried in almost every conceivable way, and proved hopelessly wanting.” The militia, some eight or nine hundred strong, are not enough, it goes on to say; and then strongly advocates compulsory service for three years or less, if possible, for all classes of



the community—and also dwells on the necessity of pay, if real efficiency is to be expected. In the South Australian Parliament the question of compulsory service was debated on, and naturally enough not without opposition; no action was taken, the Ministry being unfavourable to the movement, which therefore at present remains in abeyance.

What has been proposed is, I believe, to enlarge the scope of and put in motion the "compulsory" clauses already existing in law—but, as yet, for application in time of war only; so that 1,000 men might be taken by ballot between the ages of twenty and twenty-one in Adelaide and its suburbs, and passed after three years' service into the reserve; by which, allowing for contingencies, it is expected that besides the 3,000 men in the active militia, a reliable reserve of at least 5,000 men at the end of ten years would be formed without unduly pressing upon any one class. This is from what I can gather the outline of the scheme. Independently of compulsory service, however, an additional militia battalion has just been raised in South Australia.

Nobody wants for a moment to eliminate the volunteer forces, but it is universally felt that volunteers alone do not make an Army; and it is very clearly seen that if men do not come forward of their own accord for military service, there are only two ways of inducing them to do so, viz.: by law (ballot, as being the mildest form of compulsion), or by the offer of substantial pay; both of these being measures calculated to make Ministries hesitate.

When the Australian defence forces were in course of formation a good many useful hints were found in the regulations and constitution of the Canadian Militia; but in Australia the compulsory part has not yet been adopted. There is always going on among all the principal colonies of the Empire a regular annual exchange of blue books, militia lists, and new regulations concerning the respective Defence Departments, which is found to be very advantageous.

I will here give as briefly as possible the chief provisions of the Canada Militia Act (1886): "The militia shall consist of all the male inhabitants of Canada of the age of eighteen years and upwards, and under sixty, not exempted and disqualified by law, and being British subjects by birth or naturalization; but Her Majesty may require all the male inhabitants of Canada capable of bearing arms to serve in case of a *levée en masse*." There are four classes, according to age, and whether married or single, &c.; there is active and reserve militia, land force; and active and reserve militia, marine force; and a fairly long table of exemptions, as is usual in these cases. Although compulsion or conscription is legal, it is not found necessary to resort to it; resembling herein the case of the English Militia.

The Swiss Army also, which I have heard described as "not a piece of military perfection, but the most superb militia ever seen," well deserves consideration with reference to organizing an Australian Militia. In it every male citizen (after certain exemptions), between twenty-four and forty-four years of age, is bound to military service and drill. The men of the infantry are all capital shots; and even

the boys at school win prizes for shooting—like the cadets in Australia. Switzerland may be said to have led the way in the introduction in Europe of that universal liability to military service, which many years later has come to be general all over the continent.

In the present state of the Australian forces, when it is everywhere admitted that the want of unity and cohesion between the troops of the different colonies is a real inconvenience, and a drawback to efficiency on any large scale, calling for an early remedy, it will be interesting to note that the Swiss had a similar difficulty to contend with, before the troops of the several cantons were consolidated into one federal force. This was chiefly the result of a reorganization carried out in 1874. Each separate canton is now responsible for the recruiting and maintenance of a certain military force proportionate to its area and population; it bears the cost of this force, and to a great extent the patronage and control of the same is vested in the cantonal authorities under the superintendence of the War Department at Berne; but the right of disposing of the whole Army, as well as the war "matériel" attached to it, belong to the Confederation. Some further particulars on this and other points of interest will be found in the compilation noted at foot.<sup>1</sup>

Should any one wish to see how far the motto "Advance Australia" has already been applied to military matters he can easily do so, as far as regards numbers, by comparing the tables of the different forces at the present time, taken from the latest available statements, with the table of numbers given by Sir Peter Scratchley about seven years ago. These tables will be found at the end.

The mere numbers, however, give but a feeble idea of the progress made. Besides increasing the number of men, additional guns of the most modern patterns—some of large calibre for coast protection—are constantly being received from England; torpedoes and submarine mining have not been neglected. And here I may mention that General Edwards, during his late tour of inspection in Australia, wisely warned all concerned against putting too much faith in complicated machinery which might perhaps get out of order or become disabled—strength and simplicity of organism and mechanism being the very foundation of all things military.

In Melbourne a school of instruction for Officers has been founded. Other colonies would doubtless also have their own; but it is hoped that before long there will be one Australian military school or college. In New South Wales an United Service Institution has been established, and one in Melbourne, if not already opened, will be established immediately; premises for its accommodation were secured some time ago. There is also in Melbourne a rifle ammunition manufactory, the first step towards Australian factories for arms and warlike stores of all descriptions. Up till now ammunition and stores have, chiefly on economical grounds, been imported from England, which is all very well as long as there is free communication between

<sup>1</sup> "The Armed Strength of Switzerland," compiled in the Intelligence Branch of the Q.M.G. Department. By Major Russell, 14th Hussars. 1880.

England and Australia; but it is now admitted on all hands that in case of emergency Australia must be self-dependent.

"Good must result," said Sir Peter Scratchley, "from periodical consultations between the various military commandants of colonies;" and these Officers do constantly correspond and exchange ideas on various subjects. All of them being, or having been, "Imperial" Officers, they are entirely free from any provincial ideas about their own particular colony, serving that particular colony none the less with the utmost interest and devotion. And this is a great point, not only for themselves, but also because it is in their power to raise and enlarge the views of those under their command.

The payment of troops in the different Australian colonies in case of any question arising of soldiers from different colonies being called out to act together, might create some little difficulty. Their rates of pay differ considerably. In South Australia a militia Captain receives 12*l.* to 14*l.* per annum, while in Victoria his pay is 36*l.*, with extra allowances when in camp. A mounted Officer in South Australia receives about 5*l.* forage allowance, but in Victoria about 50*l.*, and there is as great a proportionate difference in the pay of non-commissioned Officers and men. If it should be considered necessary for troops brigaded together to be paid at a uniform rate, an agreement as to the amounts in each case will no doubt be arrived at by the representatives of different colonies.

No one can consider the more recent additions to the Australian forces without noticing especially the mounted infantry and the cadets.

These two institutions, though not peculiar to, are nevertheless particularly characteristic of, the country. For a nation of horsemen, what more natural arm than mounted infantry? Cavalry, one might perhaps say. Yes, but large numbers of regular cavalry are not called for—at any rate at present—on a continent complete in itself, like Australia or Tasmania, or the islands forming New Zealand; unlike Canada, abutting on the United States. It is very unlikely that any large body of European cavalry would be landed for an attack on Australia. There would be not only the difficulty of bringing them there, but also of maintaining them when landed; occasional scarcity of water, of which I shall have something to say presently, being one obstacle which would have to be surmounted.

If from any combination of circumstances at present unforeseen, the small amount of cavalry in Australia should require reinforcement, the native cavalry of India is tolerably near, highly efficient, and singularly suitable, as regards climate, for instance.

To well trained mounted infantry on their own ground, knowing the country, nothing should be impossible. No doubt they ought to be frequently exercised in considerable bodies; this, however, is not so easy, as they are very much scattered,—long distances often separating the dwelling places of different members of the force, with of course their horses,—for each man finds his own mount.

Although, as is always very properly insisted upon, mounted infantry must by no means be looked upon as cavalry—no charging,

or fighting on horseback—still, when cavalry is scarce, many of the duties properly belonging to it would have to be performed by mounted infantry. There is surely no reason why mounted infantry should not act efficiently as scouts and vedettes, and carry out reconnaissance duty in all its branches. Did not some of the German cavalry in 1870–71 arm themselves with the Chassepôts of French prisoners, for the purpose of using them when reconnoitring, becoming thereby something very much like mounted infantry? Victoria possesses a fine body of this arm; but up to the present they have been volunteers, receiving only a capitation grant. It is intended, I am informed, to bring them under the head of militia, which will doubtless be much in favour of their training and efficiency.

As to the cadets, it is almost superfluous to remark upon the plain and conspicuous testimony they bear to Australian military spirit, and what a substantial voucher they are for its continuance and extension. The Minister of Public Instruction for Victoria reported lately<sup>1</sup> that military drill was taught in 215 schools by 261 qualified teachers. The average attendance at the classes was 13,202 cadets, showing an increase on the previous year of 3 schools, 20 qualified teachers, and 652 scholars. There has also been an important change with regard to instruction, which has hitherto been conducted entirely by members of the educational staff, but is now in the hands of the Defence Department. Classes for instructing school teachers are established in the principal towns of Victoria, under non-commissioned Officers, and are attended regularly by more than 150 teachers. There is scarcely any large school now in which a company or detachment of cadets does not exist, learning drill and the use of firearms, combined, of course, with lessons of order, self-restraint, and prompt obedience.

Last October there was an encampment at Langwarrin for cadets alone, who turned out, to the number of about 2,000, for four days' continuous training. In New South Wales also, and other colonies, the cadet corps are meeting with much attention and encouragement.

One often hears about scarcity of water, and droughts in Australia. It may be that this very serious drawback affects the interior of the continent more than places near the coast, where a possible landing might be made, and in the neighbourhood of which campaigning might be carried on; but even here, near the coast, considerable difficulties in getting water in any respectable quantity are often encountered. This condition has always been looked upon in Australia as decidedly in favour of the defence, and against the attacking side (i.e., considering an attack by a foreign Power from without). Even at the annual and other encampments elaborate arrangements are necessary for the provision and storage of water. "Water holes" are dug to catch and hold the rain water. In some instances water is carried in casks, &c., for some distance, from the nearest wells. To a camp at Queenscliff (Victoria) water had to be transported by

<sup>1</sup> "Argus" (Melbourne), 5th October, 1889.

water trains, that is, tanks were placed on trucks and run down by rail.

It has long been known that there is a very large supply of water underground in various parts of the continent. It has long been thought that there is an inexhaustible supply, not yet discovered, in many other parts of the continent; and the Government Astronomer of New South Wales is said to have expressed his opinion that there are "several Murrays running underground," which we need only bore for in order to unearth, and place them at our service.

Another important consideration is the railway system. As to the rapidity with which the lines are being increased and extended, there is nothing to complain of, but it is only too plain that they have not been constructed with a view to military operations. It would be rather surprising, under the circumstances, if they had. Taking the long stretch of continuous railway from Adelaide through Melbourne and Sydney up to Brisbane, we find no less than three different gauges: from Adelaide to Melbourne the gauge is 5 feet 3 inches; in New South Wales it is 4 feet 8½ inches; and in Queensland it is 3 feet 6 inches.

Whether an extra rail could be laid inside or outside those already existing, as on the Great Western Railway, in England, I know not. Such a measure has been proposed, so that there may be an uniform gauge of (say) 4 feet 8½ inches throughout, or whether any of the numerous "safe and rapid transfer systems" offered by ingenious inventors for substituting other axles, or contracting and expanding the same axles on reaching a break of gauge, will be adopted, remains to be seen. But I will venture to prophesy that "advancing Australia" will before very long find some means of removing the inconvenience.

Long ago Sir Peter Scratchley directed attention to the utility of pack animals for transport in case of inland campaigning, the more so, as the employment of pack horses would be nothing new to Australians. But for military transport it might be better if a sufficient number of mules could be bred for this purpose. They might, perhaps, be utilized in time of peace for purposes other than military. They are hardier, cheaper, more easily subsisted,<sup>1</sup> and generally more suitable than horses for military transport. In Afghanistan they did capital service when employed during the latter part of the campaign in 1880, when they were to a great extent substituted for camels.

In most of the settled parts of Australia, however, the country is fairly level, so that wheel transport should be the rule, and pack animals the exception. Mountainous country, where wheels cannot go and pack animals are absolutely necessary, is not common in Australia.

In New Zealand, when the Maori war was going on, bullock carts were often used; light handy drays, capable of conveying half a ton, drawn by four or even two bullocks. They were rather slow, but

<sup>1</sup> Horses, however, are easily subsisted in Australia; and a horse in the bush generally "cuts his own bread and butter."

the only kind of transport to be relied on in winter, in some parts of New Zealand, where deep ravines and rivers had to be crossed, and journeys made over unmetalled roads, cut up by traffic and heavy rain. Pack horses also were used by the commissariat.

New Zealand is far enough off from the Australian continent to be open to a separate attack, should there be any inducement to make one. Owing to the position which New Zealand occupies as an advanced shield to the principal parts of Australia, an enemy coming from the eastward might perhaps first direct an attack upon her, all the more so as defences and military matters generally are in no such state of efficiency as they are in Australia. On the other hand, when richer Australia is within reach, offering a more tempting prize, New Zealand might be left in peace.

The New Zealand military forces are regulated by the "Defence Act, 1886." All male inhabitants between the ages of 17 and 55, including natives, are liable to serve in the militia; but there is a long list of exemptions. There are three classes:—

- (1.) Unmarried men, between 17 and 30.
- (2.) Married men, between 17 and 30, and unmarried men between 30 and 40.
- (3.) Married men between 30 and 40, and unmarried men, between 40 and 45.

The Governor shall (says the Act) cause the whole of the militia, or such part thereof as he may think proper, to be trained as a military force. No militia is compelled to attend for training and exercise for more than 168 hours (one week) in one year.

The Governor may cause a sufficient number of fit and able men, whether Europeans or Natives, to be embodied from time to time to serve as a permanent militia force in and throughout the country, or beyond the limits thereof, for resisting the common enemy, putting down rebellion, quelling disturbances, and preserving the peace. But the permanent militia in New Zealand was lately considerably reduced, and are principally stationed at the fortifications of the large ports. The volunteers consist of a number of small corps, an arrangement not conducive to efficiency? There is a fine body of armed constabulary numbering upwards of 800 men.

There are several points in which New Zealand differs from Australia. The inhabitants are scattered all over the country instead of being, as in Australia, chiefly near the coast. There are many more probable points of attack. The coast of New Zealand abounds with harbours all round, and as they and the whole coast line cannot all be made impregnable, a mobile inland force in case of attack is all the more necessary. When fighting was going on in New Zealand in 1864-65, the colonial volunteers often did very good service; and it was said by many that they were more suitable for fighting in the bush than the men of the British regiments. At that time the local militia could be employed only within a certain radius from their own province or settlement; that disability has now been removed. Whether New Zealand shall be included in any future Australasian federation scheme or not, it is important that uniformity in armament,

ammunition, and organization should prevail throughout the forces of Australia and New Zealand.

When we speak of unity and uniformity in Australian military matters it naturally occurs to us what a large territory West Australia is, and what a small force they have there as yet; only a few volunteers; no militia, no permanent force, and very little in the way of military works. But now that this important territory is about to put off its youthful character of Crown colony, and to assume the dignity of a self-governing community like its neighbours, or perhaps, to become like them a member of an Australian Dominion, it is certain that the defence arrangements will in due time be increased, and be modelled on a plan conformable to that Australian unity which is so desirable and necessary.

And now just a word or two on the nature of a possible attack on Australia.

As long as the world jogs along pretty quietly, there appears to be no special danger of any attack at all; particularly if it is everywhere known that these colonies are well armed and protected by sea and land. But whenever there has been any sign or probability of war between England and any great Power, immediately we have seen a "war scare" spring up in Australia; and no doubt we shall see it again. As to the form an attack might take, there have been many conjectures. A squadron composed of a few ships—some perhaps ironclads—capable of landing 2,000 men, or more, might be sent. It "might issue from the Russian port of Vladivostok or Petropaulowski, from the French port of Saigon, from San Francisco, or from some other quarter. Eluding our cruisers, and appearing suddenly before Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, or in Moreton Bay, it might capture the merchant vessels lying in the harbours, intercept any of the numerous vessels conveying valuable shipments of gold, or, under threat of bombardment, or after actually firing into one of the large towns, demand and obtain a payment of many millions of money."

It has been also suggested that armed merchant vessels possessing great speed and coal vitality might in time of war do great damage both to shipping and exposed ports, and could more easily evade our cruisers.

If it should be attempted to land troops for an attack, some place for the landing where there were no fortifications would be chosen. This fact should be considered by those who depreciate the necessity of inland forces for Australia. Should such a landing be effected, nothing but infantry, cavalry, and field artillery could stop the invaders from marching upon and entering any large town.

No one ever seems to think of an attack on Australia by the United States. Nevertheless, under certain circumstances such an event might occur. Mare Island (San Francisco), the United States naval arsenal and dockyard in that part, is only 6,460 miles from Sydney, or something like half the distance between Portsmouth and Sydney; Vladivostok, the Russian base, is about 5,000 miles from Sydney,

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Jerrold. Address to New Zealand Institute, October, 1881.

and was founded in 1860, with the intention of making it the chief naval station on the Pacific seaboard; considerable sums have been spent on its docks, piers, arsenals, and fortifications.

Captain J. C. R. Colomb<sup>1</sup> remarks: "The Russians moved without steam power military forces, stores, and guns backwards and forwards in 1854 over a sea line nearly 900 miles long in the North Pacific, in complete defiance of the combined naval forces of France and England. It is not wise to rely entirely on the power of fleets to prevent the despatch of expeditionary forces from either Vladivostok or Maré Island. There is no physical impossibility to prevent either Power working from these bases from transporting a complete corps of 5,000 men without any great effort to the shores of Australia. In war the only matter to be considered by them is the reasonable prospect of success. This prospect of success can only be estimated by our preparations for defence. In inverse proportion to our preparations for resistance will be the arguments in favour of attack."

I will only mention one more point from which it appears that an attack on Australia has by some been considered possible. That point is France, and the period, the reign of Napoleon III. Here is a paragraph on the subject from the *Life of Lord John Russell*,<sup>2</sup> published only lately: "There is still among Lord John's papers a singular document which purports to be a translation of a series of confidential questions issued by Napoleon III on the possibility of a French expedition, secretly collected in different ports, invading, conquering, and holding Australia. How the paper reached the Foreign Office, what credit was attached to it, what measures were suggested by it, there is no evidence to show." Although the integrity of this paper, and the existence of the project it treats of, are far from being proved, still no one can say decidedly that no such project existed.

There are some minor matters in the present constitution of the Australian forces on which I intended to remark; but I will pass them over, because it is evident that the present is a mere state of transition. The decided movement in favour of colonial federation, coupled with the late inspection of the defences and defenders by Major-General Edwards, leaves no room to doubt that the federation or amalgamation of the military forces into one Australian army must before long be carried out.

On this amalgamation one important measure entirely depends, viz., the strengthening and garrisoning of Thursday Island, King George Sound, Hobart, Port Darwin, and perhaps some other strategic points.

With a view to the provision of these garrisons, among other reasons, a moderate force of permanent infantry will probably be required. A body of permanent mounted infantry has lately been established in New South Wales, with horses provided by Government; instead, however, of being armed with infantry rifles, they are

<sup>1</sup> "Defence of Great and Greater Britain."

<sup>2</sup> By Spencer Walpole.



armed with carbines. If found advisable, the armament might of course be changed.

It is worthy of remark that in Australia considerable difficulty has been found in getting reserve men together when wanted. This partly comes from the colonies being so large in area, and large numbers of the men being frequently on the move from one district, or from one colony, to another. In Victoria therefore the volunteers, and especially the Rangers, have come to be looked upon as more or less supplying the place of reserves.

General Edwards has offered some suggestions, and proposed some lines on which to form the amalgamated Australian forces. I will endeavour to summarize his chief propositions:—

1. Federation of the forces.
2. Officer of rank of Lieutenant-General to be appointed, to inspect in peace time, and to command in war.
3. An uniform system of organization and armament, and a common Defence Act.
4. Amalgamation of "permanent" forces into a "fortress corps."
5. Federal military college for the education of Officers.
6. The extension of rifle clubs.
7. Uniform gauge for railways.
8. Federal small-arm manufactory, gun-wharf, and ordnance store.
9. An Australian uniform, Khaki colour, something like Victorian Mounted Rifles.

Also that a considerable number of cadres, especially of infantry militia, should be formed, so as to have great and speedy powers of expansion in case of necessity.

He considers the most suitable unit to be a brigade of all arms, to consist, at present, of about the following strength on peace establishment:—

	Men.
Infantry, 2 regiments of 2 four-company battalions, each battalion 300 strong .....	1,200
Mounted rifles, 1 regiment of 6 companies .....	360
Field artillery, 2 batteries, each 6 guns .....	180
Engineers, 1 field company.....	60
Commissariat, medical staff, &c.....	110
Total.....	1,910

When mobilized, such a brigade could quickly be expanded to 3,000 men; later, perhaps to 5,000.

Queensland and South Australia can supply a brigade each; New South Wales and Victoria, two brigades each, and later, it is hoped, three each.

These brigades would be readily adaptable to combined action. The Queensland brigade with the northern brigade of New South

<sup>1</sup> Of course for the present mounted infantry must in a certain sense supply the place of cavalry.

Wales, under the Queensland commandant, would form a division for the defence of the coast from Brisbane (N. terminus of the railway) southwards. A second division would be the two remaining brigades of New South Wales, under the New South Wales commandant, to cover Newcastle and Sydney. A third division for Melbourne would consist of two Victorian brigades, under the Victorian commandant; and a fourth division made up of the remaining brigade of Victoria and the South Australian brigade, under the South Australian commandant, would cover Adelaide.

Assembled, they would be an army of 30,000 or 40,000 men, and should be able to defend any point from Spencer's Gulf to Moreton Bay, or even Rockhampton, when the railway is completed.

The proposed fortress corps would consist of the amalgamated permanent forces of garrison artillery and submarine miners of different colonies, viz. :—

	About		
Queensland .....	104	artillery and submarine miners.	
New South Wales ...	464	"	"
Victoria.....	287	"	"
South Australia.....	48	"	"
Tasmania .....	24	"	"
	<hr/>		
	927 men.		

With some slight increase of its numbers the fortress corps would be utilized to garrison proposed defences at King George Sound, Thursday Island, and other important points. It will certainly be found that a proportion of infantry is necessary to its efficiency.

The interests of the whole continent demand, as General Edwards remarks, that railways to connect Port Darwin and West Australia with the other colonies be made as soon as possible. By and by other places will require consideration from a defensive point of view: New Guinea and Fiji, for example.

Now, having attempted to give an idea of the growth and present condition of these forces, together with an outline of the plans of the Australians for the formation of a national army, I think I am only expressing the sentiments of all present in saying that we very sincerely wish them success.

## THE LAND FORCES OF AUSTRALIA.

*Extract from Table of Strength and Composition of Australian Military Forces (from Papers of Sir Peter Scratchley)  
about 1882.*

Colony.	Paid forces (total Officers and men).				Unpaid Volunteer Force (total Officers and men).					Grand total, paid and unpaid.
	Permanent artillery.	Volunteer Militia.			Cavalry.	Artillery.	Engineers.	Torpedo.	Infantry.	
		Artillery.	Engineers.	Torpedo.						
New South Wales.....	319	300	60	100	1,310	—	—	—	—	2,119
Victoria .....	125	—	—	—	—	1,016	250	18	2,191	3,725
South Australia.....	50	150	—	—	780	—	—	—	900	1,880
Queensland.....	—	—	—	—	—	250	60	—	755	1,065
Total.....	494	450	60	100	2,120	1,266	328	328	3,816	8,789

EXTRACT FROM LATEST AVAILABLE SOURCES (IN ENGLAND), 1889.

*New South Wales.*

Regular artillery.....	370	all ranks.
Volunteer artillery.....	560	"
Engineer corps .....	101	"
Torpedo corps.....	160	"
Four infantry regiments.....	2,056	"
Reserve { 10 troops cavalry .....	3,240	"
corps { 4 batteries artillery .....		
{ 40 companies infantry.... }		
Total.....	6,487	"

*Victoria.*

Staff, &c.....	40	all ranks.
Permanent artillery.....	224	"
Other artillery .....	940	"
Cavalry .....	61	"
Engineers .....	182	"
Mounted rifles.....	1,017	"
Infantry (militia and rangers).....	2,099	"
Medical staff, ambulance, &c.....	80	"
Reserves .....	1,000	"
Total.....	5,613	"

*South Australia.*

Staff, &c.....	12	all ranks.
Permanent artillery.....	45	"
Field artillery.....	80	"
Garrison artillery .....	77	"
Cavalry .....	60	"
Militia infantry, 3 battalions.....	900	"
Volunteer infantry.....	1,130	"
Volunteer mounted infantry.....	550	"
Re-engaged.....	130	"
Total.....	2,984	"

*Queensland.*

Permanent force, and corps paid while on duty only.	{ 8 batteries artillery ....	}	about 2,270 all ranks.
	1 company engineers..		
	3 regiments infantry...		
	5 companies rifles.....		
	5 companies mounted in- fantry.....		
	Volunteers .....	"	1,030 "
	Total.....	"	3,300

This gives a total of 18,414 of all ranks for these four colonies, which about 7 years ago only mustered 8,789. The numbers are only approximations, and are exclusive of rifle clubs, marine corps, cadets, and police.

P.S.—I am informed on reliable authority that in the above table of strength at the present time the forces of Victoria are considerably understated. This remark probably applies also to the other colonies therein mentioned. The discrepancy arises from the "Year Books," &c., of 1889 (compiled at the end of 1888) being the latest at hand in England. A liberal margin must therefore be allowed for increase in strength since then.—R. E.

Lieutenant-Colonel G. T. CARRE, R.A.: Whilst touring through the Colonies during the summer months of last year, I interested myself in obtaining information as to their powers of self-defence; and with this object inspected, unofficially, the defences of Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, and Canada. On my arrival in England, I embodied the result of my research in a report, which has been accepted by the Intelligence Department at the War Office. I trust that my experiences may permit me to make a few remarks on the interesting lecture we have just heard read. I was throughout my travels much struck with the noble way in which each Colony has responded to England's call in defending their coast line and important towns from invasion. Victoria especially is in possession of a system of defence-works at Queenscliff, Crownsnest, Western Fort, and Swan Island, which, armed as they are by powerful guns of the latest manufacture, would in my opinion defy the most powerful armour-clad ships attempting to run through the double line of fire defending the entrance to Port Philip Harbour. The lecturer has informed us that with the exception of Western Australia, each Colony possesses a force of its own, consisting of a small number of permanent troops supplemented by a partially paid army and volunteer corps; and I judge from the tendency of his lecture that the object of his discourse is the consideration of combining these small armies under one organization for the defence of Confederated Australia and the Empire of which they form so important a portion. I discussed this question locally on several occasions, and left the Colonies with the idea that such an organization could only take place when Australia came under a supreme Government and had a greater assimilated interest in trade than at present. Tasmania and New Zealand possess neither the mineral wealth, commercial prosperity, nor population of Australia, neither does their financial status justify them in following the example of heavy expenditure (Victoria spent last year, in defence works and army, 300,000*l.*), or maintaining an army of partially-paid troops sufficiently large to defend their extended coast line. New Zealand depends on local defences. Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington, and Auckland have each their local defences, and, except by sea, have no direct communication. They thus stand, as it were, isolated. Auckland is strongly fortified, and I should like to quote it as an example. The beautiful harbour is defended on the north shore by a powerful battery of 9-inch and 6-inch B.L. guns, supplemented by a cross fire from the south shore by a battery of two 6-inch B.L. h.-p. guns. Similar batteries, situated further up the harbour, form a second line of cross fire, which is supported by a battery of smooth-bored guns massed on a hill which commands the whole. This system of defence is very powerful, but to perfect its protection Auckland requires organization. Though, as we have just been told, New Zealand possesses a Defence Act by which the whole population can be called out to defend the islands, yet I saw that in reality they have scarcely any men to properly man the guns or protect the defence works. Whilst speaking to the volunteers on the subject, they appeared to quite realize the fact; but at the same time they informed me that the owners of property and shopkeepers were quite prepared to educate themselves to become efficient gunners and infantry in sufficient numbers to man the guns with twenty men for each piece of ordnance, supported by an infantry corps of 2,000 men. Such an organization would, in my opinion, secure the defence of Auckland, and all the New Zealand ports.

SIR FREDERICK YOUNG, K.C.M.G. (Royal Colonial Institute): I have listened—as I have no doubt everyone present has—with great interest to the very important paper that has been read to us by the gallant Colonel. It would be, of course, impertinent in me, as a civilian, to indulge in any minute criticism as to the different modes in which a military man suggests that certain military matters should be undertaken; but this inference I draw from listening to Colonel Elias's paper, namely, that co-operation in military matters is as necessary as it is in all other matters, in order to ensure success. I was very much struck, therefore, with the general character of the tone running through the paper, and the contention that all the different parts of Australia would be much more efficiently defended, and the defence would be much more economically carried out, if all the great Colonies would unite under one head for the purpose of carrying out their military organization, and for the security of their great island continent. A remark was made by the gallant Officer who preceded me, to the effect that he did not think that anything of the kind could be carried out until Australia formed itself into what he was pleased to call a Nation. Now, the only difference I have with the gallant Colonel is this, that I would take exception to the word "Nation," as far as Australia is concerned. If it be regarded as a part of the great British Nation, then I entirely agree with him; but I should not like it to go forth that I, who have been for many years such a strong advocate of what is called, for want of a better name, Imperial Federation, should concur in the opinion that it was desirable that Australia, in the great movement which is now commencing, and which I think, before many years, will probably be carried out, should put herself into the position of becoming a separate Nation. If she is to continue an integral part of the great British nation—that is what I should wish, and I think what we all desire. The lecturer alluded to one or two points with which I was much impressed. He spoke of the subject of water, and of the impression that scientific experts had, that in many places where there was supposed to be a want of water from the absence of rivers appearing above ground, there were underground rivers, and that, if dug for, plenty of water would be discovered. I was struck with that remark, because only a few months ago I was in Bechuanaland, and there my attention was called to a fact, similar in some respects, by the Administrator, Sir Sidney Shippard, who has a very strong impression that in Bechuanaland, which is sometimes very erroneously called a waterless desert, there is plenty of water, which is to be found in these underground rivers. In referring to New Zealand, the lecturer also noticed that it was said that during the New Zealand war the volunteers did very good service on many occasions, and that an opinion prevailed in some quarters that for bush fighting they were better than regular troops. I can only say that my recent visit to South Africa has impressed me with a similar idea in reference to this being the case in wars that are carried on in countries of that description; and I have come back with the very strong impression indeed, that if in the past unhappy war in South Africa more use had been made of the South African volunteers, a different result might have been achieved. I will only make one further remark in reference to a system of national defence. It is very well for all parts of this great Empire to take every possible step in their power to defend their coasts by the most perfect system of military organization; but we must, as a great maritime Power, after all place our first line of defence in having the strongest Navy in the world. It appears to me that that is one of the chief points connected with the subject which has incidentally been touched upon—Imperial Federation—namely, that we should have a navy that does not come alone from the mother country, but is an associated navy of the mother country and the Colonies, formed and combined into a great national navy, to which all parts of the Empire, adequately represented, adequately contribute, and in the formation of which, and the policy connected with which they shall have their just and equitable share. And this can only be perfectly and successfully carried out under some system of National Federation.

Colonel F. CARDEW: I understand from Colonel Carré, that in speaking of federation he meant federation as colonies, and not as a separate nation. I think that before you could federate the forces of the different colonies it would be desirable to have a federation of the colonies themselves, because, as we

have heard the lecturer say just now, there are different Acts for the respective forces of the several colonies, and before you can organize those forces together, you must have an uniform Act for the whole. With regard to the organization of the forces, the lecturer stated that Major-General Edwards recommended that they should be organized systematically into brigades. That to my mind is rather a stereotyped idea of things. I think the constitution of the force should adapt itself more to the peculiarities of the country. In Australia, as in South Africa, I think we want less of cavalry and infantry proper, and rather more of mounted infantry. In my own experience of South Africa the mounted infantry seems to be the arm that should prevail, and it is undoubted that in our unhappy war with the Boers the other day, they had a decided superiority over us by reason of their mobility, and the precision with which they fired. Therefore, as I believe in Australia there are many volunteer corps of mounted infantry, I think they should be maintained and encouraged as mounted infantry, that is to say, mounted for the purposes of mobility so as to be carried on horseback rapidly from point to point, but taught to fight on foot as infantry. I remember in this theatre last year, during a discussion which followed a lecture on "Fleets and Fortifications," that Admiral Colomb's idea appeared to be that we were rather over-fortified, and that the money spent on fortifications should rather be applied to fleets. I think up to a certain point that is true, and that in Australia especially they are over-fortifying themselves. We heard just now of the establishment of large batteries of 9.2 and 6-inch guns for defending the different harbours, and of there not being sufficient gunners to work those guns, though it was added that the people are very willing to volunteer for the purpose; but I think when it came to the issue it would not do to rely upon this. I think, therefore, if I may be allowed to say so, that in the organization of the forces of Australia more attention should be paid to having mounted infantry than other arms. The fortifications themselves will always require a large number of troops to defend them who might be better employed in the open field. The Australian colonies, like other young nations, may possibly be ambitious to get large standing armies, but there is one question I should like to ask, which is, where is the enemy to come from? And I think you would find it a very difficult undertaking for a hostile force to land in any part of Australia as long as we have a fleet and maintain our supremacy on the sea.

The CHAIRMAN: We have present two gentlemen who have been immediately connected with the Australian forces, Colonel Owen, R.A., and Major Brownrigg, of the Rifle Brigade. I am sure this meeting will be glad to hear what either or both of those gentlemen have to say upon the subject before us.

Colonel OWEN, R.A.: It is with very great interest that I have heard the admirable paper by Colonel Elias, on the Australian forces. It is an excellent sequel to the paper which was published some few months ago in the Journal of this Institution, by my friend Colonel Disney, R.A., on the force of one of the colonies only. In this lecture Colonel Elias has shown how the several forces stand with regard to one another, and what their total strength would be. With regard to the forces of Australia, he says the militia may be looked upon as their regular force. I think that is rather misleading, although he did modify the statement afterwards. The regular force of Australia is only now growing: it has just begun to establish itself, being in reality the so-called "permanent forces" of the colonies. They have, as you see stated in the paper, about 900 men, who are regular soldiers. These "permanent" forces come, generally speaking, under our English Army Act; they live in barracks, and are distinctly professional soldiers; they are the regular soldiers of Australia, undoubtedly. There is no difficulty so far in getting very excellent men there for these professional forces; they are certainly small in number at present, but it would be easy, I believe, to make them ten times as strong and yet maintain the same physique. There are always men of good character ready to serve; the pay is undoubtedly better than that of an English soldier. The first speaker (Lieut.-Colonel Carré, R.A.) stated that the Australian militia forces are very expensive. As a matter of fact I think you will find that it is a very inexpensive force, as far as payment goes, but the speaker has taken, no doubt, the whole expense, including fortifications, guns, and so on. If you take the expenses of the personnel alone, it is very small. The Victorian militia

soldier costs about 12*l.* per annum, inclusive of his clothing. South Australia, at present, is comparatively a poor colony, and is saddled with that enormous piece of territory you see shown on the map, which is unproductive so far; notwithstanding this, the heroism of a great, young nation is absolutely starting a railway, and has carried it a considerable way up across that desert, while the same colony has already had the glory of carrying a telegraph line right across the great continent of Australia. She cannot afford to spend very much on her forces, and her infantry militiaman costs per annum, pay and clothing combined, about 8*l.*, which I am sure is exceptionally cheap. The admirable qualities of the material constituting the militia soldiers of Australia must have struck any one who has had anything to do with colonial forces: the intelligence of the men, the zeal of the Officers, and the physique generally of the men. As to discipline, I am sure that all Officers who have had to command Australian forces will agree that they are perfectly amenable to discipline. I have had the pleasure of commanding the forces of South Australia for three years, and I found the Officers and men perfectly amenable to strict discipline. The lecturer states that there is no such thing as a compulsory service for the militia, and then he quotes Canada as a good example to the contrary to follow. As a matter of fact in the colonies of South Australia and Queensland the law is compulsory service by ballot for the militia, if the numbers laid down as a minimum are not volunteered for, and further, in case of emergency (by proclamation), a reserve of militia can be obtained, in such numbers as the Government wish to obtain. Not only that, but the law allows these militiamen when so called out to be sent to any part of Australasia, to be placed under other colonial commandants or colonial Officers; so that these two colonies already have a law which enables them to use their militia force as a federal force, acting if necessary in common. The lecturer has referred to the volunteer mounted infantry; it is an excellent force, thoroughly appropriate to the country. In a land where the distances are very great, you have to bring your country forces a long way down to the coast if you want to collect a large number together to resist attack. Of course the best men as to physique will not be those necessarily in the neighbourhood of the large towns, but those who are leading a hardy country life. These are men who are continually on horseback, and excellent mounted infantry they make. When raising such a force for the first time in South Australia, we found that without the slightest difficulty we could obtain comparatively a large number of such corps, had funds been available. A capitation grant of 3*l.* 10*s.* per man and horse was the Government allowance for efficient. The zeal of the men was astonishing. I have known men come eighteen to twenty miles for drill, and go out again the same evening after riding and marching at drill for three or four hours; the harder the work, the better they seemed to like it. In the first year one small body marched down eighty miles in thirty-six hours, and they had not a sore back when they came in. I do not think that force is sufficiently encouraged in the colonies. The great thing after all, with regard to the Australian forces, is that we must not be in too great a hurry. We must not give too much advice to the colonies; we may look upon them as sons, and the old country as a mother, if we like, but when sons are grown up, you know that however good advice a mother may tender, they do not always follow it. It does not seem to me necessary that political federation should come before military federation; there is no reason why the Australian colonies should not act in common for defence, even without such political federation, although we may hope in time some scheme of Imperial federation may become possible. It seems to me that the regular force ("permanent forces") is the first force which the colonies should take occasion to use in common, and I do hope that we shall see the day when there shall be batteries of Australian artillery in England, and batteries of English artillery taking their place in Australia. There will be, no doubt, some small permanent force of infantry formed in all the colonies of Australia. In America, as we know, there are a small regular federal army, and large forces of States militia. I am afraid I have passed the ten minutes' limit of time allowed. I will only add that anybody who has had to do with Australian forces must always take that deep interest in them which I do in those of South Australia, and must see the value which they would be to the colonies themselves, and even to the Greater Britain in time of need.



Major BROWNRIGG (Rifle Brigade) : I think I may say that I am probably the last arrival present from Australia—having only landed in England a week ago. I have heard with great pleasure the lecture of my old friend Lieutenant-Colonel Elias, and can thoroughly endorse everything he has said. There is one point in his lecture, however, I should like to have seen a little more stress laid upon, and that is the utter want of unity in military matters in Australia. Every Colony raises its own little army, and visitors are surprised at the small but well disciplined permanent forces, at the excellency of the infantry, the well-trained garrison gunners, the superior field artillery, the advanced state of the engineers, whether field or submarine, and, above all, at what may be called our essentially Australian type of troops—the mounted rifles; but there is no military unity whatever between the Colonies. Each body of troops serves under a different Discipline Act, is raised in a different manner, the pay is dissimilar, they are armed differently, and, I am sorry to say, even the manner of drilling does not always agree. In Victoria, and, I believe, in the other Colonies, no militiaman is bound to serve outside his own Colony. Every Colony has an elaborate scheme of defence, but only as far as its own shores are concerned. Preparations are made for the defence of Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, &c., both by land and sea, but the idea of one Colony supporting or giving assistance to another is, I believe, scarcely touched upon. In fact, the Australian Colonies are inclined to look upon one another very much as France or Germany look upon Belgium. Of course this want of unity causes, whenever there is a chance of England being involved in war, what Major-General Edwards calls in his report “unseemly war scares,” when money flows like water, and it is too late to carry out anything but hasty reforms. I think Major-General Edwards’s proposal, of units consisting of brigades of all arms, each Colony to raise from one to three of such units, an excellent idea, and I sincerely trust it will be carried out. There does seem now a little chance of some unity being established between the Australian Colonies, and I trust the meeting which is to be held shortly in Melbourne will give sufficient prominence to military unity. As Colonel Owen has very properly remarked, the Colonies do not like to be dictated to; but this is such an important question, viz., the safety of Australia, that I think (with all respect be it said) a little more pressure might be exerted by the Home Government than has hitherto been done. It seems a great pity that these fine Australian forces should remain in what I may almost call a recruit stage, or like the proverbial bundle of sticks, easily broken singly, when together they might form such a compact body. Of course if a war were to break out, and the danger of an invasion of Australia imminent, some sort of union in military matters would be established on the spot, but it would have to be done in a hurry, would probably be faulty, and would, certainly, be most expensive. In my humble opinion, a General Officer of experience should at once be sent out to Australia. This Officer should be under no particular Colony, but should inspect the forces of each, and give advice to the Governments—which advice, I am sure, would be followed whenever practicable. In time of war he would, of course, assume the exclusive command of all the Australian forces. I must state, in conclusion, that the great want of military union in Australia is thoroughly felt by all military men in the Colonies; and I am glad to say that the usual petty intercolonial jealousies are, as far as I can see, quite unknown among the soldiers of Australia. I have lately had the opportunity of discussing this question with all the military commanders of Australia—with one exception; and I think I may say they quite agree with the remarks I have just uttered; and, if it were in their power to create an united Australian force, it would be done in half an hour.

Colonel J. F. OWEN : I hold in my hand what I look upon as the germ of future common action by the military forces of Australia. It is the Report of the first Annual Meeting of the General Council of the Rifle Associations of Australasia (including Tasmania). I think it is a most satisfactory commencement of working on a common basis. These rifle associations are composed of members of the various forces of the several Colonies.

Lieutenant-Colonel HUTTON : There is one point to which I venture to call attention. The lecturer has alluded to Mounted Rifles and Mounted Infantry in a manner which might lead to misunderstanding. The two things, according to our

understanding of the subject here in England, are absolutely distinct. Mounted Infantry or Mobile Infantry are infantry soldiers, pure and simple, who are mounted for purposes of mobility only upon any animal that may be most suitable to the country and to the campaign in which they take part. The corps which is advocated by Colonel Owen, Major Brownrigg, and by the lecturer, and which has been raised by the Australian Colonies, so far as I have been told, are Mounted Rifles. Such a force, though intended to act on foot, has duties and functions which are not included in the rôle of the mounted infantry soldiers, who will, in our future campaigns, be given such means of locomotion as may be required to enable them to act as infantry in concert with cavalry. In Australia there are, as I understand, no cavalry, consequently the corps of Mounted Rifles will have to perform such duties as usually fall to the lot of cavalry in war. Such duties Mounted Infantry are not intended to perform. It was the confusion in the use of the two terms which I wished to make clear.

Major BROWNRIIGG: They are mounted infantry in Victoria.

The CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, at this hour of the evening it would scarcely be proper that I should detain you at any length with remarks of mine. Were I to do so I should probably overstep your dinner hour, for during the last twelve years the question which is before us to-day has been one of the principal objects of my attention. I was asked so far back as 1877, when I was Governor of the Straits Settlements, to go to the Australian colonies to advise their several Governments as to the steps which I would recommend respecting their defences, and I did so. It so happened that the Government of one of the colonies fell vacant just about that time, and I remained in Australasia from that date until March last, first as Governor of South Australia, then as Governor of New Zealand, and have been more or less the adviser of the Australasian Governments in matters relating to their defences from that time until I left the colonies. The question which the lecturer has put before us is a very large one. He dwelt mainly on what may be termed, for distinction, the land defences. You will observe that he did not enter into the naval question. Now, I venture to think, as one speaker has observed, that this is really more a naval than what we ordinarily term a military question. If Australia is not part of the British Empire, if she is not defended by the British fleet, she cannot hope to remain Australia; she may be attacked by other great naval Powers; by Russia, by France, perhaps by the United States, by Germany, and slices may be cut off here and there. It will be impossible for a country which at present only has a population of about three millions to hold that enormous continent, which is about the size of Europe, against the forces of one of the great naval Powers, with a population of about forty or more millions each. Besides the question of the defence of Australia, there is also that of the organization of its forces for other purposes than for its defence. But the question of the organization of the forces for those purposes must be left until the time, as one speaker has justly mentioned, when Australia becomes a federated country, when all its business can be dealt with from one focus, and when, amongst other causes, by reason of their increased population and their increased revenues, the Federal Government may desire to take part in military operations which may be undertaken by the British Empire in any portion of the globe. But, as I said before, the defence of Australia is mainly a naval question. When I was sent there in 1877, I of course had to make reports to the various Governments. Those reports may now be seen, and that paragraph, which my friend the lecturer did me the honour to read, and which is designated as a speech made in 1884, was really an extract from a report made in 1877; and I do not mind saying that at the time when I was called upon to report to the Australian Governments with reference to their defences, I had much more trouble in making up my mind to that paragraph than to any other portion of the document. The difficulty was to show how Australia could probably be attacked. You see the distances the lecturer has mentioned from possible hostile ports to Australian harbours—distances of thousands of miles. When we think of our squadrons and fleets in every portion of the globe, when we think that we are to have an Australasian naval force capable of dealing with any hostile force that may make its appearance in Australasian waters, when we think of the defences of Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Auckland, and so forth, we must see that they all

form part and parcel of the naval defence of Australasia, just as the defences of Portsmouth, Plymouth, Pembroke, and Cork are part and parcel of the naval defence of Great Britain and Ireland. That is not generally understood. People talk about the matter as being under two categories: they speak of the Navy as one thing, and the forts of Portsmouth, Plymouth, Malta, Melbourne, Sydney, Auckland, and other fortified places as another. Why, they are all part and parcel of the same thing, viz., the naval defence; so much so, that I have heard it said by people who have experience in these matters—and I must say I am disposed to agree with them—that it is a question whether those defences should be under the Admiralty instead of under the War Office. I am speaking as a person who has had to deal with these things now for the last thirty-five years, but, having been absent from England, I have not thought it desirable to take part in the various discussions which have arisen on the question. I am sure that the minds of the people of England generally will be right upon the subject, and that the minds of those naval men who understand the question thoroughly are in accordance with the views that I venture to express. The question before us is really this. We want first and foremost forces to hold the fortified ports of Sydney, Melbourne, and the rest, and to work and defend the batteries erected for the defence of those ports, where the fleet will coal and refit. At the same time I may observe that the defences referred to protect the centres of wealth of the colonies concerned against any naval attack that might be made by cruisers that may elude the vigilance of the British squadrons. That is the real position. Then what is the force wanted? You want first of all permanent artillery, which has been referred to by Colonel Owen; you also want submarine miners. You want a certain number of infantry to co-operate with the artillery. You want also, according to the nature of the country, a certain number of mounted infantry, to aid in the defence of the coast about the fortified places. If you go beyond that, you get into another category. Contrary, I know, to the opinion of many, I do not concur in the idea of forces proceeding from Brisbane to Adelaide, for instance, to co-operate in the defence when there is a liability of attack from a naval force anywhere. I do not believe men will go from Sydney to Melbourne, from Melbourne to Brisbane, from Brisbane to Adelaide, for the purpose of co-operating in the defence; and what is more, I do not think they should. The fact is that, in my judgment, these proposals for the amalgamation of forces, however desirable in themselves, are not germane to the point first to be considered. These proposals, however, do come into play with reference to the creation of a force which shall be capable of co-operating with the armies of the British Empire generally, and which, as the population of Australia increases, and as her revenues increase, shall be able to take part in any war in which the British Empire may be engaged. Although it may be gathered that I to some extent express disagreement with the views very commonly entertained on these matters, yet still I do look forward to the time when there may be such a force. I look forward to the time, and no one has advocated the measure more strongly than I have, when there may be an Imperial federation, when there may be a federation of the Australian colonies, and when British ships will fight alongside of Australasian ships, and Australasian land forces will co-operate with British troops in doing battle with the common foe.

I am sure you will all agree with me, that our warmest thanks are due to the lecturer for the able and thorough way in which he has placed his views before us.