

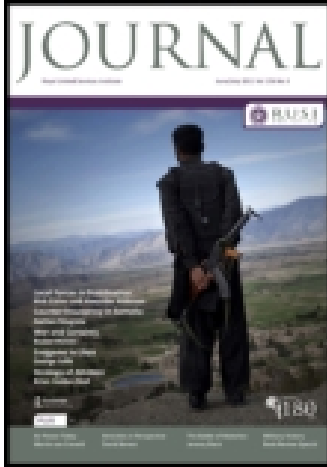
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THE TRUE COST OF THE VOLUNTARY SYSTEM FOR EVERY BRANCH OF OUR MILITARY FORCES.

By GEORGE F. SHEE, M.A.

Tuesday, 20th June, 1905.

Colonel the Lord RAGLAN, Commanding the Royal Monmouthshire
Royal Engineers (Militia), in the Chair.

"I wish to plead for your several and future consideration of this one truth; that the notion of Discipline and Interference lies at the very root of all human progress or power; that the 'let-alone' principle is, in all things which man has to do with, the principle of death. . . . and that therefore it is only in the concession of some great principle of restraint and interference in national action that we can ever hope to find the secret of protection against national degradation."—*Ruskin*.

"It is apparent from the figures which appear in the annual Estimates, that this Army, imperfectly prepared, wasteful in its methods, and unsatisfactory in its results, is one of the most costly machines ever devised."—*The Rt. Hon. H. O. Arnold-Forster, Secretary of State for War. Memorandum on the Army Estimates, 1904.*

FOR the second time your Council has done me the honour of inviting me to address you on a matter of national importance. Three years and a half ago, I had the privilege of giving a lecture in this theatre on the "Advantages of Compulsory Service." To-day I propose to deal with the "True Cost of the Voluntary System." When I spoke here three years ago, the question of adopting the modern, just, and truly democratic system of universal military service or training (the *principle* is the same in both cases, and both are as different from conscription as level justice is from lynch law), this question was still regarded as quite an academic one, entirely outside the range of practical politics, and rather a matter for the student or political thinker than for the man of business, or even for the practical soldier or sailor. Well, gentlemen, a good deal of water has flowed under London Bridge since then, and I fancy that it has carried with it some of the incrustation of age-long prejudice, some of the ignorance which has stood, and still stands, in the way of the acceptance of a very simple truth that, to quote the words of an historic report, "it is the duty of every citizen of military age and sound physique to be trained for the national defence, and to take part in it should emergency arise." There may be some indeed, who think that the progress of the idea which I ventured to place before you three years ago, has not been as rapid as they would have wished. The weary traveller, toiling up the mountain side in the hot glare of the sun, and finding neither running water to slake his thirst nor tree to give him shade, is apt to think that he is making very little progress indeed. It is only when he reaches some

point from which he gets a clear view of the distant spot from which he started that he realises with joy how far he has got on his way, and is encouraged to push on steadily to his goal. We experience much the same in tracing the growth of an idea. There have, no doubt, been times when those who have been earnestly working for the great idea of national service have felt inclined to lose hope, discouraged by the dead weight of national apathy, and by the utter absence of courageous leadership on the part of those whose position and influence would make it so easy to transform that apathy into earnest effort, that indifference into enthusiasm and co-operation. Not satisfied with refusing to help, such men have too often stooped to win a cheap applause by the repetition of those insincere platitudes—so transparently false that they hardly raise a cheer even from the groundlings—to the effect that the freeborn Briton “will never stand” any system which would oblige him to fulfil the primary duty of citizenship (a duty recognised and fulfilled by every modern nation in the world, except the United States), and that there is something particularly noble and inspiring in the idea of paying other men to defend your country, or allowing still others to attempt to fulfil in their own persons a duty that can only be properly carried out if shared by all.

These, I say, are not encouraging features. But if we glance back to where we were three and a half years ago, I think you will agree with me that the progress of the idea of national service has not been unsatisfactory if all the circumstances are taken into account. Let me recall to your minds a few of the facts which may be taken to counter-balance the unfavourable elements I have referred to. In the first place the National Service League has been founded, and is steadily, though too slowly, gaining ground in its educative work among the British people, and it is particularly gratifying to note that some of those who were my opponents three and a half years ago have since become active members of the League, a circumstance which is as strong a tribute to their generosity of mind and public spirit as it is to the truth of the principle which the League represents. Then came the Report of the Royal Commission on the South African War. There is one passage which stands out most significantly in that report. It is that in which it is stated that “The true lesson of the War is, that no military system will be satisfactory which does not contain powers of expansion outside the limits of the Regular Forces of the Crown, whatever that limit may be.” But the Report contained a further contribution of the greatest weight in the shape of the special Memorandum signed by Sir George Taubman-Goldie, a man of wide experience, both as an administrator of great British territories, and as a practical business man. The conclusion he came to, after the most careful study of the whole evidence which was submitted to the Royal Commission, is so important that I make no apology for recalling it to your notice. Speaking of the lessons of the War, he said, that “the second and far more serious defect in our military preparations for the war was in not having a sufficient number of trained men to furnish (by voluntary effort in a national emergency) the large reinforcements demanded both by the wastage of war, and by the vast area of the operations.” And, referring to the want of a system of national military training, he stated that “This particular defect in our military organisation has cost the country no less than a hundred millions sterling; that it was a

principal indirect cause of the outbreak of war; that for some months it left the United Kingdom practically denuded of trained soldiers; and that it produced the most perilous international situation in which the Empire has found itself since the days of Napoleon. Only an extraordinary combination of fortunate circumstances, external and internal, saved the Empire during the early months of 1900, and there is no reason to expect a repetition of such fortune if, as appears probable, the next national emergency finds us still discussing our preparations."

It will be seen that Sir George Goldie, while indicating the nature of the gravity of the disease, pointed to national military training as the only real remedy, a conclusion with which Lord Esher, Sir Frederick Darley, and Sir John Edge declared themselves in accord. In my humble opinion, the nation is deeply indebted to Sir George Taubman-Goldie, as the first Englishman, occupying a prominent position, who laid before the country in a clear and authoritative statement, the true road to reform and national efficiency. The Report of Lord Elgin's Commission was followed, last year, by the Report of the Duke of Norfolk's Commission on the Militia and Volunteers. It is hardly necessary to remind this audience of the nature of the task entrusted to the Commissioners, or of the fact that the great majority of its members had been in the past, or were at that time, officers of the forces into the efficiency of which they were asked to inquire. And, in view of the misrepresentation to which the Commission was subjected on the issue of its Report, it may not be out of place to say here that I have the highest authority for stating that, with possibly one exception, no Member of the Commission approached his task with the slightest prejudice in favour of compulsory training; the direct contrary was, in fact, the case.

The question put to them was "Whether any, and if any, what changes are required in order to secure that these forces" (*i.e.*, the Militia and Volunteers), "shall be maintained in a condition of military efficiency, and at an adequate strength?" To which they replied, "We humbly submit as the answer, to which, after a protracted enquiry, our most earnest consideration compels us to subscribe, that Your Majesty's Militia and Volunteer Forces have not at present either the strength or the military efficiency required to enable them to fulfil the functions for which they exist; that their military efficiency would be much increased by the adoption of the measures set forth in the fourth section in this Report, which would make them valuable auxiliaries to the Regular Army; but that a home defence Army, capable, in the absence of the whole or the greater portion of the Regular Forces, of protecting this country against invasion, can be raised and maintained only on the principle that it is the duty of every citizen of military age and sound physique to be trained for the national defence, and to take part in it should emergency arise."

No one who has taken the trouble to read the evidence given before this Commission can fail to realise that the voluntary system, as applied to what should be the *national* forces, has been, is, and always will be a failure, simply because of its inherent weakness. And though the abuse and the grossly unfair criticism with which this courageous utterance of the truth was greeted by a large section of the Press are calculated to sadden the thoughtful observer, there can be no doubt that the courage and public spirit of the Com-

missioners has had an effect on public opinion, which will bear fruit in the future. *Magna est veritas et praevalabit.*

Another Report which incidentally gave the strongest confirmation to the proposal that a national basis should be laid for the recruitment of our forces was that of the Inter-departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration. I think that when national service has been adopted in this country, and has come to be part and parcel of the mental atmosphere of the ordinary citizen, people will look back in amazement at finding that a business-like nation, such as we claim to be, could have listened calmly to some of the passages in this Report, and have then proceeded to sing the usual pæans as to the glorious voluntary system. We have, for instance, the Committee declaring that "the examination of the official representatives of the recruiting system left upon the minds of the Committee the conviction, confirmed as it was by the evidence of other witnesses, that it would be as reasonable to argue from criminal statistics to the morals of the great mass of the people, as it would be to argue to their physical conditions from the feeble specimens that come under the notice of recruiting officers." And shortly after this unconsciously cynical admission as to the real nature of the boasted voluntary system, we find Sir Ian Hamilton, fresh from witnessing the achievements of the Japanese Army, writing to the Secretary of State for War:—"This War has burnt into my mind, in a way nothing else could have done, that the condition of our Army constitutes a terrible danger to the existence of our Empire. I have learnt here that nothing but the very best will do, and we too often have the worst."

These are some of the symptoms which show that the truth is gradually making its way, in spite of the enormous obstacles raised by prejudice, by ignorance, by cant, and by personal interest. But notwithstanding all that has happened to undermine the lath and plaster wall of the voluntary system, which has been painted to look like marble, tradition and ignorance die hard, and there is no doubt that a very large majority of the people of this country have a vague idea that the voluntary system is, on the whole, a cheaper system than that of universal service in any shape or form. It is true that most people are aware that we do actually pay more per head for our soldiers than do such nations as Germany, France, Austria, Italy, Japan, or Russia. But the man in the street comforts himself with the reflection that on the one hand we get really genuine professional soldiers and a large number of splendid Volunteers, all very superior to the foreign article; and that on the other hand we avoid that dreadful interference with trade and industry which other nations submit to and which means, according to this argument, a terrible loss to the country in productive power and the accumulation of capital.

Now I hope to-day to prove that not only is our system enormously costly in actual hard cash—far more costly than any but a very few experts are aware of—but that we do not get any adequate value for our money, and that, by blind adherence to an obsolete system, we are losing so much in that power of organisation for national efficiency which national service confers that, if it were not needed on military and naval grounds, it would be the highest wisdom of clear-sighted statesmanship to adopt it for the good of the commonwealth.

But before plunging in *medias res* I must say a word in explanation of my whole attitude in this matter in order to guard against misunderstanding, though I confess that my experience of the difficulty of making oneself clearly understood does not lead me to hope that

I shall be altogether successful. You will notice that the title of my lecture is a somewhat cumbersome one, and some of you may have wondered why I did not merely call it: "The True Cost of the Voluntary System." The reason is this: I wanted to make it clear from the first that I am not attacking the voluntary system as applied to our Regular Army. I may perhaps claim to have studied the subject sufficiently to be aware of what every schoolboy knows, that our Regular Forces, those which are maintained in time of peace to garrison and police our Empire, and to form the spear-head of the lance which should represent the armed strength of the nation, that these forces can only be recruited on the voluntary system, simply because instead of being required for the defence of the mother country, as the National Armies of other countries are, they are primarily and essentially intended to fight, or to keep the *Pax Britannica*, abroad. What I am attacking is the mistake that has been made in extending a principle which is legitimate in the case of professional forces to what I may call, broadly, the National Militia—the force which represents the nation armed in its own defence, and thereby, incidentally and automatically, endowed with the power of expanding the professional Regular Forces in time of war. This departure from a principle which has been the foundation and the guarantee of national greatness in the past, and which is at the root of the national strength and efficiency of all those modern nations which have adopted or revived it; this departure I conceive to be unwise in itself and highly detrimental in its results.

One more remark and I shall have finished this long preamble, which must I fear tempt some of you to call out to me, with the judge in the old French play: "*Venons au déluge*." Though I have said that I do not attack the voluntary system as applied to the Regular Army, you will presently find me using facts as regards the costliness and the waste in that Army as illustrations of my indictment of the voluntary system as extended to the whole of our national forces. Is there anything illogical in that proceeding? Certainly not; for my point is that, though the Regular Army must be voluntarily recruited, and therefore costly, a large part of its costliness and inefficiency is *absolutely due to the fact that it is not founded on a system of national training*, but on recruitment from what has been recently called (see the Report of the Inter-departmental Committee Physical Deterioration) "the residuum of the population." In other words, though I would not for a moment propose that our Regular Army should be recruited by compulsory service, I absolutely deny that the adoption of universal military training would be of no use to the Regular Army, and would therefore have no military as distinct from national advantages, as has frequently been urged even by some competent authorities such as Sir J. Colomb. So far am I from admitting such a proposition that I contend that with the progress of industrial life and the concomitant decay of the national military spirit, the cost of our Regular Forces will grow in the same ratio as their military value diminishes, unless by the adoption of national service the basis of their recruitment—the seminary of our soldiers—becomes truly national. In other words, paradoxical as it may sound, the plain truth is that *we cannot in the long run maintain our voluntary professional forces unless we base them ultimately upon national forces trained compulsorily*.

A.

WHAT WE PAY.

1. Taking the Army Estimates for 1904-05, and supposing that the establishment of 227,000 men voted is obtained—an almost unheard-of event—we find that the gross Army Estimates were £32,370,000. On this basis the cost per head, reckoning all British troops actually serving in the Home and Colonial Army, was £142: 12s.

2. But in order to get at the real cost of our military forces we must of course, as in the case of all foreign Armies, include the Military Works Vote; this was, for 1904-05, £3,600,000, giving £35,970,000 as the total, or a cost per head of £158: 8s. Sir Alfred Turner gives the total cost of the Army, including Supplementary Estimates, as £46,800,000 in 1904-5. It will be seen, therefore, that my calculations are on the most favourable basis, since I am taking the total cost at ten millions sterling less than he has placed it.

3. I have so far of course calculated on the only possible method by which we can compare the cost of our Army with that of foreign nations, namely, the cost of "the number of men kept continually under arms"; in other words, the permanent military forces. This of course excludes the Reserves, Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers, just as it excludes the vast fully-trained Reserves in the case of other Powers. If we deduct the cost of the Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers and the Military Works Vote, we find that the Estimates for the Home and Colonial Troops were £29,852,000, giving a cost per head of £131: 10s.

4. If we include the cost of British and native troops in India (£19,000,000) and the Military Works Bill we get 442,000 Regular Troops costing £54,971,649, giving a cost per head of £124: 6s.; or, excluding the Military Works Bill, 442,000 Regular Troops costing £51,371,649, or £115 per head.

5. Finally, in order to give every possible basis of calculation, the Army Estimates, including Military Works Vote, but *excluding* the cost of the Auxiliary Forces, were £33,452,000, giving as the cost per head, £147.

We find therefore that the cost per head of our Regular Army (excluding India) is, on the lowest basis, £131: 10s., and on the higher, £158: 8s. These figures are very high, though I may remark that they are small in comparison to the cost per head of the United States Army—the most expensive in the world. But just because the cost of the Regular soldier is very high, I wish at once to enter an emphatic protest against the absurd comparisons that are constantly being made, both in Parliament and on the platform, between the cost of the Regular soldier and the cost per head of the Militiaman, Yeoman, or Volunteer. For instance, it has been repeated *ad nauseam* that while the Regular soldier costs £94: 19s.: 1d., the Militiaman £20: 11s.: 8d., the Yeoman £22: 5s.: 8d., the Volunteer costs only £7!¹ Whereupon the speaker generally proceeds to ask, amid thunders of applause from an ignorant public, whether the Regular soldier is really worth thirteen Volunteers or nearly five Militiamen or Yeomen, and urges that if any reduction is made in our military

¹ I greatly regret to see that Sir Alfred Turner has again fed a gullible public with this utterly fallacious comparison.

forces it should be in the costly Regulars, not in the Volunteers, "the cheapest force in the world." I confess that when I hear such arguments as this I do not know whether to be more amazed at the men who use them—most of whom ought to know better—or at the way in which they are swallowed by the public.

It is only an instance of the extraordinary looseness of thought which prevails in all matters connected with the question of national defence, a looseness of thought which is actually fostered and encouraged by a certain type of popularity-hunting politicians. A moment's reflection will, of course, show that you might as well compare the cost of hiring a motor for a week with the annual cost of keeping a carriage. If anyone were to tell an audience as a result of such an argument that obviously a motor was far cheaper than a carriage, or that a carriage costs thirteen times as much as a motor, it is probable that some gentleman at the back of the hall would suggest to the speaker that he should make a short stay at Hanwell or some such restful spot.

The Regular soldier serves all the year round, while *none* of the other categories mentioned serve continuously, and, as regards the Volunteers, a considerable number do not serve as long as a week continuously. If we compare the cost on the only possible real basis, *the actual time of service*, we find that:—

1. The Regular costs, including the cost of the permanent staff of the Auxiliary Forces, £131: 10s. for 365 days, or 7s. 8½d. a day. Or, if we add the cost of Military Works, part of which is certainly due to Militia and Yeomanry, the Regular costs £147: 6s. for 365 days, or 8s. a day.
2. 103,000 Militiamen cost £817,000. Cost per head, £7: 18s. for 28 days = 5s. 7d. a day = £102 a year. If we distribute the first training at the dépôt over the six years' annual training, we might take the cost as, roughly, 5s. a day, or £91 a year.
3. 38,000 Yeomen cost £468,000. Cost per head £16 for 18 days = 15s. 6d. a day = £277: 16s. a year.
4. As regards the Volunteers, it is very difficult to ascertain the average number of complete days' service given by the individual. But, taking it that the number of hours' drill amount to 4 days a year continuous training, and that 50 per cent. of the Force do 6 days in camp in alternate years, *i.e.*, each Volunteer an average of 3 days in each year, we get 7 days as the *average* equivalent of continuous service performed by each Volunteer. 240,000 Volunteers (including all "enrolled," not necessarily "efficient") cost £1,220,000. Cost per head £5 for 7 days = 14s. 3¼d. a day = £250: 10s. a year.

If only those present at the Annual Inspection (198,000 in 1903-4) were reckoned as "efficients," the cost per head would be £6: 7s.: 3d., or 18s. 2d. a day = £339 10s. a year. On the other hand, if, as has been sometimes claimed, the *average* equivalent service given by the Volunteers amounts to 14 days' continuous training, we get the annual cost per head as only £125: 5s. a year.

To sum up this matter of the comparative cost of the different categories of our forces on the same basis:—

The Regular costs £131: 10s. or £147: 6s. a year.
 The Militiaman costs £102 or £91 ,,
 The Yeoman costs £277: 16s. a year.
 The Volunteer costs from £250: 10s. to £125: 5s., let us say, £187: 17s. a year.

I now give a comparative table showing the cost per head of the chief Armies of the world. I have, of course, taken precisely the same basis in each case, namely, the total effective peace-footing of the permanent military forces divided into the total Army Estimates, including, in all cases, all military expenditure of every kind, fortifications, military schools, pensions, etc. And, as the national debts of these countries have been almost entirely incurred in war, and the debt charge per head must be regarded as a definite burden on the people, I have added the total debt per head of population and the annual charge of the same per head in each case. This is the more necessary, as I shall, of course, be told by some people that it is impossible to compare the cost of our Army with that of foreign nations, since it is impossible to calculate "the fearful loss of the industries of those countries which results from the burden of compulsory service and the withdrawal of labour from productive employment," etc.—you know the phraseology. Well, for the present I must content myself with stating the actual facts in pounds, shillings, and pence, which is one of my chief objects in this paper. I shall recur to this oft repeated statement later, merely remarking for the present that it must be rather worrying for those who use this argument to find how these "poor" countries, especially those which have universal service in its strictest form, manage to jog along, doing indifferently well, even where they come into close competition with us, who, being the proud retainers of the voluntary system, do nothing "to interfere with productive labour."

The following figures are based on the Statesman's Yearbook for 1905, and, as regards Germany, on the *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich* for 1904:—

—	Cost per Head.	Debt per Head.	Debt Charge per Head.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Great Britain.. ..	158 8 0	18 10 5	0 12 7
Germany	51 2 0	2 12 2	0 1 10
France	45 0 0	31 3 8	1 5 0
Russia	35 0 0	5 9 9	0 4 9
Austria-Hungary ¹ ..	32 0 0	5 1 3	0 5 7
Italy	42 0 0	15 3 10	0 13 10
Japan (1900-1) ² ..	.6 0 4	1 4 2	0 1 8

¹ £55 if the whole of the extraordinary expenditure for the year is included, and the common Army only is taken as the divisor; if the Landwehr and Hungarian Honvéd are included in the divisor, the cost is £41 per head.

² Dividing the peace footing (the latest obtainable) into the total ordinary Army Estimates for 1904-5.

It may be of interest to give at the same time the cost of the chief Navies of the world in 1903 (the latest obtainable for all the countries in question):—

Great Britain (incl. Naval Works)	...	£39,019,232
Great Britain (excl. Naval Works)	...	£35,525,732
British Empire (incl. Naval Works)	...	£39,858,230
British Empire (excl. Naval Works)	...	£36,261,730
Germany	£10,250,000
France	£12,500,000
United States	£16,750,000
Russia	£12,250,000
Italy	£2,850,000
Japan	£12,250,000

B.

WHAT WE GET.

1. The Voluntary system, as far as the Regular Army is concerned, has never given us the numbers voted by Parliament, except in time of reduction following upon a great war, nor has it given us material physically, morally, and mentally representative of the standard of the race. My subject is too large for me to be able to give all the figures that I have at hand in proof of this statement, the truth of which anyone will admit who has given the slightest attention to the matter. I may, however, state broadly that when there has been considerable demand for recruits, either bounties have been offered or the physical standard has been lowered. This rule has been invariably followed for the last 200 years. Writing in 1875, Captain (now Colonel) Hime, said, "from 1715 to 1867 it was found necessary from time to time, to offer a bounty, in order to induce men to enroll themselves in our Voluntary Army. In 1745, the bounty for the Guards was £6. . . . In 1775, the bounty was £3, and Militia Volunteers for the Line received £6 in 1802. The bounty for the ordinary recruit in 1803 was £16. In 1855, the bounty was £8 for the Infantry, £9 for the Marines, and £10 for the Artillery. Bounties continued to be given, at varying rates, until 1867, when they were abolished; but I have no hesitation in saying, that with our present system of recruiting, it would be necessary to revive them if we become involved in a great war." I need hardly remind you, that this prediction was fully verified during the South African war, though whether, in the light of subsequent events, that can be termed "a great war," I must leave you to judge. A bounty of £22 was offered to men of the Reserve Battalions, who only engaged to serve in this country for one year, and a bounty of £10 was for a considerable period offered to recruits for the Militia. At the same time, the physical standard was reduced to such an extent that a circular was issued to medical officers allowing them to enlist men as low as 5 feet in height. As regards numbers, I may mention briefly, that the deficiency in the Regular Army between the numbers voted by Parliament and those obtained has been at various periods:—

In 1805	-	-	-	-	-	25,000
1806	-	-	-	-	-	25,000
1814	-	-	-	-	-	32,000
1828	-	-	-	-	-	8,000
1831	-	-	-	-	-	7,500
1871	-	-	-	-	-	9,000
1898	-	-	-	-	-	13,500
1900	-	-	-	-	(about)	30,000

2. The Voluntary System has generally failed to supply sufficient men fit for the duties of war. As a direct result of our purely voluntary system of enlistment we are obliged to take immature boys of eighteen or under, while no other nation in the world enlists its soldiers under twenty, and most of them require the recruit to have completed his twenty-first year. In the discussion, 12th November, 1897, at this Institution, on the Military Prize Essay of that year, Colonel Graves (Commanding 83rd Regimental District) said: "Whenever an addition is to be made to our Army, we are compelled to go below the ordinary standard of physical capacity which has been recognised as necessary for soldiers. We have got to take the knock-kneed, bottle-shouldered, and miserable weeds out of the gutter." Writing to the *Morning Post* in 1884, the late Sir Edward Sullivan said: "Our recruits are notoriously so young, so immature, so puny, that often a couple of years' careful feeding and nursing are absolutely necessary to enable them to bear the ordinary fatigue and exposures of a soldier's life in time of peace." In his "Military Hygiene," Professor Parkes stated that he regarded the recruit of eighteen as unfit to fulfil "the heavy duties of peace." When my noble Chairman's grandfather was told during the Crimean War that 2,000 recruits were ready to send to him, he replied that "those last sent were so young and unformed that they fell victims to disease, and were swept away like flies; he preferred to wait." General Sir William Codrington, speaking as Chairman at the discussion on Captain Hime's Essay, above referred to, said: "During the Indian Mutiny, I remember reading of men who were sent out and were at once put into hospital, and out of a detachment perhaps of seventy, one-third would come back, never having done a day's real soldiering." During the South African War many of the later Imperial Yeomanry had to be sent home by Lord Kitchener as quite unfit for any military duties whatever; while other large numbers could not be regarded as anything but what Sir John Burgoyne described as "a vast number of recruits," since Lord Kitchener could make no use of them until they had had several months' training in riding and shooting.

In giving the following figures, I should like to take the opportunity of expressing my great regret, which will be shared by all serious students of the subject, that the statistics as to the Ages, Heights, and Chest Measurements of men serving in the Army, which were regularly published till 1898, should have been discontinued since then. The change is of the greatest disadvantage to anyone wishing to establish accurate comparisons between the physical standard of the past and the present, and in view of the fact that the Commission on Physical Deterioration deplored the absence of national statistics on the subject it is truly extraordinary that we should have been deprived of this one regular service of information. The matter is all the more surprising as the same amount of space as formerly is allotted to the statistics with regard to horses and mules.

The tendency is towards a continuous increase in the proportion of young recruits. The proportion per thousand under 17 was:—

In 1871	-	-	-	-	-	18.1
1898	-	-	-	-	-	37
1903	-	-	-	-	-	49.4

The proportion of recruits under 21 and over 40 (the latter category is of course a very small one) was:—

In 1873	-	-	-	-	-	28
1898	-	-	-	-	-	46
1903	-	-	-	-	-	76.9

Similarly the height, weight, and chest measurements have steadily deteriorated in the past thirty or forty years.

Men serving in the Army under 5 feet 5 inches:—

In 1889	-	-	-	-	-	106 per thousand
1890	-	-	-	-	-	115 „ „
1891	-	-	-	-	-	117 „ „
1898	-	-	-	-	-	132 „ „
1902	-	-	-	-	-	172 „ „

The proportion of recruits finally approved under 5 feet 3 inches in:—

1900	-	-	-	-	-	79.6 per thousand
1901	-	-	-	-	-	93.0 „ „
1902	-	-	-	-	-	125.5 „ „

Munson in his “Military Hygiene” tells us that “good weight or height is of even more importance than an ample chest measurement.”

The following is the proportion of men in the Army weighing under 8 stone 8 lbs.:—

In 1871	-	-	-	-	-	159.4 per thousand
1872	-	-	-	-	-	174.4 „ „
1898	-	-	-	-	-	269 „ „
1900	-	-	-	-	-	301 „ „
1901	-	-	-	-	-	325 „ „
1902	-	-	-	-	-	364.2 „ „

In 1900, 44.2 per 1,000 of the recruits accepted weighed under 7 st. 12 lbs.

„ 1901, 58.9	„	„	„	„	„	„
„ 1900, 25.5	„	„	„	„	7 st.	.2 lbs.
„ 1901, 32.8	„	„	„	„	„	„

When we remember that the average German recruit examined by Dr. Fetzer in 1877 weighed 10 stone 3.3 lbs., and that he gave it as his opinion that no recruit should be accepted weighing less than 9 stone 6 lbs., it is truly appalling that over 36 per cent. of our recruits should weigh under 8 stone 8 lbs., and an appreciable proportion should turn the scale at 7 stone 12 lbs. and 7 stone 2 lbs. In view of the physical standard accepted for our Army, the fact that the rejections for physical unfitness in Manchester in March of this year average 91 per cent. of those presenting themselves for service makes one wonder how anybody can have the face to refer in terms of pride to the voluntary system as practised by our Imperial Race.

Chest Measurement.

The proportion of recruits finally accepted for service and having a chest measurement under 33 inches was:—

In 1900	-	-	-	-	193·2	per thousand
1901	-	-	-	-	219·2	„ „
1902	-	-	-	-	218·9	„ „
1903	-	-	-	-	306·6	„ „

The average recruit of 1900, according to the Army Medical Returns, was nearly twenty years of age, but he was two inches shorter, one inch narrower in the chest, and fifteen pounds lighter than the ordinary youth of nineteen, according to the measurements of the Anthropometrical Committee of the British Association taken in 1883; and he was one inch shorter, a fraction narrower in the chest, and six pounds lighter than the average boy of *seventeen*, according to the same measurements.

It is not surprising that when such "men" are subjected to what Dr. Parkes called "the heavy duties of peace," we get an enormous wastage from sickness, amounting to nearly 117,000 men for the ten years—1890 to 1899—who were officially classed as "constantly non-effective from sickness," giving a ratio of 59·15 per thousand of the aggregate strength in those years. In estimating the cost per head of the British soldier I have made no allowance, be it noted, for the enormous wastage which occurs in this way; but it is obvious that the wastage from death, desertion, disease, prison, etc., including the added expense of frequent drafts to India owing to the poor physique of the men sent out, could not amount to less than £1,000,000 a year, which would add another 5s. 6d. per head to the cost of the British soldier. The following comparison is interesting as showing the proportion of men per thousand "constantly non-effective from sickness" in 1900 in the Home Army and in the German Army respectively.

Rate per thousand of men "constantly non-effective from sickness" in 1900:—

United Kingdom (Home Army only)	-	-	-	-	34·85
Germany	-	-	-	-	10·6
Death Rate: United Kingdom (Home Army only)	-	-	-	-	6·62 ¹
Germany	-	-	-	-	2·4

But it is when this material is subjected to the strain of war that it is really thoroughly tested, and I do not think that the figures I am about to give can be sufficiently widely known. I consider that they should be written in letters of fire over our churches, our chapels, and our schools—it might prevent a little of the canting twaddle about the glory of our Voluntary System. The figures show the proportion of deaths from disease in the Franco-Prussian War, and in the South African War respectively, and it will be remembered that the South African climate is a very healthy one, and that the progress in military hygiene and sanitation has been enormous in the last thirty-five years.

¹I am glad to find from the Report of the Army Medical Department just issued that the death rate for the Home Army dropped to 3·41 in 1903; but the rate of "constantly non-effective from sickness" was a little higher than in 1900, being 35·2 per thousand.

The proportion of men who died from disease to the total number of deaths were:—

Franco-Prussian War	-	-	-	35.5 per cent.
South African War	-	-	-	62.6 per cent.

Of the deaths which occurred in hospital the proportion due to disease (not to wounds) was:—

Franco-Prussian War	-	-	-	59.3 per cent.
South African War	-	-	-	87.0 per cent.

What do these figures mean? They mean that while we send to battle for us men drawn mainly from the proletariat, with a boyhood and early manhood too often spent in the slums of our great cities, and constitutions undermined by foul air and bad food, the German and the Japanese forces represent the average manhood of the race, called to arms after the body and the mind have been developed by training in physique, *moral*, and the spirit of practical patriotism.

I cannot go fully into the question of the *moral* of the men upon whom we cast the main burden of our Imperial Defence. To those who know how small have been their opportunities for previous healthful development of body and mind, there is something infinitely pathetic in the fact that as a whole they bear themselves so well, cheerfully facing death and disease, and following their officers into the jaws of hell with a certain happy-go-lucky, unconscious heroism that is full of good augury for the fighting qualities of the race. But it would be sheer cant to pretend that our system gives us men morally and mentally representative of the nation's manhood. I see that in 1903, 62 recruits who had been finally approved for service were discharged for weakness of intellect within three months of enlistment—a sinister phenomenon which cannot be found in any other Army in the world. It is significant, too, that in Liverpool the favourite beat of the recruiting sergeant is just outside the police station. Space will not permit me to deal with the whole subject. But I think the following figures provide a significant indication of the enormous wastage which is inevitably connected with the recruitment of our Regular Forces solely from the poorest and least efficient section of the population, a fact which is again entirely due to the circumstances that in the absence of a system of universal military training there is no truly national basis for our military forces. The following figures are official for 1904:—

Died	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,896
Deserted	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,162
Invalided	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8,869
Discharged for misconduct	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,903
Discharged as not likely to become efficient	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,653
Imprisoned (excl. India)								
Central Military Prisons	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15,492
Branch	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,451

With regard to the Auxiliary Forces, I do not propose to go fully into figures, as it would take up too much space and time. But it is an admitted fact that the physical standard of the Militia and the Volunteers is, as a whole, far below that of the Regular Army, while probably at the present moment the physical standard of the

Yeomanry is considerably above it, a fact easily explained by the extremely favourable conditions offered in that force.

3. *Efficiency.* Though Goethe has told us that figures are best adapted to prove anything, I think we all realise that the actual test of a system is its efficiency in peace and war. It would be ridiculous for a civilian to attempt to give an opinion on such a matter, and I shall certainly not attempt to do so. The efficiency of our military forces has, however, been dealt with in three Reports, to which I need here only refer. Lord Elgin's Commission on the War in South Africa showed that the condition of our Army was full of peril to the Empire, that our forces lacked the power of expansion in time of war, that the Army had to shed an enormous proportion of its so-called "effectives" on the outbreak of war because they were absolutely useless for that purpose; that in stores, arms, ammunition, supplies, commissariat, intelligence, in fact, in everything which preparation for war implies, our whole glorious Voluntary System was a dismal failure. And in the last few days the Report of the Butler Committee has revealed a state of things so deplorable that it would be the final condemnation of a system by which the Army and the whole question of national defence is divorced from the interests of the people, if we possessed anything of the logical directness of thought of the Germans, the French, or the Japanese.

As regards the Auxiliary Forces, the Report of the Duke of Norfolk's Commission is still fresh in your minds, and I need only recall to you three or four of its most salient passages:—

"We are forced to the conclusion that the Militia, in its existing condition, is unfit to take the field for the defence of this country."

"We are agreed in the conclusion that the Volunteer Force, in view of the unequal military education of the officers, the limited training of the men, and the defects of equipment and organisation, is not qualified to take the field against a Regular Army."

"If the purpose is to produce a force which, without substantial help from the Regular Army, can be relied upon to defeat an invader, then improvements in the Militia and Volunteer Force will not be sufficient."

These are the sober judgments of a body of men, especially qualified to deal with the subject entrusted to them by the King, and I do not think it would be easy to find a more complete condemnation of the Voluntary System as applied to what should be our national forces than these simple sentences. To anyone who has studied the evidence given before this Commission as to the military qualities of our Auxiliary Forces, whether from the point of view of discipline, physique, length, and nature of training of officers and men, opportunity for combined field movements, transport, commissariat, interference with employment, etc., it is astounding that patriotic men can be found, as is unfortunately the case, who, apparently in all seriousness, maintain that by encouragement, sympathy, elasticity, payment in camp, abolition of irksome rules and regulations, and such-like methods, these heterogeneous forces can be made into anything like an efficient national force, without the adoption of the *one principle which can vivify and recreate this mass of men with arms, and transform them into a great manifestation of national strength and organisation.* The fact that so large a number of distinguished Volunteer officers are members of the National Service League is,

perhaps, the best proof that such men realise the futility of these other makeshifts unless they be accompanied by the adoption of the universal obligation to undergo a training in arms.

C.

WHAT WE LOSE.

So far, I have tried to deal with some of the main aspects of the actual cost to the country of our blind adherence to the purely Voluntary System of recruitment, and of the wastage directly incurred. But it is when we turn to the indirect loss, due to the fact that the nation, as a whole, is not organised by a national system of discipline and training, that we can best realise the extraordinary folly of our behaviour. This, the most important part of my subject, would demand the pen of a Burke, or the eloquence of a Demosthenes, to do it justice. Possessing neither the one nor the other, I cannot do more than touch upon the main points here:—

1. *Physique*.—Lord Beaconsfield has said, that “The health of the people is really the foundation upon which all their happiness and all their power, as a nation, depend. . . . the health of the people is therefore, in my opinion, the first duty of a statesman.” Yet there is probably no civilised nation in the world at the present moment, which, in spite of much shouting about sport, and much thronging to cricket and football matches, pays less attention to the physique of its people than Great Britain. Though we are in the proportion of 77 per cent. town-dwelling population, we neglect the foundations of national strength and efficiency by failing to give to the whole people a sound physical training, as part and parcel of the education of citizenship. And, as I showed in an article in the *Nineteenth Century* (May, 1903), while other nations have steadily improved the physique of their people, there is every sign that ours is deteriorating. Nor can—

2. The *Moral* of the people be separated from its physique, if we look at Education in the broad sense of the word, as the science of producing good citizens, an aspect of it which seems to be the last which occurs to those who are entrusted with the education of our people. We seem to imagine that it is enough to teach children how to read and write, and do arithmetic. In spite of Ruskin's great teaching, we still think that the true test of education is the power it confers of making money, not that of making men and citizens. Yet what does he say? “Education does not mean teaching people to know what they do not know. It means teaching them to behave as they do not behave. . . . Education is not a profitable business, but a costly one; nay, even the best attainments of it are always unprofitable, in any terms of coin.” A truth which I recommend to those who talk so much about the *cost* of universal training, which is only another word for national education. “You are to spend,” he continues, “on national education, and to be spent for it, and to make by it, not more money but better men; to get into this British Island the greatest possible number of good and brave Englishmen. *They* are to be your ‘money's-worth.’” Of education in citizenship, in social duty, in patriotism, we have practically not a trace. In the public schools it is true, there

is. some indirect education of character by the fact that boys are entrusted with a certain amount of power and responsibility among their fellows; but even here I think we are beginning to find out that the boasted training of character is not such a wonderful affair after all, and that, while it sufficed for the Colonies in days gone by and for the commercial man in times when there was no competition, it fails to supply the British youth with the power of meeting on equal terms his German or American competitor. I do not propose to discuss the essential reasons here, but there can be no doubt that much is owing to the fact that boys are not taught to consider work as a noble and worthy thing in itself, but rather as a thing to be got over as quickly as possible in order that the main business of life—play—should have all the enthusiasm and devotion which popular favour and the atmosphere of the schools themselves allot to it. Certainly there are few boys of 17 or 18 in England who have been taught to think that they owe any duty to their country and to society, and, unless they happen to be Volunteers, none have been brought into relation with national ideals and needs by personal service of an absolutely unselfish kind. And if this is true in the case of the public schools, it is still more so where the national schools are concerned. Here the citizens of the future are being formed in millions, yet the history and the significance of our great Empire, the responsibilities which are incumbent upon each one of us to maintain our magnificent inheritance untarnished, the cultivation of that civic spirit which was found not only among the boys of Greece and Rome, but is a living force in Germany, Switzerland, France, and Japan; all these things are conspicuous by their absence, while indirectly boys and girls alike are taught to get as much out of life as possible and to look after number one—the State, the Municipality can do the rest! Think for a moment what it means to a nation to lack the cultivation of the spirit of practical altruism which national service for a national cause implies. Putting the thing in its simplest form, consider this fact: Every German, Frenchman, Austrian, Italian, Japanese, and Swiss does for some time in his life actually perform a certain definite service to his country without any fee or reward, simply and solely as a civic duty, which he knows it is an honour to perform. He is thereby not only brought into touch with the national needs and with his country's history—its soul—but he inevitably receives in exchange something of the spirit which has made his country great, and in performing a duty which he shares with all his fellow countrymen, rich and poor, he learns the value and the beauty of co-operation between man and man for something greater than self. I shall perhaps be told that all this can be taught by religion, and that there are many agencies at work throughout the country to teach children that they have duties to their parents and to society, and that there is something more in life besides having a good time. This is quite true; but quite apart from the fact that these agencies reach, in truth, a comparatively small proportion of the population, and that which needs it least, this training itself will not replace the practical and indirect training in altruism which the performance of a great civic duty necessarily teaches. To quote Ruskin again:—“The true ‘compulsory education’ which the people now ask of you is not catechism, but drill. Compulsory! Yes, by all means! ‘Go ye out into the highways and hedges, and *compel* them to come in.’ Compulsory! Yes, and gratis also.”

3. Closely connected with this tremendous want is the lack in our case of that spirit of social solidarity which also results from national service. In our industrial civilisation, where money and what money gives play an increasingly large part in the minds and lives of all, there is a tendency on the part of the rich to look upon the poor as so many pawns in the game of the acquisition of wealth, and a corresponding tendency on the part of the poorer classes to look upon the rich as enemies and the possessors of something which is eagerly coveted for its own sake. The respect for work well and honestly done, the desire to fulfil one's place in life efficiently and with all one's might, whether that place be a Prime Minister's or a stoker's, seems to have greatly diminished, and with it the healthy respect and friendly feeling of man for man, irrespective of what may be in his pocket. Those who have travelled much abroad will probably agree with me when I say that these phenomena are by no means so frequent or so striking there, where all classes have been brought into close contact with one another in the performance of a common task, and where often a Prince of the blood royal may for a time have served as a non-commissioned officer in a troop commanded by a simple gentleman, and a peer may for a time find himself a private in the ranks side by side with peasants from his own estates. There is no loss of dignity on his part, no loss of respect on theirs. On the contrary, both are improved.

4. *Industrial Efficiency.* When discussing the cost of the voluntary system I said that I would pass over for a moment the question of the loss which a country is alleged to incur by the withdrawal of part of its able-bodied population from productive employment. I have not had time to go into the various calculations that have been made as to the alleged loss to a country by a system of universal service, though I find that Captain (now Sir John) Ardagh, in his lecture in 1876, estimated that the loss to France amounted to 5½ million sterling. Nor do I intend to go into any detail in discussing these figures. I am quite willing to deal with the matter on much simpler lines. I will let anybody put down the loss at as many millions sterling per annum as he chooses, and the higher he puts it the better I shall be pleased. For you will observe that the argument is really suicidal. For, either the Germans have intellectual gifts far beyond our own to outweigh the supposed loss incurred by universal service, or this very sacrifice of time to the service of the country has been repaid a thousandfold in the improved physique, intelligence, *moral*, and industrial efficiency of her people. From pretty close knowledge of Germany, I have no hesitation in saying that, as a whole, the Germans are less intelligent than our own mixed race, which has added the vivacity and quickness of the Celt to the sane, though slow, judgment of the Teuton. It is perfectly clear that whatever sum Germany may be said to lose annually by the withdrawal of a certain number of its manhood from productive labour, the actual result to Germany has been not a loss but a steady and constant commercial gain, so that she is our successful rival and competitor in every branch of industry, even in those in which a few years ago we regarded ourselves as supreme. Nor is such a result in the least surprising. The qualities which men learn in preparing to defend their country are those which add most to their wage-earning

capacity, and consequently to the productive power of the country. Discipline, orderliness, self-control, methodic work, cleanliness, punctuality: these are not qualities which are wasted in civil life; on the contrary, the nation which is without them must nowadays fall behind in the struggle for commercial supremacy. And it is in this very matter of industrial and commercial efficiency, with which national service is supposed to be likely to interfere, that we are most lacking and most in danger of being worsted by those nations which have adopted the modern system. This is not merely true in theory; it is proved by the growing wealth and prosperity of those countries, and is supported by the weighty testimony of the great employers of labour who have joined the National Service League, such men as Sir John Aird, Sir John Wolfe Barry, Sir George Gibb (General Manager of the North Eastern Railway), Sir Alfred Jones, Messrs. Lever Bros., Messrs. Price & Reeves, Messrs. C. J. Wills (of Manchester), Sir Thomas Wrightson, Messrs. Joseph Crosfield (of Warrington), Messrs. William Whiteley, Mr. Henry Birchenough, and many others. All these men, who speak with unequalled authority, affirm that national service is needed to secure industrial efficiency, both in the rank and file of the workers and among its leaders, who, as non-commissioned officers or officers in a national force, would learn those habits of command and organisation which make a successful foreman, manager, and director.

I wish most carefully to avoid trenching here upon the question of fiscal reform, nor shall I express any opinion as to its merits; but of one thing I am certain. No fiscal system yet invented will save this nation commercially and industrially unless its people are trained to those habits of discipline, order, and sense of duty which are the foundation of successful industry, as they are of national life.

5. Of the lack of a national basis of recruitment and its disastrous consequence to our Regular Army and indirectly to our Navy, I have already spoken; but I am anxious to refer to it again for a particular reason. We are sometimes told by people who plume themselves upon being practical that "it is no use talking about universal training, but that we must aim at *practical Army reform*," as if we had not been reforming the Army "practically" for the last hundred years! We are to further increase the pay of the soldier, give him cubicles, let him be out all night, provide him with more games and recreation, not be too strict in discipline, and, above all, provide him with an attractive dress. (It is an amusing comment upon our voluntary system that it was seriously asserted not long since by several newspapers that the lack of suitable recruits was due to the shape of the cap then worn.) These are the practical recommendations which we are told must take precedence of any Utopian proposals in favour of the national adoption of universal training. And there are some who put the thing in a more specious form when they say: "Compulsory service or training is an excellent thing in itself, but quite apart from the fact that *the nation will not stand it*, it would be no use whatever for the Regular Army, which has to fight abroad and garrison the Empire in time of peace; therefore, however good compulsory training may be from the point of view of national health, discipline, *moral*, etc., it is idle to talk of it to practical men who are concerned with providing an efficient Regular Army for the Empire." I regard this kind of talk as the more dangerous because, as I say, it has a certain air of speciousness.

These men forget that you may increase the wages of the soldier and his comforts, and even his pensions, as much as you like, but owing to the natural march of events and the progress of industry, you cannot get a sufficient supply of recruits of a desirable quality unless you have given military training to the youthful manhood of the nation, and so broadened the basis of your voluntary recruitment. This is an essential truth which I venture to emphasise particularly in this place, where I fancy that the argument to which I have just referred has been pretty frequently heard.

There is another important aspect of the loss of military efficiency which the country incurs by its complete adherence to the voluntary system which is by no means sufficiently understood. It is said by some who are entitled to speak with the highest authority, and who have done me the honour to discuss the matter with me, that the great difficulty we have to meet is the supply of officers. The argument runs something like this:—"With our small Army and with our Auxiliary Forces, giving ample opportunity to men to serve as officers if they choose, we are yet thousands short of our peace establishments, and in time of war we should be faced with a terrible deficiency in leadership. How, then, are you going to officer the large force which you propose to raise on a national basis?" The question shows that the fundamental principle of national service has not been grasped in the least. Among the many reasons which contribute to the difficulty of securing enough officers, the chief is, that the nation as a whole and the vast majority of its most intelligent men are not brought into close contact with the question of national defence, and are therefore not in the least led to give their services to it. A considerable number of those who accept commissions in the Auxiliary Forces do so for social reasons, and because of the pleasant comradeship which such work brings, and which compensates for the interference with private business which is entailed in many cases. But there are many officers of the Auxiliary Forces who feel that, with the best will in the world, they are wasting their time in trying to secure adequate results under a system where real discipline and control is vitiated and rendered almost impossible by the fact that men can resign at a fortnight's notice. The whole thing lacks the seriousness of a great national purpose, and its unreality strikes most forcibly precisely those men who take the work most seriously. Is it surprising that under such conditions, coupled with the lack of patriotic training generally, it should be difficult to secure sufficient officers for the Auxiliary Forces or the Regular Army? What is the case in every other country? So far from there being a deficiency of officers, there is always a superfluity, and this though the demands made are in every case enormously greater than those exacted from officers in our Auxiliary Forces. Putting aside the courses required by the German, Austrian, French, Italian, or Japanese officer, we need only look at the Norwegian or the Swiss system. Here the standard of attainment and the amount of time in securing it which are expected of the officers are really extraordinary, seeing that he is a civilian with his own business interests first and a citizen soldier afterwards. Yet, as I have said, there are more applicants for commissions than there are vacancies. Why? Because where every man is obliged to serve his country in some shape or form, those who consider themselves to possess in any way the qualities of leadership, either in virtue of social position

or of brains, will, by an ineradicable instinct of human nature, desire to qualify for the higher position rather than be satisfied to remain among the rank and file. Moreover, such men know that in acquiring the position of officer they will be leading comrades and neighbours who know them well in private life, and who look up to them as their natural leaders in a national force which is but the mirror of the national life. I cannot develop the question here any further, but I am profoundly convinced that *we shall never solve the officer question in this country until we have laid the foundation of patriotic training among the whole manhood of the country, and provided the incentive to leadership which the obligation to serve the country in arms, imposed upon every citizen, would supply to the well-to-do and intelligent classes.*

When we consider the larger question of the power of expanding our national forces in time of war the assertion that this could be done in modern times by the trivial makeshifts and hollow shams of the voluntary system, even by taking Imperial Yeomen from street corners at 5s. a day, is one that no man can seriously entertain, and that the nation itself can only *pretend* to believe even when it is encouraged to do so by its so-called leaders and statesmen. Have we not seen the result of such folly in the disastrous history of the South African War, the true inwardness of which has been exposed to our gaze in the brilliant pages of Mr. Amery's third volume of the *Times* history of the war? Putting aside for a moment even the military inefficiency caused by our national unpreparedness, where is that magnificent patriotism of which we are told so much and which, all untrained, with a cricket bat in one hand and a golf club in another is to save the nation when the enemy is at the gate? The men who came forward during the war were nearly all men who were already serving in one or other of the Auxiliary Forces, and the whole of these put together represent a very small fraction of the able-bodied population of these islands. Mr. Amery tells us that: "Of the Militia and Yeomanry one man in five, of the Volunteers one in fifteen, and of the untrained and unorganised bulk of the male population of fighting age about one man in a thousand came forward in this emergency." Of the patriotism that finds vent in bawling in music halls and molesting passers-by in the street there was enough and to spare; of the courage which talked airily of the war being a "picnic," at which the Boers would run away at the first sight of the British soldier there was enough to fill the columns of most of our daily papers; but of the earnest sober patriotism that submits quietly and without boasting to the personal sacrifices which preparation for war in time of peace necessitates: of that we saw, and see, practically nothing. The result was that we spent £250,000,000 and wasted 25,000 lives in the course of two and a half years in overcoming the resistance of the smallest white people on the face of the earth—a people possessing neither an Army nor a Navy, but merely a conscript Militia, in which every able-bodied man and boy fought for his country. This was the small test applied to our voluntary system, and yet in face of the truth which is known to every nation but our own we are not ashamed to boast of the result in postprandial speech and tell everybody that this nation will never tolerate any form of national service. A leading paper—the *Spectator*—has even gone so far as to write, not in condemnation, mark you, but with smug approval: "Not till the

country has been subjugated will it endure conscription," meaning, of course, national service. And now, as if determined to save us in spite of ourselves, Providence has given us another object-lesson in modern war and its meaning in the tremendous struggle in the Far East. All our pet fallacies, all our twaddle about the needlessness of universal training for an island power, all the canting appeals to the gallery as to the value of the Volunteer in comparison to 12 "pressed men," all the folly about courage without preparation being sufficient, has been swept aside, not by argument, but by the sheer weight of the Titanic blows struck at Port Arthur, Liao-Yang, Mukden, and Tsu-Shima.

The seed laid by those two great patriots, Stein and Scharnhorst, in 1806, when Prussia lay crushed under the heel of Napoleon, found its fruition in the three wars which welded together the fabric of German Unity. And the truth appeared so clear that every civilised nation, except ours, followed the example of Prussia and set to work to organise its national resources for national defence. Japan, which at that time was awakening from the sleep of the Middle Ages, saw at once the truth and justice of the principle that every man should be trained for the national defence, and in adopting Western civilisation it adopted universal service as its natural and most logical concomitant. The results we see to-day. And this leads me indirectly to the final point with which I propose to deal here.

6. National Service supplies the only means by which a modern State can be completely organised for national efficiency in peace as well as in war. The progress of industrial civilisation, coupled with the growth of the democratic principle, accentuates the natural tendencies to selfish individualism. So that to anyone who looks below the surface of our national and Imperial life it must be clear that at the very moment when we have apparently completed the edifice of Empire, disintegrating tendencies are at work which would bring the edifice down with a crash at the first shock of war with a great Power. In an article in the *Monthly Review*, of December last, I pointed out that the centrifugal tendencies in the Empire are enormous and increasing, and that there is only one way of counteracting them, namely, by the introduction of the centripetal principle. In order that the nation and the Empire may stand the stress of war and may organise its forces, physical, moral, and industrial, for national efficiency, it is imperative that the individual should be brought into relation with national needs and aspirations; and this can only be done by personal, and disinterested, service. Thus national service would become a means of giving to the country something of the qualities of the whole people applied to the common good, whilst on the other hand each individual would absorb something of the greatness of national strength and aspiration. In our blind self-satisfaction and reliance on the past and in our refusal to face national service, in our desire to get everything for nothing, and to enjoy Empire without accepting its responsibilities, we are undermining the fabric built up with so much devotion and sacrifice by the great men of the past, and we are in danger of realising the picture drawn by Juvenal of ambitious Sejanus:—

. . . qui nimios poscebat honores
Et nimios poscebat opes, numerosa parabat
Excelsae turris tabulata, unde altior esset
Causus et impulsae praeceps immanis ruinae.

The fact is that we are jeopardising our national safety for a fetish and risking our Empire for the sound of a word.

Look around you. Everywhere you see nations organised, trained, and strong in the qualities of their people, whatever qualities they be. We alone, with the vastest Empire the world has ever seen, with tremendous responsibilities, with wealth offering a tempting bait to the strong, are satisfied to go on bungling and botching at a worn-out system, and fondly telling ourselves that it is beautiful and strong. And our leaders, those whom we should expect, in Coleridge's words, to have "the courage to speak the word of Duty to the people," these men flatter the indolence and apathy of the nation, glut them with false praise and lead them to believe that no effort is needed in our case, or that at most all will be well if every man learns to fire off a rifle. Not satisfied with this, some of them betray the post of leadership by telling the people that "they will not stand" any form of national self-sacrifice, even for the defence of their country. What would we think of the commander who, while wanting his men to attack a position, tells them that he does not in the least expect them to follow him? How inspiring, how noble such behaviour would be! Yet this is done every day on the platform and in the half-penny Press. If I might say one thing before I conclude, it would be to ask that those who are not prepared to lead should at least refrain from sounding "the retreat" and from undermining the efforts of those who are earnestly striving to educate the nation to a sense of its duties. Let us at least hear no more of the nauseous drivel about the nation "never standing" any form of national service.

Sir, I have shown, very inadequately I fear for want of time to prepare my subject sufficiently, that by our complete adherence to the voluntary system for every branch of our military forces we not only pay at a fabulous rate for an inefficient and inadequate defence, but that so far from such adherence being beneficial to our national interests, it is disastrous in the last degree, and threatens us before long with the loss of national physique, commercial supremacy, racial union, and finally of dominion and Empire, which must inevitably fall from the grasp of hands too feeble to wield it and pass to those of a more virile race, strong in the principle and practice of national service, unless we realise the warning of that teacher, whom I have quoted more than once, that "it is only in the concession of some great principle of restraint and interference in national action that we can ever hope to find the secret of protection against national degradation."

Major-General M. R. HAIG:—I feel very grateful, Sir, that by the courtesy of this Institution I have been privileged to hear to-day the case against the voluntary system so ably, and, I hope for all of us here, so convincingly stated. To those of us who have been for long years advocates of the compulsory system, it seems passing strange that, with the military history of the world before us, especially of late years and in present days, there should be any necessity for using arguments on such a question. But, unfortunately, we are a people who move slowly, especially in military matters, and I am afraid that the lessons which the present day is teaching are, to a very great extent, thrown away upon us. We hear constantly nowadays expressions (which Mr. Shee

has very properly condemned) against the compulsory system. Such expressions as "Unpractical," "Un-English," "The country would never hear of it," "Impossible" are frequently used, and one weekly paper has actually said, unconscious of the shamelessness of saying it, that not until the country has been subjugated will it endure conscription. I daresay you can hardly credit that a paper of such note could commit itself to a statement of this kind. I am convinced that, if it was not, unfortunately, a notorious fact, the Japanese would say the thing was impossible, especially in a patriotic country like England. How are we to account for such a fact as that? How are we to account for the fact that we hear, for instance, so constantly in Parliament that if you wish to avoid conscription you must do so and so, and that the Volunteers stand between us and conscription—as if conscription was the last degradation to which the people could possibly subject themselves! I think, Sir, we cannot attribute these facts to which I have been referring to any want in us as a nation; on the contrary, I think we possess—perhaps I am prejudiced in the matter—a very fair proportion of intelligence, and that if this question were simply argued on its merits, without prejudice, that there would be no necessity for us to meet to-day to talk about conscription or the voluntary system. I think the real reason of the view so commonly taken by our countrymen is a moral one. We do not maintain the voluntary system, and we do not object to conscription, because we really think that voluntary recruiting provides the best Army for us; we do not argue in that way at all. I think the real reason is this: In the absence of a compulsory system in the Army—which Mr. Shee has shown us to-day tends to a patriotic feeling—in the absence of that we have unconsciously become dull in our sentiment of patriotism. But I must not detain this meeting longer. I have been for years an advocate for conscription, and I rejoice with all my heart that a meeting so numerous as this, and in a military Institution, can be got together, especially on an Ascot meeting day, to listen to a lecture condemnatory of the voluntary service system; and I wish with all my heart the utmost success to the National Service League, which I consider is doing a most valuable and patriotic work for us.

Major-General Sir JOHN ARDAGH, K.C.I.E., C.B. :—I think the first remark I should like to make is one in which I have the most absolute confidence that everybody here present will support me, and that is, that we have received a most illuminating and instructive quantity of information on a most important subject from my friend Mr. Shee. I do not go quite as far as he does in regard to conscription; but I go a very great way. I desire to recall to the meeting that, as regards the duties of our active Army, conscription is simply impossible. The mere idea of compelling men, we will say, to go and garrison some unhealthy foreign station in the same way that a German or a French soldier is called upon to occupy a garrison in his native town, is simply preposterous. What, I take it, Mr. Shee conceives, is not universal conscription for our Regular Forces, but universal conscription for whatever duties may be incumbent on us as a nation in a military capacity. So far I go entirely with him; but I should like to revert a little to one of the methods which attend this question. It is, Where are we to begin? My conviction is that we must begin at the board schools, and that every able-bodied boy who receives his education at the expense of the State should also be taught the rudiments of drill, how to handle a rifle, and how to let it off. I think this is the most important point that we have before us

at the present moment, and I would ask all who are present to use all the influence they possess, and not to cease using it, until we can get our House of Commons to insist upon the education of this country being conducted on those lines. The next point that we have to consider under a *régime* of compulsory service is, How are we to employ all the men who become liable for military service in this country? It will be evident, I think, that we cannot, and do not, find it necessary or desirable in times of peace to compel every able-bodied man to go through a definite period of military service, however short it may be; it is not necessary. I gave my views upon conscription in a lecture here a quarter of a century ago. The number of men who come to a military age in this country, if they were brought into the ranks for a year would cost us an enormous sum to maintain and to employ, and finally, we should not know what to do with them. If we have a sufficient number of men trained in a sufficient manner in the ranks of the Militia, which already possesses a law which enables us (if its operation is not suspended) to fill those ranks up to the requisite number, I think we shall have done all that we require in the way of compulsion. There is no doubt that if that compulsion were exercised for the Militia it would have a very remarkable effect upon the number of Volunteers. A vast number of men would be willing to go into the Volunteers in order to avoid being drawn for the Militia, and if that willingness existed there is no doubt that the general efficiency of the Volunteers might be enormously increased. It might be increased for this reason: that at present a man who enters the Volunteers says to himself, "Well, I need only stay as long as I like; I need only attend as many drills as I like; I need not go into camp unless I like." But if there was a slight reflex compulsion which would affect the whole able-bodied population as regards ballot for the Militia, then we could insist on the Volunteer attaining a much higher degree of efficiency than is now possible. All these points, I take it, are covered by Mr. Shee's lecture. I do not suppose he intends us to turn ourselves into a Continental Power, and to maintain a body of men under arms whom we see no immediate prospect of requiring. I think the main point above all is that which I mentioned at the commencement of my remarks, namely, compulsory military education in drill, discipline, and shooting for every able-bodied boy in the whole country who receives his education at the public expense.

Colonel H. H. A. STEWART, late Donegal Artillery (Militia):—I think at all events those who have paid attention to the lecture have come to the conclusion that Mr. Shee is entirely in favour of compulsory service. Mr. Arnold-Forster, unless I am mistaken, not long ago stated that to adopt the compulsory system of enlistment in this country would entail an additional expenditure on the Estimates of 25 millions a year. What Sir John Ardagh has just said with regard to the enforcement of the ballot for the Militia is, I think, the plan with which we ought to commence as regards compulsory service. The second point that has occurred to me in following the very interesting lecture was that Mr. Snee stated the cost of the maintenance of our voluntary Army is 32 millions per annum. Mr. Shee is a little bit "off the rail" on that matter, to use a metaphor, because the exact amount of the Army Estimates for last year, which I had on high authority only a few days ago, was 46½ millions, so that Mr. Shee's calculation is about 50 per cent. below what the cost of the English soldier to the population is. The third point which has occurred to me is also an important one, with

regard to the number of soldiers committed to prison. I think there is a very considerable mistake in the figures given, and I will tell you why. The number of soldiers in military prisons and branch prisons for last year, or the year before, is given as 22,000. I think that is a mistake, for this reason, that a great number of soldiers who are bad characters and incorrigibles are committed to prison several times in each year, and each commitment is counted as a soldier. I have known myself in my own regiment many years ago in the West Indies the same man to have been committed to prison eight times in one year; that fellow was not much good. I should therefore like to have Mr. Shee's explanation on that point. Lord Wolseley stated in the year 1897, with regard to the number of military prisons in the country, that so good was the behaviour of the soldiers in that year, and for some years previously, that one-half of the military prisons in the country had been closed, and the other half were only half filled. I should like to know how long it is since this terrible "eruption" of bad behaviour amongst the soldiers began. Of course, Lord Wolseley may have made a mistake, for we all know that "a man who makes no mistakes makes nothing at all." There is one other point I should like to refer to, namely, the question of the provision of officers for the Army. I think one great reason, at all events, for the want of a sufficient number of suitable officers is that the game is not worth the candle to serve His Majesty in the Army. Look at the pay an officer gets! I happen to have a son in a distinguished cavalry regiment, and I have to spend a large sum of money on him; in fact, my hand is always in my pocket to keep him going. Is not that one excellent reason why there is a difficulty in getting officers? I believe the cavalry want about 80 or 90 officers; the Guardsmen are short in their number, and even the Infantry of the Line. The expense is, I believe, a paramount reason why we have a difficulty in finding officers for the Army.

T. MILLER MAGUIRE, M.A., LL.D. (Barrister-at-Law, Inner Temple): — I should like to say a few words with regard to the admirable paper of my friend Mr. Shee. I feel a considerable amount of hesitancy in rising to speak in this Institution on these topics, because some of us feel that during the last eight or nine years we have said here nearly everything that we could possibly say on these questions, more sometimes than it was judicious to say in our own interests, and more than was popular in some circles. And we also feel that political partisans ignore all our efforts; yet this is a matter of vital importance to our Empire, and the present is a critical period in the history of our Empire. Our difficulties and dangers are certainly not likely to become lighter as the century gets older, and we, as students, should therefore pay the greatest attention to statements such as have been put before us by Mr. Shee and the speakers who have followed him. Mr. Shee's statement about the Regular Forces and about the Forces of the Crown generally is one of the saddest and most deplorable things that a Briton could listen to. His facts and figures are absolutely appalling, whether we compare the situation now with the situation in which our ancestors found themselves in 1805, or even on the accession of Queen Victoria, or whether we compare the provident care or lack of care of our rulers, not only with regard to its Army, but for the health and prosperity of our people at large and for that of the rising generation with the care and attention paid to them by other Statesmen in other lands. If Mr. Shee be right, there is something to make us not only pause, but be

perplexed and anxious to the very last degree. Is this Regular Army of ours fit for its duty? I hope it is; but if Mr. Shee's figures be correct, it manifestly is not, whether as to the *personnel* of the men, whether as to the numbers and qualification of the officers, or whether it be the inducements given to privates, sergeants, or officers. Is it fair to a nation like ours to trust not only the wealth and honour of the people of the United Kingdom, but the interests of the people of India and the other races dependent on us, on such a broken reed as is described by Mr. Shee? Is it fair to our men to dump them into careers where the remuneration and the prospects are insufficient? Is it fair to our soldiers to send them forth to their death without guns or other details of perfect military equipment? Is it right that our people, a splendid race like ours, having all the elements of greatness still remaining, should be represented in our fighting forces by the people described by Mr. Shee? Are our Auxiliary Forces in a proper condition? I think that the majority of competent authorities agree that they are not. Who is going to set the business right? We must look into the matter ourselves and take counsel together, and see how our ancestors set it right. How did they set it right? They set it right precisely by the method suggested by Mr. Shee. I should like to ask the gallant Admiral sitting near me a question. Is it not the case, Sir, having regard to the preparations of the Navies of other lands, that we were at least as well prepared in the years 1804 and 1805 as we were in the years 1904 and 1905?

Admiral Sir NATHANIEL BOWDEN-SMITH:—Certainly, and we had not so many possible enemies.

Dr. MILLER MAGUIRE:—The gallant Admiral agrees with me. He has said that our ancestors in the years 1804-05, in spite of the fact that Napoleon was hovering over the cliffs of Boulogne, were infinitely better prepared from every point of view, including invasion, than we are now.

Admiral Sir NATHANIEL BOWDEN-SMITH:—I think it is a pity to introduce invasion; it is spoiling our game.

Dr. MILLER MAGUIRE:—Very well, Sir, I will drop it. The question I put to the gallant Admiral was, That we were in 1804-05 as well prepared with regard to naval power as against any possible enemy as we are in the year 1905, without bringing in the question of invasion or spoiling the game; and he said that we were better prepared in 1804 than we were in 1904.

Admiral Sir NATHANIEL BOWDEN-SMITH:—And I added that we had fewer possible enemies then.

Dr. MILLER MAGUIRE:—But we were as fully prepared to speak with our enemies at the gate as we were in 1904. Assuming that we were as well prepared, or better prepared, against our possible enemies in 1804 than in 1904, how does it come about that our ancestors in 1803, 1804, and 1805 adopted the policy suggested by Sir John Ardagh? In 1803 the Military Service Bill was passed on the lines suggested by Sir John Ardagh, and that Military Service Bill, which was passed at the time

when we were about to obtain supremacy at sea, contained clauses enacting that every Briton who was not engaged in the naval forces of the Crown must become either a Militiaman, with men like Lord Raglan, or a Regular soldier, like the gallant Major-General Ardagh, or a Volunteer, like myself. He had to be one of the three. I thought I would bring the gallant Admiral into line, because much unfair nonsense is talked about the Blue-water School, and the gallant Admiral agrees with me. If it was quite right, having regard to the dangerous condition of our Empire in 1803 and 1804, to insist on every Englishman knowing what his position would be in the event of a serious Imperial crisis, whether invasion, fighting with Napoleon or anyone else, whether fighting on sea or land or both—if it was desirable, as Mr. Pitt said, that this should occur in 1804, why is it undesirable that the same thing should occur now? What on earth harm will it do to the people of England? What injury will occur to any middle-aged man or boy of twenty to be asked: "Cannot you spend a certain portion of your life in the service of your country? If you cannot be a Regular soldier, and go abroad to the garrisons which the gallant officer referred to in India and elsewhere, and if you do not want to be a Militiaman for any social or other reason, and if you have some money to enable you to do so, cannot you be a Volunteer for a certain number of years?" I contend that if we get that power—and apparently we are all agreed—that if the result of Mr. Shee's paper enabled this meeting to lay that down as a preliminary basis of operations, that it is not unfair to our youths to ask them to be either Regular soldiers, or Militiamen, or Volunteers, or sailors, as the man who fights on sea is even more indispensable to an insular Power than the man who fights on land. If you are not going to be a sailor of the fleet—one of the men who rule the waves—then you must be a Regular soldier, and we will pay you well, and encourage you, and promote you, and reward you well in every way for your services in the Himalayas or in Africa or Burmah; or you must be a Militiaman, or you must be a Volunteer. If we get so far as the result of this meeting it will have done a great deal of good. I think I have stated what is the minimum that any nation can ask for, especially as we see all over the Continent of Europe the smallest and poorest nations asking a good deal more. If the smallest and poorest nations prepare efficiently for war, if the smallest and poorest nations can have plenty of guns, if the smallest and poorest nations can be ready for emergencies, why cannot we put ourselves in as good a position at the beginning of the 20th century as we were in at the beginning of the 19th century? I quite agree with Mr. Shee on another point. I am quite convinced that if there were no danger—and there are great dangers; if there were no jealous Powers—and there are many; if there was no new naval Power in the Far East; and if there was a new World Power in the Far West; if someone could guarantee to me that there was going to be a millennium for the rest of my life, I would still urge people to drop the idea of a millennium, and say: "For heaven's sake have a universal military service for a generation, anyhow." I would say that for physical and moral reasons, with the object of elevating the manhood of the nation, and restoring to our ball-players their souls. It is part of my duty now to go about the miles and miles of dreary residences of our working classes, and when I contemplate their dull, dreary grey lives, and how there is no unity of tastes and habits between them and their employers, the dull, blighting, uneventful

existences they spend when they stop their toil, it makes my heart bleed; to me it is absolutely deplorable. It is an awful thing to think that there are millions of people who do not share at all with their better educated and more elevated fellow citizens either pleasure, patriotism, or hope. How different from mediæval times at their worst, how low compared with even the ideals of old world sects and clans. Read the "Canterbury Tales," read Spenser's "Fairie Queene," read Scott's novels:—

"Unless above himself he can erect himself,
How poor a thing is man."

The manhood of our nation is dwindling away. I assure you it is so—the soul of our people is dwindling away. Alas! for the parents and children of the flat, the tenement, the slum. I have had a long correspondence with Baron Suyematsu about the soul of the nation. How could the soul of the nation continue to exist under conditions as prevail in the new suburbs all round London—I am not speaking of the distant rich suburbs, but the near working-class suburbs. Conversation and *camaraderie* among different classes would be one great gain, physical improvement would be another. German officers with whom I spend a good deal of my time tell me that the improvement in the German recruit is something incredible—not in the finest and best recruits, not in the peasants of Saxony or Silesia, but in the men who come from the mines in Westphalia. To come out of the mines and be soldiers for two years elevates and improves them in their manners and everything that tends to give a loftiness of tone to the toilers. To take a poor man and put him along with the student and the landed gentleman, and the sons of commercial opulence during their training for the Army has an effect for good on both of them. It blesseth him who gives and him who takes. But without any regard to conscription, I believe that our Regular Army could be made an almost invincible Regular Army if we had better leaders, and that the money we spend on it now could provide us with an admirable force. But even if that were enough for our Empire, even if the Admiral's views about invasion are perfectly correct, and even if I banish the idea of invasion out of my mind—and I have not the slightest intention of doing so—I say that for moral and military reasons the adoption of a scheme such as Mr. Shee suggests would be one of the greatest blessings that could possibly happen to our people at the beginning of this new century, even as a similar system a hundred years ago gave a spirit to our people which carried the Union Jack not only from Torres Vedras to the Pyrenees, but also from Cape Comorin to Nepal.

Mr. SHEE, in reply said:—I should like first of all to say with what pleasure I have heard Sir John Ardagh speak, because I think it is about twenty-five years ago since he gave his lecture here on the cost to a country of the adoption of compulsory service. I referred to that lecture in the course of my own. I can only say that I studied it with the greatest interest and profit, and I am glad indeed to find that I have carried Sir John Ardagh with me in my general contentions, because, as you all know, he is one of the greatest authorities we have in this country, and indeed in the Empire, on the whole question of the organisation and efficiency of our military forces. I am afraid, however, I am not altogether in agreement with one or two of the remarks he made, if I may venture to say so in the presence of so great an authority. I feel—and I think a great many of those who have studied this question feel—

that the ballot, however desirable it may be from the point of view of general expediency, is not a just, and therefore not an advisable, method to adopt, in putting before this nation, or any other nation, the great principle of national service. I do not think it is fair to say to people: "We are going to give you a chance; if you are fortunate you will get off, and if you are unfortunate you will have to serve. You may be a rogue and you may be an honest man; and it may be that the rogue will get off and that the honest man will be taken." I think the uncertainty which would be introduced by that method would be extremely undesirable, not only on national grounds itself, but also for its commerce and trade. I have discussed this question with leaders of industry all over the country, and one and all have agreed that if we are to have any system of compulsory training it should be *universal* in its incidence. One of the great difficulties that employers have to deal with as regards the Volunteer system is this, that they do not know how many Volunteers are going to be called upon, when they will have to go away, and for how long. People who are not accustomed to think these things out say at once: "If you are going to introduce a system of universal training you will have a much greater interference with trade or industry than under the present system." That that is not the case a moment's reflection will show, for if every man knows beforehand that at a certain time and for a certain definite period, and at a certain definite age, he will have to undergo a term of service, he could make his preparations beforehand with absolute assurance, and his employer knows precisely how many men are going to be taken, when they are going to be taken, and for how long they will be away, and he can meet those difficulties. I have discussed the matter, not only with employers of labour here but in Germany, Switzerland, and other countries, and they have all told me there is really no difficulty in the question of the so-called interference with labour, because it is of a certain definite nature well understood by everyone. That is why I have made some remarks with regard to the question of the revival of the ballot. In that connection Sir John Ardagh will pardon my reminding him, and also my friend Dr. Miller Maguire, that immediately after the revival of the Militia Ballot Act for the general Militia there was an Act passed called the Local Militia Act, which had no item of chance and no item of unjust incidence in it.¹ It provided that the local Militia should be raised on the principle of universal service, while the general Militia, which in those days was liable to service abroad, should only be enrolled on the principle of the Militia Ballot Act. We see in the Local Militia Act of 1806 an admirable instance of the way in which the principle of universal training could be revived now. With regard to the points which Colonel Stewart raised, I think he will be amused if I tell him that I have referred to practically all of them in the course of my printed lecture, only I did not want to burden you with them, so I did not read them all. With regard to the matter in which he said I was ten millions out, I will read you this passage: "Sir Alfred Turner"—who is the authority he had in mind—"gives the total cost of the Army, including Supplementary Estimates, as £46,800,000 in 1904-5. It will be seen, therefore, that my calculations are on the most favourable basis, since I am taking the total cost at ten millions sterling

¹I have since this gone very carefully into the history of this Act, and find that I was wrong in stating that the element of chance was excluded. The Force was raised by the ballot, but substitution was not permitted.—G.F.S.

less than he has placed it." I was very careful indeed to err on the side of moderation in estimating the cost of the Regular Forces; I did not take the highest estimate, which includes Supplementary Estimates and other items, so that I think Colonel Stewart will admit that I have not overstated my case. With regard to Mr. Arnold-Forster's preposterous statement as to the cost of introducing a system of universal service, I do not really think it is necessary, before a body of experts such as this, to go into the matter fully. I do not believe there is a single person here present who believes that those figures were seriously intended; I think they were really meant simply as a means of stifling discussion at the moment, and putting the nation off with the idea that the thing was impossible. But I think the examination to which they were subjected at the time, not only by the National Service League, but by many experts, shows that they are absurd. In connection with that, I should like very much to go back to what Sir John Ardagh and Colonel Stewart said with regard to the great number of men who would be forthcoming under any scheme of universal training—that there would be far too many for our needs. I have gone into this matter with very great care, and if anybody would do me the honour of allowing me to send them the figures, I think I can prove that the number of men forthcoming would not be so very great. You have to remember, first of all, that we have to recruit the Volunteer Army, we have to recruit the Navy, we have to make an enormous allowance, alas! for physical rejections, and we have to consider that we only require the men to be taken for a short period—two, three or four months; we do not know exactly what it would be—but at any rate, I think the number would be 144,000 a year. That may be considered a very great number, but I do not think it is very enormous. There is this final answer to the objection, that we shall have too many men to deal with, namely, that we have only to raise the physical standard a little higher and we can then have as few men as we like. I think there is no juster principle in dealing with this question of numbers than that of raising the physique of the people. It is a far juster one than that of the ballot. It is quite true that the ballot enables you to have as few men as you like automatically; but I think you will agree it is a juster principle to say that we will raise the physical standard and will have a better class of men because we do not want so many. I think that is fairer. With regard to the 22,000 prisoners whom I mentioned, I took the number from the official figures. Every single figure I have given I can vouch for, because it is official. Colonel Stewart's remark that the figures included many prisoners who had been in prison many times over is, of course, justified by the fact that it reduces the total number; but I think it is also a fairly strong comment upon our voluntary system that we retain in the ranks of the Army a man whose conduct is so bad that he is put into prison eight times in the course of one year. With regard to the several points raised by Dr. Miller Maguire, I feel very much obliged to him for having brought them before you, because I have dealt with them in the course of my lecture, but I was not able, owing to the shortness of time, to read what I have said on those points. If you will allow me to do so, I should like to read one passage dealing with the question of social solidarity—the bringing together of all classes so that they might be able to know one another better. What I said was this:—"Closely connected with this tremendous want is the lack in our case of that spirit of social solidarity which also results from national service. In our industrial civilisation, where money and what money gives play an increasingly large part in the minds and lives of all, there is a tendency

on the part of the rich to look upon the poor as so many pawns in the game of the acquisition of wealth, and a corresponding tendency on the part of the poorer classes to look upon the rich as enemies and the possessors of something which is eagerly coveted for its own sake. The respect for work well and honestly done, the desire to fulfil one's place in life efficiently and with all one's might, whether that place be a Prime Minister's or a stoker's, seems to have greatly diminished, and with it the healthy respect and friendly feeling of man for man, irrespective of what may be in his pocket. Those who have travelled much abroad will probably agree with me when I say that these phenomena are by no means so frequent or so striking there, where all classes have been brought into close contact with one another in the performance of a common task, and where often a Prince of the blood royal may for a time have served as a non-commissioned officer in a troop commanded by a simple gentleman, and a peer may for a time find himself a private in the ranks side by side with peasants from his own estates. There is no loss of dignity on his part, no loss of respect on theirs. On the contrary, both are improved." In connection with that, I would like to tell you of a remark made to me by one of the great philanthropists and educationalists in this country, Mr. T. C. Horsfall. He is a gentleman who has been occupied for many years in the task of ameliorating the lot of the poorer inhabitants, especially of the great cities in the North of England, and he has been profoundly impressed by the enormous difficulties that beset him, for this reason, that the vast majority of the well-to-do classes are not brought into close contact with these problems, and he said in a lecture which he gave in Manchester some years ago:—"I do not think that in a country where people are so kind-hearted and so generous as they are in England it would be possible for the conditions in our slums to be tolerated if they were brought into close contact with them—by young men of the well-to-do classes serving side by side in the ranks and doing common service in a common cause." I do not think I have anything further to say, except to thank you extremely for the kind way in which you have listened to my remarks.

The CHAIRMAN (Colonel the Lord Raglan):—It devolves upon me as Chairman to wind up the discussion, and I will begin by alluding to a few points in the lecture with regard to which I am almost wholly and thoroughly in accord with Mr. Shee. In these days, when money is nearly everything, Mr. Shee has rather wisely taken his stand upon the fact that our present system is extravagant. A great man once said there were two sorts of extravagance: A man's extravagance, which consists in paying half-a-crown for a thing worth eighteenpence when he wants it; and a woman's extravagance, which consists in giving eighteenpence for a thing worth half-a-crown when she does not want it. It seems to me that our present system most successfully combines both those forms of extravagance. In peace we spend eighteenpence for a thing worth half-a-crown because we say it is so cheap, although we do not want it, and in war time we have gone into the hedges and by-ways and paid half-a-crown for a thing worth eighteenpence. Mr. Shee has particularly alluded to the manner in which the classes of this country are separated by modern industrial conditions. A still worse thing is this, that the greater part of the classes of this country do absolutely nothing whatever for the service of their country. People always say: "The working man would not stand compulsory service." My belief is that the working classes are in favour of it, and if I was going to fight a working-class

constituency, supposing I was standing for Parliament, and this point came up, I should say:—"Gentlemen, what classes have chiefly benefited by all the fighting done for this country, which has created the British Empire? Why, the manufacturers and trading classes, who have never fought at all. Let them come and take their share like everybody else." Would not the working men give me a cheer if I said that? And would I not get their votes? In connection with that, I would like to tell you an anecdote, although it is a shocking thing to have to tell you. It was told me not long ago by a friend of mine. His brother-in-law, a leading North-country manufacturer, said to him: "It is perfectly incomprehensible to me that anybody can go and become a soldier in order to kill or to be killed; it is a thing I do not like; it is shocking." My friend replied: "It is precious fortunate for some of you people that somebody does do it." And he said: "Oh, well, that will be all right." The result of these ideas is that patriotism, love of the country, and love of the flag, as understood abroad, even in the United States of America, is dead in this country. Would it be possible in any other country to see the national flag, as we do in two cases out of five, hung upside down when the streets are decorated in any town in the kingdom? Another point which has been alluded to more than once is the loss of wage-earning capacity. That will be absolutely nothing. The number of men who work fifty-two weeks in the year is uncommonly small, and when a man can afford to loaf away part of his time he may just as well be serving his country. There is one thing in which I entirely disagree with what the lecturer said. He stated in the course of his lecture that the principle of compulsory training was founded by Stein and Scharnhorst. Compulsory service was enforced in England many hundreds of years before their time; it was this country which invented compulsory service and carried it out, and the result of compulsory service was that the British archer walked about Europe for 200 years as if it belonged to him. I said before there are certain classes who do not do their work. Could anything be more dreadful than to think of the cry which arose from the whole Press of this country without exception on the publication of the report of the Duke of Norfolk's Commission. Why should that be? Because the class who own newspapers and who write in the newspapers are the very class who do not do anything for the service of their country. They are the class for which the Volunteers were supposed to be formed. Are the middle classes to be found in the Volunteers? No; the middle classes have left the Volunteers. The Volunteers now consist of the working classes, who ought to be in the Militia, and the middle class, for whom the Volunteer Force was formed, have ceased to go into it, and do absolutely nothing for their country. I think we should agitate for compulsory service on the lines of the old Local Militia. I believe that the Acts in connection with it are not repealed, and that if the Secretary of State were to write to-morrow and say: "Embody at once the Local Militia," it could be done. Sir John Ardagh brought forward the question of foreign service and conscription; but I think he will find that in other European Armies a certain amount of the foreign service is done by conscripts. I do not think the French Marines are raised by voluntary enlistment, nor do I believe that when the German Army invaded France in 1870 they said when they arrived at the Rhine: "We are conscripts, and we cannot possibly go abroad." You would not of course make conscripts serve abroad in time of peace; but I would say myself that whether a man is a conscript or whether he is not, he must be liable to go in time of war to the place where he was wanted, because five million trained men

drilling like the Guards and shooting like the King's Prize winner, sitting on the banks of the Thames would be of no use to this country if the destiny of the Empire was being decided on the Oxus. Mr. Shee has dealt with the question of the number of men available. I most thoroughly join with him in his objection to the ballot, and still more, if I may say so, for the suggestion Sir John Ardagh made, that the Militia ballot was to be used as a bogie to fill up the ranks of the Volunteers. The result probably would be that you would tempt men into the Volunteers by saying: "You do not get so much training there as in the Militia," and therefore you would compel the poor man to thoroughly train himself in the service of the country, while you would allow the rich man to buy himself out into another force in which the terms of service were easier. I do not believe that you have the right to go to the country and put such a scheme of that sort before it. Mr. Shee has already referred to Mr. Arnold-Forster's figures, which took my breath away, and that of a good many other people, too. Colonel Stewart alluded to the want of officers, which is very great in the Army, and still more so in the Auxiliary Forces. I do not see anything myself which will give you the proper number of officers for any form of Auxiliary Force unless you have some system of payment, which will have to be pretty high, or they must be compulsorily trained like everybody else. Compulsory service will at once sweep away all those difficulties. I have only one other thing to say, which is that anything else, including all these other excellent things we hear about rifle clubs and about training boys in schools, are all beautiful in theory, but they are all part of a system for shirking the real issue. Even if you have a man drilled like a Guardsman and shooting like a King's Prize winner, he is of no use to you unless you can get him when you want him, and if you have got him and you have nowhere to put him, he is of still less use to you. You want a cadre to put him in; you want non-commissioned officers and officers to lead him. No system of rifle clubs will do what we want. If we had the whole of the able-bodied inhabitants of this country, men, women, and children, firing from noon to night you would not make an Army. I regret most deeply that Lord Roberts has committed himself in that connection. Sir John Ardagh again has advocated drilling boys at school; but you must remember that of those so drilled only one in five will enter any of our Forces under present conditions, and even then it will be years since he was drilled; and if I know anything about the War Office, the drill will have changed twice over during that time, and therefore it would be far better if the boy had not learnt anything before. Drilling schoolboys is another form of shirking the subject that I do not like to see. I have a letter here from a great supporter of National Service, General John Hart Dunne. His words are so wise that if you will allow me I will read them. He says:—"It would take every man, horse, and gun that we possess at this moment to defend our Imperial interests in India, and generally abroad. Lord Roberts's idea to turn the manhood of the country into rifle experts would be of little use unless they were made to undergo a certain amount of military training and discipline. Without this his proposition may do more harm than good by encouraging the country to live on in a fool's paradise, with nothing but a mob of good shots to fall back upon! Besides, it does not at all follow that our next war is likely to be carried on like the Boer one. Let everyone with influence now urge upon our War Minister that if he does not at present insist on obligatory service, he should at all events so far copy the Swiss as to have our Auxiliary Forces so welded together, with proportional artillery, engineers, transport, and

hospital corps, as to be able to form complete brigades and divisions ready to meet an emergency that sooner or later is sure to overtake us." I have one remaining duty, namely, to propose a vote of thanks to the lecturer for his interesting lecture. I need not mention on your behalf the very great interest with which you have listened to the lecture, which was full of most pregnant facts and figures that it behoves us all to take away with us and ponder over.