



Royal United Services Institution. Journal

Publication details, including instructions for
authors and subscription information:

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

The Development of our System of National Land Defence

Colonel S. A. E. Hickson D.S.O.

Published online: 11 Sep 2009.

To cite this article: Colonel S. A. E. Hickson D.S.O. (1912) The Development of our
System of National Land Defence, Royal United Services Institution. Journal, 56:409,
303-322, DOI: [10.1080/03071841209433652](https://doi.org/10.1080/03071841209433652)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071841209433652>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

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

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes.
Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan,

sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

THE JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL UNITED SERVICE INSTITUTION.

VOL. LVI.

MARCH, 1912.

NO. 409.

[Authors alone are responsible for the contents of their respective Papers.]

THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR SYSTEM OF NATIONAL LAND DEFENCE.

BY COLONEL S. A. E. HICKSON, D.S.O.

On Wednesday, December 6th, 1911.

ADMIRAL SIR NATHANIEL BOWDEN-SMITH, K.C.B.,
in the Chair.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

OVER and above organization and methods of National Mobilization for Defence I propose this afternoon to endeavour to trace in particular the origin and development of that spirit of national service which is itself the foundation of all National Defence. It is the fluctuations of this national spirit which above all endanger national security. At times we see it rising so high that the nation seems capable of achieving anything. At others it falls so low, the spirit of self-interest and party is so predominant, that nothing seems capable of arousing the people to preparation for combined action. Manifestly it is continuity of spirit which is desirable and necessary.

I am concerned to-day with Home Defence only, not with those feudal, mercenary and standing armies of which Mr. Fortescue has told the tale so inimitably. Our system of defence at home has always been distinct from our foreign service system of offence, and the maxim that principles abide, details only change, must be my excuse for taking my audience back for a time to remote periods of history. Historians have shown that it is the persistence of Saxon¹ influence in our institutions which

¹ I use "Saxon" as comprehending generally Angles, Saxons, and other Germanic races in contra-distinction to Norman.—S.A.E.H.

sidered, "and Territorial units have been allocated to these sections of the coast, and are being trained for their defence. Behind these there is being organized a central force, partly Regular and partly Territorial, which, should an outbreak of war approach, would be under its own commander-in-chief." Thus from Alfred's time to our own the strategical principle of defence has remained unaltered. But as a matter of organization there is one important difference. In Alfred's day national service was a matter of course, and what interests us to-day is whether under a voluntary system of training and enlistment it will be possible to collect with sufficient rapidity a sufficient and sufficiently trained force in any one part of the country, without denuding other parts, and without unduly interfering in time of war with the private avocations of that small and gallant force of Territorials which voluntarily trains in time of peace.

"NORMAN PERIOD."

(and preservation of the Saxon Oath of allegiance).

The strong spirit of national service which Alfred inspired, aided by his great power of organization and command, both naval and military, as already said, made England under his successors an united country such as she had never been before. But in course of time that apathy which insularity tends to engender, again set in, and we have one of those fluctuations of the national spirit already referred to as so dangerous to security. Under Ethelred the Unready the fyrd system entirely broke down, and all national organization disappeared. The Danes, seeing our want of preparation, came again. They even for a while gained the mastery. The spirit of faction and party prevailed, and when the family of Godwyne at last became supreme, "the policy of Leofric, followed by the luke-warm patriotism of Edwin and Morcar, opened the way to the Norman Conquest by disabling the right arm of Harold." Heroic though Harold might be, strong though his central force of Hus-Carls might be, he had not the genius of command, the power of inspiring united action possessed by Alfred. Mr. Green describes his rule as a policy of mere national stagnation within and without sprung from the narrowness of conception of a mind which it is impossible to call great. But genius was arrayed against him; whilst Harold allowed his navy and southern forces to disperse, Duke William of Normandy, in spite of mutinies, kept his men together. Favoured at last by a fair wind at a time when the wind is normally adverse, and combating with success every other difficulty, he landed his 3,000 dinghies on our shores when least expected, unopposed, and in a few weeks England was a conquered country. Thus it is that a Napoleon or a Hannibal unexpectedly crosses the Alps, that a Wolfe conquers Quebec, and a conqueror overpowers England—in spite of all seeming impossibilities. A concurrence of three events only is required

—the man, the means, and the opportunity—to make the success of such surprises a certainty.

Nevertheless, we are proud of our Norman blood, and we have every reason to be grateful to the Norman conqueror who restored to us national unity, even though at such a tremendous sacrifice. For though he could not altogether exclude feudalism from us, he wished to rule as legally elected King of England, and to preserve the Saxon institutions. He had not been long our master before he recognised the superior value—to him especially—of the Saxon spirit of national service in defence of country and king before all, over the feudal spirit of tenant service. In 1086, therefore, at Salisbury, at the great Council summoned after the Domesday survey, he accepted the old Saxon oath of allegiance, and caused “all landowners of substance in England, *whose vassals soever they were*, to become his men, and swear that they would be faithful to him *above all others*.” Thus was the old Saxon oath of allegiance made to take precedence for ever over local homage. Every man became, above and before all, the king’s man. This, says Dr. Stubbs, “accounts for the maintenance of the national force of defence over and above the feudal array. The fyrd of the English, the general armament of the counties and hundreds was not abolished at the conquest, but subsisted even through the reigns of William Rufus and Henry Ist; to be reformed and reconstituted by Henry II., and in each reign it gave proof of its strength and faithfulness.” Eventually, it emerged as our militia. As early even as the reign of King John, in 1205, and 1216, all men were ordered to assemble to resist the enemy’s landing on pain of forfeiture and perpetual slavery.

EARLY ENGLISH PERIOD.

(Assize of Arms, Statute of Winchester).

It fell to the lot of Henry II. to give to the Saxon spirit of national Service in defence of king and country before all, the force of law. He found three different military systems current on his accession :—

1. Hired foreign mercenaries.
2. The feudal tenants in chivalry.
3. The territorial levies or Saxon fyrd.

The first of these he was bound to discharge by the terms on which he ascended the throne. The second, like William I., he regarded as by nature unreliable when not positively hostile. His natural policy, therefore, was also like William, to develop still further the national territorial force, and training of the people for home defence. He, therefore, strengthened our defensive system by the Assize of Arms, which is further interesting as being a very early application of the jury system. Duly appointed jurors in each district assessed the wealth of

the whole community of freemen who were divided into classes according to their wealth, and made to swear before magistrates that they would "have and carry these arms in the service of the king, according to his commands, in defence of king and country." By this means Henry II. sought and found a method of dispensing with the services of the barons in keeping order at home, whilst he incidentally founded that national system of training, which later was capable of furnishing a large reserve to our kings, even for service abroad. For from this national training, as revised by the Statute of Winchester, came the men raised by indenture and array, who, over and above the feudal tenants in chivalry, won for British arms such lasting glory at Crecy, Poitiers, and Agincourt.

But the immediate object of the assize was to unite the whole people under proper discipline for home defence, and we shall see later how grandly it achieved this object, how complete the union of all classes in the common national cause became, and how eventually this national spirit triumphed over feudalism or tenant service. The Assize of Arms was intended, says Dr. Stubbs, "to create a force for national defence, safer and more trustworthy than the feudal levies." . . . "Neither the feudal levies which were unmanageable and precarious, nor the mercenaries who were intolerable to the people, were available for the purpose served by the ancient national militia; and that body which was the armed English people, subsisted side by side with the county court and hundred court through the Norman period." In other words, it was already our constitutional force. This it became more than ever in 1285, when Edward I. introduced the provisions of the Assize into the Statute of Winchester. By this act the age of liability to service was fixed at from 16 to 60 years of age. View of armour was to be held twice a year by two constables, and defaults reported through the justices to Parliament and the king. This statute is regarded as "a monument of the persistence of primitive (Saxon) institutions working their way through the substratum of feudalism and gaining strength in the process." Only 10 years later, by the confirmation of charters, and the Act "de Tallagio non concedendo," the right of the Commons to representation in Parliament was likewise conceded, on the famous Justinian principle, that, "as what concerns all should be approved by all, so common dangers should be averted by united efforts."

Thus at last is our constitution complete, and the duties of the people in national defence, as well as their privileges in the national council defined by law. "For," says our historian, "it was the fixed and persistent policy of the kings fully developed under Edward I. to unite the whole people for administrative purposes, whether by eliminating the feudal distinctions or by utilizing them for the general objects of government; that, as the Parliament should be the whole nation in council . . . the host should be again the whole nation in arms."¹

¹ Stubbs Hist.

Thus, on the one hand, by one Act of Parliament we have the "*Tota communa liberorum hominum*"—i.e., the whole body of freemen—obliged to bear arms; on the other, by another Act, the king undertakes not to levy taxes without the consent of the whole community of freemen (*communi assensu omnium burgensium et aliorum liberorum hominum*.)

There is no bargain. The two Acts are not actually connected, nevertheless, the duties as well as the privileges of citizenship are equally committed to law. Thus nicely balanced in our constitution, as it originally stood, were duty and privilege, the spirit of national service, and the insistence on individual liberty.

Under Henry VII. and the statutes of Livery and Maintenance, the feudal military system was virtually quashed for ever, and when Henry VIII. ascended the throne the ancient Saxon territorial levies, out of which now sprang the trained bands and national militia, were the only constitutional forces available. It was practically the same force which Alfred the Great had inaugurated, based upon the Saxon spirit of national service in defence of king and country before all. Serfdom had disappeared, and the territorial forces of defence now mustered under the sheriffs and officers duly appointed by the king irrespective altogether of feudal tenure, were the English people in arms as a whole, bound by law to train and turn out in defence of their county.

14th CENTURY SCHEMES OF DEFENCE.

I proceed now to review the practical effect of these laws to regulate service upon the evolution of our national scheme for mobilization and defence. The basis of the whole system was, as we have now seen, a thoroughly national spirit of service and training regulated by statute, and affecting all alike. Our ancestors saw nothing degrading in service, without which there cannot be discipline. They recognized it as the first duty of man, and perceived that a man is of value to his fellows, not in proportion as he is free, but in proportion as he renders good service. The "unemployed" alone is absolutely free, because no one requires his services.

The Statute of Winchester was brought into force against rebellion in 1330, and against foreign invasion in 1340. Again, in 1360, when the French attacked and burnt Winchelsea before the local musters could assemble. In each case the whole manhood of the nation was mustered, and thus became gradually educated and accustomed to train and turn out for defence. After the last-named occasion, 1360, Edward III. found fit to compel training on Sundays and holidays, in lieu of certain games which were henceforth forbidden. Richard II. extended such practice by Act of Parliament (1392), even to men employed as servants, whilst Edward IV. enacted that every man should have a bow his own height, and the price of bows was even regulated by law for the national good.

It is in the preparation to resist the invasions threatened in the years 1377 and 1386 that we first begin to see clearly the beginnings of a regular system of mobilization for defence. The strong hand of Edward III. was now removed, and one of those fluctuations of the national spirit was, no doubt, making our enemies fancy they saw an opportunity. But in 1377 we are able to give even the dates of the various steps taken to put the country in a posture of defence. Thus on June 12th the Mayor and bailiffs of Exeter, in view of French invasion, are ordered to repair its walls and ditches, and compel all lay residents within ten leagues to assist, with power to arrest and imprison the disobedient. On June 30th John de Warburton is likewise commissioned to take and get to work stonemasons and others on Corfe Castle, also with power to imprison the disobedient. On July 1st John de Cobham and others and the sheriffs of Kent, and other gentry from practically all counties, are directed to array and keep ever arrayed, the men at arms and archers of their counties to resist invasion, "according to the form of like commissions of the late king." They are likewise to cause beacons to be set up "in the usual places," to give notice of the arrival of the enemy. On July 2nd special Commissions of the Peace are issued, and on July 12th Commission "de Walliis fossatis" are further granted to individuals named for the defence of parts named along the coast, and certain marsh districts such as Ouse and Derwent, Ely in Cambridge, Hythe and Romney in Kent.

Alike in 1377 and 1386 and all the schemes which follow, precautionary measures are clearly distinguishable from actual mobilization. First, the people were mustered and warned, and garrisons and central armies allotted, a post of alarm being assigned to every man. The lighting of the beacons by selected officers, duly appointed, was the calling of the whole manhood of the nation, within reach, to arms—every man to his post—a silent and even more eloquent signal than the single telegraphic word "Mobilize," in common use to-day, and of which Moltke was so proud. Crude the system may have been at first, but it grew more and more complete and regular, the precautionary stages being :—

1. The planning and repair of fortifications.
2. The appointment of commanders to the various sections of coast and the preparation of schemes for local defence.
3. The mustering of all able-bodied men from 16 to 60, and the selection of the more robust for garrison and other permanent duty.
4. The describing of central armies.
5. The preparation of the beacons and guards, and mounted post in connection therewith.
6. The appointment, where necessary, of special Commissioners of the Peace.

The system is a thoroughly decentralized one, organized under the king's lieutenants,¹ the sheriffs, Justices of the Peace, bailiffs, and constables. The inimitable Froissart relates that in 1386, ten thousand men at arms and one hundred thousand archers were mobilized for defence, over and above a large army in Spain. Contingents were also ordered to be sent to London for a central force under the king. "From the Humber to Southampton all the coast of England was well guarded and men upon the watch at every point." He further gives the scheme for defence, namely, to allow the French to land and remain unmolested for several days. The country round them was to be devastated, then their fleet destroyed, and finally the half-starved enemy was to be vigorously assaulted.

TUDOR PERIOD.

(16th Century Schemes of Defence).

Henry VII., having suppressed feudal armies, as we have seen, the Saxon ideal of national militia service triumphed.² But civil war had again created a fluctuation of the national spirit. Organization was wanting, and British prestige abroad had fallen very low. Under the influence of Henry VIII.'s early popularity the national spirit of service for defence, however, rapidly revived. Wolsey was his minister for war and organizer: Henry himself was an expert rider, archer, as well as musician and dancer; and under him English archery and training once more regained their renown. It was, however, not till 1539 that his rupture with Rome about his divorce, caused him to anticipate invasion mainly from Germany, at Antwerp, if not from Germany and France combined. So thorough, however, were his preparations that on travelling from Dover to London, the French ambassador reported having seen every subject who could bear arms called up from 17 to 18 without exception. "They are mustering, drilling, and fortifying their exposed frontiers in all directions. . . . My lord, no invading force could show itself without the whole nation being warned, and every man will be ready to march where danger threatens." The attempted invasion was, in fact, abandoned, and amid great rejoicing, Henry VIII. held upon this very site where we now are, i.e., from his palace at Westminster, called Whitehall, a very remarkable review, when, on May 8th, 1539, 15,000 men of the City of London, clad in white uniform, marched past before him, the Lord Mayor in armour, with a mace by his side, being at their head, and every alderman leading his Guild. Contemporary records remark with pride, "How glad the people were to prepare, what desire they had to do their Prince service! It was a joyful sight to behold of every Englishman."³ Six years later, in 1545, the French were in

¹ Patent Rolls, Richard II.

² Stubbs' Hist., Vol. III, 536. Hume's Hist., Vol. III, 71.

³ Compare Hall's Chron., Hume Vol. III, p. 312.

turn invading our shores, and this time it is the German Ambassador, Van der Delft, who reports that "by means of beacons the English say that they can anywhere muster 25,000 to 30,000 men in two days, and they are confident in their strength and delighted to see the enemy near." The unanimity and high spirit of national service throughout this period are striking and remarkable. There is a most complete union of all classes in a common cause, and from all sides reports come in that the territorial levies, including even women and children, enter with enthusiasm into the local schemes, taking their coats and cutting ditches to make the enemy's landing troublesome. Indeed, in 1545, two attempts were made by the French to land, firstly in the Isle of Wight, where the English slowly fell back till, gradually increasing in numbers, they became strong enough to drive the French back to the sea; secondly, at Seaford, where the whole French fleet appeared, and where 300 local territorial archers and others drove 1,500 French who landed back to their ships with the loss of 100 of their number. In all cases the same general principle is followed of central armies supporting the county territorial forces distributed all round the coast; and in 1551 we find a Venetian Ambassador reporting with reference to our coast defence that "great sums of money have of late years been wasted in erecting fortifications which have, however, not answered. . . . After all, the great security of the kingdom exists in the valour of the nation, where bravery is equalled only by the strict subordination they observe to their respective leaders." The same authority states that the infantry is innumerable. "York alone can muster from seventy to one hundred thousand men capable of bearing arms," and, though we were behind the continent in general use of firearms, Harrison states that our men were waxing skilful in the use of the caliver and pike, it being the duty of the magistrates to see that "the men enrolled practised each one his several weapon." Light troops on the coast falling back on central supports, till met by central armies, is the feature of all local schemes, and the orders for the beacons became even more thorough. Their great aim was (1) to keep an alert watch, (2) to afford to every man a specific post on emergency, (3) to call up on occasion all the men, either of one, or of three, counties, according to the strength of the enemy in view, (4) not to alarm the people falsely and without occasion. To these last two points great attention was given, the number of beacons lit on the coast regulating the area from which the men were to turn out.

Foreign ambassadors, French, German, and Venetian, unite with our own authorities in praise of the high spirit of national service of our people, in view of national danger. "Britain," says one, "has little to apprehend, either from a sudden or deliberate attack, as both would be attended with the greatest risk to the invader."

TUDOR PERIOD CONTINUED.

(The Spanish Armada).

But alike on sea and land, the development of the broadside fire of sailing vessels at sea, and the separation of the three arms on land, had begun already at this time to develop the arts of strategy, tactics, and military organization as we now know them. Foremost amongst our own early strategists stands Drake, who, at the time of the Spanish Armada, had learnt and taught three important lessons:—

1. The superiority of the broadside and swift sailing vessels over the old galley, as an instrument of war.
2. That the strategic position for the British Navy in time of war is off the enemy's ports rather than our own.
3. The value and art of coast defence warfare and of the attack on the land fronts of naval harbours and coast defences.

His policy of destroying the Spanish expedition off its own shores meant the absence of the British Navy from British shores. Strong coast defence became, therefore, a necessity for England, lest, as nearly occurred, the Spanish Navy should elude our own. We are not, therefore, surprised to find Drake, with Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir John Norris, Lord Grey, Sir Thos. Leighton, and others, taking part early in 1588, in a general consultation, the object of which was "to consider a project for the ordering of the forces of the realm to withstand invasion," and the report of this board, together with "the advice of Sir Edward Harwood to Charles I.,"¹ and "the orders to be observed upon any foreign invasion" printed in 1642, form in themselves a complete review of our system of mobilization and defence at this period.

Over and above the general assembly of the whole people on the lighting of the beacons, the total number of men allocated by this Board to garrison of the principal places² from the Wash to Falmouth City was 137,000, besides the local forces of Wales and Anglesea. In addition to which there were two Central Armies, each of nearly 30,000, the Army of Tilbury of 19,000 men, sundry forces raised by individuals amounting to 1,000, and an army of the North. The total must have amounted to some 250,000 men, the present strength very nearly of our Territorial Force, at a time when the population of England was but 4½ millions, or only one-tenth of what it is now. Thus a corresponding number of men to-day would be 2,500,000. The local schemes for the defence (for example) of Yorkshire, East Anglia and Kent were carefully and minutely worked out on the same principles as already related, i.e., light troops, mounted

¹ Record Office, Dom Eliz., Vol. 209, 49; and March, 1911 JOURNAL.

² Note.—That is, Falmouth, Plymouth, Poole, Portsmouth, Parts of Sussex, Sheppey, Harwich, Parts of Suffolk, Yarmouth.

for choice, patrolling the sea coasts, supported by pioneers, with instructions to fall back upon infantry supports, and take up a position to await the Central Armies. "The whole of the maritime counties," reports a spy and eye-witness, "from Cornwall to Norfolk, were so furnished of men of war, both of themselves and with resort of aid from their next shire, as there was no place to be doubted for landing any foreign forces, but there were within 48 hours come to the place above 20,000 fighting men on horseback, and on foot with field ordinance." To this we may add a Venetian ambassador's report that "the whole island contains a vast multitude of men warlike, resolute, and not only despising but even courting danger." Kent alone was called upon to turn out 18,000 men, and Sussex 17,000 men, the present territorial establishments of these counties being 8,500 and 4,800 respectively, or considerably less than half. Other counties were in like proportion. Thus relatively our forefathers of the 16th century could turn out a force of selected and robust men twenty times as strong as we can, our population being ten times theirs, and our territorial forces only half their strength.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD.

(Decay of National Spirit. Rise of Standing or Professional Armies.
and the New Model).

When the 17th century dawned, in all three great changes were affecting our national defensive system.

1. The musket and the pike had definitely replaced the bow and arrow and bill or lance.
2. The tactical use of the three arms and the ranging of these under separate officers specially qualified, was giving rise to standing armies.
3. England's Navy was being more and more recognized as her first line of defence.

The difficulties of training, in the country, with gunpowder and musket, were, of course, great as compared with the bow and arrow, and combined drill had now reached a degree of importance before unknown. But the professional soldier was never, even in early days, a favourite in this country, and many a pamphlet betrays the strong leaning of old soldiers towards the hereditary system of national training for home defence, more especially as the means of rendering the burden of defence least, and sense of security greatest. Thus the writer of a pamphlet in 1628 shows how advantageous it was "under the old system not to have to draw the people from their counties and proper habitations, except on short notice." Another in 1648 maintains that "the liberty of the people and their safety" is concerned rather in having "the old laws vigorously enforced than in new setting or altering the power of the militia." In short, as the struggle before was between the spirit of national service and the tenant service of feudalism, so now it became between

national service and the spirit of the professional soldier. The advice of the distinguished soldier Sir Edward Harwood, sums up very well the views of those who still held to national service. After giving his opinion that naval service must first be considered, he advises the arming of the whole able-bodied men of the kingdom from 18 or 20 to 35 or 40 years old, and their training under experienced instructors. He recommends that the statutes to regulate service formerly in force be revised and adopted to universal practice with the musket and caliver by shooting at marks; and dwells upon "the advantage to his Majesty by this means of having an army of foot always ready of a sudden, in any part of England to answer all occasions, without drawing his forces much far out of their proper places." Thus does he, too, revert to the primitive Saxon principle of defence, concluding impressively but ominously as follows: "It may be said that these advices will not be found practicable or very difficult. So are all great works at first."

Sir Ed. Harwood was killed in 1632, but ten years afterwards, in 1642, his advice was republished by his brother. In the same year were printed, "The orders meet to be observed for those shires that lie upon the coast," bearing no authority, but manifestly written by a soldier of large experience, who had been as he says, in the Low Countries, where great armies were last assembled, and perused there every regiment—the sorting and division of weapons, as well as their order and description. He dwells upon the necessity of getting men together for training and exercise in sufficient numbers, and proclaims that our aim should be to have our nation well exercised and trained "as the sheet anchor and refuge of all."

But in the very year of the publication of this pamphlet, the Civil War broke out. With it came the "New Model" army of Cromwell, and, later, a standing Army became ever more and more the order of the day.

THE 18th CENTURY.

After the Restoration we find no longer any national scheme for mobilization and defence. When the militia was reconstituted in 1662, it was on a basis of 4 days' regimental training annually, with 2 days' company training 4 times a year. Consequently, in 1690, after our naval defeat at Beachy Head, when a French fleet of 111 sail was riding at anchor in Torbay, the surrounding hills were crowded with a mob of disorganized Englishmen, who were powerless even to prevent 1,000 Frenchmen from burning and sacking Teignmouth. What a contrast to the repulse of the French at the Isle of Wight and Seaford in 1545! Small wonder that in 1698 we find a writer complaining that "the militia as now regulated is burdensome and useless, and successfully rendered an object of the people's contempt and aversion, with a design to create in them a good opinion of mercenaries, and to make them believe a necessity

of always keeping up a standing force of such." Similarly another author in 1712 points out that "a good militia system would be much cheaper than a standing army," though the policy of assenting to the King's inclination to have regular forces after the French model continues, and "must in time be submitted to if we will not look back into what our predecessors thought discretion." Thus in 1740, Carlyle forcibly describes our military affairs as "chaotic, and this in a quite habitual manner this long while back," and describes the English Army as "in a wrong sense the wonder of the world." Finally, in 1756, we had to import 10,000 Hanoverians, and as many Hessians to defend our own shores. Further than this we could not go. In 1757 a Militia Ballot Act was introduced, with company training throughout the summer and autumn twice a month; and, though it appears to have had little effect, we learn from a pamphleteer in 1759 that the militia spirit is gaining ground. Not, however, till the beginning of the 19th century did the spirit of national service rise sufficiently high, even during the Napoleonic wars, to allow of the embodiment of the militia, and after Waterloo the militia became gradually rather a reserve for the regular army than a real national defence force, with an organized scheme for mobilization.

CONCLUSION.

(Modern reversion to Saxon Methods).

Now, at the beginning of the 20th century, the militia as a defence force, has disappeared altogether, and we are, strangely enough reverting, as already indicated, to a territorial force on a county basis, raised almost exactly on the general lines of the Saxons, with modern organization by divisions and defence schemes based on the old national idea of distribution all round the coast of local forces, supported by central armies. So true is it that principles abide, details only change. The only important variation so far to-day is that, whereas our forefathers founded their scheme on 'manhood service,' equitably regulated according to their lights by law, we still adhere to the voluntary principle. The difference clearly is that in the one case you can put your finger on sufficient men at once in any locality threatened. In the other you accept the risk of being found with insufficient organized force to defend England, Ireland and Scotland, as well as our important naval bases, and yet have enough men left for the formation of adequate central armies.

Thus we come back to where we started. Continuity of a high spirit of national service is essential for national security. It is in the fluctuations of it that danger lies, and I have attempted to prove by facts and figures that, estimated by the number of able-bodied men we could put into the field in the 16th century, the spirit of national service of our forefathers in Kent, Sussex, York, London, and other counties was to the spirit of national service of to-day as twenty to one. This is

borne out by Hollingshed's statement that in Elizabeth's time, the musters exceeded a million men, whilst in London, under Henry VIII., 15,000 robust and selected men took part in the interesting review described.

If a high spirit of national service in the 16th century could produce not only such great leaders as Drake, Hawkins, and others, but also Bacon and Shakespeare, ought we not the more to cultivate it? Bacon it was who, centuries ago, warned us that, "sedentary arts and delicate manufactures have in their nature a contrariety to a military disposition." That is the great danger to-day. We have to bridge over the vast gulf which separates the rich from the poor, the duke from the docker. Bacon was 28, Shakespeare 24, at the time of the Armada. Can we do better than remember that the mixture of classes in their day made well disciplined England known also as Merry England, in that century when our first great efforts in literature and the advancement of learning were likewise being made?

In the words of Sir Edward Harwood, these advices may seem not practical or very difficult. Yet I trust that I have not failed altogether to show that a high and universal spirit of national service has an immeasurable strategic value for defence purposes. By this means alone can his Majesty have an army of foot *on a sudden* in any part of his dominions, without drawing his forces much far out of their proper places, and without denuding other parts. The splendid old Anglo-Saxon spirit of manhood service in defence of king and country could effect this. Without it all measures of defence must be relegated to uncertainty, and enlistment become a permanent source of worry and anxiety to those whose duty should be to train recruits, not to procure them. Such absence of national spirit can only be due to educational neglect, that is, to the gross military ignorance of the people. The progress of civilization and of the institutions we value, can only be ensured by the intelligent application of the forces and inventions which civilization herself discovers and produces for her own protection. This can be assured alone at the present day by establishing a national standard of military education and training.

DISCUSSION.

The Chairman: I did not come to the meeting this afternoon to take the Chair, but to say a few words on behalf of the National Service League; and therefore I propose to exercise my privilege as Chairman and open the discussion. I will preface what I am about to say by complimenting the Lecturer on some of his interesting statistics. He commences with the Saxon period, and traces our history of national defence through various periods up to the Militia Act of 1755, then up to the first Volunteer Act of 1794, and so on up to the present time. In treating of the question of national defence, we must speak of the land forces and the sea forces together; we cannot separate the one from the other, because the one is the complement of the other. With regard to the Navy, I do not

think I need say very much about that, because it appears to me that both political parties and all our fellow countrymen, with the exception of a few cranks, are united in their desire to have an all-powerful Navy. I only wish people also considered that an army is absolutely necessary for us, and that they would think in such a way as not to allow the Army to be reduced any more than it is at present.

What, however, both services require is more freedom of action. In the Navy our ships are too much tied to our shores, and although under existing conditions we must always keep a large fleet in home waters because we depend upon our Navy to save us from invasion, we should like to see some of our ships more free than they are at present, to be able to do their duty on the high seas wherever their services may be required. With regard to the Army, recent experience has warned us that our Expeditionary Force may be suddenly called away to help to maintain the balance of power in Europe, and we have no trained men behind them ready to take their place. What, therefore, we really want is a bona fide Territorial Army sufficient in numbers, sufficiently trained, and ready for mobilization at short notice.

That is what the National Service League has been trying to impress upon the country for several years past, believing that such a reserve can only be obtained by a system of compulsory or national training. I think you will agree with me that although our progress has not been what we should wish it to be, still we have made some impression on the country, in spite of the very misleading statements which are often made as to our propaganda. When we first began our movement we only had, I think it was, three Members of Parliament with us. We have now something like 160 who are openly in favour of our proposals, and there are many more sitting on the fence only waiting to see which way the cat jumps to come down on our side. As to the allegations which are brought against us, I saw it stated the other day that we were absolutely in favour of Conscription, pure and simple. I have been connected with the movement ever since it began, and I have never heard any of my colleagues advocate Conscription. Again, it was stated not long ago that we wanted to keep a million men under arms. No one has ever made such a proposal to my knowledge.

What we do urge is this, that we should have a bona-fide Territorial Army of at least 400,000 strong, without counting the lads* in their first year of service, and that those men should be ready for mobilization at short notice. I cannot understand any thinking man or any Government, after what has occurred quite recently, being satisfied with the present order of things. Look back at the year 1870 when France suffered her terrible humiliation and found herself under the heavy heel of Germany, and to secure peace had to surrender two Provinces and pay an indemnity of over two hundred million sterling; and, remember, at that time the Navy of France was infinitely superior to that of Germany. The German ships were all shut up in their ports, so that France had all her coasts and communications perfectly clear, and she was not brought to her knees by starvation as we might be under similar circumstances.

I would ask to be allowed to give you one other example as to how a nation suffered a terrible reverse through not being prepared, and one not so generally well known. I refer to the war between Chili and Peru, which broke out in 1879. Peru is a nation which is much better known in England than Chili; it occupies apparently a larger space on

the map, whereas Chili is only a narrow strip of land between the Andes and the sea. At first Peru kept the whole Chilian force at bay with her ironclad ship, the "Huascar," and a few others, but shortly afterwards the Chilians brought their ship, the "Esmeralda" up with their other vessels, and a sea fight took place off the barren coast of Tarapaca. The Peruvian naval forces were worsted, the "Huascar" sunk; and Peru, bereft of her sea power, was absolutely at the mercy of Chili, for Chili had paid attention to her land forces whilst the Peruvians had neglected to do so. Chili invaded Peru, seized Lima, the capital, occupied it for three years, during which time the whole of the people groaned under the tyranny of their oppressors, and in the end Peru was only able to secure the evacuation of the invaders by surrendering to Chili the province of Tarapaca with its rich nitrate fields, which Chili has held ever since and from which she gets millions of revenue every year from the export duty on the nitrate. As far as I remember, Peru only conceded that territory to Chili for, I think it was, ten or twelve years, but Chili still holds it, and apparently intends to keep it.

A few days ago I noted that Lord Haldane, in making a speech, is stated to have said that this country would never accept any sort of compulsory service until England had been invaded not once, but twice. If England is successfully invaded once she will not want it a second time. I suppose the Secretary of State for War meant to imply that any invasion of this country was impossible. You may remember some years ago one of our Statesmen, who is no longer living, is stated to have said that a dinghy could not approach our shores without being discovered and destroyed. Shortly afterwards we were told that we should be prepared against a raid of 10,000 men, later on the 10,000 men were raised to 70,000 men. I suppose the number 70,000 is getting rather awkward even in theory at present, and so I presume, we are coming back again to the dinghy period. When one considers the naval part of the war between Russia and Japan and the number of ships on both sides which were destroyed by mines—the Japanese lost two battleships in as many days—and the submarine boat, which is altogether a new weapon, and which has never been tried in real warfare, and when we remember that in the North Sea and the seas all round our coast the weather is occasionally so thick that you cannot for two or three days together see half a mile beyond the ship, I do maintain, although I admit the invasion bogie is made too much of, that he is a bold man who says at the present time anything is impossible. I have always been brought up to believe that in war it is the impossible that often happens.

In conclusion I would observe that it is uphill work going about the country trying to preach patriotism when some of those who should be the leaders of the people tell them that nothing is necessary, and that they may sleep peacefully in their beds, and also use their best endeavours to dissuade them from making that small self-sacrifice which, in combination with a powerful fleet, would render not only this country, but the whole British Empire, absolutely secure from any interference from outside.

Dr. T. Miller Maguire, M.A., LL.D., said that he would like the Lecturer to make clear one point. Did he mean that there ever had been a period in the history of our race when, without compulsory military service, the State had been able either to enforce its will

on other nations, or to defend itself from serious attacks by other nations? For example, when the Lecturer stated in the last passage of the paper that "a high and universal spirit of national service has an immeasurable strategic value," did that mean a *voluntary* or an *obligatory* national service?

The Lecturer: By national service I mean obligatory universal service, manhood service—the necessity for every man on arriving at manhood to serve in the defence of his country.

Dr. Miller Maguire said that it followed that the present Territorial system was a mockery, and a snare, because it was not based on obligatory military service. One of the arguments with which they were met was, that compulsion was contrary to the spirit of British liberty; that it was antithetical to the grand traditions of Magna Charta, and contrary to the policy of the amorous Henry VIII., or of the dry English Justinian Edward I. But the Lecturer had shown that, instead of obligatory service being antithetical to, it had been contiguous with the spirit of British liberty, and had grown with and cherished the spirit of British liberty throughout.

Colonel E. M. Lloyd said that he had listened with the utmost satisfaction to the long historical statement of the Lecturer, showing how the duty of Englishmen to defend their country had been a recognized part of English common law throughout all the ages. Referring to the mention which Colonel Hickson had made of the remarks by foreign ambassadors on the existence of compulsory service in England, he would like to quote from a little book, "The Complete Captain," written by a Huguenot leader, the Duc de Rohan, in the time of James I. Speaking of the difficulty of recruiting, he said.

"You must get the best men you can, but in France and Germany beggars cannot be choosers. They have to take what they can get. In England it is very different. They, luckily, by the law of their land, can compel any man to serve; therefore they can pick their soldiers."

How far that was strictly true then may be a question, but at any rate, that was the way in which foreigners looked at it, and that was the way he would be very glad to see them look at it now. He thought the ups and downs to which the Lecturer had referred—the times of high spirit and the times of low spirit—had just corresponded with the urgency of the case; as soon as ever John Bull thought the danger was past he unbuckled his belt and took off his helmet and wanted to go to sleep. But what they had to enforce upon him was that this was not the day when he could afford to do it.

Colonel A. Keene said that by permission of the Chairman he proposed to read a short letter he had received from Lord Roberts with reference to this lecture:

"I am much obliged to you for sending me a copy of the lecture which Colonel Hickson is to deliver at the R.U.S.I. It is quite excellent. I wish I could be present, but unfortunately I am engaged. I should like to have been able to lay stress on the number of men available for home defence when the population was one-tenth of what it is now, and to express my opinion that there would be equally good results at the present

time if any real attempt were made to put the danger we are in practically before the people, and to rouse their feeling of patriotism instead of minimising the danger and allowing them to believe that 300,000 inefficiently trained men are all that is required to ensure the safety of these islands. Please give my best thanks to Colonel Hickson."

Colonel E. R. Kenyon said that people sometimes told them that the Civil War in America showed that untrained troops would do very well; but remarks of that sort came only from people who had not studied that war. What was it that made Stonewall Jackson's brigade stand like a stone wall in the very first battle except that he alone among all the Generals up to that time had used every minute for training his men.

There was another point to which he desired to refer, namely, the need of mobility. They had got their line of troops, like outposts, stationed all round the kingdom, and they had the central force which was to go and support them, but that central force would be utterly useless unless it was thoroughly mobile. Mobility did not only come from horses, and cycles, and mechanical transport, but it came from training. Therefore they needed not only universal service, but universal training before war broke out, otherwise they would be in the position which seemed to content some people now.

In his opinion they wanted a considerable increase in pack artillery. It would be extremely useful, if ever they had to line Essex, or possibly if they had to go to certain shores abroad, if some of the Territorial Artillery could be turned into pack artillery, which could work up along hedgerows, through ditches, through narrow paths, and so on. Both the mules and the men who would lead them could be trained very much more easily than horses or drivers could be trained for field artillery. They would therefore get a more efficient force at much less expense.

The Lecturer, in reply, thanked Dr. Miller Maguire for having drawn attention to something which might perhaps appear a little ambiguous in his paper. He desired particularly to make himself clear that what he meant by "national service" was service by national law, which implied compulsory service. What they wanted was a law, as of old, to assess equitably the burden of service.

APPENDIX.

REVIEW HELD BY HENRY VIII.

FROM

HIS PALACE AT WESTMINSTER

[WHITEHALL.]

¹ Cardinal Pole in the year 1538 was perambulating Europe with a mission from the Pope, the aim of which was to form a sort of confederacy against Henry VIII., with a view to isolating him, and thus compelling him to make peace with the Church, and atone for past transgressions, as the only condition of retaining his throne. At the same time, David Beton, Abbot of Arbroath, was elected Cardinal, with an express view to his publishing in Scotland the bull of excommunication against the King

¹ Gairdner Letters and Papers, Reign of Henry VIII

of England, and prohibiting all commerce and intelligence, to effect which a special Envoy was further sent to James of Scotland.¹

Thus at the beginning of 1539, Henry VIII. had serious cause for alarm, which rumours of Italian horsemen in Normandy, and a report that the Duke of Guise was going to Scotland with 20,000 men, did not diminish. Whatever this might portend, the King determined to be prepared for every possible crisis.

A general muster was ordered throughout the Kingdom. All absentee officers from Calais were ordered to return to their posts, and special measures were taken for its defence, as also for the defence of Berwick and other fortified places. Everywhere, and in every way, most energetic preparations were made for defence. Commissioners were appointed to search and defend the coast, which was divided into sections. Norfolk, Suffolk, the Thames, and the coasts of Essex, Kent, Sussex, Southampton, Somerset, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall, Yorkshire, the Castles of Berwick and Carlisle, as well as other strongholds, all had their duly appointed Commanders; whilst plans were drawn up for the construction of bulwarks all round the eastern and southern coast, from the Mount to Dover, and thence to Berwick. Beacons were set in order, and everywhere men were on the watch all round the coasts, whilst the inhabitants of each county were busy at works of defence "Stirred by a belief in universal danger, the people of the island were unanimous in their resolve to defend their country, stake the coast, and cut ditches to make the enemy's landing troublesome."² In Essex, even before the arrival of the Commissioners, the inhabitants had already made two trenches, 80 rods in length, and bulwarks, and we learn that "The Earls of Oxford and Essex have taken great pains in the ordering of beacons and other defences. The town of Harwich is much pleased at the King lending them ordnance."³ "At Harwich ye should have seen women and children work with shovels in the trenches and bulwarks there." All round the coast of Kent very vigilant watch is kept on the Downs and at sea, by Sir Thomas Cheyne, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports—a wide-awake, but cautious man, who will not needlessly alarm the people. Boats he has out everywhere, but false as well as reliable reports come in. "I have warned them of the Isle," that is Thanet, he says, "to keep sure watch, and bring me word which way they take, when they make sail again," a Dutch fleet having appeared off the Downs. He adds that the men of Thanet "seem marvellous warlike, and I like them none the worse for the cross keys, but I shall light no beacons till I know more. If they land I trust you shall hear of some broken pates, albeit I lack gunners for my great pieces."

Such were the preparations in hand throughout England at a time when Henry VIII., distrusting alike Francis and the Emperor of Germany, —was looking for invasion as certain.⁴ The French Ambassador Marillac's arrival and action, and doubtless the reports he submitted stating that "in short they have gone so far that whatever hurt may come they could not be taken unprepared," put an end at last to danger, for he reports that by the end of the summer they will have had time to complete their fortifications everywhere, where an enemy might land. Musters have been made everywhere, and he himself had seen and counted 15,000

¹ Gairdner Letters and Papers, Reign of Henry VIII., Vol. 13, No. 1136.

² Vol. 14, Preface page xxxiii.

³ Vol. 14, No. 682.

⁴ Vol. 14, No. 670. Marillac to Montmorency.

Englishmen without any foreigners, 10,000 of whom were armed in white from head to knee, at a muster of the men of London only.

An original report ¹ of the review, which King Henry VIII. himself held, of this muster, is contained in the records of the Corporation of London, of which the following summary is taken from the "Grafton Chronicle," printed in 1569.

"The King's Highness, which never ceased to study and take pains both for the advancement of the commonwealth of this his realm of England, of which he was the only supreme governor and head, and also for defence of the same, was lately informed by his trusty and faithful friends that the cankered and cruel serpent the Bishop of Rome, by that arch-traitor Reginald Pole, enemy to God's word and his natural country, had moved and stirred divers great Princes and Potentates of Christendom to invade the realm of England, and utterly destroy the whole nation of the same; wherefore His Majesty in his own person, without any delay took very laborious and painful journeys towards the sea coasts. Also he sent divers of his nobles and counsellors to view and search all the ports and dangers on the coasts, where any meet or convenient landing place might be suffered, as well as the borders of England, as also of Wales. And in all such doubtful places, his Highness caused the Lord Admiral, Earl of Southampton, to prepare in readiness for the sea, to his great cost and charges.

"And beside this, to have all his people in a readiness, he directed his Commissioners throughout the realm to have his people mustered, and the harness and weapons seen and viewed, to the intent that all things should be in readiness if his enemies would make any attempt into this realm: And amongst others, one Commission was directed to the Right Worshipful Sir Thomas Forman, knight, Mayor of London, and his brethren, for to certify all the names of all men between the ages of 60 and 16, and the number of harnesses, weapons, with their kinde and diversities: Whereupon the said Lord Mayor and his brethren every one having with them one of the Counsel or learned men of the City repaired to their Wards, and there by the oath of the Common Counsel and Constables of the same Ward took the number of the men, harnesses and weapons according to their Commissions. And after that they had well viewed their books and the number of persons, they thought it not expedient to admit the whole number of such as were certified for able and apt persons for to muster: Wherefore then they assembled themselves again, and chose out the able persons, and put by the other, and specially all such as had no harness, nor for whom no harness could be provided. But when they were credibly advertised by the King's Counsellor Thomas Lord Cromwell, Knight of the Noble Order of the Garter, Lord Privy Seal (to whose prudence and goodness the City was much bounden) that the King himself would see the people of the City muster in a convenient number, and not to set forth all their power, but to leave some at home to keep the City. Thereat soon every Alderman repaired to his ward, and there put aside all such as had jacks, coats of plute, coat of mail and Briganders, and appointed none but such as had white harness, except such as should bear Moorish pikes, which had no harness but sculles: and they appointed none but such as had white harness, neither did they admit any that was a stranger, although they were denizens. When it was known that the

¹ Vol. 14, No. 940. *Archæologia* xxxii, 30, from the Records of the Corporation of London.

King would see the muster, Lord how glad the people were to prepare, and what desire they had to do their Prince service, it would have made any faithful subject's heart to have rejoiced. Then every man being of any substance provided himself with a coat of white silk, and garnished their bassenets with turnes like cap of silk set with ouches furnished with chains of gold and feathers : others gilded their harness, their halberds and pollaxes. Some, and especially certain goldsmiths, had their breast plates, yea, and their whole harness of silver bullion. The constables were all in jorjets of white silk, with chains, and battle axes. The meaner sort of people were all in coats of white cloth, curiously trimmed with the arms of the city before and behind. The Lord Mayor himself was in fair armour, and the crests thereof were gilt, and over that a coat of black velvet with half sleeves and so was Sir Roger Cholmley, Knight Recorder of London, and all the other Aldermen and Sheriffs, and such as had been Sheriffs, all well mounted on shining horses, richly trapped, with battle axes in their hands, and maces and chains about their necks. The Lord Mayor had four footmen all in white silk."

The account continues relating how the Chamberlain of the City, and the Counsellors and Aldermen's deputies which were appointed to be Wyffelers on horseback, were all in white damask. Four hundred Wyffelers on foot in white silk. The minstrels all in white. The standard bearers were the tallest men of every ward, and when everything was prepared every Alderman mustered his own ward in the fields, viewing every man in his harness, and causing such as could shoot to take bows in their hands, and the others bills or pikes.

"The 8th day of May, according to the King's pleasure, every Alderman in order of battle with his ward came into the common field at Mile-end, and then all the guns served themselves into one place, the pikes in another, and the bowmen in another, and likewise the billmen, and there 'ryuged and snayled,' which was a goodly sight to behold : for all the fields from Whitechapel to Mile End, and from Bethnal Green to Ratclyffe and to Stepney were all covered with harness, men, and weapons, and in especial the battle of pikes seemed to be a great forest. Then every part was divided into three parts, the pikes in three parts and so the other. Then there were appointed three battles, a forward, middle, and rearward.

"About 8 of the clock in the morning marched forward the light pieces of ordnance with stone and powder, after them followed the drums and fifes, and immediately after them a guydon of the arms of the city. Then followed Master Sadler Captain of the gunners, upon a great horse in harness, and a coat of velvet and a chain of gold, and four halberds about him appareled as before is rehearsed. Now followed the gunners four in a rank, every one going five foot assunder, every man's shoulder even with another, which shot altogether in divers places very cheerfully, and especially before the King's Majesty, which at that time sat in his new gate house at his Palace at Westminster, where he viewed all the whole company. In like manner passed the second and third battles, all well and richly appointed. They passed as said, the foremost captain at 9 of the clock in the morning by the little conduit entering into Paul's churchyard, and so directly to Westminster, and so through the Sanctuary and round about the Park of St. James, and so up into the field, and came home through Holborne : and as the first Captain entered again to the little conduit, the last of the muster entered Paul's Churchyard, which then was four of the clock at afternoon. The number was 15,000, beside Whyffelers and other waiters."