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### Gold Medal Prize Essay

Major W. C. Bridge

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## GOLD MEDAL PRIZE ESSAY.

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*Subject :—*

“IN THE EVENT OF WAR WITH ONE OR MORE NAVAL POWERS, HOW SHOULD THE REGULAR FORCES BE ASSISTED BY THE AUXILIARY FORCES AND THE PEOPLE OF THE KINGDOM?”

*By Major W. C. BRIDGE, South Staffordshire Regiment, D.A.A.G., Mauritius.*

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*“ God helps those who help themselves.”*

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### INTRODUCTION.

IT may seem at first sight that in the subsequent pages the subject of this essay is somewhat lost to view at times; but that is not really so, for if we ask how the Auxiliary Forces and the people of the kingdom can assist the Regular Forces in the event of war, the incontrovertible answer is, that they cannot do so at all unless the methods and the plan of action are carefully thought out and decided upon in advance during peace, and unless we make up our minds beforehand what we require of them. That is the axiom which forms the basis of this discussion, which is devoted to a consideration of what measures should be taken, or at any rate preconcerted, *now* in order to ensure our Regular Army obtaining the best possible assistance when the crisis comes. When the invader is already in our midst it will be too late to proceed to the devising of methods for repelling him, and arrangements made now for providing and maintaining the minimum force which probabilities suggest as requisite will be of far greater utility than the provision in the hour of danger of hosts of ill-trained and undisciplined men with muskets to meet a foe operating on plans which he has spent years in perfecting, and whose troops have been carefully prepared for the task of carrying them out. The lesson to be learnt from the later stages of the Franco-German War and the constant failure which attended the ill-judged efforts of Gambetta's raw levies should suffice to convince us of the futility of endeavouring to raise and organise armies in the day of battle, and of the necessity for preparing everything beforehand.

This essay will therefore be divided into the following parts:—

Part I.—A consideration of the situations with which we are likely to have to deal.

Part II.—An analysis of the present condition of our Regular Army on home service and its ability to deal with the situations referred to in Part I., with suggestions as to any changes of organisation that appear desirable.

Part III.—An analysis of the present condition of the Auxiliary Forces and their ability to assist the Regular Army, with suggestions as to changes which should be effected in their organisation and training in order to render them more effective for the latter purpose.

Part IV.—A discussion as to how far the population of the country can and should assist the military forces, reorganised as advocated in Parts II. and III., in a war of the nature with which this essay deals.

## PART I.

### *A Consideration of the Situations with which we are likely to have to deal.*

On this point there is considerable diversity of opinion. The extreme alarmists base their fears and their calculations on the assumption that there are certain Powers, who are more than possible foes, who would find little or no difficulty in throwing an overwhelming military force into Great Britain and in maintaining it there sufficiently long for their purposes. The incurable optimist, on the contrary, laughs at the idea of serious invasion, confidently quotes von Moltke's dictum as to the ease with which he could land 200,000 men on our shores, and the hopelessness of attempting to withdraw them again, and claims our island situation as almost sufficient protection in itself. Between these two limits we have varying shades of opinion. There are those who believe that whilst an enemy would find it impossible to invade us with an enormous host, he could certainly do so with a force sufficiently large to justify him in taking the risk, and too large for us to hope to deal with except under the most favourable circumstances, having regard to the present organisation, size, and distribution of our land forces.

Others, again, are satisfied that the worst we have to fear is a sudden "raid" by a force of not more than 10,000 or 15,000 men. This category may be said to be the most numerous of all, and is encouraged in its belief by the knowledge that it is shared by so influential a body of experts as the Admiralty Board. Most of the leading organs of the Press hold this view, and consequently most of the men in the street also, whose opinions are formed for them by the Press. It is not surprising to find that it is embraced by the majority of politicians of both parties, and especially by successive Cabinets as represented by Ministers for War, who are only too ready to yield to the temptation of believing anything which will still their consciences and absolve them from attempting the impossible task of reconciling popular budgets with the provision of an adequate and adequately trained Army. The tendency to believe what we wish

to believe is irresistible to the average man, and it is, of course, pleasing to the people of this country to hug the assurance that duty and patriotism demand no sacrifice from them; and thus it has come about that those who insist that we are living on the lip of a smouldering volcano in our admitted unpreparedness (once the fleet is got out of the way some how or another) to meet an invasion are ridiculed, and can find no hearing, whilst those who confidently boast of our security and our adequate Home Army are deferred to by all classes. The chief reasons upon which the believers in the possibility of a serious invasion base their belief are as follows:—

1. The teachings of history.
2. The ability to act rapidly and to evade defending fleets, conferred by fast steaming power, wireless telegraphy, and other modern means of obtaining prompt and accurate information.
3. The greater independence of weather considerations, enjoyed by the modern fleet.
4. The levelling up of the fleets of other Powers as regards both numbers and power of ships, the quality and quantity of their *personnel* and by reason of the changes in the mode of conducting naval warfare.

#### 1. *On the Teachings of History.*

The mere fact of its being an island has never, since Armies and Navies organised more or less on present principles came into existence, served to protect a territory from invasion, even in the days of sailing-ships and the absence of well-thought-out plans. The girdle of blue has always proved a fallacious protection, except when it has been made intelligent use of, and been merely regarded as a first line of defence requiring a substantial backing. Putting on one side the overwhelming of Europe by vast successive hordes of Huns, Goths, and Visigoths, and of Russia by the Tartars, which were merely the swamping of the aboriginal inhabitants by greatly superior numbers, and not by force of arms, or at any rate, only in a secondary degree, the majority of the world's great conquests have been effected by over-sea expeditions. Take Continental Europe. Its present political divisions have existed almost ever since there has been a settled society. France has been France ever since the advent of the Carolingians, Germany has always been Germany despite the onslaughts of the disciplined Roman legions, and even in Russia the Tartar domination could not endure. Only such countries as were islands, or the next worst thing to islands, viz., peninsulas, have changed masters permanently, and our own island more than all. By the aid of their ships, Romans, Saxons, Danes, and Normans have in turn possessed themselves of England; the Iberian peninsula has fallen under the yoke of the Moslem from the further shore of the Mediterranean; Sicily, a true island, has been several times subdued; and Italy would have fallen into the hands of the Carthagenians had the latter possessed sufficient energy and perspicacity to maintain their fleet. Greece and Turkey, the other peninsulas, have the same tale to tell. This, then, should suffice to show that the sea of itself is little or no protection, but rather the reverse. Over-sea

expeditions therefore have led to more changes of ownership of a permanent nature than have the marchings of armies across frontiers, whether the latter are arbitrary, or geographically defined. That the German General Staff are confident in the ability of their armies, aided by their growing fleet, to carry out a successful invasion of our islands is well known, and the article in the April number of the *National Review*, written by a member of that body, and entitled: "The Future Functions of the German Navy," proves that such an invasion is not only contemplated, but also arranged for.

It may, of course, be urged that at the time when those bygone invasions took place the inhabitants of the threatened countries were little, if at all, organised for defence, and but little versed in the strategy or the tactics proper to such occasions. That is no doubt true; but it is equally so that neither were the invaders in better case, or their preparations anything but perfunctory, and the moral is, that if they under such conditions in their ill-equipped sailing craft, which were at the mercy of wind and wave, and were in no sense war-ships, but merely transports assembled for the occasion, could effect conquests, how much more certain should be the success of a modern expedition of this sort, carefully elaborated and prepared and backed by all the resources of up-to-date science and knowledge? That is to say; of course, if the threatened Power has neglected to take the necessary countervailing steps and to develop its defences. The truth is, that the dwellers in islands are apt to lull themselves into a state of false security as regards their safety from attack, or at any rate to rely too exclusively on their naval armaments for procuring them that immunity. That appears to be the tendency in Great Britain just now. The assertion, "The fleet is our first and only line of defence," is heard too frequently, and is too freely accepted as being true. Moltke's famous dictum already quoted, uttered in a moment of suspicious expansiveness, the latter portion of which is triumphantly adduced by the optimistic school in support of their argument, while the first portion is conveniently ignored; is taken too literally, and is responsible for much of the prevailing belief as to our invulnerability. Those who study history or make themselves acquainted with the opinions of naval strategists of this and every age will learn that no fleet has ever accomplished much (except, of course, in purely naval combats on its own element) without the backing of an adequate military force. To quote a modern instance of the truth of this axiom: If, when Sir Beauchamp Seymour bombarded the forts of Alexandria in July, 1882, he had had at his disposal a landing party of a size adequate to that of his fleet and of the task in hand, the whole rebellion would almost certainly have entirely collapsed that same night, and we should have been spared a costly, if short, campaign. There is too strong a tendency to believe that, given a powerful fleet adequate to maintaining our maritime supremacy and protecting our commerce, the size and condition of the Army does not matter, and that an ill-organised mass of indifferently-trained men will suffice for all our needs. It is, no doubt, beyond dispute that it would be far better and safer for this kingdom to possess a strong Navy and no Army than no Navy and a large Army; but it is nevertheless not to be gainsaid that under such conditions we should be greatly embarrassed. We might, perhaps, be able to ensure our islands against invasion, and to blockade our enemy's coasts; but, on the other hand, we could undertake no decisive

action calculated to settle the main issue one way or another. Mere pin-pricks, such as the raiding of mercantile ports, the levying of contributions on defenceless towns, and even the bombardment of naval dockyards and arsenals, supposing such to prove feasible, would be of no avail, and these are all that a fleet unassisted by a co-operating army could accomplish. In other words, we should be confined to what amounts to a passive defence—a method of warfare which is generally admitted to be demoralising and doomed to failure in the long run. It would be the case of the whale and the elephant, each in his element defying the other, but incapable of inflicting any injury upon him.

Take the case of the mightiest expedition that ever threatened England with invasion—the Spanish Armada. Why did it fail? Chiefly because of the astounding incompetence and lack of foresight of those who organised (!) it, first in appointing an ignorant layman to command it, and secondly, in composing it of ships which in size and construction were wholly unsuited for the task they had to perform. The bravery and resourcefulness of our admirals and seamen had, of course, much to do with its discomfiture, but the point is, that the fact of our being an island had little or nothing to do with deciding the issue. All the above-mentioned causes of failure were preventible causes, and such as would certainly not characterise any carefully-planned expedition launched against us by an enemy of to-day. Had the Spanish ships not been too huge and unwieldy to manœuvre readily, or to bring their highly-placed guns to bear upon their foe who had the genius to run close alongside where the guns could not be sufficiently depressed to bear upon him, whilst at the same time carefully avoiding boarding tactics and the trying of conclusions with the highly-trained men at arms; had the Spanish captains been true seamen indeed, the Armada might well have succeeded in throwing ashore its hosts and in protecting whatever base they might have selected. The gale which completed the discomfiture of the great fleet did not spring up until days after it had cleared the English Channel. And once landed, what on earth, or rather in England, was there to stop the march of these veteran soldiers of Philip II. Certainly not the knowledge that England is an island. But the fact that our action was limited in this manner would, of course, not be unknown to our opponent, and he, by carefully laying his plans and watching his opportunity, would, sooner or later, succeed in evading our blockading ships and in getting to sea. We are, of course, contemplating the case of a Power whose naval strength is at any rate sufficient to justify him in taking his chances against our fleet. The arguments so well set forth in the naval prize essay of last year, and the course of events at Port Arthur, despite the poor success attending the Russian effort, serves to illustrate the difficulty of bottling up a fleet that is determined to break out, even when conditions, such as the configuration of the land, close contiguity of the blockading ships to their base, and superior *moral* on the part of those manning them, are all on the side of the blockader. A skilful or determined use of torpedo craft on such an occasion renders the escape of the main fleet more than possible. The example of the disaster which befell Admiral Cervera's fleet when it attempted to force its way out of Santiago Harbour during the Spano-American War, can scarcely be regarded as a proof to the contrary, for that was merely a half-hearted endeavour,

and unskilfully planned, if planned at all, whilst the Spanish ships were known to be ill-equipped, and their officers and crews discouraged.

But it may be said that even allowing that the most efficient blockade can be evaded, and the imprisoned fleet, or part of it, succeed in reaching the high seas, of what use will that be to it? How will that bring about the invasion of these islands? Well, we are, as already assumed, dealing with the case of an enemy whose navy is not greatly inferior to our own. Supposing that enemy to be either Germany or France, or the two in alliance, or, as an alternative, Germany and Russia acting in concert. The geographical position alone of these countries with regard to our own islands affords them an immense advantage from the outset. They are near enough to us to be able to know promptly and accurately what is going on on our coasts, and the state of our weather, and therefore, to profit by the temporary absence of our blockading squadrons (for we may assume a blockade of the enemy's ports) through tempests or other causes. But more important than all, they are near enough to make most effective use of their torpedo-boats, destroyers, and submarines against us. Our present Secretary for War has expressed his confidence that owing to our possession of so many craft of this nature, our coasts are rendered secure against invasion; but he seems to forget that other nations possess them also, and are brave and skilful in their use, and that in such a game of hide-and-seek, good fortune may as easily prove to be on the weaker as on the stronger side. It seems quite reasonable, then, to admit the possibility of the blockading ships being driven off their cruising ground by them, and a certain number being put out of action without a single cruiser or battle-ship on the enemy's side having suffered damage, since until the blockade is raised, all the latter may be supposed to be lying securely under the protection of the guns and other defences of fortified harbours. Their destroyers and submarines will be constantly employed in delivering attacks against our blockading ships, and it is to be expected with at any rate a fair amount of success. Such success involving for us the loss of ships, and, worse than ships, of *personnel*, will all help to put the two opposing fleets more upon an equality. Thus, the number of available ships on either side being approximately the same, when the enemy breaks out of his ports on a favourable opportunity, we may take it that we shall require every battle-ship that we can collect in order to bring him to an engagement. Our opponent, aware that the coaling difficulty will only allow him to keep the sea for a limited period, will be anxious to try conclusions as soon as possible, and will therefore be as eager in seeking us out as we shall be in looking for him. We shall thus be under the necessity of entirely raising the blockade and concentrating. Let us further suppose—and this is by no means unreasonable—that as a result of the fight between the two fairly matched fleets our own is worsted and is obliged to seek its ports, there to be in its turn blockaded, temporarily, no doubt, but still for the time blockaded, until it is possible to summon to redress the balance such ships as are engaged in protecting our commerce in distant waters—an operation which would then of course become a secondary consideration. That space of time would in all probability be sufficient for the enemy to put into execution any plan he had formed for the invasion of these islands. We may well believe that if things had come to this pass the state of uneasiness in this country would be very great, and that the



general recognition of the precariousness of our food supply would compel such cruisers and lesser craft as were still available to devote their main energies to protecting our merchant-vessels of all descriptions as they neared our shores from the hostile cruisers and destroyers which would be busily engaged in hunting them. This, too, would tend to favour invasion, and it would appear to be perfectly feasible for an expeditionary force prepared in anticipation—and intelligent anticipation and timely preparation are to be expected from at any rate one of our possible enemies—to take advantage of the temporary command of the seas which its fleet enjoyed to cross the narrow strip of water dividing his coast from ours and to make for some pre-determined point of disembarkation. No doubt with our fleet temporarily *hors de combat* we should still have plenty of torpedo craft at command which would be skilfully and boldly handled, and which would frequently get home amongst the enemy's transports, if not against his war-ships; but that would be a small matter in the eyes of a Continental foe disposing of a gigantic army, and would be far outweighed by the moral effect that would be produced by the landing of even a few thousand men on our shores. For the sea trip only a matter of from 30 to 48 hours would be required, and another 12 hours or so for the landing of a considerable force, the latter operation, dependent as it is upon so many chance circumstances, being the least known factor in the problem. Still, with well-disciplined and practised troops, as we may expect these to be, the landing would demand much less time than is generally supposed. The following examples of what has been done in the past by troops who were anything but practised in the work, except, perhaps, those who landed in Egypt in 1801 and in the Crimea in 1854, and who had nothing but the simple appliances of the old sailing days to aid them, will serve to some extent as a basis on which to calculate the time required under present conditions for putting a force ashore:—

Date.	Place.	No. of Troops disembarked.	Nature of Opposition.	Time taken.
1758.	St. Malo.	13,000.	None.	1 day.
1761.	Belleisle.	10,000.	Severe.	1 day.
1762.	Martinique.	12,000.	Severe.	1 day.
1799.	Holland.	17,000.	None.	2 days.
1801.	Egypt.	12,000.	Severe.	1 day.
1807.	Copenhagen.	27,000.	None.	1 day.
1809.	Walcheren.	39,000.	None.	3 days.
1810.	Mauritius.	12,000.	None.	1 day.
1854.	Crimea.	34,000.	None.	4 days.

During the Essex manœuvres last year (1904), a force consisting of an army corps, so-called, but numbering only 11,571 officers and men and 2,701 horses, was put on shore in 12½ hours, so far as the combatant troops were concerned, although 36 hours elapsed before all the horses and wagons were ashore. Here we have an instance of a landing at a previously-selected place on a plan carefully thought out beforehand and with the help of every available appliance. We may expect that in the future, now that this important matter is receiving due attention, disembarkations will be effected much more expeditiously and we may probably count upon a force such as the above being put on

shore in half the time demanded for the purpose on that occasion. And what we are doing in this respect is sure to be copied by any of our possible enemies, especially those who contemplate the contingency of an invasion of these islands, even if they have not already given the matter their attention and worked out to a nicety what can be done in the way of saving time by dint of forethought and of practice. That the performances of the past, which have been adduced above, will be very greatly improved upon we may consider as certain, when we reflect that they were all executed with far less facilities than we enjoy to-day, by troops who, so far as can be ascertained, had had no practice in such work, and in some cases in the face of vigorous opposition. This being admitted, there is no reason whatever why an enemy in temporary command of our waters should not confidently count upon throwing ashore on some selected point on our south or east coast a force of 25,000 to 40,000 men in the course of 12 to 18 hours, and of more than double that number in 36 hours, the work going on day and night, for, with a view to avoiding the losses and disorganisation which, under modern conditions, even a feeble opposition can occasion, troops must certainly learn to disembark at night, just as they have had to learn to march and fight at night. But the sceptic, the optimist, may say: "Where is any possible enemy going to procure the enormous number of suitable vessels wherein to transport this force, and, having collected them, how is he going to ensure their safety during even this short passage, seeing that a large number of our destroyers, if not cruisers, are bound to be able to find opportunities for molesting them, despite the assumed impotence of our main fleet of battle-ships which has been put *hors de combat*?" "And after all is said and done," it will be asked, "what is this force of less than 50,000 men, so large to transport but so comparatively small for anything like a serious invasion, going to effect, even allowing that it finds itself safely set down upon our shores?" The answer to the first question takes the form of another question, viz.: "Would such an immense number of ships be needed as at first sight appears?" Continental Powers are less nice in the calculation of cubic space per head required for troops on transports than we are wont to be, besides which it has to be remembered that there is no question of a sea voyage in the case under consideration, but of a short passage of some 24 or 30 hours, or perhaps considerably less. Under those conditions, transports can be packed in a manner which would not otherwise be feasible, and from 25 to 30 of the big modern freight ships of 3,500 tons and upwards, or an even smaller number of the liners which most of the leading Powers now possess, would amply suffice for the combatant portion of the force we are dealing with. If it be urged that almost any possible enemy would find it difficult to collect even that comparatively small flotilla, it may be pointed out that during a war with us that enemy's merchant fleet would be reduced to a state of idleness, so that almost every ton of it would be available for use for transport purposes, except, of course, such vessels as had been caught napping at the outbreak of hostilities, and had been snapped up by our cruisers on the ocean routes. Besides which, suitable ships are always to be purchased or hired for money, and although of course this could not be done while our fleet was blockading our enemy's coast, or during the short period for which, as we are assuming, the fortune of war had given the latter the command of the sea, we must credit him with foresight, and

must therefore suppose that already, prior to the declaration of hostilities, he will have taken steps to procure the ships which calculation will have shown to be necessary for the purposes of the intended invasion.

If, we are told that, as Great Britain is in possession of four-fifths or so of the merchant shipping of the world, it is to this country the would-be invader must inevitably turn in order to satisfy his requirements, and that therefore patriotism or sentiment would deter our shipowners from satisfying the demand, we must point to recent experiences to prove that the power of the purse rises superior to considerations of this nature. By whose aid was the Russian Baltic Fleet enabled to keep the sea, just subsequently to the memorable occasion when it had ruthlessly shot down British fishermen and sent British craft to the bottom of what was almost their territorial waters, and when the national indignation ran so high that a war between ourselves and Russia seemed almost inevitable? The answer is: British colliers laden with British coal. And are not British ships racing across the Pacific with cargoes consigned to Vladivostok and intended to be landed, if good luck allow it, under the noses and to the detriment of the nation with whom our Government is in almost offensive alliance? And is it not an established fact that when we and the Italians were seeking to subdue the fanatics of Somaliland, no desire for the triumph of the cross over the crescent, or of freedom and enlightenment over tyranny and barbarism served to restrain Britons from furnishing the Mullah and his tribes with the arms and munitions, without which he could not have continued the struggle? No; wherever remunerative charters or freights are offering, the British ship will be forthcoming and owners will always be ready to quiet their consciences with the sophism: "If we didn't do the job somebody else would, and so why should we not pocket the money as well as another?" No doubt, one hundred years ago, or fifty even, it was not so, but unfortunately ideas have changed and we have to take things as we find them, and it is no flight of the imagination to believe that any enemy of ours, having the necessary money or credit, can obtain all he requires in the way of ships and stores for organising an invasion of this country. And as to the effectiveness of such an invasion by 50,000 men! Well, the opinion has been expressed that, at present at any rate, an invasion by 30,000 or 40,000 men would spell for us disaster. Besides, this first force would be the advanced guard merely of another, which the transporting ships would be sent back to fetch.

2. *On the Ability to act Rapidly and to Evade Defending Fleets conferred by Fast-steaming Power, Wireless Telegraphy, and other Modern Means of obtaining Prompt and Accurate Information.*

Even supposing that the enemy's fleet has not now the command of the seas, temporarily or permanently, opportunities may nevertheless offer to him for carrying out an invasion. After all, the sea is wide, the range of human vision limited, and the chances many, and those who are willing to take big risks will often win big stakes. How easy it is for whole fleets, let alone individual ships, to miss each other at sea is very well known, at any rate to sailors. Is it necessary to quote the historical case of Nelson's pursuit of Villeneuve,

and the manner in which, even in the circumscribed area of the Mediterranean, he, resourceful and tenacious seaman as he was, failed so frequently and for so long to track his quarry. Again, in some recent naval manœuvres in our own waters we have opposing squadrons almost passing through and yet failing to sight each other, and that when they were out scouting for the very purpose of getting into touch.

At the commencement of the present Russo-Japanese War a British cruiser, expressly sent to search for two Russian cruisers in the Mozambique Channel, for long failed to find them, and only at last heard casually that they had been at anchor for more than a week in a harbour not 30 miles from the one in which she herself then was. A certain island Colony of ours had reason to fear a visit from Rojdestvensky's fleet, and consequently a system of look-out posts was organised, from which the whole of the adjacent sea to the limits of human vision was watched. Nevertheless, during the space of three months not a single war-ship was ever sighted, although steamers arriving often reported having seen such, and indeed exchanged signals with them within a few miles of the coast, and although it is now known with certainty that two Japanese cruisers were really patrolling those seas for some time (*vide* article: "The First Year of the War," in the April number of the JOURNAL of the R.U.S.I.), whilst on more than one night officers and others watched the beam of an electric light which was played on to the land from a certain remote harbour during the space of fifteen minutes and more, and which could only have proceeded from a strange ship, since there are no such lights in the island, yet there is no one, no fisherman even, who can come forward and say that a war-ship was in that harbour, let alone indicating whence she came and whither she went.

All this, then, goes to prove the ease with which ships can escape detection; and in the case of a flotilla conveying an invading force and bent, not on clearing its way by first fighting an action, but merely by evading the opposing fleet, it may be expected to arrange to arrive off its rendezvous near our coast during the night, the ships moreover not moving together in one conspicuous mass, but steaming independently to the appointed place. Some of them might be captured, probably would; but troops are plentiful with our potential Continental foes, and the loss of a few battalions would not disturb their equanimity or upset their plans.

Given a war with Germany or France, or the two in combination, who can deny the possibility of an army corps being landed on our south coast within 24 hours of leaving its home ports, and within 36 hours on our east coast, meaning by this latter term the coast anywhere north of London. This east coast, it may be said in passing, is the most advantageous locality for a landing of hostile expeditions, both from the naval and the military point of view.

The greater ease with which information can be obtained nowadays as regards the movements of one's enemy, whether on land or sea, is all in favour of our would-be invader. Germany, for instance, desiring to locate our fleets, would merely have to obtain this information from its agents or sympathisers in any neutral country by requesting them to telegraph the substance of the reports of all movements as they came to hand. In these days of enterprising war correspondents, this sort of information gets through, despite censors, even if it has to be sent round the world by devious routes

to its destination. The British Press itself would probably afford all the information required, for the desire for "copy" and to obtain a reputation for enterprise and smartness, would, as it has always done—and notably in the immediate past—outweigh patriotic considerations, and lead our "dailies" to betray the situation. And of course a resourceful enemy would arrange for the telegraphic despatch to him of a summary of their news. Besides, any Dutch or Belgian fishing-boat would, although nominally neutral, willingly obtain and impart the required information merely by reason of the anti-British sentiments of those peoples, or at any rate in return for substantial rewards.

The multiplication of submarine cables, the difficulty of interfering with the correspondence of ostensible neutrals, who can so easily prearrange codes in which apparently simple expressions mean so much, wireless telegraphy, a higher and more generally diffused knowledge of signalling all go to facilitate the work of the Intelligence Staff and to reveal the whereabouts and movements of an enemy, particularly when that enemy is Great Britain, whose subjects enjoy a dangerous amount of freedom of action, and within whose hospitable limits are many who, though battenning on her wealth, are foreign to the backbone in name and in sympathies, and more than ready to bite the hand which feeds them.

### 3. *The Greater Independence of the Weather enjoyed by the Modern Fleet.*

Neither can we count nowadays upon the assistance of wind and weather as we could of yore. The modern war-ship and the modern transport are both to a great extent independent of such elements, and there is even less difficulty than there was in landing a force from its ships in rough weather, thanks to steam-launches, picquet-boats, and other conveniences. No adverse winds short of a gale can now prevent a fleet from making its objective, and even gales will probably only delay them. It may be urged that this consideration cuts both ways, and that this independence of meteorological conditions would assist us as much, if not more, than it would our opponents. During a blockade of the coast of France, for instance, there need be none of those vexatious withdrawals to Torbay on signs of an approaching sou'-wester, such as interrupted the operations of Hawke (although on a certain memorable occasion a gale of this sort afforded that daring and skilful admiral his opportunity) and those who came after him. The lee shore has lost much of its dangers, whilst an off-shore blow cannot ordinarily drive ships from their cruising ground. Well, whether it has or has not been proved that a modern fleet can maintain a blockade for a lengthened period in heavy weather, it is certainly a fact that under such conditions its consumption of coal will be abnormally great, and that it will therefore be compelled to coal much more frequently, for which purpose it must withdraw to its ports either as a whole or in detachments, since at these times coaling at sea will become impracticable. If a blockaded squadron chooses such a time for attempting to break out, it will have the following advantages in its favour, viz.:—

1. It will put to sea in the best possible trim, whilst its opponent will certainly not be in better condition, either for fighting or for pursuing.

2. Being the closer in shore, the home fleet will have the advantage of the smoother water (no small consideration with ships of low free-board and limited handiness), and will therefore be able to fight its guns with better effect than the blockading fleet, if it comes to fighting its way out.
  
4. *The Levelling up of the Fleets of other Powers as regards the Number and Power of Ships, and the Quality and Quantity of their Personnel, by reason of the Changes in the mode of Conducting Naval Warfare.*

There are those no doubt—and no small section, either—who will urge that as all this argument as to the possibility of an invasion of England hinges upon the hypothesis that the enemy possesses a fleet of a strength approximating to that of our own, and that certain alliances take place, and that as there is little or no prospect of either of these conditions being realised, at any rate, for a long time to come, it resolves itself into a purely academical discussion outside the range of practical considerations. But is this really so? Granted that our Navy is at present strong enough as regards the number and efficiency of its ships, at any rate, to prove more than a match for any combination that could be formed against us, is that ratio of strength likely to be maintained even in the near future? Are there or are there not Powers which, looking ahead on a settled policy, are making, and intend to continue making, every sacrifice necessary for the building up of Navies which before very many years have elapsed will be able to cope with ours, either single handed or with the aid of allies. Read the preamble to the German Navy Bill of so long ago as 1900, which lays down in plain terms that:—

“Germany must have a fleet of such strength that a war, *even against the mightiest naval Power*, would threaten the supremacy of that Power.”

And what is to prevent such Powers from watching their opportunity and taking advantage of our embarrassments, which are the penalty of world-wide Empire, and attacking us when the propitious moment presents itself? Does any Briton, not blinded with that insular vanity which leads the nation to believe itself to be under the special protection of Providence, and therefore privileged to take risks which less favoured nations would not dare to run, really believe that had such fleets existed a few years ago, when our hands were more than full in South Africa, we should have escaped invasion then? And being invaded, how should we have met the crisis? And can we say that similar situations will not arise again when those other Navies are more on a par with our own? It may be at once conceded that we can build and fit our ships much more rapidly and can afford them on a far larger scale than any of our possible rivals; but ships and *matériel* are not everything. You require crews, and adequately trained, competent crews, including officers, to man them. In this respect our Navy is wholly lacking, and that lack constitutes its greatest danger. The present available reserve, including every category—the best and the worst—numbers only 22,500 seamen and 2,500 stokers; 2,500! not a stand-by of 30 each for the number of battle-ships which would be in commission, and ill-trained men at that,

whereas, in the opinion of one distinguished admiral at any rate, in a war with France alone and at her present strength we should require a reserve of at least 250,000 men. If this be correct, as many experts appear to consider it is, can we say that we are in a fit state of preparation for war with any first-class Power? And if we are not fit, what is going to protect us from invasion? who could be bold enough to say that we are not liable to, or, indeed, inviting it?

Then, again, the power for harm of a single torpedo-boat or submarine, given good luck and a dashing crew, has done very much to level up inferior Navies and to render them formidable rivals to even the leading naval Powers, so that it is by no means a foregone conclusion that success will be on the side of the mightiest or most numerous fleets.

There are those again who pin their faith in what are termed practical politics, and who would scout the possibility of such alliances against us as have been suggested above; but are not the teachings of modern history in favour of such combinations? These are the days of quick political changes and sudden alliances, when sentiment and loyalty to ancient friends and ideals are at a discount. There are few, if any, nations which would not rejoice to attack and humble us if they saw the chance and thought us weak. Therefore, strength and readiness to meet any possible combination is our best safeguard. We talk to-day of our "cousins across the water," as though they were bound to us by indissoluble ties of blood and sentiment; but it is less than 20 years since we were within an ace of war with these good cousins, and even now there are questions between us awaiting settlement which might well lead to hostilities, particularly in view of the evident determination of the States to make their influence felt everywhere. We enthuse at present over the *entente cordiale*; but does any serious man who knows aught of French nature believe that our next-door neighbours, especially that section of them which sways Ministries and therefore decides the country's destinies, can or will forget or forgive Fashoda any more than they forget or forgive Elsass, or imagine that in their heart of hearts they like us? Germany, animated by that most powerful of motives, trade rivalry, is ready to join hands with anybody against us, and Russia, the defeated, who surely can never pardon our unfriendly attitude towards her during her present misfortunes, has already learnt the lesson of her war even before that war is terminated, and intends to stop at nothing to build up a mighty Navy in the near future.

Japan, who owes all to naval supremacy, will undoubtedly do the same. And even now, when these two nations are at each other's throats, and they are piling up hecatombs of each other's dead, there is talk of an alliance between them directly peace is concluded, the project forming the subject of serious deliberations among an influential party in Tokio and the imprisoned Russian officers in their midst. No! no combination, no alliance is too impossible for contemplation nowadays; no blood is thicker than water, and no tradition too sacred to be broken down. Let us then be practical; look facts boldly in the face, and instead of hiding our heads ostrich-like in the sand and crying: "There is no danger," admit the possibility of a serious invasion of this kingdom by a force of at least 50,000 men in the first instance, with the probability of its rapid reinforcement by a similar number. It is upon that possibility that the following calculation of our requirements is based.

If the soundness of the foregoing argument be admitted, is there anything chimerical in supposing that a situation such as the following might arise: War between ourselves, and Germany and France in alliance? Our Channel and Atlantic Fleets blockading in various ports the French and German fleets, which have not succeeded so far in concentrating and in putting to sea. The Mediterranean Fleet is fully occupied in blockading Toulon, and its cruisers and smaller craft in protecting the trade route through that sea, and in conveying our shipping. The special cruiser squadrons attached to the Atlantic and Channel Fleets will be engaged in similar police work in the Atlantic, and may also have to assist the Eastern Group in guarding the route from South Africa to India and China, and in patrolling the East African coast. Persistent bad weather prevents our Channel and Atlantic Fleets from maintaining an efficient blockade or from coaling at sea, whilst their numbers, which, even with the addition of ships from the Reserve—this addition, however, being far smaller than it should have been, not through lack of ships but of the *personnel*, especially stokers, required to man them—are barely sufficient for the task in hand, have been somewhat reduced by the successful attacks of the enemy's smaller craft. Some of the latter, in disregard of all law, and right and of the protests of the lesser Powers not too strongly urged, have made use of Dutch and Belgian ports as bases for these attacks.

Some *three* weeks after the establishment of the blockade, when bunkers are depleted and some of our ships are necessarily absent in order to coal, a French squadron of several battle-ships and half-a-dozen cruisers, convoying transports, swift and of equal steaming powers, containing 10,000 troops breaks out from *Brest* or *Lorient* and makes for *Donegal*, the ships separating for the passage, but being given a rendezvous off the latter port at a certain date and hour. All the transports are in charge of officers of the French War Navy, who know what to do and can be relied on. Our scouting cruisers report the departure of the ships and the fact that they appear to be steaming westward, and one of them hangs on to what seems at first to be the nucleus of the hostile force. Darkness, however, sets in, the French ships having sailed at sunset, and she loses sight of them. By good luck she stumbles upon one of the French transports, having 2 battalions of infantry on board, and captures her. The French ships, steering due west, but independently, 'until they are on a meridian sufficiently to the west of Ireland, then alter course and make direct for their rendezvous, meeting with none of our cruisers by the way. One battle-ship, however, falls in with a large British liner making for *Queentown* from *New York*, and takes possession of her. Putting a small prize crew on board, she sends the liner ostensibly on her way with orders to make the south coast of Ireland and to signal that she has seen a French squadron to the south steering for *St. George's Channel*, the number of ships composing it being of course exaggerated. This is done, and the report puts the ships which have now assembled to look for the French squadron and to destroy it, on a false scent. At the end of the third day after sailing, the ships of the latter and the transports make the appointed rendezvous just out of sight of land, and after lying off during the night, enter the harbour at daylight. Before sunset the troops, with their stores and transport, are all landed and are marching on *Londonderry*. There is no need to follow their movements in detail. Military men



acquainted with the nature of the country, the distribution of our troops in Ireland, and their facilities for concentration, and the disposition of the inhabitants, as well as with the principles of warfare, will be able to gauge the chances of this force being able to hold its own for a time. The fact of its landing will, of course, be promptly known, and indeed there would be no desire for concealment, the object being to create a diversion and to lure at least a portion of the British fleet to the remote coast of Ireland during the first movements of uncertainty, as well as preventing the movement of a single soldier from that island to take part in more important operations elsewhere. Indeed, if the French flotilla were either strong enough to fight or swift enough to be able to evade any hostile fleet despatched against it, its purpose would be best served, not by putting its troops on shore, but by hovering about the coast and leaving it uncertain upon what part the descent was to be made. On the day subsequent to the sailing from its home port or ports of the French expedition, the remainder of the French and the whole of the German fleet have taken advantage of the temporary weakening of the blockade through the necessity of detaching a sufficient squadron to deal with the unknown quantity now at large, and have tried conclusions with our ships. Being in the majority they have been successful, and have gained what they wanted—temporary command of the North Sea and of the English Channel. The fleet of transports, on board of which are the troops of the main invading force, puts to sea, making for the Lincolnshire coast, say Grimsby, their time of sailing being so arranged as to ensure their reaching their objective at about the same time as the Irish expedition makes its appearance at Donegal.

Again it is asked: Who, knowing the difficulties and delays attaching to the calling out and mobilising of the heterogeneous forces upon which Great Britain relies for her defence, is prepared to deny the possibility of this invading force effecting its landing unmolested and marching upon our great centres of industry, taking hostages by the way for the security of their communications, and the obtaining of supplies, before anything in the shape of an organised resistance in force could be offered. Directing their march towards Liverpool they would possess themselves of the main lines of railway, and the trunk roads *en route*, thus severing North from South, and obtaining for themselves the advantage of the interior position.

Time being the all-important factor in this critical situation, the German and French transports would, no doubt, hasten back directly they were clear, to bring across more troops. It is not to be expected that the invaders would carry out their plans scathless. Some of their transports, if not of their war-ships, would be captured or destroyed, and although of the latter, few, if any, could be spared, they could regard the loss of a few thousand troops with equanimity in view of the extent of their resources in men, and the important ends they were seeking to attain. And neither, on the other hand, would their ships be idle. The success of their fleet would encourage their cruisers and small craft to greater enterprise, so that these might be expected to take full advantage of their temporary preponderance to harass British merchant shipping. With a hostile force in their midst, and their food supply thus endangered, the condition of the inhabitants of these islands would be one of great anxiety, if not of real peril. In such a case it is to be expected that England would call in her outlying fleets, to meet the more vital and pressing peril at home,

leaving her world-wide interests to take care of themselves and her distant possessions to stand or fall by the result of the operations at the Empire's hub. But it is very possible that before these accessions of strength could reach our shores and redress the balance of sea power, the main issue would have been decided and the Government driven by the famished and impoverished mob to make terms. It must be noted, too, that in the foregoing appreciations, the two Powers in alliance against us have been put in the most disadvantageous position that they could well occupy. They have been represented as having allowed their fleets to be caught napping and to be blockaded in their own ports, whereas in reality it is to be expected, since they must be credited with the possession of as sound ideas as ourselves as to the true principles on which fleets should be employed, that this would certainly not happen, but that their fleets would, at the outbreak of hostilities, be on the high seas and have made their arrangements for enabling them to remain there. In that case their position would be considerably stronger and ours less so in an equal degree. The paralysing effect of the feeling that an enemy's fleet is free to act, and is bent upon carrying out, we know not what plans, is very great even to a Power which has the superior naval force. As proofs of this may be recalled the anxiety felt by the United States at the time when the Spanish fleet, during the war of 1898, kept the seas, and the undisguised relief expressed by all when Cervera was ill-advised enough to bottle himself up in a land-locked harbour. Or still more recently, we have noted the embarrassment caused to the victorious Japanese fleet by the existence of the numerically insignificant Russian naval force in Vladivostok, and the fear of unexpected action on its part. And until recently, the existence of Rojdestvensky's fleet, even when nowhere within striking distance, restricted Togo's action and forbade too great a show of audacity in home waters, since any serious crippling of his ships would have brought his adversary to the spot.

## PART II.

*An Analysis of the Present Condition of the Regular Army on Home Service, and of its ability to deal with the Situations referred to in Part I.; with Suggestions as to Changes in its Organisation which appear desirable.*

The Regular troops in the United Kingdom are organised into:—  
4 cavalry brigades and 9 infantry divisions.

Of these, 2 cavalry brigades and 3 infantry divisions are stationed in Ireland; 3 of the infantry divisions in Great Britain are organised into an army corps and are distributed with a view to their rapid concentration at the headquarters of the corps, viz., Aldershot.

The actual detail of fighting units on home service is:—

	In	In
	Gt. Britain.	Ireland.
Battalions of Infantry - - -	61	24
Regiments of Cavalry - - -	12	6
Batteries of Horse Artillery - - -	13	2
Batteries of Field Artillery - - -	75	18
Companies of Garrison Artillery - - -	41	3

With more than sufficient departmental troops to complete the organisation.

Behind the Regular Army stands:—

- a. The Army Reserve, numbering 77,405.
- b. The Militia Reserve, numbering 7,299.

No account has been taken of the men of the various infantry, cavalry, and artillery depôts, as this would be misleading, consisting almost entirely as they do of untrained recruits and the limited staffs necessary for instructing them. Besides, the requirements of the Army abroad are not going to grow less because we are at war. On the contrary, bearing in mind the necessity of maintaining the units in India, if nowhere else, at their full strength at such a time, they are likely to increase, so that the batches of trained recruits at the depôts will have to be despatched abroad by some means or another directly they become available, for it is not to be supposed that at such a crisis we shall deplete our home battalions for the purpose of completing those on foreign service. That the marine artillery or infantry could not spare a single man for land service is certain. Having regard to the lack of an adequate reserve for the Navy, this valuable body of men will have to be utilised to the last recruit for naval purposes.

As regards *a*, the Army Reserve, judging by the strength at which it has been decided to maintain infantry battalions at home, it is within the mark to say that one-half of this reserve will be used up at once on the outbreak of hostilities to complete units to war establishment and to replace inefficient. The remainder will speedily disappear after providing for the units on foreign service and for making good casualties after the first serious engagements. Just at present, when the men enlisted for 3 years with the colours are beginning to pass into the Reserve, the latter will increase considerably in numbers, but this will be at the expense of quality, for in a voluntary Army like ours we cannot make much of a soldier out of such material as offers in so short a space of time. Moreover, a few years hence and we shall begin to feel the effect of the present 9 years' men, and the strength of the Reserve will then once more decrease. It is just a game of Peter and Paul over again.

As to *b*, the Militia Reserve. This consists of a mere 7,000 men, a large percentage of whom, it is safe to say, would not be forthcoming when wanted, and would not be a valuable addition to the Army anyhow. From neither of these two sources, then, could be drawn men for the purpose of forming fresh units. Under our present organisation the demands of even a small war abroad, or the necessity of reinforcing India in the event of Russia's menacing the North-West Frontier, would so denude the United Kingdom of Regular troops as to leave it without a field force capable of meeting an invasion of even 30,000 men, after allowing for the Irish garrison, which must be maintained, and those of the defended ports. The further test, as convincing as it is conclusive, of our existing system is shortly supplied by the only possible answer which any unbiassed man must return to the plain question: "In the absence of our Regular Army on foreign service, were this country invaded by 50,000 men, would you rely without misgiving upon our Auxiliary Forces to repel them?"

The first requisite in a crisis such as that with which we are dealing is an adequate force prepared to go anywhere within the

kingdom at very short notice and to get there in the shortest possible time. To meet these requirements it must be:—

- a. Very mobile and always concentrated.
- b. Well organised.
- c. Well trained and exercised.
- d. Physically fit.

Such a force we possess to a certain extent in the army corps to be maintained at Aldershot, an army corps which, be it remarked, is 4 battalions, or a whole brigade, short of the infantry required to complete its establishment, this brigade having to be made up from the garrison of Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight. It has also to be borne in mind that that army corps is mainly intended for offensive purposes beyond the seas, and that therefore if we employ it in meeting an invasion it will no longer be available for the offensive abroad, and there will be nothing to replace it, and that at a time when we may find it absolutely necessary to have recourse to the offensive-defensive in one or another of our distant possessions. It is all very well to say that the main issue must be decided at the hub of the Empire, and that the outlying portions—the limbs—must stand or fall by our success or failure there; but politicians and Colonial communities are not students of the art of war, and will not understand this, and it is very certain that if India, Canada, the Cape, or Australia found themselves invaded or raided by any Power with which we were at war, they would call upon us for assistance, and if it were not forthcoming a state of public opinion would arise which would threaten the integrity of the Empire. Besides, as has been already hinted, this army corps is too small for the purpose in view, even allowing that it fulfils the conditions enunciated above, which, unfortunately, there is reason to doubt, at any rate so far as *b* and *d* are concerned.

The modified *army corps* at Aldershot would be able to effect but little against the 50,000 highly-trained Continental troops with whom we assume it to have to deal, unless of course it had the good fortune to be able to catch them in the act of landing or before their advance had been organised, when no doubt modern conditions of war would be greatly in their favour. It is not, however, to be supposed that an invader would attempt to land in the face of even a greatly inferior defending force, well posted and ready to receive him, but he would haul off and make his attempt elsewhere, and there is every reason to expect that he would ultimately succeed in effecting a surprise landing, always, of course, assuming that he retains temporary command of the sea.

The task of the Regular field force, then, will be to meet the invader in the field under more or less equal conditions. To do so with any reasonable prospect of success it is manifest that its present strength is totally inadequate, and must be trebled.

As already said, the first requisite in such a force with such a problem before it is extreme mobility. An invader must be confronted at the very earliest possible moment, for every minute's breathing space afforded him is of immense service to him. He must be fallen upon and harassed before he has time to establish himself or to organise his base, his communications and his advance, and collect supplementary supplies and means of transport. Our field force must therefore be prepared to confront him promptly and

be able to hang persistently on to him. Well, the force which will be the best able to fulfil these requirements will be one which has been carefully organised beforehand, which is fully equipped in all respects, especially as regards its transport, has been constantly practised in combined movements from place to place, and the Staff and units in working together. This means that the force must be in existence beforehand, and not merely be improvised or built up round a nucleus when the crisis comes. The sudden bringing together of the larger units, such as divisions and brigades, from various parts of the Kingdom and then expecting them to prove mobile and to readily co-operate, will not do, for it is unpractical and opposed to common-sense. Besides, we cannot leave the rest of the Kingdom without similar organised bodies of troops, for who can say that a secondary landing will not be attempted elsewhere and become a primary one if it is encouraged to do so by lack of opposition? Granted the possibility of such an invasion as is here assumed, an adequate force must be maintained *at all times* capable of being hurled against the invader directly and wherever he appears. This means not only that horse and foot must be physically fit and practised in marching, but that transport and feeding arrangements must be perfected, and that those who will be responsible for them must always be in their places and ready to act. •

With our system of voluntary service and territorial dislocation due to so many inevitable causes, there is no question with us, as there is with the more favoured Continental Powers, of calling out the Reserves in any threatened area and finding them ready organised and efficient for action within it. Under such circumstances our Reservists would be a mere disconnected mass of men without officers, not knowing to whom to look for instructions, and even lacking arms until such time as they had obtained them from their *dépôt*, which might very likely be at the other end of the Kingdom. The best we can hope for is this more or less centrally situated striking force held ready to meet emergencies and to act swiftly and effectively in any direction. Unfortunately the conditions prevailing in a densely-populated and over-civilised country such as England, and the industrial distribution of the inhabitants, fetters us to the south for our choice of a location and a training ground for anything in the shape of a large standing force, unless we go to the extreme north, which, however, strategical considerations alone, not to speak of others, forbids. Thus our striking field force cannot be placed in the most effective position for meeting a descent upon our east coast, which, bearing in mind who are the Powers who are the most likely to attempt to invade us, is as probable a place as any. It is therefore all the more necessary that its mobility should be of the highest order. Indeed, it ought in every respect to consist of the most efficient and physically fit officers and soldiers in the Kingdom, obtained for the purpose by selection from the whole of the Regular Army at home. There is no room for weaklings or "physical equivalents" in it, or for jail birds and the like, who will probably be non-effective when they are wanted, and at any rate not up to the standard of efficiency. The ranks must be kept filled, and no skeleton units allowed to introduce a factor of danger and uncertainty into the problem of what the field force is or is not capable of doing. It is a question whether the men of this force ought not to receive some advantages in the way of pay and privileges—at any rate, in war time—over their comrades employed

in the less onerous work of garrisoning defended ports and strategic points.

There must be no system of relieving units in it by other units on their return from abroad with depleted ranks, and often from stations where the conditions of service have militated against the officers and men obtaining due instruction and practice. This is an argument in favour of the establishment of a Home Service Standing Army independent of the remainder; but it would be a Home Army to which it would be a distinction to belong rather than a reproach such as would attach to membership of such a home organisation as appears to be intended. The units abroad must of course be relieved from time to time, but let this be effected without detriment to our striking force, which is equivalent to saying that the relieved unit must be completed to full strength the moment it returns home.

The minimum of strength for this home force, consistent with its ability to meet an invasion by 50,000 to 100,000 men is 8 divisions of infantry at the least, with 2 cavalry brigades. It must be remembered that our enemy's troops will probably be picked men—picked men from a conscript Army in which the standard of intelligence will certainly and of efficiency will probably be far higher than our own. They will therefore be better than ourselves, man for man, and we must consequently endeavour to counter-balance that superiority as far as possible by dint of numbers.

We have seen that there are in Great Britain 6 complete infantry divisions, or will be when the withdrawal of certain battalions from foreign stations have been carried out, *i.e.*, two less than our minimum requirements. There are 3 more in Ireland, certainly, but they are tied to that island, and there is no likelihood of our being able, in the event of a war, to withdraw from thence a single gun, horse, or battalion. On the contrary, if engaged in hostilities against certain Powers we should probably have to reinforce them, especially in the face of the situation which has been sketched above, when Ireland would have an invasion of her own—on a small scale, perhaps, but probably rendered formidable by the sympathy, passive if not expressed, of some of the inhabitants. Are we, then, to raise fresh units to supply the deficiency? The answer is that, apart from the expense, we cannot obtain a sufficiency of recruits to maintain the units we already possess. In short, the Regular Army cannot be expanded in order to make up the two divisions. We are therefore forced to turn to the Auxiliary Forces and to enquire whether they are capable of furnishing them.

### PART III.

*An Analysis of the Present Condition of the Auxiliary Forces and of their Ability to Assist the Regular Army; with Suggestions as to Changes which should be effected in their Organisation and Training in order to better fit them for this purpose.*

The Auxiliary Forces comprise the following organisations:—

1. The Militia, consisting of:—
  - 124 Battalions of Infantry.
  - 3 Batteries of Field Artillery.
  - 32 Companies of Garrison Artillery.

The Militia lacks the departmental troops necessary for its organisation into the higher units on the model of the Regular Army.

2. The Yeomanry Cavalry, with a strength on the 1st January of:—

56 Regiments, numbering 27,638 of all ranks.

3. The Volunteers, with a strength on the 1st January of:—

Infantry, 183,474.

Artillery, 40,673.

Engineers, 17,667.

There are in addition departmental troops of various descriptions, and there is an imperfect brigade organisation, but these brigades vary considerably in the number and size of the battalions composing them. The strength of the battalions also varies from 348 to 2,096, and their organisation from 4 companies to 16.

#### COMMENCING WITH THE SENIOR SERVICE—THE MILITIA.

##### 1. *The Militia.*

As is generally known, the whole population of the country is liable for service in the Militia, subject to the chances of the ballot. In practice, however, it has long become customary to maintain the force on the voluntary principle, even at the cost of allowing it to fall very much below its establishment. The enforcement of the ballot has been advocated of recent years in certain quarters, but there has, generally speaking, been made manifest a disinclination to adopt that course, partly out of deference to public opinion, which is strongly opposed to even that mild form of compulsion, and partly owing to doubts whether the force is sufficiently valuable or necessary to make it worth while. The average Briton is loud in his advocacy of "the old Constitutional Force," but the very last thing he wishes to do is to serve in it. In many respects he is not to blame for this attitude, for no one who is enthusiastic over soldiering for its own sake could possibly desire to serve in a force in which he has no opportunities for learning and none to instruct him. Neither are there any material advantages to tempt the industrious man steadily pursuing his calling and who cannot afford to have his life's work interrupted for a month at a time. The result is that the Militia is almost wholly in the hands of the lowest stratum of society—of men who are either too lazy to work or too lacking in worth and in intelligence to obtain it. Exception must be made in the case of some few battalions, but it cannot be denied that, generally speaking, the force is made up of the riff-raff and the failures of society, and to whom, accustomed as they are to loaf and to starve all the rest of the year, the comparative plenty and the few shillings offered in exchange for a month's outing during the summer are a sufficient inducement to come forward. True, they have to put in a little work and to submit to a certain amount of irksome restraint during that month; but the *quid pro quo* in the shape of pay, bounty, food, and clothing is sufficient to make it worth their while.

This state of affairs did well enough even 20 years ago, but it is entirely out of date now. Just as it is absolutely essential that the

average shooting of a battalion should be good, so is it imperative that its general level of intelligence should be high, or at least equal to that of the enemy it may be expected to have to meet. The machine-made soldier, working like an automaton at the sound of unintelligible words of command jerked out by something or anything called an officer are past. We no longer gauge the excellence of a unit by its ability to march past like a wall, or by the brightness of its buttons. In modern warfare, when individual intelligence has to be pitted against individual intelligence, and when our whole system of training is directed towards teaching every man to think and to act for himself, we cannot regard a force as satisfactory which is but little able to benefit by such training or to develop thinking powers. But even allowing that the average Militiaman is capable of improvement, and that he could be made an efficient soldier in the modern acceptation of the term, given time and opportunities, who is there to perform the task? Certainly not his own officers. They are as lacking in all the knowledge, the experience, and the qualities requisite in the officer of to-day as are their men in those required in the rank and file. The corps of Militia officers is made up of two categories: Of the *bona-fide* Militia officer, whose connection with the force is permanent, and of the youth, who merely regards the position as a stepping-stone to higher things. Now it cannot for a moment be contended that the men of the former class are in the force with any idea of putting in hard work or study, or of themselves learning what soldiering really is, let alone spending irksome hours in imparting the results of their own study to their subordinates. So entirely is this the case that even yet the average Militia officer fails to see the broad line of demarkation separating him from the professional officer of the Regular Army, who is constantly studying and constantly being tested technically, physically, morally, and even financially, but claims an equality of treatment, and because he does not *always* get it complains of "studied neglect." Men belonging to this category merely regard the Militia regiment to which they belong as a club, which affords them opportunities for enjoyment and for hobnobbing with friends, and nothing more. They undergo certain perfunctory rule of thumb examinations for promotion, and some of them go through certain courses, during which they have neither time nor inclination to gain anything more than superficial knowledge. Many of them are merely in the force from purely social considerations. All these men, whatever their motives for being in the force, are of course ready and keen enough to come forward in time of war and to serve to the best of their ability, but to prepare themselves for doing so during peace time they absolutely decline. Others, again, are men who have repeatedly failed to pass into the Army, and who hang on to the Militia because they are really keen on soldiering and wish to get as much of it as they can. Unfortunately as a rule their lack of intelligence renders them valueless. But the average youth joins the Militia because even now, despite the severity of the tests and of the competition, it affords him facilities for passing into the Army more quickly and more cheaply than through other channels. The best men succeed in passing and are thus lost to the force, while of those who fail, the majority resign and try some other walk of life, only a small percentage who can afford to do so remaining on permanently; and on these there weighs the sense of failure which adversely affects their potential usefulness throughout their life.



And in addition to lack of quality, there is also a lack of numbers among the subalterns and captains especially, varying from 10 or 15 per cent. up to as much as 60 or 70 per cent. in some battalions. How can such a corps of officers, then, be competent to train men—even keen and intelligent men anxious to learn—in the art of modern war, even supposing they had the opportunities, which, however, they have not? Of what does the Militiaman's training consist? He commences as a recruit with some two months at the depôt of the territorial regiment, the time being devoted to acquiring the rudiments of drill under the supervision of officers who feel no interest in him and who know very little more than he does himself. Then he returns to civil life until such time as the annual training of his battalion commences. A month of slurring now ensues, during which he is rushed through many things, including a course of musketry, the latter especially being always hurried because it is irksome and tedious to all ranks and spoils the officers' afternoons. An average of a few hours' work is performed daily, so far as inspections, sports, and other attractions do not interrupt, and is barely sufficient to recall the smattering of knowledge gained as a recruit, let alone to ground him in even squad or company *drill*. Officers who are sadly in need of being lectured to themselves make a pretence of lecturing to their men. Or, worse still, a man's unit is taken during a considerable portion of its training for the manœuvres, and in that case he spends his time in what appear to his undeveloped mind meaningless tramps along dreary roads or in carrying out unreal operations under impossible section and company leaders. That a force of this kind can be seriously regarded by either Ministries or the general public is astonishing, especially when Ministers and public are constantly insisting upon the necessity for incessant training on practical lines for both officers and men of the Regular Forces, who certainly can boast of a higher general level of intelligence than the Militia, and should therefore require less training. The apologists for the Militia will no doubt say: "Yes, but then we do not expect so much of the Militia as we do of the Regulars." But this is tantamount, then, to confessing that they are not fit for the work for which they are mainly intended, viz., the defence of the Kingdom, for in order to be so they must emphatically be as good as the Regulars, and we must expect as much of them as we do of the latter. In this connection it is necessary to ask what sort of an enemy they will have to encounter under such circumstances. It is idle to deny that the average intelligence of the conscript Armies of the Continent—Russia excepted—stands on a much higher plane than that of our Regular Army, let alone of the Militia. They are made up of every class of society, and there are more than enough men of intelligence and education to give tone to the whole and to dominate it as brain always dominates mere matter. Their training is thorough, and the stake in their country which they possess is such as to make it a far more desirable, if not a necessary, object to bring a war to a successful conclusion than it is to the great body of men of whom our Militia is composed. It is all very well to talk of the oppressive weight of Continental armaments and the discontent of the people in consequence, but that discontent is not found among the thinking, reasoning classes who recognise the necessity of such armaments, and who certainly have not shown themselves lacking in patriotism or zeal when the test came. The only apparent exception was in the

case of the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, when the Prussian Army showed itself far superior in intelligence and in determination and far more efficient, man for man, than did the Austrian. That, however, in reality supports the argument set forth here, for the Austrian Army had then degenerated into a force much akin to our Militia, as the permission to provide substitutes had been very largely taken advantage of, with the result that the ranks were chiefly composed of the lowest classes of the population, who became food for powder because they were good for nothing else. There is no doubt either that the same cause had much to do with the inferiority of the French to their antagonists at the outset of the war of 1870-71; but no more striking illustration of the superiority of mind over matter, of a sense of responsibility over perfunctoriness, could be offered than the struggle now proceeding in Manchuria. There intelligence, combined with perfect training, are proving irresistible against the by no means despicable traditions of centuries, the two together engendering a confidence not to be withstood. And why should we expect a better fate; why should we suppose that we are capable of encountering the intelligent and highly-trained troops of, say, Germany or France with a Militia that is certainly but little superior, if at all, to the Russian Army as represented in the East, in the matter of brain power, and very inferior to it in the matter of its training?

The recent war against the Boers has unhappily strengthened the mischievous impression so prevalent in this country, that any Englishman with a musket will do to fight against the professional soldier of any other country, the fact being entirely lost sight of that the Boer was no soldier at all, but merely a good shot, innocent of all tactical skill, but possessing a certain shrewd sense, who knew how to use his rifle to advantage in the particular kind of country to which he was accustomed from birth, but who would have been of little use elsewhere. And even so, we required a force of 6 to 1 to overcome him, if the numbers of the combatants on either side have been correctly stated. We shall certainly therefore require far greater odds in our favour to deal with a highly intelligent, highly-trained, well-organised and equipped antagonist, such as a force which felt equal to the invasion of these islands would represent. Can we, then, in any way regard the existing Militia force as equal to the task of supplying the battalions we require to make up our field force? The answer is, emphatically, "No!" and it is as unpatriotic as it is stupid to try to deceive ourselves into believing that we can do so.

Even if the force could boast of competent officers, something might be made of it, though it is to be feared that even so the material is too unsatisfactory to justify our hoping for much under the present conditions. The real remedy is to abolish the force entirely as it stands, regardless of sentiment, vested interests, and possible loss of votes at political elections, and to substitute for it something which we can draw upon to complete our field army and to furnish, in addition, an efficient second line which can really be regarded by experts as competent to meet an invader in the field. Adopt, in the case of the Militia, the course which the country is being asked to approve in the case of the Volunteers, viz., reduce the numbers to what are really required and apply the money saved to thoroughly organising, training, and equipping the remainder. Only effect the reduction in a rational manner, not merely cutting down numbers and leaving as many units in existence as there are now, out of

deference to disappointed colonels or would-be colonels and other wire-pullers, but sweep useless and superfluous battalions and batteries out of existence. If it pleases sentiment and salves wounded feelings, continue to call your regenerated force the Militia, for the name does not matter so long as it ceases to be a Militia in reality, and becomes what we know it ought to become: a section of the Regular Army and the equal of the latter in all respects as a fighting machine.

The Army Estimates for 1905-6 show that 184 battalions of Militia infantry are to be provided for; but as is pointed out in the Secretary of State's accompanying memorandum, the condition of the force is unsatisfactory, that of some of the units being described as "very grave." There is also "great variety in the numbers and quality of the units." Under these circumstances it seems incredible that a practical business people, such as we pride ourselves on being, should feel any desire to maintain the force, expensive as it is. For offensive and defensive purposes the money expended on it is almost entirely thrown away. No unprejudiced man—certainly no expert—can regard the force as aught but a dangerous encumbrance; dangerous because apt to deceive the uninitiated merely by its being included in the Army List, and an encumbrance because it cannot be seriously taken into consideration by the General Staff when drawing up their plans for military operations.

We have seen that in order to complete our field or striking force we require from the Militia, or some other source, 16 battalions. We have further assumed that, failing conscription, there can be no question of this country attempting to take the offensive on land with respect to any possible Continental enemy, or forestalling invasion by invasion. Where a first-class Power is concerned we are tied to the defensive, and it is only for the purpose of reinforcing India or of dealing with savage or semi-civilised enemies that we shall dream of sending expeditionary forces of modest dimensions across the sea. For that purpose we shall require anything from 1 to, say, 4 of the divisions included in our field force.

To replace these during their absence we should be ready with other 4 divisions, and if these are to be drawn from the Militia, that force must give us another 38 battalions. We thus ask from the Militia a total of 48 battalions. The strength of the Militia infantry on the 1st January last was 70,135, or, say, 70 battalions; but that does not matter, for it is suggested that the only really satisfactory method of maintaining the Militia and of ensuring its efficiency at whatever strength is fixed upon, should be adopted, viz., the enforcement of the ballot. Reduce the force to a strength of 50 battalions, detach these completely from the territorial regiments, and locate them in the more populous *country* or small town districts; then enforce the ballot without fear, favour, or affection; by this means levelling up the standard of intelligence to a considerably higher plane than that of the Regular Army, and thereby rendering it possible to make of the Militia an efficient fighting force with less training and practice than is requisite in the case of the former.

But in the first place it must be accepted as a *sine quâ non* that no improvement in the force can be effected until we provide it with a complete corps of professional officers and non-commissioned officers, and entirely eliminate the present unsatisfactory body of amateurs. It is as wasteful of time and men as it is absurd to expect officers of this stamp to turn crude material into efficient soldiers, or to gain

the confidence and respect of their subordinates, especially if by having recourse to the ballot you are going to level up the rank and file and fill your ranks to a considerable extent with educated men who are capable of criticising their superiors and detecting their shortcomings. And there is no use deceiving one's self with the idea that the present amateurs can be turned into officers and non-commissioned officers of the required type by putting them through a certain number of courses. Courses are most illusory, and depend entirely for their value upon the keenness, zeal, and intelligence of the individual who undergoes them and the object for which he desires the certificate obtainable at the end of them. No amount of courses will instil into a man capacity for work, self-reliance, or the ability to impart instruction. These qualities are only to be gained by years of application and by those upon whom lies a sense of obligation, and in the case of the Militia officers, their very conditions of service deprive them of opportunities for such application as well as preventing them from feeling any sense of responsibility, since their position is one which they can take or leave at will—merely an idle and independent man's hobby, or in the case of those who are in the force from love of a little amateur soldiering, a relaxation from the real business of life. As for the non-commissioned officers and men, it is doubtful whether one of them is in the force out of keenness for soldiering; men who are animated by that sentiment seek the ranks of the Volunteers or the Yeomanry. The Militiaman is not to blame for his attitude, for it is just what is to be expected under the given conditions, and in accordance with human nature, which is distinctly averse to making-believe. It is encouraging to note that the principle of professionalism among the officers at any rate is to a certain extent recognised by the War Secretary, although even he appears to think that it only becomes necessary if the force is to be available for service abroad; but it is most distinctly necessary if the Militia is to be fit for the purpose for which it already exists, viz., to defend this country in the absence of the Regular Army when employed elsewhere, and for the still more important purpose which it is here proposed to entrust to it, viz., the completion of the Regular Home Army to a strength which will enable it to deal successfully with an invasion. The generally accepted principle is that the more ignorant and dull the instructed the more capable should be the instructor, and if this be true, the officers and non-commissioned officers of the Militia should be at least as good in every respect as those of the Regular Army, and should therefore be obtained, educated, and trained in the same manner, that is to say, by open competition so far as the officers are concerned, to be followed in the case of the successful candidates by a prescribed period at the Military College or Academy. The term "Militia officer" should disappear like the reality, even if in deference to conservative sentiment that of "The Militia" be maintained. Officers and non-commissioned officers of Line regiments and of the regiments of the regenerated Militia should be interchangeable. There should be no "once a Militiaman always a Militiaman"; on the contrary, there should be a constant interchange between the two, and, indeed, but for sentiment, the very name "Militia" should disappear and promotion into the Militia battalions should be the reward of smart subalterns and captains of the Regular battalions. This would afford increased opportunities for putting promotion in the Army on a more satisfactory footing and

doing away with the disheartening and unwholesome inequalities which give us two battalions in the same brigade, in one of which the senior subalterns average nearly as much service as the junior majors in the other. The interchange would of course have to be reciprocal, the Militia subalterns, if not the higher ranks, who so desired, receiving promotion into the Regular battalions, and so obtaining their chances of foreign and active service. The same principle would hold good as regards the non-commissioned officers, and indeed there is no reason why men in the ranks should not be allowed to exchange from one branch of the Service to the other, so long as their doing so did not degenerate into a scheme for foisting incompetents and bad characters on to another unit. It may be objected that this would mean an enormous increase in the item of pay of officers, and that moreover we should be paying many of them to spend the greater portion of their time in idleness; but in reality that need not be so. As a matter of fact there would be a saving of money, as the following figures show:—

		£
Present cost of 124 Battalions	- - -	666,750
Proportional cost of 74 Battalions to be abolished	- - -	397,899
		448,248
Cost of 50 Battalions to be maintained	- - -	268,851
Add pay of Officers at 365 days	- - -	179,397
		448,248
Deduct pay of Officers for 27 days, already included in original estimate	- - -	13,254
		434,994

There is thus effected a saving of the difference between £666,750 and £434,994, or in round figures, £231,000. On the other hand, however, there will be an increased expenditure due to increased period of training, for to bring the Militia to the proposed pitch of efficiency an annual training of one month will by no means suffice.

The suggestion is that men should be enlisted for 4 years with the Colours and for 4 years in the Reserve, the age at which the ballot should be made to apply being 19. During each year of his period with the Colours each man to serve for 4 months, followed by a period of 14 days' training during each of his years in the Reserve. At the end of his period in the Reserve a man to be free of all further liability to serve, but permitted to enrol himself in an "Emergency Reserve" for a further term of 4 years if he desired. He would undergo no training whilst serving in that category, neither would he receive any pay, but might be granted a small bonus for each year in which he fired a prescribed number of rounds on a rifle range, to enable him to do which he would be allowed a rifle and ammunition from his former unit and be granted travelling expenses. All Reserve men to be called out either by battalions or half battalions previous or subsequent to the period of training of their former units, when the officers would be free to take them in hand. It will be seen that under such a system, what with their annual training, the training of the Reserve men, and the putting them and the men of the Emergency Reserve

through musketry no very great portion of the Militia officers' year would be wasted from the point of view of the public. To fill up whatever balance of time remained he could be attached to a battalion of the Regular Army, to one of the other arms of the Service, or be put through some of the courses of instruction that all tend to make an officer more efficient and useful once he is really grounded in his profession and is animated by zeal. Then, of course, he should be accorded leave during the slack winter season, and at no other time; a relief from the ordinary round of work as steady and continuous as is contemplated here, which is absolutely essential if a man is not to grow stale. Under conditions such as these the junior officers and the non-commissioned officers of the Militia would have almost better chances of learning their work and of becoming professionals than their comrades of the Regulars, while the rank and file, who would take their tone from them and who, under the chances of the ballot, would consist of better material in every respect, would enjoy the great advantage of being trained and led by competent instructors.

It will no doubt be urged that inasmuch as the country is opposed to compulsory service in any form, and that this scheme relies upon a mild form of compulsion, it is impracticable and impossible. It is hard to believe, however, that the average Briton would prove so unpatriotic and so blind to the necessities of his country as to resist such a measure if the facts were put plainly before him. If he be indeed so lacking in his appreciation of the first duty of the citizen, which is recognised and accepted by almost every other community on this globe, whether civilised or savage, there is of course nothing more to be said, that is if it be also true that no Government would be courageous or disinterested or powerful enough to force the duty upon him. The Ballot Act exists, and needs but to be put in force, and if we examine into the maximum of service to which a man is liable under that Act we shall find that what is proposed here is not very much more onerous. To take lads of between the ages of 19 and 23 away from their regular employment for 4 months in each year is not so serious as may at first sight appear. That it does not interfere with material progress or hamper business or trade is amply illustrated by the case of Germany, in which country the system is more strictly applied than in any other, but whose industrial development during the last two decades has been most marked, and whose entrance into the commercial arena as our dangerous rival is now a cause of anxiety. As a matter of fact, it is now conceded by all except the prejudiced that the qualities acquired, combined with the physical and mental development during a period of military training at the receptive age prove of immense benefit to a man in his after career, and far outweigh any slight inconvenience which his temporary absence or the delay in taking up the work of his life may cause to himself or his employers. Besides, it has to be remembered that in our case these conditions would affect an exceedingly small percentage of the population, *i.e.*, 60,000 or 70,000 at most out of 40,000,000, or about .18 per cent. This could not be deemed a hardship by the utmost stretch of the imagination; here would be no handle which the demagogic advocate of liberty could grasp. If we inquire closely we shall find that the average young man of from 19 to 23 years of age is not earning very much, and that the pay and bounty offered him, combined with his housing and maintenance

during the training periods would constitute a very fair *quid pro quo*, and would in the majority of cases cover any loss of wages or salary.

But one of the greatest advantages to be anticipated from the enforcement of the ballot is the improved recruiting for the Regular Army which would result. By having recourse to the ballot for maintaining the Militia, and allowing no substitutes (an amendment of the Act to this effect being advocated), we should close the ranks of the force to the class of man who now chiefly fills them—the man who ekes out a precarious livelihood by means of the trainings when his unit is “up,” and intermittent manual labour when it is down, a man, too, who as often as not boasts of a double or treble identity, and figures on the strength of three or more units, thereby falsifying the returns as to numbers, and robbing the exchequer. This individual could not exist without the Militia pay and bounty, and being deprived of them will be driven into the Regular Army. It may be said: “Yes, but he will be as undesirable there as in the Militia.” That, however, is not the case. We certainly do desire to raise the social level of the ranks of the Regular Army, but it is to be feared that there is little or no chance of our ever doing so, and, indeed, that likelihood becomes steadily more improbable with the lapse of time. Soldiering, except of a voluntary description, which is free from the feeling of compulsion, and with which a man can sever his connection the moment he finds it irksome, is out of tune with the times. Professionalism finds no favour even with those who believe themselves keen, but who, in the majority of cases, are merely under the glamour of the pomp and circumstance of war and the strains of the band. One of the chief characteristics of the modern Briton is his impatience of restraint of any kind. The material advantages and the prospects in the Army are quite sufficient as it is to attract energetic and ambitious young men with a penchant for soldiering; but they will not come and submit to the loss of freedom which service in the Regular Army entails when they can satisfy their bent and obtain all the fun in the Militia, the Yeomanry, or the Volunteers, and at the same time, be made a great deal more of. So long as these outlets for their military ardour exist, so long will they take advantage of them and eschew the Regular service with its more onerous conditions and irksome restraints. It is only by closing them that we are ever likely to force such men into the latter. And by putting a termination to free enlistment into the Militia there is no doubt that a considerable percentage of those who would otherwise enter that force will enlist into the Regular Army, particularly if the conditions of the two branches of the service are rendered more similar. The Militia is at present one of the chief enemies of recruiting for the Regular Army. The men thus obtained would not, as already pointed out, raise the tone of the Regular Army, and, indeed, the tendency would rather be the other way; but the Regular Army is in a better position as regards opportunities and amount of time available to lick such men into shape and make something of them than is the Militia, and therefore this material would be turned to better account than it is at present. The Militia ballot, then, in addition to giving us in that force a superior type of man, whose presence in it would bring about a most desirable levelling-up of the rank and file, and whom we could not hope to secure in any other way, would at the same time bring about an accession to the ranks of the Regular Army amounting probably to some thousands or

more of men who, if not of the most desirable class, are most welcome in default of anything better. To sum up, the advantages of the proposed reorganisation of the Militia and alteration of its conditions of service would be the following:—

1. The creation at but comparatively little greater cost than that of the present Militia of a really efficient force almost the equal of the Regular Army, and capable of supplying the infantry units necessary to complete the field or striking force requisite to meet possible invasion.
2. Simplification of the administrative machinery.
3. Increased efficiency of the officers, non-commissioned officers, and the training staffs.
4. Provision of an adequate reserve to maintain the units at their proper strength in time of war.
5. Removal of one of the chief sources of competition with recruiting for the Regular Army, combined with the securing of a superior class of men for the Militia.

It is difficult in a brief essay like the present to enter into a calculation as to how far, if at all, the proposed regeneration of the Militia would increase its cost. The cost of paying the officers throughout the year has been included in the foregoing calculation of the saving to be effected by the abolition of 74 battalions. There would be increased expenditure under the following heads:—

1. Pensions and gratuities of officers and of such non-commissioned officers as were allowed to serve on voluntarily.
2. Increased cost of extended training.
3. Training of the Reserve and of the Emergency Reserve.
4. Cost of the working of the ballot system.
5. Musketry.

Of these heads, however, it must be pointed out that (1) and (3) are both prospective, whilst the increased cost under the remaining heads would be in part balanced by the saving of £231,000 which we have seen would be effected. As a set-off, too, there would be savings over the following items:—

1. The instruction and pay of the recruit on enlistment.
2. The bounties, which would be abolished.
3. The Engineer branch of the service, the Garrison Artillery, and other departmental troops, which it is proposed to abolish.
4. The pay of the Militia Reserve, which would cease to exist.

As regards (3), we know that this step is contemplated by the Secretary for War, so far as the Artillery are concerned, and certainly it would be judicious, for it is absurd to maintain this expensive arm under its inferior officers at a greater strength, at any rate, than that deemed necessary by the General Staff and the Defence Committee. Neither has any allowance been made for the fact, as foreshadowed by the Secretary for War, that in future the Militia will probably be called upon to undergo a longer period of training than at present.



To lengthen the training by even one short week would increase the cost of the present force by £45,000. The saving to be effected by the reduction of the Garrison Artillery would represent a substantial set-off to the increased cost of the regenerated force such as it is proposed in these pages to establish. And there seems no reason why it should not be further swelled by the complete disbandment of the Militia Engineers, since, having regard to the usual proportion maintained between the various arms and the reorganisation of the Regular Army, the greater portion of these at any rate would be superfluous, whilst such of these units as were required to complete the various divisions could be better obtained from other sources, as it will be attempted to show later on.

Thus for a limited increased annual expenditure on the Militia we should obtain the following advantages:—

1. The provision of an adequate number of efficient battalions, composed of a superior stamp of officers and men, to complete the striking force necessary to repel an invasion, and to replace the latter in the event of its having to leave the United Kingdom.
2. The force would always be maintained at its established strength, and the present waste of men and money, due to causes which are inevitable under the voluntary system, would be avoided.
3. Simplification and co-ordination of the organisation and system of training throughout the Regular and Militia infantry.
4. The provision of a corps of officers capable of training their men and of leading them against the professional troops of Continental Powers.
5. The provision of an adequate reserve on a simple inexpensive organisation.

## 2. *The Yeomanry Cavalry.*

If the soundness of the plan herein advocated be conceded, and it be recognised as feasible, what, then, are we to do with the remainder, that is to say, with the great bulk of the Auxiliary Forces as represented by the Yeomanry and the Volunteers? The answer of the practical business man who declines to be swayed by sentiment or to allow his judgment to be warped by outside considerations, must surely be in favour of ending them, at any rate, as they are at present constituted. Take the Yeomanry. If it be our intention to maintain a force capable of carrying war into an enemy's country, it cannot be for a moment admitted that the Auxiliary Forces—and in especial the Yeomanry—are in any way adequate for the purpose, either in point of efficiency or of numbers. If we require or desire an Army capable of coping with any of our possible Continental foes on their own territory, that Army of course requires its due proportion of cavalry, and cavalry of the first quality. No one can maintain that we obtain either the proportion or the quality in the present force of 23,000 men. That body, if we are to undertake the offensive in respect of other great Powers, is absurdly inadequate. If, on the other hand, we are to confine ourselves to the defensive or even to

the offensive-defensive, it is much too large. But in either case it is not up to standard. Fancy pitting the 14-days'-training-a-year Yeoman against the professional cavalryman of Germany or France! Assuming, however, that we have no such idea, and only intend to use our Yeomanry as we intend to use our Infantry Militia, *i.e.*, for repelling an invasion, it may be said at once that the force is superfluous. If there is any one country in which cavalry action is limited more than in another it is Great Britain. There is practically no place for this arm in the fighting line. This, then, limits its sphere of usefulness to reconnaissance work and to covering the flanks during an engagement; but the more enclosed a country is and the more the movements of troops are confined to roads, the smaller are the bodies of cavalry required for reconnaissance work and the keeping in touch with the enemy. For the same reason, the smaller is the number of mounted troops required for protecting the flanks from counter-attacks or from turning movements during an engagement, whether a force be acting offensively or defensively. Besides, it is certain that in this populous country, with all the resources of civilisation at its command, with a network of telegraph and telephone wires, not to mention numerous railways, covering the whole land, and with reliable and intelligent officials, such as postmasters and police constables, in every village, we should obtain far more information through such sources than through the cavalry, no matter how efficient the latter might be. Every consideration, then, demands the reduction of the mounted portion of a force chiefly intended for use in Great Britain to a considerably smaller proportion as regards the other arms than that which is found necessary in Continental Armies. It would be a great mistake therefore to block up roads and add to the difficulties of supply and transport by encumbering our field force with masses of superfluous cavalry—especially of inferior cavalry.

The recent war with the Boers gave rise to very exaggerated notions regarding the value of the Yeomanry cavalry. The fact is quite lost sight of that the work they were called upon to perform in South Africa was of the most elementary description; that the enemy they confronted was devoid of military knowledge and training, and that numbers were overwhelmingly on our side. Neither can it be urged that, even thus advantageously placed, the Yeomanry acquitted themselves well—as a whole, at any rate. Nevertheless, the mere fact of their going to the seat of war has engendered the idea that they constitute a reliable body of cavalry—an idea which no general who had experience of them has undertaken the graceless task of refuting, although the interests of truth, of the Army, and of the country demand that this should be done. But whatever the achievements of the Yeomanry in South Africa, it is no reproach to them that they are in no way equal to opposing trained cavalry, for the amount of training which they receive is absolutely inadequate to fit them for such a purpose. The annual period of training has now been permanently increased to a fortnight; but what is a fortnight for such a purpose, even if it were taken seriously. It would be little enough for a reserve consisting of old soldiers who had learnt their work during years of permanent service in the Regular Army; but the Yeoman is a civilian pure and simple, with everything to learn during his meagre annual training, and we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that even this fortnight is by no means made the most of; but that it is chiefly regarded by the majority, both officers and men,

as a pleasant outing, during which mounted competitions, regimental sports, and local race meetings are the first consideration, and not to be interfered with by any little drills or irksome tactical schemes, for which time might otherwise be found.

It is so easy to knock up diaries of work performed which will at once satisfy inspecting officers and the public and not unduly strain the conscience. Can any one assert with truth that at the end of his fourteen days in camp the average officer, whether squadron leader or troop leader, has anything more than the haziest notion of reconnaissance duties or has ever thought or read anything concerning the principles on which cavalry is employed? Can it be pretended that the trooper on going down has acquired more than the knowledge of a few parade movements or the standing like a dummy on vedette duty, or that he has made any attempt to learn to shoot with the carbine which he "carries" so bravely. In knowledge of the many matters with which he should be acquainted and with which our Regular cavalryman to a great extent is acquainted, the Yeoman, whether officer or man, is the veriest tyro. For this state of affairs the Yeomanry officer is scarcely to be blamed. If he has nothing to gain by hard work and the acquisition of military knowledge, and if the country is willing to take him seriously without demanding these things of him, why should he voluntarily trouble himself with them? He is an independent man of means and of leisure, else he could not be in the force as it is at present allowed to be run, and which outherods Herod, *i.e.*, the Regular cavalry, in the matter of extravagance, ostentation, and gold lace. It is idle to shut our eyes to the real reasons which attract him to the force. These have been alluded to in the discussion of the Militia, and the Yeomanry constitutes the rich man's Militia. Besides, how is he, with the best will in the world, to learn in the course of a few days what it takes the cavalry officer years of training to acquire and constant practice to retain?

If, then, a force of this nature would be superfluous, even when efficient, how much more so is it when in the condition here depicted, and which is by no means an exaggeration. During the current year it is to cost us £438,000 for a strength of some 27,000 officers and men. Why not reduce the force to the strength of a cavalry brigade, completely organised in all respects as such, officering it from retired officers of the Regular cavalry or mounted infantry? The training would of course have to be greatly lengthened and to be taken far more seriously by both the military authorities and the units themselves; but it seems more than probable that a sufficiency of men could be found in the existing force who would be ready to serve for 6 weeks or so annually during a period of 6 years, given adequate pay and allowances, of course. This period could be followed by a further period of 3 years of reserve service, during which each man would come up for, say, three weeks' training with his former unit. When the system had been in force 9 years, moreover, it is a question whether it might not be possible to reduce the standing establishment by one half, counting upon the reserve to furnish the other half, although without increasing the length of the annual period of training for the latter. If these means did not suffice for maintaining the small force, extend to it the provisions of the Ballot Act as well as to the Militia; but applying it only to those classes which constitute the material of which the Yeomanry ought

properly to be composed. This would carry with it the additional advantage of eliminating the stamp of town bred man of sedentary calling, dependent on livery stables for the hire and the care of his "charger," who is too much in evidence in many of the units at present. If the right stratum were tapped there should be very little need to incur the trouble and expense of teaching the recruit the parts of a horse or how to ride it. The money saved by the reduction of the force would more than cover the cost of properly organising and training the reduced force, so that we are in the presence of one of those rare occasions when retrenchment goes hand in hand with increased efficiency. These measures would not suffice to turn out efficient cavalrymen, but they would give us far better trained Yeomen than we have under the present system, who would be fairly competent for the mounted infantry duties which are all that the force is ever likely to have to perform.

It is not to be denied that just at present the Yeomanry is the most popular branch of the auxiliary services, and that because it proved to a limited extent useful on an occasion, the like of which will probably never recur, but it is absurd on that account to maintain that it will be useful under normal conditions in a campaign conducted in accordance with the principles at present accepted by civilised nations; principles which are forced upon them by a recognition of the circumstances which control modern warfare. Let us ask ourselves what will be the *role* of our cavalry in the event of an invasion. It will certainly not be the locating of the invader at the outset. That will be the work of the coastguard, who may be said to represent the supporting squadrons of our advanced patrols, consisting of any cruisers and smaller craft, or even merchant vessels and fishing boats flying the British flag that may be off the coast. We may take it as certain that wherever the invader attempts to land, his whereabouts will be promptly reported by the adjacent coastguard stations, if not also by the local authorities. Thus he will be located and troops will most certainly be on the way to attack him long before his force has even completed its disembarkation, whilst from that moment onwards telegraph offices, cyclists, motorists, and others, will be constantly reporting his movements. The object of the British field force will be to close with the invader at the earliest possible moment, since every hour gained by him probably means an accession of strength, and the gaining of a firmer foothold. There is thus no necessity for an elaborate cavalry screen carefully covering the front. Such little cavalry as is necessary will be required on the flanks of the striking force, leaving the front clear for energetic and decided action. And one of the main recommendations of the Yeomanry has always been the knowledge of their own locality possessed by its several units, and therefore, their supposed value for scouting purposes. But apart from the consideration of their inadequate training for scouting work, we have seen above that there will be very little of it to be done, and the endeavour has been made to show that our modest body of Regular cavalry suffices for our requirements in that connection. Besides which, if wanted at all, the Yeomanry cavalry would, in all probability, be called upon to work in districts with which it was not acquainted. And it is certainly a fact that one good scout is worth ten indifferent ones, so that a small number of the former is worth far more than a great many of the latter, whilst the more the roads are left free for the

unhindered movements of our infantry the better. The Yeomanry as at present constituted, is a superfluous force for which no use can be found unless indeed we apprehend further trouble in South Africa, when, no doubt, it would, as on a former occasion, be able to make some show against the untrained Boer yeomen. There is no scope for it on the battle field of the British or European type, and it is not required for scouting purposes, because we have without it sufficient better and more reliable mounted troops for carrying out that work. With the brigade of more highly-trained Yeomen, such as is suggested here, which might be provided at a considerable saving on the present expenditure on this arm of the auxiliary forces, our requirements in cavalry would be more than met.

### 3. *The Volunteers.*

In view of the present state of public feeling towards the force, and the outcry which the proposal to lop off a few of its superfluous thousands has raised; it seems a waste of energy to maintain that the Volunteers, at any rate as at present trained and organised, are a hindrance rather than a help in any scheme for the defence of the Kingdom. Supposing that the Volunteers were all that they are deemed to be, and animated by the purely patriotic spirit by which they are as a body believed to be animated, it might seem an ungracious task to decry them; but it is the duty of the serious man to look facts in the face, and to take things as he finds them. In the first place the great mistake is made of regarding the force as a homogeneous whole. As a matter of fact scarcely any two of its units are alike in constitution, in organisation, or in their degree of efficiency. Volunteering was originally intended for the class of man of superior intelligence, occupying positions above those of the artisan or workman, and able to afford to give a certain amount of his leisure to acquiring the A.B.C. of soldiering. His education and intelligence were supposed to assist him in learning these things in a comparatively short space of time, whilst his comparative independence in regard to means and leisure provided him with the necessary opportunities. But nowadays only a very small proportion of the units consists of men of this stamp, viz., a proportion of these belonging to London and the large cities and towns. For the rest we have the county corps, consisting for the most part of men from the smaller towns or larger villages; small shopkeepers, clerks, and such-like, but very rarely the real country man. Then there is the third and largest section of all, comprising all the corps principally recruited from the labouring classes. There are units entirely composed of riveters, dockyard mates, or factory hands, whose low standard of intelligence, whose habits of life, and whose impatience of restraint quite unfit them for volunteering. No amount of training, after the Volunteer fashion, would ever make soldiers of them. They approximate to the type of man who joins the Regular Army, in which indeed a great proportion of them would be did the Volunteers not exist. In this way the Volunteer force, like the Militia, robs the Regular Army of numbers of men of whom it is badly in need, whom it is in a better position to turn into efficient soldiers, and whom, but for the rivalry of the former, it would secure. This section, which is by far the largest of the three into which the Volunteers may roughly be divided, is worse than useless, and, indeed, constitutes a hindrance and a

danger; a hindrance as standing in the way of the interests of the more important Regular service, and a danger because of the false ideas existing as to its worth. It is scarcely any exaggeration to say that every penny spent upon units falling under this category is a penny wasted.

Very much the same may be said of those comprised in the second category—the county corps. Made up as these are, in the case of the infantry, of companies scattered over large areas, and even so but rarely assembling in their integrity, it is not surprising that their discipline and steadiness, not to speak of their military knowledge, are of the lowest order. A dozen sketchy visits from an adjutant, coupled with a few days in camp during the course of each year, are nothing like sufficient to instil into a corps of this class, even the rudiments of what it is necessary for them to acquire, if they are to be of any use at all, or to cause them to take their soldiering seriously. The men who enlist in these county corps, or, as they ought more correctly to be called, small town corps, are just the individuals whom the ballot ought to try and catch for the Militia. There, under the conditions herein proposed, there would be a very good chance of making good soldiers of them, whereas under existing conditions they are merely promising material wasted. Then let this class of Volunteer also go by the board, and let us make a further saving on their account.

We have now boiled our force down to what are sometimes called the “class” corps, that is to the type of man who is the best fitted for a Volunteer. Anyone with experience of the force must be aware of the marked difference that exists between corps of this sort and all the others. The greater earnestness and sense of responsibility of their members, combined with their higher intelligence, does enable them to reach any given standard in a far shorter period than that required by their compeers. In every sense the appearance and bearing of these corps causes them to compare very favourably with the rest of the force. However, it is merely a matter of comparison and nothing more, for even so the “class” Volunteer stands upon a very much lower level of efficiency than the Regular soldier. It is perfectly true to say that, give him 3 months or so continually under arms, and he will prove to be as efficient and reliable a soldier as could be desired; but that is just the point. We cannot afford him these 3 months. When we want him at all we want him in a hurry, for an invader (the chief if not the only enemy the Volunteer would or should have to deal with) is not going to sit down and wait while we supplement his drill-hall training with a practical one, and teach him to march and look after himself and to obey his officers. Thus for practical purposes even this superior class of Volunteer is of very little use.

A further source of weakness is the lack of homogeneity in the units themselves and in their organisation. Battalions vary in strength from 348 to 2,788 and from 4 companies to 16. These heterogeneous collections are loosely organised into so-called brigades, which latter in their turn present no uniformity, but consist some of as many as 7 and others of as few as 3 battalions. Scarcely one brigade has a complete staff, there being a very marked shortage in respect of the most important individual of all—the brigade-major, who, even where he does exist, is in some cases merely a Volunteer officer. The brigades are commanded *ex-officio* in the majority of

cases by the colonels commanding regimental districts, but as these officers cease to be under the new organisation most of the Volunteer brigades will soon find themselves without permanent leaders. It is understood that in future Regular officers will be appointed to this position, but will they be permanent holders or merely appointed for the drill season? In the latter event the brigades will be but little better off than at present. The Army List credits most of these brigades with A.S.C. companies, meaning presumably supply columns; but most of these companies have little more than a paper existence, some of them still lacking a commander, and very few boasting of a second officer. There are good grounds for saying that the regimental transport is in some cases a mere sham arranged to blind the authorities and keep them quiet and to enable the annual allowance per vehicle to be drawn during the time spent in camp. Most of the wagons and horses are the property of trading firms, building contractors, or carrying agents, the drivers being also in their employ, and it is often a difficult matter to induce them to spare vehicles, beasts, and *personnel* simultaneously, especially during busy periods, and it is fairly safe to say that they could not or would not spare them at all should war break out and an invasion of this Kingdom result, for at such a crisis their ordinary work would be greatly increased, at any rate for a time. Besides, if all the Volunteers were called out simultaneously these wagons and horses would be under the necessity of being in more than one place at the same time, since the same set is under agreement with more than one unit. In one large city it was a known thing that the same 4 vehicles did duty at the annual inspections of a considerable number of battalions, the result being that the names of units on their tail-boards were being constantly altered.

As regards their medical arrangements, the Volunteers seem to be better off, for bearer companies are forthcoming in plenty, and there is no reason whatever why even under present conditions they should not be as efficient for the work legitimately required of them as the corresponding units in the Regular Army. One or two brigades have no company, however, so that even in this respect the brigade organisation cannot be said to be complete.

A force presenting all the shortcomings in respect of the quality of its *personnel*, its standard of efficiency, and its organisation enumerated above cannot be deemed either useful or reliable; but even were it otherwise, even were the condition of the force in these respects as satisfactory as it is in reality unsatisfactory; what use have we for it as at present constituted? Its brigades, its battalions, its companies even are not required for service abroad; our organisation for the purpose of meeting invasion, it is submitted, is complete without them, whilst if we adopt the Secretary for War's confident and comprehensive view that the country is absolutely safe from invasion, it is impossible to find any justification for their continued existence. As, however, military opinion is opposed to the War Secretary in this view, and it is considered necessary to form plans for meeting an enemy on our own home territory, it has to be asked:—

- (1) Whether the Volunteers are really wanted in this connection; and
- (2) whether in that event their present organisation is the most suitable for the purpose. The answer to (1) is a qualified "Yes"; to (2) an emphatic "No."

What would the situation be in the event of an invasion? The invader would suddenly appear at the predetermined point of landing, for we may take it that the attempt would be made, or at any rate might be made, immediately after the declaration of war, even if not prior to that formality, before we had ordered mobilisation. His presence would be immediately made known to the Army Council. That body would at once despatch the striking or field force or a portion of it to oppose him. The time occupied by the latter in reaching the threatened point would depend:—

- a. Upon the locality chosen by the invader for his disembarkation, *i.e.*, its distance from Aldershot, and its accessibility.
- b. The extent to which railways and roads facilitated the conveyance of troops to the threatened point.
- c. The season of the year and the state of the weather.

But under the most favourable circumstances some hours might be expected to elapse before the field force was able to offer active opposition to the landing. By that time the invader would have landed a considerable proportion of his combatant troops, probably equal to that which we could oppose to him at the outset, and have seized points of strategic and tactical importance, besides interrupting telegraphic communications in all directions and damaging the neighbouring railways. Well, how could the Volunteers assist us at such a crisis? Those in the county in which the landing was being effected, and possibly in the adjacent counties, would be called out after some delay. They would doubtless turn out as smartly as they could, but it is highly improbable that, what with drawing their arms, ammunition, and field equipment from their armoury, obtaining rations, bedding and so forth, and packing these into the regimental transport vehicles, supposing the latter to be forthcoming in a hurry, it would certainly be from 12 to 24 hours at the lowest estimate before even 50 per cent. of the majority of the units, even of concentrated town units, would be ready to move from their regimental headquarters to any point. The ability of the Volunteers to turn out at short notice for a surprise (!) parade or march during peace time is no measure of their ability to do so for the purpose of taking the field in earnest. One can leave one's work and one's private affairs in the lurch and dispense with one's little comforts for an hour or two, but it is another matter when one is going off for an indefinite period and with the possibility of never returning.

Well, having assembled our battalions each at their various headquarters, we have then to assemble them in brigade, after which we can think of moving them against the invader, possibly without any staff to direct them or in accordance with any preconceived plan, but still we can move them. By this time, however, there will be a sufficiency of Regular troops belonging to the striking force in the field, and the presence of the ill-trained Volunteers at the scene of action would be more of a hindrance than an assistance.

What is the remedy, then? Why, to abolish the present unwieldy and expensive organisation and to substitute a simple and effective one for it. To accomplish this the following measures would be necessary:—



1. Abolish the whole of the inland corps, whether infantry, artillery, or what not.
2. Divide the whole of the coast line into sections, selecting some central strategic point slightly inland in each section as its head quarters, not necessarily as a place of assembly, but merely as the point from which to exercise control and issue instructions.
3. Organise the Volunteers of the counties bordering on the coasts as distinct company or battery units.
4. The size of the various sections to be determined by the nature of the country and of the coast, i.e., by the probability, or the reverse, of its becoming the scene of a landing, and of its populousness.
5. Apportion to each section a Volunteer force of infantry and artillery.
6. The bulk of the artillery to consist of heavy batteries of quick firers and howitzers, and the infantry to be chiefly mounted infantry, the exact proportions of the arms, and number of the troops in any given section depending upon the nature of the country in which they would have to operate.

By these means we should have a ready and fairly effective means of promptly opposing an invader directly he attempted a landing. His operations would thus be impeded and delayed from the outset, instead of his being accorded the few all-important essential hours wherein to make good his footing, and establish a covering party which he would otherwise enjoy. No matter how perfect his arrangements, how excellent his troops or how numerous, the disadvantage at which they would be taken if attacked when disembarking or immediately afterwards, before their marching columns were organised, would go far to neutralise their superiority and to justify even Volunteers in opposing them unaided. The range and effect of modern weapons and their accuracy are such that even the veriest tyro in tactics could use them with effect at such a juncture, since manœuvring would not be required, whilst no set attack would be made or defence of a position undertaken. The batteries and companies as they came to the threatened spot would merely do their best on their own initiative to delay and disorganise the enemy during the actual process of disembarkation, and would then retire. In fact, both artillery and infantry would indulge in mere sniping tactics. If each section were subdivided into sub-sections, the Volunteers of the sub-section would be easily and rapidly available for action on the spot, particularly if the infantry portion of them were mounted, or, better still, in districts where roads were good and plentiful, as is generally the case near the coast, were provided with bicycles or motor cars. Employed in this way the Volunteers, it is urged, would be distinctly useful and would supply an urgent want which the Regular Army is not equal to supplying. Auxiliary troops, such as the Volunteers, could be most usefully employed in this work of delaying the enemy's progress and in gaining time for the Regular Army, whereas, to fritter away the latter, behind which there is nothing reliable for field operations, in such a manner would be highly improper. At present the Volunteers are an unwieldy, undigested, and, indeed,

undigestible mass, the great bulk of them, even supposing they boasted of any adequate organisation and training, being superfluous to our wants. We are not going to deter any prospective invader by letting him know that we possess hundreds of thousands of men with muskets whom we could not oppose to him with reasonable chances of success, even if we could bring them together quickly and move them about. We should impress him far more by presenting to his gaze a properly organised force of one hundred thousand, each man of which had his appointed place and his sphere of usefulness in the system of defence of the country, as a supplement to, and not as a substitute for the Regular soldier.

The question of the utility of the artillery Volunteers requires to be specially dealt with, in conjunction, however, with that of the same arm in the Militia service. The Secretary for War stated in his memorandum accompanying the Army Estimates for the current year, that much of the Militia garrison artillery was redundant for defence purposes, and certainly so far as can be judged by probabilities and without knowing the details of the schemes for the defence of our fortified ports and of the capital, that would appear to be the case. It is not clear whether the War Secretary, when expressing this belief, bore in mind the existence of the Artillery Volunteers, and meant that when allowing for the latter the Militia Artillery became superfluous. But whether he did or did not it seems safe to say that it would be better for every reason to suppress the whole of the Militia Artillery, and to rely entirely on the Volunteers for all of the *personnel* of this arm which we require as a supplement to the Regular organisation. This is just the sort of work that an intelligent man can pick up in odd hours, without spending a comparatively long and continuous period in camp, and at little or no expense to the individual or the public. By abolishing the Militia Artillery we shall save the expense of assembling the units annually for training, and paying them, and we should no longer have in our big towns, many of them far removed from the coast and enjoying but few opportunities for gun practice of practical nature, two rival organisations both intended for precisely the same object.

In reducing the Volunteer infantry to the proposed limit of 100,000, all suitable individuals should be offered the chance of transferring to the artillery branch, at any rate so far as units belonging to the coast towns and districts are concerned. When eliminating infantry units, as units, from the present Volunteer infantry, all that are superfluous in the coast towns should go, or be converted into artillery, if local conditions required any of the latter and proper facilities for training it existed. In future, no men residing inland should be accepted for the artillery unless they were willing to bear the expense of travelling as often as necessary to the nearest coast battery available for purposes of practice. In this manner the requirements of our coast defences as regards artillery *personnel* would be cheaply and effectively provided for, particularly if it could be arranged to use Regular gunners for the more important gun numbers, and to cause the Volunteers to drill with them. It seems hardly irrelevant, however, to again record the opinion here that the very greatest service which the discarded artillery Volunteers, whether Militia or Volunteer, could offer their country would

be to join the Naval Artillery Volunteers, and so help to build up a reserve of gunners for employment in our first line of defence. But this paper has to look at things entirely from the point of view of the interests of the Army, and not from the broader, national standpoint. The estimated cost of the Volunteers during the current year is £1,220,000. The establishment is 344,045. At this rate, the force, if reduced to 110,000, would cost, in round figures, £400,000. This is only approximate, as in the absence of details there is no way of arriving at the separate costs of the various arms, while that of the batteries of artillery, which it is proposed in this paper to establish, and of the mounting of the bulk of the infantry, is difficult to estimate until the numbers have been worked out, a task which is outside the limits of this discussion. It seems well within the mark, however, to say that the saving on the force would amount to one-half the present cost, or some £600,000, whilst for the money actually spent we should receive far greater value. This calculation presupposes the maintenance of the medical corps, which, as we have seen, would be utilised elsewhere, although, no doubt, each unit would obtain the services of a local medical man and would train a few of its members as stretcher bearers. The garrison artillery is also retained, as we have seen above, as the exigencies of recruiting for the Regular Army would continue to render them necessary in the scheme for the defence of our fortified ports, although, as in the case of the Militia, the strength of this arm, and therefore its cost, could be considerably reduced.

The Army Service Corps organisation would, however, be no longer required, and the large sum spent on travelling and on camps would cease to be necessary. The training of each unit should consist in:—

- a. Learning to move with celerity as a unit by march route within its section.
- b. Learning to shoot at such targets as it would have to shoot at in the event of an invasion, such as boats approaching the shore, men assembling on a beach, and "sniping" with a rifle.
- c. Becoming acquainted with every inch of ground in their section, especially short cuts, cross-roads, points of vantage for signallers and look-out men, and all possible localities favourable for carrying out a disembarkation, together with the position from which to oppose it and the best methods of manning them.

The methods of obstructing roads, of preparing bridges for destruction and actually destroying them in case of necessity, as also of putting houses in a state of defence, would all prove useful knowledge and far more practical than the acquisition of a smattering of the methods of moving and manœuvring brigades and divisions and attack upon formidable positions. All the above could be learnt in a training no longer or more exacting than that which the Volunteers at present undergo, whilst the necessity for going into camp for a fortnight, which they consider so great a hardship, would be obviated, whereas if the force is to be fit to take the field on the higher organisation the fortnight by no means suffices.

*Rifle Clubs.*

Whatever else we do, let us avoid placing undue reliance upon Rifle Clubs, or encouraging the pernicious belief that these as at present constituted can have any value whatever, militarily speaking. Amongst the many dangerous fallacies to which the late Boer War gave birth was the idea that so long as a man can shoot he possesses the one requisite of the modern soldier; but there is something far more important than the mere shooting straight and aligning sights correctly on a mark, whether fixed or moving, viz., the gauging of the distance away of the mark and correctly adjusting the sight accordingly. In other words, the ability to judge distance is even more important than the ability merely to align sights correctly. The last is the complement of the first, and the two in combination are essential to good results in the field. But to the average man, learning to judge distance is both difficult and irksome, for it is only acquired with considerable pains, especially by the individual not engaged in outdoor pursuits in the country. Well, the latter is not the sort of man, unfortunately, who joins rifle clubs. The majority of the members are persons leading sedentary lives in our towns and villages who find a little mild exertion and "potting" a welcome recreation. For this they are willing enough to go on to ranges where all the firing points are clearly marked and to spend an evening in an indoor miniature shooting gallery, but to go to the trouble of estimating ranges and then to verifying them is not to be expected of them. They are under no compulsion, and even the professional soldier would not practice judging distance without compulsion.

But even supposing that the rifleman were a good shot for all practical purposes, of what use is he without organisation, without discipline, without uniform even, and innocent of all military qualities? What is he to do at a crisis? Pot the enemy from behind hedgerows and windows? Well, we know the sort of treatment meted out to persons who acted that part by the Germans in 1870, and what the accepted opinion is amongst civilised nations concerning free-lance action of this description. In the Franco-German War even the *Francs Tireurs*, who made some sort of a pretence to the possession of an organisation and some sort of uniform, were shot down whenever caught. And no doubt Britons behaving in the same way would be similarly treated by the invader. Besides, consider the embarrassment to the commander of the British field force if he is to have irresponsible sharpshooters discharging rifles all round him day and night—men independent of him in every way and in most cases anything but willing to obey orders. It may be said that in the event of a war of invasion, the members of these clubs would at once enrol themselves as Volunteers. Yes, possibly; but just at that crisis the Volunteers would have been called out and concentrated at various centres, and would have neither time nor opportunity for devoting their energies to the training of recruits, apart from clothing and equipping them, even supposing these accessions of strength were needed.

The Rifle Clubs indeed are merely the latest plausible excuse to enable the manhood of the Kingdom to still their consciences in part for evading their direct obligation of personally serving their country as soldiers. The War Office, although forced by the politicians

to accept them, laughs at them, and regards them as one of the many obstacles to an honest recognition of the fact that if we are to maintain our place in the council of great nations we must be as strong for offence as for defence. If we are not, we render it possible for warlike nations to say: "Oh, yes, Great Britain can perhaps defend what she has got, if attacked, but she cannot take the initiative and attack us; so we can afford to ignore her." Why do the Continental Powers maintain their huge armies? Far smaller numbers would suffice for mere defence carried out on proper principles; but they are aware that in order to be really formidable and safe they must be able to hold over their neighbours the threat of invasion. We content ourselves with boasting that we can sweep the seas clear of their ships; but they do not possess sufficient ships to be impressed by such an operation, and are not dependent on other countries as we are for their food supplies.

Why are we drawing in our horns now and reducing or abolishing many of our over-sea garrisons? It is not because we cannot afford them or because we honestly believe that it is superfluous to hold them. It is because of the increasing inability of our people to appreciate the duties and responsibilities of Empire, their growing dislike of restraint or anything which threatens their personal comfort or their pleasures. A thousand arguments, or rather pleas, are brought forward against conscription, and we are asked to be content with all sorts of inferior substitutes and make-shifts in its stead. All classes refuse to recognise that universal compulsory service is compatible with—indeed directly conducive to—material progress, as is evidenced in the case of a great nation of the same original stock as ourselves. The country does not want to see these things or to accept the only logical conclusion to be deduced from them, and hence the popularity of every institution which can in any way be represented as saving us from the necessity of giving practical effect to that conclusion.

Such is the state of public opinion in the matter that not an authoritative organ of the Press has dared to advocate conscription, and even experienced officers of the Army hesitate to do so in words, however strongly the Service generally may be in favour of it, whilst the few who do demand it are not taken seriously or accorded a hearing. Summing up, then, the conclusions arrived at, we find:—

1. That the numbers and organisation of our military forces and our adherence to the voluntary system tie us down to a defensive attitude so far as other great Powers are concerned.
2. That the teachings of history, the march of science, and the political outlook combine to create situations which would render invasion of the United Kingdom feasible, if not easy.
3. That the Regular Army at home is not strong enough or properly organised to deal with such an invasion.
4. That none of the Auxiliary branches of the Service as at present organised, trained and recruited are capable of properly co-operating with the Regular Army or of making up for its lack of strength.
5. That the enforcement of the ballot for the Militia, combined with the reduction of that force to considerably

less than half of its present establishment would put the latter in a position to make up the deficiencies referred to in (3), and also to provide a second line of defence of quality almost equal to the first.

6. That in this event a Volunteer force of 100,000 men on a simpler and less expensive organisation than at present, and having less ambitious aims, would be ample for all our purposes, and far more useful than the larger force now is.
7. That in view of the restrictions on cavalry action, both on the field of battle and as regards reconnoissance, due to the very enclosed nature of our populous and highly-developed country, the force of Regular cavalry now serving at home is both numerous and strong enough for all our purposes, and that therefore the Yeomanry cavalry is superfluous.

We have still to deal with the plea of those who urge that rather than discourage such military spirit as animates the nation, we should accept anyone who offers and take from him thankfully such modicum of service and in such form as he is inclined to offer. Such an idea seems scarcely worth the trouble of refuting. Where are you going to stop once you start in this direction? Already we have degenerated from Volunteers to Rifle Clubs, and no doubt any crisis will revive the ridiculous proposal raised in a great city of the north during the Boer War, to the effect that citizens should enrol themselves as "Queen's Burghers," and on the strength of doing so be supplied with a rifle and a bandolier. Nothing more; no drill, no bother, no responsibility, only a claim to be regarded as a self-sacrificing patriot. The simple answer to all these pernicious proposals is, that the citizen will best evince his patriotism and his spirit of self-sacrifice (if it is a sacrifice) by giving his personal service in the Regular Army, and not waiting until we are at war to do so, but by doing it now.

With the Regular Army kept up to strength by the enlistment into it in sufficient numbers of the cream of our middle class manhood, and with the Militia provided for both as to numbers and quality by means of the ballot, our position would be as strong as could be desired so far as defence is concerned, always of course premising that our naval preponderance is maintained and that any loss of the command of the sea will be but temporary. That being so, what is the use of having anything more? There is no room for sentiment in the matter. All cant concerning the "Old Constitutional Force," "patriotic self-denial," and so forth must be disregarded, and the military machine relieved of superfluous parts which hinder rather than accelerate its working.

#### PART IV.

*A Discussion as to how far the Population of the Country should assist the Military Forces Reorganised as Advocated in Parts II. and III. in a War of the nature with which this Essay deals.*

If all this be true, if indeed a considerable portion of our military forces is redundant for the purposes of our pacific policy, what then

remains for the people at large to do in the way of furthering the defence of our islands or of the Empire? Well, there is not much. The military experts would say: "Having fixed the size and organisation of your Army, and having satisfied yourself that you have got it, sit down calmly and leave it to do the rest without let or hindrance." The best thing the layman can do is to keep quiet and not hamper the Army by mischievous interference, however well meant. Above all things keep the Press under control. All the indications derived from the manner in which manœuvres and even our small campaigns are reported lead to the apprehension that at such a crisis as an invasion the War Office and the commanders of the forces operating in the field would come in for much irresponsible, hysterical criticism that would go far towards paralysing their action, whilst their plans would be thwarted or deranged by the untimely publication of announcements or conjectures concerning their movements and intentions. No doubt the proclamation of martial law would soon put a stop to all this; but it is doubtful whether any Ministry would consent to this measure in the free and irresponsible Great Britain of to-day.

However, there is one way in which the civil population might prove of great service. As already said, one of the chief requisites of our field force will be extreme mobility, and it is suggested that this mobility could be furthered by organising in every county a sort of auxiliary or second line supply and transport body. It is not intended that it should take the field or even work on the lines of communication, for which the field force itself would provide, but that it should be employed in conveying supplies and stores to such centres as might be indicated by the general commanding in anticipation of their being required there. For example: An invader lands on the Lincolnshire coast, and it is decided to oppose his advance by taking up a position on the Wolds. The heads of the local auxiliary transport in South Lincolnshire, in Leicestershire, and in Nottinghamshire are instructed to at once bring forward to the line Boston-Tattershall-Lincoln-Gainsborough all the tinned meat, flour, groceries, and cattle that they can collect. It is of course impossible to go into details here concerning a hypothetical situation, but the exact place to which supplies should be brought and the quantities would be communicated to each local head. The further work of distributing the supplies and conveying them from these bases to the front would be performed by the Army Service Corps, which, however, would have been saved an immense amount of labour and of wastage in horses and in energy by the civilian auxiliary organisation. To carry out this plan all that is needed is:—

1. The registering during peace time of the names of persons possessing carts, traction engines with trailers, or motor cars, willing to act as carriers.
2. The appointing of a recognised head in each locality, if possible a retired officer of the Army, to whom all orders on the subject of the furnishing and forwarding of supplies would be directed.
3. The registering of the names of all business firms, farmers, millers, etc., willing to furnish supplies, and of the maximum quantities that could be furnished in each case on a sudden call.

4. In districts where the railways would probably prove useful for forwarding these locally-collected supplies, the registering of names of men willing to act as an auxiliary railway *personnel* for the loading and unloading of trucks.
5. The registering of suitable buildings in the various towns which could be hired as stores for supplies thus collected.

Here is an opening for the 150,000 odd Volunteers with whom it is proposed to dispense to show their patriotism. There is already in existence a corps bearing the title of the Engineer and Volunteer Railway Staff Corps, boasting of an imposing list of lieut.-colonels and majors who no doubt would be glad to have some subordinates to deal with. In this simple manner outside help could be effectively offered to the field force in the only manner in which it is likely to need assistance.

There seems to be no necessity for organising an auxiliary intelligence organisation from among the civil population, that important branch of the Army having recently undergone sufficient development. This does not of course refer to the occasional hiring of civilians for the carrying out of some specific object, such as of the master of a fishing-boat to look out for hostile war-ships on some particular stretch of water. or of a postmaster or constable to report the number of the enemy's troops passing through a certain village or town. But outside these minor services the department is ample for the work it would have to perform, and the more self-contained the Army is and the more it is allowed to carry out its various functions without extraneous assistance the better.

One other useful task could be entrusted to the civil population: Should this country be invaded, it cannot be gainsaid that a very great rise in the price of food stuffs would immediately take place, whilst on the other hand the dislocation of our trade and industries will throw many men out of work. The result will be much distress and discontent just at a time when least desirable, and when the armed forces of the country will not be available for the suppression of any disorder. The knowledge of this might encourage the mob in some of our large cities to rise and to coerce the Government into making terms with the invader with a view to the restoration of their cheap loaf. In order to anticipate such a possibility, an adequate number of citizens of standing should be enrolled as special constables, and properly organised. It is a question whether a signalling organisation might not usefully be established in connection with our seaports, coast towns, and adjoining districts. If each town or townlet had its permanent squad of signallers trained in military methods of signalling and accustomed to working from previously selected stations, useful information concerning an invader's movements, from the moment his ships hove in sight until the field force came into touch with him and assumed its functions, could be passed along, and his place of disembarkation reported to the local Volunteers and other troops in the sections more promptly than by any other means. The Coastguard would of course be on the look-out for hostile ships; but that body has no ready means of communicating with the military authorities, and it is therefore desirable that the latter should possess their own independent organisation for looking out for the enemy and reporting his movements. It would be the duty of the Volunteers



during their training to make themselves acquainted with the positions of the various signal stations within their district, whilst directly war was declared, or was even imminent, the signallers would be expected to man these stations and to be ready to transmit all information obtained. Plenty of young men in our small towns and villages could find both time and opportunity for learning military signalling, and the larger the number in the vicinity of each post the lighter the demands upon each individual, since the larger would be the number of reliefs that could be formed.

With this the modest tale of the help to be demanded from the general population seems to be exhausted. No doubt a more heroic or showy part would be to the taste of many in this country of busy and self-confident amateurs, who are ready to assume with a light heart the command of armies, the control of fleets, or the management of a railway system or other gigantic undertaking; but hitherto no institution has suffered more from the curse of amateurism than the Army, and only now is the nation awakening to the fact that militarism is an art in itself like everything else, not even excepting the digging of a potato plot.

We are given over to admiration of the Japanese military system, past and present. We would therefore do well to bear in mind one of their proverbs, viz.: "A smattering of military tactics is the cause of a great defeat." However enthusiastic and well-intentioned civilian assistance may be, it should not be required by, and can scarcely be of value to, a properly organised and well-trained Army. The nation can best help the Army by offering it its confidence and its sympathy, by taking it seriously, and by emancipating it from the baneful influence of time-serving politicians, who make it the plaything of their hobbies and their ambitions. At present the man in the street cold-shoulders the Army and affects to despise it, forgetful of the fact that if it is not all that it should be, he alone is to blame. He dare not treat the Navy thus, for he feels, or believes, that he depends upon it for his safety. Now that the idea of the welding together of the Navy and the Army and of their close co-operation is to the front he will have to become convinced of the almost equal importance of the land service, and to alter his attitude towards it. That done, he need have no apprehension as regards the future. A little real patriotism on his part and a little real self-sacrifice, not so much in gold (although even that is grudged now) as in flesh and blood, will give Great Britain as adequate and efficient an Army as she can desire, and will render the latter as popular with the flower of the youth of all classes as it is now the reverse.

It seems necessary before concluding to reiterate emphatically that the writer of these pages has strictly confined himself to the making of proposals which he deems adequate to meet the situation with which this essay has to deal, viz., a war with one or more *Naval Powers*, and that they are in no way supposed to be sufficient for the far greater and more serious task of defending our possessions against those military Powers who bid fair to become our opponents in the near future. Few people in England seem to realise that we have in Asia and in North America extensive land frontiers coterminous with those of two Powers who both have the best of reasons for wishing to humble us and to wrest from us our possessions. In Asia, it is true, we at present pin our faith upon a buffer State and upon Russia's

supposed disablement; but the most superficial acquaintance with the world's history should convince us that buffer States are a delusion, and that they must sooner or later be absorbed by one or other of their mighty neighbours, whilst there are good reasons for believing that Russia is stronger now on the frontier of Afghanistan than she has ever been before. As for the United States, it would indeed be blindness not to recognise that her militarism is steadily growing, that she begins to feel her destiny, and that she is already casting greedy eyes upon her weaker neighbour—Canada.

If the United States decide to adopt a system of universal compulsory military service, in respect of the defence of our possessions in North America, to what a state of impotence will our Army be at once reduced? And in the face of the present state of public opinion in America, to say that there is no prospect of her doing so is merely to close one's eyes to possibilities. If, then, we recognise our obligation to defend India, and to protect Canada, we must be prepared to act with something more than a mere handful of troops, backed up by a few hundreds of thousands of ill-trained auxiliaries, to convey whom to the scene of war would be to paralyse much of the trade and industry of the Kingdom. We have not a big enough available Army at present to make even a battle such as the war recently raging has accustomed us to. And yet one of the combatants, Japan, has a population of only one million more than that of the United Kingdom, and has no colonies upon which to call for assistance.