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The best national system
for providing the necessary
military force

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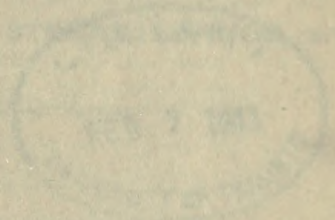


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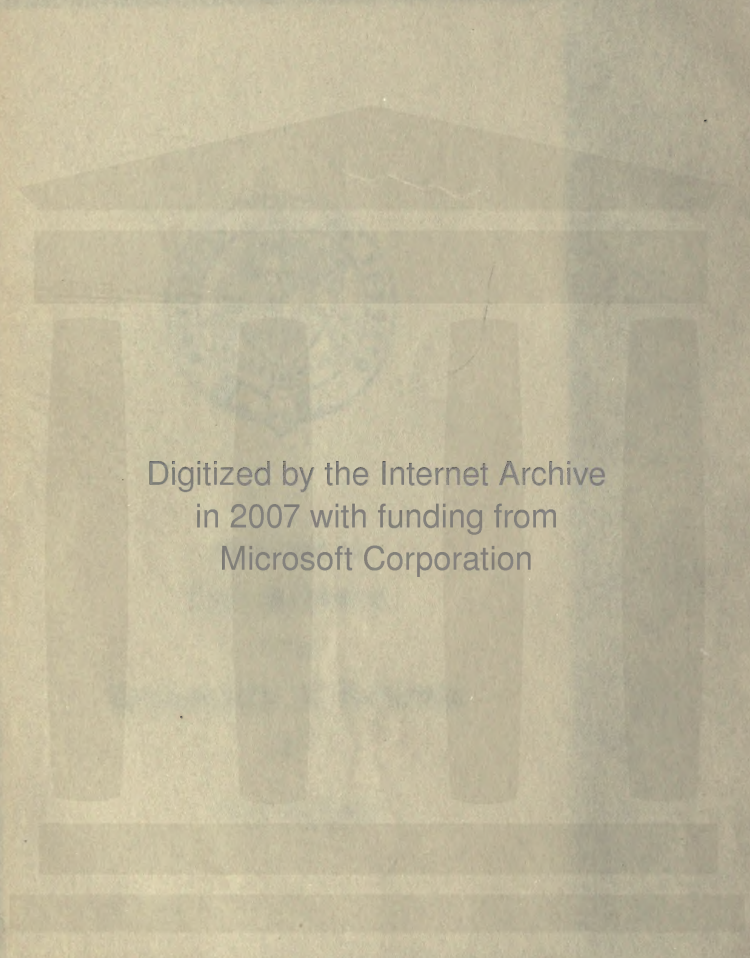
MILITARY ESSAY, 1911.

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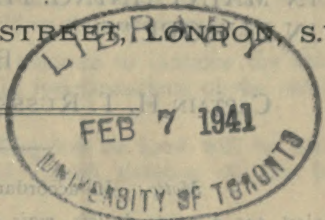
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THE

NATIONAL SERVICE LEAGUE

President: **FIELD-MARSHAL EARL ROBERTS, V.C., K.G.**

Head Office: 72 VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, S.W.



MILITARY ESSAY, 1911.

H. T. Russell

The best national system for providing the best military force

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THE JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL UNITED SERVICE INSTITUTION.

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Subject:—

“THE BEST NATIONAL SYSTEM FOR PROVIDING THE NECESSARY MILITARY FORCE: (I) TO SECURE THE SAFETY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM ON LAND; (II) TO SUPPORT THE DEFENCE OF THE EMPIRE; (III) TO ASSIST IN MAINTAINING THE BALANCE OF POWER IN EUROPE.”

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647
R8

By

CAPTAIN H. T. RUSSELL, R.A. (retired pay).

Motto:—In accordance with rule (6):—

“Ce n'est pas à coups de lois, mais par le fer et par le sang, que se crée une Armée.”

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PART III.—Strategical conditions affecting the employment of our Forces.—“Peculiarities” not truly “peculiar”	29
PART IV of the essay contains the Military System suggested by the author. This occupies some 36 pages of highly technical matter. Although based on Universal Compulsory Service, the author's scheme differs widely, both as regards length of service and number of men retained with the colours, from that of the National Service League, which aims at improving and perpetuating the Territorial System introduced by Lord Haldane. From considerations of space, and to avoid confusion of thought, <u>Part IV is therefore omitted from the present reprint.</u>	

omitted

INTRODUCTION.

A National Military System provides both land forces and sea forces, whose rôle in war is complementary.

In any attempt to suggest even the outlines of a Military System which shall be suited to the United Kingdom, this complementary rôle must be borne in mind when treating of the recruiting, maintenance, or organization, of either class of force.

It will be convenient in the first instance to examine the terms of our reference, and to adopt certain interpretations of the sub-heads thereof. Accordingly:—

- (1) *The safety of the United Kingdom on land* will be taken as equivalent to the territorial (land) defence of the British Islands.
- (2) *Support of the defence of the Empire* will be taken as including all military action, beyond the confines of Europe, undertaken by forces recruited within the United Kingdom in defence of our overseas possessions, in co-operation with any local forces available.
- (3) *Assistance in maintaining the Balance of Power in Europe* will be taken as including all military action, within the limits of Europe, undertaken by forces recruited within the United Kingdom, in co-operation with the forces of an allied nation.

The necessity for these special interpretations with regard to co-operative action in paragraphs (2) and (3) arises out of the use of the words "support" and "assistance" respectively.

The factors which decide the potential military strength of a State are threefold, viz. :—

- (1) Natural or physical ; (2) moral or intellectual ; and (3) technical or artificial.

NATURAL OR PHYSICAL FACTORS ARE :—Geographical situation, area, climate, topography, fertility, nature and extent of frontiers, possession of Dependencies of economic or strategic value, the distances of such Dependencies from each other and from the Motherland and from the organized territories of possible enemies.

MORAL OR INTELLECTUAL FACTORS ARE :—Virility of race, homogeneity of population, religion, culture, stability of the national temperament, and special politico-military genius.

TECHNICAL OR ARTIFICIAL FACTORS ARE :—Aggregate resources and wealth, aggregate population (as determining the numerical limitations to armed forces), the statistical distribution of wealth and population, political and fiscal organization, internal and external communications, sea-commerce and sea-power and the ratio between them, perfection of armaments in the technical sense, perfection of the Military System, and the advancement of military education.

The Military System, then, is only one of many factors, but it is all-important, since it is one of the few factors concerning which it may be claimed that a high degree of excellence may outweigh deficiencies and disadvantages under other heads.

It is, moreover, a comparatively elastic factor. The majority of the remaining factors are either fixed, or at most can be varied only through slow evolutionary processes. A Military System can be varied comparatively rapidly, and will exhibit the results of variation in a comparatively brief period.

The Military System of a State should be framed in accordance with the burden of responsibilities undertaken by that State. In practice, however, it is framed rather in accordance with the politico-military genius of the people, who may or may not realise the full extent of their responsibilities.

The *raison d'être* of a Military System is to provide military forces sufficient in numbers and quality, and to organize both *personnel* and *matériel*, to meet possible military requirements.

In all cases the *ultimate* (or capital) military requirements are twofold, viz. :—

- (1) The conquest by invasion of a national enemy, this being the only effective form of conquest, and the shortest road to relief from his hostile enterprises.
- (2) The defeat of an attempt at conquest by invasion, undertaken by a national enemy against the Motherland.

There may be numerous and important *secondary* requirements. Such are Colonial and "savage" warfare, the policing of distant possessions, retention of these possessions, and support of the Civil Power.

These secondary requirements must never be permitted to mould the Military System in a shape unfitting it to cope with the primary requirements, nor must they be allowed to bulk too largely in popular estimation.

The essence of a Military System is the *man-problem*. The index of its efficiency is the ratio "*man-power to responsibilities*." In the absence of a sufficient *number of men* no skill in organization, no knowledge of the art of war, no energy in training, no technical perfection of armament, no belated popular enthusiasm, can avail.

Weight of numbers, when that weight can be applied at the decisive point, in the decisive direction, at the decisive moment, in obedience to a decisive will-power, spells decisive success in all war, by land or sea.

The "best" Military System is that which renders the ratio "*man-power to responsibilities*" a maximum, by providing the maximum

number of men, and impressing upon them an organization and training and an equipment which ensure personal proficiency and mobility in the highest attainable degree.

The supreme importance of numbers arises out of the creation of Nations-in-arms, a creation brought about by evolutionary processes as inevitable as all similar processes in the field of human activity. The advent of the Nation-in-arms, a cumbrous affair in truth from the standpoint of war strategy, has profoundly modified the outlook of the human race upon war in general, has changed the character of warfare between civilized nations, and has drastically affected strategical procedure.

The more widely-diffused the knowledge of war conditions the less the anxiety of the ordinary individual to expose himself to their perils. This tendency, very far from promising any hope of the *abolition of war*, serves merely to place a premium upon virility of race, toughness of national fibre, and steadfastness of national purpose.

There are five possible methods of recruiting military forces, five possible bases for a Military System. These are :—

- (1) Universal and legally-compulsory liability to military service for all able-bodied male nationals.
- (2) Universal and legally-compulsory liability to conscription for all able-bodied male nationals.
- (3) Legal compulsion applied to a limited category of able-bodied male nationals.
- (4) Voluntary engagement for hire of male nationals.
- (5) Engagement, which must needs be voluntary, of male aliens.

Or, some permutation or combination of the above.

A *personnel* having been obtained by one or other of these means, there are two possible systems of maintenance during the period of training and service in the Active Forces. These are :—

- (1) Continuous training and service.
- (2) Intermittent training and nominally continuous "service."

In a force or army maintained upon system No. (1), training proceeds systematically, uninterrupted, and intensively throughout the entire period of colour-service. In system No. (2), sometimes alluded to as the "Militia System," or the "compulsory-training" System, the *personnel* is subjected to a brief initial period of intensive training and is then dismissed, to re-assemble at stated periods for further instruction, until passed to a Reserve formation.

These several principles will first be discussed in general terms, with a view to elucidating their inherent merits and defects, and

selecting those principles found "best" in the experience of the great military Powers.

The strategical situation of the United Kingdom, and the strategical conditions affecting the employment of its forces, will next be reviewed. An attempt will be made to demonstrate that, whilst this situation and these conditions are in some respects peculiar, the admitted peculiarities are not of a nature to justify the installation of a Military System *less* efficient than those adopted by the Great Powers.

Finally, an outline will be given of a Military System which in the writer's opinion is both satisfactory and imperatively necessary. Only an outline can be given within the limits of an essay, and political complexities, with which a military officer has no direct concern, will perforce be neglected.

PART I.

THE SEVERAL POSSIBLE BASES OF THE MILITARY SYSTEM.

In a system based upon Universal Compulsory Service, as many recruits as may be required are selected by a process of examination from amongst those males who attain a prescribed *military age* in any year, and subjected to intensive training under discipline in the active units of the fleet and army. This period of training is usually reduced to the minimum adjudged sufficient to ensure solidity and *moral*.

This colour-service completed, either in a single period of continuous service, or in intermittent periods (under the Militia principle), the trained man passes to a First Reserve, remaining liable to recall during a fixed period, or until attaining a specified age, being then free to pursue his civil avocation subject only to brief periodical attendances at military training or exercises, or for mere review.

On completion of his service in First Reserve, the trained man is relegated to a Second Reserve, in which his liability to recall is diminished, as also are the demands made upon him for periodical attendance.

Subsequent periods may be served in further Reserve formations, the liability to recall and the periodical attendances being gradually diminished to extinction.

The higher formations of the Reserve constitute drafting reservoirs of trained men for existing units of the active army or fleet, swelling peace establishments to war strength on mobilization, and replacing the wastage of war. They may also be organized with a view to the expansion of the field army, supplying fresh units whose *cadres* only are maintained during peace.

The lower Reserve elements are usually intended to provide units of the Second Line, available in emergency for auxiliary services in

exterior or offensive wars, but normally relied upon only for those of secondary importance.

The ultimate Reserve elements are frequently restricted by their legal constitution to territorial defence.

In addition, most States reserve a common-law right of summoning for territorial defence the entire male population capable of bearing arms, but not inscribed in the rolls of any organized formation. With this intention, nominal legal liability to service is fixed at an age less by several years than that at which the active army or navy recruit is normally incorporated, whilst the legal maximum age of liability exceeds that at which service in organized formations ceases.

In certain cases, where the aggregate Peace Establishment is legally limited (as for instance is the case in Germany but not in France) the Recruit Contingent annually available furnishes a quota in excess of that required to maintain the prescribed establishments. The surplus recruits are then subjected, as supernumeraries, to a brief modified training, and passed direct to some form of Supplemental Reserve, whence they pass in due course to one or other of the lower Reserve formations.

By adjustment of the physical and other standards, the quota annually incorporated can be made to bear any desired proportion to the available annual contingent, and therefore to the aggregate population. In Germany the standard proportion is, in the latter instance, *one per cent.*

Voluntary engagements are, of course, not only permitted but encouraged, as also are re-engagements and extensions of service, these latter providing a most desirable professional leaven in forces necessarily composed for the greater part of young and short-service *personnel.*

Exemptions or postponements of incorporation are usually provided for, to meet cases of individual hardship, unfitness, or grave social disability. Those definitely excused from service are ordinarily required to pay a small military tax.

The attainment of a specified educational standard is accepted as evidence of a superior mentality, entitling an individual to periods of colour-service briefer than the normal, or performed under more favourable conditions. Such youths are encouraged to qualify themselves professionally as Officers of Reserve. It is usual for them to defray themselves the costs of their service, and they are regarded as supernumerary to Establishment.

Any quota required for naval forces is selected from the common recruit contingent, so far as may be by personal choice, regard being had to sea-experience and civil occupation.

The outstanding military feature is, therefore, a large active army, backed by numerous Reserve formations mainly composed of fully-trained men.

It is the existence of these great Reserves which swells the nominal war-strength of the Nation-in-arms to an awe-inspiring total. Undue importance, however, must not be attached to a mere aggregate figure. Indeed, the title "Nation-in-arms" is in some respects unfortunate, since it produces erroneous impressions in the lay mind. No Nation-in-arms could ever apply the total of its nominal resources in any one war. Every Nation-in-arms would acknowledge defeat long before its nominal resources were exhausted.

The truth is that the demands of modern warfare are of a nature that compels a rigorous writing-down of the military value of all lower Reserve formations. This is especially the case for all purposes of exterior or offensive war. Apart from the question of the personal proficiency of reservists long absent from active units, it is a practical impossibility to equip, staff, and provide officers for the vast numbers which would answer a general call to arms. It is improbable in the extreme that any modern State would make such a call.

One thing at least is certain, no State relies upon its lower Reserve elements to supply deficiencies in the Active Army, to replace the latter, or to retrieve the situation should the Active Army be crushed.

In short, it may fairly be averred that the prime strength of the so-called Nation-in-arms lies in its powerful and mobile Active Army, and in those higher reserve formations expressly organized beforehand for its support and expansion. Passing beyond that, we enter at once into a domain of improvization and comparative inefficiency. In no country is the organization of lower Reserve formations complete.

The realizable advantages of the system are as follows:—The military forces are identified with the nation, and the roots of the Military System penetrate all social strata. General military knowledge is widely-diffused. Hence the less the probability of serious errors in military policy or political strategy being precipitated by an ill-informed public opinion. The moral fibre of the nation is strengthened by the measure of self-sacrifice involved, and a sense of public and national duty is inculcated.

Legislation affecting the military services is handled by legislators who approach their tasks with some personal knowledge of military requirements, and an instinctive willingness to accept expert opinion.

The burden of service is justly distributed on sound democratic principles, and the growth of the military services keeps pace with the growth of population and development of resources. The ratio "man-power to responsibilities" is maintained at practically a constant

quantity, or it can be increased at will. This highly desirable end is attained by a simple, unvarying, and well-understood procedure.

The necessary legal machinery is controlled by the Civil and Statistical branches of the Executive Government, which free the Military Directorate from the anxieties and doubts attendant upon all other recruiting systems, leaving it at liberty to devote its energies to problems of organization, strategy, preparation, and war-training.

Since only the best *personnel* is selected, wastage from disease and inefficiency is reduced to a minimum. All accepted recruits are capable of undergoing a strenuous military education, and of supporting military fatigue.

The average standard of intelligence must needs be high, where all social strata are represented, and *moral* (prime mover of military forces) is readily cultivated.

The Officers' Corps, especially, must include at least an average amount of brains of conspicuous ability, resulting in a truly intellectual Staff, and a high standard of professional skill.

Unity of strategical and tactical doctrine, so essential to uniformity of training, and therefore to all concerted action, is easily ensured.

The Administrative Branches of the Services deal with known or readily-ascertainable quantities. All problems of organization are therefore simplified.

The General Staff is free to develop its strategical preparations, assured that the Administrative Branches can and will direct their organization in accordance with General Staff requirements.

The General Staff, in fine, will be placed in its proper position of pre-eminence, unhampered by the fatalistic *non-possumus* attitude of the Administrative Departments, characteristic, for example, of the voluntary system. It will operate in close concert with the statesmen responsible for the national exterior policy.

During the course of a war, the units of the First Line are constantly maintained at full strength by drafts of fully-trained officers and men. Numerous fully-trained Reserve formations are available for duty upon the lines of communication of a field army, for sieges, investments, and forces of occupation. The full power of the active First Line, composed exclusively of young, vigorous, well-developed, and well-drilled men, is set free for the more exacting tasks of field warfare.

The Reserve formations, too, include a sufficiency of highly-trained technical troops, maintained in constant efficiency at practically no cost to the State, by reason of their civil employment being cognate to their military duties.

The system is relatively cheap, since rates of pay are permissibly low, whilst pensions and non-effective charges, as well as "inducements," are reduced to a minimum.

Public and professional attention is focussed upon the efficiency of the active forces, and upon the organization for its support and expansion. Neither money nor brain-power is wasted in directions which do not bear towards these ends.

The maximum numerical strength of *personnel* is rendered strategically mobile, that is, available for prompt application in any theatre, without the necessity of tedious eleventh-hour re-engagements and re-organizations.

Wielding an instrument thus perfected, the heads of the State are enabled to shape and guide the national political strategy to the best advantage, to seize opportunities, to adopt positive policies, and to view the possibility of resistance with comparative equanimity.

The social advantages are well-defined and indeed unmistakable. A high proportion of the total male population is passed in review and subjected to healthy discipline at an age when the character is still plastic, with beneficial results in every walk of life. Education, especially, is powerfully affected.

Such are the advantages. It is less easy to ascertain the disadvantages. No well-founded arguments against Universal Service, in its social or economic aspects can be advanced. It is not within the scope of this Essay to refute those arguments that are advanced. Paradoxical as it may seem, it is probable that the genuine disadvantages are rather military than either social or economic. Isolated instances of abuses, so greedily seized upon by anti-militarist propagandists, are not in themselves evidence of the unsoundness of the system. Rather are they characteristic of the tendencies in general of the countries affected, tendencies which would persist in the absence of any military system whatsoever.

From the purely military standpoint, however, most soldiers will regret the existence of vast armies. Great and cumbrous forces cannot be moved in the game of war like the smaller armies of past epochs. This fact renders leadership an arduous business rather than a matter of zeal and inspiration, war is robbed of many of its "attractive" elements. Battle-losses represent not so much the expenditure of *Kanonen-futter* as the loss of valuable brains and muscle.

Nevertheless, none but a Nation-in-arms can hope to contend in warfare against a rival Nation-in-arms.

The principle of Universal Compulsion has been accepted by all States except Great Britain, the United States of America, Spain,

the Netherlands, Belgium, China, and certain minor South American Republics.

In the case of the United States of America, geographical remoteness from the territories of organized military Powers has hitherto condoned the evasion. In each of the other cases retention of alternative systems must be ascribed either to financial embarrassment, or to some peculiarity in the politico-military genius of the people, indulgence in the peculiarity being rendered possible by the mutual jealousies of rivals, by toleration, or by sheer good luck. It is significant, too, that few of the Powers mentioned as exceptions to the general rule bear serious responsibilities, or are in a position to adopt positive exterior policies which might involve a conflict of interests.

Indeed, it is probably true to state that at the present day none but a Nation-in-arms dare adopt a positive exterior policy, and the day is at hand when none but a group of such Powers can do so.

Not all the States, however, are enabled to give full logical effect to the principle. There are numerous variations in scope, in organization, and in procedure. In the case of France, for instance, exemptions are rigorously cut down. In Germany and in Russia they are freely accorded.

Austria-Hungary recruits *ad hoc* for her twin Landwehrs, which are really imperfectly-organised National Armies, rather detracting from the efficiency of the "Common Army." This condition arises from the peculiar political links which bind the component portions of the Dual Monarchy, and cannot be defended on purely military grounds.

Opinions differ also as to the desirable minimum period of colour-service, shorter terms making for greater numerical strength of Reserve formations. There is, however, a practical consensus in favour of three years for mounted, two years for dismounted branches. Any shorter periods are adopted with reluctance.

To exemplify the working of the system, the statistics of the German Contingent for 1909 will be quoted.

German Recruiting Statistics for 1909.

1. Approximate total *male* population 31,080,000
2. Authorized Peace Establishments :—
 - (i) Active Army 590,325 N.C.O.'s and men.
 - (ii) Navy 33,500 P.O.'s and men.
3. Proportion of Combined Active Forces to population93 per cent

Exact details are not procurable by the writer, but probably the Active Army received about 200,000 carefully-selected recruits.

Switzerland maintains only a Militia army, her Recruiting Statistics for the year 1910 were as follows:—

1. Recruits examined	...	...	...	...	33,316
2. Rejected as medically unfit, &c.	...	...	...	...	2,461
3. Accepted as fit for auxiliary services only	...	...	...	...	5,969
4. Granted adjournments for various reasons	...	...	...	...	3,784
5. Actually incorporated in the Active Forces	...	...	...	...	21,102
or 63.3 per cent. of the Contingent.					

The high proportion of incorporations must be ascribed to several causes (1) elimination of the palpably unfit during the preliminary training, previous to appearance before the Revision Board; (2) general absence of desire to evade military service; (3) the fact that few exemptions are granted, save for physical disability.

The Swiss Army probably represents the most perfected application of the Militia principle extant; nevertheless it is recognised that Swiss troops would labour under serious disadvantages if opposed to fully-trained forces, and constant demands are made for the extension of the periods of training.

The Conscriptive System.

The distinctive feature of a *Conscriptive System* is the annual selection of a fixed Recruit Quota, by some form of lot-casting, from amongst the *personnel* of the Annual Contingent.

Total exemption, or postponement, may or may not be purchasable, whilst the service of a (paid) substitute may or may not be accepted in lieu of personal service.

In principle, as in general outline, the organization of the forces thus recruited, the periods of colour and Reserve service, &c., resemble those obtaining under the typical Universal system. The military advantages, however, are neither so complete nor so well-defined. The military forces are not completely identified with the nation, and they must contain a proportion of "undesirables." It is, in fact, in its social and political aspects that Conscription is seen most clearly to be inherently vicious. It is undemocratic, and offers temptations to corruption and abuse. These features may be ignored or tolerated by public opinion during peace. In war the moral defects will assuredly be revealed.

The adoption of this system is defensible only where encumbered finances, or the absence of an active exterior national policy, compel the maintenance of forces greater than those obtainable by voluntary engagement, but less than would be furnished by universal compulsion.

The only States still adhering to Conscription are:—Brazil, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, and Spain. In Spain it is proposed to adopt universal compulsion in the near future. In all these States, except Mexico, the *liability* is universal, and as a general rule voluntary enlistment is relied upon as far as possible. In the Netherlands substitution is not permitted. In Portugal the transition from a conscriptive to a universal system is not yet complete.

Conscription persisted in France until the *débauche* of 1870-71, but must now be regarded by Powers of the first rank as obsolete.

Legal compulsion of a limited category obtains in Mexico and Belgium. In the former case, the principle of Universal Service, recognised by the Law of October 1900, remains a dead letter. In so far as voluntary enlistments fail, compulsion is applied to the lower social *strata*, and to criminals, mainly half-caste or Indian.

In Belgium, by the Law of December 1909, personal service is required of one son per family, without exemption by payment. Belgian military organization, however, is not of a nature to commend itself to a World-Power, and it is commonly held that the Belgian people, absorbed in industrialism, fail to maintain forces commensurate with their population, their resources, or the strategic importance of their territory. In all probability, the present Belgian system is but a makeshift.

The Voluntary System.

Voluntary Enlistment involves in practice reliance upon three different recruiting agencies, viz. :—(i) Enthusiasm for the profession of arms, (ii) pecuniary inducements, and (iii) compulsion by destitution.

If it were feasible to obtain sufficient recruits of the desired age and maturity, through the first of these agencies, no country would need to consider any other basis of recruiting.

This, however, can only be accomplished if the total forces required bear an exiguous proportion to the total population. Extremely few men enlist, in any country, from motives of pure zeal, and the two latter agencies are by far the most important. Any waves of popular enthusiasm which may set in when a "popular" war is imminent, or has actually commenced, arrive too late to possess a military value.

Most aristocracies can be relied upon to furnish a respectable quota of enthusiasts for the commissioned ranks. In some countries, and particularly in Great Britain, the lower social orders furnish a quota which is surprisingly large in view of their normal conditions of existence, which scarcely make for patriotic enthusiasm. Not only is the British volunteer quota surprisingly large, it is also surprisingly *constant*, though it is difficult to ascertain why this should be so.

The permissible total of the Military Budget being a fixed quantity in the eyes of a Popular Assembly, the money for the maintenance of these inefficient Second Line formations must needs be found at the expense of the professional army.

If an additional word of condemnation be necessary, it remains to indicate that these Second Line formations must be recruited *ad hoc*, in competition with the recruiting for the professional forces, and in defiance of all common sense.

Terms of colour service in a voluntarily-recruited professional army, however, are necessarily long. Some military advantages accrue from this fact, but they are offset by the difficulty experienced in building up proportionate Reserve formations, and by necessary deductions in respect of the considerable periods during which the recruited *personnel* is immature.

It is interesting to note how voluntary recruiting is, in the United Kingdom, affected by the political and economic conditions of the several component territorial areas. Some statistics will be given :—

**Total Population, Number of Paupers, and Number of Regular Soldiers.
January, 1910.**

	Approx. Total Population	Number of Paupers	Number of Serving Regular Soldiers born in each country
England.. .. .	31,500,000	885,785	183,702
Wales	2,000,000	57,052	3,240
Scotland	4,750,000	113,259	18,530
Ireland	4,500,000	102,219	22,955

Proportion of Paupers to Total Population.

England	1 pauper in each	35 of population.
Wales	" "	35 "
Scotland	" "	42 "
Ireland	" "	44 "

Proportion of Serving Regular Soldiers to Total Population.

England	1 soldier in each	171 of population.
Ireland	" "	190 "
Scotland	" "	256 "
Wales	" "	617 "

The general inference that we fail to turn to account the potential man-power of both Wales and Scotland is irresistible.

On the other hand, the conspicuous aptitude of Englishmen and Irishmen for military service is apparent.

The outstanding features, then, of a military system based upon voluntary enlistment, are :—

- (1) A comparatively long-service professional army, numerically small, and necessarily including a high proportion of immature *personnel*.
- (2) Relatively few trained Reserves (if any).*
- (3) Absence of any certainty as regards the yield of the recruiting agencies.
- (4) Impossibility of intensive training.
- (5) Compulsory acceptance of many recruits who, under either a Universal or a Conscriptive system, would be classed as unfit.
- (6) Withdrawal of the flower of the national manhood from the ken of the recruiting agent.
- (7) Social and political dangers attendant upon estrangement of the military services from the nation at large.
- (8) Consequent necessity for the maintenance of inefficient Second Line formations.
- (9) Dependence of recruiting upon racial idiosyncrasies, economic conditions, and political habits of thought.
- (10) Inordinate and ever-increasing costliness.
- (11) Popular ignorance of military affairs.
- (12) Neglect of the ratio "man-power to responsibilities."

It must always be remembered that a voluntary-service army is of necessity a *small* army. The day of small armies is past, nor can the balance be redressed by the individual proficiency or perfected technical equipment of small numbers.

The conditions under which adoption of the voluntary principle appear defensible appear to be as follows :—

- (1) The State must include a comparatively large population, for the percentage of enlistments will be small.
- (2) The State must be comparatively wealthy, for the cost will inevitably be high *per* military unit.
- (3) The State must be in the fortunate position, geographical or political, of fearing no sudden aggression.
- (4) The State must anticipate no necessity for offensive military action on a large scale.
- (5) The State must pursue no active exterior policy.
- (6) The National responsibilities must be few and centralised.

* There are no Reserves in the case of the Army of the United States.

secondary importance, involving no capital risks. Many of these calls will be of a nature, and the requisite military action will be undertaken under climatic conditions, which demand experience and maturity of *personnel* rather than great numerical strength.

For the execution of such tasks nothing can be more suitable than a professional voluntarily-enlisted army or force. This conclusion is supported by consideration of economy in regard to periodical reliefs, drafts, and necessary changes of station.

The Colonial Army of France furnishes an example of what it is intended to convey. France maintains oversea Colonial garrisons and forces of occupation comprising some 15,000 Europeans, besides maintaining within the Motherland a Colonial Expeditionary Army, recruited by voluntary engagement, or by voluntary transfer from the Home Metropolitan Army, for their support and expansion.

There is clearly much to be said in favour of the principle, even if certain defects are to be noted in its application in the particular case of France.

The *Mercenary System* really needs no discussion, since it is obvious that under modern conditions there is no market in which the requisite *personnel* could be obtained. Some may not, however, recall the fact that we ourselves employed mercenary troops as recently as the Crimean War.

So far as the two systems of maintenance are concerned, it is clear that continuous colour-service must make for solidity and homogeneity, and must favour the cultivation of *moral*.

Intermittent training, on the other hand, favours none of these military qualities. The "Militia Principle" is adhered to by the Argentine Republic, Chile, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, and by ourselves so far as touches the so-called Special Reserve units. The Militia of the United States of America may also be mentioned.

In many of these countries the principle is distrusted, in some efforts are being made to secure its removal, and the substitution of continuous service. Some consider it still sufficient for the strictly defensive strategical policies adopted. All recognise that such forces are incapable of undertaking offensive war or of coping with the organized troops of their powerful neighbours.

The great majority of the advocates of "Militia" training, or "Compulsory Training" base their arguments upon an easily demonstrable fallacy, to wit, upon the assumption that territorial defence can be assured by forces less highly trained, or less trained,

than those charged with offensive action. Indeed, this fallacy itself contains yet another, *i.e.*, that mere defensive action can of itself be successful.

Such a system of maintenance is weakest when operating in conjunction with voluntary enlistment, for it obviously is not strengthened by association with a principle even weaker than itself. The fact is that, at the present day, a militia force, voluntarily recruited, can appeal only to the less valuable, the least desirable, the least stable, of the population, who may regard its periodical paid trainings as a welcome addition to other sources of State relief, but who assuredly join such forces with little idea of rendering military service commensurate with the expenditure their training involves.

There is, then, little or nothing to commend the "Militia Principle" to a Power of the first rank, weighted with heavy and distant responsibilities.

PART II.

THE STRATEGICAL SITUATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

No precise parallel to the strategical situation of the United Kingdom can be cited, nor does the situation to-day bear more than a remote resemblance to the conditions prevailing in times past. Little, then, can be gleaned from historical precedents.

The British Islands, composing the United Kingdom, include an area (over and above the Channel Islands) of 121,316 square miles, a population of roughly 45,000,000, and lie at the north-western angle of the European Continent, in a position peculiarly advantageous as regards climate and propinquity to principal trade routes, besides offering ready access for military forces to the important strategic points of Western Europe.

The population is far from being homogeneous, English (34,000,000), Welsh (2,000,000), Scotch (4,750,000), and Irish (4,500,000), presenting widely-different racial and social characteristics. Institutions, however, are generally similar, and there exists (at present) a common political organization. Each race possesses undeniable military qualities, which under the established military system are unsatisfactorily and unevenly utilized. Wealth, in proportion to area and population, is great, the annual revenue approximating to £180,000,000. Internal communications of all sorts are highly developed. Every condition favours sea-commerce and the development of sea-power. Wealth, however, depends increasingly upon importation of raw materials, and export of manufactured articles.

Far from being self-supporting, the major portion of food supplies is water-borne from distant centres of production.

Oversea possessions comprise vast territories in various stages of development, and include :—

- (1) In Europe, 119 square miles ; population, 232,000.
- (2) In India, 1,773,088 square miles ; population, 295,000,000.
- (3) Other areas in Asia, 153,694 square miles ; population, 7,790,000.
- (4) In Australasia and the Pacific, 3,190,168 square miles ; population, 6,000,000.
- (5) In Africa (excluding Egypt and the Sudan), 2,203,915 square miles ; population, 34,000,000.
- (6) In America and the West Indies, 4,024,910 square miles ; population, 11,500,000.

In Europe, the British Islands lie in close proximity to the highly-organized territories of the most important military Powers.

In Asia and in America great Dependencies or Dominions lie in close proximity to Powers which, if politically energized, may rapidly become formidable military Powers.

In Africa (except Egypt), and in Australasia, aggression by organized neighbouring Powers is not, perhaps, a contingency of the immediate future. In Egypt and in the Sudan we have definite political and military commitments.

British "responsibilities," therefore, are both enormous and widely-diffused. The British Empire, having probably attained its maximum area, has for its primary political objective the retention, development, and consolidation of its resources.

This is essentially a defensive rather than an offensive policy. In conformity thereto, the national military policy of the United Kingdom is essentially defensive, aiming at (1) the safety of the British Islands, (2) the preservation of the component portions of the Empire, and of their internal order, and (3) preservation of a balance of power outside the British Empire.

When it is considered that British territories march with those of every first-class European Power other than Austria-Hungary, it will be realized that the possible zones of friction from European sources alone are both numerous and serious.

Economic rivalries and political jealousies are, perhaps, the most obvious, but certain ill-defined racial movements also menace the

British Empire in varying degree. Chief amongst these movements appear to be :—

- i. *Pan-Germanism*, involving aspirations towards a Germanic hegemony in Europe.
- ii. *Pan-Islamism*, aiming at an Islamic hegemony in the Middle and Near East, in Northern and portions of Central Africa.
- iii. *Asiatic regeneration*, with "Asia for the Asiatics" as its rallying cry, and Asiatic control of Eastern productive capacity, of Eastern politics, and of the Western Pacific, as its immediate objectives.

These are essentially offensive policies. Germanic aggression threatens to upset the balance of power in Europe, forcing Powers now friendly or neutral into an alliance hostile to our interests, to menace directly our sea supremacy by absorption of maritime minor States, and to confront us with the capital risk of conquest-by-invasion.

Pan-Islamism threatens us with the development upon hostile lines of territories bordering upon our shortest routes to India and the East, with internal troubles in and near our Mahomedan Dependencies, with direct opposition to our occupation of Egypt and the Sudan.

Asiatic regeneration menaces our hold upon India, the Straits Settlements, and Hong-Kong, our maritime interests in the Pacific, and may, in some more distant future, assail both Australia and the western seaboard of Canada.

We have, moreover, to reckon with the magnetic attraction that India must exert upon Russia, the consequences of the rapid Americanization of Central Canada, and the possibility of revolutionary upheavals at home. Such are our responsibilities.

If, for the purpose of meeting these responsibilities, the United Kingdom is compelled to seek exterior assistance, this must take the form of ready-organized, highly organized, and instantly available military co-operation. No other form of assistance need be considered.

So far, however, as European or "serious" warfare is in question, no one of our overseas Dependencies is capable of rendering this assistance, nor is there any prospect of its being forthcoming within the next generation, by which time the crisis will surely have passed, and the Empire will have been either consolidated or dissipated.

Unfortunately, the entire conditions of the overseas Dominions are opposed to the attainment of true military efficiency, which is a growth of highly organized communities. The energies of their comparatively small and scattered populations are absorbed in rapid economic progress. Forms of Government are largely experimental. Constant immigration from many lands involves a heterogeneity of race. Discipline of all kinds is disliked. As yet there is little or nothing to inculcate a sense of military danger. Such dangers as are recognized do not menace the several Dominions in equal degree. As a result, anti-military prejudice is strong. Military organization is usually confined to the provision of land forces sufficient, perhaps, for the maintenance of internal order and for initial resistance to exterior aggression, but relatively inferior in training equipment and skilled leadership. There is little inclination to undertake the huge financial burdens inseparable from any efforts in the direction of attaining sea power.

The military progress recently made by Australia and New Zealand is, of course, considerable; nevertheless, the forces provided, both naval and land forces, can for long possess only a defensive capacity, and cannot be regarded as available for general Imperial purposes, certainly not for action in Europe.

This defensive *rôle* promises, of course, to reduce very materially the gross burden of our Imperial responsibilities, particularly in certain eventualities, and should discourage the systematic strategic approach, which is what Australasia has most to fear at present from the only Power that is in a position to encroach in that quarter.

Ultimately, each and all are dependent upon the direct assistance of forces recruited within the United Kingdom, which alone of all the territories of the Empire is capable of furnishing white manpower in large quantities and in organized strategically-mobile formations.

For all purposes of consolidation and development, as well as for all intercourse with other States, and for all trading with foreign markets, the Empire depends upon free passage by the way of the sea. So vital is this freedom of passage to the United Kingdom that total cessation of its sea-borne commerce would reduce its inhabitants to starvation in from three to four weeks.

We strive for command of the sea, therefore, purely and simply in the first instance as a measure of self-defence.

Sea-mastery, however, is equally essential to all our military operations (save resistance to accomplished invasion), whether these be essentially defensive or essentially offensive. Sea-mastery, in short, cannot in itself be a strategical end. Rather is it the means to all our strategical ends. No one of these ends can be attained

by sea power alone. Indeed, for all purposes of action at great distances from highly-organized naval bases the efficacy of fleets has diminished rather than increased since, for example, the time of Nelson.

The industrial activities of great Continental States, sited deep inland, can be assailed by naval action only in so far as they depend upon sea-borne imports and exports which cannot reach their destinations overland. We cannot regard the sea-borne commerce of our Continental rivals as a prime objective, such as our sea-borne commerce is to them. On the other hand, the Napoleonic conception of a "Continental system," stopping our flows of food supply and raw material at their Continental origins, and refusing admittance to our manufactures at Continental ports of destination, is a weapon more dangerous to us than ever before, and one that calls for only secondary naval action against us.

Such a weapon can be beaten down only by amphibious effort on our part, but in this connection little that is relevant to present conditions can be learned from our previous endeavours in this direction. In our principal wars of the past we did, in truth, recognize the necessity of acting amphibiously, but we were enabled to rely mainly, as regards land power, upon the subsidized armies of our Allies. Our own land effort was never commensurate with either our sea effort, our population, our resources, or our responsibilities. We waged these wars on a system, so far as we were concerned, of strictly limited liability. We have, indeed, no experience of "serious" war, never having been compelled to resist invasion, and never having undertaken invasion save as a numerically-unimportant Ally.

Our historical procedure was successful so far as it went, because money and armaments, which we could freely spare, were at the moment the things chiefly necessary to our Allies, who were sufficiently equipped as regards man-power.

To-day it is *men*, not money or armaments, that our possible Allies lack, and it is man-power that we must contribute if these same Allies are not to be forced into hostile coalitions which they themselves detest.

Formerly, when we were thus content to be sea-strong and land-weak, we were enabled to effect quite considerable results by the application of minor land forces. Our Continental enemy was always harassed by our subsidized Allies, hampered by poverty of land communications, and was unable to cope with us in the open at sea.

In future our Continental Allies cannot hope to withstand the land-shock of the common enemy unaided by us, communications of all sorts are perfected, and the opponent will, like ourselves, act amphibiously with sea power formidable enough to command respect.

It is futile to debate whether an invasion of the British Islands is possible or the reverse, to imagine arbitrary restrictions to the magnitude of a raid, or in any way to foretell the future. The only solid basis of reasoning is, that, given a Nation-in-arms for our opponent, his numerical strength is limited only by the aggregate numbers of his trained troops, which in its turn is limited only by his financial situation and his population. We cannot presume to place limitations upon his use of those numbers.

If we aspire to regulate the balance of European power in a sense favourable to ourselves, it is as an amphibious Nation-in-arms that we must enter the lists. Only by a full employment of our man-power can we hope to do so with chances of success.

It is tolerably certain that loss of one of our oversea Dominions would not of necessity, and in itself, involve the ruin of the British Empire as a whole. But paralysis of the United Kingdom, brought about by failure to preserve the balance of power in Europe, which would result in either (i) actual invasion, or (ii) slow strangulation by the application of a "Continental system," or (iii) such loss of sea power as would render the land forces of the United Kingdom strategically immobile, would assuredly have that effect.

This, then, is our primary strategical objective, an objective which, since the overthrow of Napoleon, has been to us merely an attractive theme for academic discussion. It overshadows all other objectives. In short, the "safety of the United Kingdom on land" cannot be considered as a proposition apart from "maintenance of the balance of power in Europe." The greater includes the less, and the military system which can ensure the latter will *ipso facto* ensure the former. It will also, with reasonable application, ensure "the defence of the Empire." It is needless and unsound to maintain separate military systems, and separate categories of troops, for the three eventualities.

Attempts to do so must result in immobility of man-power, and have so resulted, with the consequence that we can now initiate no political or military enterprise; we are thrown wholly on the defensive, and have lost influence and prestige to an extent which can scarcely fail to invite further aggression.

It is not alone in regard to our dependence upon sea-communications that our strategic situation is peculiar. No other State, faced by the capital necessities of preparing for an offensive war of the first order, or of preparing to resist invasion, would permit itself to contemplate secondary military enterprises.

We, however, owing to the multitude, divergence, and geographical distance of our Imperial responsibilities, which compare very significantly with the concentrated simplicity of the tasks falling to our principal European rival, may find ourselves compelled at any

moment, however inconvenient, to embark upon some savage, Indian, or Colonial campaign of serious proportions. This disadvantageous situation is apparent from the course of recent world-politics. Both by sea and by land we have been obliged to adopt a policy of concentration in and about the United Kingdom. This inevitable concentration has involved certain perils in connection with both the Pan-Islamic and the Asiatic movements, has compelled our virtual withdrawal from the Pacific, and has greatly reduced our strength in the Western Atlantic. To lighten these burdens we have been obliged to enter upon a definite Alliance with the greatest Eastern Power, which has exasperated our European ill-wishers, to seek a *rapprochement* with the United States, with whom we have few common interests other than those of sentiment, and to attempt, apparently in vain, to recover some of our lost influence at Constantinople.

Assuming the highest possible degree of value for these efforts, it is still plain that our military power is wholly insufficient for the pursuit of our primary objective.

It is plain, too, that the deficiency lies in our land forces, which are numerically insignificant, and include an undue proportion of strategically-immobile elements, ear-marked for resistance to invasion, but in point of fact the least fitted of all to cope with that supreme eventuality.

No British Government could, in the present condition of things, permit our so-called Expeditionary Forces to quit our shores in the absence of the fleet. Nor could any Government permit our fleet to embark upon a distant enterprise, should the Expeditionary Forces be likewise employed at the same moment. Nominally provided with two legs to stand upon and progress with, we can never contemplate using more than one at a time.

This condition is rendered possible, and its continuity is assured, by adherence to the principles of voluntary military service, under whose protecting *ægis* all military truth is hidden from the nation.

PART III.

STRATEGICAL CONDITIONS GOVERNING THE EMPLOYMENT OF OUR FORCES.

The strategical situation of the United Kingdom is, as has been mentioned, in many respects peculiar. This peculiarity of situation, however, does not involve corresponding peculiarities so far as the *employment* of our forces is concerned. The contrary is frequently alleged by defenders of our present impossible military system, which is supposed by its impassioned advocates to be especially competent to cope with peculiarities, and to exhibit a most desirable elasticity.

The first true peculiarity arises from the fact that, as an Insular Power, we are dependent upon sea-mastery for all strategic liberty of action. Japan, as the only other first-class Insular Power, is likewise dependent upon sea-mastery, but her military system is that perfected in Germany, and her land forces are organised and trained upon the lines obtaining throughout Continental Europe.

The second peculiarity arises out of the first, viz., that all our great wars, and most of our smaller wars too, must needs be waged amphibiously. But the great Continental States have also realised the potentialities of amphibious war, and practice it assiduously during peace. Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy make a special feature of it, and Italy, at the moment of writing, is engaged upon an amphibious war that may yet become "great."

Fleets, like the cavalry arm, are too expensive not to be used to the uttermost. Indeed, it is probably correct to assume that *all* civilized warfare of the future will be amphibious. We, at any rate, can have no monopoly in it. In short, amphibious warfare has ceased to be a peculiarity.

Again, it is obvious that for extra-territorial warfare, our land forces, proceeding from the United Kingdom, or from any other portion of the Empire, must needs be conveyed to the theatre of operations in ships. Essentially, however, there is no difference between transport by ship and transport by rail. In either case the communications must be safeguarded. In the one case safety is guaranteed by naval forces, in the other by land forces, occasionally by both. Here is no real peculiarity, certainly none which can affect the basis of the military system, which supplies only the man-power transported.

Transport by sea is no longer a mysterious process, nor is it in itself more hazardous than transport by rail. It is, however, more convenient, more elastic, and vastly cheaper, besides lending itself to strategic surprise in a way no other form of transport can do.

So far as regards the character of the opposition we may have to encounter, it is only in purely savage or Colonial campaigns that real peculiarities are evident. Maturity of *personnel* and acquaintance with the characteristic methods of the opponent are here the great *desiderata*, and if voluntarily-enlisted *personnel* is best for this limited purpose, it is solely because this maturity and experience are presumably more readily realized by troops so enlisted.

Moreover, with constantly increasing reliance upon fire-action, the erstwhile characteristic methods of most savages tend to become less marked.

In all other cases, whether we are opposed to a Continental adversary, within or without the limits of Europe, to Turkey in the Middle East, to Russia on the Indian frontier, to Japan or China in the Far East, Western Canada, or Australasia, to the United States on

the shores of the great Lakes, the methods opposed to us will be those of Western Europe, and only the environment will vary.

Varying environment may call for modification in transport, supply, equipment, and alimentation. Strategy may be cramped or its scope enlarged, but there can be no inherent peculiarity calling for special recruiting methods. Contrariwise, each of the eventualities above mentioned would necessitate the employment of land forces far in excess of those which our voluntary system could furnish.

If, then, it be true that a compulsory-service Army would refuse to fight at distances so great from the Motherland, or that national opinion would not tolerate the idea, or that the Army would fight so badly as to contain within itself the germs of defeat, all our pretensions to Empire must go by the board. And not merely our pretensions only, but those of all the great Colonizing Powers besides.

Fortunately there is no reason to suppose that there is any truth whatever in such suggestions, which imply that whereas a compulsory-service *personnel* will depart cheerfully for hostile territory in a train, it will refuse to do so in a steamer.

The fact that we cannot now maintain our title to absolute seamastery, so far from marking a peculiar strategic situation, or involving peculiar methods of employment, merely tends to bring our strategic situation into line with that of rivals over whom we once enjoyed a definite initial advantage, to *eliminate* peculiarities, and to impose upon us the necessity of installing a military system as efficient as their own.

There remains the matter of invasion. The United Kingdom embraces a small area, and its principal strategic points lie of necessity in close proximity to each other and to the coast. This being so, any invasion of the British Islands could and would be decided rapidly, and by a relatively small invading Army, if this were enabled to seize and hold a few of the chief nerve-centres. There are no remote districts in which defending forces could concentrate at leisure.

The smallness of the area, too, favours the co-operation of an invading Army with its fleet, both as regards seizure of inland nerve-centres, and indirect reduction of our sea-power. Our Home naval bases, for example, would be in a parlous condition if invested by land and sea. They would be in nearly as parlous condition if attacked from the sea and isolated from the centres of steel, fuel, and ammunition production by more distant invading forces.

The smallness of the area, too, renders the time-element of peculiar importance as regards defensive action, and as regards such operations of war as the demolition of railroad communications. Such demolitions would be more effective within the United Kingdom than in wider theatres.

Again, any successful invasion must be presumed to isolate considerable areas very soon after its accomplishment, paralysing mobilization, concentration, and concerted action.

Here are true peculiarities, which, however, call for special measures of preparedness, and an elasticity of plans for defence, rather than for a special recruiting basis.

To some extent these invasion conditions resemble those hitherto prevailing upon the western frontiers of Russia, where, but for a different reason, namely, paucity of rearward rail communications, *mobilization for defence* was frankly regarded as impossible, and units were maintained practically at war establishment.

We maintain a considerable Army of Occupation in India, minor forces in certain convenient "half-way-houses" on our principal lines of sea-communication. Many of these elements are *sedentary*, many that are not sedentary are non-mobile for reasons that will be stated.

There is an extreme probability that danger in Europe will synchronize with disturbances in India, or in certain of our Dependencies. This fact alone is sufficient to impress upon us that none of our overseas garrisons can be safely regarded as strategically mobile.

Malta, for example, though a thoroughly bad training ground for mobile troops, is conveniently situated with regard to Egypt, but it would be highly dangerous to rely upon reinforcing our Army of Occupation in Egypt from Malta, because, if Egypt were endangered, Malta would *ipso facto* be endangered also. As a World Power, we are on the defensive, and difficulties occasioned by one rival may afford another rival an opportunity which will assuredly be seized. If this be not at present generally recognised, it very soon will be.

Similarly, South Africa (an incomparable training ground in all save cost of maintenance) is, strategically, an admirable "half-way-house" to India. But in our changed strategic conditions if we are to rely upon reinforcing India from South Africa, we shall be compelled to maintain troops in South Africa for that express purpose, over and above all internal requirements of South Africa itself.

Nor is it safe to trust to the ability of India to spare troops for detachment elsewhere. In the words of a celebrated Irish County Court Judge, we must in future consider every herring as hanging by its own tail. The reservoir whence all exceptional exterior requirements must be drawn is the United Kingdom, and that alone.

In this there is involved the necessity of departure from previously-accepted strategical policy. We no longer occupy a position of peculiar immunity or peculiar advantage. We revert to our true status of a Power that is primarily European, and secondarily "Colonizing," and we are compelled to regard our responsibilities as a Continental Power must regard its own, as the denominator in the ratio whose numerator is man-power, man-power produced and organised in the Motherland.

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