

# LORD HALIBURTON


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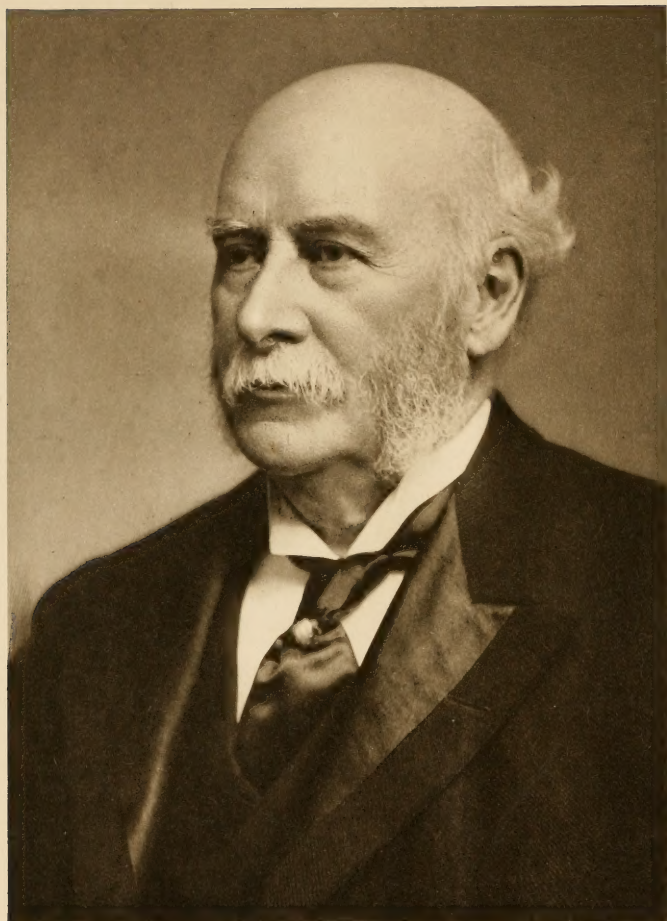
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LORD HALIBURTON







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# LORD HALIBURTON

A MEMOIR OF HIS PUBLIC SERVICE

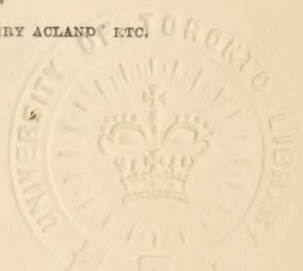
James  
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BY

J. B. ATLAY

OF LINCOLN'S INN, BARRISTER-AT-LAW

AUTHOR OF 'THE VICTORIAN CHANCELLORS' 'HENRY ACLAND' ETC.



WITH A PORTRAIT

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19. 4. 49

WILLIAM BRIGGS

TORONTO

1909

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# LORD HALIBURTON

## CHAPTER I

1832-1872

Parentage—'Sam Slick'—Called to the Nova Scotian Bar—  
Enters the Army Commissariat Department—Transferred from  
the War Office to the Horse Guards—Minute on the Distribution  
of Military Posts—Travelling Allowance Regulations.

THIS record of the official career of the late Lord Haliburton does not pretend to be, in any received sense of the word, a biography. No one would have disclaimed such a project more vehemently than Lord Haliburton himself. And when his widow requested me to undertake the preparation of a brief memoir of her husband, she impressed upon me that it could amount to no more than 'the bare truths of a strenuous, and intelligent, and highly conscientious official life, whose high sense of duty kept all other thoughts and aspirations away.' Yet circumstances over which he had no control conspired to bring Haliburton

before the public eye in a measure which seldom falls to the lot of a member of the Civil Service, whether on the active list or *en retraite*. His powers as a controversialist, and the leisure which was enforced upon him by his retirement, made him the champion of causes which were unpopular in proportion as they were misunderstood.

His main task was to expound, at a very critical period in the history of the British Army, the real theory of Lord Cardwell's reforms; and it is no exaggeration to say that, but for him, the nation might have found itself plunged into schemes of reconstruction which would have rendered the task of our soldiers in South Africa impossible of accomplishment. In so doing he ran counter to the full tide of popular sentiment, and he incurred no small share of misrepresentation; while only in the limited circle of those who appreciated the true nature of the problems of army administration were his efforts acknowledged at their true value. Some of the controversies in which he was engaged have become obsolete, or have found their own solution; not always a solution of which Haliburton approved or would have desired. But accurate thinking and a complete mastery of the art of exposition can never be out of date. And I venture to think that there is room, even in this age of book-making, for a sketch, however inadequate, of an



honest, clear-minded, and most capable public servant, whose early bringing-up, in what is now the Dominion of Canada, rendered him absolutely fearless of official etiquette, and taught him to maintain against all comers his honest opinions founded on knowledge and true judgment.

Arthur Lawrence Haliburton was born at Windsor, in Nova Scotia, on December 26, 1832. To his dying day he was intensely proud of being a Canadian,<sup>1</sup> and on his elevation to the Peerage he quartered in his coat-of-arms the maple leaf and beavers of his native Province, with the stags and thistles of his ancestral home. His forbears claimed descent from a famous Border family, the Haliburtons of Mertoun and Newmains. Early in the eighteenth century a bunch of Haliburton brothers had emigrated to Jamaica, which, however, they shortly quitted for Massachusetts; and thence, after a temporary sojourn in Boston, Arthur Haliburton's great-grandfather removed himself to Nova Scotia, where the lands, vacated by the countrymen of Evangeline, invited settlers of British blood. Here, in 1796, was born Thomas

<sup>1</sup> In the autumn of 1897, shortly after his retirement from the Civil Service, he was made the channel of an appeal to the Colonial Office for the grant of a decoration to the descendants of the United Empire Loyalists. It was refused, on the advice of the Dominion Ministry.

Chandler Haliburton, better known as 'Sam Slick,' the inventor, according to Artemus Ward, of 'American humour'; a man whose pithy sayings and whose abundant store of anecdote, jest, and aphorism are lit up by the keenest observation, and by no small political prescience.

'Sam Slick,' the Yankee clockmaker, and parent of the subject of this Memoir, was in real life an accomplished lawyer, who at the early age of thirty-two was appointed Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas in Nova Scotia, and who discharged high judicial duties in that Province for nearly thirty years. In 1856 he finally retired to England, where his reputation as a humorist and man of letters was well established. He mingled in the best literary society of the day, and sat in the House of Commons as member for Launceston, the little Cornish borough which in later years gave Lord Halsbury his first introduction to parliamentary life. Memories of 'the old judge,' of his wonderful speeches, his geniality, his whimsical talk, were current till very recently among his former constituents, who no longer enjoy the distinction of a representative of their own. Among Judge Haliburton's most cherished possessions were a walking-cane and snuffbox that had belonged to Dr. Johnson. These, in due course, descended to his son; and when, in March 1897,

the latter complied with the request of Mr. Bayard, the United States Minister, for 'a scrap of Sam Slick's chirography,' he sent him these precious relics as a further souvenir. The donor felt himself fully compensated for the loss of his heirlooms by the charming letter in which Mr. Bayard expressed his gratitude for 'a gift which would radiate its power to give pleasure in regions and scenes beyond the broad Atlantic.'

Arthur Haliburton was one of a numerous family; his mother, the daughter of Captain Lawrence Neville, of the 19th Light Dragoons, died during his boyhood, and some years later the Judge married the widow of a Shropshire squire,<sup>1</sup> a lady who long survived him, and whose trenchant and vivacious talk was—within the present writer's recollection—the delight of London drawing-rooms. Together with his two brothers, Arthur Haliburton was educated at his father's *alma mater*, King's College, Windsor, Nova Scotia, the oldest university in the Colonies, and the only one possessing a Royal Charter. The place of its original foundation had been New York, but after the great disruption of 1775 it had migrated to Nova Scotia, and in that loyal atmosphere had retained the Tory

<sup>1</sup> Sarah Harriet, daughter of William Mostyn Owen, of Woodhouse, Shropshire, formerly married to Edward Hosier Williams, of Eaton Mascott, Shrewsbury.

traditions of its Oxford prototypes. It preserved the ancient and orthodox classical curriculum; it was faithful to Lilly's Latin Grammar, and to the Latin grace before and after meat. Among the pupils of a generation senior to the Haliburton brothers were the two distinguished soldiers, Sir John Eardley Inglis, the defender of Lucknow, and Sir William Fenwick Williams, the defender of Kars. In 1899 the University conferred upon Lord Haliburton, as he had then become, the distinction of an honorary D.C.L. degree.

His original vocation was for the law; it ran, indeed, in his blood, for his grandfather,<sup>1</sup> as well as his father, had been Chief Justice of the Nova Scotian Court of Common Pleas, and his elder brother Robert<sup>2</sup> was already practising in the Colony with success. Arthur Haliburton was duly called to the Nova Scotian Bar in 1855, and his legal studies and legal training were destined to be of invaluable service to him hereafter. But the outbreak of the Crimean War turned his ambitions into a different channel. These were the days of purchase, and a commission in the Line was not within his reach; an opening, however, was found which brought him into that close connection with

<sup>1</sup> William Hersey Otis Haliburton.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas, the eldest of the three, died early in life at Boston, but not before his musical accomplishments had earned for him the title of the American Mozart.

the British Army which subsisted to the end of his official life.

The outbreak of hostilities had caught England without even the nucleus of a commissariat establishment. In spite of all the warnings of the past, and the memories of the Peninsula campaigns, a Parliamentary Committee, appointed to inquire into the Army and Ordnance expenditure, had recently reported that there was no necessity for the existence of such a department in Great Britain and Ireland. It had formed its decision on the ground that the arrangements of the Commissariat Department were all based upon a state of war, 'which seems to be unnecessary, inasmuch as it appears on the highest evidence that no training in time of peace will fit a commissary for his duties in the field during war.'

This 'highest evidence' was Lord Fitzroy Somerset,<sup>1</sup> then Military Secretary at the Horse Guards, who, as Lord Raglan, was destined, within four years' time, to see a British army

<sup>1</sup> Reports from Committees (1850), vol. x. 240. For Lord Fitzroy-Somerset's evidence on this point see answers to questions 3203-3212; and General Sir George Brown was characteristically positive 'that the Commissariat in time of peace affords no training whatever for field service in time of war,' see questions 7810, 7811. On the other side, see questions put to Sir Charles Wood, 7346 and 7347, and Sir Charles Trevelyan's evidence before the Chelsea Committee on the Condition of the Army before Sebastopol (the 'Whom shall we hang?' Committee), question 14126.

rotting in the Crimean winter for the very want of that peace-trained staff the utility of which he had decried. The recommendations of the Committee were carried out and the existing arrangements swept away in spite, it should be added, of strong opposition on the part of the Treasury, which at that date was the Victualling Department. So, when, in the spring of 1854, it was necessary to transport a formidable fighting force to the Black Sea, a field-commissariat—the life-blood of every movement in a campaign—was not in existence in the British service. The disasters of the Crimea are matters of history; once more the impossible task was attempted of improvising, at a moment's notice, the complicated machinery of military administration. Forty years later Sir Arthur Haliburton tersely described the experiences of that gloomy effort :

The struggles of the few trained Commissariat officers to infuse knowledge, subordination, and efficiency into the mass of untrained recruits, collected from civil life and cast upon their hands as officers and subordinates, were untiring. As usual they began in disgrace and failure, and, as usual, they ended in success; but a success purchased by a lamentable expenditure of lives and of treasure.

Haliburton himself was one of these 'untrained recruits.' In 1855 he received a commission in the recreated Commissariat Department of the

Army, now, for the first time, transferred from the Treasury to the Secretary of State for War. He was promptly despatched to Turkey, and though he was never actually at the seat of hostilities in the Crimea, he learnt invaluable lessons connected with the needs of an army in the field ; while the experience thus acquired convinced him that the situation of a civil commissary attached to a fighting force was one of extreme delicacy and difficulty.

‘ The position, of the civilian,’ he wrote long afterwards, ‘ in camp and garrison, in constant contact with soldiers who grudgingly recognised his rank and authority, was anomalous and unsatisfactory. His authority and usefulness depended almost entirely on his personal qualities, and gained nothing from his official rank and position.’<sup>1</sup>

When the Peace of Paris was signed the Department was again reduced, after the evil precedent of 1815. Only ten officers were retained on the home establishment ; but abroad, and in the Colonies, the services of a trained commissariat staff were still utilised. In 1857 Haliburton was posted to the forces stationed in Canada. He received his commission as Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General in November 1859, a commission which was renewed in June 1862 and May 1866.

<sup>1</sup> *Army Administration in Three Centuries*, p. 34 ; the genesis of this pamphlet, published by Haliburton in 1901, is given below, p. 234.

Though the terms of his appointment placed him under the Rules and Discipline of War, his duties were, in the main, of a purely civil order.

The Commissariat officers made all important contracts ; and if the General Officer commanding gave orders for expenditure not provided in the estimates, or not in accordance with the Regulations, it was the duty of the Commissariat officers to point it out to him, and to report the matter to the Treasury. He was also expected to write to the Treasury in detail upon the various proceedings at the station and to call attention to what he considered to be unnecessary expenditure.<sup>1</sup>

To perform these duties properly, considerable knowledge of a mercantile character was required ; and in the days before the telegraph the control of financial operations of no small magnitude was thrown upon the Commissaries. Such a position was admirably calculated to develop the sense of responsibility and to enforce a thorough mastery of detail, while giving scope to that cool judgment and insight into the character of those around him which was to distinguish Haliburton through life. In 1860 he was recalled to England, and he then began that period of desk and office work which, with a single break, was to continue until his retirement, in 1897. The Commissariat was then a separate department, with its headquarters in

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. Biddulph, *Lord Cardwell at the War Office*, p. 5.



New Street; and here Haliburton's assiduity and administrative capacity attracted the attention of the Commissary General-in-Chief, Sir William Tyrone Power, a veteran whose military service dated from the China War of 1843, and who still survives at the patriarchal age of eighty-nine.

In November 1866, a Committee, presided over by Lord Strathnairn, took into consideration the question of transport, and the general administration of the supply departments of the Army. In the following year they recommended that a Controller-in-Chief should be appointed at the War Office, with control over the various executive departments of supply—the Commissariat, the Military Store, and the Purveyor's—which were to be fused together and staffed in the upper ranks by controllers, with deputy and assistant controllers in due gradation.

In 1868, Sir Henry Storks, fresh from his inquiry into the suppression of the Jamaica revolt, was appointed, in conjunction with Sir William Power, to reorganise the Supply Departments on the basis of these recommendations; and nearly two years were occupied in getting the new control establishment into working order. Sir William Power had brought Haliburton with him from the old office as his personal assistant. The duties which were now required of him had hitherto been

entrusted to men of much higher standing in the Department, but Sir William had not been deceived as to the very exceptional capacity which he had detected in one who held the subordinate rank of Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General. Few officers, whatever their position, he declared in a quasi-official communication<sup>1</sup> to Sir Henry Storks, the newly made Controller-General, could have displayed equal zeal and ability in the discharge of an exacting and absorbing task. In addition to routine duties, which meant an eight hours' working day, from ten to six, Haliburton was employed on all the committees formed to facilitate the process of reorganisation, and he took a leading part in their deliberations. They dealt for the most part with the drafting of regulations for the paymasters on home and foreign service, and with the exceedingly complex and difficult business of correlating the various sub-departments of control. On one of them, Haliburton, utilising, it may be surmised, his Turkish and Canadian experiences, proposed a reform in the manner of conducting the Treasury and War Office accounts abroad, by which a very large reduction of clerical labour was effected, the accounts simplified, and the security of the public funds increased. This recommendation was at

<sup>1</sup> Dated March 4, 1870.

once approved by the Treasury and put into immediate practice at every foreign station.

‘Mr. Haliburton has been indefatigable in his work,’ continued Sir William Power, ‘and, not only as a reward for the past, but on account of the services which may be expected from him in the future, I consider that he should be placed in a position more commensurate with the duties he performs and with his admitted ability than that which he at present holds. If this be not done, the reorganisation of the Departments will leave him, in spite of his valuable services, in a worse position than he was when I brought him here in 1868.’

A fate, it may be added, that has been known before now to attend junior members of the Civil Service whose premature advancement has excited surprise not unmingled with envy.

The estimates for the coming year had provided for two Assistant-Controllers at the War Office, and there was at the very moment a vacancy. To this post, for which he had shown such special aptitude, Sir William Power most earnestly recommended the appointment of Mr. Haliburton :

‘It has always been laid down that control appointments are to be filled by selection, and although he is junior in the list he has by his labours and abilities fairly earned a position which he is fully qualified to fill. This opinion is shared in, not only by the officers of his own Department,

but by the heads of the Military Store and Purveyor's branches in this office; and although the appointment would be exceptional, it can, I submit, be fully justified by the exceptional circumstances which have led to it.'

The proposal was too revolutionary for the time and place; but Mr. Cardwell was at the War Office, and the good work that Haliburton had done was not lost upon him. The public mind had for some time past been much exercised over the 'dual government' of the Army. The separate existence of the 'Horse Guards' at Whitehall, and the War Office in Pall Mall, was symbolical of the gulf between the civil and military branches,<sup>1</sup> and it was not easy to defend on principle the existence of two concurrent and, in some respects, conflicting institutions. The military staff under the Commander-in-Chief still remained a comparatively independent body, conducting their intercourse with the Secretary of State and his subordinates almost entirely by correspondence. Mr. Cardwell was resolved to bring both branches under one roof, as far as the amount of available cubic space would allow; primarily for the sake of convenience and economy, but with the ulterior object of making the supremacy of the civil power more easily enforceable.

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Verner, *Military Life of the Duke of Cambridge*, i. 403.

The Duke of Cambridge foresaw clearly that the removal of himself and his headquarters to Pall Mall meant the eventual subordination of his office to that of the member of the Cabinet who was responsible to Parliament for the administration of the Army, while it involved an immediate lowering of his prestige and authority. He wrote pathetically that :

‘The removal of the Commander-in-Chief to the office at Pall Mall, deprived, as he must be, moreover, of all his military surroundings, would place him in a position of subordination which would virtually deprive him of all his specific attributes, and would in fact place him more or less on an equality with the Controller-in-Chief, or any one of the Under-Secretaries of State. This would be a degradation which would altogether alter his status in the estimation of the Army and the public, and would, in my opinion, be most injurious to the interests of the Crown, the real head of the Army, and also to the public service.’<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Cardwell was obdurate; but the establishment of the Commander-in-Chief in that labyrinth of dark staircases and blind passages which, as I write, is being cleared away to make room for the Auto-Mobile Club,<sup>2</sup> was delayed by the structural deficiencies of the building. Mahomet being unable to come to the mountain, Mr. Cardwell deter-

<sup>1</sup> Verner, i. 409.

<sup>2</sup> Now a *fait accompli*.

mined that the mountain should go to Mahomet ; and, pending the preparation of suitable quarters for his Royal Highness, he decided to send a section of the War Office to the Horse Guards.

For this unenviable duty Mr. Cardwell selected Haliburton ; it was a commission of no small delicacy, for the welcome that awaited the intruders in Whitehall was not likely to err through excess of cordiality. But to an absolute fearlessness Haliburton united that peculiar blend of tact and force which is only found in strong men. He was one of those fortunate people who, without being thick-skinned in the vulgar sense, are impervious to hostile atmosphere. He marched his staff of clerks into their new surroundings as if they were merely moving from the west to the east wing of the old buildings in Pall Mall. It was not a case of smoothing over difficulties ; they simply ceased to exist. On the morning upon which the transfer was effected the Duke came down in choleric mood, prepared to criticise the new department as if it were a regiment with a black mark against it paraded for annual inspection. He found everything working with the smoothness of a well-oiled machine. H.R.H. was an outspoken prince, and he ever gave frank expression to his feelings. ‘ Well, I’m d—d,’ was his only commentary, and he passed on to the order of the

day ; but from that hour, till his resignation of the command of the British Army, Haliburton had a supporter and friend in the Duke of Cambridge.<sup>1</sup>

The work assigned to him at the Horse Guards related to the transport and travelling allowances of the Army, the regulation of which was placed under his complete control, subject to the decision of the Quartermaster-General, with whom he was placed in direct personal communication. A post of such responsibility could not be held decorously by a junior officer in an Army Department, and Haliburton accordingly resigned his commission, and was transferred to the Civil Service as Assistant Director of Supplies and Transport. From the first he showed a conception of his duties and of their wider bearing upon questions of Army administration which stamped him as a man of very different calibre from the average Deputy Commissary. He rapidly made the discovery that much unnecessary expenditure was caused by an unsound and wasteful method of posting the troops ; and, as a specimen of his breadth of view and his clear and graphic style, I venture to quote at length the following minute, addressed by him,

<sup>1</sup> Haliburton, on his part, never failed to express his regard for the Duke's shrewdness and straightforwardness. 'Always a great stickler for constitutional observances,' he wrote of him, 'and always taking a common-sense view on such questions' (*Army Administration*, 32).

in November 1870, to Lord Northbrook, then the Under-Secretary of State for War:

‘The accompanying books give the barrack accommodation and the distribution of the Army at home and abroad. It will be observed that the military posts in the United Kingdom are as various as they are numerous, and that they are scattered far and wide over the kingdom.

‘This method of posting the Army at home is a remnant of a past age, the circumstances of which differed entirely from those of the present day. When neither telegraphic nor railway communication existed, and troops had to be moved by the slow and tedious “march route,” or by the scarcely more expeditious sailing craft of that day—it was necessary to traverse the country with a chain of military posts, the heavier links resting on places which were then of political or social importance. As it was impossible to move troops with rapidity on any point threatened with insurrection or riot, the Army was posted in bodies, large or small according to the character of the district, in or near all the manufacturing towns, and in localities where mining or other operations brought large numbers of workmen together.<sup>1</sup> Some few posts were, no doubt established from wider considerations; but, speaking generally, it may be said that our system of posting the Army was founded on

<sup>1</sup> It may be added that the absence of any efficient constabulary was one of the main causes which reduced the Army to the level of a police force. The disadvantages and dangers of the dispersal of the troops on home service were a constant source of complaint and remonstrance on the part of Sir Charles Napier during his command of the Northern District, 1839–40. See his *Life and Opinions*, ii. 7, 23, and *passim*.



local considerations rather than on broad strategical and general grounds.

‘The necessity which gave rise to this system no longer exists. Troops can be concentrated in a few hours in any part of the kingdom, and it is therefore as unnecessary to keep up the majority of the old military posts as it would be to keep up the old Posting Inns which were equally necessary in their day. These ceased to exist when no longer suited to the age, because the “voluntary contributions” by which they were supported ceased to flow in; those survived, like many other institutions supported by the State, because active measures were wanting to displace them.

‘Of the good and evil which characterised this system the good has long since ceased to exist, while the evil not only survives, but is becoming more pernicious every day. Any system which divides regiments into small detachments, and scatters them miles apart, materially impairs the efficiency of the corps. On a recent occasion, when two regiments were to interchange stations in England, I was informed, in reply to my question why such an expense was incurred when each corps had been scarcely more than a year at its post, that, while one corps had been kept together for that period, the other had been divided into numerous detachments, and that it was necessary to bring it together to restore its efficiency. Thus, while one was concentrated to have its efficiency restored, the other was scattered to have its efficiency destroyed. This is repeated all over the kingdom. We build up to-day what we destroy to-morrow, and this game of “see-saw” costs us thousands which are worse than thrown away.

‘What is true of a corps is true of the whole army. If the companies of a regiment require to act together to make an effective corps, equally do regiments require to be brigaded together to form an efficient brigade. The more an army is disjointed and scattered in time of peace, the less efficient it will be when suddenly called together in time of war. This system is, I believe, not only detrimental to the service, but costly to the State. There is a perpetual movement of troops between the headquarters of a corps and its detachments, and of whole regiments from one post where they have been scattered to another where they can be concentrated.

‘Strategically the great majority of our military posts have no value whatever. The only value they possess is that of the ground on which they stand. This, if properly realised and applied, would go far towards establishing a better and more economical system. With the exception of the forts capable of defence, all our minor military posts should be dismantled and sold, and replaced by a few large garrisons—near towns, if necessary, or more isolated, like Aldershot, if that plan be considered best on military grounds. The sites selected for the new posts should be chosen solely on strategical and general considerations. The railway system of this country is tolerably complete, and the addition which time will develop can be foreseen. There exist now certain great centres of communication which command the whole country. These, no doubt, would be largely considered in forming any general scheme, as they would be most valuable on strategical and on economical grounds. If large military posts were

formed at or near them, we could not only at once reinforce any part of the kingdom without the troops having to change train, but, by them, we could tap the whole country for supplies instead of being dependent on a district. These large military posts could gradually, by the labour of the troops, and, as it were, in the course of their tuition in field works and military engineering, be made into strong entrenched positions. In addition to the advantage which we should gain from substituting a few strong positions for the thousand weak ones which we now occupy we should gain immensely, not only in the training of our army, but in having in each military district a centre where the reserve forces could meet and be brigaded with regular troops. Those who have compared the progress made by a militia regiment trained at Aldershot with that of one billeted in the county town, will understand how great this advantage would be to the Reserve Forces.

‘ Were such a scheme carried out, it would enable us to overcome many difficulties in recruiting regiments abroad, in the depot system, which is far from satisfactory, and in establishing a clearer connection between the Reserve and the Regular forces. It is, however, only necessary at present to draw attention to the principle which should be adopted, not to the detail advantages which would flow from it. If such a plan be adopted, the sites to be selected and the general scheme should be considered as a whole, and be fully matured before any portion be carried out. If we began with one section of the country without due regard to the other we might find that we had spent time and money on an object which marred rather than

advanced the general design. If some general scheme could be developed by those whose military education and abilities have qualified them to frame it, it might then be carried out gradually in detail, each detail leading up to the complete design. It would only be by the adoption of some fixed design with a determination to adhere to it that the sectional jealousies, and local political opposition, sure to come, could be successfully resisted.

‘The first outlay would be for huts or barracks and sites. Against this should be set the value of the land which we hold in the heart of many manufacturing towns and districts, which would make a large set-off against the expenditure. But, apart from this, the annual saving in the movement of troops (both in Army and Navy votes) would be very considerable, and would soon recoup us any first outlay.

‘It is on these grounds that I have ventured to bring to your notice a subject which is far wider than the nature of my duties entitled me to deal with.’

4.11.70.

While examining the regulations relative to the moving of troops by land in the United Kingdom, Haliburton made the discovery that for many years past the Government had been paying excessive rates for railway conveyance. When fixed by Parliament in 1844<sup>1</sup> they had been considerably lower than those applicable to the general public. In time the rates to the public fell, while

<sup>1</sup> 7 and 8 Vict. c. 85, s. 12.

those to the Government remained unaltered, the result being that the Government at length paid more instead of less than the public. He represented to the railway companies with all the force at his command that this was contrary to the spirit of the Act. The companies refused to give way; there were no means short of legislation by which they could be compelled to do so, and, in spite of the favourable report of more than one Parliamentary Committee before which he pleaded the case of the War Office, it was not until 1883, when the Cheap Trains Act was passed, that he succeeded in getting the rates reduced.<sup>1</sup> It was estimated that between 1847 and that year Government had overpaid the railways to the extent of a million and three-quarters sterling. The concession effected a saving of 35,000*l.* per annum, which would have been 55,000*l.* if Ireland had not contrived to obtain exemption. Other administrative reforms in connexion with the supply and transport service which were effected through his instrumentality had the effect of increasing the net saving to 68,000*l.* per annum without in any way retrenching the pay or allowances or the comfort of the soldier.

And it is important to observe, in view of popular misconceptions, that Haliburton's first efforts

<sup>1</sup> 46 and 47 Vict. c. 34, s. 6.

when in a position of responsibility and influence were directed towards decentralisation, and towards abolishing the system by which every question relating to transport and travelling allowances was referred to the War Office. The initial step was to shift all executive details to the Generals Commanding Districts; but a grave difficulty arose from the utter chaos into which the regulations governing these allowances had been suffered to drift. Such as existed were scattered through many volumes of circulars, some wholly obsolete, some partially cancelled, and all overlaid by unpublished decisions unknown outside the War Office and completely inaccessible to the Army. Haliburton at once undertook to compile and revise them, and in due time the whole of the regulations governing the allowances of the land forces were issued in a small volume which could be carried in the pocket. The consequent saving of time and correspondence was equally appreciated in the War Office and in the Districts.

A few years later, after his return from India, Haliburton was placed at the head of a Committee which was appointed to examine in minute detail into the working of every branch of the War Office, civil and military alike. The Committee found an enormous amount of unnecessary duplication of work and a ridiculously over-staffed clerical esta-

ishment. Their drastic recommendations paved the way for reforms which simplified the routine, brought about a much-needed decentralisation, and effected substantial economy. The authorised establishment of clerks of the higher division stood at two hundred and five in 1876; it is now, and has for many years been, under sixty.

## CHAPTER II

1872—1877

Deputy Accountant-General in the Indian Military Department—  
Votes of Thanks—Returns to the War Office—The Control  
Department—The Training of Supply Officers—Letter from  
Sir William Power.

IN April 1872 Lord Mayo was assassinated as he was visiting the convict establishment on the Andaman Islands, and he was succeeded by Lord Northbrook, who, as Under-Secretary for War, had been brought into close contact with Haliburton. In October of the same year the new Viceroy applied to the Duke of Argyll<sup>1</sup> to sanction his appointment as Deputy Accountant-General in the military department of the Government of India. The place was one of dignity and influence, and the offer most flattering to a man of Haliburton's standing in the Home Civil Service. But there were features on the other side of the account which might well make him hesitate before returning an unconditional acceptance. He was just forty; his

<sup>1</sup> Then Secretary of State for India.



position in the War Office was most satisfactory, and there was every probability of his remaining on the employed list for the next twenty years, and eventually retiring on a liberal pension.

‘If I now proceed to India,’ he wrote to the Duke of Argyll, ‘I relinquish all the advantages of my past service and my future prospects in this country, with the certainty that I can never complete the full period of service<sup>1</sup> in India, and with the risk of being invalided from the effects of hard work—no inconsiderable risk in that climate if I render, as I shall endeavour to do, such service as I feel sure His Excellency expects from me.’

The difficulty was adjusted by the assurance that the Secretary of State for India would sanction any pension arrangement that the Viceroy might recommend, and Haliburton still further secured himself by the arrangement that he should proceed to India ‘on leave of absence’ for the period of twelve months, and thus retain the option of going back to his old billet with his position and his prospects unimpaired.

He quitted England in December 1872, and re-entered the War Office in April 1875, his leave having been periodically extended. His return was not due to the lack of due recognition, for in the course of his first year in India he was offered the immediate reversion of the Accountancy-General

<sup>1</sup> Sufficient to entitle him to a pension.

with a salary of 3,000*l.* a year.<sup>1</sup> But he decided on purely private grounds that his work at home was more congenial. London had attractions which neither Simla nor Calcutta could present; and when, in May 1874, it was necessary for him to make his final choice between India and the War Office, he elected for the latter. At the urgent entreaty, however, of Lord Northbrook, the Secretary of State for War<sup>2</sup> granted a special extension of leave till the following April, in order that someone might be trained up under Haliburton to take the place which it had been hoped he himself would fill.

‘You may rely upon having him back again,’ wrote the Viceroy, ‘upon which I congratulate you, for he is quite one of the best men of business I ever came across, and for the sake of this Government I am very sorry for his determination. . . . I don’t think you will lose in the end by the experience he will have gained in Indian work.’

Lord Northbrook’s regret found official expression in a formal vote of thanks on the part of the Government of India. Haliburton’s labours had been extensive and peculiar. In conveying the original offer Lord Northbrook had informed

<sup>1</sup> 2,500 rupees per mensem.

<sup>2</sup> The late Lord Cranbrooke, then Mr. Gathorne Hardy. Cardwell had resigned when the letter reached him. ‘If I had remained, I should have complied. Will you lay this before my successor?’ was his endorsement on the envelope.

him that his duties would be somewhat the same as those of the Accountant-General at the War Office, 'with rather more latitude as regards dealing with general military questions.' The continued ill-health of his superior, Mr. Kellner, threw from the beginning the main burden of the office upon Haliburton's shoulders, and the numerous reports and memoranda for which he is responsible are signed by him as 'officiating Accountant-General.' They are concerned, for the most part, with purely departmental matters, but one of them had the result of completely and permanently recasting the pay of the British garrison, into which by force of time and circumstances a number of indefensible anomalies had crept, generally to the detriment of the European soldiers serving in India.

'One great advantage,' he wrote, 'of the adoption of the plan recommended will be, that for the future the issue of the soldier's pay will be governed by the same regulation throughout the whole British Empire, India being at present the solitary exception to a uniform system. That regulation is, that, wherever the soldier serves, his pay shall be the exact equivalent of the sum in British currency for which he enlisted; and that when he is stationed in countries where from dearness of living, or from other causes, as in India, Ceylon, and China, his emoluments require to be increased, that increase shall be given in the shape of local allowances in

money or in kind, but that under no circumstances shall the pay of the soldier be increased or diminished above or below the rates which are laid down in the Royal Warrants which govern its issue. This regulation was intended to be and should be of universal application, and it only needs this change in India to make it so.'

: And outside the special work of his own department Haliburton was appointed, in conjunction with the Inspector-Generals of Ordnance for the three Presidencies, and other distinguished officers, on a special Commission to make a comprehensive inquiry into the work devolving on each of the manufacturing establishments, arsenals, magazines and ordnance depôts in the three Presidencies, with the object of a complete revision of the Indian Ordnance Departments. For the ability and care bestowed upon this most important and complicated subject he received for the second time the thanks of the Governor-General in Council, though the resolution did not reach him until some months after his return to England. When, after his final retirement from the Civil Service, the Treasury were trying to deduct his years in India from the time he was allowed to count for pension, he remarked playfully, in a letter to an old friend, 'That was about the best work I have ever done, and it would be odd if it had to go unpensioned.'

As Lord Northbrook had predicted, Haliburton's Indian experience was to be of great advantage to him in the important branches of military administration for which he was destined. He had seen the working of the Indian Army, native and European, from within, a circumstance which gave especial weight to his verdict—on a departmental Committee formed shortly after his return—against the unlimited extension of the private soldier's service in India.<sup>1</sup> He had gained an insight into matters of finance and policy which was unattainable at the War Office by anyone of his rank. He had acquired additional experience in the art of managing men, and he had associated on terms of friendship and equality with some of the ablest servants of the Crown, civil and military. Among these especial mention should be made of Major Evelyn Baring, the present Lord Cromer, who had been Lord Cardwell's military secretary, and now occupied a corresponding post under his relative, Lord Northbrook. In a recent letter to Lady Haliburton, the maker of Modern Egypt bears testimony to her husband's 'great intelligence and force of character and to the admirable manner in

<sup>1</sup> 'If statistics have ever proved anything,' wrote Lord Wolseley, 'they have proved that the British private soldier after eight years' service in India runs downhill very rapidly as regards health and strength.'

which he carried through whatever work came to his hand.’

Haliburton found his old colleagues at the War Office delighted to welcome him both privately and officially. An opportune resignation was in prospect, but before he received promotion to the office of Director of Supplies and Transports his services were employed on a very delicate and responsible piece of reorganisation. The new Conservative Government detested Cardwell and all his works,<sup>1</sup> and there were many of its supporters and some even of its members who would gladly, if they dared, have drawn a sponge over the whole record of his achievements at the War Office. ‘Purchase’ was gone beyond recall; ‘short service’ was only in the experimental stage; but in attacking the Control department the reactionary school had the full force of military opinion at its back.

The Control department had been constituted by Mr. Cardwell in 1870 in consultation with Sir Henry Storcks, Sir Edward Lugard and Sir William Power. The Secretary for War, after investigating the subject with his accustomed thoroughness, and guided by the evidence taken before Lord Strathnairn’s Committee, had become convinced that for the management of such vast and vital

<sup>1</sup> See *Army Administration*, p. 36.

responsibilities as were involved in warlike operations every General Commanding must have on his staff a highly trained business expert, capable, under his authority and orders, of successfully controlling the business transactions of his command, and trained for that purpose in garrison and camp during peace. Accordingly, Cardwell provided out of the *personnel* of the existing Supply and Finance Department four independent groups to be known as the Supply, the Transport, the Store, and the Pay sub-departments. Over each of these groups was to be placed a body of selected staff officers with the title of Controllers, trained and organised on a purely military basis.

At this point, unfortunately, Cardwell's evil genius intervened.

'A clever but crotchety member of the War Office suggested that it would be very cumbersome and unnecessary to create five [*sic*] departments with five different titles, and that it would be much simpler to create only one department with subdivisions and to call the whole the Control Department.'<sup>1</sup>

The suggestion was adopted, with consequences which might have been but were not foreseen. Mere *Controllers* would have excited no suspicions,

<sup>1</sup> Lord Haliburton in the *Times* of August 30, 1906: I have no suspicion who the clever but crotchety individual could have been.

aroused no unfriendly feelings; but the term *Control Department* was seized upon by its enemies, and they were many,<sup>1</sup> to discredit it. ‘What is the department to control?’ was asked at once; and the not unnatural inference was drawn that it was intended to check and control the Generals Commanding, and not, as was the actual case, merely to aid and strengthen them in the performance of the responsible business duties for which they had neither training nor experience. The department never recovered from the weight of its bad name, though the prejudice was abating when it was abolished in 1875. The Conservative Government first decapitated it by abolishing the Controllers, and then dissolved it into its original elements, recreating the old Commissariat, Military Store, and Pay Departments, each independent of the others and all unrepresented on the staff of Generals Commanding.

Writing to the ‘Times’ less than a year before his death, Haliburton declared that the Control Department set up by Cardwell was the only real sound business organisation which the British Army had enjoyed during the whole course of his long service. Drawing his moral from the Report

<sup>1</sup> ‘Especially,’ wrote Haliburton in after years, ‘the General Staff, which now lost its power over services with which for generations it had meddled and muddled.’



of the War Stores Commission, he pointed out that, to secure thoroughly efficient control of the supply and transport services, Generals on detached command should in every case have a trained expert on their staff to supervise, under their orders, every branch of the business services. The want of such an expert could not be supplied by any mere 'financial adviser,' however skilled in the higher walks of army book-keeping.<sup>1</sup> He could only be produced by years of training in each business branch, in the War Office, and finally on the General's staff. This was the class of man which the Control Department was created to train and encourage, and, had its existence been spared, Haliburton was absolutely convinced that the administrative failures in South Africa and the serious losses reported by the Royal Commission would never have occurred. 'I ventured to protest, as strongly as my subordinate position would permit, when the Control Department was destroyed. I would now urge as strongly as I can its re-creation.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'In the field,' he wrote, 'the financial branch is the least important. Mistakes in finance may lead to the loss of money; but mistakes in supply or transport may paralyse the Army and give rise to disasters. Financial losses do not arise from mere errors of accounting. They arise from failure in the successful conduct of the supply services. Secure sound administration for these services and there will be no financial disasters.'

<sup>2</sup> *Times*, August 30, 1906.

And while his protests in this behalf were unavailing, Haliburton was impressed by a deep-seated blemish in connexion with the administrative services which had been left practically untouched during the short existence of the Control Department. The combatant officers were under the firm belief that the civilians attached to the Army had no feeling in common with them. They were convinced that these latter existed more for the purpose of checking and thwarting the Army than of aiding its operations in the field or promoting its comfort and well-being in garrison; that they were constituted to spy out the nakedness of the land, and to reduce the emoluments and restrict the privileges of the soldier in every direction. This was no modern prejudice: the misunderstanding had raged ever since commissaries had been attached to the British Army. On active service the officers of the Commissariat were seldom in the confidence of the Generals Commanding, and frequently they were not even consulted as to their ability to carry out the movements in contemplation. Hence arose many of the so-called Commissariat failures recorded in our wars, and the recriminations between the Army and its Supply Department to which these failures gave rise. Nor had any appreciable improvement been caused by the fact that in recent

years a certain number of the commissaries had been drawn from the commissioned ranks of the Army.

The latest reorganisation of the Control Department, now bifurcated once more into separate branches of supply and ordnance, left this mischief untouched, and though the objectionable name of 'Controller' was gone, there was no reason to hope that 'Supply' would be more popular with the Army, or more successful in its operations, than it had been in the past. Shortly after his return from India, Haliburton had a conversation with the Secretary of State for War, Mr. Gathorne Hardy, in which he placed before him the view on this subject acquired from a long apprenticeship in the Commissariat and strengthened by a recent experience of the workings of the Army Departments in India. At Mr. Hardy's request these views were subsequently committed to writing in the form of a memorandum.

Haliburton put his finger at once on the sore place. So long as the Commissariat officers were civilians pure and simple, or military men deprived of their military rank and titles, good feeling and mutual understanding between the Army and the Army Departments was impossible.

'We thrust into the midst of the Army an important section differently constituted and

differently organised from its main body. We give it—or at any rate it has acquired—an inferior Army status. We impose upon it the delicate and obnoxious duty of checking extravagant tendencies, of acting as a Remembrancer<sup>1</sup> of regulations, as it were, to the Army, and we expect cordial co-operation between the two.<sup>2</sup>

The only remedy, he contended, was gradually to eliminate, with due respect to living interests, the existing civil element and to make all future appointments to the commissioned ranks of the Supply and Transport Department entirely from the Army, the officers so appointed retaining their military rank, and being still for all purposes of personal discipline under the rule of the Adjutant-General. Officers not below the rank of captain, taken from the Army with a thorough and mature knowledge of its feelings, habits and requirements, would not only be an excellent foundation on which to build up the extra knowledge for departmental duties, but they would establish that community of interest, that sympathy and fellow-feeling, between the Army and the Departments created for its supply and maintenance, which were then, and had always been, conspicuously lacking.

It was patent, indeed, unless civilian officers and subordinates were to be sacrificed wholesale,

<sup>1</sup> A favourite metaphor of Haliburton's, *vide infra*, p. 115.

that it would take years before the reform was completely carried out. To Haliburton's mind this gradual process was a strong recommendation.

‘Sudden and violent reforms,’ he wrote, ‘amounting almost to revolutions in the Army, are always to be deprecated. They introduce new and unaccustomed elements, destroy the feeling of security in appointments which *employés* should possess, and create uncertainty, alarm, and friction. The more gradual a reform, the more likely it is to be successful, and it is above all things desirable that reforms should begin in the lower grades, working upwards and gradually and imperceptibly leavening the whole department.’

And here the need for change was most imperative in the lower grades, comprising, as they did, a chaotic mass of non-commissioned officers and men belonging to the Army Service Corps, of soldiers temporarily attached from regiments, of pensioners and of civilians.

‘However able the upper grades of officers may be, their success must be hampered, if not entirely prevented, by the fact that they have under them no sufficient stock of reliable juniors and subordinates to carry out their orders or to whom they can confidently entrust the execution of the minor but important details of their duty. . . . From these two elements—uninstructed and immature officers, ignorant of the army and the conduct of business generally, and a disjointed subordinate department without uniform organisa-

tion—we expect successful departmental administration.’

If the subordinate department was to be made efficient, the men employed in it must be drawn from a different stratum.

‘For work of this character we do not want boys fresh from school and ignorant of the service. We want men of the Quartermaster class, conversant with the regulations of the service, and “up to” the thousand-and-one little methods to which those with whom they have to deal resort in order to scamp the service to the uttermost. We require, in fact, hard-headed, rough-and-ready men of average intelligence, who have by long habit acquired an intimate knowledge of the Army, of Army contractors, of the Regulations of the Service, and of the quality of supplies, and who have been accustomed to control large bodies of men. This is the stuff we want, and the Army contains a rich mine which we have almost entirely neglected.’

Haliburton enjoyed the great advantage of writing on a subject with which he was personally conversant. For years before his entry into the War Office he had experienced the trials and vexations of a civilian commissary officer, in war time and peace time, on foreign stations and at home.

‘There are,’ he wrote, ‘and always will be, cases where the individual officers, possessed of excep-

tional personal influences and advantages, overcome these difficulties, but such exceptions are so exceedingly rare that they serve to prove the rule.'

He was himself one of these exceptions.

As might well be supposed, his suggestions met with a sympathetic reception in military circles. The Duke of Cambridge declared that they were founded on a simple, rational and judicious principle, and deserved the fullest support. His Royal Highness added that, if the scheme were once fairly established it would

'put an end to those distressing and continual frictions and vexations which absorb so large a portion of our time to dispose of and to deal with, and which, even when settled as best they can be by the authorities, leave a sting and a raw which can never entirely be got rid of.'

But in the War Office, and to the mind of the Secretary of State, Haliburton's memorandum failed to carry conviction. The Supply and Transport Department continued to be recruited by the appointment of 'such officers, non-commissioned officers, *and civilians*' as might be recommended by the Secretary of State; but in practice civilians were for some time to come appointed almost exclusively. Gradually the military element was strengthened in point of numbers, but the department failed to gain a

military character, and it was not until 1887, under the *régime* of Mr. Stanhope, that the reforms advocated by Haliburton in 1875 were carried into effect, and the Commissariat staff finally merged in the department of the Quartermaster-General. To other changes which accompanied this merger and which swept away civil control over Army expenditure, Haliburton, as we shall see, offered a strong though unavailing resistance.

The interest of the controversy lies in the past rather than in the present, though some passages from Haliburton's memorandum throw light on recent experiences in South Africa; and the following letter from Sir William Power, pronounced by Haliburton to have been by far the ablest administrator produced by the wars of the early Victorian period, is valuable as a historical document :

‘Wimbledon, Aug. 6, 1875.

‘My dear Haliburton,—I have read your paper with much interest; it appears to me to be unanswerable, and will, I trust, be adopted in its main features.

‘It is the complement of the Control scheme, such as it would have become in the natural course had the original plan or principle been adhered to. By this time the greater part of the Control officers would have come from the Line, and of the subordinate department from the ranks, and the development you advocate would



have been obvious and easy. But the discouragement to the admission of Line officers, the muddling up of Supply and Control and Ordnance, and the various considerations of prejudice and personal interest which were allowed to weigh, never gave the Control scheme a fair chance.

‘First, as regards the name “Control”; it was adopted partly to avoid the appearance of favouring the Commissariat at the expense of the other departments, and partly because the higher branch was intended to exercise a controlling power over the sub-department. But when, contrary to the intention of Lord Strathnairn’s Committee, the Controllers and Commissaries were made into one department, the name lost all meaning unless the invidious one attached to it.

‘It was not contemplated by the Control scheme that the department should be recruited from civil sources. The candidates come in too young; their pretensions—after competitive examinations—are too high. And from their false position they do not acquire the practical knowledge of the trades and tradesmen they should superintend—of the habits and needs of the soldiers they have to supply. Nor do they readily acquire the military experience and habit of command indispensable for the management and discipline of the large numbers of soldiers forming the Supply and Transport Corps. This incompetency is obvious in peace, it becomes infinitely more so when immediate and vast expansion is required, often of very heterogeneous and unbroken material, requiring the combination of more than ordinary military and administrative ability. Unfortunately there is simultaneously required a large

expansion of the superior department, for which equally new and untrained material only is available, affording a temptation and excuse for the introduction of military officers into the Supply and Transport Corps, quite independently of the department, thus giving rise to friction, contention and antagonism where all should work as one machine under the departmental chief and his officers.

‘The organisation of the subordinate department as you propose is quite in harmony with the original Control scheme. It would give a body of tried soldiers and practical men from the Supply and Transport Corps, and from the Army generally, to whom the pay and advancement of the sub-department would be a great prize, who would not be above their work, and who would be quite amenable to the control of the officers of the superintending department.

‘Such an organisation would have great and natural power of expansion ; for the peace Cadres of both the superior and the subordinate department could, on the outbreak of war, be rapidly supplemented from the numerous retired and half-pay officers and N.C.O.s applying for service, all of whom would have had military training, many of them staff and administrative experience, and almost any of whom would be better than the volunteers from the public offices and the raw recruits swept up from the streets which were our only resource in the Crimean War.

‘I entirely agree with you as regards the prejudice (not altogether unfounded) which the Army entertains against the department, and the jealousy with which (for obvious reasons) the Army is

regarded by the department. These difficulties undoubtedly exist and must be met and overcome for the credit of the country.

‘It is no use maintaining a department for the sake of abusing it. The late Government got into an entirely wrong groove when they departed from the principle of Lord Strathnairn’s Committee, and they could not be got out of it. I should not have retired from the service had I seen any prospect of their doing so, and there seemed then no hope of the change which has occurred to afford the Conservative party an opportunity of proving their claim to the administrative superiority they are credited with.

‘Your paper shows not only in what direction the change *should* be made, but also shows with what little cost and friction it *may* be made. I feel great interest in your plan, and, for the first time since the original Control principles were departed from, I entertain hopes of seeing the department on a proper footing. To me your statements are so clear and convincing, and they hit so exactly the blots in the present system, and show a course so plain, simple and easy of setting it right, that I cannot believe they will fail—they cannot be contradicted.

‘Excuse the length of this hasty scrawl, which would grow beyond all bounds if I were to enter into a tithe of the arguments and evidence which accumulate upon me as I write. Wishing you every success and the service the advantage of the plan you so ably advocate,

‘ Believe me,

‘ Very faithfully yours,

‘ W. TYRONE POWER.’

## CHAPTER III

1877—1887

Director of Supplies and Transports—Marriage—Feeding the Army during the Nile Campaign—Praise from Lord Wolseley—The Suakin-Berber Railway—Parliamentary Tributes—Is Made a K.C.B.—Some Personal Traits—His Relations towards his Subordinates.

IN 1878 Haliburton succeeded Sir William Drake as Director of Supplies and Transports, and shortly before that date a new chapter in his career had been opened. On November 3, 1877, he was married to Mariana Emily, daughter of the late Leo Schuster, and widow of Sir William Dickason Clay, Bart. Hitherto he had lived the life of a bachelor of somewhat retiring disposition, wrapped up in his work, and little affected by the attractions and distractions of fashionable London. His wife was a lady of ample private means, witty and agreeable, fond of society, and moving in a circle which embraced men and women of varied interests and accomplishments, and where brains and good breeding were indispensable passports. Her house

in Lowndes Square was a centre of quiet hospitality, attractive alike to the citizen of the world and to those who held aloof from the common round of pleasure and amusement. Throughout their married life Lady Haliburton had one single aim: the comfort, the happiness, the success of her husband. With a woman's shrewdness she realised that, if his remarkable qualities were to find proper scope, he must shake off the habit of self-effacement which absorption in official routine is apt to engender, and reveal his individuality to a wider company than that with which he was brought into immediate and daily contact. To a man of Haliburton's fearless and independent character the change in his worldly fortunes made not an iota of difference, but it would have been contrary to human nature, and to all experience, if the step which rendered him indifferent to the vicissitudes of the public service had not given him a new position in the eyes of his colleagues and superiors.

The period during which Haliburton 'directed' the Supply and Transport services comprised eight wars or 'sorts of war.' The twenty years that followed the Indian Mutiny had been an epoch of almost unbroken peace, so far as the British Empire was concerned, but the time had come when the gates of the Temple of Janus were once more

to be unlocked.<sup>1</sup> In 1877 the services of British Regulars were required on the frontiers of Cape Colony. In 1878 the Russo-Turkish imbroglio which involved the calling out of the Reserves, and the subsequent occupation of Cyprus, put the abilities of the new Director to the test. In 1879 came the Zulu War: this was followed in rapid succession by the first Transvaal War, by the Tel-el-Kebir campaign, by General Graham's operations in the Soudan in 1884, by the Bechuana-land Expedition, and by the operations up the Nile and round Suakin, undertaken in the vain hope of relieving General Gordon and 'smashing the Mahdi at Khartoum.'

With the exception of the Egyptian War of 1882, at which date he was incapacitated for duty by the effects of a bad fall, the arrangements for the supply and transport in every one of these expeditions devolved upon Haliburton. In time of war and under the ever-varying conditions of active service it is impossible to insure with absolute certainty against waste and loss and accident, or against the shortcomings of subordinates. But as regards the despatch of stores and transport equipment from home, no British armies in the field

<sup>1</sup> 'Tum regina deum caelo delapsa morantes  
Impulit ipsa manu portas, et cardine verso  
Belli ferratos rumpit Saturnia postes.'

*Aeneid*, vii. 620.

had ever been so well found and catered for as during those years. The nature of his task may be gathered in some degree by a letter received from a staff officer<sup>1</sup> in May 1879, on the eve of Lord Wolseley's departure for South Africa.

‘With reference to our conversation of yesterday, Sir Garnet desires me to say to you that, knowing nothing at present of the condition of the stores at the seat of war, and having been, up to this moment, employed on work which required all his attention, so that he has had very little means of judging of the details of what has been going on at the Cape, it is quite impossible for him to give any opinion whatever as to the amount of stores that ought to be sent out. It must be entirely on your own responsibility that you either do or do not comply with any requisitions that have at present been made to you. Sir Garnet looks to you to keep up the supplies at the seat of war to an adequate standard.’

That Haliburton not only succeeded in satisfying Lord Wolseley's expectations, but had been enabled to send off at a fortnight's notice large supplies for the forces hurried off to Natal after Isandhlana,<sup>2</sup> is to be attributed to the events of the previous year. Before the days of telegraphs and steam the supplies for our armies in the field were procured almost entirely on the spot or from the

<sup>1</sup> The present Major-General Sir J. F. Maurice, K.C.B..

<sup>2</sup> January 22, 1879.

nearest adjoining territory, and the items that were drawn from the United Kingdom were insignificant in quantity. Gradually, as communications became perfected, a change set in, and the main base for the troops on active service was transferred to Pall Mall. But no adequate system or establishment for carrying out these duties had been created, when the sudden occupation of Cyprus threw a heavy strain upon the Supply and Transport. The first troops who landed found themselves on very short commons, and some of Haliburton's scanty band of subordinates seem temporarily to have lost their heads.<sup>1</sup> The Director, as head of the department, was prompt in explaining to his Parliamentary chief, the Surveyor-General,<sup>2</sup> the source of the mischief, and he insisted that without an establishment for reserve supplies at home it was impossible to grapple with such emergencies. Fortunately the Secretary for War, Colonel Stanley,<sup>3</sup> had taken the unusual step of proceeding himself to Cyprus and investigating the various complaints—mainly arising out of an outbreak of fever, with which the Supply department had nothing to do<sup>4</sup>—that were being ventilated in the press. What he saw and learnt on the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide infra*, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> For the office of Surveyor-General, *vide infra*.

<sup>3</sup> The late (fifteenth) Earl of Derby.

<sup>4</sup> *Military Life of the Duke of Cambridge*, ii. 114.



spot convinced him of the justice of Haliburton's representations, and funds were provided out of the vote of credit<sup>1</sup> for the immediate creation of an establishment for reserve supplies at Woolwich. Without this the task of equipping the Natal expedition could not have been accomplished within anything approaching the required period.

For his services in connection with the Zulu War Haliburton was made a C.B. in 1880,<sup>2</sup> but the most marked success of his career as Director was achieved in the Nile campaign of 1884-1885, which presented unparalleled difficulties both in relation to supply and transport. The latter, as all must remember, was conducted by special 'whaleboats' suited to Nile navigation and to portage. They were designed, built and equipped to the direct order of Lord Wolseley,<sup>3</sup> inspired by his recollections of the Red River campaign of 1870. Eight hundred of them were sent out, each

<sup>1</sup> The supplementary estimate for naval and military supplies voted in the previous February.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Beaconsfield's letter is dated January 28, and it was accompanied by a graceful note from Colonel Stanley: 'I am glad it should have been bestowed while you and I were colleagues.'

<sup>3</sup> See *The Campaign of the Cataracts*, by Major-General (then Colonel) Sir William Butler, and *The Official History of the Soudan Campaign*, Part I. 61 *seq.* The officers originally entrusted with the building of the boats were Sir William Butler, Sir Redvers Buller, and General (then Colonel) Alleyne; on Sir William Butler's departure for Egypt, after some four hundred of them were ready for delivery, his place was taken by Major-General (then Major) Sir Coleridge Grove.

capable of carrying twelve soldiers and a hundred days' supplies, while voyageurs and Kroomen were brought from Canada and the West Coast of Africa to pilot the boats through the broken waters of the Cataracts. In view of the anticipated strain on the troops, moral and physical, and in spite of some ridicule, it was determined that the provisions should differ both in variety and in quality from any that had hitherto been issued on service. They had to be packed in specially designed cases, suitable alike to the light Nile boats and to the rough camel transport of the desert, while the unknown effect of the climate on the packages and contents had to be guarded against by conjecture and analogy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The ordinary daily field ration was:  $1\frac{1}{4}$  lb. fresh or 1 lb. preserved meat;  $1\frac{1}{4}$  lb. bread, or 1 lb. biscuit or flour;  $\frac{1}{3}$  oz. tea;  $\frac{1}{3}$  oz. coffee;  $2\frac{1}{4}$  oz. sugar;  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. salt;  $\frac{1}{36}$  oz. pepper; 1 lb. fresh vegetables, or 1 oz. compressed vegetables, or 1 tin *erbswurst*;  $\frac{1}{32}$  gal. lime-juice, with  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz. sugar. The boat ration was: Preserved corned meat, 1 lb. on four days out of six; preserved fresh meat, 1 lb. on one day out of six; ham or bacon, 1 lb. on one day out of six; fresh meat, 1 lb. in substitution for 1 lb. of any of the foregoing, whenever it can be procured; cheese,  $\frac{3}{4}$  oz. daily; biscuit, navy or cabin, 1 lb. five days out of six; bread,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  lb. in substitution for 1 lb. of biscuits, whenever procurable; flour,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  lb. one day out of six; baking powder,  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. to 12 lb. of flour. In addition to which the men on the boats received daily: 1 oz. tea, 3 oz. sugar,  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz. salt,  $\frac{1}{36}$  oz. pepper,  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. rice, 1 oz. preserved vegetables or 12 oz. fresh vegetables,  $\frac{1}{1280}$  gallon vinegar,  $\frac{1}{320}$  gal. lime-juice,  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. oatmeal; pickles,  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. four days out of six; jam or marmalade,  $1\frac{1}{3}$  oz. two days out of six; *erbswurst*, 1 tin every three days; tobacco,  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. every fifteen days; soap,

Lord Wolseley has the reputation of being a somewhat exacting taskmaster, and when he bestows praise the recipient need have no hesitation as to whether it has been fairly earned. The following letter, then, requires no comment :

Camp, Korti, 8/3/85.

MY DEAR HALIBURTON,—As I may call it, our first campaign is now over, and this little army is going into summer quarters on the open reach of water extending from Hanneck cataract to Merawi. It is therefore a good time for me to write and tell you how I think you and Lawson<sup>1</sup> have fed us. As you know, I have been with many armies in the field, but I have never been with any, or heard of any, that was as well fed as that I now command here. Of course we have had accidents, but, all round, the rations have been delicious and plentiful. We owe you and Lawson a deep debt of gratitude, and I am only too anxious to recognise it. Any system that could supply us with such good food 1400 miles inland here, as we have had, must be a good one, no matter what Mr. Morris<sup>2</sup> may say to the contrary. The men

<sup>1</sup> lb. every fifteen days.—*Official History of the Soudan Campaign*, Part I. 208.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. (afterwards Sir George) Lawson was Assistant-Director of Supplies and Transport, and Haliburton's right-hand man till the abolition of the department in 1888. He was made a Deputy Accountant-General in 1888, received a K.C.B. in June 1897, and died on March 9, 1898. An excellent and careful administrator and first-rate in all matters of detail, he formed an ideal official combination with his more brilliant chief.

<sup>2</sup> Commissary-General (afterwards Sir Edward) Morris, who took a rather jaundiced view of Haliburton's victualling arrangements.

have been very healthy, and I attribute that fact very much to the excellent food you have supplied them with. Please remember me very kindly to Lawson, and believe me to be,

‘Sincerely yours,  
‘WOLSELEY.’

On the strength of this testimonial, Haliburton might almost dispute with Sir Edward Ward the fame of being the best commissariat officer since Moses.

In acknowledging the letter and expressing his extreme gratification at finding that the efforts of his department were giving satisfaction, Haliburton added :

‘We are subject here to constant questions and fault-finding in the H. of Commons, but with your favourable opinion I think we can stand up against the combination which dictates the adverse criticism here. It is no easy matter to ship thousands of tons of perishable supplies, and send them up hundreds of miles of country where they must be subject to rough handling and vicissitudes innumerable, without some losses. Fortunately, if we lose some supplies we gain much experience, and I trust our losses in future will be less and less, though they can never be altogether avoided.’

The total loss from all causes, theft, heat, evaporation, defective packing, rough usage, etc., worked out at 4.69 per cent., a mere fraction, as

Haliburton confessed, of what he anticipated when the expedition was being fitted out, though as a matter of fact the transfers, portages, and other risks to which the supplies were subjected much exceeded what was in anyone's mind at that time. To show that no great exposure to wet was expected, the Mobilisation Committee ordered all the sugar for boat service to be packed in bags. All the cases had to be loaded, at one time or another, on camels, and subjected to some forty transshipments and handlings after reaching Egypt, and those of them which were destined for the whaleboats had been made of special light pattern. For months the packages were exposed all day to the sun in the driest climate in the world, being at the same time subject to damp from the Nile, and to immersion in water when the boats were passing the cataracts.

With regard to the grumbling which found vent in the press and in Parliament, Haliburton remarked in the course of a memorandum to the Surveyor-General :

‘There are people who apparently think that an army operating four thousand miles from its base, with intervening seas, rivers, and deserts, can be supplied with the same facility as a picnic party on the Thames. War is essentially wasteful and destructive. Its supplies are subject to conditions unknown in ordinary life, and to expect

that they can experience those conditions without great losses is to expect the impossible.’<sup>1</sup>

From his above-quoted letter to Lord Wolseley I venture to give this further extract, which is valuable as throwing light upon another sphere of Haliburton’s duties as Director of Transport, and as affording an admirable example of the easy grasp of detail that lay outside the routine of his official experience.

‘My object in troubling you with a long letter is to give you an account of the proceedings here in connection with the Suakin-Berber Railway.

——’s<sup>2</sup> idea was that *he* should build an eighteen-inch gauge line—and his ideas fluctuated between that and a metre gauge. At first we were led to believe that the plant was all available here and in India. This turned out not to be the fact—the whole would have to be made. He also proposed to get together a scratch pack of *personnel* from India and England. This turned out to be impracticable as far as India was concerned. Looking

<sup>1</sup> Haliburton’s closing words are characteristic of the loyalty to all those around him which was no small cause of the unstinted devotion with which he was regarded in whatever office he held. ‘May I be permitted to say that I never could have conducted the service to this satisfactory issue without the cordial and liberal support which you have invariably extended to me and without the invaluable assistance of Mr. Lawson and the other gentlemen associated with me in the task?’

<sup>2</sup> The reference is to a distinguished officer of the Royal Engineers now deceased. In reading the letter one is irresistibly reminded of Rudyard Kipling’s poem—

‘Only a colonel from Chatham can manage the railways of State.’

at the state of affairs there, the Government of India said we could not rely upon the Public Works Department giving us any large amount of organised skilled labour—nor could it spare trained R.E. officers. —, with his marvellous capacity for promising results—in the future—still wished to have the work, and still prophesied grand and immediate results, but he could really give no reliable data to prove that his promises and hopes were well founded.

‘I had always urged that if the work was to be done with any hope of success we should select the largest contractors of good repute in England, and employ them as agents, not as contractors. It was impossible to hope for a contract, as the line had never been surveyed, and there existed no data on which a contract could be based. A number of people offered—amongst others Lucas and Aird, who had just finished the Hull and Barnsley line, who had a staff accustomed to work together, a point on which all authorities placed the greatest importance, who had plant and material for one hundred miles of line ready to ship, and who had constructed works in India.

‘Then came the question of gauge. All, save —, agreed that, save in one point, the 4.8½ ft. offered enormous advantages over the 18 in. or the metre. The 4.8½ could be laid as what is known as a contractors’ line, *i.e.* a temporary line which contractors lay preparatory to making the permanent line. The advantage is that cuttings are almost entirely unnecessary. The line can work on gradients even as high as 1 in 10— 1 in 20 and 25 being quite common. For any exceptional

gradients stationary engines with winding gear are provided, and these, though they reduce the speed over the line as a whole, enable it to be laid and worked with great rapidity. The Hull and Barnsley line with very high gradients worked up to thirty-five miles an hour—up hill and down dale—without cuttings and with temporary bridges, carrying all the heavy girders and stone for permanent work. The other great advantage is that, the base of the line being broad, the rails do not need ballasting to nearly the same extent. The narrow or metre would require to be very solidly laid in order to run trains with safety—and ballasting means time and carriage of material. It also appeared that though the narrow lines required less work of levelling for sleepers, they practically required the same width for working, as the carriages overhang the rails much more than in the 4.8½. The one advantage of the narrower gauge consisted in its being able to work sharper curves, provided the line was laid with great solidity. But with a *surface* line, it is not anticipated that any curves outside the power of the 4.8½ will arise, and that, should they do so, the necessary blastings of cuttings to obviate them would not take so much time to make as would be consumed in the greater labour required on the whole length of the narrow line in order to make it solid. The carrying power of the two could not bear comparison.

\* Looking to the fact that the one system could be shipped immediately and laid more rapidly, Lord H.<sup>o</sup> decided in favour of Lucas and Aird and their system as against — and his. The

\* The Marquess of Harrington, then Secretary of State for War.



result was that on the order to proceed, given on February 15, shipments commenced within a week, and in less than a month the line was commenced, and fifty miles were at Suakin with engines and all plant and stock for working complete. I feel certain if you had been here you would have adopted the course that the Secretary of State approved. I was very much afraid that —— would carry his views—with his boundless confidence and promises, and with his *apparent* knowledge and experience—but when the matter was discussed in the presence of practical men before Lord H. it became apparent that there was real experience and knowledge on one side and mere theory on the other; and so it came to pass that Lucas and Aird were appointed as constructors.

‘After this we still had endless difficulties. ——, when he found he could not prevail, gave in, but he then wished to place Lucas and Aird under himself and his officers for all details of construction. This, they said, they would agree to, but then they could not be responsible for rapidity of work. Their system of work was not understood by —— and not believed in, and it was hopeless to expect that it could be worked to advantage under such conditions. It was arranged that the R.E. should survey the line—give the contractors the general direction from point to point, and that the actual work of laying the line should be entirely in the hands of the contractors—free from interference except so far as military exigencies required; that they were to be permitted to make such deviations, within the points indicated, as exigencies of surface construction required—in

fact that they were to lay the line over a hill, round a hill, or down a hill as they thought best, and not be made to effect cuttings, tunnellings, or such like, not essential to a surface line.

‘Whether — has ever yet cordially accepted this division of work is not very clear, but Graham<sup>1</sup> has been informed of it, and I hope will see that the R.E. do not meddle and muddle. Much will depend on the survey effected: if we get into a wrong direction we may have to overcome difficulties which might be avoided on another line of direction, but if Osman is pushed aside sufficiently to enable survey parties to work, no doubt this will be carefully provided against. If a standing camp is established in the hills, the contractors think it would be well to lay the line, so far, double, in order that one line should be used for supplies, and one for construction. When ready to move on, the double line could be taken up and used beyond Ariab. You will no doubt settle all this on your arrival. I heard that the junior partner of Lucas and Aird, Mr. Ellis, was in Cairo, *en route* home, having started the works, and I suggested to the firm that he should wait there to see you.

‘If I may venture to give an opinion on a strategical question, it seems to me that your views as to the Nile route are unanswerable. It would never have done to advance from Suakin to Berber, leaving the Nile valley thence to Halfa or Assouan entirely unoccupied; but if you hold that and advance, then picking up the fresh line at Berber, the position is perfect, and the Mahdi’s goose will be in a fair way for cooking. This

<sup>1</sup> The late Major-General Sir Gerald Graham, V.C.

country, with its usual lack of backbone, is now getting into a cold fit, and there will be strong pressure on the Government, and a strong disposition in the Government itself, to find a way out of the Soudan, especially if Afghan affairs grow more serious.'

Afghan affairs did rapidly grow more serious, while the cold fit was becoming more pronounced. Haliburton's letter was written on April 3, and before the end of the month the decision of the Government to evacuate the Soudan had been announced. Until a recent date a considerable amount of the material for the construction of the Suakin-Berber railway was lying in Plumstead Marshes.

Lord Wolseley did not confine his appreciation of Haliburton's exertions to the channels of private correspondence. In a despatch to the Secretary of State after the termination of the campaign,<sup>1</sup> he repeated *totidem verbis* the language of his letter of March 8.<sup>2</sup> The general good health of the men, he repeated, and their robust and vigorous appearance were directly attributable to the excellent quality and liberal allowance of their food, which played no small part also in fostering 'the soldier-like spirit and the cheerful good humour with which they bore the many dis-

<sup>1</sup> See Parliamentary Papers of 1885 (C—4329), p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, p. 53.

comforts and the great fatigues inseparable from such a campaign. I feel convinced,' he went on to say, 'that it would be to the future advantage of the State, and of great benefit to the Army, if the field rations were fixed in general accordance with the scale laid down for this army. . . . The present system under which food supplies are furnished by the Director of Supplies and Transports to an army in the field seems to me to work extremely well, and to be a great improvement on the old plan.'

It was scarcely less gratifying to the Director that, in the heat of the Khartoum censure debate, Mr. Gladstone with his back against the wall should have found time to pay him a solid compliment:

'There has been added to that valour on the part of the soldiers the laudable characteristic of consummate skill on the part of the commanders, and with regard to the Department of Supply a state of organisation very different from that which has characterised some of our wars.'<sup>1</sup>

A few months later, when the Marquess of Hartington, now no longer Secretary of State for War, was seconding a vote of thanks to the participants in the Soudanese campaign, he claimed

'that it was admitted on all hands that the commissariat, the transport and the medical arrangements were made with a completeness and a

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard*, ccxciv. 1092.

perfection which have certainly never been surpassed, and which, I believe, have never on any previous occasion been equalled.'

In substantial recognition of his services Haliburton was made a K.C.B. in September 1885. It had been no light or easy task to bring the department up to the high state of efficiency recorded by Lord Hartington and Lord Wolseley. When he assumed the Directorship the very gradual increase of the military, at the expense of the civil, element in its ranks had effected little in the way of reducing the friction between the Army and the department. The latter had been deprived of all direct action and power, and been left at the same time saddled with a responsibility which was freely assigned to it on any breakdown or failure. Many of the officers whom Haliburton found in important posts were inexperienced or rusty, and some of the seniors were inclined to chafe under his authority. 'It was very unpleasant for me,' said the Commissary-General in his evidence before the Committee appointed to inquire into the working of the transport and commissariat during the Egyptian campaign of 1882, 'that Mr. Haliburton, who had been my junior in the Commissariat, should be my superior at the War Office, though he had the tact never to make one feel it.'

Haliburton's tact was combined with an inborn gift for enforcing obedience without parade of authority—the iron hand beneath the velvet glove. He extracted every ounce of work from those under him, and if men were not up to their duties their services were quietly dispensed with. If a rebuke had to be administered to a subordinate, it was inflicted in a quiet, unruffled manner, which produced the maximum of effect with the minimum of humiliation. Indeed, it was a saying in the War Office that sometimes a man would leave Haliburton's room uncertain whether he had been dismissed or not. He was one of those who, by a happy dispensation of Providence, simply *cannot* lose their temper, and his mental organisation was impervious to the little worries which make the daily round of domestic and official life a succession of trials to so many.<sup>1</sup> In the Lowndes Square establishment

<sup>1</sup> As a sample of the suave manner in which Haliburton encountered life's minor miseries, I venture to give the following anecdote. He had bought from a furniture dealer of high repute an expensive sideboard, which was vouched as a genuine antique. Before the bill had been paid, a discharged workman informed him that the article had been, in vulgar parlance, 'faked.' Haliburton's letter of remonstrance followed Gladstonian precedent by propounding three courses for meeting the difficulty. Firstly, he might decline to pay the bill, leaving the dealer to sue him and be cross-examined in open court; secondly, he might pay the bill as it stood, and then sue the dealer for fraud; thirdly, the dealer might make a substantial reduction in his charges. Needless to say, the third course was adopted.

the mistress always delegated to her husband the task from which the bravest male generally shrinks—the correction and objurgation of the servants.

But if he was inclined to the maxim of ‘no duffers in the ship,’ he accorded a complete confidence to those in whom he detected zeal and ability. He was liberal in encouragement, most generous in his acknowledgments for good work done, and he showed a never-failing loyalty to those beneath him. There are many in the Civil Service to-day who largely owe their career to Haliburton’s recognition and recommendation.

‘I hope you will accept in the spirit in which it is offered,’ wrote one of these, ‘the expression of my genuine gratitude. The excessively kind thing you did in my behalf to-day deeply touched me, and will probably indirectly be of great assistance to me. . . . Having neither a Peer for a father, nor an uncle who can control the representation of a county, I am likely to remain what I am. This makes me all the more sensitive to the spontaneous, flattering, and truly kind word you put in for me this morning, and I should like you to realise that your kindness has touched me, and that it will never be forgotten by yours truly —.’

The following letter shows another aspect of the manner in which he was regarded by the younger men :—

‘It has been a great privilege and pleasure to be your Secretary. I have often felt that I was

not able to assist you as I should have liked to have done, but in a sense, if I may say so, you could not help having a fairly efficient Secretary, for it would be impossible for anyone to work with you without "putting his back into it," and catching some of your enthusiasm for good work. I have to thank you for the first "chance" I got in the office, and, I feel sure, if I have any success hereafter, it will be largely due to my association with you.'

Down to the end of his life Haliburton possessed a strong attraction for the young, and was never happier than when in their company. The hospitable instinct, in which Lady Haliburton so fully shared, made the clerks in the War Office constant guests at his table, or visitors to his country house in the holidays. And on festive occasions, such as a Christmas dinner, it would have been difficult for a stranger to guess the every-day relations between host and guests.

Finally, a sample may be given, under Haliburton's own seal, of that combination of firmness and kindness which characterised him when compelled to deal faithfully with a subordinate :—

' War Office, August 17, 1878.

' My dear ——,—I am very sorry there has been a mistake made about the ship's rations for the return Indian voyage,<sup>1</sup> and I have delayed

<sup>1</sup> The allusion is to native troops summoned to Malta by Lord Beaconsfield, in April, 1878, and sent back after the rising of the Berlin Congress.



writing to you from day to day in hopes that some satisfactory explanation would come from Cyprus. Colonel Stanley was very much put out about it, and more than surprised at the delay which occurred in sending a reply to the telegram which was sent to you by his orders on the 3rd, and by the unsatisfactory nature of the reply when it came. It practically evaded the question which was—why were the ship rations, ordered to be got ready on the 4th of June, not forthcoming? The papers were full of the breakdown of the Department, and when we seek for an explanation we get a reply conveying no information whatever. I write now to tell you that the G.O.C. Malta has been called upon to state what steps he ordered to be taken to carry out the orders of the 4th of June, the receipt of which you acknowledged on the 10th. The original orders, I think you took to Cyprus from Malta, and the G.O.C. Cyprus has been directed to call on you for any explanation you may have to give.

‘I know you are apt to think that interference from Head Quarters is very uncalled for, and that you would always be better if left alone to do your work. In this case you were. You simply got through G. O. C. orders to have the rations, and now you must explain why you had them not. As an old friend I advise you to look at the question very seriously, because it is a grave one, and the consequences may be grave to whoever has been in fault.

‘I confess I was never more surprised than when I saw the telegram in the “Daily News” saying that there were no ship’s rations. I told Colonel Stanley I thought there must be a mistake, and that we should

hear that the rations were at Malta. Our orders were clear, and in a note to Lawson, of 13th June, you say "I have arranged with the Admiralty Superintendent here to ship all the supplies necessary for the return voyage, and I am now getting a scale of rations fixed for the voyage." It never struck me as possible that on the 3rd of August these supplies should not be forthcoming. I give you these details so that you may know what aspect the case bears here, and direct your explanation to the important points, or point rather, for there is only one—why was the order received at Malta on 9th or 10th of June not carried out immediately?

'There was one other point in connexion with the move to Cyprus that gave rise to the condemnation of the Department. It was stated that masses of stores and provisions were huddled into the ship, and that great confusion resulted on disembarkation. This, it was foreseen here, would be the case if everything went at once, and the order to hold one month's supplies ready to embark was advisedly given. I had arranged with the Admiralty that Malta should be the base of supply, and that the transports idle at Cyprus would keep up a stream of supplies from Malta until the troops were settled and storehouses provided. It appears that the whole reserve of three months was taken at once, thus unnecessarily confusing both the embarkation and disembarkation, without any reason as far as we knew. The order was distinct, and should not have been disobeyed without cause; and the departure from orders should have been reported. I have not raised this question, however, as, in the pressure of the more important one of the absence of rations, it lost some of its

apparent importance. Privately, I shall be glad to hear why you adopted a course inconsistent with orders, and apparently unnecessary and embarrassing.

‘This is not a cheerful letter to write, my dear ——, but I want you fully to understand that the occasion is one of importance to you, and I hope in your explanation you will recognise this, and banish anything like temper from your official statement. Above all be quite clear, and meet the facts fully, giving dates; and do not, as in your telegram, impose upon us the necessity of asking further and more formal explanations.

‘Very truly yours,

‘A. HALIBURTON.’

## CHAPTER IV

1887—1891

Abolition of Haliburton's Office—Mr. Stanhope's Appreciation—  
Placed on the Retired List—the Singapore Military Contri-  
bution—Made Assistant Under Secretary of State for War.

THE year 1887, the Jubilee, both of Queen Victoria's accession and of the Duke of Cambridge's first commission as a soldier, was marked by important changes in the organisation of the Army. Under Lord Cardwell the War Office had been grouped into three departments, those of the Commander-in-Chief,<sup>1</sup> the Surveyor-General of the Ordnance, and the Financial Secretary. But now, while the financial branch retained its old position, a re-adjustment of duties concentrated the sole military responsibility to the Secretary of State in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief, upon whose shoulders there thus devolved the 'obtaining, holding, and issuing' all kinds of supplies and necessities of war.

One of the offices swept away was that of the

<sup>1</sup> Strictly speaking, this title was not conferred upon the Duke of Cambridge until this very year of Jubilee. Since his first appointment in 1856 he had been 'the Officer Commanding-in-Chief.' The last Commander had been the Duke of Wellington.

Surveyor-General,<sup>1</sup> and with him disappeared the civilian Director of Supplies and Transports. It was a revolution which put Haliburton on the shelf, certainly for the moment, and possibly for good and all; yet it was owing in no small degree to his own representations.<sup>2</sup> During ten years his department had done its work successfully, and, as happens so often, it was never more efficient or in better trim than at the moment of its extinction. But he had always felt that he had been charged with executive duties which did not properly belong to his office under the Surveyor-General. As far back as 1883 a Committee had been appointed at the instigation of Dr. Cameron, one of the Liberal Members for Glasgow, before which a strong point was made 'by some,' as Haliburton drily observes, 'who were interested in making it,' that it was anomalous and improper that, while all local supplies to the Army were obtained through the instrumentality of Commissariat officers, supplies procured in London, for an army in the field, were obtained by a civilian who was presumed to have no special knowledge of the subject.

'Theoretically,' said Haliburton,<sup>3</sup> 'the objection was sound; and, undoubtedly, it would seem to be better that the department or staff charged

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard*, cccxx. 1715.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide infra*, 275.

<sup>3</sup> Memoranda on the Administration of the Supply and Transport Service at the War Office (1895).

with the executive duty of supplying the Army should be charged with that duty whether it is performed in the field or in London. The constitution of this office does not require that the actual provision of supplies demanded for the field should be effected by the Director of Supplies in person. The practice arose, I think, from the accident that when supplies were urgently demanded there was no other available machinery at Headquarters for providing them. Now a system has been established, reserve stores have been created at Woolwich,<sup>1</sup> where the details of supply transactions centre, and with the aid of that establishment there is no reason whatever why the Quarter-Master General's staff should not take over the provision of all such supplies, and carry out the service under the financial control of the Surveyor-General just as General Officers Commanding perform similar services in their commands under financial control.

‘I do not anticipate,’ he added, ‘that the work will be better done than it has been done, but it will, in future, be on a more intelligible and defensible footing, and the change now proposed is one I have, on that ground, long advocated.’

It seems clear that Haliburton, while desiring the transfer to the Quartermaster-General of the executive duties and responsibilities of the Director of Supplies and Transports, did not contemplate for a moment the abolition of the office of Surveyor-General. Still less did he advocate the abolition

<sup>1</sup> *Vide supra*, p. 50.

of civil control over expenditure. His recommendation was to the effect that, for the future, the Military Department should make it their business to foresee the requirements of the troops both in peace and war, should be in communication with the Admiralty and with Generals Commanding, and should have plans prepared for victualling the great fortresses in the event of war. The duty of the Civil Department would consist in seeing that the necessary funds were provided, advantageously expended, and properly accounted for.

The actual changes, however, inaugurated by Mr. Stanhope went far beyond Haliburton's recommendations. With the abolition of the office of Surveyor-General administrative control passed from the civilian to the soldier in the War Office itself, as it had done a few years previously in garrison and in the field. The attenuated civil control, now exercised through the Financial Secretary, was limited, in practice, to the examination of completed expenditure, thus 'merely securing the integrity of charges without affording any effective control over their necessity or their extent.'<sup>1</sup> It was another and a conspicuous step along the path which Haliburton, as an old 'Constitutionalist,' regarded with disfavour and suspicion.

In announcing to Parliament his scheme of

<sup>1</sup> *Army Administration*, p. 33.

reconstruction, Mr. Stanhope was careful to explain that the abolition of the office of Director of Supplies and Transports was not proposed because of any complaint as to its working at the present moment. 'I can only express my own opinion,' he said,<sup>1</sup> 'which, I believe, will be supported by my predecessors in office, as to the admirable way in which these duties have been discharged in recent years by Sir Arthur Haliburton.'

Scarcely less acceptable were the hearty words used by Mr. Woodal,<sup>2</sup> Member for Hanley, and Surveyor-General of the Ordnance during the late Liberal administration.

'Sir Arthur Haliburton is not only a man of the greatest ability and courtesy, but he may challenge the severest criticism of the Supply and Transport, and be able to come out of the ordeal with flying colours. . . . It is only just to say so much for a very able and devoted public servant, especially after what has been commonly supposed to have been the disclosures of the Committee which sat upstairs in connexion with supplies.'

His place abolished and his occupation gone, Haliburton was now entitled to retire on a substantial pension; but the Government pressed him to remain a year longer in the Service, and to give the War Office the benefit of his experience and judgment in getting the new scheme into working

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard*, cccxx. 1713.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 1730.



order. The details of what was nothing less than the complete transfer of the Commissariat and Transport from the civil to the military side were exceedingly complicated, and it was not until March, 1889, that he was able to report the line clear.

For the purpose of carrying out his task he had been granted the acting rank of Assistant Under-Secretary of State. This appointment excited the ire of Lord Randolph Churchill, on whom the War Office, and everything connected with it, acted like a red rag displayed to a bull; and his Lordship took upon himself to declare in the House of Commons that the Assistant Under-Secretary for War had no duty to perform except to look after the messengers at the War Office. This onslaught gave Mr. Stanhope another occasion for a generous recognition of Haliburton's services. It is the fate of the Civil Servants of the Crown to bear the brunt of factious and ill-informed criticism, and when ministers who have held high offices join in the hue and cry the lot of the gentlemen in Downing Street and Whitehall is a hard one; nor are their Parliamentary chiefs always ready to assume responsibility. But Mr. Stanhope, whom Haliburton always considered one of the ablest, if not the very ablest, War Minister with whom he was brought in contact, was the last man to allow an exceptionally gifted subordinate to be

flouted without raising a voice in his defence. He retorted that there was not a single person, in any way acquainted with the War Office, who would not acknowledge the conspicuous services of Sir Arthur Haliburton.<sup>1</sup>

In March, 1889, he went, technically, upon the retired list, but he was not allowed to remain idle. The Empire is fortunate in possessing a reserve of experienced ex-officials who are never happier than when entrusted with some tough piece of work which gives opportunity for showing that it is not through fault or choice of their own that they are enjoying inactivity. The persistent pressure of some distinguished soldiers in the War Office, and of their allies out of doors, had aroused the Conservative Government to the necessity of fortifying certain Colonial stations whose defenceless condition had long been a weak joint in the Imperial harness. A series of questions arose as to the contributions which the Colonies might fairly be called upon to make towards the expenditure thus involved and the cost of the increased garrisons. Strong differences of opinion were found to exist, not only between the Colonies themselves and the Home Government, but between the Colonial Office, the Treasury, and the War Office. A Committee was accordingly appointed of repre-

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard*, cccxxiii. 617.

sentatives from these Departments, and Haliburton was invited to preside over it.

The work was one of much complexity and delicacy, and the various reports—for the case of six colonies had to be adjudicated upon—were not arrived at without considerable divergence of opinion. They involved a complete investigation into the financial condition of the Colonies and into the negotiations which had attended their acquisition of a separate status. In most cases their origin was obscured by the mists of time, and such records as existed lay buried in dust-laden pigeon-holes at home or abroad ; but in the Straits Settlements, where the outcry against the eventual decision of the Committee was the loudest, there was no necessity for antiquarian research. Singapore was a mere infant among the Britains beyond the Seas ; and its existence as an independent Colony was preceded by long negotiations, accessible to the public in the Parliamentary papers.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to 1866 the Straits Settlements formed a dependency of India, and shared its financial burdens, though, as far back as 1858, they had addressed a Memorial to Parliament praying that they might be constituted a separate Colony under the direct rule of the Imperial Government. The

<sup>1</sup> See No. 269 of 1862, and papers of 1866 'in continuation of 1862.'

delay was due to the suspicions of the Treasury authorities at home that the principal motive for the change lay in the hope that the defence charges which, under Indian rule, amounted to about two-thirds of the revenue, would henceforward be defrayed out of the Imperial Exchequer.

Those were the spacious days, when the Colonies were still regarded, more or less, as millstones, and the guiding principle of English statesmen of both parties was the avoidance of expense. When Sir Hercules Robinson<sup>1</sup> was sent out to Singapore, in October 1863, to report upon the desirability of the transfer, he was instructed that the primary object of his inquiry was ‘to ascertain whether the Settlements would be in a condition to defray their own expenses without any charge upon Imperial Revenues.’ He was informed, moreover, that ‘in no circumstance would Her Majesty’s Government be prepared to sanction any Imperial expenditure towards either the civil or military charges of the Settlements.’ And when, three years later, the transfer was actually effected, it was made an essential condition that the Colonial revenues should meet their entire expenditure, military as well as civil.

During the twenty-one years that immediately followed the transfer this arrangement had gradually

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lord Rosmead.

sunk into abeyance, indeed, it had apparently been forgotten. And when Haliburton's Committee came to make their investigations it was discovered that the expenses of its military defence, which amounted in 1887 to 30,000*l.*, were annually defrayed out of Imperial Revenue.

The improved defences which were required for Singapore necessitated an increase to its garrison, and the extra cost for garrison and works for the five years, 1889-93, was estimated at 136,000*l.* per annum. The Home Government, however, following the recommendation of the Committee, felt that, as it had allowed the Colonial payments for many years to fall below the proper amount, it might disorganise the finances of the Colony if so large an increase in its contribution was suddenly demanded. While, therefore, re-asserting the principle agreed to on the transfer—that the Colony should bear the full cost of its own civil and military establishment—it reduced the annual demand for the next five years to the round sum of 100,000*l.*

This arrangement, 'equitable and just,' as Lord Knutsford<sup>1</sup> declared it to be, was received with an outburst of indignation in the Straits Settlements. The Legislative Council complained that they had never been consulted. And the

<sup>1</sup> Then Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Governor, Sir Cecil Clementi Smith, in the despatch which announced that the money had been voted for the current year, explained that this result had only been brought about by himself and the other official members voting against their convictions; and he added that it had placed the executive on very strained relations with the legislative authority. Individual members of Council wrote home in protest; public meetings were held at Singapore; the commercial community in the Colony, and the Straits Settlement Association in London, appealed with great vehemence to the Colonial Office.<sup>1</sup>

Although three Departments of State were involved in the controversy, it was the War Office which was more immediately interested in enforcing the increased contribution, and it was from the War Office representative that the Colonial Secretary drew his ammunition. In a succinct and admirably drawn Minute,<sup>2</sup> Haliburton contended that the Home Government had dealt with a very complicated case in a fair and reasonable spirit, and that the remonstrants from the Colony

<sup>1</sup> See *Parliamentary Papers*, 1890-91, C. 6290, 443.

<sup>2</sup> Signed, *pro formâ*, by Sir Ralph Thompson, then Permanent Under-Secretary for War. In the recently published *Life of the Duke of Newcastle* Thompson is mentioned as the one fortunate acquisition which the War Office owed to his ill-starred Secretaryship. Sir Ralph was Permanent Under-Secretary from 1878 to 1895. He died December 1, 1902.

had failed to produce any arguments which could justify a permanent departure from the understanding on which the transfer of the Settlements to Imperial control had been accomplished.

Thus fortified, Lord Knutsford informed the Colony and its representatives that the revised military contributions must stand, and that the money must be found ; nor would he hold out any hope of a reversal of his decision. The Colony, however, was not to be silenced so easily, and five years of strenuous agitation, of reiterated protests, and of resignations by members of Council softened, eventually, the heart of Downing Street. Whatever the original equities of the dispute may have been—and by the strict letter of the law Haliburton's contentions are unanswerable—the fall in the Exchange value of silver had placed a burden on the Exchequer of the Settlement which had never been in contemplation when the hard and fast rules of 1889 were adopted. One of the last official acts of Lord Rosebery's Government was the consent by Lord Ripon to the adoption of a sliding scale, under which the military contribution became a fixed percentage of the revenue of the Colony.<sup>1</sup>

So closed a controversy which had imposed upon Sir Arthur Haliburton the ungrateful rôle, so familiar to those in the higher ranks of the Civil

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Papers*, 1895, C. 7784.

Service, of running counter to popular sentiment, and of submitting to the cold, dry light of analysis the claims of a body of men firmly convinced that they have a legitimate grievance.<sup>1</sup> It rested with him to stand forward as the representative and champion of that long-suffering person, the taxpayer of the United Kingdom, who, in the last resort, foots the bill for those who think Imperially. Throughout these battles—for Hong-kong, Ceylon, and Mauritius all showed fight—the brunt of attack and defence fell upon Haliburton. His temporary immunity from routine duty had given him leisure for the investigation of the difficult questions involved, both historical and financial, which had been denied to his colleagues from the Treasury and the Colonial Office. And his tenacity of purpose and skill in cross-examination made him at an early stage the dominating figure on the Committee.

In January 1890 he was offered a Commissionership of Customs by the Right Hon. W. H. Smith, the First Lord of the Treasury: it was refused, to

<sup>1</sup> His attitude is well represented in the concluding paragraph of another Minute arising out of the labours of the same Committee. 'As a general rule the War Office is glad to receive such military contributions as the Colonial Office thinks the Colonies can afford to give, but in this instance (Ceylon), in view of the complications surrounding the subject, it seems wise to limit the demand to such an amount as can be clearly justified; more especially as that course will aid us in re-establishing the question of future contributions on a more secure and certain basis.'



the no small disappointment of the latter; but Haliburton had small inclination for a post which would have placed him beneath one colleague, at least, who was his junior in official standing.

Later on, in the same year, he served, in company with Sir Francis Mowatt, and others, on a Committee appointed to consider the scale of pensions, terms of superannuation, and the general grievances of the Metropolitan Police.<sup>1</sup> The complainants entirely failed to convince him that they had a case; his Memorandum was pronounced to be 'most convincing on its merits,' but he was reminded, by a very experienced authority, that 'nowadays a mere business question like this does not get settled on the merits—the politicians take it in hand.' There are many London constituencies in which the police vote is of considerable importance.

In May, 1891, he became Assistant Under-Secretary for War in succession to Colonel Deedes.

'I have not yet written to you,' ran the letter from Mr. Stanhope, 'respecting the Under-Secretaryship of State, because I was strongly of opinion that, before arriving at any final decision, I should like to see Sir Ralph.'<sup>2</sup> I saw him to-day, and am

<sup>1</sup> These culminated on July 7, some weeks after Haliburton's Committee had reported, in a partial strike of the Constabulary, which at one time threatened to assume dangerous proportions.

<sup>2</sup> The late Sir Ralph Thompson.

glad to find that he entirely agrees with me as to this appointment.

‘I think it would be very much to the advantage of the public service, if I could persuade you to allow me to nominate you to it. I am aware that your own personal feeling is somewhat in favour of rest after long service; but it would be a very great misfortune if your experience and capacity were lost to the public service when such an opportunity occurs of retaining them.

‘To me, personally, it would be a great pleasure if we could work together for the rest of my time here, while it is also certain that Sir Ralph and yourself can, working together, run the office more efficiently than is possible under any other combination. I hope, therefore, that you will agree to my proposition.’

This recall to active service was in itself no small compliment to a man who had drifted out of the running for preferment, and whose powers were unsuspected outside a comparatively small group of ministers, such as Mr. Stanhope and Mr. Smith, and soldiers, such as Lord Wolseley, who had been brought into close personal relations with him. I have been told that when his name was submitted to the Prime Minister the latter was sublimely unconscious of his claims and qualifications. But ready recollection of the permanent servants of the Crown, even within the sacred portals of the Foreign Office, was never a foible of the late Marquess of Salisbury.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vide infra*, 231.

## CHAPTER V

1891-1892

The Wantage Committee—Haliburton's Position on it—His Dissident Report—Army Members and Short Service—the Effect of Haliburton's Action—Lord Wolseley's Comment.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL, in one of his irresponsible moods, had asserted, as we have seen, that the Assistant Under-Secretary for War had nothing to do except look after the messengers at the War Office. It is a ludicrous misstatement; but, to a certain extent, that functionary is a servant of all work, the man who can best be spared to represent the department on committees and inquiries. And it was not long before Haliburton was requisitioned in this direction.

During the years immediately preceding 1891 a serious falling off in the number of recruits attracted to the Army had produced one of our periodical crises, and great difficulties had been encountered in making up the annual drafts for India and other foreign stations. The causes, as will appear, were exceptional; their effect had

been foreseen, and it ought to have been provided against. But a chorus of complaint arose, alike from the commanders of depleted battalions, and from that school, still, numerous, which was unreconciled to the reforms of Lord Cardwell. There were 178 'service members' in Parliament, and they were fully capable of making their voices heard.

On April 28, Mr. Stanhope constituted a Committee to 'consider the general question of the best means of providing the drafts necessary for the due maintenance of the Army abroad, and, incidentally, any points which might tend to remove the difficulties experienced in obtaining recruits of proper age and physique.'<sup>1</sup> More detailed instructions ordered the Committee to report upon :—

(a) The existing inducements to enter the army ;

(b) The length and conditions of service with the colours and in the Reserve ;

(c) The advantages accruing to the private soldier on discharge, with special reference to deferred pay.

The main object of the inquiry was to ascertain :

'In what manner and to what extent these conditions failed to meet the requirements for drafts

<sup>1</sup> Letter of the Right Hon. Edward Stanhope to Lord Wantage, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1892, C. 6582.

for India and the Colonies, and whether any alterations are required (within the limits of the existing establishment), due regard being had to the maintenance of an adequate reserve.'

The Committee was also asked to consider what means, if any, could be devised for promoting the employment of reserve and discharged men in civil life, so as to increase the popularity of enlistment. Whether Mr. Stanhope foresaw the gravity of the issues which would be raised before the Committee, or how far it would travel from the question of 'drafts,' may reasonably be doubted.

At the head of the Committee was placed Lord Wantage, who, as Lieutenant Lindsay, had won the Victoria Cross at the Alma, who had played a conspicuous part in the Volunteer movement, and who had served as Financial Secretary in the War Office during Lord Beaconsfield's last administration. The other members consisted of the present Lord Selborne, then Viscount Wolmer, M.P., General (then Lieutenant-General) Sir Edward Bulwer, G.C.B.,<sup>1</sup> Sir T. Crawford, M.D., the late Lieutenant-General W. H. A. Feilding,<sup>2</sup> the late General (then Lieutenant-General) Sir J. J. H. Gordon, K.C.B.,<sup>3</sup> the late Colonel A. C. Nightingale, the

<sup>1</sup> Former Inspector of Recruiting.

<sup>2</sup> Then Inspector of Recruiting.

<sup>3</sup> Of the Indian Army, who had served through the Mutiny, and who died November 2, as these pages were going through the press.

late Major-General (then Colonel) Salis-Schwabe, the late Colonel A. J. Shuttleworth, R.A., the late Major J. Stacpole of the Army Service Corps, and Sir Arthur Haliburton, K.C.B.<sup>1</sup>

The latter has been described as holding what is termed in the law a watching brief on behalf of the War Office. It was hardly to be expected that the department of the State responsible for the efficiency and the existence of the British Army should be unrepresented on such an inquiry; but the word brief is quite inapplicable in his case. It so happened that the subject of recruiting, and of the 'terms of service' generally, had never been brought before Haliburton's attention, and he probably had a more absolutely open mind with regard to them than any of the other ten members of the Committee. His general experience and his peculiar faculty of judgment were his sole credentials; he had no preconceived ideals, and from first to last his attitude was that of the juryman sworn to 'hearken to the evidence.' In the storm that, at a later period, was raised against him, it was constantly asserted that he was placed on the Wantage Committee with instructions 'to wreck the ship'—'a calumny'—to use his own words, which he very strongly resented, and which

<sup>1</sup> Captain Percy Lake (now Major-General Lake, C.B.) acted as Secretary.

was repudiated in clear and emphatic language by Mr. Stanhope.<sup>1</sup>

No less unwarranted was the attempt to discredit him on the ground that he shared with others the responsibility for the adoption of the existing organisation. As we know, Haliburton did not join the War Office until after Cardwell's short service system had been adopted. And, in the interval between 1870 and 1891, his duties had been confined to branches of Army Administration into which the questions before the Wantage Committee either did not enter at all, or, if they did, only cursorily and incidentally. What Sir Arthur got to know about long and short service was derived from the mouths of the witnesses and from the line of inquiry into the administration of the British Army which the course of the proceeding suggested.

The Committee sat on thirty-one days between May 6 and December 10, 1891, and called seventy-two witnesses. These included the Duke of Connaught, the Duke of Cambridge, Viscount Wolseley, Sir Evelyn Wood, Sir Redvers Buller, the Accountant-General (Sir Ralph Knox), the Lieutenant-Governor of Chelsea Hospital, the Principal Medical Officer of the Army, the Director of Clothing, Members of the Charity Organisation

<sup>1</sup> *Vide infra*, 103.

Society, officers commanding, and regimental officers of all ranks and branches of the service, together with colour-sergeants and private soldiers. The Blue Book containing the Minutes of Evidence, in 492 double-columned pages,<sup>1</sup> is a storehouse of curious and interesting information, of very unequal value, it must be confessed, concerning the inner life of the Army and the working of the system introduced by Lord Cardwell. The best of the witnesses allowed themselves to be carried away in the heat of discussion, and the evidence of so strong an advocate of short service as Lord Wolseley contained that famous description of our home battalions as ‘squeezed lemons,’ which was so often to be quoted against him. It used to be said of Beavan’s Reports that there was no conceivable proposition of equity for which support could not be found in their pages, and a similar observation, *mutatis mutandis*, might be made with regard to the evidence taken before Lord Wantage’s Committee.

An examination of the Blue Book in which that evidence is contained serves to emphasise the fact that Haliburton was present as a genuine learner. He is evidently, in the phrase of Rosa

<sup>1</sup> 1892, C. 6582 I. Only the evidence which had been submitted to cross-examination was published; this decision ruled out a written statement by Lord Roberts, who was then in India.



Dartle, 'asking for information'; and the questions put by him, though not excessive in number, cover a wide range of subjects.<sup>1</sup> They ranged over length of service, linked battalions, deferred pay, employment after leaving the service, length of time required for mobilisation, the annual training of the reserve, 'special enlistments,' the qualifications of recruiting officers, sentry-go in London, and the sale of old uniforms.

Haliburton's legal training, his pertinacity, and his perfect command of temper, rendered him an ideal examiner of witnesses; his powers of memory enabled him to detect the smallest contradictions or discrepancies, and his grip was like that of a terrier. The occasional sparring over incidental matters between him and Lord Wolseley<sup>2</sup> must have been as entertaining to watch as it is instructive to read. Moderation in statement is not an art to the practice of which Lord Wolseley has ever devoted any great attention; but his skill in verbal fence, as Haliburton strove, time after time, to pin him down, is worthy of a great strategist; it affords a perfect example of

<sup>1</sup> Without professing to be completely exhaustive, the following catalogue gives the pages on which his interlocutions will be found: 16, 110-12, 161, 167-8, 215, 230-1, 247-8, 281, 293, 297, 300, 305, 315-16, 320, 343, 453, 483, 487, 489-90.

<sup>2</sup> *E.g.* pp. 167-8, 281-2.

the retention of the offensive while conducting a retreat.

When the Report was presented to Parliament, at the beginning of March 1892, a most remarkable division of opinion was revealed. It was signed by all eleven members of the Committee, but asterisks were appended to the names of Generals Bulwer and Feilding, Colonel Salis-Schwabe, Major Stacpole, and Sir Arthur Haliburton, signifying that they dissented from certain recommendations. The dissents of the first four were briefly set out in three printed pages, while the 'remarks' of Sir Arthur occupied 109 paragraphs, and extended to twenty-nine pages, as against the twenty-eight pages of the Report itself.

From a not unnatural anxiety that the Report should be out in time for the debates on the military estimates, the final sittings of the Committee had been very hurried, and Haliburton's dissentient remarks had not been drawn up, still less submitted to the other members when they agreed upon their recommendations. The Report bears date January 27; Haliburton's dissent was signed February 20.<sup>1</sup> This was unfortunate in many

<sup>1</sup> The delay was caused by the necessity of making out, on Haliburton's initiative, the cost of certain of the recommendations of the Committee.

ways, and Colonel Salis-Schwabe wrote to Haliburton immediately on the receipt of the latter document, which he then saw for the first time, that but for the pressure at the end, he thought Generals Bulwer and Feilding, as well as himself, would probably have acquiesced in his conclusions. In the circumstances, it perhaps would have been better if Haliburton had abstained from signing the Report at all; a minority Report—to which he might or might not have obtained adhesions—would have cleared the issues, and have made his position more intelligible to the public.

The recommendations of the Committee are exceedingly difficult to summarise. They travel over a wide field: they deal with the whole recruiting question, with the drafts, with the feasibility of an increase in the number of battalions, with the length of service in the infantry, cavalry, and artillery, with deferred pay and pensions, with the daily pay and position of the soldier generally, with the training of the Reserve, and with the civil employment of discharged soldiers and reservists. In many respects they are wise and sensible, showing an intimate acquaintance with the grievances and the needs of Thomas Atkins, and a good number of them have been carried out: for example, the extra pay, the abolition of the vexatious ‘stoppages’ for sea

kit, and for clothing in India, and an alteration in the recruiting posters, framed to bring more clearly before the mind of the recruit the terms of his engagement.

With some of the recommendations Haliburton was thoroughly in accord, as he was with those paragraphs of the Report which gave a decisive verdict in favour of short service, of a thorough application of the Territorial system, and of the maintenance of the close connection between the Army in India and the Army at home. But in his judgment the crucial point of the Report—the suggested change in the terms of service with the colours and in the reserve, with a view to strengthening the home battalions—was totally destructive of the admirable principles enunciated in its earlier paragraphs.

The Committee had advised that the periods of service should be modified and made more elastic:—

(a) By allowing men to extend their colour service from year to year, or for any number of years up to twelve in all.

(b) By allowing men of good character who had left the colours, not less than six and not more than twelve months previously, to return from the Reserve to complete twelve years' colour service

without refunding any money or gratuity received on transfer to the Reserve.<sup>1</sup>

(c) By allowing, if the exigencies of the service should permit, trained soldiers, who wished to do so, to pass freely to the Reserve before the end of their period of engagement with the colours.

Sir Arthur Haliburton was firmly convinced that these changes in the terms of enlistment were calculated, through their effect on the short service system, to reduce our fighting reserve by many thousands of men, and at the same time, largely to augment the non-effective charges of the Army; and against them accordingly he put forward his whole strength.

It was not without considerable diffidence that he made up his mind to record his dissent. His colleagues on the Committee comprised soldiers of rank and experience, who had the good of the Army and of the nation at heart no less than himself, and who for the most part had spent their lives in the Service. The Chairman, moreover, had been for three years at the War Office, and, as a young member of the House of Commons, had, as far back as the 'seventies, taken part in the debates on the inauguration of the Cardwellian reforms.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, this branch of

<sup>1</sup> Known popularly as Deferred Pay, *vide infra*, 205.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Lord Wantage*, 208.

Army administration was, as we have said, entirely new and unfamiliar to Sir Arthur Haliburton.

‘Until I went on the Committee,’ he wrote to General Maurice, after the publication of the Report, ‘I knew nothing of the subject; my experience had been entirely in the direction of supply and transport. At the Committee I learnt very little. Most of the evidence was mere desultory conversation, not directed to specific points—unscientific and vague. The result was that I was obliged to examine the facts of the case for myself. These drove me to the conclusion you find in my report. It would be indeed strange if, in a subject so full of pitfalls, I had fallen into none of them; and I shall be more than grateful for a friendly hand to pull me out again.’

In tabling the grounds of his dissent, Haliburton was confronted with a double obligation. It was impossible merely to indicate the recommendations which he was unable to accept. He detected omissions which had to be supplied in order to make clear the extent of the difficulties experienced in the provision of drafts for India and the Colonies, and the limits of the remedies required to overcome them. If the recent failure had been due to a permanent inability to raise the requisite number of recruits, he was ready to admit that it might become necessary to stimulate recruiting by raising the emoluments of the soldiers. But he was prepared to show that the

causes of the existing breakdown, and of the draft difficulty during the last two years, were to be sought and found elsewhere.

‘In 1886–87 the supply of recruits exceeded the demand, and in 1888 certain stimulants to recruiting were withdrawn, the numbers falling in that year to 25,153, from 39,409 in 1886, and 31,225 in 1887; and it is only in 1891 that the numbers have recovered to 36,003.<sup>1</sup> As it was known in 1888 that, owing to increases in the Army, and to other exceptional circumstances which occurred in 1883–86, an unusually large number of men would go to the Reserve from certain regiments, in the period 1890–93, and that unusually large drafts would consequently be required for those corps in that period, it was unfortunate that any measure calculated, even temporarily, to reduce the supply of recruits should have been adopted. In view of the impending exceptional demand for drafts, steps should rather have been taken, either to mitigate the demand or to stimulate recruiting, and the establishment of the battalions concerned should have been temporarily increased above their ordinary strength so that, when the demand for exceptional drafts arose, it could have been promptly and satisfactorily met.

‘A recruit does not become qualified for a “draft” for some considerable time (in the case of India, for, on an average, one and a half years); and, to meet the abnormal demands for Indian drafts in 1890–91, it was essential that prepara-

<sup>1</sup> Printed 86,003 in the *Parliamentary Papers*.

tions for them should commence in 1888–89. When a merchant has liabilities maturing at a given date he takes care to have funds ready to redeem them, and there seems to be no reason why similar foresight should not be observed in meeting the requirements of the Army.

‘The question referred to the Committee, viz., what are the causes of the recent failure fully to supply drafts, and what the remedies, though one of great importance, is in reality a very simple one, and a close comparison of the Short Service system, as originally designed, and the Short Service system, as at present administered, at once discloses the measures necessary to remedy the difficulty that has arisen.’<sup>1</sup>

The task of explaining the real meaning and operation of short service was now undertaken by Haliburton for the first time. He was addressing himself primarily to the Secretary of State for War, and, through him, to the Cabinet; and the presentation of his case was of a technical rather than of a popular character. A very few years were to elapse before he found himself going over the same ground, and repeating the same arguments, in the full publicity afforded by the columns of *The Times*. It will be more convenient, and will save much tedious repetition, if I reserve his defence of short service to the Chapters in which Haliburton’s controversy with Mr. Arnold Forster

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Papers*, 1892, C. 6582, p. 33.



is set out in detail.<sup>1</sup> But the danger which he had to meet was far more real and pressing in the earlier emergency. And during the whole course of his career, official and non-official, Haliburton never deserved better of his country than by the firm stand which he made, alone and unsupported, on the Wantage Committee.

The difficulty about the drafts, which had brought the Committee into existence, he showed to be purely one of administration, due to the departure from Cardwell's main principle of an exact balance between the battalions at home and the battalions abroad. It was *not* caused by any general want of recruits, or by insufficient inducements to men to enter the service; for, as a matter of fact, more men had been enlisted in the past year than would have been necessary had the Cardwellian system never been tampered with. A slight increase in the number of battalions, certain alterations in the 'reliefs,' and the placing of all battalions abroad on the same establishment, would provide ample remedy for the evils which had arisen from the excess of battalions abroad.

To meet the temporary and exceptional causes which had aggravated the destruction of the Cardwell balance, Haliburton made certain prac-

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Chapters vii.-ix.

tical recommendations. He advised that, when the Reserves were called out they should be regarded as supernumerary to the ordinary peace establishments, and that recruiting should proceed as if no such addition had been made. In the event of any dislocation of the recruiting machinery, through a sudden increase in the numbers of the Army or otherwise, he urged that due preparation should be made three years before the expiration of the colour service of the men so recruited, to 'dissipate' the strain that must be experienced if all the men had to be replaced in a single year. This could be effected by inducing some men to prolong their service for a year or two, and others to pass to the Reserve prematurely.

Here, said Haliburton, as far as the recent failure to supply drafts was concerned, he might terminate his report. But the Committee had made many and important recommendations—some of which, viewed in relation to the drafts difficulty, seemed to him unnecessary and ineffective, while others, if adopted, would, in his opinion, be distinctly injurious to the Army. To these he felt bound to reply in detail.

These recommendations fell into two classes: increases to the pay and allowances of the soldier, and modifications in the terms and conditions of service. They were based on the hypothesis

that infantry battalions at home had become inefficient alike for ordinary peace duties and for active service, and that their condition was due to two main causes: the extreme youth of the recruit, and the excessive drafts which home battalions supply to their sister battalions abroad. To all these conclusions he demurred, for reasons which will be assigned in a later Chapter.<sup>1</sup> To accept them would be to strike a fatal blow at the grand object of Short Service—the Reserve, and their whole tendency was to bring the Army back to conditions analogous to those of the pre-Cardwellian era. They would lead, so he calculated, to a greatly increased establishment,<sup>2</sup> and to an increased yearly expenditure of from two to three millions,<sup>3</sup> while slightly decreasing the fighting strength.

From this brief sketch it will be seen how fundamentally Sir Arthur Haliburton differed from his colleagues—or at least from the majority of them—and how glaring was the antagonism between the Report and the dissenting Observa-

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* pp. 152 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> 'Establishment' is the technical term for the total number of men voted by Parliament, and is to be carefully distinguished from 'strength.'

<sup>3</sup> In a Parliamentary return, issued in the following April, the total cost to the United Kingdom and India, of carrying out the recommendations of the Committee, including the non-effective charges, was estimated at 3,000,000*l.* per annum.

tions. The whole inquiry, indeed, seems to have ranged beyond the intention and expectations of Mr. Stanhope, and it may well be questioned whether he would not have acted wisely in requesting the Committee to reassemble and endeavour to see by a comparison of views whether the members could not arrive at something nearer a common understanding. The consequences of the unfortunate form in which the Report was issued were aggravated by the unavoidable delay in printing the bulky volume which contained the Minutes of Evidence. This did not appear until many weeks after the Report. Long before that date public and 'Service' opinion had ranged itself on the side of the majority, and was proclaiming Sir Arthur Haliburton to be the incarnation of red-tape and officialism.

Within a few days of the presentation of the Report the Army men in the House of Commons were pressing for an opportunity of discussing it, and their speeches showed clearly the anticipations which had been aroused by the appointment of the Committee. In the debate on the Army Estimates, on March 7, 1892,<sup>1</sup> General Goldsworthy declared that, in his opinion, it did not matter a jot whether you had long service or short service. Sir Henry Fletcher said boldly: 'The short ser-

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard*, 4th Series, ii. 220 *et seq.*

vice system is a system which I, as a soldier, cannot, and will not, support.' And General Sir Charles Fraser asserted, even more emphatically, that short service had utterly broken down. In his reply, Mr. Stanhope deprecated any general discussion of the recommendations of the Committee until the evidence had been presented to Parliament, and he seized the opportunity of warmly defending himself against the charge of having chosen Sir Arthur Haliburton as an obstructionist and a marplot:—

'He was nominated by me on the Committee,' said the Secretary of State for War, 'as a man of great experience, and thoroughly able to advise us on these questions. But it so happened that he had never given any special attention to recruiting, and he joined the Committee as a thoroughly impartial man who had an opinion to form on the subject; when it came before the Committee he dealt with it according to the evidence and according to the facts given in previous Reports. Certainly he did not deal with them in accordance with any preconceived notion, or according to any wish expressed on my part. If I had expressed any wish concerning the matter, it might have been that he should not criticise my conduct; but he has taken what I believe to be the perfectly legitimate course of doing so.'

The evidence at last made its appearance, after a good deal of prodding; but from various

causes, including the illness of Mr. Stanhope, the full dress debate on the Wantage Committee was postponed till June 10. The shadows of the coming General Election, at which the defeat of the Government was almost a foregone conclusion, were lengthening,<sup>1</sup> and the discussion was mainly confined to the recommendations bearing on the pay and general condition of the private soldier.<sup>2</sup> Sir Walter Barttelot reiterated his conviction that the War Office was largely concerned in the production of Haliburton's counter-report, and a general tone of dissatisfaction and disappointment pervaded the speeches of the Service Members. No resolution was moved, and the subject smouldered out; but henceforward Haliburton was the target upon which the assailants of the War Office concentrated their fire.

The Committee had shot its bolt; many of its recommendations, including some of which Haliburton disapproved, as well as others which he cordially endorsed, were carried, sooner or later, into effect, and though it is difficult to ascertain whether they have popularised the Army or stimulated recruiting under normal conditions, they have, at any rate, done much towards improving the lot of the private soldier. But on the question of the

<sup>1</sup> Parliament was dissolved on June 28.

<sup>2</sup> See *Hansard*, v. 700 *et seq.*

extension of the term of service with the colours the Government was adamant; and it may fairly be claimed for Haliburton that this was his doing, and his alone. There was a strong party in the Cabinet, in Parliament, and in the country, openly in favour of reverting to long service. A still larger section was vaguely opposed to short service—a system the principles of which they had never grasped, and which they judged solely by the attenuated battalions at home. Such of the latter class as took the pains to study Haliburton's clear and logical argument were, for the first time, enlightened, and as the discussion proceeded, in Parliament and in the Press, his views steadily gained ground. Had Haliburton refrained from publishing his reasoned dissent from the recommendations of the Committee, or had it been less cogent, or less strongly worded, it is more than probable that public opinion would have insisted on, at any rate, a trial being given to the proposed extension of service with the colours; and a mortal wound would have been dealt to that Reserve, which was the sheet-anchor of Cardwell's system, and which, in the hour of need, responded so nobly to his calculations and predictions.

For such an achievement on the part of a single man, hitherto unknown outside a small official circle, it is difficult to find a parallel. It

stamped him, at once, as a public servant of the first rank, and it gave him a recognised position with successive Secretaries of State, and with the heads of the military departments, which is seldom granted to permanent officials, however capable or distinguished.

And from the quarters where encouragement was most welcome he received an ample meed of praise. ‘No doubt you will be criticised,’ wrote General Sir John Adye, after expressing his strong dissent from the main recommendations of the Committee; ‘but I have studied the subject for years, and heartily congratulate you on the ability and courage with which you have treated it.’ Lord Cromer, then Sir Evelyn Baring, who, as a captain in the Artillery, and Military Secretary to Lord Cardwell, had been one of the triumvirate responsible for working out the details of short service, wrote him a long letter from Cairo :

‘I see that the views of the Committee would change the short service system, which, I think, would be a great mistake; and I agree with you fully about the “nursery” argument: only there ought to be, as Cardwell originally wished, some means by which we can always have a small force of, say, 10,000 men, ready for our numerous small wars. I remember, at the time, seeing the disadvantages of the double battalion system—the number of battalions happened to be just about



equal; but it was clear that a very little disturbance would put this arrangement out of gear. . . . The Government will make a great mistake if they carry out any reorganisation of which Wolseley does not approve; the impression left on my mind, in 1872, was that he was nearly the only one who grasped the whole question, and, without doubt, now he knows much more about it than he did then. As to Army expenditure, I wish Wolseley and some strong-headed civilian could be turned loose. But the whole question requires attacking in detail, and not after the Randolph Churchill method.<sup>1</sup> It appears to me that the Commission [*sic*] was much too military. All the Army reforms have been done by civilians, aided by the advice of the best soldiers, who are in a minority. For the matter of that, no department is ever reformed from within.'

And the following letter from Lord Wolseley, brilliant and trenchant, like everything he writes, may be regarded as the most conclusive justification of Haliburton's action:—

'Dublin, February 2, 1892.

'Your paper is most interesting: I shall read it over again to-morrow. It cannot be repeated too often or be too strenuously dinned into the heads of outsiders that it is not Mr. Cardwell's

<sup>1</sup> In allusion, it may be presumed, partly to Lord Randolph's resignation on December 23, 1886, of which the final cause was Mr. W. H. Smith's refusal to accept his proposed reduction of the Army estimates, and partly to the line taken by him in the Hartington Commission, see *Life of Lord Randolph Churchill*, ii. 321.

system that has broken down, but that all our present difficulties and misfortunes have arisen, and are at present directly attributable, to the fact that his system has been glaringly and most unwisely departed from. His system was based upon a balance between the number of units kept at home and those kept abroad—in his time it was seventy-one battalions of Infantry at home and seventy abroad. Now we have sixty-five at home and seventy-six abroad. Since his time we have increased the *permanent* strength of our English Army in India by 10,000 men, including three additional battalions; we keep about 3,000 men—three battalions, etc., etc.—in Egypt, and we have most wisely increased the strength of our distant garrisons, including Malta, to which we should not be able to send reinforcements at the outbreak of hostilities with France. The addition of three battalions to the force maintained in India I always thought myself a very doubtful necessity; but to make it without adding six battalions to our total Army Establishment I always thought was folly—aye, simple madness . . .

‘Our present Army system was always unpopular with the older generation of soldiers. Indeed, few even took the trouble to study it. It was quite enough for them that it was a system propounded by a Liberal lawyer! in Mr. Gladstone’s administration. Heaven and earth were set in motion to condemn it, and much was done, and is still being done, to throw grit into the machinery, and to make it appear as a system which strikes at *esprit de corps*, and all that is healthiest and best in our Army. I don’t want to

enter into this question, beyond saying that it would be difficult to start and propagate a more glaring untruth. . . .

‘Now for the points in your paper of more general application. *We want our Army for War.*<sup>1</sup> For the duties it has to perform during peace it is, as at present constituted, fully capable. I grant you it does not gladden the heart of the old-fashioned Inspecting-General. It is composed of growing lads who, when twenty-two years of age, will be superior, man for man, to the soldiers of any army. The stuff and the untruth that are brought forward by those who don’t like the work which our present system entails is simply sickening to men who know the truth, who know that they had little to do in the old chaos army, and have a considerable amount to do under our short service system.

‘I joined at Chatham, in 1852, and it was full of recruits all waiting for conveyance to India. As regards age, they were nearly all boys, and not nearly such nice looking, or such good boys as those we get now. I was nearly nineteen myself, and thought myself a man; but I remember that I regarded the recruits around me as boys, that is, as much younger than I was. We never did enlist men in this century. We used to enlist men long ago. Cromwell’s army was entirely composed of men, and even in Charles II.’s reign we had

<sup>1</sup> Lord Wolseley has made the very remarkable statement that, when he was applied to by Mr. Stanhope, in June 1888, ‘the military authorities were without any definite instructions from her Majesty’s Government as to the duties, responsibilities, and requirements which our Army was expected to fill.’—*Report of the Royal Commission on the War in South Africa* (1903, C. 1789), p. 211.

men as soldiers. But then we competed for men with men's wages in a very restricted labour market. If we don't take recruits at their present age we shall not obtain the numbers we require, even though we give the extra sixpence all round, which I would like to see given. Therefore, we may dismiss this age question, in which we are not one whit worse than ever we have been in this century. Of course the Americans, in their war, obtained over a million of *men* to be soldiers, by giving them man's wages. You have, I think, forgotten this fact in your paper. . . .

'I think the recommendation affecting the principle of short service made by the Committee most unwise. If you keep a man for twelve years in the Army, you are bound in fairness and in honour to allow him to serve on to pension; the extension of colour service proposed is the height of folly, and all the baits to men to extend their period of colour service will land us in an enormous pension list, and a very serious reduction of our Army Reserve. . . .

'The principle upon which our machine is constructed is thoroughly sound, but the machine, as made, is only capable of a certain amount of work. Try and make it do more than it was calculated to do and you overstrain it, and it will break down. This is what we have done during the last nine or ten years, and consequently our army is at sixes and sevens. Remember this, and all that has occurred is as simple as that  $2 \times 4 = 8$ . Our present difficulties were foreseen and pointed out by me many times. They are easily rectified by adhering to the principles of Mr. Cardwell's reforms. . . .

‘I shall only add that I would implore Mr. Stanhope on no account to adopt any of the Committee’s proposals that are in any way calculated to injure the Reserve. It is the *one* standpoint—the one gloriously bright thing in our military history. As for those recommendations that would make us keep on our men until they had put in twelve years’ colour service, to adopt them would be madness: it would re-establish the ten years’ system under a worse form than ever, for it would lead to more soldiers’ wives, more married quarters in barracks, and to a far larger pension list than ever. Our aim should be to *discourage* men to stay a day longer than seven years with the colours, and to let a considerable proportion of those who wished it, leave at the expiration of five years’ service. This would popularise the Army in the recruiting market, and would be merciful to the men concerned.

‘You say your voice will have no weight in this question. You are wrong, as far as men are concerned who know the history of our Army administration. They know that all the useful reforms which have been effected in the Army in recent times, even in the drill and training of our men, have been forced upon them from without.

‘May I add one word of advice? When you ask a soldier for his opinion, and he gives it you for what it is worth, don’t imagine he is your enemy, or an unfaithful colleague, because you don’t agree with what you consider his extravagant proposals. He asks for all he considers necessary. Ask him for what he would, under existing circumstances,

public and political, recommend you to do, and he will at once reduce those proposals, and point out expedients that will be economical, and enable you at least to tide over this difficulty, if not permanently to correct it to the fullest extent.

‘As you know, I have urged the increase of the soldiers’ pay by sixpence a day. I believe it would be, from an Army and National point of view, a very wise measure for many reasons, that I shall not here enter upon. But I know that we cannot expect it from any Government situated as the existing Government is at present. Besides, I am “credibly informed” that we are on the verge of a considerable fall in wages all along the line. If this be so, there is a very good and plausible reason why all questions of extra pay can be postponed for the present.

‘The country is kept in ignorance of the facts regarding our Army by the short-sightedness of commanding officers, and their captains and subalterns, who do not like commanding battalions, always meant to be depôts, nor the work which such command entails upon them. One battalion in Ireland sent out 500 men in drafts in the space of ten months. Is it to be wondered at that its commanding officer and all his officers, should growl when they knew that their growls would be chorused by all the old gentlemen who do not know or understand the objects of our or of any other nation’s military system ?

‘Thank you very much for sending me your “Dissent” from the Committee’s proposals. It has been most interesting reading to me. The man who wants to go back to long service is a

fellow who believes in making water run up hill, and who thinks that by putting his own pet watch back he can delay the sun's rising. There is nothing secret in this letter, so you can show it to anyone who cares to read through its long and dreary pages.'

## CHAPTER VI

1895—1897

Appointed Permanent Under-Secretary—the Duties of the Office—Haliburton's Peculiar Qualifications—Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman—Minute on Short Service—Reorganisation of the War Office on Retirement of the Duke of Cambridge—Is Made a G.C.B.—the Close of Haliburton's Official Career.

EARLY in 1895 Sir Ralph Thompson resigned the office of Permanent Under-Secretary of State for War, and Haliburton was appointed to succeed him. Every step up the ladder, on the highest rung of which he now stood, had been well and strenuously earned. He had owed nothing to family connexion or private interest. The friends who had urged his claims were, without exception, men who had been attracted by his strength of character, his rapid grasp of complicated issues and his broad-minded handling of whatever business was set before him. It is a very noticeable circumstance, impressed upon me by the perusal of Haliburton's correspondence, that the bigger, intellectually, were the men with whom he was brought into contact, the more cognisant do



they appear of that impalpable quality which distinguished the man of affairs from the meritorious official.

Haliburton has himself described, in an interesting passage, the nature of the post which he was now called upon to fill.<sup>1</sup>

‘In addition to being the civil expert adviser of the Secretary of State, the Permanent Under-Secretary superintended the working of the administrative machine to secure that it ran smoothly. He was responsible for the discipline and control of the large body of subordinates employed in the administration; that every communication received in the War Office was sent to the branch or branches that should deal with it; that it went to the Secretary of State before action taken, if it was a question which he should decide; and that, when it did go to the Secretary of State, it was supported by a reference to all information on the subject which the office records contained. It was also his duty to see that no action was taken affecting the civil rights of the people without the Secretary of State’s knowledge and approval; that, when the interests of other departments of State, of India, or of the Colonies were affected, they were consulted, and their views obtained before the Secretary of State committed himself to a decision. He was responsible for the conduct of the Parliamentary and legal business of the office; in short, he was the Secretary of State’s “Remembrancer,” respon-

<sup>1</sup> *Army Administration*, p. 61.

sible that all proper procedure was observed in arriving at decisions, but with no personal responsibility for the decisions arrived at by the military and civil heads of departments, except when he himself acted in the name and on behalf of the Secretary of State. The successful performance of these duties necessitated large experience and knowledge, a constitutional desire to appear as little as possible above the surface, and yet to guide the office business into its regulated channels, and to oil the machinery of administration by a judicious exercise of tact, temper, and firmness.'

'Tact, temper, and firmness' are seldom found so closely united as in the case of Arthur Haliburton. The serene and kindly wisdom, *mitis sapientia Læli*, which made it a liberal education to serve under him, was combined with an imperturbable coolness in difficulties. He was one of those to whom, in the crises and perplexities of private life, men turn instinctively with the certainty of meeting sound counsel as well as the gentlest sympathy and support. And in the office his extreme lucidity and power of logical condensed statement gave him a remarkable, but well deserved, influence over the Secretary of State for the time being.

The two 'Chiefs' to whom successively he became 'Remembrancer,' were Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and Lord Lansdowne. The strange vicissitudes of 'C.-B.'s' career, from his acceptance of the leadership of a disorganised and mutinous

party down to his death in the plenitude of power, have obscured his great merits as a departmental administrator. Lord Lansdowne's brilliant success as Foreign Secretary, and as leader of the Unionist party in the House of Lords, has thrown into the shade the years he spent at the War Office before the early disasters of the Boer War had exposed him to obloquy, the injustice of which is at last being recognised.

To both of these men, dissimilar in almost every respect, Haliburton was *persona gratissima*. With Sir Henry, perhaps, he was more thoroughly in accord, for though a strong Conservative in general politics, experience had taught him that the Conservatives of that date were by no means purged of their old distrust of Cardwell and his system. There was something, moreover, especially congenial to the son of Sam Slick in the pawky humour of the genial, kindly Scot, who was so strangely misunderstood and underrated south of the Tweed. It has been charged against Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman that in the War Office he acted on the simple principle of letting the permanent officials have their own way. To anyone who knew the quiet, stubborn nature of the late Prime Minister, the suggestion carries its own refutation ; but he was quick at summing up his subordinates, and both in Sir Ralph Thompson

and Sir Arthur Haliburton he had under him men of very exceptional calibre.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that Haliburton generally carried his point, and that the principles laid down by him were seldom found to differ from those which ultimately were translated into action, could scarcely fail to produce a sense of soreness in other 'strong' men in the War Office, who possessed neither Haliburton's suavity of manner nor his gift for stating a case. Nevertheless the Permanent Under-Secretary succeeded in maintaining, save in one single instance, the most excellent relations with his colleagues on the military as well as on the civil side of the War Office. Unhappily that gallant soldier and most admirable administrator who then filled the post of Adjutant-General was a man who could not brook opposition,

<sup>1</sup> Now that Sir Henry and Lady Campbell-Bannerman, as well as Haliburton himself, have passed away, there is a melancholy echo about the postscript to a letter on Christmas Eve 1894. 'Let me offer to you and Lady Haliburton the best wishes of the season from my wife and myself. I imagine that what people really mean by good wishes is an iron digestion and a convenient balance at the bank—both difficult to maintain.' Sir Henry's letters abound in racy comment on men and matters, but they are not all for the general eye; one sentence I venture to quote, both for its universal applicability and on account of the guidance which it has conveyed to the present writer. 'These trumpery questions of Guards and Camerons and ——'s appointment are really not worth putting in any book; and what rubbish the book will be if they are thought fit for a place! Besides, both on personal questions and such things as troops in Egypt, there will be an end of frank confidential communications, if every careless note is to be published.'

and Sir Redvers Buller forms the solitary instance in which Haliburton's tact and powers of conciliation proved unavailing.<sup>1</sup>

There is a common impression that it has been the traditional aim and the pride of the civilian element in the War Office, and especially of the Permanent Under-Secretary in the days when that official was a civilian, to act as a constant check upon the military, and that want of harmony between the two branches has been the chief source of our disasters and breakdowns. The distinguished officers who came across Haliburton in Pall Mall tell a very different story. Amongst those with whom it has been my privilege to converse there has been a general agreement that his comprehensive knowledge of Army administration was equalled by his clear understanding of the conditions which made for efficiency. As was said by one who knew him well, no stronger or more indefatigable advocate of the true interests of the Army ever existed. Against remedies more dangerous than the disease, and against the fallacies which found perpetual vent in Parliament and in the Press, he waged untiring war.

<sup>1</sup> 'I have a regard for Buller, in spite of our difference,' he wrote to a friend in the dark days after Colenso. 'He has many good points, though in a rough exterior and an explosive interior.' 'What a pity,' he adds on another occasion, 'such an able man should have so little judgment where he himself is concerned!'

To reasonable reform and to well-considered requirements he was always most ready to lend an attentive ear. And when the changes introduced into the organisation of the Army were such as his judgment could not approve, his fidelity to "the salt" made him devote his best abilities to carrying them out and to ensuring that they were given a fair trial.<sup>1</sup>

Stress has already been laid on Haliburton's essentially judicial mind, on his independence, and on his absolute fearlessness before authority. A no less valuable gift was that of putting his thoughts and his knowledge into language which carried conviction alike to the careless and the prejudiced. To a newly appointed Secretary of State whose acquaintance with the innumerable ramifications of Army administration was necessarily limited, his knack of producing at a moment's notice an admirably expressed and carefully reasoned minute on the burning questions of the hour was a perfect godsend. When the Conservatives came back in 1895, the question of Short *versus* Long Service was by no means a *chose jugée*, and Haliburton was called upon suddenly one morning for a 'dagger

<sup>1</sup> 'Personally,' he wrote to Lord Wolseley in October 1895, 'I prefer the existing system, with possibly more direct responsibility on the heads of the great departments. This, however, is only my personal preference; as you know I have only to carry out loyally any system which the Secretary of State approves.'

brief,'<sup>1</sup> by the aid of which his harassed chief might render that topic clear, in the course of the afternoon, to a body of Ministers who knew little of the inner history of the British Army, and were not likely to take any trouble to inform themselves. The story lingers still in the War Office how Haliburton and a devoted secretary locked themselves in, eschewing luncheon and the other joys of the day's routine, and how by four o'clock the following *résumé* was ready for the instruction of the Cabinet :—

'The existing short-service system was forced upon the country by the complete breakdown of the long-service system.

'In 1866-67 a Royal Commission on Recruiting, presided over by Lord Dalhousie,<sup>2</sup> referring to the condition of the Army before and after the Crimean War, stated :—

'“We have been content to exist from hand to mouth, with no forecast of the future. No preparations for a state of war were thought of. . . . Men were enrolled and sent half trained into the field. . . . Recent events, however, have taught us that we must not rely in the future on

<sup>1</sup> Certain members of the Bar, who rose eventually to the highest place in their profession, had an incurable, and not altogether unreasonable, objection to reading the mass of verbiage which often does duty for a brief. For them it was customary to issue a specially revised document in which the vital passages were marked with a dagger (†) in red ink.

<sup>2</sup> Better known as Lord Panmure, the successor of the Duke of Newcastle at the War Office during the Crimean War.

having time for preparation. Wars will be sudden in their commencement and short in their duration, and woe to the country which is unprepared to defend itself against any contingency that may arise.”

‘Again, speaking of the strength of the Army, the Commissioners reported :—

“ Its present strength is barely sufficient for a period of peace, and the question is how we can most readily and speedily increase it, through the means of a Reserve force of men who have already received their training in its ranks, but may have fallen back . . . into civil life. . . . We have already stated the fact that the ‘ Army of Reserve Force,’ constituted in 1859,<sup>1</sup> has been a complete failure, and the measures which we have proposed to induce more men to re-engage in the Regular Army will no doubt still further check its increase. Under these circumstances we are not prepared to propose any plan as one that may be relied on to secure a large army of reserve.”

‘ General Peel, on introducing the Army Estimates in 1867, referred to the recommendations of the Royal Commission as follows :—

“ The necessity for a Commission arose from the great difficulty which was experienced in procuring recruits for the Army, and, in point of fact, the question then was, and now is, whether the British Army should be allowed to collapse,

<sup>1</sup> 22 & 23 Vict. 42, providing for the enlistment of a force not exceeding 20,000 men as a Reserve for the United Kingdom. It was to consist of persons who had previously served in her Majesty’s or the East India Company’s forces, and who might volunteer for such further service—pensioners, in fact.



whether it should be reduced to the strength of your recruiting powers, or whether your recruiting powers should be raised to that point which should meet the wants of the Service ? ”

‘ The Secretary of State for War, in his instructions to the Military Committee on Army Reorganisation of 1880, thus described the condition of the Army during the Crimean War :—

“ During the Crimean War, as is well known, regiments were first denuded of their best men in order to fill up battalions which had proceeded on service, and then were themselves in turn sent to serve in the field, having lost their best men and with their ranks newly filled up. This was felt to be a grave evil, and the intention of the Reserve scheme was evidently that expansion in time of war should be effected, not by drawing men from other battalions, but by bringing them from the Reserves.”

‘ The measures adopted by the Government on the report of the Commission of 1866–67 failed to improve the condition of the Army. In 1870–73 the whole question was reconsidered, and the reports of the Localisation Committee resulted in the final adoption of the short-service system.

‘ For many years before 1870, under the long-service system, the Army was from 10,000 to 12,000 men below its establishment. Under the short-service system, it is now kept up to its full establishment.

‘ During the last ten years of the long-service system, 1861–70, the average number of recruits raised, even under the demoralising system of bounties, only reached 15,084, while during the

past ten years, without bounties, the average has been 33,273.

‘It was shown by the Royal Commission of 1866 that, out of 5,622 men composing the drafts of all arms sent to India in the two years, 1864–65, under the long-service system, 2,093 were under twenty years of age, and 2,038 were under one year’s service. Under the present system, out of 9,770 men composing the Indian drafts in 1895–96, none were under twenty nor under one year’s service.

‘In this respect, under the system of the home battalion feeding its sister battalion abroad, an enormous advance has been made upon the older organisation under which battalions abroad were supplied direct from their depôts at home with ill-trained, immature soldiers. Those depôts frequently failed to supply the requisite drafts. The Royal Commission of 1866 mentions the case of one regiment which was sending home from India 300 men for discharge, and which had only about fifty men at the depôt to replace them.

‘In the evidence before Lord Wantage’s Committee it was universally admitted that the Army abroad is better now than it has ever been before.

‘The Royal Commission of 1866–67 stated :—

‘“As a Peace Establishment, and having in view nothing more than the proper provision of that military protection which we are bound to afford to our Indian territories, and our extended Colonial possessions, the Army is at present barely sufficient for these purposes. . . . Perhaps, on a sudden call, we might assemble in the United Kingdom some 40,000 or at most 50,000 effective

men of all arms of our Regular Forces. What is this when we look at the extent of coast to be defended, or to the numbers which might be thrown on our shores in the course of twenty-four hours !”

‘ Under the short-service system the force with the Colours at home (exclusive of Auxiliary Forces) amounts to 105,770, and with the First Class Army Reserve this force could on a week’s notice be augmented to 183,637 of all arms.

‘ This Reserve of 80,000 highly-trained soldiers in the prime of life is maintained ready for immediate recall to the Colours when required, at a cost of only three-quarters of a million. A similar force of long-service soldiers would cost over four millions, in addition to the pension charges to which they would give rise.

‘ The short-service system has enabled the Government not only to keep the Army up to its strength, but to create, at the same time, that Reserve of fighting men “trained in its ranks” which the Royal Commission of 1866 failed to obtain, and which is now a vital element in the organisation of every army in Europe.

‘ Looking to these facts, it may safely be stated that the short-service system has succeeded in remedying the evils which existed under the system it replaced.

‘ Any return to the long-service system is impracticable. It would be as impossible now as it was formerly to obtain recruits willing to serve for prolonged periods. But, even if it were practicable, in order to obtain the number of men fit for active service required for the War Establishment (1,067) of an Infantry battalion, in the absence

of a trained Reserve, a peace establishment of more than 1,200 non-commissioned officers and men would be necessary.

‘The result would be an increase of between two and three millions to Army expenditure, together with a loss of fighting force of about 30,000 Infantry alone.

‘It has been calculated on the best data available that the normal charge for pensions for an Army of the present strength would, on the long-service system, add a million to the British charge for pensions, and a proportionate increase for Indian charges.

‘Without the Reserve, which the short-service system gives us, we could neither complete two Army Corps for service abroad, nor place three Army Corps in the field for home defence, as we can now do.’

Haliburton had not been many months in office when the upheaval took place at the War Office which had long been inevitable, but which a train of circumstances had postponed and delayed.

As far back as June 1888, within a few weeks of the issuing by Mr. Stanhope of the Order in Council referred to on a previous page,<sup>1</sup> the whole question of the distribution of duties at the War Office was reopened before a Royal Commission under the

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, p. 73, and vide *Military Life of the Duke of Cambridge*, ii. 354 ; *Three Centuries of Army Administration*, p. 40.

late Duke of Devonshire, then Marquess of Hartington, as chairman. The other members were the Right Hon. W. H. Smith, Lord Randolph Churchill, the Right Hon. Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Sir Richard Temple, Admiral Richards, Mr. Ismay (of the White Star Line), and General Brackenbury. The terms of reference were :—

‘To inquire into the civil and professional administration of the Naval and Military Departments and the relation of those departments to each other and to the Treasury ; and to report what changes in their existing system would tend to the efficiency and economy of the public service.’

The first report, issued in May 1889, dealt chiefly with the relations between the Admiralty and the War Office. The second, issued in May 1890, was concerned solely with the internal administration of the War Office. The Commission found :—

1. That there was an excessive centralisation of responsibility in the Commander-in-Chief.

2. That in the distribution of work among the heads of the great military departments no sufficient provision had been made for the consideration of the plans for the military defence of the Empire as a whole, or for the examination of larger questions of military policy.

3. That the consultative, as distinguished from the executive and administrative element, was not sufficiently represented at the War Office.<sup>1</sup>

The recommendations had included the abolition of the office of Commander-in-Chief on the occurrence of the next vacancy, and the substitution of a Chief of the Staff, but this decision was by no means unanimous, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman being among the dissentients. It was most unpopular with the Army at large, which, in Haliburton's words,<sup>2</sup> 'was unwilling to part with that outward and visible sign of its own dignity and power, the Commander-in-Chief, endeared to it by forty years of the genial and sympathetic command of H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge.'

The Commissioners acknowledged that, with the Duke at the War Office, it would be inadvisable to proceed upon the general lines of reorganisation which they indicated in their report. Nor was the moment regarded in any responsible quarter as a propitious one for calling upon his Royal Highness to resign. For the next five years the Army continued to be administered under the Order in Council of 1888, which Lord

<sup>1</sup> See Lord Lansdowne's speech in the House of Lords, August 26, 1901, *Hansard*, xxxvi. 770.

<sup>2</sup> *Three Centuries of Army Administration*, 41.

Wolseley at a subsequent date pronounced to be perfect, and which Lord Lansdowne, with equal positiveness of language, declared was universally condemned. But by the spring of 1895 the clock had moved onwards, and the Duke of Cambridge, unwilling as he was to admit it, had grown older. A Liberal Ministry was in power, though tottering to its fall,

‘and it was argued by many that, if the recommendations of the Hartington Commission were to be disregarded, the Government of the day would, by such an act of omission, commit itself to a tacit approval of the existing constitution and organisation of our Land Forces.’<sup>1</sup>

Colonel Verner has published the pathetic letter between the reluctant veteran and his Royal mistress in which Queen Victoria felt compelled to say, ‘on the advice of her Ministers,’ that, for his own sake, as well as in the public interest, it was inexpedient that he should retain his office beyond the ensuing autumn. This decision was arrived at on May 19, but the secret was kept for a month longer, and the announcement by Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, on June 21, of the approaching retirement of the Duke of Cambridge came as a profound surprise to all but a few initiates.

<sup>1</sup> *Military Lief of the Duke of Cambridge*, ii. 390.

By a special piece of irony the same evening witnessed the defeat of the Liberal Government through what was practically a vote of censure on the Secretary of State for War, and this was promptly followed by the resignation of the Ministry. The night was, indeed, one of surprises; the majority of seven in favour of Mr. Brodrick's amendment<sup>1</sup> was due to the slackness of the Ministerial Whips on the one hand and the activity of the Service members on the other, but a main factor in the result was the ineffective reply of the Secretary of State for War to the charge of allowing the existence of a serious deficiency in the amount of small-arm ammunition. It is not generally known that, owing to the forgetfulness of a subordinate, Sir Henry, as he became in the course of the next few days, was called upon to meet the case of the Opposition without preparation or instruction.

It is not probable that even if the cordite amendment had been rejected the Government could have kept off the breakers for more than a week or two, but their precipitate retirement from power had one remarkable consequence. Lord Rosebery had decided to recommend Sir Redvers Buller for the post of Commander-in-Chief, about

<sup>1</sup> The total number of votes—132 for, 125 against—is significant of the 'snap' nature of the division.



to be vacated by the Duke of Cambridge, and Colonel Verner relates that it was almost a matter of minutes whether the appointment could be made before the Liberal Government resigned the seals of office.<sup>1</sup> The accession of Lord Salisbury saved Lord Wolseley the mortification of seeing his junior and his *protégé* exalted over his head, and it brought Haliburton once more into close association with one for whose genius he had the warmest admiration, and with whom he remained till the hour of his death on terms of intimate friendship. At the same time the knowledge of the high estimation in which his own abilities were regarded in high places did not make Sir Redvers an easier colleague for the Permanent Under-Secretary.

Lord Lansdowne succeeded Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and no time was lost in showing that he intended to carry out the changes in the War Office which had already been decided upon by his predecessor. In one most important particular both the outgoing and the incoming Cabinets were resolved to disregard the recommendations of the Hartington Commission; the office of

<sup>1</sup> *Military Life of the Duke of Cambridge*, ii. 399. I have always understood that it was this apprehension which caused Lord Salisbury, contrary to the ordinary usage, to send a messenger to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's private residence with a peremptory request for the surrender of his seal.

Commander-in-Chief was retained, and the Chief of the Staff was dropped. But, in communicating to Lord Wolseley the honour that was to be conferred upon him, Lord Lansdowne was careful to explain ‘that changes in the position of the Officer Commanding-in-Chief were inevitable, and that her Majesty’s Government reserved to itself an absolutely free hand in regard to these.’

The upshot of these reforms can be given very briefly in Haliburton’s own words : <sup>1</sup>—

‘It was agreed that the great branches of administration should be under high officials, directly responsible to the Secretary of State for the details of their duties. They were to have direct access, and be responsible for giving advice, to the Secretary of State on all matters within their jurisdiction, and while they could not shelter themselves behind the Commander-in-Chief for not giving advice with which he did not agree, they were bound to refer all questions for his opinion before finally submitting them to the Secretary of State. If they could not reconcile, or subordinate, their opinions, a very rare condition with soldiers, the matter was referred to the Secretary of State, who, after hearing the views of all concerned, was the supreme and final authority.’

This system, under which for the five years of his appointment he executed the office of Commander-in-Chief, was profoundly distasteful to

<sup>1</sup> *Army Administration*, p. 41.

Lord Wolseley, who complained on a celebrated occasion in the House of Lords <sup>1</sup> that under the existing *régime* the Adjutant-General and Quarter-Master General were

‘ no longer the Staff Officers of the Commander-in-Chief at Headquarters. They are accountable to the Secretary of State and not to the Commander-in-Chief for the discharge of their duties. They are the Staff Officers of the civilian Secretary of State. . . . Until 1895 the Commander-in-Chief was responsible to the Secretary of State that the Army was thoroughly well trained for war. There is now no one soldier to whom the country can look as directly and professionally responsible for the military efficiency of the Army it pays for.’

The view that the Orders in Council of the autumn of 1895 increased the power of the Secretary of State at the expense of that of the Commander-in-Chief was not shared by Haliburton, who went so far as to style it a delusion : <sup>2</sup>—

‘ The 1895 system in no way affected the position or the power of the Secretary of State. . . . The Secretary of State was supreme, as he always must be under a constitutional Government ; under him were high officials, responsible for sections of the work of the office in all its details, while over them was the Commander-in-Chief, as general military manager and adviser, respon-

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard*, xc. 327.

<sup>2</sup> *Army Administration*, p. 53.

sible for exercising general supervision over the military departments, for seeing that nothing was done which he disapproved of, without the Secretary of State's sanction, and responsible that the military staff worked together for the good of the Service.'<sup>1</sup>

And to show that this 'general supervision' was no mere *façon de parler*, he quoted the rules of procedure under the Orders in Council which direct that

'all important questions will be referred to the Commander-in-Chief before submission to the Secretary of State. Questions which do not require the Secretary of State's decision, but which affect more than one of the military departments, will be referred to the Commander-in-Chief *for decision*.'

The root-and-branch revolutions of the last five years have rendered the question one of scarcely more than academic interest. But as it was under these rules and orders that the two final and most responsible years of Haliburton's official life were spent, I have thought it better to reproduce in his own words his description of the system which he was called upon to administer. He entertained strong objections to many of the changes introduced into the administration of the

<sup>1</sup> *Army Administration*, p. 42.

Army both by Mr. Stanhope and by Lord Lansdowne. But his objections were based on constitutional grounds, on their effect in practically destroying civil control over Army expenditure. Between the systems of 1888 and 1895 he pronounced that there was a distinction without a difference; so far as there was any difference, it was in favour of the latter.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless the final adoption of the recommendations of the Hartington Commission in the autumn of 1895 entailed a general reorganisation of the War Office, a readjustment of departments and of duties in which the interests and the claims of over 1,100 employees of every degree and station were found to be in frequent conflict. It was a work of great difficulty and complexity, but no man was better qualified to cope with it than Haliburton. In a few months everything had settled down and was moving in well-oiled grooves.

The period between March 1895 and September 1897 was the crown of his active career. For the first time he enjoyed a full measure of independence and responsibility. His long training, his wide experience, his profound knowledge of mankind, partly instinctive, partly acquired, had at last their proper scope. He was now one of that little hierarchy of the permanent heads of

<sup>1</sup> *Army Administration*, p. 45.

departments on whom the whole fabric of administration rests, and few have emerged from the ordeal with a higher record. But the delicate and confidential nature of so much of his work, as well as the obligations and traditions of the service, forbid any chronicle of these arduous years.

To lift the veil from his sanctum in Pall Mall would be a breach of official decorum that no one would have resented more strongly than the subject of this memoir.

‘ Important “ things,” *i.e.* War Office news, used to get out now, and then,’ he wrote in September 1899, ‘ and always will, but these little personal records are a lower “ rung,” and quite new. Who is the culprit? Is he on a three-legged stool, or is he in a comfortable armchair?’

It is the burden of the Civil Servant that he must do good by stealth and must leave unclaimed the fruits of his labours. There are compensations, and, as a fellow-worker wrote to Haliburton,

‘ one is not called on to do any dirty or doubtful business, or to do what in private employment might press on one. If anybody starts hard practice either on the public or on an individual it is his own foolishness.’

The making of bricks without straw is the task of all who, from time to time, are responsible

for the administration and governance of the British Army. 'Drafts, drafts, drafts,' was the perpetual burden of the song that sounded in Haliburton's ears. When he retired in 1897, Short Service was again trembling in the balance. And a fresh source of embarrassment was due to the unrest occasioned in South Africa by the Jameson Raid and its immediate *sequelæ*. There was one party in the Cabinet which called for the application of the mailed fist, another which vetoed the reinforcement of the British garrison on the ground of expense, and a third which was unwilling to take any decided step for fear of exasperating the Boers and hurrying on a catastrophe.

'I can't understand the ways of politicians,' Haliburton wrote from Tunbridge Wells in November 1896, 'they are so d—d politic! If it is necessary to reinforce in South Africa on account of the extraordinary preparations of the Boers, why can't we say so plainly and openly—in the face of the world? We could say it without offence and without being liable to be accused of aggressive designs. Why should we not say to Oom Paul, "You are arming in a way that can have no purpose other than an attack sooner or later on British possessions. We do not object to your arming, but we will take measures to prevent you using your arms to our detriment. When you disarm, we will modify our precautionary measures." Who can object to this?

There can be no doubt that this arming gives ground for grave possibilities. "The means to do ill deeds makes ill deeds done," and want of preparation against contingencies tends to precipitate them. If the dangers exist we should meet them in an open and straightforward way, declaring our intentions and our reasons. Giving sham reasons and making no sufficient preparations will only bring about what we wish to avoid. These are the views of Haliburton of Tunbridge Wells, not of his namesake of Pall Mall! The Pall Mall man is only an official.'

The life of Haliburton of Pall Mall was brought to a close, under the Civil Service Regulations, on his attaining the age of sixty-five.

'It is difficult to realise the expediency of general rules,' wrote General Sir Henry Alderson to Lady Haliburton, 'when their operation involves the loss of an individual administrator whose powers are at their ripest and best. Nothing remains but to wish him, after the arduous duties of his long and interesting service, every happiness in his retirement—and a hobby with which to season it. For you there will be the compensation that you will be able to see a little more of him than his absorbing work at the War Office has hitherto allowed.'

But though Haliburton's mental vigour was at the zenith, it was far otherwise with his bodily health. He had never really recovered from the mischance which had put him *hors de combat*



during the summer of 1882.<sup>1</sup> As the years rolled by his lameness had increased while his powers of locomotion became more and more limited, and another fall in the spring of 1897 made him permanently dependent upon crutches. To a man of his powerful physique this necessity was a sore burden, and the injured limb was the source of severe and constant pain. The time had come when he was fully entitled to claim his release from toil and responsibility.

Yet when the parting came it was a painful wrench, though alleviated by the warmth of the farewells and by the appreciation which found expression in the mouths of his fellow-workers from the highest to the lowest. On the Birthday immediately preceding his retirement, Lord Salisbury had communicated to him the Queen's pleasure that he should be admitted to the Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath, 'in recognition of the distinguished and valuable administrative services which for a great number of years you have rendered to the State.' But almost more gratifying was the chorus of lamentation which went up a few months later from those who had 'thought and wrought and toiled' with him in the War Office. The break-up of old associations was an ordeal made bearable by the

<sup>1</sup> Vide *supra*, p. 48.

strength of conviction so visible among all sorts and conditions of his subordinates that they were parting from a government that was strong as it was wise.

‘May I, when I go, which cannot be long now, leave the office as much regretted as you are,’ wrote Sir George Lawson, with whom he had been so long and so closely associated. ‘I feel some diffidence in saying how much I have admired you since I have been brought into contact with you,’ says his private secretary, ‘but I only express the general opinion of the office when I regret that you did not become Permanent Under-Secretary five years earlier, or could not remain for five years longer. You have always made my work so pleasant to me that I have never felt it a toil. My only wish has been to have saved you more of the drudgery.’

And a testimonial came from an unexpected quarter in the shape of a letter on behalf of the Wesleyan Army and Navy Committee, who desired to express their appreciation of the consideration with which Haliburton had always received their representatives.

What the Secretary of State for War thought of his Remembrancer can only be realised by those who have read the correspondence which passed between them. Haliburton’s force of character and range of information, together with his lawyer-like power of discarding superficialities and only

using what was absolutely necessary for the occasion, were qualities which carried special weight with a statesman who looked for breadth of view combined with minute knowledge of detail. The following letter from a colleague<sup>1</sup> whose previous training had included no experience of Government offices or military questions gives us a glimpse of that unaffected courtesy which endeared Hali-burton to the whole of the establishment in Pall Mall:—

‘I thank you very much for your letter of the 25th,<sup>2</sup> though I do not believe the most part of what you say. In my opinion you are wrong in thinking that you ought to go, and much more wrong in going. The office can ill afford the loss, and those who have had the advantage of working with you can afford it still less. And as to what you say about my “kindness and consideration,” I really hesitate to set the words down—it is impossible to have carried those good qualities to a higher perfection than you have done in dealing with me. I expect that it is a mark of the better sort that they think that they are gaining benefit from those virtues in others when in reality they are themselves exercising them. But, anyhow, I am very grateful to you, very sorry that you are going, and very anxious to serve you in every way in my power.’

<sup>1</sup> The late Right Hon. J. Powell Williams, M.P., Financial Secretary to the War Office, 1895–1900, *vide infra*, p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> September 1897.

Nor was it only in the War Office that Haliburton's retirement was regarded as a heavy loss to the public service. Sir Francis Mowatt, the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, who had been closely associated with him in public inquiries as well as in those walks of duty where the spending and the controlling departments are supposed to be ever at friction, was most warm in his appreciation of one who never asked for what was not needed and who never receded from a position he had once taken up. 'Tell Lady Haliburton,' he wrote to her husband, 'that she would be a proud woman if she could hear one-half of the regrets that are expressed on all sides at your going.' And in a letter to her ladyship Sir Francis declared that

'the Secretary of the Treasury would have an easy post if at the head of each of the Departments of State were your husband or some one like him. I shall be very fortunate if the relations between our departments remain on a footing as satisfactory as that of the last three years.'

*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes* may possibly be applied to such eulogy from a representative of the Treasury, but Haliburton's latter days at the War Office were not one of those epochs against which the charge of 'cutting the estimates' can be brought with any show of justice.

The staff in Pall Mall were unwilling to part from him without that crowning token of esteem which custom has consecrated among Englishmen. Accordingly an invitation was issued in the names of Lord Lansdowne and Lord Wolseley, on behalf of the senior members of the civil and military branches of the War Office, to a dinner at which his friends might bid farewell to Sir Arthur Haliburton in solemn form. Unfortunately the effects of his accident precluded the acceptance of a compliment which would have been especially appreciated by one who was ever the most genial of hosts.<sup>1</sup>

‘I have always,’ he wrote in reply, ‘taken the deepest interest in the efficiency and welfare of the Army, and my work in Pall Mall has therefore ever been to me a labour of love. It is a great pleasure to me to feel that my labours have met with the sympathy and approval of my colleagues and chiefs, an approval which I think I may opine your kind invitation was intended to express.’

The selection of so distinguished a soldier as Sir Evelyn Wood to be the medium of the invitation was flattering in itself and a sufficient refutation of the baseless notion that during Hali-

<sup>1</sup> ‘I have declined the dinner on account of the T.T.,’ he wrote to a young friend. The initials, I imagine, stand for ‘Timber Toes.’

burton's term of office the civil and military sides of the War Office were prone to pull different ways.

'I cannot recall,' wrote the Quartermaster-General, 'that you have ever written or said a word that has made even a jar in my mind, and all my recollections of our associations in work will be of the most agreeable nature.'

## CHAPTER VII

1897—1898

The Short-Service Controversy—Mr. Arnold-Forster's Letters to the *Times*—Haliburton's Reply.

DURING the months which preceded, and in those which followed the retirement of Sir Arthur Haliburton from the War Office, the minds of Ministers had been exercised by demands for a substantial addition to the strength of the Army. The united efforts of President Cleveland, President Kruger, and the Kaiser had roused the British public to an unwonted interest in military affairs. Highly-coloured statements as to the national unreadiness and inefficiency had caused widespread uneasiness. And early in 1897 the Service members, who had come back in unabated vigour after the General Election of 1895, had presented a strongly worded memorial to the Prime Minister in which the administration of the land forces of the Crown were subjected to unsparing denunciation.

Meanwhile a vigorous Press campaign was being carried on, and in November a series of

letters appeared in the 'Times' from the pen of Mr. Arnold-Forster, in whom the chorus of hostile criticism found its most vigorous exponent; in Haliburton's words, 'his indictment was so long and so elaborate that, like Aaron's rod, it swallowed up the rest.' Mr. Arnold-Forster was as yet untried in office, but he had sat in Parliament for eleven years as an active member of the Unionist party, making himself heard on many topics, but devoting himself specially to all questions connected with the fighting services. As far back as 1881 he had contributed an article to the 'Nineteenth Century,' entitled 'A Civilian's Reply to Sir Garnet Wolseley,' and from that date onward he had been a diligent student of military and naval affairs both at home and abroad. He had been at the manœuvres of nearly every army in Europe and constantly at those of our own troops. He had marched with the infantry and ridden with the cavalry. He had seen the artillery firing and experiments in gunnery of every kind. He claimed personal knowledge of our camps, barracks, and arsenals, and a wide acquaintance with soldiers of every rank and in every branch of the Service.<sup>1</sup> He combined great industry, a vigorous and expressive

<sup>1</sup> *The War Office, the Army, and the Empire*, by the Right Hon. H. O. Arnold-Forster, M.P., p. 4.



vocabulary, and much skill in marshalling and presenting his facts, with dauntless courage and faith capable of removing mountains.

The assumption on which his arguments rested was based on an utter breakdown of the organisation of the Army 'in spite of the heroic efforts of the regimental officers.'<sup>1</sup> This breakdown, he declared, was not accidental but inevitable; it was neither local nor temporary, but the symptom of a deeply rooted disease, and a necessary outcome of the existing system; it had been foreseen with absolute certainty by everyone who had followed the working of the military machine during the last ten years. Mr. Arnold-Forster undertook

'to demonstrate in the clearest possible fashion that the main principles of our present Army organisation are contrary to common sense, are in direct defiance of the teachings of experience, are framed with a total disregard of human nature, and are bound, by their very essence, to fail.'<sup>2</sup>

'The system,' he contended, 'has broken down at every point, the linked battalions do not perform their mutual office, the depôts do not fill up their gaps, the required recruits are not forthcoming, those who are obtained are not of the right stamp or quality. The six years' term has had to be abandoned. The Reserve, to acquire which the whole system was formulated, is of doubtful value, and is decreasing in number.

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, November 11, 1897.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* November 20.

The regimental officers, almost without exception, frankly detest the system. The majority of officers in high commands outside the War Office do not hesitate to condemn it.’<sup>1</sup>

The letters appeared in the ‘Times’ of November 11, 16, 18, 20, 23, 30,<sup>2</sup> and they received the editorial approbation of what was still the greatest journalistic force in Europe. The leader-writer of the morning on which the last of them appeared was instructed to declare that Mr. Arnold-Forster ‘had painted a striking picture, the broad features of which are vouched for by the admissions of those responsible for the Army,<sup>3</sup> and by the patent evidence of inefficiency upon which they

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, November 20.

<sup>2</sup> A further letter, by way of rejoinder to Sir Arthur Haliburton, appeared on January 3, 1898.

<sup>3</sup> At the Cutlers’ Feast at Sheffield on November 4 Sir Michael Hicks Beach, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had made a remarkable speech in which he deprecated any increase of the Army Estimates without a thorough overhauling of the War Office, and suggested the existence of unnecessary friction between the civil and the military elements (*Annual Register*, 1897, p. 211). The insinuation can hardly have been more agreeable to Lord Lansdowne than it was to Haliburton. ‘He is a sort of Judas among Cabinet Ministers,’ wrote the latter. ‘He thinks he can use the purse to better purpose than they can, and therefore he discredits their administration. To have a member of the Cabinet criticising the possible demands of one of his colleagues before they are made, and insinuating that the administration is defective, is a little too much. He qualifies it by confessing his ignorance; but the proper course for an ignorant Cabinet Minister is silence! Criticism based on ignorance is well enough for a politician in opposition, but it comes ill from one of the Ministry. The bird is fouling his own nest.’

rest their demand for increased efficiency. He has drawn up an indictment too formidable to be ignored by a department about to ask Parliament to spend large sums of money in addition to the enormous existing expenditure. The country will wait with keen curiosity to see what reply the War Office has to make, not to this or that isolated appreciation, but to the broad substantial charge that the legions it pretends to furnish do not exist.'<sup>1</sup>

And Mr. Arnold-Forster himself had flung down a similar challenge.

'The onus of proof lies upon the War Office and upon the upholders of the present system. It is their duty to justify and excuse themselves, if they can. They come before the country as men who have failed, and they advocate the continuance of a system which, with unlimited money and unlimited goodwill behind it, has absolutely broken down.'<sup>2</sup>

Parliament was to reassemble in the course of a few weeks, and in ordinary circumstances Parliament was the place in which the impugned department would make its defence. But the sweeping nature of the attack, the air of confident omniscience with which it was delivered, and the prominence allotted to it in the columns of the 'Times,' seemed to call for an immediate answer. To leave Mr. Arnold-Forster's facts and

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, November 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* November 20.

figures unchallenged would create an impression in the public mind which might irretrievably damage the Secretary of State in his policy and programme for the ensuing session.<sup>1</sup> It was impossible for Lord Lansdowne and scarcely more practicable for any of his subordinates to enter the lists in person. But the case for the prosecution was presented so plausibly and from such apparent familiarity with the whole mechanism of the Army machine that anyone save a trained controversialist, possessing an intimate knowledge of a crabbed and intricate subject, would be more likely to prejudice the defence than assist it.

In this emergency Sir Arthur Haliburton expressed to Lord Lansdowne his willingness to take up the cudgels on behalf of the system which he had so long helped to administer. During his last months at the War Office his ears had caught the mutterings of a coming storm. The protest of the Military Members and the clamour in the Press had warned him not only of a general dissatisfaction with the organisation and administration of the Army, but of a strong desire in

<sup>1</sup> Lord Lansdowne was at this moment engaged in drawing up a scheme for the increase of the Army by ten battalions and fifteen batteries. The memorandum setting out and justifying his demands was presented to the Cabinet on December 15. (*Report of the Royal Commission on the War in South Africa*, pp. 249 *et seq.*, especially p. 253).

influential quarters to revert, in one form or another, to the ideals of a former generation. Nor did he stand alone in his anticipations. 'I have a strong foreboding,' wrote Sir Charles Welby, then private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, and one of Haliburton's most faithful correspondents, 'of a big long-service or, anyhow, "anti-present system" landslide, which we shall have to fight to the death, but which may overwhelm us and lead to resignations, &c.'

It was no part of Haliburton's object to meet the general assault upon the War Office, its *personnel* and its methods, which gave spice to the letters of Mr. Arnold-Forster and the rest. Still less did he undertake to prove that the existing military establishment was adequate to the burden imposed upon it by our ever-increasing Imperial responsibilities. His aim was simply to show that the system inaugurated by Lord Cardwell was enormously superior to that which it superseded, that, in his own words, the fruits of the long service army were 'atrophy, sterility, and extravagance'; and that it had been replaced by a system 'vigorous, prolific, and economical.'

His original inclination had been in the direction of an article in the 'Nineteenth Century,' and the late Sir James Knowles placed at his disposal

a liberal allowance of space in the forthcoming January number of that Review. But the letters of Mr. Arnold-Forster were attracting so much attention and causing so much popular ferment that, much to Sir James's chagrin, Haliburton decided to pick up the glove with the least possible delay in the arena where it had been thrown down. Mr. Arnold-Forster's concluding shot had been fired on November 30, and the 'Times' for December 3, 6, and 9, contained Haliburton's reply. These letters and the two subsequent ones of January 11 and 22, 1898, were republished, with substantial additions, in a pamphlet entitled 'Army Organisation<sup>1</sup>: a Short Reply to Long Service.' It is this pamphlet which I have followed, though with the 'Times' letters on the desk before me, in my endeavour to summarise Haliburton's argument. In a newspaper controversy the importation of a certain amount of personal, and not strictly relevant, matter was unavoidable. In a pamphlet these disfigurements could be shed and the case treated as what it essentially was, a question of arithmetic, 'what system of Army organisation will give the nation a maximum of efficient fighting strength at a minimum cost?'

<sup>1</sup> The title, curiously enough, was the invention of the late Mr. Powell Williams, M.P., for whom, though he looked upon him as a fish out of water in the War Office, Haliburton had a strong personal regard.

Mr. Arnold-Forster had declared<sup>1</sup> 'that the present Army system was invented, and is maintained, in order to give the country an army. The system, as a matter of fact, has not produced, and cannot produce, an army.' While repudiating, for the most part, any desire to go back to the pre-Cardwellian organisation, the critics had gradually formulated their views in two main proposals—the establishment of a long service army for India and the colonies, and the creation of a separate short service army for the United Kingdom, while innumerable passages in their writings proved that their objection was to the whole system.<sup>2</sup> In order to determine whether a complete or partial return from short to long service was practicable or desirable, and to show the effect which such a course would have on our fighting strength, Sir Arthur Haliburton undertook to examine both systems, to review the fruits that each has produced, and to judge them by their fruits.

'It will simplify this examination,' he wrote, 'and keep the statistics which are essential to it within reasonable limits, if it be mainly confined

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, November 16.

<sup>2</sup> It is only fair to say that, in his letter to the *Times* of November 30, Mr. Arnold-Forster had expressly rejected the idea of enlisting a separate Indian Army, to the maintenance of which he declared that the political objections were insuperable.

to the Infantry of the Line. That is the largest and most important arm of the service ; it is the one which has formed the subject of most of the criticisms, while the general principles involved are alike applicable to all arms.'

The first step in the chain was to remove two erroneous impressions which had got firm hold of the public mind, and were at the root of the present agitation. It was generally believed, in the first place, that short service was introduced into the country for the first time by Mr. Cardwell, and, secondly, that, up to 1870, long service had adequately met the requirements of the army. Both these beliefs were unfounded.

For more than a century and a half, whenever a strain was thrown upon the army, long service failed to meet its requirements, and 'short enlistments' for two, three, or five years, or for the duration of particular campaigns, were resorted to in order to fill the ranks up to fighting strength. This had been the case under Queen Anne and under George II., and in the incessant wars which occupied so large a portion of the reign of his successor.<sup>1</sup>

Up to the beginning of the nineteenth century the normal period of enlistment was for life, which meant for about twenty-four years. In 1806 Mr.

<sup>1</sup> See Fortescue, *History of the British Army*, ii. 572, and iii. 528 (n.).



Windham passed a Short Service Act limiting enlistment in the infantry to seven years, with power of renewal for two similar periods. In 1808 the Government of the Duke of Portland re-authorized life enlistments, and offered large bounties—at times as high as 40*l.*—to all who accepted the longer term. These bounties killed short service for the time being, and, though the short enlistment remained open for recruits until 1829, it was discouraged and, in that year, finally prohibited.

Continued difficulty was experienced in obtaining recruits. In 1847, in the teeth of 'the service' ten year enlistments were adopted, with liberty to re-engage and complete twenty-one years;<sup>1</sup> and this was the system prevailing when the Crimean War broke out. It failed to make good the wear and tear of that campaign, and an Act was passed in 1855,<sup>2</sup> authorising the enlistment of men for two years, with power to retain them for one year more. In the time of peace that followed the suppression of the Indian Mutiny the difficulties of recruiting became more and more pronounced, and at the same time the armies of

<sup>1</sup> In his evidence before the Wantage Committee (Q. 4445), Lord Wolseley declared that the Duke of Wellington was originally a strong opponent of this measure, until it was shown him that nearly every man who had fought his battles in the Peninsula war enlisted under Windham's Act.

<sup>2</sup> See *Panmure Papers*, i. 79, 92.

the Continent were revolutionising their organisation. Twice at least during Lord Palmerston's last Premiership we were on the brink of a great war, yet, in 1866, a Royal Commission reported that we had been content to exist from hand to mouth, with no forecast for the future, and that the existing strength of the British Army was barely sufficient for a period of peace.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the British Army was in a state of collapse. The home establishment was below strength, and shrinking year by year. The half-hearted and tentative efforts at creating a reserve had resulted in complete failure, and the only available means of expanding the Army in case of war was by filling the ranks with raw and untrained recruits.<sup>2</sup>

Yet the key to the problem had been pointed

<sup>1</sup> *Army Organisation*, pp. 9, 10 ; and *vide supra*, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> The late Sir William Russell has placed on record what he saw as our men were streaming back from the unsuccessful assault on the Redan (September 7, 1855). 'One poor young fellow, who was stumping stiffly up with a broken arm and a ball through his shoulder, carried off his firelock with him, but he made a naïve confession that he had "never fired it off, for he could not." The piece turned out to be in excellent order. It struck me that such men as these, however brave, were scarcely a match for the well-drilled soldiers of Russia, and yet we were trusting the honour, reputation, and glory of Great Britain to undisciplined lads from the plough or the lanes of our towns and villages. As one example of the sort of recruits we receive, I may mention that there was a considerable number of men in drafts which came out to regiments in the Fourth Division who had only been enlisted a few days, and who had never fired a rifle in their lives.'—*The British Expedition to the Crimea*, by William Howard Russell, p. 356.

out by more than one warning voice.<sup>1</sup> The Prussian mobilisation of 1866, and the victory of Sadowa, had shown what could be accomplished by soldiers of three years' service recalled suddenly to the ranks. To keep our regular forces on a permanent footing sufficient to repel invasion would impose a burden too heavy to be borne. The only possible way of expanding the Army from a peace to a war footing was that of allowing the soldier, after a short service with the colours, to leave the ranks, subject to the obligation of returning when required.

The Conservative Government of that day, however, were unequal to rising to such a conception.

'Instead of trying to increase the fighting force by the creation of a Reserve trained in the ranks, as all the other great Powers had done, and overlooking the fact that it was the length of the term which defeated all their efforts to fill the ranks, they actually extended the term from ten to twelve years, and offered an additional futile 2*d.* per diem in the vain hope of enticing them to the colours.'<sup>2</sup>

The outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in July 1870, the *débâcle* of the Empire, and the heroic

<sup>1</sup> *Army Organisation*, pp. 6, 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 10. The Army Reserve Act of 1867 (30 and 31 Vict. c. 110) provided for the creation of a separate force, not trained with the colours at all. It continued the system of 1859 (*supra*, p. 122, n.), and was a mere piece of make-believe; the useful but limited Militia Reserve was created by 30 and 31 Vict. c. 111.

but futile struggles of the Republican levies, came on England like a thunderclap. We indulged in a panic, the lasting memorial of which is 'The Battle of Dorking'; and the breakdown of long service was at last recognised—it not only was unequal to keep up the peace establishment but must of necessity fail to give the Army a trained Reserve.

Without this impetus it may be doubted whether Cardwell could have carried with him a nation absolutely devoid of intelligent interest in the working of its military system. In the existing circumstances he found little difficulty in establishing the short service system—six years with the colours and six years in the Reserve.<sup>1</sup> 'It speedily became apparent that this measure<sup>2</sup> solved the recruiting difficulty which had been the despair of Royal Commissions and Governments for many years.'<sup>3</sup>

Between 1861 and 1870 the number of recruits obtained annually under long service had averaged about 15,000, and, during the same period, though the army was reduced by 40,000 men, its strength, in spite of the demoralising system of bounties,

<sup>1</sup> Owing to the exigencies of Indian service the term with the colours was extended, shortly afterwards, to seven years; and to eight years, if the soldier is abroad on the expiration of his seventh year.

<sup>2</sup> The Army Enlistment Act of 1870.

<sup>3</sup> *Army Organisation*, p. 12.

averaged 3,312 below establishment. Extending the period backwards to 1854 the annual average deficiency was 7,488.

The number of recruits raised annually under short service between 1870 and 1897 had averaged 28,900, while between 1889 and 1897 the average had risen to 33,725 ;<sup>1</sup> and with temporary exceptions the peace establishments had been maintained at their full strength. In 1870 we were at our wits' end to maintain an infantry force of 108,266, without any Reserve. In 1897 we were maintaining 137,612, and had an infantry reserve of 51,948.<sup>2</sup>

It was commonly objected against the short service recruits that they were 'mere boys,' and 'children,' 'unfit even for peace service at home,' and that they were enlisted at an age much younger than was ever tolerated under long service. Hali-burton had no difficulty in showing that the same complaints, couched in almost identical terms, had been in vogue ever since the beginning of the century. He quoted Windham's speech on introducing the Recruiting Act of 1806 ; the report of the Royal Commission of 1861 ; the evidence given before the Royal Commission of 1866 by

<sup>1</sup> There is a slight discrepancy between these figures and those given at p. 124 ; but the periods selected are not exactly the same.

<sup>2</sup> *Army Organisation*, p. 14.

Lord William Paulet, the then Adjutant-General. And he pointed out that in 1897 there were only 138 soldiers per thousand under twenty years of age, as against 190 per thousand in 1871.<sup>1</sup>

It was frequently and persistently alleged that the recruits now taken were inferior in quality to those obtained under the old system. In answer to this Haliburton cited the evidence before the Wantage Committee of, amongst others, the Duke of Cambridge, Viscount Wolseley, and Sir Redvers Buller.<sup>2</sup> While allowing that the average recruits were too young for immediate active service, there was complete agreement that the modern recruits were of the same description we had always had—boys, not men, but giving the same promise of physical development as their predecessors in the days of long service.

Nor, indeed, in spite of the popular prejudice to the contrary, was it desirable in the best interests of the Army to obtain older recruits. Even so conservative a soldier as the Duke of Cambridge had told the Wantage Commission that the man who enlists after twenty is not so good in the long run as the boy who joins in his teens.<sup>3</sup> And an authority widely experienced in all matters con-

<sup>1</sup> *Army Organisation*, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Minutes of Evidence*, pp. 60, 72, 276.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Q. 2034, p. 73.

nected with recruiting, Deputy-Surgeon General Don, had been most emphatic on this subject :—

‘Any gain to be secured in physical development would be more than counterbalanced by deteriorated moral adaptability. Under twenty both body and mind are flexible, and amenable to the good influences of military drill and discipline. Over-twenty recruits, except for Royal Engineers, are now drawn from the strata of poor workmen, dissipated idlers, and rolling stones.’<sup>1</sup>

‘The reason,’ adds Haliburton, ‘why lads, enlisted between the ages of seventeen and eighteen, ultimately became much finer soldiers than those enlisted at or above twenty is obvious. In this country most young men of eighteen and upwards have selected some occupation in life. Those that succeed in their occupation do not enlist; those who fail, and those described by Surgeon-General Don, fall to the share of the Army. This they do after a struggle with straitened and adverse conditions, which impairs their physical and moral worth. On the other hand, young recruits on enlistment are well fed, clothed and housed, their physique is developed by gymnastic training and drill, and their *morale* is improved by the strict discipline of regimental life. By the time they are twenty they have completed their military instruction, and have developed into much finer men and better soldiers than they could possibly have been if they had passed their youth in poverty and privation, free from authority and control.’<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Minutes of Evidence*, Q. 12,098, p. 409.

<sup>2</sup> *Army Organisation*, p. 22.

Next he contrasted the state of battalions under the two competing systems in the light of their capacity to expand for war. In 1870 there were at home sixty-eight battalions whose authorised regimental establishment, exclusive of officers, amounted to 48,886; abroad there were seventy-three battalions, with a corresponding establishment of 59,380—a total Infantry force of 108,266. In 1897 there were at home (exclusive of the newly formed 2nd battalion of Cameron Highlanders) sixty-three battalions, with an establishment of 59,872; abroad there were seventy-eight battalions, with an establishment of 77,440—a total Infantry force of 137,612.

Under long service the battalions abroad were on the average about fifty below establishment; they were now kept up to full establishment. Under long service, as shown by a table which he quoted,<sup>1</sup> the average battalion abroad had in its ranks eighty-two men under twenty, and sixty-three over thirty-five, or 145 at ages when the fighting value of the soldier is the smallest. In December 1897 these battalions contained only fifty-two men of diminished fighting value. Under long service battalions abroad had only 464 men between twenty and thirty, acknowledged to be

<sup>1</sup> *Army Organisation*, p. 28.



the best fighting age ; now they had 940, and they averaged 234 stronger than in 1870.

‘ Under long service battalions abroad could only be expanded to war strength by diluting them with raw recruits from the depôts, or by reinforcing them with men taken from other regiments. Under the short service system battalions abroad are kept so closely up to war strength that they are at all times fit for ordinary field service without reinforcement.’<sup>1</sup>

After this comparison, Haliburton turned to meet the attack on the ‘linked battalion,’ with which was involved the old question of drafts, and to examine our supposed inability to place in the field forces adequate either for a great or a small war.

It was against the linked battalion system that the assault had most furiously raged, and the principle of making the Home Army a nursery for the Army abroad was contrasted with the results obtainable from properly constituted depôts. On this latter point Sir Arthur was able to quote the unanimous verdict of the Wantage Committee.

‘ The advantages of the system of regimental training for men destined for India over the alternative and far more expensive system of depôts can hardly be over-estimated. . . . The

<sup>1</sup> *Army Organisation*, p. 29.

double battalion system is not only the most economical but also the best machinery that can at present be devised for furnishing the foreign drafts and effecting the reliefs.’<sup>1</sup>

It was objected again that, under the linked battalion system, the energies of officers of home battalions were misapplied in doing work which ought to be done and could be done much better at the *depôt*. The officer of the old school, steeped in the old tradition, regarded with not unnatural dissatisfaction the task of training a succession of recruits to be taken from him in drafts as soon as they approached efficiency.

‘No doubt,’ replied Haliburton, ‘this part of their duty is not pleasant to them. They have to spend much time as military schoolmasters, just as officers in the German and French Armies are obliged to do. These fully recognise that the strength and efficiency of their armies depend on the proper performance of that duty, and they perform it without complaint, if not altogether with pleasure. It is acknowledged that this system has been largely instrumental in giving

<sup>1</sup> Report of Committee, paragraphs 15, 18 (*Army Organisation*, p. 73). The weight of the evidence taken before the Committee went to prove (1) that though *depôts* may in a few months turn out trained *recruits*, they can never turn out trained *soldiers*—this can only be achieved by the battalions themselves ; (2) that in the dull and lifeless routine of *depôt* service, where no real soldiering is possible, military discipline would be difficult to enforce, and habits would be acquired which would be utterly destructive of military efficiency.

us the best foreign army we have ever possessed. To the civilian mind it seems probable that there would be as much difference between recruits trained at regimental depôts, and recruits trained in regiments, as exists between boys educated in public and in village schools. If it is essential to the efficiency of the service that regimental recruits should be trained in the home battalion, before being sent to strengthen the battalion abroad, where they may at any moment have to take the field; the duty could not be dispensed with, and, apart from the *esprit de corps* which characterises all regimental officers, and which is not restricted to the mere battalion, they are too intelligent and too patriotic to wish to shirk a disagreeable duty, if it can be shown to them that, from a wider point of view than that of their battalion, it is absolutely essential to the efficiency of their army.’<sup>1</sup>

In support of this contention Haliburton quoted the words of two most distinguished and war-tried soldiers. ‘Show on parade,’ said the Commander-in-Chief, ‘should not be the first thing; the object should be to send abroad the number of men required for the foreign battalion, and these men should be trained and efficient soldiers.’<sup>2</sup> And in the opinion of Sir Evelyn Wood, the unpopularity of the present system amongst the officers was due to the peculiar standpoint from which it was regarded in England, ‘we hate it

<sup>1</sup> *Army Organisation*, p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 75.

when we are at home, but when we are abroad we like it very much.’

Those who advocated the training of young soldiers at depôts, added Haliburton, overlooked the fact that, if the men necessary to provide the foreign drafts were removed from the home battalion to the depôt, the commanding officers would find their regiments reduced to something like 300 men.

In respect to the inequality in number of the battalions at home and abroad the critics had touched a blot in the system; but they had strangely misapprehended its effect upon the Army.

‘They appear to think that the battalions at home are injuriously affected while the foreign battalions are unaffected by this disproportion. This is the very reverse of the fact. The regiments that really suffer are those that have both battalions abroad. They receive drafts consisting of men trained partly at a depôt and partly with the battalions abroad, instead of drafts completely trained in battalions at home. Drafts so trained are inferior, and while that inferiority lasts the foreign battalions suffer. In addition to this, the battalion which goes abroad without relieving its linked battalion, and without taking over from it some of its seasoned men, has necessarily a much larger proportion of young soldiers in its ranks than it would otherwise have.’<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Army Organisation*, p. 58.

This deteriorating influence had not been permitted to affect India, where no soldiers under twenty are sent; but it had given to battalions in the Colonies and the Mediterranean an average of seventy men below that age. This was an unsatisfactory and inconvenient state of affairs, and called urgently for an addition to the number of battalions sufficient to restore the balance between at home and abroad; but to describe it as a grave national peril was a sheer misuse of language.

‘The total force at the disposal of the country is not reduced by there being an excess of battalions abroad—indeed, it is rather augmented; because battalions abroad have a higher establishment by 200 rank and file than they have when at home, and the depôts of the regiments are augmented by 250 in order to supply the drafts to two battalions abroad.’

Haliburton next proceeded to deal with a very serious allegation, the inability of the short service system to produce an efficient army for a war of any magnitude. It had been asserted by the military Members of Parliament in their memorial to the Prime Minister that the battalions which stood first for service were ‘to a large extent composed of immature soldiers deficient in the age and stamina necessary to enable them to endure the hardships of a campaign.’ If there was

any foundation for this assertion, then Sir Arthur Haliburton admitted that short service had broken down; but he was prepared to show that it was the very reverse of the truth.

In the first place he produced a table giving the average peace strength of battalions at home under long and short service respectively:—

Age	Long Service, 1870	Short Service, 1897
Under 20 . . . .	114	266
20 to 25 . . . .	134	344
25 to 30 . . . .	142	85
30 to 35 . . . .	141	32
35 to 40 . . . .	50	12
Over 40 . . . .	7	3
	588	742
Deduct men under 20 .	114	266
Total . . . .	474	476 <sup>1</sup>

Striking out all men under twenty, as unsuitable for war service, the force available for war was practically identical at both periods. But under long service no means existed for raising battalions from 474 to war strength (1,067), except by pouring into the ranks newly-raised recruits as best they could be obtained, or by denuding other regiments of their best men. Even that

<sup>1</sup> *Army Organisation*, p. 32.

process, objectionable and destructive as it was, would not have enabled the Government to fill up more than one-third of the home battalions, leaving the other two-thirds mere skeleton corps.

The creation, indeed, of the Militia Infantry Reserve in 1867-68, had laid the foundation for a certain measure of legitimate expansion ; but the long service battalions of 1870, even thus expanded, could only have taken the field 803 strong, or 264 below full war strength. The table by which Haliburton contrasted the battalions of 1870 and 1897 as mobilised for war is a striking argument, especially when it is remembered that the Militia Reserve was a limited quantity, which could only have stiffened the home battalions, leaving the foreign battalions considerably below war strength.

Ages	Long Service, 1870			Short Service, 1897		
	With the Colours	From Militia Reserve	Expanded Battalion	With the Colours	From Army Reserve	Expanded Battalion
Under 20 . .	Sent to depôt as unfit for immediate field service.					
20 to 25 . .	134	112	246	344	—	344
25 to 30 . .	142	113	255	85	431	516
30 to 35 . .	141	85	226	32	160	192
35 to 40 . .	50	19	69	12	—	12
Over 40 . .	7	—	7	3	—	3
	474	329	803	476	591	1067 <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Army Organisation*, p. 34.

But behind these figures lay a most vital question :—

‘ The efficiency of the battalion thus mobilised for war largely depends on the quality of the Reserve, and in the mind of the public a distrust of the Reserve undoubtedly exists. Some scarcely believe in its existence, while others, prepared to admit its existence, are filled with doubts as to its efficiency.’<sup>1</sup>

These words were written some two years before the Reserve was put on its great trial, and there was comparatively little in the way of evidence to appeal to. Haliburton, however, was able to cite the Duke of Cambridge, Lord Wolseley, Sir Redvers Buller, and Sir Evelyn Wood in praise of its efficiency. ‘ The Reserve called out in 1882,’ the Duke had told the Wantage Committee, ‘ behaved most admirably.’ Lord Wolseley testified to the rapidity with which they settled down in the ranks, and the corresponding astonishment of the commanding officers, one of whom pronounced them to be the backbone of the service. Sir Evelyn Wood declared emphatically that in no foreign army had he seen such a splendid body of men.

The root of the whole controversy, contended Haliburton, lay in a confusion of mind as to the purposes for which a Reserve existed. The

<sup>1</sup> *Army Organisation*, p. 40.



military parliamentarians, through the mouth of Sir Henry Havelock Allan, complained that, in the event of an expeditionary force of any magnitude being required, the home battalions designated for it would require between four and five hundred men from the Reserve before they could be embarked, and judges of military matters were called upon to picture to themselves a state of chaos, leading to inevitable disaster, in an army every battalion of which had been suddenly reinforced fifty per cent., and in which the new-comers were totally unknown to each other and to their officers.

‘If British battalions,’ was the retort, ‘are not to be made up to war strength as the battalions of foreign armies are, by recalling the Reserve to the colours, how are they to be made up, and for what purpose is a Reserve maintained?’ It was a sheer mistake to suppose that when the Reservists rejoined they would be unknown to each other and their officers. As a rule they would go back to their old regiments, and, even if this could not be guaranteed in every case, the regimental system had grown to be so uniform as regards drill and discipline throughout the Army that no great inconvenience could arise.<sup>1</sup>

‘Even if inconvenience did result, how, under any system, could that inconvenience be over-

<sup>1</sup> *Army Organisation*, p. 43.

come except by keeping the Army always at war strength, a course that would add six millions to Army expenditure? If battalions had to be prepared for the field, as they were during the Crimean War, by the transfer of men from other regiments, or if their ranks were filled from the Militia Reserve, or by young recruits, the same difficulty, in an intensified form, would present itself with this difference, that under short service the ranks will be filled with first-rate fighting material from the Reserve; whereas under long service, as far as they could be filled at all, they had to be filled either with material of inferior value, or with a limited amount of good material extracted from other battalions to their complete undoing.’<sup>1</sup>

The Indian Army, meaning thereby the European Army in India, was often cited as the model of what a fighting force should be in point of age and physique. But a table quoted by Haliburton<sup>2</sup> showed that, while the Indian battalions contained on the average 314 men of twenty-five to thirty years of age, or about thirty per cent. of their total strength, the home mobilised battalions contained 516: that is to say, close on fifty per cent. of their total strength were men of the best fighting age. And a comparison of the British, French, and German battalion, as mobilised for war, revealed the fact that the British soldiers with the colours, available for active service,

<sup>1</sup> *Army Organisation*, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 36.

exceeded, on an average, the French and German by 245 and 201 respectively. The number of Reservists required to bring a peace battalion up to war strength was less by at least one hundred in the British than in either of the two selected armies.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Arnold-Forster had declared that the system had not produced and could not produce an army. Haliburton showed that short service had not only given us a far stronger force than the country ever possessed before, but gave us battalions which in point of composition were superior to those of the French and German armies. He had found chapter and verse for Lord Wolseley's memorable boast that—

‘When the Army Reserve rejoins the colours the home army will be immeasurably superior to any army we have ever had in England for one hundred years; infinitely superior in every respect to the army Wellington had at Waterloo or that we landed in the Crimea; of this I have no doubt whatever, I am sure of it.’<sup>2</sup>

The kernel of the prejudice against short service lay in the fact that the critics refused to

<sup>1</sup> These figures, on their first appearance in the *Times*, were called loudly in question. But Sir Arthur Haliburton was able to prove conclusively, with one trifling and technical exception, the accuracy of his statistics and the soundness of his deductions. See *Army Organisation*, pp. 38, 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 44.

accept its main principle. Cardwell had never contemplated the maintenance of the home battalions at fighting efficiency : it was never intended that they should be kept in a position to take the field unstiffened by the Reserve. ‘It is not our object,’ said Lord Wolseley<sup>1</sup> before the Wantage Committee, in explanation and qualification of some of his previous answers, ‘to have battalions at home ready to go on service ; that would mean an army without a Reserve or theatrical army such as we had before the Crimean War.’ It was demanded that a battalion should be ‘a fighting unit, or the cadre of a fighting unit, capable of expansion at a moment’s notice, and perfectly prepared, when expanded, to take its place in the fighting line.’ The home battalion under short service, retorted Haliburton, exactly fulfilled these conditions in national emergencies which admitted the recall of the Reserve to the colours.

In the matter, however, of small wars, which do not admit the definition of a national emergency, he allowed that Mr. Arnold-Forster had touched a grave blot in the Cardwell system. And it was a blot which was very largely responsible for the disfavour with which the existing organisation of the Army was regarded by those who did not understand it. The remedy, as Lord Wolseley

<sup>6</sup> See *Army Organisation*, p. 54.

had pointed out long ago, was very simple. It was only necessary so to amend the Reserve Forces Act as to enable the Government to complete *at any time*, and not merely on the occasion of a national emergency, the force requisite for small wars by recalling men from the Reserve to the colours.

‘It is not that short service is incapable of this elasticity,’ said Haliburton, ‘it is simply that, having the means within its reach, the Government has not given itself the power to make use of them.’<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Army Organisation*, p. 55.

## CHAPTER VIII

1898

The Short Service Controversy Continued—Effect Produced by Haliburton's Letters—Attacks upon him in the 'Times'—Warm Appreciation by Lord Wolseley—Lord Lansdowne's Edinburgh Speech—Letters of 'Reform'—and of Mr. Arnold-Forster—Haliburton's Rejoinder.

To rouse the British public to the point of hearing both sides on a question which involves careful reasoning and the intelligent handling of statistics is a Herculean task. The man who is first in the field, who pitches his story in the highest key, and who deals the swashing blows of Master Gregory, has an almost overwhelming advantage. The classes, indeed, leisured and educated, whom Sir Arthur Haliburton addressed through the columns of the 'Times,' were the most favourable audience to whom a controversialist could appeal, but they numbered a large proportion of those among whom the Cardwell system, imperfectly understood, still excited strong prejudice. The abolition of purchase had hit a number of interests very hard, the competitive examinations for com-

missions in the Army were highly unpopular, and though these reforms had nothing to do with the merits or demerits of short service, they contributed to swell the outcry against the new model which Lord Wolseley and his fellow-workers were so painfully building up.

Neither the necessity for the creation of the Reserve, nor its proper functions, nor the manner in which it was working, had ever been set out in a manner 'to be understood of the people,' and the studied, persistent, depreciation to which it had been subjected had aroused a very general belief that neither in point of quality nor of quantity was it to be depended on. Haliburton's *apologia* was received in many quarters with indifference and careless incredulity; in others with pronounced and vociferous hostility.

Yet to the open-minded reader, who did not start with the conviction that the War Office had inherited a double dose of original sin, these letters came with the force of a revelation. 'So we really have a Reserve; I had never believed it,' was the remark of one of the most highly placed of Her Majesty's Judges<sup>1</sup> to Lady Haliburton. And in the ranks of those behind the scenes, on both sides in politics, the men who had experience in public administration, and who, in City phraseology,

<sup>1</sup> The late Lord Morris.

knew how to read a banking sheet, Sir Arthur's vindication of short service was recognised as triumphant and conclusive.

'It has come as an absolute astonishment to most people,' wrote a general officer who occupied one of the most important posts in the War Office and to whom more than to any man was due the successful mobilisation of 1899-1900,<sup>1</sup>

'to find that there was such a strong case as you have put, and it has set others thinking. They are just awaking to the fact that, after all, there may not be any bottom under the pile of abuse which, so far, they have accepted as true without inquiry. It is the first time that the nature and results of our present organisation have been put clearly and fairly before the public, and the public is a little staggered when it finds what it has been abusing.'

The same correspondent, who moved largely in circles outside the official and ministerial sphere, was able to gratify Sir Arthur Haliburton with the assurance that the letters were influencing thinking men very strongly, and that since their appearance there had been an unmistakable swing round in opinion. And in the midst of the attacks to which he was now about to be exposed no approval gave Haliburton more

<sup>1</sup> Major-General Sir Coleridge Grove, K.C.B., then Military Secretary.



pleasure than a warm letter of congratulation from Sir William Harcourt, the old colleague of Mr. Cardwell in the representation of Oxford City.

On the morning on which the last of Haliburton's letters appeared <sup>1</sup> the 'Times' came out with what is known journalistically as a 'slating leader.' An ironical compliment was paid to his 'forensic ability,' and his dexterity in handling a mass of figures, which it was insinuated had been obtained by him from the War Office since his retirement in September. The strongest evidence of the essentially official origin of his defence was declared to be the invincible optimism that breathed in every line.

'Dr. Pangloss in his most exalted moods was never so convinced that everything is for the best in the best of all possible worlds as is Sir Arthur Haliburton that everything is for the best in the best of all possible armies, administered by the best of all possible War Offices upon the best of all possible systems.'

Then, after pouring scorn on Lord Wolseley's assurance that he could bring two *corps d'armée* to the port of embarkation before the transports for them could be got together,<sup>2</sup> the writer proceeded to gibe at Sir Arthur for entirely omitting

<sup>1</sup> December 9, 1897.

<sup>2</sup> 'We have to take so much upon trust that we must overlook the want of actual experience of mobilisation.'

from his survey the artillery and cavalry, as well as the commissariat and transport, 'things that the War Office has not always managed with unqualified success.' With an extraordinary misapprehension of the A B C of the Cardwell system, Haliburton was derided for explaining 'that while every battalion is perfect so far as it goes we need more battalions.' And then in a tone which by no stretch of language could be described as courteous the writer went on to declare that—

'These nicely drawn out tables of averages do not impress anybody who knows what can be done in the way of manipulating figures. We cannot check the averages for the past, therefore the comparison is not effective. . . . Throughout all his comparative arguments Sir Arthur Haliburton is beating the air. Their basis is unsound or unverifiable, and none but War Office officials imagine that the substantial question is between a six years' and a twenty-one years' service.'<sup>1</sup>

As some set-off against this diatribe Haliburton received from the Commander-in-Chief a letter, from which the following extracts may be quoted :—

'How grateful to you I am,' said Lord Wolseley, 'and I am sure all that is best in the Army is to you for your admirable closely-reasoned

<sup>1</sup> The writer apparently supposed that the term of service on Cardwell's accession to office was twenty-one years, instead of twelve, as was the actual case.

and unanswerable letter in the 'Times.' . . . The 'Times,' finding you doubled up this man and made mincemeat of his arguments, had only the old resource of abusing the plaintiff's attorney to fall back upon. . . . They must have enough intelligence to feel they have made fools of themselves, and are naturally sore with you and me and others here, and angry with themselves and their foolish military advisers. You have done the State yeoman's service by your letters. If you had never done anything else for England, they alone would entitle you to the gratitude of all thinking men.

Nor was Haliburton without his champions in the Press. The 'Broad Arrow,' one of the most influential and best written of the Service papers, hailed it as a happy accident that he was now a free lance, with time on his hands, and free to state the case for the War Office.<sup>1</sup> It was of small importance, urged the writer, whether the late Permanent Under-Secretary drew his statistics from memory or from the archives of the War Office :

'From whichever source they come they are at least as valuable as the information picked up, hole and corner fashion, by amateur military detectives.

'Mr. Arnold-Forster,' the same paper asserted, 'has but a superficial appreciation of what he writes about, and facts, so far, have not been taken by him seriously into account. His supporters are, most of them, either greater amateurs than

<sup>1</sup> *Broad Arrow*, December 11, 1897.

himself who desire to have a share in the valuable advertisement which the 'Times' is so kindly according his name; or they are military men without knowledge or experience of army organisation and administration who simply reproduce the complaints of those officers of battalions serving at home who regard the fact that the home battalion has to labour to prepare the reliefs for the battalion serving abroad as a conclusive argument for the necessity of the immediate introduction of a new system.'

And the military correspondent of the 'Observer' declared<sup>1</sup> that 'on the question of short service under the Cardwell system,' the only topic with which Sir Arthur Haliburton was for the moment concerned, he had proved his case 'indisputably by the logic of incontrovertible facts and figures.'

On the very day in which Haliburton brought his 'Times' correspondence, for the moment, to a close, Lord Lansdowne addressed a large political meeting at Edinburgh. The Secretary of State for War, who was not a familiar figure on platforms, had selected the occasion for a declaration of the Government's Army policy and an outline of its programme. Much of his speech was taken up by a vindication of the British troops during the recent frontier campaign in India, and of the

<sup>1</sup> *Observer*, December 12.

short-service soldier generally, together with a tribute to the inestimable value of the Reserve. At the same time he declared that the Government had an open mind both as to the practicability of reducing the term of service with the colours to an optional three years instead of seven, and as to the abolition of deferred pay. He admitted that there were serious deficiencies in the working of the existing Army system, but these were due to the fact that it had never had a fair trial. The growth of the empire and the corresponding demands upon the Army had never been met by the requisite increase in the number of battalions which, though on a higher establishment, were still exactly the same in number as in 1870. The Government proposed to raise extra battalions and also to make a special contract with a certain number of Reservists, by which they bound themselves to rejoin the colours for warlike operation during their first year in the Reserve if so called upon.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vide supra*, p.175. This was effected by the Reserve Forces and Militia Act, 1898 (61 and 62 Vict. c. 9), which abolished the necessity in such cases for a Royal Proclamation and for the calling together of Parliament, as laid down by the Reserve Forces Act of 1882. Not more than 5,000 men were to be called out, and the service was limited to twelve months. The Act can only be put in operation 'when warlike operations are in preparation or progress.' With regard to the general increase in the strength of the Army, Mr. St. John Brodrick (now Viscount Midleton, and then Under-Secretary for War) was very emphatic, in a letter to Haliburton, that it was

The 'Times' promptly seized upon these admissions as a confirmation of the attacks that had been made upon the War Office in its columns and elsewhere, and greeted Lord Lansdowne's proposals as an acceptance of the suggestions put forward by Mr. Arnold-Forster. The fact that Lord Lansdowne advisedly abstained from entering into any defence either of the military or civil side of the War Office, and from alluding in any way to Sir Arthur Haliburton's letters, was construed into a tacit surrender; he was congratulated upon having 'absolutely thrown over the complacent optimism which regards our military system as a close approximation to the ideal.'<sup>1</sup> There was a widespread impression that the assailants had got the Government 'on the run,' and that a vigorous campaign would show further concessions when Parliament met.

In pursuance of this campaign there immediately appeared in the 'Times' the first of a new series of letters on 'The Condition of the Army,' this time over the signature of 'Reform.' The identity of the writer has never been disclosed, but he has generally been associated with

not due to the agitation in the press—'there has been a strong pressure on us from above for months past.'

<sup>1</sup> It may be remarked that this line of argument 'estopped' the critics from resort to their former arguments that Haliburton was Lord Lansdowne's mouthpiece.

the name of an officer of the Royal Engineers, who at one time had been high in the councils of Printing House Square. Whoever the unknown may have been his tactical eye was keen enough to show him that Haliburton was the pivot of the defence, and against him he launched out with a superabundance of personality. Sir Arthur, he maintained, had been placed upon the Wantage Committee in order to play the part of the dynamite charge controlled by clockwork, and wreck the ship at a given moment ;

‘ He was now, as in 1891, the representative of the powerful forces which for years have successfully obstructed the reform alike of the War Office and the Army.

‘ With your permission, sir, I propose to show that Sir Arthur Haliburton’s figures and alleged facts are largely illusory,<sup>1</sup> and that, as might have been expected, vital military considerations find no place in his philosophy. . . . The controversial

<sup>1</sup> How very far from impeccable were ‘ Reform’s ’ own facts may be shown by two instances exposed by Haliburton. (1) He had stated that ‘ at a moderate estimate ’ there were 50,000 men in the Army ‘ who do not fulfil the requirements of British soldiers.’ The latest Army annual return had shown a total of 28,929 under twenty in the ranks. (2) He had laid it down as a consummation devoutly to be wished that non-commissioned officers should be permitted and encouraged to re-engage up to twenty-one years’ service. Haliburton pointed out that they had always been both ‘ permitted and encouraged ’ to do this. ‘ So carefully is the privilege guarded that no non-commissioned officer can be refused re-engagement except by the express veto of the Secretary of State.’

methods adopted by Sir Arthur Haliburton show three marked characteristics. He uniformly ignores or misrepresents the views of the critics; he makes effective use of carefully selected shreds of the evidence of military authorities, even when they are contradicted by other statements or by facts; he adduces statistics which are either irrelevant or directly misleading.'

'Reform's' letters appeared on December 14, 17, 22, and 28, and on January 4, 7, and 8, and the editorial columns of the "Times" supplied a chorus of approving comment. The game was to play off Lord Lansdowne and Sir Arthur Haliburton against each other. The late Permanent Under-Secretary was no longer treated as the mouth-piece of his former chief, who now figured as a man thwarted by the inertia and obstruction of 'an organisation which is blind to fact, impervious to argument, and impregnably entrenched in self-sufficiency.' And before 'Reform' had delivered his last testimony Mr. Arnold-Forster returned to the charge in a final letter which appeared on January 4.

Whether his much vaunted acquaintance with all sorts and conditions of military men extended in those days to the civil side of the War Office I cannot say, but the tone which he thought proper to adopt towards the late Permanent Under-Secretary betrayed a strange ignorance of the character



and reputation of Sir Arthur Haliburton. A retired public servant of the highest rank, who had enjoyed the unbounded confidence of his official superiors, and whose knowledge and statesmanlike capacity were conspicuous in whatever company he might find himself, was rated by the honourable member for West Belfast in the sort of tone that Picton and Craufurd might have adopted towards an incapable or dishonest commissary.

‘If the Civil officials during the past five-and-twenty years,’ he wrote, ‘have really approached Army questions in the spirit which animates the late Permanent Under-Secretary, no wonder the Army is in urgent need of reform. . . . It requires very little knowledge of the Army as it really is to be aware that the contents of the letters are strangely at variance with known facts, and are for the most part so irrelevant to the only issues with which the public are concerned that they can have very little weight as soon as their true character has been exposed.’

The Indian table given by Sir Arthur Haliburton <sup>1</sup> was declared to represent

‘nothing except Blue Book calculations which everyone in the War Office and everyone in the Army knows to be false and untrue.’ . . . ‘I am much mistaken,’ was his parting shot, ‘if, before the present controversy is completed, Lord Lansdowne

<sup>1</sup> *Army Organisation*, p. 36, and *supra*, p. 172.

will not hear some very frank utterances as to the qualifications of more than one of the officials whom he so generously, but perhaps not so wisely, defends.’<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the object of all these onslaughts remained calm and unruffled but not idle. In acknowledging a letter from Sir William Harcourt dated December 12, he intimated that ‘Reform’s’ letters might perhaps afford him an opportunity for resuming the controversy, though

‘the tone of the “Times” is so hostile that it may deny me the hospitality of its columns.’ ‘I hope that “Reform” will “draw you,”’ was Sir William’s cheery answer, ‘as I feel sure you will have the best of him, and you need not fear that the “Times” will refuse you hospitality. They know well enough that the Government have in substance adopted your principles of Army organisation.’<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, Lord Lansdowne in his Edinburgh speech had rather pointedly abstained from any allusion to the *personnel* of the War Office. ‘With what indignation,’ wrote a member of the Government to Haliburton, ‘I have read Arnold-Forster’s letter and the *Times* article; not only in reference to yourself, but in the general tone towards the permanent officials. They are fomenting the idea, held in very high quarters, that all War Office mistakes are the work of the men who carry out the policy of the Secretary of State—usually dictated to him by the Military Adviser. This is neither true nor fair.’

<sup>2</sup> In this connexion the following letter (December 20) from Lord Lansdowne to Haliburton is both interesting and instructive. ‘Many of my colleagues regard the existing system with the utmost disfavour, but can find nothing to put in its place; it therefore holds the field, and the policy indicated in my Edinburgh speech

Thus encouraged Haliburton expressed to his friend Sir Charles Welby his intention of writing one more letter—

‘ I will begin to-day,<sup>1</sup> if I can persuade myself, and I will try and strengthen Lord Lansdowne’s hands against those who would drive him on. I will deal with deferred pay and extended service. I will not go against modifying deferred pay, but I will bring out the evidence as to it, and the effect its abolition may have on extensions and the effect they would have on the Army if excessive. I feel compelled to write once more because the idea is widespread that I did not answer A.-F.’s figures because I could not, and that feeling has shaken faith in mine, or, rather, prevented it. They suggest to me the broad issue and then find fault with me for not going into details.

‘ The thing that strikes me as so odd is this— How can anyone look at the figures I gave, go carefully into them, and yet not admit that the system has been a great success? Of course to those who do not believe the figures to be correct it is different; but even those who do admit their correctness seem to me to draw no satisfactory conclusions from them.

‘ It was, as things turned out, unfortunate that Lord Lansdowne did not say something at Edinburgh about his department and about my defence. His silence has given rise to the false idea that he has thrown them both over, and those Press people

is accepted. But the question of money has to be faced, and my difficulties are only beginning.’

<sup>1</sup> December 25.

want to see how far they can push him along their own lines.<sup>1</sup>

The editor of the 'Times' graciously consented to allow the victim of these varied onslaughts the right of reply, and Haliburton's fourth letter on the condition of the Army appeared on January 11. Three columns and a-half of that journal were insufficient to contain the flood of pent-up fact and argument, and another letter, the fifth and last, was published on the 22nd of the same month.

Haliburton began by explaining that owing to a misapprehension his former letters had contained a less detailed reply to the statements of Mr. Arnold-Forster and the others than he had originally contemplated. He now found that this omission had been construed into a tacit admission that their statements were unanswerable. He had imagined, moreover, that if he proved by statistics, the perfect accuracy of which he was in a position to guarantee, supported by the opinions of distinguished soldiers and administrators, that the short-service system actually gave the 'legions' it was intended to supply, and that the Army was *not* in the condition of collapse described by

<sup>1</sup> The purport of this letter, as was probably intended, seems to have reached Lord Lansdowne, who wrote to Haliburton on January 6: 'I am all for your carrying war into the enemy's country; nor do I object to a gentle peppering of the "friendlies" under the head of Deferred Pay.'

the critics, it would be unnecessary to meet their statements to the contrary with direct and detailed refutation.

In this he had been mistaken; his facts, his figures, and his inferences had been equally decided.

‘I will explain,’ he wrote, ‘how these tables were compiled. Regiments send to the War Office monthly returns detailing the service of their non-commissioned officers and men. These form the basis of the general annual return of the British Army.<sup>1</sup> In July last, in consequence of the memorial of the military Members of Parliament, I wished once more to study the condition of the Army, in order to satisfy myself whether views, formed in 1891, were justified by existing conditions. I therefore directed the statistical branch of the War Office to compile returns showing the numbers and ages of all ranks in the battalions at home and abroad. There can be no possible doubt as to the correctness of these returns. They are simply the sum total of the regimental rolls worked out to an average. I might have given the whole of the 114 battalions in detail, but even your hospitable columns could not have found space for such a mass of figures, and no reader would have had the patience to do what I did for him, reduce them to reasonable and intelligible limits.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Parliamentary Papers*, C. 8558 of 1897.

<sup>2</sup> A few weeks later, when his letters were reproduced in pamphlet form, Haliburton added after the words quoted in the text the following passage: ‘Though my statistics have been

Then, after paying a tribute to 'the labour and marked ability which Mr. Arnold-Forster had brought to bear upon the question,' Haliburton lamented his approach to the subject with 'that "little knowledge" which "is a dangerous thing,"' and his inability 'to separate the wheat from the chaff in the statements with which his numerous friends have supplied him.'

In order to demonstrate to the public what an absolute sham an infantry battalion at home is, Mr. Arnold-Forster had given, in his own words,

'plain facts with regard to some, taken at random, which happen to be on the higher establishment, and are therefore supposed to be in a more perfect state of preparation and efficiency than less favoured corps.'

He had enumerated accordingly five battalions, designated by letters of the alphabet. One of these, he represented, would require 711 Reservists to make it up to war strength, another 688, and so on. If these were favourable samples of the battalions at home it followed that the rest of the

repudiated, their accuracy has never been shaken. Indeed, that would be impossible. They show the actual living strength of the battalions on the dates they refer to, and I once more guarantee their substantial accuracy. It is said I am optimistic. It is the facts, and not I, who speak. Let those who repudiate the inevitable conclusions to which these facts lead show where they err, or accept their guidance.'

Army would require an even larger proportion of Reservists to fit them for service in war.

‘The tables I have already given,<sup>1</sup> answered Haliburton, prove that on July 1, 1897, the home battalions were not in the condition Mr. Arnold-Forster describes. At that date they only required, on the average, 591 Reservists to make them up to full war strength of 1067, or 100 less than German and French battalions require. Mr. Arnold-Forster wrote in November<sup>2</sup> and my statistics were not later than July, but in November the battalions would have been stronger, not weaker. He abstains from giving information which would enable me to check his figures, and it is only from his chance expressions that one can form an idea of how he fell into the exaggerations that characterise his statements.’

In the first place there was no such thing as a home battalion ‘on the higher establishment’; all were on the same establishment of 777.<sup>3</sup> Then again, he apparently assumed that all men ‘disqualified for Indian service’ were equally disqualified for field service.

‘It seems possible that this may explain some of the errors into which he has fallen. Under a financial arrangement with India we do not send soldiers to that country with less than two years

<sup>1</sup> *Vide supra*, pp. 168, 169, and *Army Organisation*, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Times*, November 16.

<sup>3</sup> See Lord Wolseley’s answer (Q. 4391) to the Wantage Committee.

to serve. They are not sent in order to save India the expense of the transport of men with so little service to give. These men are all, however, fit and available for field service, and are only excluded from India on financial grounds.'

It was in reliance on fallacies such as these, continued Sir Arthur, that Mr. Arnold-Forster declared that short service had broken down and that the home battalions were worthless for fighting purposes. His alarmist statements about the Militia were equally devoid of foundation. It was true, indeed, that in 1896 the 'constitutional force' had been 16,937 below establishment with an actual strength of 117,773 against an authorised strength of 134,746. But this was not sufficient for Mr. Arnold-Forster, who produced from his own imagination a purely fancy picture.

'Because there are 30,000 men in the Militia who have assumed the contingent liability of serving abroad in the Regular forces if required, which they would not be if the Militia were embodied for the defence of our shores, he calmly strikes them altogether out of official existence. He equally dismisses from the service 35,000 more militiamen as "untrained recruits." No untrained recruits join for Militia training; they all undergo a two months' drill, as well as a short musketry course before training. Having thus wiped out of Militia existence 65,000 very effective men, besides a few driblets for deserters, etc., Mr. Arnold-



Forster ventures to tell the public that we have "what might by courtesy be called an effective remnant of 41,578"; whence the Army Annual Return for 1896 shows that there were present at Inspection that year 98,761 in addition to 11,781 absent without leave.'

'Mr. Arnold-Forster,' said Sir Arthur Haliburton, with a gleam of prophecy, 'has evidently persuaded himself and many others that the Army needs a brand new constitution which he is prepared to supply and doubtless to administer.' In less than six years Mr. Arnold-Forster was Secretary of State for War.

Leaving for a moment the original protagonist, Haliburton turned upon 'Reform' who had charged him with consistently assuming that the official was the real age of the recruit.

'I not only did not say this' [was the retort] 'but I said exactly the contrary and proved by reference to old records<sup>1</sup> that there had always been deception on the part of recruits in this matter, and I distinctly stated that we still get the same class of recruits that we always got.'

'Reform' had further objected that he gave no definition either of long or of short service; and he chose to assume that by long service Haliburton meant life enlistments, or enlistments for twenty-

<sup>1</sup> *Army Organisation*, p. 18.

one year. These, explained the latter, had ceased in 1848, exactly half a century ago.

‘By long service I refer to the ten year system which collapsed in 1867, and the twelve year system which was on the high road to collapse when Mr. Cardwell’s reforms were adopted. The term short service is not limited to any particular number of years. It may be two with the colours as in Germany, three as in France, three, six, seven, eight, as with us; the limit must depend upon national requirements. Short service means such a term with the colours as will allow the soldier to give, in addition, a period of effective Reserve service. No long service system can yield a Reserve because men serve with the colours until they are no longer suited for service in the field.’

‘Reform’ had contended that ‘the popular misuse of the term “Reserves”’ had led Sir Arthur Haliburton into a quagmire of errors. ‘A Reserve is, strictly speaking, a force intended to replace loss in war.’ The term, replied Sir Arthur Haliburton, has no such restricted meaning. In this country, as on the Continent, Reservists are the force which brings the peace establishment to war strength at a moment’s notice.<sup>1</sup>

‘The Reserve must fulfil this duty if it is to be a means of salvation to the Army. It may be large enough not only to fit the Army for the field but to maintain it there for a time more or

<sup>1</sup> ‘Soldiers of the first line on furlough,’ as they have been described.

less long. The Continental reserves accomplish this, and ours also, but not nearly to so great an extent. If we want more reserves we must increase our reserve producing power, but most of the measures advocated by the critics would not only not increase our Reserve, but would tend to diminish and enfeeble it.'

'Reform' had contended that in the opinion of every student of war it was desirable to keep the Reservists with the colours. This Haliburton emphatically denied.

'Sir Redvers Buller has pointed out that for every man who goes from the colours to the Reserve and is replaced by a recruit, the country gets two soldiers instead of one "supposing you have 1,000 men serving on for a pension, for the same cost you can get 1,000 soldiers and 500 in the Reserve, so that you really get 1,500 instead of 1,000, and these 1,500 would be better soldiers, you get more efficient men for the same money. . . . Our Reserve of 80,000 men costs us 720,000*l.* a year; if they were kept with the colours they would cost us the loss of 80,000 fighting men in the flower of their age, or four and a half millions a year for an equal number of additional soldiers with the colours who in time would deteriorate in quality.'"'<sup>1</sup>

According to 'Reform' neither Mr. Arnold-Forster nor any other critic of the War Office had evinced the smallest desire to go back to pre-

<sup>1</sup> *Army Organisation*, p. 68. This quotation had actually been used by Sir A. Haliburton in his letter to the *Times* of December 6, before 'Reform' had appeared upon the field.

Cardwellian organisation or 'reproduce the conditions which nearly entailed national disaster.' Sir Arthur Haliburton rejoiced to hear it, but he found it curious that, 'while making this admission, all their arguments should be based on an admiration for long service, and nearly all the reforms they propose would lead to its establishment.' In illustration of these longing, lingering looks at the dear dead days he quoted the following sentence from 'Reform':—

'If Sir Arthur Haliburton, instead of taking 1870 as the period for comparison, had gone back to the period 1862-63 before the pay of the soldier had been doubled or his comforts augmented, he would have found that for every British battalion more than 1,000 men were rated and that the total strength of Regular forces with the colours was 227,151, and in 1860-61, 235,800.'

'If "Reform,"' retorted Haliburton, 'had possessed any knowledge of military history he would carefully have avoided the thin ice on which these words had placed him.'

'The exceptional number of soldiers with the colours in the early sixties was partly due to the patriotic feelings evoked by the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny. Many of the soldiers enlisted for those campaigns remained in the service all through the sixties. In order to obtain these men, however, every conceivable measure was resorted to. Militia officers were given commissions in the Regular Army on condition that they

brought 100 recruits with them, and bounties ranging from 10*l.* to 2*l.*, besides "bringing money," were paid for recruits. In 1858, 91,000 recruits were obtained. The standard was 5 feet 3 inches, half an inch lower than at present, while there existed no standard for chest measurement, which is much more important than height. Of these 91,000 recruits 29,000 were rejected on medical and other grounds, over 6,000 absconded before attestation, and, showing the demoralising effects of bounties, over 14,000 more deserted within the year. It is said, "returns of actual strength are not given, but it can hardly be supposed that the force voted in those years was immensely in excess of the possible supply." Here are the missing figures. During the five years 1859 to 1863 the Army was, on the average, 11,000 below establishment.

'The average number of recruits raised was 12,000, the desertions 4,792, the annual cost of recruiting 95,987*l.* During the past five years the establishments have been maintained up to and even over full strength, the number of recruits has averaged 33,756, the desertions only 2,200, and the cost of recruiting has fallen to 30,000*l.*'<sup>1</sup>

'Reform' had united with Mr. Arnold-Forster in demonstrating from the Royal Marines, who enlisted for twelve years, that there could be no insuperable aversion among working men to a ten years' term.

'Those who use this argument must be lacking in the sense of proportion. The Royal Marines during the past five years have averaged

<sup>1</sup> *Army Organisation*, p. 15.

15,318 all told, the Army over 200,000. The Royal Marines require 2,000 recruits, the Army over 33,000. The Royal Marines have a very easy life in Portsmouth, Devonport, and Chatham and on board ship, where their duties expose them to few hardships and privations. A marine after twenty years' service may be as useful on board ship and in barracks as a young man of twenty-four, but the soldier must be young enough to endure both exposure and privation, such as they have recently experienced on the Indian frontier, and yet be able and willing to "come up to time."<sup>1</sup> It is as reasonable to compare the conditions applicable to the Marines and the Army as it would be to compare those applicable to an elephant and a toy-terrier.<sup>2</sup>

And to round off the comparison of the fruits of long and short service he now produced a final table inadvertently omitted from his earlier letters :

‘The following figures show the average fighting strength of the Regular Army, at home and abroad, in 1870 and 1896:—

—	1870	1896
Home . . . . .	89,670	106,408
Abroad . . . . .	90,774	114,334
Reserve . . . . .	5,824	78,100
Total <sup>3</sup> . . . . .	186,268	298,842

<sup>1</sup> *Army Organisation*, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Times*, January 11, 1898. This 'shrewd nip,' as old Foxe would say, does not reappear in the pamphlet.

<sup>3</sup> Haliburton discovered before the republication of his letters in pamphlet form that he had included in the Reserve of 1870 the

‘ This table shows that the short-service system has given us a fighting force over 100,000 stronger than we had when Mr. Cardwell introduced his despised reforms !

‘ These were some of the fruits of Short Service,’ added Haliburton, whose temper was warming as he went on, ‘ and of the labours of that War Office which they would sweep off the face of the earth and replace by a brand new office manned from the amateur administrators and faddists who now seek to enlighten the nation. The figures which I have laid before you, if correct—and their correctness is, I believe, beyond cavil—prove that I am justified in answering your question, of whether the existing organisation gives the legions it was intended to supply, a most emphatic affirmative. In the interests of the Army and of the nation it is not sufficient to ignore the official statistics I have given you, or to meet them with the reply that they “ cannot be verified ” or that they are “ astonishing statements ”—truth generally is astonishing. They are too weighty and important to be thus disregarded. They are either true or false. If they are true they knock the bottom out of the indictment framed by Mr. Arnold-Forster and “ Reform.” If they are false, their falseness should be proved and I should be gibbeted as an impostor.’

The gibbet was never erected.

Having dealt *seriatim* with the allegations against the existing organisation of the Army,

men of the Militia Reserve who were not liable to serve abroad. This reduced the figure 5,824 to 4,302, and the total regular Army from 186,268 to 184,746. See *Army Organisation*, p. 49.

Haliburton turned to consider some of the proposed remedies. It had been asserted that he was an optimist who considered the Army perfect.<sup>1</sup> Nothing was further from the truth. His earlier letters had been a defence of the principles on which the Army was organised, and he had carefully refrained from entering into details which might lead him aside from the wide aspects of the case. Even now he would prefer to leave the question with those who have the full information at their disposal and who are in a position to know not only what is desirable but what is practicable. It was with diffidence and with full knowledge of the pitfalls which surrounded even trivial changes in Army organisation that he ventured his suggestions.

‘ In judging of the present system it must be remembered that ever since its establishment it has been worked short-handed. Before ending or mending it, it would be wise to complete it, and see the results it would then give. As long as our existing foreign requirements continue, the number of battalions which sufficed in 1870 is inadequate to our present needs. I have always thought that Mr. Cardwell made a mistake in 1870 in providing an exact equilibrium between home and foreign battalions. To my mind “ he cut his coat ” too closely, and did not make sufficient allowance for occasional and unavoidable disturbance of the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide supra*, p. 179.



equilibrium. If he had provided two or three extra regiments for home service the machine would have worked more smoothly and much of the present dissatisfaction would never have arisen.'

In his former letters Haliburton had shown that an increase in the number of battalions and an amendment of the law to enable a section of the Reserve to be recalled at any moment would ease the situation without prejudicing the principles of our organisation. Nor did he entertain any fundamental objection to raising the age of the foreign drafts. Soldiers of only twenty were young for Indian or field service and greater maturity was very desirable. But the suggested remedy of enlisting older men he believed to be absolutely impracticable.

The industrial classes all take to some occupation by the time they are seventeen to eighteen. If we decline to enlist them until they are twenty, we shall only get those who have failed in their chosen career or who, for a variety of reasons, wish to abandon it. If evidence is of any value, it proves that no increased pay which any Government is likely to offer would materially affect the class of recruits obtained, while the expense would be enormous, and a reduction of that expense, when the experiment failed, would be impossible. We must be content to take recruits young, and keep them until they develop into first-

rate soldiers. If the "official" age of twenty is too young for India let it be raised to twenty-one. This would necessitate an increase to the home establishments in order to ensure drafts of the requisite age. An actuary alone can say what the increase of establishment and cost would be; but the latter would be trifling compared to that involved in an endeavour to bribe young men to quit their employments for Army service. In the one case, the increased expenditure would certainly give the older drafts; in the other, we should incur the cost, and in all probability fail to obtain the desired remedy. This proposal would diminish the foreign service obtainable from soldiers, and thus increase the cost to India of its European Army; but I fear it is impossible to perfect our volunteer Army, without incurring some increased expenditure.'

There were two suggested remedies, however, the abolition of deferred pay and the introduction of three-year enlistments for the battalions of the Line, which did cut right at the system established by Cardwell; and in combating them Haliburton knew that he was strengthening the hands of Lord Lansdowne against those whom in private correspondence he designated as 'the Arnold-Forsters in the Cabinet.'

The abolition of deferred pay was one of the recommendations of the Wantage Committee, though three members, Lieutenant-General Sir Edward Bulwer, Lieutenant-General Feilding and Colonel Salis-Schwabe, as well as Haliburton

himself, had dissented in that respect from the majority. Deferred Pay was a sum of 21*l.* given to the soldier on leaving the colours, and had been instituted in 1876, by Mr. Gathorne Hardy, who felt it wrong and undesirable to send some thousands of men yearly into the labour market without securing for them a sum of money to keep them until they could find work.

‘Up to that time, extension of colour service had not been optional with men unless they were likely to make good non-commissioned officers. When deferred pay was given, it was felt that permission to extend might safely be granted, on condition that deferred pay should not be issued while the men remained with the colours, and that if drawn on transfer to the Reserve should be refunded as a condition of return to the colours. Those who wish to make a career of the Army can thus do so without any ultimate sacrifice of pecuniary advantages, for on extension their deferred pay accumulates, while the desire to obtain deferred pay at the end of the first period of service, coupled with the natural desire for change, is a sufficient safeguard against too many men extending their service, and thus injuriously affecting the Reserve.’<sup>1</sup>

Haliburton did not contend that there was any special virtue in deferred pay handed over in a lump sum to the men on joining the Reserve, though

<sup>1</sup> *Army Organisation*, p. 64.

the evidence taken before the Wantage Committee showed an overwhelming majority<sup>1</sup> in favour of it being issued in that form. But in its abolition he saw clearly a danger to the existence of short service. The witnesses before the Committee had been in general agreement that if deferred pay were abolished, large numbers of men would extend their colour service. And a calculation made for him in the War Office had shown that, if 25 per cent. of the privates extended their service, at the end of seven years the Reserve would be reduced by 39 per cent. As a result we should no longer be able, with the same establishments, to mobilise the Army to war strength.

This difficulty, indeed, could be got over by increasing the peace establishments with the colours, so that a smaller Reserve would suffice to raise the battalions to war strength. But this would add considerably over a million to the cost of the Army without adding a single man to its fighting strength. 'For every man who unnecessarily extends his service we gain strength where it

<sup>1</sup> 27,714 to 5,234 on a plebiscite taken by printed form sent to upwards of 40,000 Reservists. (See *Report of Committee*, p. 30; *Evidence*, p. 541 (Appendix xxx.) The whole question was raised before Mr. Stanhope on the report of the Committee in 1892, and, on the advice of his military staff, he decided against abolition. The number of Reservists who declared that deferred pay had been of advantage to them on leaving the colours was even more emphatic—32,053 to 2,155.

is unnecessary—on parade ; and we lose it where it may be of vital importance—in the line of battle.’ The abolition of deferred pay was, in fact, part of a scheme for having a short service Army filled with long service soldiers, which would inevitably result in our drifting back to a long service Army.

As for three-year enlistments, which we have recently seen tried by Lord Midleton and abandoned by Mr. Arnold-Forster during their respective tenures of the Secretaryship of State for War, the difficulties were scarcely less grave.

‘ At present we know that battalions can provide drafts for India, because a sufficient proportion of seven-year men is available. The home establishment is fixed with a view to accomplish this object, and yet to leave an efficient stock on which to graft the Reserve on mobilisation. The strength of the establishment was fixed by actuarial calculation as sufficient to yield the Indian draft ; but there is some doubt whether it has not been drawn a little too fine. No men are sent as drafts to India with less than four years to serve, and as a proportion of the three-year men would certainly not extend, it follows that a larger number of men with the colours will be required to insure drafts being available. The more three-year men we enlist the more men must be kept with the colours to make certain of keeping up the foreign garrisons. Nothing must ever be permitted to interfere with that supreme obligation. If the numbers rose to 300 per regiment,

that would mean an addition of considerably over a million a year to the cost of the Army. It would give a more numerous Reserve, the cost of which would have to be added to the above amount; but a less highly trained Reserve than that which we at present possess. It is not clear whether it is proposed to place any limit on the number of three-year men, or whether the option of three and seven years' enlistment would be open to all recruits. If three-year enlistments be conceded it would be very difficult to maintain any limitation, and if no limitations were enforced, the up-keep of our foreign by our home garrisons might become impossible under the existing system, and a separate Army for Colonial and Indian service would become a necessity. This, again, would mean a long service Army.<sup>1</sup>

In his final letter, Mr. Arnold-Forster had given Haliburton opportunity for an explanation, of which he gladly availed himself. The former had declared that the comparison of German and British battalions<sup>2</sup> was misleading because, under certain conditions, dependent upon the time of year when mobilisation was ordered, the Germans would send men into the field with less than one year's service.

‘Perfectly true,’ came the answer, ‘the German battalions might have been shown less efficient

<sup>1</sup> *Army Organisation*, p. 77. The passage as quoted in the text is slightly expanded from its original form in the *Times*.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide supra*, p. 173.

than I gave them, and thus have strengthened the comparison in favour of British battalions; but wishing to avoid the slightest appearance of unfairness, I preferred to show them with all men of less than a year's service excluded, as is the case in the British battalions.' <sup>1</sup>

Nor was Mr. Arnold-Forster's further comparison between the two armies better grounded. 'While German officers,' he had written, 'train their own men whom they will lead in war, British officers train boys who, when trained, will immediately pass out of their hands for ever.' This Haliburton described as 'an absurd exaggeration,' for the men trained in the Home battalions still belonged to the regiment, and would return to it when recalled from the Reserve.

And before laying down the pen, he turned to Mr. Arnold-Forster's allegation that his former letters had been written in careful collaboration with his late colleagues.

'This statement is absolutely without foundation. The War Office had no knowledge of the contents of my letters until they appeared in the "Times." When I stated that I did not represent the views of the Secretary of State, you, sir, with others scoffed, but you have since acknowledged

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Army Organisation* (p. 38 and note) with *Times*, January 22.

that I spoke truly. I wish it to be clearly understood that I speak for no one but myself, though I have the satisfaction of knowing that the views I have expressed have met with the general and hearty concurrence of my late military colleagues.'



## CHAPTER IX

1898—1900

The Echoes of the Controversy—Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman—He Defends Haliburton in the House of Commons—Extracts from Haliburton's Correspondence—Ill-health—The Athenæum—The Boer War—The Reserve called out—Their Splendid Response.

THE final stages of the Short Service controversy had been closely followed by the chiefs, past and present, of the incriminated War Office.

‘The hornets are all out of the nest,’ wrote Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, on January 6, ‘and more audacious than ever. What, can you tell me, has happened to the *Times*? It used to be so reasonable and willing to support the present system in the main. Is it a new man? and who? Its articles are not only violent, but personally abusive; and though in ordinary politics it has unfortunately caught the tone of the “Eatanswill Gazette” of late years, and my poor friends are always denounced as knaves and swindlers. I have not seen that spirit applied to “service” questions until lately.

‘Another point on which I am doubtful is this: what is the attitude of our big soldiers who have always supported the system, and had not a little

to do with creating it—*e.g.* Wolseley, Buller, Wood ? Will they face the music, or will these boar-hounds join the chorus of mongrels and turnspits who are yelping in the press ? If they do, how can the mere civilian be “ plus royaliste que le roi ” ? . . . The whole wrath and venom is poured out, not upon the soldiers, but upon the “ War Office ”—the civilian clerks, who are obstructive fossils, mummies, and I know not what. Boiling this down it means Knox<sup>1</sup> and you ; and everyone knows how wanting you two are in ability, energy, and intelligence !

‘ But (except in the mere matter of checking extravagant expenditure) you civilians have never hindered the soldiers, or dictated to them. The whole thing has been the idea and creation of soldiers. . . . It comes to this, that the barrack-yard is to outweigh the headquarters staff. It is the barrack-yard alone that is represented among the *militaires* in the House of Commons, and they are having it all their own way. They will sweep that august assembly like a whirlwind. Will the staff stand out against them ? Such men as Wolseley, Buller, Wood, Brackenbury, Grove, Neville Lyttelton—will they speak up, or will they bow their head ? Their names would have great weight with the public ; at present, owing to silly

<sup>1</sup> Sir Ralph Knox, K.C.B., for many years Accountant-General, had succeeded Haliburton as Permanent Under-Secretary of State, a post which he held till 1901. Entering the War Office as far back as 1856 he had an unusually distinguished record of public service. It was he, in conjunction with Lord Cromer (then Captain Baring) and Lord Wolseley, who worked out the details of the Cardwell reforms of 1870-72 ; and outside his official duties he has acted as Chairman of Commissions and inquiries innumerable.

answers given before your Committee,<sup>1</sup> they are quoted on the other side. If they turn tail we had better have a new deal altogether.’<sup>2</sup>

A few days later, when Haliburton had returned to the charge, he was cheered by another letter from the same correspondent:—

‘ You have eclipsed yourself in yesterday’s “Times.”<sup>3</sup> I never saw such a regular *culbute* as you give to the enemy. The letters are all admirable, even in the parts you yourself deprecate, where you “answer a fool according to his folly;” and it will be invaluable to have them reprinted. But I must add that no praise, admiration, and gratitude can be too great for your gallant defence, single-handed !

‘ You casually refer to it in this letter, but the public are ignorant of the fact that you are in reality a fresh and impartial defender ; your duties with the Wantage Committee having never brought you into dealing with these questions. When known, this will greatly enhance the value of your

<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry had presumably in mind Lord Wolseley’s often-quoted comparison of the home battalions to ‘squeezed lemons’—an answer which, taken by itself, was in strange contrast both to the tenour of his evidence before the Wantage Commission and to his letters contained in this volume. It related, of course, to the home battalions as they stood, *without the Reserves*.

<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to see how the distinguished soldiers enumerated in the text, all of them employed on the Headquarters Staff, could have joined in the hurly-burly. But Haliburton undoubtedly felt that there were others, labouring under no such disqualification, who might have helped him. ‘It is a marvel to me,’ he wrote to a friend, ‘that not one soldier strikes a blow in favour of the organisation of the Army. Prodigious !’

<sup>3</sup> January 11, 1898.

letters. At present they are discounted, as coming from an author defending his own work. I only wish I saw equal pluck and equally high sense of honour and public duty in all quarters.

‘I am very glad my big friend W. V. H.<sup>1</sup> has been communicating with you. He at first was all on the economical, resist-the-demands-of-the-services tack. That line will not do at all; the thing must be met on its merits, and you have cleared the ground of a great tangle of absurdities by your letters.’

This opinion was cordially endorsed by Lord Lansdowne in a letter dated January 22nd. ‘The position has changed a good deal for the better, and no one will deny that you have been the principal contributor to the result.’ ‘I think the victory in the correspondence rests certainly with you, and that you have completely disposed of A.-F. and “Reformer,”’ wrote Sir William Harcourt. Nor was it less gratifying to Haliburton to receive, a couple of months later, the following note from one towards whom he had been compelled on a former occasion to assume so divergent an attitude:—

‘2, Carlton Gardens, *March* 20, 1898.

‘DEAR SIR ARTHUR,—I am much obliged to you for sending me your pamphlet on Army Organisation. I believe I could have obtained a copy in the usual way through E. Stanford, but I much prefer receiving it from you.

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Harcourt, *vide supra*, p. 179.

‘I think the main purpose for which you have contended has been gained. And you and I have been so far shoulder to shoulder in maintaining the principles of the existing system. I am sorry to learn from your note that you have been so unwell. Bulwer tells me that you are being quite re-established, in which I, in common with your many friends, rejoice.

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

WANTAGE.<sup>1</sup>

Parliament met on February 8, and Mr. St. John Brodrick, the Under-Secretary for War, introduced the Army estimates on February 25. The Ministerial proposals for an increase of the establishment and the concessions of certain small privileges to the soldiers were met with a chorus of subdued approval from the service members. Mr. Brodrick made a pointed allusion to the honourable member who was destined to be his immediate successor in Pall Mall, as one of those ‘who denounce and deride’ all official refutation and explanations.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Arnold-Forster expressed himself as being only partially satisfied by the

<sup>1</sup> In a long letter to the *Times*, dated March 7, 1898, Lord Wantage gave a hearty support to Lord Lansdowne’s Army policy. He strongly deprecated the ‘desire which had been expressed in some quarters to upset’ a system which was capable of providing the expeditionary force promised by the Government and only made possible by the Reserve.

<sup>2</sup> *Hansard*, liv. 32.

year's programme; but there was no renewal of the fiery onslaught of the recess.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman has given a graphic account of the evening's proceeding in a letter to Lady Haliburton, dated February 28:

‘You can tell your victim<sup>1</sup> when he is fit to hear it, that whether from the brilliancy of his defence or for whatever reason the enemy collapsed entirely on Friday night. There was no trace of the fierce words of the newspaper attack. They professed to be quite satisfied with the Government's concessions. The three nights' debate that was promised shrivelled up into one night sustained with difficulty. One result was that poor I,<sup>2</sup> who had meant to speak on Monday, with a nice Saturday and a possible Sunday for polishing up my tropes, arguments, and epigrams, had to dive into a back room and hastily scramble together some sort of a speech. I am glad, however, that, looking back, I think I contrived to get in all that was required by way of protests or doubts as to the reactionary parts of the proposals. On the whole I think we may well be content with the way things went.’

‘Backing of his friends’ was an obligation which ‘C.-B.’ never neglected, and the reference

<sup>1</sup> Haliburton had recently been in the hands of the doctors.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Henry had been chosen as the Liberal Leader in the House of Commons at the opening of the Session.

in his speech to Haliburton<sup>1</sup> was unmistakable.

‘One almost begins to wonder,’ he said,<sup>2</sup> ‘what the War Office meant. We are told that the officials or some of them are fossils only fit to be put into the British Museum. As for the military officers, I can only say that they have comprised some of the most distinguished men of the British Army. If there are better officers I do not know where they are to be found ; and these officers have been close to the Secretary of State. These officers have not only a large voice but an overwhelming voice in the control of the affairs of the Army.

‘And then there are the civilians. It is sometimes said that if the soldiers had their own way everything would be right, but that, unfortunately, there are civilians who distort the mind of the Secretary of State and prevent the right thing being done. I only wish those who have spoken disrespectfully of the leading civilians would have half an hour’s conversation with any one of them, and if at the end of that half hour they still thought there was a fossil somewhere they would be convinced it was not the civilian from the War Office. My honourable friend<sup>3</sup> will bear me out that nothing can exceed the ingenuity, the adaptability, the extraordinary acquaintance with all the history of the Army, and the public spirit and intelligence of the gentlemen to whom I refer.’

In the birthday Honour List of this year Haliburton’s name figured among those upon whom

<sup>1</sup> And, it should be added, to Sir Ralph Knox.

<sup>2</sup> *Hansard*, liv. 125.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. St. John Brodrick.

her late Majesty was graciously pleased to confer a peerage. As a loyal Canadian he took the title of 'Baron Haliburton of Windsor, in the Province of Nova Scotia and Dominion of Canada.'

'I agree with you,' he wrote in answer to the congratulations of one of his old subordinates, 'that it is a very satisfactory reply from Lord Lansdowne to the civilian element in the War Office, and I think the office should be pleased. I need scarcely say that I cannot and do not pretend to despise these things. They are the external and visible sign of a successful career and of official approval. I should like to have done more, but doing anything was uphill work, and on the whole I should be pleased that I did not make a fiasco.'

The exacting claims of his work in Pall Mall had left Haliburton small opportunity for non-official correspondence. In the enforced leisure of his later years his pen was at the disposal of his friends, and the mass of his letters to which I have access show his keen interest in public affairs, his shrewd outlook on life, and that playful, ever courteous turn of expression which helps one to understand the affection which he inspired in all who were admitted to his intimacy. In writing to those much younger than himself, and who regarded it as a privilege to lighten his labours, there is an air of deference which



made his letters the delight and prize of their recipients. "What a bore this man is," I hear you say. Quite true; I admit it and apologise.' 'My dear Fawcett, I think you are right—as usual.' 'Take care of yourself; the public never thanks a man for getting ill in its service—and the public is a beast.' One of the hardest-worked men alludes in a deprecating way to 'my naturally indolent habits.' 'I am fairly satisfied with it,' he declares, of one of his letters to the 'Times,' 'but, as you know, I never feel that anything I do is as good as it might and should be—that is the nature of the beast.'<sup>1</sup> Referring to a young gentleman who was hoping to gain admission to Sandhurst, he observes that London is not a good place for a boy of nineteen to study in 'unless the subject be human nature of the female type,' and he adds sarcastically, 'of course, if his sight be defective it is quite right to reject him even for that "kingdom of the blind" the British Army!'<sup>2</sup>

Two more of his letters, written in the summer of 1898 to Sir Charles Welby, show the keen interest

<sup>1</sup> Caddy Jellaby, whose views on Africa were summed up in the comprehensive verdict that Africa was a beast, was one of Lord Haliburton's favourite characters in fiction.

<sup>2</sup> At that particular moment the unfortunate British Army and those who were responsible for it could do nothing good in the sight of the newspapers; an attitude which Haliburton strongly resented.

he continued to take in the affairs of his old office and in military matters generally.

‘A great calm seems to have come over the War Office, and we may hope that the “backhander” the “Times” gave one the other day is the last “kick” of dissatisfaction. I see from Lord Lansdowne’s speech at the Mansion House that he is going to act on the Decentralisation Committee’s Report, though probably not on the whole of it.

‘I am a believer in decentralisation up to the fullest possible point consistent with a due regard to a proper control of public expenditure, and to exercising a wholesome check on the tendency that will always exist in large services towards malpractices of the clever black sheep who find themselves in a position to exercise their cleverness for their own purposes. “The means to do ill deeds makes ill deeds done,” and therefore public expenditure of both money and stores must be sufficiently safeguarded. The difficulty, of course, is to know exactly what “sufficiently” is. In deciding that, two conditions must not be lost sight of. As a rule the soldier is not a good business man and does not pose as such. He therefore leaves a great deal in the hands of his subordinates, and himself gets into their hands without suspecting it. This tendency must be guarded against. Give as much initiative to —— as you like, but keep a careful check on all that is done to see that it is well done. After all, exercising the check does not necessarily involve increased correspondence unless something turns up which necessitates it. And the value of the knowledge that there is a careful examination, and check, on all trans-

actions, and that detection is probable and not merely possible, far exceeds the cost of a half-dozen War Office clerks. Apart from the question of safeguarding public funds, there is the desirability of uniformity of action, and where discretion is given to numbers of people, uniformity can only be approximated by careful supervision. You did not expect a sermon on administration from the Highlands, did you? Grouse would be more welcome, but they are not so handy just now as sermons, and so I send you what I have got!’

‘I agree with you that some of the recommendations of the Decentralisation Committee are good, and that it is wise, as far as possible, that the responsibility for carrying out details of military business in the commands should be exercised by the General Officer Commanding with the least possible reference to the War Office. In an army the main administration must always be centralised because the limits of a G.O.C.’s authority must necessarily be confined by the boundaries of his command, and few important movements can be made that do not affect several commands, and they must necessarily be concerted and ordered by a central authority.

‘I do not object to all that is possible being transferred from W.O. to districts. My objection to the Committee’s report, and the action taken on it, is that it gives rise to false impressions. It “fouls its nest” and gives the idea that large organic changes are being carried out, whereas the Committee know that the main administration cannot be decentralised and that the ‘reforms’ merely touch the fringe of the question—touch it advan-

tageously no doubt, but it was a pity to cast unnecessary discredit on the office. It is a popular thing to do, but scarcely a wise thing, I think.

‘I hope Lord Lansdowne will be able to admit in some speech that there was no maladministration, and that the changes are merely those prunings which all administrative offices require from time to time. And looking through the report, and the recommendations, I see most of the details which are to be changed are purely military, though the civilian gets the discredit of having clung to them for purposes of their own.

‘Grierson’s evidence is to me very interesting. It shows that the Germans have the system which we established in 1869—the control department for purely business matters. The controller was to be the business man on the staff of the G.O.C., doing exactly what Grierson describes. Unfortunately the Conservatives in 1875 abolished all that because officers thought the Controller was to “control” the General, not the business merely. I found the measure about to be carried out when I returned from India, and wrote a strong minute against it; but it was too late, and the deed was done, which is responsible for many of the details of the work being done in the W.O.<sup>1</sup> I feel sure that we shall have to come to some such organisation again, probably on a more military basis, but the time is not yet. Even with such a business staff, however, the main lines of administration must be governed in Pall Mall. I think my minute of 1875 was printed, and if the question ever comes up, you might ask someone to look it up for you.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide supra*, p. 35.

‘What is the “clerical question” you refer to? I hope it does not contemplate making the second division the avenue to the first division. I feel that there are political temptations to adopt that course, but it would be fatal to the Civil Service. It would mean that we were prepared to accept men of inferior qualifications.

‘If that is the question, ask for a minute I wrote for Lord Lansdowne in 1895 when he first came into office; the second division then accepted it as finally disposing of the question.

‘The only other clerical question I know of, though I never heard it discussed, is the proposal to abolish “senior clerks” and retain only “clerks” and “principal clerks.” I think it would be fatal to the prospects of the clever young men and be a premium on inefficiency. Now we can at a comparatively early date push up the exceptional men over the heads of respectable inefficiency.

‘Here goes the lunch bell. You are saved!’

Through all his correspondence there runs the note of bodily pain bravely and uncomplainingly borne. His increasing lameness and his failure to obtain relief at the Continental Spas, where he had been in the habit of taking his annual ‘cure,’ curtailed, year by year, his enjoyment of society, and restricted him to a comparatively small band of friends, some of them old colleagues, others chosen from a much younger generation. In 1894 he had been ‘specially selected’ under Rule II. to the Athenæum Club, and within the sedate

portals of that haunt of ancient peace some of his happiest hours were spent. Wet or fine, his carriage would deposit him there between three and four o'clock, and the afternoon would be occupied in a succession of rubbers at Bridge amid a congenial and accomplished company of those who, like himself, had insured against old age by devotion to the card-table. There was a peculiar quality about Lord Haliburton which seemed to create and diffuse geniality. Suffering could not spoil the sweetness of his temper. The conversation of a club smoking-room is wont from time to time to assume an acrid and personal tone; but ill-humour could not survive the atmosphere of cheerful optimism which Haliburton diffused around him. The little formal phrases of old world politeness seemed to trip naturally from his tongue. And the writer of these pages can well recall the noble forehead and the fine presence, and the tall figure supported by crutches,<sup>1</sup> whose arrival upstairs was always the signal for such hearty greetings.

<sup>1</sup> The further accident to his leg in the spring of 1897 had led to the contrivance of a special invalid carrying-chair. When his present Majesty had the misfortune a year or so later to sprain his knee badly at Waddesdon Manor, and was transferred as a convalescent to his yacht in the Solent, Haliburton, who was spending the summer in the neighbourhood of Cowes, placed the chair at the disposal of the royal patient, an offer which was gracefully and gratefully accepted.

In the autumn of 1899 came at last the opportunity of testing that system to the defence of which he had devoted so much of his powers. On October 9, some weeks too late for the fair, the Reserves for the First Army Corps were called out, and the mobilisation scheme which had for years engaged the best brains at the War Office was put in operation. Her Majesty Queen Victoria signed the authority for the Secretary of State at 11.30 A.M. ; it was received at the War Office at 11.45 ; the telegraph lines had already been 'cleared' by the joint authority of the Postmaster-General and the Adjutant-General,<sup>1</sup> and by two o'clock the posters summoning Reservists were out in nearly all the regimental districts. So prompt was the response that the General Officer commanding the Home District came into Sir Evelyn Wood's room in Pall Mall with the remark, 'Now I shall go away and buy old furniture.' It was thus that von Moltke had occupied himself after despatching the historic telegram on July 15th, 1870, 'Krieg Mobil.'<sup>2</sup> 'We called out 24,519 men,' wrote Lord Wolseley to Haliburton on the 24th of the month. 'Of these there came up 24,040, i.e. 98·04 per cent. ; 1638 were rejected by the doctors

<sup>1</sup> Field Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood, who, by an extraordinary slip of the pen, gives the date as *November 7* (*From Midshipman to Field-Marshal*, ii. 243).

<sup>2</sup> *From Midshipman to Field-Marshal*, ii. 244.

on joining. This is creditable all round, and ought to silence all the asses who speak in Parliament upon subjects they don't understand.' A couple of days earlier Haliburton had written to a friend :

'I felt sure the Reserve would come up, and expected that about seven per cent. would fail to respond—from a variety of causes—absence, illness, death, imprisonment and what not. This result justifies my argument of two years ago. . . . I trust the War Office will now cease from measures calculated to diminish the reserve, and will realise that peace home battalions full of boys are exactly what we want—because they are preparing that Reserve without which we should be nowhere when war broke out. It is very difficult in time of peace to persuade people that the Army is made for war, not for parade.'

And the following extract from a letter written on October 27 is interesting as a protest against an excess of *esprit de corps* which tends to sacrifice the efficiency of the Army to that of the individual battalion.

'I quite agree about the Reserve. It is an example of professional pedantry. Of course, if perfectly convenient, there is at any rate a sentimental advantage in sending Reservists to their own regiment ; but it is absurd to send battalions away below strength rather than take men of other regiments. No expedition has ever before left these shores when regiments were not very largely made up from volunteers from other regiments.'



Haliburton watched the fortunes of the war with the same interest and the same disillusionment and disappointment which absorbed us all. 'These two victories,' he wrote after Talana and Elandslaagte, 'are equal to another army corps in their effects. I fancy that Buller will have only a walk-over when he gets out.' A day or two later, on the eve of 'Mournful Monday,' his tone is altered, 'fogged, and unhappy about the military operations in Natal.'

'Why did not Buller take that hill <sup>1</sup> before?' he comments, when the road to Ladysmith was opened at last. 'I pointed it out to Grove when Buller's telegram came describing the Colenso battle. My solution of the case is that someone pointed this out to Buller at the time, and out of sheer cussedness he did not do it.'

'The English are never *sharp*' <sup>2</sup> is another of his *obiter scripta* after the news of one of the regrettable incidents. 'They fight well when they find themselves in a trap, but they never weary of getting into fresh ones,' and when the Ministerial reconstruction after the General Election of 1900 was pending, he pays a strong tribute to his old chief and his old associates.

'I can't believe that the Government propose to change the Secretary of State at present. To

<sup>1</sup> Pieter's Hill.

<sup>2</sup> 'Slim' was the cant expression of the day.

do so would be to admit that the War Office had failed and that Lord Lansdowne was responsible. I think the War Office has done marvellously well. There were mistakes before the War, but they were Cabinet mistakes, and many mistakes out there, but they were purely military, and may be ascribed to most Generals, from Roberts downwards.'

The change was made, however, and Lord Lansdowne was transferred to a sphere in which he has rendered services to the Empire that are happily beyond the reach of political controversy. With his departure from Pall Mall 'that poor old War Office,' as Haliburton was fond of calling it, entered upon a bewildering succession of masters and methods.

Many of us will remember how, while the fate of Natal was still trembling in the balance, the late Marquess of Salisbury added, if possible, to the general gloom by a depressing, half-cynical speech, in which the quality of 'self-detachment' was strained almost to breaking-point.

'I do not believe,' declared the Prime Minister, 'in the perfection of the British Constitution as an instrument of war. . . . The exercise of the powers of the Treasury in governing every department of the Government is not for the public benefit. The Treasury has obtained a position in regard to the rest of the departments of the Government that the House of Commons obtained in the

time of the Stuart dynasty. It has the power of the purse.'<sup>1</sup>

Haliburton was one of the listeners. 'I went to the House of Lords,' he writes on January 31, 1900. 'Poor Lord Salisbury made a lamentable speech, throwing the blame on the British Constitution and the Treasury. I fear it is not only generals we lack just now.' And a few days later, in the columns of the 'Times,' he threw a flood of dry light on the Premier's disclaimer of responsibility.<sup>2</sup> He had already been to some degree anticipated, as the opening sentence of his letter shows:—

'Your correspondent, "K," states very correctly and conclusively the arguments in favour of some central control by the Government over the expenditure of the various departments. No great business like that of the nation could be successfully conducted if each department of the service were permitted to spend whatever seemed good in its eyes; the department that knows how much cloth is available must obviously have an influential voice in deciding how it can be cut to the best general advantage. It is not the extravagance of individual heads of departments only that has to be controlled. It is necessary to guard these heads of departments against endless schemes, involving public expenditure, constantly

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard*, lxxviii. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Times*, February 11, 1900. The letter is signed 'Administrator.'

pressed upon them, and which they are not strong enough to resist without Treasury backing. The complaints about Treasury control have for some years been so persistent and so angry that there has evidently been some cause at work disturbing the normal harmony of the public departments. There can be no smoke without fire, and the volume of smoke has become so dense of late that the fire must evidently be of considerable extent. What has caused that fire I will endeavour, with your permission, to explain.

‘In addition to the special financial control exercised by the Treasury on behalf of the Government as a whole, there is supposed to exist a general control over the policy of the Government, and over the heads of the departments who constitute the Cabinet. This disciplinary control it is the function of the Prime Minister to exercise. If he has, as he should have, a complete general knowledge of the working of the various departments of State, and of the policy by which each is actuated, he is in a position to settle authoritatively the differences that must and will arise between the spending departments and the Treasury, and to secure the efficient and harmonious working of the Government machine. The popular notion that the Cabinet as a whole can perform that function is a delusion. The various political heads of departments as a rule know little or nothing about the work of the other departments of State—certainly nothing about the details of their administration—and take little interest and no part in inter-departmental differences. These are, or rather should be, settled between the differing departments and the Prime

Minister. To discharge this function successfully—one of the most difficult a Prime Minister has to perform, and one essential to the harmony, stability, and efficiency of a Cabinet—he must be well informed, impartial, and strong, and must have the time to devote to the investigation and settlement of the many differences that must come before him. As the function of the Opposition is to oppose, so the function of a Chancellor of the Exchequer is to check, or in other words to object to, any unusual expenditure. During Mr. Gladstone's Government a very strong, perhaps too strong a statesman presided over the Treasury, and unfortunately Mr. Gladstone, though very strong in one sense, was never very intimately acquainted with the departmental necessities of the public service, and was never impartial where public expenditure was concerned. His inclination was always to cut down, a virtue that can be carried too far, and his leaning in any differences that arose between the public departments and the Exchequer was always towards the Chancellor's views. In his day, therefore, complaints against the action of the Treasury were rife, and it was constantly accused of sacrificing the public interests to the exigencies of a popular Budget.

‘Under the present Government things have gone from bad to worse, but from a different cause. Lord Salisbury has never been credited with an extensive knowledge of the general administration of the Government and of the requirements of the service outside those dealt with by the Foreign Office, and he has never taken any personal interest in, or been in a position satisfactorily to settle, the differences that have frequently arisen between

the Chancellor and the heads of the departments. For many years the country has practically had only a nominal Prime Minister, and the controlling power which must exist somewhere in a Cabinet, and which he is supposed to exercise, has gradually slipped into the grasping hand of the Chancellor. The Chancellor's duty is to exercise a limited control over the departments subject to appeal, and that limited control has become almost unlimited owing to the court of appeal being practically closed. The Government machine is out of gear owing to its various parts not performing well and duly the duties assigned to them. Fortunately the present permanent head of the Treasury<sup>1</sup> is a man of great ability and common sense and replete with tact and knowledge. The result is that the evil which the Prime Minister sees and misunderstands has not worked the evil to the service that might have been expected from the dislocated machine that governs it. If the British Constitution needs amendment, that amendment should find its expression in a rule prohibiting the Prime Minister from holding a portfolio in any of the great departments of State. He will then have time to cultivate his own proper duties, to control those of others, and will no doubt soon grow in faith in the possibilities of the British Constitution as an engine for war.'

<sup>1</sup> Sir Francis Mowatt, G.C.B., *vide supra*, p. 142.

## CHAPTER X

1901

Sweeping Reorganisation in the Army—Haliburton's Distrust of the Changes—His Pamphlet, 'Army Administration in Three Centuries'—Summary of its Contents.

THE series of reorganisations to which the British Army was subjected from the commencement of the present reign down to the date of his death was followed by Lord Haliburton with close attention, and brought him to some very decided conclusions. On March 8, 1901, Mr. St. John Brodrick, who had succeeded Lord Lansdowne as Secretary of State for War in the previous November, introduced his scheme for 'decentralisation,' and for the creation of the six army corps. The debates in both Houses of Parliament were discursive in character and personal in tone. They served to illustrate a favourite saying of Haliburton's, that in this country few understood the Army system though all felt competent to criticise and refashion it. It seemed to him more than ever desirable, in view of the recent attacks to which the War Office had been subjected, especially on

its civil side, and of the ingrained repugnance of the military profession to parliamentary control, that the public should gain a general knowledge of the broad constitutional grounds on which the administration of the Army was originally founded, and of the principal changes which had led to the administration as it then existed.

Accordingly under the thinly veiled disguise of 'Constitutionalist' he put together a pamphlet of some eighty pages entitled 'Army Administration in Three Centuries.'<sup>1</sup> Haliburton understood as few men have done the working of every part of the administrative machine of the British Army, and he saw clearly that it was want of historical knowledge, as well as of administrative experience, which had led to so many futile experiments. To him it was simply astounding that a practical people like the English should know and care so little about one of the great institutions of the country, an institution vital both to their safety and to the existence of the Empire.

Two generations of tinkering had so obscured the constitutional safeguards introduced at the Revolution that it had become impossible to say where military authority ends or where effective civil control is to be found. And Haliburton viewed the gradual transference of financial control

<sup>1</sup> Published by Edward Stanford, 1901.



in Army matters with grave apprehension; not only because it tended to strengthen the hands of that powerful section which is always afraid of 'militarism,' but because it ran counter to the basis of the constitution, government by the civil power. It is my object to rescue from that oblivion which is the almost inevitable fate of the *brochure* the main outline of Haliburton's argument, using, for the most part, his own language, and following him in the only safe method of exposition, the chronological and historical.<sup>1</sup>

The existence of the British Army as a constitutional force dates from the Revolution of 1688. The painful experience of half a century had implanted in the hearts of the people a distrust of a standing Army which survives to the present day. Charles I. had based his personal monarchy on the government of the Army by Royal Prerogative. This Prerogative Parliament had transferred into its own hands and, working through it, had created the New Model and brought Charles to the block. 'The Army, conscious of its power and dominated by its great commander, then turned upon and purged the Parliament,'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The same ground is covered, but from a different standpoint and with greater wealth of detail, by Sir William Anson (*Law and Custom of the Constitution*, Part II. c. viii. s. 2). See also Clode, *Military Force of the Crown*, ii. 698 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Army Administration*, p. 4.

and gave the nation its first and only taste of military rule. When the Restoration came, king, Parliament, and people had each good cause for disliking a standing army. It was determined to disband it and trust to the Militia, a force administered by the Secretary of State, governed locally by Lords-Lieutenant of counties in whose hands the patronage of the force was vested, commanded by country gentlemen, and composed of men having other means of sustenance than their pay.

Foreign and domestic complications,<sup>1</sup> to say nothing of the unrelinquished aspirations of the last two Stuart kings, rendered the continued existence of a British Army unavoidable. Its strength crept gradually up; it was free from all parliamentary control, and its numbers were only limited by the amount of money with which to pay the soldiers that the king could scrape together. The camp at Hounslow and the packing of the ranks with Royal partisans was one of the chief causes of the Revolution.

When William III. was placed on the throne war was raging in two out of the three kingdoms, and the Dutch 'deliverer' wanted British regiments for eventual use in the Low Countries. The problem before him and his advisers was how,

<sup>1</sup> Tangiers, to wit, and the risings in Scotland.

without risking a divided allegiance, the Army could be placed equally between the Crown and Parliament, so that the interests of the one should not disturb the influence of the other.

‘It was solved not by destroying, but by strengthening, the existing departments of the Government, by defining the prerogative of the Crown and by adding to the legitimate functions of Parliament. By the Bill of Rights, the Act of Settlement, and the Mutiny Act the Powers of the Crown and Parliament were settled on fixed and satisfactory lines. The number of troops to be maintained being decided by the Cabinet,<sup>1</sup> with the approval of the king, was voted by Parliament, together with the funds estimated by the Secretary at War for their maintenance. To keep more men than Parliament voted was thenceforth illegal, while pay for a greater number could only be expended with the express sanction of Government and the covering authority of Parliament.’<sup>2</sup>

The Army being established on this footing, its ‘Government and Command,’ including appointments, promotions, the grant of honours and rewards, organisation and training of troops, and maintenance of discipline, remained one of the prerogatives of the Crown. But its exercise was guarded and controlled by the constitutional practice now developed under which every action

<sup>1</sup> A convenient term, though the Cabinet as we know it was not evolved till some time after the Revolution.

<sup>2</sup> *Army Administration*, p. 7.

of the king was taken on the advice of a responsible minister of the Crown, whose counter-signature was essential to its validity. The king remained the Fountain of Honour in the Army, exercising supreme control over its discipline. But the appointments and promotions which he alone could initiate required the approval of a Secretary of State. And the power of discipline was doubly guarded by this minister, who was responsible for all acts of the Crown, and by the Judge Advocate General, a high parliamentary official.<sup>1</sup> It was the duty of the latter to report to the king on all courts-martial, to secure that no soldier was illegally condemned or oppressed, and to communicate the king's orders to the Army.

For over a century after the Revolution the Sovereign, as a rule, was his own Commander-in-Chief. When, during the reign of Queen Anne and on some other occasions, a 'Captain General' or a 'General of the Force' was appointed, that high officer exercised the royal prerogative of command subject to the same constitutional checks which surrounded its direct exercise by the Crown. There was no 'Department of the Commander-in-Chief,' no 'Horse Guards'; and the king carried

<sup>1</sup> Of whom it was facetiously said that he was neither a Judge, an Advocate, nor a General.

on the duties of administration through the office of the 'Secretary at War.' This member of the Ministry, who was not a Secretary of State, was responsible to the king for the routine of 'command and government,' and to Parliament for the exercise of financial control and for the prevention of military encroachments.<sup>1</sup>

As important military questions arose, 'Boards of General Officers' were appointed to report upon them. To these the Judge Advocate General acted as secretary. He submitted their reports to the Secretary at War, who took and communicated to the Army the king's decision. Meanwhile the Board of Ordnance and the commissariat Department were charged with the administrative services necessary to the *ménage* of an army.

The Board of Ordnance, which dated back from Tudor times, was the most venerable, and in Haliburton's opinion the most successful department connected with the Army.<sup>2</sup> It was under a Master-General, usually a military officer of high rank and a member of the House of Lords, having a seat in the Cabinet and recognised as the proper

<sup>1</sup> For the original functions of the Secretary-at-War see Fortescue *History of the British Army*, i. 311, 359, 392; and for the gradual growth of his office, *ibid.* 409, 554, 581, and ii. 21.

<sup>2</sup> But, on the other hand, its efficiency varied very much from time to time. Fortescue, ii. 563, and iv. 880.

military adviser of the Government. He was assisted by high civil officials, two of whom, the Clerk of the Ordnance and the Surveyor-General, were usually members of the House of Commons. The Board was responsible for the supply of arms, armament and stores to the Army and Navy, and had charge of barracks and fortifications. The Master-General assisted by a lieutenant-general administered and commanded the corps of Artillery and Engineers ; the subordinates of the Board were civilians holding local appointments. They communicated direct with the Board in London, but in large garrisons they acted under a committee, composed of the officers commanding Artillery and Engineers and of the Ordnance storekeeper. It was the duty of the Master-General and the Board to furnish detachments of sappers and miners and gunners on the demand of the Commander-in-Chief, and equipment on the authority of the Secretary at War. But in the details of its administration the Board was independent of both those officials.

In the Commissariat Department the supply and transport services were performed, under the direct orders of the Treasury, by civil Treasury agents—called Commissariat officers—and more familiarly known as Commissaries — who were represented in Parliament by the First Lord

of the Treasury and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

‘They held the funds for the use of all branches of Government abroad, acted as contract agents for military and naval services at foreign stations, and were generally responsible for supplying the Army with food, forage, land and inland water transport. It was their duty to obey all orders given by competent authorities, but it was equally their duty to point out any objection to those orders, and when overruled to report the facts to the Treasury. The control of the Treasury over military expenditure was completed by means of the Commissioners of Public Accounts and of the Board of Audit who examined all expenditure of money and stores.’<sup>1</sup>

Thus, while the command of the Army was a royal prerogative, exercised by the king or his deputy, the Commander-in-Chief, subject to the constitutional control of the ministry, its business administration was entirely in the hands of civilians appointed by, and directly responsible to, the Government.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Army Administration*, p. 12. It took many years and much persistent effort to establish effective control over Army expenditure, and the great Duke of Marlborough does not provide a solitary instance of military irregularities in dealing with the public funds (*vide infra*, p. 261).

<sup>2</sup> As Sir William Anson forcibly puts it (ii. 355): ‘The soldier was fed by the Treasury and armed by the Ordnance Board. The Home Secretary was responsible for his movements in his native country; the Colonial Secretary superintended his movements abroad. The Secretary of State took care that he was paid, and

This organisation continued until the closing years of the eighteenth century; but, as the patronage of the Army gradually accumulated in the hands of the Secretary at War, who was subject to political pressure, influences were exerted most inimical to the well-being of the Army. It was frequently suggested that a permanent Commander-in-Chief, free from the taint of politics, should be appointed to exercise, on behalf of the Crown, those prerogatives of government and command which had practically been allowed to fall into abeyance. This proposal was viewed by the public with the old jealousy provoked by Charles I., by Cromwell, by James II. There seemed to lurk in it a possible danger to the liberties of the people. And it was not until 1793, at the beginning of the struggle with France which lasted down to 1815, that Lord Amherst was made Commander-in-Chief. The Adjutant-General's and the Quartermaster-General's departments, which had hitherto been attached to the office of Secretary at War, were transferred to him, and he was given a War Office clerk as his military secretary.

When, however, Lord Amherst was succeeded in 1795 by the Duke of York, the latter selected a soldier for this position, and the Horse Guards

was responsible for the lawful administration of the flogging which was provided for him by the Commander-in-Chief.'



establishment was thus completed in very much the form which endured down to the changes of 1904. And in 1805 the Secretary at War was relieved of all duties connected with the discipline of the Army, which was thenceforth supervised by the Commander-in-Chief under the constitutional control of the Judge Advocate General and the Secretary of State.

‘The Commander-in-Chief was responsible to the king and to the Government, but not directly to Parliament for the efficiency of the Army, while the Secretary at War was directly responsible to Parliament for military expenditure and for the preservation of civil rights and privileges from military encroachment. Each acted as an independent check on the other, the one to secure that efficiency was not impaired by undue economy, the other to see that efficiency was obtained without unnecessary expenditure. When they differed, their differences were submitted to the decision of the Crown through one of its responsible ministers.’<sup>1</sup>

It was some time before the position assigned to the Commander-in-Chief in relation to the civil administration and the military government of the Army was authoritatively defined.

‘Lord Palmerston<sup>2</sup> in a well-known minute explained the relative position of the two offices.

<sup>1</sup> *Army Administration*, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Secretary at War, 1809-1828. His ‘Memorandum on the Office of Secretary at War’ will be found in Clode, ii. 698. See also *Military Life of the Duke of Cambridge*, i. 102.

“ Power cannot be vested where there is no responsibility, or responsibility be imposed where authority does not exist. The Legislature has imposed a responsibility upon the Secretary at War from which he cannot discharge himself, and it would be placing him in a position perfectly anomalous, and unknown to any office in the constitution, to deprive him of that independence by which alone he can secure to himself the power of faithfully performing his duty. The office of Secretary at War has existed in point of fact, and has been considered in point of law, as a sort of barrier between the military authority of the officer in command of the Army and the civil rights of the people, and as a civil and constitutional check on the expenditure of the money granted by Parliament for the maintenance of the Army.”<sup>1</sup>

It was ordered accordingly<sup>1</sup> that the separation between the Financial and Accounts Department and the military discipline of the Army should continue to be observed. But since financial matters could not be entirely severed from discipline, the Secretary at War was forbidden to issue orders or regulations without informing the Commander-in-Chief. If they could not come to an agreement the Secretary at War was to submit his proposed order together with the Commander-in-Chief's objection to the Government in order that it might take the king's pleasure, which

<sup>1</sup> In a memorandum of the Prince Regent's, countersigned by Lord Liverpool, the Prime Minister (given in Clode, ii. 722).

reflected that of his constitutional advisers. This order settled for many years the limits of civil and military control over the Army.

The extent and completeness of the civil control over military action and expenditure can best be illustrated by the saying of the Duke of Wellington's, uttered in no spirit of complaint, that 'he could not move a corporal's guard from London to Windsor without obtaining the authority of the civil power.' Changes in the methods of locomotion have obscured the meaning of the well-known phrase. The document which ordered any movement of troops, even a few soldiers from one garrison to another, required the signature of the Secretary at War because it was the sole legal authority for magistrates and constables, directing and empowering them to impress transport and provide billets for men on the march. The compulsory provision of these things was a direct and by no means a popular tax on large classes of the people, and its imposition was therefore most properly fenced round with precautions by the civil authority.

Haliburton laid especial stress upon the fact that this complete supremacy of the civil over the military power was not 'forced by ambitious and aggressive civilians on a reluctant army.'<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> *Army Administration*, p. 20.

strongest supporters of that supremacy were found in the Army itself, and no one had used more emphatic language on the subject than 'the two great soldier statesmen of the last century,' the Duke of Wellington and Lord Hardinge. From the parliamentary utterance of the former he quoted a complete and characteristic *résumé* of the constitutional status of the British Army.

'I have always understood that it was a principle of the Government of this country that he who exercised the military command over the Army should have nothing to say to its payment, its movement, its equipment, or even the quartering thereof, excepting under the sanction of a civil officer who was himself a subordinate in the hierarchy of civil office, and could not take the King's pleasure except upon matters of account. The Secretaries of State were responsible upon all the larger political questions arising out of the existence of the Army, while the Commander-in-Chief exercised the military command, and under their superintendence administered the patronage as well for the benefit and encouragement of the Army itself as upon constitutional grounds, in order to keep the patronage out of the usual course of a parliamentary and ministerial management.'<sup>1</sup>

This system remained in force until the Crimean War, but in the epoch midway between Waterloo and the Alma a series of suggestions were made

<sup>1</sup> *Army Administration*, p. 23.

for its modification. During the years 1833-37 it was proposed to abolish the Master-General of the Ordnance, and to give his military duties to the Commander-in-Chief; and to transfer the Ordnance Board and the Commissariat Department of the Treasury to the Secretary at War, making him, in virtue of his enlarged powers, a Secretary of State.

The Duke and Lord Hardinge opposed the change, dreading this concentration of authority in a single official of Cabinet rank, and, to Hali-burton's lasting regret, their great influence procured the complete rejection of the proposals. It was inevitable that, sooner or later, the administration of the Artillery and the Engineers must pass into the hands of the Commander-in-Chief, and it was very desirable that the number of co-equal departments concerned in every movement of the Army should be reduced and concentrated. It was merely proposed to do deliberately and on well-thought-out lines what was done subsequently in a panic.<sup>1</sup> Instead of rejecting the scheme as

<sup>1</sup> We may compare the remarkable anticipation of these words in the recently published *Panmure Papers* (i. 47). 'The lamentable results which have attended our present expedition, as far as the waste of human life has been concerned, are solely to be attributed to the want of proper control by a single minister of every department of the Army. The confusions, delays, and disappointments may be traced to this source to a very considerable extent, and as the nation is now alive to this fact, it is quite possible that

a whole the Duke should have so modified it as to achieve the purpose the Government aimed at, without destroying the principle on which the administration of the Army was founded.

‘When the Crimean War burst upon the country it found a Cabinet asleep, and a war administration rusted with forty years of peace, years that had worn out its trained experts and enfeebled its knowledge and grasp of war administration. Because the military machine was rusty, and creaked and groaned in its movements, for want of the oil of able administration, the public, forgetting that its army system had, in the words of the Duke of Wellington “worked with safety to the constitution, and promoted the honour and interests of the country,” jumped to the conclusion that it was fundamentally unsound and must be replaced by a new machine which, like a quack medicine, was to cure all the ills that military flesh was heir to. The country, having no Lincoln to warn it, “swopped horses when crossing the stream,” and failed to recognise that it was the drivers and not the horses that were at fault.’<sup>1</sup>

A new Army Department and a new system of Army administration was created, as it were,

it may rush into some extreme course which may entirely overthrow the present system, which by prudence and a little foresight might have been preserved in all its better parts.’ The quotation is from ‘some observations by Lord Panmure suggested by a memorandum of Prince Albert, dated February 1855.’

<sup>1</sup> *Army Administration*, p. 27.

under the fire of the enemy. In June 1854 the Department of War was separated from the Colonial Office and placed under a fourth Secretary of State, who assumed control over all the military departments. Henceforward he was known as the 'Secretary of State *for War*,' and in February 1855 the Office of 'Secretary *at War*' was absorbed by him, the Deputy Secretary at War becoming an Under-Secretary of State.<sup>1</sup>

In order to complete the constitution of the War Office as we now know it, the Board of Ordnance was next abolished,<sup>2</sup> and its duties distributed between the Commander-in-Chief and the civil branches of the new War Department. The Commissariat Department had already<sup>3</sup> been taken from the Treasury and placed under the Secretary of State. The subordinates, alike of the absorbed and of the newly created departments,

'unaccustomed to work together, and with different business habits and traditions, were hastily collected into detached and widely scattered buildings, and were expected to perform, under an

<sup>1</sup> See *Lord Cardwell at the War Office*, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> May 1855; greatly to the chagrin of Lord Raglan, who had been at the head of the office since 1852, and who 'conscientiously believed that the change will be the reverse of beneficial to the public.'—*Panmure Papers*, i. 203.

<sup>3</sup> December 1854.

inexperienced head, services of which neither the head nor the subordinate had any practical knowledge.’<sup>1</sup>

The resulting inconvenience was serious at any time, and trebly so when war was raging ; but the ultimate consequences of this hasty reconstruction were graver still. By the formation of the new War Office under the direct and immediate control of a Cabinet Minister the delicate balance which characterised the pre-existing administration was absolutely destroyed—not intentionally, not with knowledge and design, but through that fertile source of evil, want of thought.

‘Under the previous system, when the civil and military departments differed and were unable to adjust their differences, they appealed to the Crown through an independent power, the Secretary of State, the representative of the Government which controlled each and all of them. Under the new system, when the Horse Guards and the War Office differed, the Commander-in-Chief could only appeal from the Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, who thus became litigant, judge, jury, and Court of Appeal in one. This was the great initial mistake of the new system, and to it can be traced the growth of that discord between the civil and military elements in the administration, which has culminated, after half a century, in the demand that the Commander-in-

<sup>1</sup> *Army Administration*, p. 28.



Chief should be permitted direct appeal from the Secretary of State to the public, through Parliament or through the Press.<sup>1</sup>

And out of the consolidation of the War Office there arose the cry against Dual Government in the Army. The now submerged post of Secretary-at-War, though occasionally filled by a soldier of distinction like Sir Henry Hardinge, had been usually regarded as a civilian appointment,<sup>2</sup> and the office establishment had consisted entirely of civilians. Into the new War Office was introduced a military element by the appointment of a soldier immediately subordinate to the Secretary of State, who had the title, first, of Secretary for Military Correspondence, and, subsequently, of Permanent Under-Secretary of War. The inevitable result was grave friction and irritation between the War Office and the Horse Guards. The Commander-in-Chief was responsible for dealing with purely military questions, and yet, when he submitted proposals to the Government, the answers were, or were supposed to be, dictated by military officers, of inferior rank, who had no

<sup>1</sup> A very lucid exposition of the changes thus introduced will be found in Lord Panmure's speech in the House of Lords on February 21, 1856, quoted in full in the *Panmure Papers*, ii. 117 (n.).

<sup>2</sup> One of its most distinguished and incongruous civilian occupants was the Right Hon. T. B. Macaulay, who received the Cabinet rank which Lord Palmerston during his prolonged tenure of the office had always declined.

direct responsibility, but whose advice and influence were distinctly traceable in the Secretary of State's decisions.

The dual control lasted until the year 1870, when, on the recommendation of Lord Northbrook's Committee, a civilian was appointed once more to replace a soldier Under-Secretary of State, and the position of the Commander-in-Chief was largely restored to what it had been prior to the reorganisation of 1855. He was charged with the *personnel*, including enlistment, military training, distribution of troops, military information, discipline, appointments, honours and rewards; subject, indeed, to the constitutional control of the Government exercised through the Secretary of State, but with his position no longer undermined by irresponsible military advisers in the Secretary of State's office.

At the same time a fundamental change was effected by the addition to the War Office establishment of a Surveyor-General—a military officer of high rank, with a seat in Parliament—and a Financial Secretary, also with a seat in Parliament, but a civilian. These 'well-conceived and well-considered' departments were, in a great measure a revival of defunct organisms. To the Surveyor-General were confided the duties of supply, which had formerly been carried out by the Board of

Ordnance and by the old Commissariat Department of the Treasury, while the Financial Secretary had the general control over Army expenditure and establishments which the Secretary at War exercised before his office was abolished. In its main lines this system was a return to the administration which existed before the Crimean War, but with a distinctly more military character outside the walls of the War Office, and with the seeds of decay implanted in some of its chief constituent parts.

The ambiguous position of the Surveyor-General was, from the first, regarded by the Army with jealousy and mistrust. Serving directly under the Secretary of State, and as part of his office, he was credited with a reflected importance which seemed to give him greater influence, if not greater power and authority than was possessed by the Commander-in-Chief. We have already seen the misunderstanding which proved fatal to what was unhappily named 'Control.'<sup>1</sup> In 1875 the latter was abolished, and the Commissariat, the Ordnance, and the Pay Departments came, as separate organisations, under the control of the Commander-in-Chief, so far as camp and garrison were concerned. In the War Office itself these services continued, though only for a time, to be

<sup>1</sup> *Vide supra*, p. 33.

administered by the Surveyor-General and the Financial Secretary.

In 1883 the Commissariat became a purely military corps under the Commander-in-Chief, and the Ordnance and Pay Departments soon followed suit. After a short interval came the demand for the transfer of control over the Supply and Transport service from military to civil hands, in the War Office as well as outside. It was urged that the Surveyor-General—whose office had now become a purely political appointment—and the Director of Supplies and Transports, could not understand the wants and feelings of soldiers.

‘An agitation arose against the Ordnance Department. “Punch” made merry over its swords that would not bend and its bayonets that would turn into corkscrews, and the public, frantic at the thought that the Army, without a voice in the matter, was compelled to receive and fight with useless weapons, forged by ignorant civilians, clamoured for the appointment of a strong and responsible Commander-in-Chief to whom the administration of these services should be transferred. It was argued that the military authorities could not be responsible for the efficiency of the Army if they did not control the administration of its equipment, its food, transport, armaments and barracks—services vital to its efficiency. The Government, with that yielding spirit which has characterised it in modern times, following, instead of guiding, public opinion, abolished the

department of the Surveyor-General, and in 1888 administrative control over Army services passed from the civilian to the soldier in the War Office, as it had done a few years previously in garrison and in the field.’<sup>1</sup>

The consequence of this step was to limit the powers of the Financial Secretary to an examination of accounts, which merely secured the integrity of charges without affording any effective supervision over their necessity or their extent. The old civil and constitutional control over military expenditure was weakened if not destroyed.

‘The abolition of these civil branches of the War Department, and the increased power and responsibility conferred on the Commander-in-Chief, gave for a time great satisfaction to the public. Before very long, however, the hosannas which had greeted the creation of a “strong Commander-in-Chief” became fainter and fainter, and a new set of reformers, who knew not the Josephs of the previous agitation, and who had no faith in a strong Commander-in-Chief, commenced a fresh crusade against the administration of the Army.’<sup>2</sup> They urged that no human being could support the weight of responsibility that had been cast on the unfortunate Commander-in-Chief; that he must be an accomplished soldier, a scientific constructor of arms and ammunition, of barracks and fortifications, of gun-carriages and

<sup>1</sup> *Army Administration*, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 39.

transport wagons, a master baker and learned in the gentle art of slaughtering cattle and sheep, and dressing them for the mess table !' <sup>1</sup>

This catalogue of distracting responsibilities got upon the nerves of the public, and produced the appointment of the Hartington Commission <sup>2</sup> which reported, in effect, that no one man could possibly perform all the duties now concentrated in the person of the unfortunate Commander-in-Chief. The Commissioners, remarked Haliburton, failed to see that every great business must have a general manager or superintendent, and that, while no single individual could grasp in complete detail, or personally perform, all these various duties, yet, assisted by trained and expert subordinates, of rank and experience, one man could perfectly well superintend their operations and be responsible to the Secretary of State for their successful working.

‘ The Royal Commission recommended that the Commander-in-Chief, who may be regarded as the General Military manager under the Secretary of State, should be abolished ; that his work should be divided among several independent heads of departments ; and that the Secretary of State should do what they had said no man could do, be responsible for all these services, unaided by

<sup>1</sup> *Army Administration*, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide supra*, p. 127.

any general manager, though assisted, as to questions of policy, and schemes of offence and defence, by a Chief of the Staff, who should not interfere with the current work of the departments of the office.'

As we have seen, it was not until 1895 that the system which was in force at the date when Haliburton was writing came into existence. And while following in the main the lines laid down by the Hartington Commission, it was allowed to retain the office of Commander-in-Chief, nor did it affect the questions of financial control over the Army services; the changes merely dealt with the division of duty among the military heads of departments in the War Office.

And here ended Haliburton's historical retrospect of the five systems under which the British Army had been administered since the Revolution.

'The years of the life of each system indicate the soundness and vigour, or the delicacy and feebleness of its constitution. The first lived 167 years; the second 15; the third, after undergoing many very serious operations, succumbed in its seventeenth year; the fourth died in infancy, aged 7; and the life of the fifth is despaired of by the authors of its being on account of the repeated attacks which threaten its existence.'

Its destined span was indeed under ten years, and Haliburton lived to see the installation of system number six.<sup>1</sup>

The closing pages of the pamphlet are devoted to the relations which have from time to time existed between the civil and the military elements at the War Office, and to the gradual abandonment of the system of constitutional check and balance which, in Haliburton's eyes, were the fundamental principle upon which Army administration should be based.

‘Under the four systems created since 1855 the lines separating the command from the business administration of the Army, which were so distinctly drawn at the Revolution, have been blurred where they have not been completely obliterated. Before 1855 civilians initiated, controlled, conducted, accounted for and audited Army expenditure, free from all personal interest in the expenditure they controlled. Now Army expenditure under the Secretary of State is initiated, controlled, conducted and accounted for by soldiers who are the beneficiaries of the expenditure they deal with. Even these extensive powers are considered insufficient. It is frequently urged that the Accounts Branch of the War Office and the Contract Department, still under civil control, should be made subordinate to the military administration, on the ground that soldiers must necessarily be the best judges of

<sup>1</sup> These are the actual dates : 1688–1857, 1855–1870, 1871–1888, 1888–1895, 1895–1904.



what the interests of the service require. The doctrine of Fox and Palmerston, as to the necessity for 'constitutional checks and counter-checks'; 'making one department a check and a control on the other,' is to modern military administrators unintelligible, or at any rate very distasteful.

'The public have an idea that the civil element is all-powerful in the War Office, and ascribes to the malign influence of the "War Office clerk" every failure, from a bent bayonet to a bungled battle. A reference to a paper recently presented to Parliament, giving the rules of office procedure, should dispel that delusion. It provides that all proposals affecting expenditure, made by the Military Departments, shall be referred to the Finance Department for opinion, and that when these departments differ the former shall submit the difference for the decision of the Secretary of State. On the other hand, appeals by officers and others against decisions given by the Finance Department must be referred to the Military Departments for opinion, and when they differ the former must submit the difference for the Secretary of State's decision. If the office is worked in strict accordance with its constitution, neither the military nor the civil branches can over-ride each other. The Secretary of State alone has that power and that responsibility.'

<sup>1</sup>

And, in Lord Haliburton's judgment, the separation of finance from discipline was the key to Army administration. 'Efficiency and economy,' he was fond of quoting, 'are always principles of

<sup>1</sup> *Army Administration*, p. 55.

antagonism. The views of one who has to bear the expense and of others who enjoy the benefit are not certain to be identical.' Speaking from long experience, Sir Henry Hardinge had declared that it would be most undesirable under our constitution to have the Commander-in-Chief of the Army transacting the finance of the Army. But, complained Haliburton, 'these sound constitutional views, which once actuated statesmen and soldiers, no longer prevail.'<sup>1</sup>

In the years before the great changes of 1855 there had been one exception to the rule that the control of Army expenditure was exclusively the function of the civil administration. Certain expenditure, not included in the Army estimates noted by Parliament, but known as 'Army extraordinary,' was left in military hands, with results that were not encouraging to the advocates of military control. Two instances were quoted by Haliburton 'as throwing some light on the possibilities of our modern system.' During the War of Independence the Quartermaster-General in America had complete charge of the transport services, free from all local civil control; his department made contracts for transport, fixed the establishments to be maintained, paid for the transport and accounted for it. The result was a

<sup>1</sup> *Army Administration*, p. 56.

loss to the public of 417,592*l.*, and a recommendation from the Commissioners of Public Accounts that all expenditure of money for military services should be entrusted 'to civil authorities of the Crown, acting under the control not of General Officers but of the highest civil department in the State—the Treasury.' A few years later, when a sum of ten millions was about to be expended on the construction of barracks in the United Kingdom, a purely military department, free from the ordinary civil control, was called into existence under a Barrack-master. A serious misappropriation of public funds was the consequence.

'No satisfactory accounts could be obtained, the Barrack-master General objecting to his expenditure being subject to audit by civilians, except as to the accuracy of computations, on the ground that he must be the best judge of the necessity and the propriety of the charges he had incurred.<sup>1</sup> The British officer of to-day indeed is above suspicion in his dealings with public funds. Malversation such as above referred to is not likely to recur, but systems of administration should not depend for their integrity solely on the honour of those administering them.'

<sup>1</sup> *Army Administration*, p. 58. For the story of Barrack-master-General Delancey see *Fortescue*, iv. 903. 'There can be no doubt that Delancey was guilty of a shameful breach of trust towards the Ministers, and they as guilty of a breach of trust towards the nation. . . . However, the fact remains that in a few short years the British Army was imperceptibly transferred from quarters in ale-houses to quarters in barracks.'

And to Lord Haliburton it seemed more than curious that our modern system should be based, not on the constitutional principles of check and balance introduced under William III., but

‘on the unfortunate exceptions to these principles which form almost the only blot on the military administration of the eighteenth century.’<sup>1</sup> Once more we have created a trust and an interest in the same individuals, and abandoning constitutional check and counter-check we largely rely for the integrity of public expenditure on the capacity and the honour of individuals.’

The civil establishment at the War Office had been founded by Pitt in 1804. In that year civil clerks were first introduced into the departments which had previously been staffed with officers and non-commissioned officers. One reason for the innovation was ‘the frequent changes that took place among the persons employed’; and there was the further grave objection to the former system, that it withdrew useful men from their regiments and did not, in fact, furnish that description of public servant absolutely necessary for the business of the office.

‘Pitt’s policy is now reversed. That valuable body of subordinates is being gradually got rid of and replaced by soldiers. The change will not stop there. It has frequently been proposed

<sup>1</sup> Here indeed we have ‘Haliburton the optimist.’

to replace the higher grade civilians in the Secretary of State's office by retired officers, and those of the lower grade by non-commissioned officers. Such a change would no doubt reduce discussion and friction within the office, for it is not the "custom of the service," which to soldiers is an unchanging law, for officers of the Army to give official expression to views which do not accord with those of their seniors. But while it may reduce friction it will narrow the sources and reduce the value of the information at the Secretary of State's disposal, and give rise to grave constitutional complications.

Formerly, when the people thought themselves injured by the action of the soldiery, they could appeal with confidence to a tribunal free from military influence, and therefore commanding their confidence. That tribunal no longer exists. If the people now feel themselves aggrieved by the action of the military authorities they can only appeal to a military department for redress, and its decisions, even when just and reasonable, will never command their confidence. It is true that the head of the department will be a member of the Government and probably always a civilian. The head may be the head of a civilian, but the voice will be the voice of the soldier! Even should complaints reach the Secretary of State personally, his decision must be based on a brief prepared by a military official. So surrounded and so advised there will be a danger of the Secretary of State, in the quaint words of Bacon, "being counselled more for the good of them that counsel than of him that is counselled." The result will be that people, when they have cause to complain

of the action of the military authorities, will direct their appeals to the House of Commons instead of to the military department, and thus will be brought about that which it was the great object of the statesmen of the last century to avoid, the direct intervention of Parliament in the detail administration of the Army.’<sup>1</sup>

It is not altogether easy for a modern reader to share Lord Haliburton’s enthusiasm for the old order which was swept away in 1855. The century that elapsed between Malplaquet and Vimiero is not a chapter in our military annals to which we are accustomed to recur with pleasure, and the *régime* of the Iron Duke and Lord Hardinge brought forth bitter fruit in the Crimea. But though one may not be able to accept all his conclusions, it is impossible not to recognise the historical value of the retrospect, or ignore the weighty warning contained in this recapitulation of ‘certain fundamental principles, once universally accepted, but which have failed to obtain recognition in the various modern systems which have replaced that framed at the Revolution.’<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Army Administration*, pp. 74-75.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 77.

## CHAPTER XI

1901-1907

Changes at the War Office—the Esher Committee—Letters to the ‘Times’—Mr. Haldane becomes Secretary for War—Haliburton’s Expectations—‘Nineteenth Century’ Article on Universal Service—Disappointment at Mr. Haldane’s Scheme—The End.

DURING the three years for which Mr. Brodrick held the seals as Secretary of State for War, Lord Haliburton took no further part in controversy. Long experience had made him sceptical of cut-and-dried schemes for Army reorganisation, however promising they might appear on paper. But there was nothing in the much-abused Army corps or in the Reserve battalions for Mediterranean garrison duty, which ran counter to his principles. The somewhat factious opposition which the Ministerial proposals encountered in Parliament was largely regarded as a personal protest on the part of some of the unruly members of the Unionist party.

With the autumn of 1903 came a mighty change. The reconstruction of the Balfour Ministry after the September resignations which deprived the

Cabinet of the services of the Duke of Devonshire, Mr. Chamberlain, and several others of their colleagues, sent Mr. Brodrick to the India Office, and his place in Pall Mall was filled by Mr. Arnold-Forster. For the last three years Mr. Forster had been serving his official apprenticeship as Under Secretary to the Admiralty, but he had never abated his interest in the Army or wavered in his conviction that he had mastered the secret of the Army problem. The publication, a few weeks earlier, of the Report and the evidence taken before the Royal Commission to inquire into the South African war had roused the nation to one of its periodical fits of self-examination and self-reproach. The War Office had come in for some especially hard knocks at the hands of the Commissioners, and there was a widespread inclination to see the broom vigorously applied to that institution by one who had in the past made it the object of so much hostile criticism.

Early in the new year the 'Reconstitution' Committee, appointed with a wide, but undefined, reference as the outcome of the War Commission, issued their first Report. Effect was given to its Recommendations without warning or delay. On February 1, 1904, the office of Commander-in-Chief ceased to exist, its place was taken by an Army Council, framed avowedly, but with



many important distinctions, on the model of the Board of Admiralty, and the Secretary of State for War became *ex-officio* its President. The existing 'Horse Guards staff,' beginning with Earl Roberts, were swept out of existence with a *brusquerie* that took small account of the extraordinary services which the last of the Commanders-in-Chief had so recently rendered to the empire.

A general chorus of approval went up in the Press,

'founded,' as Haliburton wrote, 'not so much on an extensive knowledge of the subject, as on the conviction that some change in the administration was essential, and on the satisfaction felt that the new administration was to be framed on the same lines as that of the sister service, which had commanded the confidence of the country and worked without that friction which has been such a marked feature in the case of the Army.'<sup>1</sup>

There were many very distinguished soldiers, however, who failed to share in the general satisfaction. The composition, 'unique in the history of committees,' of the triumvirate which had been entrusted with the destinies of the British Army was not one which appealed to the military mind. Lord Esher, Admiral Sir John Fisher, and Colonel Sir George Clarke, R.E.,<sup>2</sup> were all of them men of mark, but only the last named was a soldier, and

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, March 16.

<sup>2</sup> Since 1906 Governor of Bombay.

his career in the Army had brought him the scantiest administrative experience.

After giving himself several weeks to master and assimilate the details of the successive Reports of the Committee, Haliburton took up his pen once more, and the 'Times' of March 16 and 19 contained letters over his signature which strongly criticised certain of the Recommendations. The first of these dealt with purely military questions, with the new regulations touching military promotion and appointments, with the abolition of the military levées, and the formation of a Permanent Department of Defence under the Prime Minister.

The Committee of Defence was not the creation or invention of the triumvirate, but had been nominally in existence for some time : it had been reconstituted in the spring of 1903 on the initiative of Mr. Arthur Balfour, and a very important alteration had been made in its composition by the inclusion among its members of the First Sea Lord and the Director of Naval Intelligence, and of the Chief of the General Staff and the head of the Intelligence Branch of the Army. The Report of the Esher Committee added to it a salaried military secretary who was to hold his post on a five-year tenure. It must be admitted that the reconstitution on this basis of the Defence Committee was highly popular out-of-doors, and was hailed as a

recognition of the necessity for closer co-ordination between the land and the sea forces. But any one who has followed the argument and the historical reasoning contained in the last chapter will be prepared to find that the creation of this department, and especially the appointment of the Permanent Secretary, seemed to Haliburton a dangerous departure from the constitutional practice of the country.

‘It will place the Prime Minister,’ he wrote,<sup>1</sup> ‘with regard to those two services in a totally different position from that he occupies towards the departments presided over by other Cabinet Ministers. The First Lord and the Secretary of State for War are his proper advisers on all naval and military subjects, but if between them another and irresponsible adviser is introduced great friction will inevitably arise.’

An analogous case will illustrate this. Prior to 1857 the Commander-in-Chief was the legitimate adviser of the Secretary of State for War on all military questions. In that year Sir Henry Storks, subsequently succeeded by Sir Edward Lugard, was appointed ‘Secretary for Military Correspondence’ in the War Office. Up to that time no question of dual government in the Army had arisen, but following immediately on these appointments, complaints became numerous and bitter that the advice of the Commander-in-Chief was disregarded owing to the intervention of an irresponsible military officer, who, behind his back

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, March 16.

and without openly appearing, influenced the Secretary of State against his proposals. Business was hampered and obstructed, and the friction continued for many years until the appointment of a military secretary on the civil side of the office was abolished.

‘The meetings of the Defence Committee in ordinary years cannot be numerous, and the Secretary during the intervals would have no sufficient work to justify his office. The duty of collecting information on naval and military subjects belongs to the intelligence branches of the two services. They must possess that information if they are responsible for their departments, and it would be a mere duplication of work if the Secretary of the Defence Committee also collected the same information. The Council<sup>1</sup> and the Board of Admiralty can supply the Defence Committee with that information, and their Intelligence Branches are capable of furnishing competent secretaries to the Committee and of keeping available for instant reference any records and information it may require. If, however, a clever and ambitious secretary is appointed, who will be independent of the Admiralty and the War Office, he will inevitably become a thorn in their flesh, and such heat and friction as formerly existed between the Horse Guards and the War Office will be engendered and found intolerable. The more able and more ambitious the secretary, the more impossible will become his position.’

It must be confessed that in this protest Lord Haliburton seems to make imperfect allowance

<sup>1</sup> The Army Council.

for the enormously increased complexity of the problem of Imperial Defence, or for the constant failure, in the past, of the two great services to understand one another, and to keep their respective duties clearly defined. Nor is the analogy drawn from the 'Secretary for Military Correspondence' by any means complete. Time alone can show how far his strictures and forebodings are justified.

In his second letter, which is confined to the judgment of the Committee on the relations existing between the Military, the Financial, and the Contract Departments of the War Office, he was on surer ground, and had very genuine cause for complaint. The civil side of the War Office, with which, in one capacity or another, he had been associated for so many of his working years, had been assailed by the Committee in the picturesque and highly coloured language which is the stock-in-trade of the Press whenever anything goes wrong with the Army. The Report had stated that

'criticism of military policy by civilians has become a habit.' 'War Office papers teem with minutes, showing that clerks of the finance branch freely express their opinion on matters of military policy.' 'The War Office is divided into two hostile camps, whose occupants regard each other with mutual suspicion.' 'The system combines the maximum of friction with the minimum of efficiency.'

There was no Secretary of State for War, Haliburton asseverated, not a single military authority of position and character who had ever served in the War Office, who would endorse these reckless paragraphs; and they were the less excusable that while the report of the Dawkins' Committee, to inquire into War Office organisation,<sup>1</sup> issued as recently as 1901, gave no countenance to them, the published evidence of some of the most distinguished military witnesses called before it was eloquent in favour both of the officials and of the system. Sir Henry Brackenbury, the Director General of Ordnance, had given the following testimony:—

'The great step, which has been of immense advantage, was that which I got carried out last year: I got a branch of the Accountant-General's office put into my office, which has been of great assistance and advantage to me. Its head is my adviser, who keeps me straight and prevents me going wrong. It is an immense advantage.'

Sir Evelyn Wood declared that he had received the warmest and most cordial assistance from the Accountant-General's department. Sir Coleridge Grove, the Military Secretary, bore witness that the civilians and military had worked together in the War Office for many years on the best

<sup>1</sup> Haliburton gave evidence before it: see 1901, C. 581, p. 79.

of terms. Colonel Cowans said, most emphatically, that his department—the Quartermaster-General's—had never had any difficulty whatever with the finance branch, or any delay caused by it.

Sir George Clarke, added Haliburton, had himself been a member of the Dawkins' Committee, and yet, without producing any evidence whatever to rebut this evidence of the military heads of the War Office, he permitted the Esher Committee to make statements absolutely at variance with it.

‘There must necessarily be some heat and friction in any great business like that conducted by the War Office, when the projects of the military, who are responsible for the efficiency of the Army, have to be financially opposed by the department responsible for its finance. This natural heat evolved by clashing opinions never degenerates into personal acrimony or enmity. If the financial control were such a poor thing as never to assert itself or to disturb the equanimity of those who advocate projects of public expenditure, it would be of little value to the Government in guarding the Exchequer from undue or useless expenditure.’

In a leading article<sup>1</sup> the ‘Times’ volunteered the explanation that the hard words of the Com-

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, March 19, 1904. i

mittee had been used in a purely Pickwickian sense.

‘ Their statement that the War Office is divided into two hostile and mutually suspicious camps . . . in reality means nothing more or less than that the War Office is at present organised on that system of “checks and oppositions” which Lord Haliburton considers ideal,<sup>1</sup> but which the Committee consider incompatible with real economy in peace, wasteful in war, and combining “the *maximum* of friction with the *minimum* of efficiency.” Lord Haliburton is convinced that giving the soldiers responsibility for finance will lead to frauds and scandals of every sort. That is simply, in polite language, the old War Office view that the soldier is necessarily a spendthrift and probably a thief.’

Against this most unwarrantable inference Haliburton warmly protested:—<sup>2</sup>

‘ I have known the War Office intimately for more than a generation, and during that time no such view existed there. Certainly I do not hold, and never have held, the view you impute to me. Fortunately proof of this exists. Prior to 1870 the conduct of the business of the Army outside the War Office was entirely in civil hands. I was always of opinion that this was an unsound organisation, and that the whole machinery for carrying out Army services in camp and garrison should be purely military, supervised and controlled by the Secretary of State, by means of the military staff of the War Office, as regards military affairs, and

<sup>1</sup> *Vide supra*, p. 243.

<sup>2</sup> *Times*, March 26.



by means of his civil staff, as regards financial transactions. It took some thirteen years to accomplish this reform. It was only about 1883 that the last civilian departmental officers were finally replaced by soldiers in garrisons at home and abroad, where they had served for over two centuries. This was a step in the right direction, but it was wanting in completeness, and in 1887-1888 the edifice was crowned by the transfer from the civil to the military side of the War Office of all administrative duties connected with what may be called the business of the Army. I strenuously advocated this measure, though it involved the abolition of the office I held of Director of Supplies and Transport, and my retirement from the service. I think those facts prove that the War Office did not regard the soldier as "necessarily a spendthrift and probably a thief!"

A few months later Lord Haliburton was again in the field, enjoying once more the hospitality of the 'Times' which was always ready to welcome so racy a combatant.<sup>1</sup> On August 8, just a week before the rising of Parliament, the Secretary of State for War introduced proposals for Army reconstruction, which, it may briefly be said, his old antagonist condemned—lock, stock, and barrel. Into this final controversy between Haliburton and Mr. Arnold-Forster, in which the rôles of assailant and defender were now completely reversed, I do

<sup>1</sup> Haliburton, however, was wont to complain that his letters were sometimes held back till much of their savour had evaporated.

not propose to enter. Whatever the merits or demerits of that Army scheme, it perished in the General Election of January, 1906, and though it cannot accurately be described as birth strangled, it made few friends during its brief existence. Its author has published a voluminous vindication of his stewardship,<sup>1</sup> and I should be most loath to write a line in disparagement of one of the most devoted and indefatigable workers of his generation. From the nine or ten letters contributed by Haliburton on the scheme itself, and on questions arising out of it, I will only quote one characteristic passage :—

‘I have no personal interest to serve in advocating any system of Army organisation. I am not the author of any system. We have had a Cardwell system, a Brodrick system, and now an Arnold-Forster system. What we want is a national system, not based on the opinions of any individual statesman, but framed after full and exhaustive national inquiry by a representative body of statesmen and soldiers, on evidence which will be open to the public,<sup>2</sup> and which will justify it and the Government in adopting and proclaiming the resulting system as the national system of Army organisation.

<sup>1</sup> *The Army in 1906 : A Policy and a Vindication*, by the Right Hon. H. O. Arnold-Forster, M.P.

<sup>2</sup> It was one of Lord Haliburton's grievances against the Esher Committee that the evidence, if any, on which they reported was never published.

‘As an old servant of the public, whose poor services it has more than generously rewarded and honoured, I have felt it a duty to warn it against an ill-considered scheme, which, I am convinced, will reduce the strength, lower the efficiency, and increase the cost of the Army.’<sup>1</sup>

The appointment of Mr. Haldane as Secretary of State for War, in December, 1905, and the disappearance into thin air of the Unionist majority in the following January, opened a chapter in the history of the British Army the final pages of which it would be presumptuous to forecast. The

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, October 13, 1904. Haliburton's other letters will be found in the issues of August 8, 10, 31; September 7 and 23; October 15, 18 and 19; December 24, 1904; March 6, 1905; and in the *Westminster Gazette*, December 6, 1904. Their substance was re-issued by him in pamphlet form, *Army Organisation: The Arnold-Forster Scheme* (Stanford, 1905). The following extract from the Preface is deserving of quotation: ‘No one can frame a reliable scheme of Army organisation without knowing the nature and the extent of the strain that it will have to bear. To do so would be like asking an engineer to bridge a dangerous river without giving him information as to the strain his bridge would have to endure. I have no knowledge, and I believe the general public have no knowledge, of the strain that our Army may have to meet in a possibly not remote future. Has not the time come when the Government should give the public some idea of the strain which its defensive forces may be called upon to meet? It will then, and only then, be able to form a reasonable opinion on the character and strength of the forces it should maintain. The British people are not niggards in expenditure—they will never refuse funds for expenditure they know to be absolutely necessary in the interests of the country. What they reasonably object to is extravagant expenditure for purposes they do not understand, and on objects the necessity for which they are unable to appreciate.’

new minister was personally unknown to Lord Haliburton, but I have reason to believe that his attention was promptly drawn by one of his colleagues to the pamphlets on Army organisation and Army administration which loom so large in these pages. Lord Haliburton's position of freedom from party ties, and his absolute independence on all Army questions, made him one of those to whom Mr. Haldane, wandering in unfamiliar paths, could turn without embarrassment. He became a visitor in Lowndes Square, and in the course of their conversations and correspondence Haliburton's varied store of information and his long official experience were placed freely at the disposal of the younger man, seated suddenly in what his senior knew to be the thorniest chair in the Cabinet.

The open mind and keen intelligence of the Secretary of State filled him with hope that Mr. Haldane might complete the edifice which another lawyer statesman had begun. The lessons of the South African War, and its revelation alike of our responsibilities and of our dangers, had widened Haliburton's outlook, while strengthening his faith in our resources. He saw clearly that the Army which the Cardwell system yields us, though sufficient in its day for all then existing requirements, could not suffice for the contingencies to

which the Empire is now exposed, and that for these contingencies other forces than the ordinary Regular Army must be provided.

‘ We require,’ so he wrote to the ‘ Times,’<sup>1</sup> ‘ not only a “ Regular Army ” with its Army Reserve for all ordinary wars, but we require a “ Reserve Army ” so recruited and so trained as to be capable of supporting and acting effectively with the Regular Army in any part of the world. The problem of our Regular Army is simple. We have only to give up experimenting, and to revert to a well-tried and successful system. The problem of our “ Reserve Army ” *i.e.* Militia and Volunteers—is more complicated. It must be raised under conditions that will ensure its numerical strength and its efficiency for field service, and it must be liable to be sent abroad when national emergency renders it necessary. If voluntary service will yield these results, well and good. If it will not, then the question of some sort of compulsory service will arise.’

The report of the Royal Commission presided over by the Duke of Norfolk had proved conclusively that our existing auxiliary forces were incapable of supplying a second line army capable of effectively reinforcing the first line in the field. How to produce that second line army, and at the same time to maintain a home army capable of resisting invasion, was the problem which now exercised Haliburton’s mind, to the exclusion of

<sup>1</sup> August 2, 1906.

nearly every other topic. 'Universal service,' in its Continental form of Conscription,<sup>1</sup> was never entertained by him as possible or desirable; but he was an enthusiastic disciple of the doctrine, preached so eloquently by Lord Roberts, Lord Rosebery, and Lord Milner, that it was the duty of everyone to take part in the service of his country, and to be so trained that he could do so effectively. It seemed to him that in Mr. Haldane a minister had been found who would give effect to this principle. In a speech at Newcastle on September 15, 1906, the Secretary for War had declared that

'the nation in arms is the only safeguard to the public interests. Unless we have an army based upon the people, it must, according to modern standards, be a weak army. . . . The time had come to make a beginning, and to appeal to the manhood of the nation to render this service.'

The appeal, indeed, was made, with results which, in their present stage, cannot be fairly estimated. But neither the 'Special Reserve' nor the 'Territorial Army' were what Haliburton understood by 'a nation in arms,' and Mr. Haldane's speech in the House of Commons,<sup>2</sup> in which he expounded the scheme, which after substantial

<sup>1</sup> The term is of course inaccurate as applied to universal compulsory service, but it has passed into common use.

<sup>2</sup> On February 25, 1907. *Hansard*, clxix. 1279.

modifications, has now materialised, was a bitter disappointment to him.

Haliburton shared the ideal of Lord Roberts—that universal physical training of a military character, and instruction in the use of the rifle, should form part of the curriculum of all schools; and that, in the case of boys who leave school before eighteen, there should be continuation of this training, up to that age, in cadet corps, boys' brigades, and similar institutions, under State supervision. And in an article, which appeared in the 'Nineteenth Century' for March, 1907,<sup>1</sup> he ventured to formulate a scheme which would give shape and effect to the teaching of the National Service League and its kindred organisations.

‘If the nation decides that part of the education of its young men should consist of sufficient military training to qualify them to take part in the defence of their country, the establishment of the necessary military schools of instruction throughout the country will be a much more simple matter than might be supposed. The schools must always be open, and ready at all times to receive pupils. An effective machinery for this is ready to our hands. We have in this country the headquarters and staff of 124 militia battalions. These are only assembled for duty on twenty-seven days in the year when the Militia undergo their deficient, annual training. These Militia battalions form part

<sup>1</sup> P. 364. *Universal Military Training as a Practicable Scheme.*

of regiments of the Regular Army, though the connexion between the Regulars and the Militia battalions has been much less intimate than Lord Cardwell contemplated, and very much less than it should be.

‘My proposal is that the staff of the Militia battalions should be permanently embodied, that they should become *dépôt* battalions of the Line regiments, that the lieutenant-colonel commanding, the adjutant, and perhaps one or two other officers, should be drawn from the battalions of Regulars. This measure will have the incidental advantage of remedying the draft difficulty when both regular battalions are abroad, of which we have heard so much of late years. It should be the duty of the *dépôt* battalions to train the recruits for the Line battalions, and to give the youths of the country their military training and knowledge. This training should be for one year, or for such other periods as might be sufficient. At the expiration of that training the youths would have three courses open to them: Those who wished to enter the army might enlist; those who preferred to return to civil life could do so, but would be required to be inscribed, for from three to five years, in the reserve of their battalions, or they might, for a small retaining fee, be enrolled in the Reserve of the Regular battalions. During those three or five years they would be required to undergo a certain number of days’ training, so as to keep alive their military knowledge. That training should be given by their battalion, at any time most convenient to them and that would interfere least with their civil occupations. Or they might join volunteer corps, and thus keep alive their efficiency.



By this system, we should, in five years, possess depôt battalions that could, in case of emergency, call up their Reserve, and become efficient auxiliaries to the service battalions. Their service would be confined to the United Kingdom, unless they volunteered for active service abroad, either in units, or as drafts from the reserve of trained men.<sup>1</sup>

While Haliburton's article was passing through the Press, Mr. Haldane's statement in the House of Commons,<sup>2</sup> with its fundamental changes in the status of the Militia, cut the ground from under his feet.

'The main difference,' he added, in a despairing postscript, 'between my scheme and that of the Government is that I would draw closer the Cardwell tie between the Regulars and the Militia, making them the depôt battalions of the Regulars, and assigning to them the duty of training the youth of the nation, so that in a few years we should have the manhood of the "nation in arms."' Mr.

<sup>1</sup> Haliburton suggested that the training age should be from seventeen to twenty, or whatever should be found most suitable or convenient. The exemptions would be those usual in 'conscript' armies—men serving in the Army, in the Navy, the Marines, and the mercantile marine; all physically unfit for military service; clergy, bread-winners, and only sons of widows, &c. And he further proposed that, 'apart from the Militia battalions forming the depôts of Line regiments, it might be desirable to retain a certain number of battalions or schools for what are known abroad as one-year volunteers. With all it might be desirable that residence in barracks should be optional, just as there are boarders and day-scholars in schools.'

<sup>2</sup> February 25. *Hansard*.

Haldane disestablishes the Militia, and completely divorces it from the Regular Army, transferring it and the Volunteers to the administrative control of the "Local Associations." He creates, in place of the Militia, new *depôt* battalions of Regulars to enlist and train "non-Regular Reservists" for the Army.<sup>1</sup> A valuable and essential measure, if universal military training cannot be achieved; but one that will never give us "the nation in arms," the only safeguard to the public interests.<sup>2</sup>

Lord Haliburton was indeed grievously disappointed, for he had convinced himself that Mr. Haldane 'meant business,' and he had made no allowance either for the tide of 'anti-militarism,' which was then running with exceptional strength, or for the strong opposition of the Trade Unions. A few weeks later Haliburton concluded a letter to the 'Times'<sup>2</sup> with the following sentences, the last he ever penned:—

'The second line army of the future will be formed of the same materials as those that composed the existing Militia and Volunteers. Why did Mr. Haldane draw back from calling on the nation to form a National Army by making its youth undergo, as part of their national

<sup>1</sup> During the course of the session Mr. Haldane's plans were so far modified that the bulk of the Militia was retained as the Special Reserve, forming part of the Service Army, and free from all connexion with the County Associations.

<sup>2</sup> Written April 5; published April 22.

education, such training in arms as might be found necessary to enable them to take their place in the ranks for home defence in times of great emergency ?

‘If Mr. Haldane had carried out his first intentions his scheme would have been perfect, and he would have become the greatest War Minister the country has produced. His local associations would work up the trained youth into volunteer corps, and into brigades and divisions, and a great and efficient national army would be called into being. Why has he failed ? Are his colleagues and his party more interested in their political stability, and in the votes they can command, than in the safety of the nation and the forces it can command for its defence ? If the Government would adopt universal military training as part of the education of the nation, all its military difficulties would vanish, and I believe they would find an enormous mass of opinion in the country to support them. The Conservatives, apparently, are equally afraid of committing themselves to any definite scheme for the creation of a national army. Mr. Wyndham’s motion, in opposition to the second reading of Mr. Haldane’s scheme, which has great merits, is purely negative in its criticism. It regrets everything, and suggests nothing for the consideration of the party and of the country. Both sides are afraid to move, and the result will be some more years of confusion and inefficiency, and then, possibly in a time of great emergency, a sudden and possibly fruitless call for compulsory service. Compulsory service can only be made really effective by having a carefully prepared organisation to give effect to it.’

This letter, which he never lived to see in print, was Lord Haliburton's final effort on behalf of those principles of military administration, which he believed to be the best for his country. For some time past his health had been failing, and an attack of influenza still further reduced his ebbing strength. He got up from his bed to make the appeal from which I have just quoted, and the exertion exhausted him so much that high fever supervened, nor did he ever really rally. He died at Bournemouth—whither he had been moved in the hope a change might be beneficial—on April 21, 1907. He was buried at Brompton Cemetery on April 26.

'One of the noblest and finest men I have ever known,' is the tribute paid to his memory by a distinguished soldier, who had been brought into constant contact with him officially, and had been admitted to close intimacy with him in private life. From early manhood Haliburton's great abilities and immense powers of work had been placed unreservedly and ungrudgingly at the disposal of his country; and at a period when he might justly have claimed exemption from all further liability he still laboured hard to further what he judged to be the true interests of the Army and the nation. Though a man of strong convictions, the vagaries of political partisanship and the constraint of party

ties were to him simply incomprehensible. He was no Utopian, and he realised to the full the limitations and the stress of circumstances subject to which the administration and the organisation of the British Army have to be carried on. But, while making allowance for them, he was never coerced by them or led away from advocating strenuously and fearlessly what he considered would be to that Army's advantage.

Of servants such as he was any nation may be proud. And to the ability and rectitude which he showed through all his long official career he added, in private life, the charm of a singularly gracious and kindly nature, of a large and generous mind, and of the inability either to give or to take offence. His public work brought him the respect of all acquainted with him. His personal character endeared him to all who knew him. He died full of honours, and warm in the affection of his many friends. And the honours and the affection were alike deserved.



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