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Friday, January 20, 1882.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL ARTHUR J. HERBERT, C.B., Member of  
Council, in the Chair.

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BRITISH MILITARY POWER CONSIDERED WITH  
REFERENCE TO WAR ABROAD.

By Colonel H. B. H. BLUNDELL, Grenadier Guards.

THE object of this lecture is to urge that the action of steam cruisers upon an enemy's mercantile marine in naval warfare has entirely changed the conditions of great wars as they affect Great Britain. That, as a consequence, the idea which obtains of the military effort England would have to make in such a war is inadequate, and that an alteration in the establishment of regiments and changes in the conditions of reserve service are desirable.

First, as to the resources of the British Isles :

The population is 35,000,000, concentrated upon a comparatively small area, which is intersected by a most complete system of telegraphs, railways, roads, and other communications.

The wealth and manufacturing power—especially the manufacturing power of war *matériel*—of Great Britain is greater than that of any other nation, and her maritime preponderance as compared with any other Power is not only to be measured by the relative strength of their respective fleets, but to some extent by that of their merchant navies. It is stated that 70 per cent. of the sea trade, and two-thirds of the steam tonnage of the world, sails under the British flag. The arrangements for manning the British Navy do not, however, appear satisfactory as contrasted with the obligatory enrolment for maritime service of their seafaring population by other Powers.

Thus with a population which may almost be spoken of as approaching that of France or Austria, and as nearly double that of Prussia in 1866, the great *latent* power of England is indisputable, and so long as superiority at sea is maintained over an enemy, *time* is given to render that latent power *active*. For *time* all-important, Great Britain depends upon her Navy.

The military forces which would be available immediately on the outbreak of hostilities, although by no means despicable as against invasion by what may be termed *coup de main*, are very small indeed as compared with the *latent* resources of the country; while the army available for immediate action in an European war might even be

regarded as insignificant, but for the power of choosing and of changing the line of its operations which the command of the sea frequently gives to a British force making war in a continent of peninsulas such as Europe is. This power largely increases its numerical effect.

In order to estimate the war-effort which the British nation could make in a contest of vital importance, it appears useless to refer to recent wars in Western and Central Europe.

Since the necessities of Prussia at the beginning of the century taught her to train her men to arms in relays, and to hold them ready to return to the ranks when summoned, and since an admirable administrative system has enabled her to collect, organize, clothe, equip, feed, and move the national forces so summoned, the nations on her borders, unless equally ready to place the bulk of their national forces on a war footing on the outbreak of hostilities, have been liable to be overrun, overpowered by superior numbers, and paralyzed before they could organize their forces.

In Central and Western Europe, then, *latent* force, no matter how great, is useless to a nation, and the relative strength of contiguous Continental Powers can only be contrasted by comparing their actual forces and their military systems.

America is not, however, so circumstanced; her isolated situation, like the insular position of Great Britain, still gives her *time* to organize her forces, and enables her to dispense with the military systems of the Continent; while her system of Government, theoretically as free as that of England, is a guarantee against a premature resort to compulsory service in the Army.<sup>1</sup>

A brief review of the war-effort made by the Federal States during the American Civil War probably shows what would happen here were England engaged in a national struggle, more correctly than the review of any other war or any speculation on the subject could do.

On the Southern States taking up arms, and Fort Sumter capitulating, President Lincoln first called out 75,000 militiamen for three months, unless sooner discharged, by requisition to the States, for the proposed object of putting down the rebellion.

It soon became evident that large levies were needed: Congress, meeting in extraordinary session, voted 500,000 men and 500,000,000 dollars. By the end of the year 1861, 600,000 men were under arms.

Large armies were formed at first by voluntary enlistment; when a sufficient number of volunteers did not present themselves, each State was required to furnish its quota, the Government giving a bounty. When the quota was not forthcoming, men were drawn by lot.<sup>2</sup>

During the four years' struggle the Northerners had called into the field 2,039,748 men, of whom a million were under arms at the close of the war. They had spent 1,000,000,000*l.* sterling, of which 600,000,000*l.* had been borrowed by the Federal Government. When it is recalled that the debt contracted by Great Britain during the

<sup>1</sup> I say theoretically, because the President, during the Civil War, assumed very arbitrary power.

<sup>2</sup> See Moore's "Putnam's History," vol. viii, p. 459.

old French War from 1793 until its close amounted to 601,500,000*l.*, the enormous rate of expenditure in the American War is realized.<sup>1</sup>

The course of warlike effort which the Northerners found themselves compelled to make is especially noteworthy as showing that countries, the fortunate accident of whose position permits them to dispense with obligatory service in peace time, may, by a profuse expenditure, defer the resort to obligatory service in war for a short time, but if the struggle in which they are engaged becomes protracted are compelled to resort to it. It would appear, too, that the sooner a nation so situated, and which has become involved in a great war, realizes this fact, the better for its Exchequer.

The American Civil War introduced to notice a new instrument of ocean warfare—the steam cruizer, and showed the devastating effect such vessels have upon the mercantile marine of an enemy, even though that enemy be superior at sea. The shipping of the Federals, notwithstanding their superiority at sea, was reduced during the war by 2,000,000 tons owing to the depredations of the Confederate cruizers, and by the panic caused by them, which led to the transfer of shipping from the American to foreign flags, in order to avoid the risk of capture.

The war is also specially noteworthy as illustrating, by the small force of 75,000 men first estimated as necessary to quell the rebellion and the large numbers actually used for the purpose, how enormously a nation may, at the commencement of a struggle, underrate the effort required to bring it to a successful issue; but how rapidly, the magnitude of the effort required once realized, it rises to the occasion.

The population of the Federal States on the outbreak of war was 19,614,885 freemen, 88,986 slaves, that of the Confederates 7,570,224 freemen, 3,860,571 slaves. The efforts made by the Confederates are not here touched upon.

After considering the warlike effort made by the Northern Americans in their civil war, as illustrating what a free country really can do in a national struggle, it is curious to read the idea which obtains of the military effort Great Britain, with a population in the proportion of seven to four to that of the Federal States at the time referred to, might be expected to make if unfortunately she became involved in a great war abroad (no argument is necessary as to the effort which would be made in the event of war within the United Kingdom).

The "Times" of November 25th, 1881, states:—"For a great crisis like the Russian War or the Indian Mutiny we must possess a large reserve of trained men, so as to enable us to send into the field at least two army corps, or an aggregate of little less than 80,000 men," and this statement may be said to take as large a view as has yet appeared in the public press of the force Great Britain would be likely to employ in a great war abroad.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Statesman's Year Book"; other authorities give direct outlay 630,000,000*l.*, but total cost 831,500,000*l.*

<sup>2</sup> A larger view was taken in 1809, when Mr. Windham stated that England could despatch 100,000 men abroad (Hansard, vol. xii, No. 1111.) Kinglake, vol. vi, p. 461, states that Lord Liverpool, the War Minister, gave the strength of

An article written by Sir Garnet Wolseley in the "Nineteenth Century," March, 1881, states:—"All serious thinkers upon our Army requirements, then, at last seemed to agree to the three following postulates: 1st. That for the protection of these islands from invasion, for the defence of our foreign possessions, for the maintenance of our rule in India, and to enable us to fulfil our Treaty engagements in Europe, we might at any moment find it necessary to put in the field an army of about 60,000 men, which should have behind it a thoroughly efficient reserve of well-trained soldiers of at least equal numbers."

Now it is quite clear from what has been said on the subject of the American War that such a force as is mentioned in the above quotations, and which fairly state the view generally accepted, large as compared with the force sent out by England to the Crimea, by no means represents the fighting power of a country of 35,000,000 of inhabitants, although it may be all that country can employ if it is restricted to certain self-imposed conditions for raising its forces. Nor is the employment of larger forces limited by the inability to transport troops by sea, as is evidenced by the assistance rendered to the French and to the Turks in the transport of their troops in 1855, when British shipping was far less than it now is.

Usually in war the forces a country employs depend upon the forces of an enemy which have to be overcome and upon her own resources.

In a war between European Powers the words of St. Luke, 14 chap., 31 and 32 ver.—"Or, what King, going to make war against another King, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace"—remain as true as when they were written.

What, then, it may be asked, is the explanation of the idea which obtains in England as to her probable action if involved in a great European war, for it appears to be a conventional idea based on circumstances no longer existing?

An examination of the conditions of war as they affected Great Britain at the time of the Peninsular War appears to furnish the explanation. After the battle of Trafalgar, England had no rival in European waters; she could enter upon a war abroad or withdraw

the Regular Infantry at 210,000, Cavalry 27,000, in that year; the strength of the Artillery and Engineers was not given, but that of the whole land service, exclusive of Sepoys, was stated in Parliament to be 700,000. The forces sent abroad in that year were—

Walcheren .....	about	40,000
Sicily .....	"	15,000
Spain and Portugal ..	"	45,000

Kinglake remarks that the numbers of the forces sent abroad cannot be relied on, as it is believed that some of the soldiers were transferred from one theatre of war to another. Still, making every allowance, the force sent abroad must have been more than two army corps.

from it at will, and if she withdrew from it, her enemy's power of injuring her before the days of steam-power at sea was very limited.

The despatches of the Duke of Wellington illustrate very forcibly the secondary light in which foreign war was regarded in England at that time; one political party asserted that it would, if in power, withdraw the Army from Portugal, the other was only prepared to keep it there if the cost could be kept down. The Duke thought that as many troops as *could be spared from other services* should be used in the Peninsula; he went into calculations as to the relative cost of the Army at home and in the Peninsula, and urged the Government to keep the Army in the Peninsula for fear of an attempted invasion of England at a future time, should the French be relieved from the pressure of military operations on the Continent; but it is necessary to quote the despatches, as it is difficult to realize such a situation.

"To the Earl of Liverpool.

"Sta. Marinha, 23rd March, 1811.

"My opinion has invariably been, that it was the interest of Great Britain to employ in Portugal the largest army that could be spared from other services; and that no more than 2,000 or 2,500 men ought to have been stationed at Cadiz, which would not have cost a shilling more than their pay. The expense at Cadiz, which I imagine will amount to no trifle, out of the six or nine millions, has been, in my opinion, entirely thrown away, equally with the service of the troops, which would have made a great difference here early in the last summer.

"In respect to offensive or defensive operations here, if they are left to me, I shall carry on either the one or the other, according to the means in my power, compared at the time with those of the enemy, and bearing in mind always your Lordship's instructions of the 27th February, 1810, marked A.

"I would recommend to Government to increase the force here as much as possible, putting down the establishments elsewhere, and of course decreasing the expense in those parts of the Empire from which they draw the troops. By this measure they will put it into the power of the Officer here to avail himself of every opportunity; they will be sure of holding this country as long as they please; and they will save the whole expense of transports.

"I shall be sorry if Government should think themselves under the necessity of withdrawing from this country on account of the expense of the contest. From what I have seen of the objects of the French Government, and the sacrifices they make to accomplish them, I have no doubt that if the British Army were for any reason to withdraw from the Peninsula, and the French Government were relieved from the pressure of military operations on the Continent, they would incur all risks to land an army in His Majesty's dominions. Then indeed would commence an expensive contest; then would His Majesty's subjects discover what are the miseries of war, of which, by the blessing of God, they have hitherto had no knowledge; and the cultivation, the beauty, and prosperity of the country, and the virtue and happiness of its inhabitants, would be destroyed, whatever might be the result of the military operations. God forbid that I should be a witness, much less an actor in the scene; and I only hope that the King's Government will consider well what I have above stated to your Lordship; will ascertain as nearly as is in their power the actual expense of employing a certain number of men in this country beyond that of employing them at home or elsewhere; and will keep up their force here on such a footing as will at all events secure their possession without keeping the transports, if it does not enable their commander to take advantage of events, and assume the offensive."

And again he writes—

"Fuente Guinaldo, August 29th.

"We may spend ten millions a year in this country; but it is a very erroneous notion to suppose that all that expense is incurred by the war in the Peninsula.

"Our establishments which we have here would cost very near half that sum if they were kept at home, and the surplus only should be charged as the expense of this war. I do not mean to say that that expense is not great, but it must be borne as long as the Spaniards and Portuguese can hold out, or we must take our leave of our character as a great country."

No one can read these despatches without astonishment. I am reminded of an expression used by a French master at a great public school, who complained, when examined before a Commission, of the manner in which the study of foreign languages was slighted in the school course. He said it was treated as an "*objet de luxe*." Now, if such an expression can be used with reference to so serious a subject as a war, it would appear to apply to the manner in which the British nation treated their war in Portugal at the time these despatches were written.

Imagine Von Moltke, after the Prussian Army was already on foreign soil in one of the recent campaigns, having to plead as a reason why it should not be withdrawn from the theatre of war that its cost was not very much more than if it was at home.

But Great Britain could in those days, as a nation, sit at home at ease and watch the small though heroic military force with which she took part in the Continental struggle, and it may almost be said was able to limit the immediate risk of war to such dimensions as she thought fit.

In the Crimean War, England had the advantage of powerful allies, and was thereby saved from the necessity of employing large forces by land, while Russia had to fight at a point on her territory where it was most difficult for her to muster in strength. Many will recall the expression, "Bleeding the giant in the toe," which was applied to the Sebastopol campaign. Though steam was available at sea, *the power its use conferred on hostile cruisers had not then been illustrated.*

It is contended that the case is very different now. Were England involved in a European war now she would *immediately feel the direct pressure of war by the attacks of hostile steam cruisers* on her mercantile marine, and be obliged to grapple with her antagonist, and to exert her strength.

Great Britain would forthwith be obliged to organize a gigantic system of ocean patrolling to protect her commerce from the attacks of hostile steam cruisers which, however effective, would be enormously expensive. Captain Colomb, in his able lecture on "Naval Intelligence and Protection of Commerce in War," expresses most clearly the dangers to British shipping, and I shall take the liberty of quoting his words.

He states:—

"Attacks on the high seas will be made by hostile cruisers which may elude the vigilance of blockading fleets, or by vessels purchased, fitted out, and armed in rear of our fleets, perhaps thousands of miles away from the blockaded coasts. It is to be observed that, while the extent of the enemy's seaboard limits the operations of blockade, the area of operations for the direct protection of our commerce has, in a geographical sense, practically no limits at all."



And again—

“It is the very first stage, rather than the closing scenes of maritime war, which decides the fate of such trade. American war fleets floated triumphant on the sea long after the American carrying trade—terrified by ocean fires kindled by an uncaught ‘Alabama’—had taken to itself wings and fled. Moral effect is the great force to be reckoned with in considering the protection of commerce. If the first few weeks of war shakes that ignorance which blindly hopes that our naval arrangements for war are commensurate with our commercial necessities, the British mercantile marine will probably disappear in a reaction of panic.”

The great value of the carrying trade of Great Britain has been generally recognized in the discussion which has lately appeared in the press upon imports and exports. Captain Colomb estimates the value of British trade at sea requiring protection in war at 800,000,000*l.* a year, and for its protection he considers that six squadrons are required in the Atlantic Ocean alone.

Whatever system, however, were to be adopted for the protection of the mercantile marine, it is abundantly clear that the cost to the Government would be very great, and the cost to shipowners for the arming of their vessels, and probably all vessels would have to be armed in some way, as well as for the payment of the high rates of insurance, would also be very great.

It is also clear that other Powers are fully alive to the effective use which can be made of the new weapon in naval warfare—the steam cruiser—as is evidenced by the formation of their volunteer fleet by the Russians when there was a probability of war between Russia and this country.

Since this lecture was written Sir William Armstrong has given an address upon the national defences, in which he expatiates upon the effect of steam cruisers in future wars; he spoke as follows:—

“Light unarmoured ships, designed by Mr. George Rendel, had lately been built in this country for foreign Powers, which, with a displacement of only 1,300 tons, had attained a speed of 16 knots an hour. They carried coal for steaming 4,000 miles, and had already actually steamed 3,500 miles without replenishing. They were each armed with two 10-inch new type guns, which had nearly an all-round fire, and were capable of piercing 18 inches of iron armour, and with four 40-pounders on the broadsides. It was a very serious question what could be done in the event of a number of such vessels as these being let loose upon our commerce. At present there was not a single ship in the British Navy carrying an armament competent to engage them, that could overtake them in pursuit, or evade their attack when prudence dictated a retreat. Confidence was often expressed in our mercantile marine being capable of furnishing, on an emergency, a supply of vessels fit to be converted into cruisers; but where were there to be found among trading or passengers steamers vessels possessing a speed of 16 knots, with engines and boilers below water-level, and having an under-

“water deck to save them from sinking when penetrated by projectiles  
“at or below the water-line?”

It is submitted, therefore, that the days for England to carry on a great war with a small military force are past; that the idea of doing so is a dangerous delusion calculated to encourage the country to enter upon such a war with a light heart, but without having determined upon the vigorous action which will be necessary.

If England does become involved in such a war, she will have to do her utmost both by land and sea to bring it to a speedy and successful conclusion. If this view is correct, it is unlikely that England could confine herself to the holding of a small peninsula or marine fortress even in a war in which her interests were *secondary*, but would be constrained to grapple with her adversary.

There is, however, one question outside the United Kingdom in which the interests of England are of *primary* importance. The maintenance of her communications with India would always be a matter of vital importance to England, in defence of which she would feel obliged to exert all her force. Differences of opinion there doubtless would be as to the circumstances which were to be regarded as menacing the way to India, but for the maintenance of the way to India, whatever it might at the time be considered to be, Great Britain with or without an ally would be obliged to contend in earnest.

In such a war it would be quite impossible to limit the forces employed to two army corps. *The force necessary for the service to be performed would have to be used.* There would, doubtless, as there was in America, be a period of hesitation, but, as there, a revulsion of feeling would take place, the country would see the absolute necessity for carrying on the war in an effective manner, and would adopt whatever measures were necessary to raise the force required.

It may be well to recall what occurred in 1878, when it was thought necessary to oppose the occupation of Constantinople by the Russians, as illustrating the impossibility of attempting to limit the force to be employed to two army corps.

The Turkish forces, repulsed at all points, were retiring on the Gallipoli and Constantinople peninsulas. The great importance of holding these peninsulas was indisputable.

Supposing two army corps had been sent out from this country in time to take part in the defence of those peninsulas. Let us suppose that the regular regiments left at home were being raised as quickly as possible to a war strength, and that a reserve corps of some regiments in process of augmentation was concentrated, and the militia called out, the strength of the Reserve Forces, militia and volunteers, classed as efficient, would have amounted to 300,000. Behind the volunteers, ex-volunteers to a number equal to those serving might probably fairly be counted upon as available on an emergency. Danger of an invasion there was none.

Is it conceivable that with this large defensive force at home, that no matter what the necessity for troops at the front, that no more force would have been sent out from England, but that all the regular

regiments when completed would have gone on quietly doing goose-step at home?

It is contended, on the contrary, that besides officering and organizing regiments of Turks a third army corps would have been sent out, no matter how composed, as soon as vessels could be got ready, as the reserve division was sent out in the Crimean War; that the services of militia regiments volunteering would have been accepted either directly for the war or to release regular regiments, and that provisional volunteer battalions would have been enlisted for the war on special conditions as rapidly as possible.

It is contended, then, that though a well-grounded hope may be entertained that Great Britain will not become involved in a war with a Great Power, it is unreasonable any longer to assume that, if she does become involved in such a war, hostilities can, under any circumstances, be carried on with small means.

Fortunately, in the interests of peace, no foreign nation is likely to believe in the professed inability of Great Britain to put a larger force than two army corps into the field.

If it were stated that owing to a difficulty in getting men to train at Oxford the boat-race this year would still take place, but that that University would compete in a pair-oar, every expert would know that the idea was Quixotic. If a great athlete announced his intention of competing in a foot-race, but stated that he intended to confine himself to hopping; or in a wrestling match, but to confine himself to the use of one arm, his opponents would smile, but would not relax their training preparations.

A medical man sometimes is called in to see a full-fed patient, who says he is unequal to the slightest exertion, the least thing fatigues him, but after examining him his physician is able to say with confidence, "What you are suffering from is 'languor,' not 'weakness';" "if your house were to catch fire you would soon find the full use of "your limbs."

So with England, a statesman of the calibre which it is the fashion here to impute to Continental statesmen would not be misled as to the forces which England said she intended to use. He would consider what such a nation really could do, and assume that, the necessity arising, what the country could do, it would do.

What steps, then, it may be asked, can Great Britain take in peacetime to provide for the contingency of a great war? The Army and militia reserves as at present organized can only be counted upon to complete corps to their war establishment, not to replace casualties for any length of time.<sup>1</sup>

Her large *latent* military force, like that of America, can only be gradually developed, and the only way in which preparation for its development can be made in peace-time is by the formation of a *clear*

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix.

If two army corps were sent out *now*, the country would practically be face to face with the question of manning the Army *immediately*; if an Army were sent out at any time, even if the reserve had reached its full ideal strength of 60,000 men, the country would equally be face to face with this question.

plan as to the manner in which that development can best be effected; for the Government is powerless to take any active measures in such a matter until public opinion is ripe for such action.

Probably the experience of America would be found the best guide. As applied to England it appears to be—

First. To form provisional battalions in regimental districts of men enlisted for the war on special conditions.

To give a special rate of deferred pay to men actually in the field, such pay to go to their next of kin if they fell.

Secondly. To require regimental districts to furnish a quota for their regiments or for general service, giving bounties and allowing substitutes,<sup>1</sup> but requiring the individual to find his own substitute, and be personally responsible for him in case of desertion; the man so drafted might also be required to serve as an efficient volunteer himself; the regimental districts would doubtless add to the bounties; *the voluntary system would thus be used as long as possible.*

Finally. If necessary, obligatory service, forbidding substitutes, would have to be resorted to.

The small *active* force of Great Britain should, it is submitted, have the establishment of all corps fixed at a strength which would admit of their being able to take the field at once in an efficient state on receiving a quota from the reserve. At present this is far from being the case: in the infantry 43 battalions are at a peace establishment of 480 rank and file, and 6 battalions at an establishment of 500; if these battalions were suddenly raised to the war-strength of 1,000 rank and file, nearly two-thirds of the men composing them would be strangers; the battalions could not assimilate so large a contingent of strangers, and yet be regarded as fairly representative of their regiments.<sup>2</sup>

It is urged that if the strength of the weak battalions cannot be increased without reducing the strength of the battalions first for service, it would be better even to do that, and, unless reservists can be employed in them, to reduce the war-strength of battalions for little wars. Were the number of battalions required to take part in a little war consequently increased, it would be preferable to continuing to keep a large proportion of the regiments at establishments from which they cannot, on receiving a quota of reservists, at once be expanded to a war-strength, and regarded as efficient for immediate service.

Then as to the reserve: the value to a nation of a reserve of trained soldiers, who can be recalled to the ranks on the outbreak of war, and enable that nation to take the field with a much larger force than it could otherwise do, is unquestionable, and a local connection is a proper complement of any system of expansion, as it supplies a bond of union which otherwise can only be obtained by long association, but it is urged that the conditions of reserve service in this country are very disadvantageous to the State. The soldier of the reserve is not liable

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C.

<sup>2</sup> It is assumed that these regiments, like those sent to Zululand in 1879, would leave one-fourth of their strength behind them, and of their strength going out, 360 rank and file would be their own men, and 640 rank and file would be strangers.

to be called out for a little war, consequently, when such a war occurs, the regiments to be sent out have either to be completed to a war establishment, by robbing other battalions at home of men they can ill spare, as hitherto, or must be kept up to a high establishment, as now intended, at the expense of the battalions last for service, and even so the small battalions will have to supply men to replace those medically unfit as well as for special corps. In either case the regiments sent out are deprived of the steady effect of the older soldiers from the reserve.

One of the most serious inconveniences of the system of small establishments, for which, so far as I know, no remedy has been proposed, is that special corps in the British Army are not self-supporting. On the outbreak of a little war men are required for the Army Hospital Corps, Army Service Corps, and any other corps which may be formed, but as the men in the reserve cannot be called upon, the only source from which to draw them is the attenuated infantry regiments at home, which probably have a very large proportion of young soldiers. Imagine an Officer commanding a regiment with more than 40 per cent. of his men under one year's service—and I do not state an imaginary percentage—in addition to the usual requisitions for drill instructors and cooks for militia, &c., being called upon to furnish volunteers of good or fair character, and some service, to each of such special corps, and to send steady men to do the duty of Army Hospital men gone on service, afterwards receiving an order to forward the names of fifteen men of fair character, two years' service, and unmarried, who are willing to volunteer to such and such a regiment. He may also, with what, considering his field of choice, must appear to him a delicate irony, be informed that considerable inconvenience had been experienced in consequence of men of indifferent character having been recommended for transfer, and that care must be exercised in the selection of men of really fair character from those volunteering.<sup>1</sup>

By a process of this sort, not only is a small battalion rendered unfit to go on service itself, were an emergency to arise, but even ceases to be as efficient as it ought to be as a training school for recruits.

The reserve man now gets 6*d.* a day, and is not liable to be called out for little wars, even if sent to the reserve prematurely at his own request: and assuming the reserve to be called out once in a generation—thirty years—the retaining fee paid for a reserve man by the State amounts to 43*l.*, without reckoning the loss sustained by the State on men who do not appear, or the cost of Staff.<sup>2</sup>

The chances of a reserve man not being called out at all are as five to one, so that really, when one thinks of the strain of a little war upon the Army while the reserve man is looking on, his post seems to be very much the sort of post the late Sam Weller, junior, prized,—“not much to do and a good deal to get.” We temper the blade at great

<sup>1</sup> The French have felt the evil effects of transferring men from corps to corps in their Tunis Campaign.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix D.

trouble and expense, and then put it on the shelf to rust, and use the half-tempered.<sup>1</sup>

It ought to be very clearly stated that the conditions of reserve service have been enormously altered in favour of the soldier since the institution of the force; not only does the man in the reserve get 6*d.* a day instead of 4*d.*, without any further obligation, but on entering the reserve he is presented with his accumulated deferred pay with which he can purchase his discharge, so that no man need remain in the reserve who does not wish to do so.

One can understand that it is desirable in order to encourage entrance into the Army to make the exit as easy as possible, but as deferred pay enables any man who wishes it to take his discharge from the Service *altogether*, it is contended that if more were now asked from a reserve man it ought not prejudicially to affect recruiting.

It is urged, then, that men of the Army Reserve should be liable to serve in any little wars in which their regiments have a battalion engaged, and that to provide for the loss sustained by the reserve arising from discharges from that force by purchase, there should be *direct* enlistment permitted into the reserve force to men who have served not less than two or three years in the Army, and have been discharged with a fair character, and that men so enlisting should be liable to *general* service in little wars; probably many men after purchasing their discharge from the reserve would also again enlist in it, were direct enlistment into it permitted. Ex-militia reserve men and ex-volunteers of certain qualifications might with advantage possibly be permitted to enlist into the Army Reserve, and there might be two rates of pay, 4*d.* if liable to serve only when there is an emergency, and 6*d.* if liable to serve any time when a little war occurred or was probable.

When one considers how inevitably the establishments of corps are affected by considerations of cost, it may not be out of place to remark that the wealth of the country has quadrupled since 1815, and the population has nearly doubled, and that it behoves the Services always to urge that any comparison instituted between the cost of forces at two periods should have regard to the population and wealth of the country at each period.

In order that every Officer should feel the importance of effecting economies in matters not affecting efficiency in order to obtain as many men as possible for the Army, it is urged that every Officer commanding a corps should report, for the information of the General Officer commanding the district, upon any economies he thinks desirable, but that the General Officer should only forward any suggestion in which he concurs.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There seems no valid reason why a reserve man, who may be regarded as a man on continuous furlough, should not have the right to serve on for pension if recalled to the colours.

<sup>2</sup> The system of public accounts, requiring all money voted in any one year to be spent in that year, militates against economy in engineers' work. There is a natural anxiety to spend all money voted instead of swelling the Estimates of

The three points I wish specially to urge, then, are—

1st. That there should be a definite plan thought out how best to develop the *latent* force of the country.

2nd. That all the corps of the active Army should be kept at such establishments as admit of their immediate expansion to the war-strength, after receiving their quota of reservists, as efficient fighting bodies.

3rd. That reservists should be held liable to serve in any little wars in which their regiments may be engaged, and that men who have served a certain period in the Army, and have been discharged with a fair character, should be enlisted direct into the reserve for general service in it.

I must ask your indulgence for treating a large subject in so cursory a manner, my object being to draw attention to what appear to me grave though remediable defects in our system, viz., the smallness of the establishment of a large number of battalions and the conditions of reserve service, and to elicit opinions from others better informed on the subject than I am.

I have purposely avoided touching upon the special requirements of the special arms, though I believe the numbers are found scanty in some mounted branches; upon the assistance which Great Britain might receive from her external Empire, assistance difficult to measure but always increasing; and I have assumed superiority at sea in the supposed contingency so as to limit my subject.

I have also avoided all allusion to the present state of Ireland, as hitherto, in presence of an external foe, Ireland has been loyal, and bad as the state of things there is now, we may hope that it is temporary.

another year, hence, savings on services that with time might be profitably spent, are liable to be expended too hastily, and for building purposes at the very worst time of the year.

Possibly some change in this system, as in that of small transfers requiring Treasury authority, might be effected without the sacrifice of a thorough Parliamentary control.

APPENDIX A.

(Extract from Army Reorganization Committee's Report, 471.)

1ST ARMY CORPS.

STATEMENT showing the establishment of an army corps for service in the field, the strength of the 1st Army Corps (deducting non-effectives) according to the latest returns, the number required to complete to the War Establishment, and the measures proposed to supply the deficiency—distinguishing the several branches of the Service, and the number of Officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, Officers' horses, riding and draught horses, field guns, and carriages.

*Horse Guards, War Office, 1st July, 1879.*

RECAPITULATION.

	Officers.	Non-commissioned officers and men.	Officers' horses (private).	Public horses.	Field guns.	Carriages.
Establishment of an Army Corps for field service .....	1,414	35,599	1,213	11,384	90	1,631
	37,013		12,597			
Strength of the 1st Army Corps (deducting non-effectives) .....	936	19,916	546	4,243	90	244
	20,852		4,789			
Required to complete to war establishment .....	473	15,683	667	7,141	...	1,387
	16,161		7,808			
HOW TO BE SUPPLIED.						
Officers and Officers' chargers {	267	...	339			
Regimental.....						
Staff and departmental ...	211	...	328			
By transfer from other corps .....	...	3,130	...	2,378		
From Army Reserve..... {	...	6,919				
For regiments						
Cavalry and infantry drivers	...	594				
From Militia Reserve {	...	2,683				
Combatants .....						
Bâtmen .....	...	606				
Drivers, &c., for Army Service Corps .....	...	1,153				
Bearers for Army Hospital Corps .....	...	350				
To be enlisted (drivers and Royal Engineer Train) .....	...	169				
From General Post Office .....	...	49				
To be purchased .....	...	...	...	4,763		
To be supplied from store or requisitioned.....	...	...	...	...	...	1,387
General total .....	473	15,683	667	7,141	...	1,387
	16,161		7,808			

<sup>1</sup> N.B.—After completing the 1st Army Corps there will remain available 8,637 1st Class Army Reserve, 20,562 Militia Reserve.

C. H. ELLICE, *Adjutant-General.*



## 2ND ARMY CORPS.

STATEMENT showing the establishment of an army corps for service in the field, the strength of the 2nd Army Corps (deducting non-effectives) according to the latest returns, the number required to complete to the War Establishment, and the measures proposed to supply the deficiency—distinguishing the several branches of the Service, and the number of Officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, Officers' horses, riding and draught horses, field guns, and carriages.

*Horse Guards, War Office, 1st August, 1879.*

## RECAPITULATION.

	Officers.	Non-commissioned officers and men.	Officers' horses (private)	Public horses.	Field guns.	Carriages.
Establishment of an Army Corps for field service .....	1,414	35,593	1,213	11,334	90	1,631
	37,013		12,597			
Strength of the 2nd Army Corps (deducting non-effectives).....	841	15,983	510	3,645	90	173
	16,829		4,155			
Required to complete to war establishment .....	573	19,611	703	7,739		1,453
	20,184		8,442			
HOW TO BE SUPPLIED.						
Officers and Officers' chargers {	317	...	337			
Regimental.....						
Staff and departmental ...	256	...	366			
By transfer from other corps.....	...	2,325	...	596		
From Army Reserve..... {	...	7,812				
For regiments	...	462				
Infantry drivers	...	6,115				
From Militia Reserve {	...	606				
Combatants .....	...	1,307				
Bâtmen .....	...	350				
Drivers, &c., for Army Service Corps and Cavalry .....	...	49				
Bearers for Army Hospital Corps .....	...	525				
From General Post Office .....	...	...	...	7,143		
To be enlisted (drivers and Royal Engineer Train) .....	...	...	...	...		1,453
To be purchased .....	...	...	...	...		
To be supplied from store or requisitioned .....	...	...	...	...		
General total .....	573	19,611	703	7,739	...	1,453
	20,184		8,442			

<sup>1</sup> N.B.—After completing 1st and 2nd Army Corps there will remain 363 1st Class Army Reserve, 12,064 Militia Reserve.

C. H. ELLICE, *Adjutant-General.*

Deductions from the strength of the 1st Army Corps, as estimated in this lecture:—

For men found unfit though serving .....	4 per cent.	} 10 per cent. <sup>1</sup>
Recruits and other casualties.....	6 per cent.	
Absentees of Army and Militia Reserves.....	5 per cent.	} 10 per cent.
Men found unfit.     "     "     ".....	5 per cent.	
Men serving, 19,916, at 10 per cent. ....		1,990
Reserves    12,335,     "     ".....		1,233
		3,223

Similar deductions from 2nd Army Corps:—

Men serving, 15,988, at 10 per cent. ....		1,598
Reserves    16,712,     "     ".....		1,671
		3,269

Reserves remaining after two army corps formed:—

Army Reserve.....	363	
Militia     "     ".....	12,064	
	12,427	
Deduct 10 per cent. ....	1,242	
	11,185	
Deduct men required to replace ab- sentees, &c., men medically unfit, &c.	6,492	
	4,693	Remain available as First Reinforcement at the date of return.

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Now, in 1882, the Army Reserve is said to be 28,000 as against 15,787, the number of that force included in the return. The increase, then, is 12,213 less 10 per cent. = 10,992 men.

Add increase to Army, 1881	1,351
Add Reserves available as First Reinforcement at date of return.....	4,693
	17,036
Deduct Transfers no longer required.....	5,455
	11,581

11,581 available now as First Reinforcement. At the Crimean rate of waste, 6 per cent. per mensem, 4,308 men, this reinforcement would last between *two and three months*.

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<sup>1</sup> A deduction of only 10 per cent. assumes the regiments first for service in a very satisfactory state; if 25 per cent. had to be deducted, as in the case of regiments sent to Zululand in 1879, there would have been but 404 men available for reinforcement.

Let us suppose, however, that the Army Reserve was actually....	60,000
then deducting the number .....	<u>15,787</u>
already accounted for in the return, there remains .....	44,213
or, deducting 10 per cent. ....	<u>33,792</u>
Add increase to Army, 1881 .....	1,351
Add First Reinforcement in return .....	<u>4,693</u>
Available as reinforcements if two army corps sent out and a reserve of 60,000.....	45,836
Deduct transfers .....	<u>5,455</u>
Available as reinforcements .....	40,381

Two army corps  $35,599 \times 2 = 71,798$  non-commissioned officers and men.

Supposing the waste of the two army corps to be at the Crimean rate, given in the report of Lord Airey's Committee as 78 per cent., or 6 per cent. per mensem = 4,308 men per mensem, these reinforcements would last *nine months*.

If, however, 44,025 men is to be considered as the maximum number to which the reserve can attain

	44,025	
Deduct .....	<u>15,787</u>	already accounted for in return.
	28,238	
Deduct 10 per cent. ....	<u>2,823</u>	
	25,415	
Add .....	1,351	increase to Army, 1881.
	<u>4,693</u>	remaining for First Reinforcement at the time of the return.
Available as reinforcements .....	31,489	
<sup>1</sup> Less transfers not required ....	<u>5,455</u>	
	25,825	

At the rate of waste above calculated they would feed the two army corps for nearly *six months*.

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<sup>1</sup> These transfers are disastrous to the Army, they would leave the regiments at home in a very inefficient state.















## APPENDIX C.

On the flow of recruits being insufficient, bounties would have to be given, when a large part should be deferred.

The limit to which bounties should be given before resorting to obligatory service is all-important to determine; if too high they might demoralize the Army.

General Sherman, in his "Memoirs," page 387, advocates high pay in preference to exaggerated bounties. He also says the United States tried almost every system known to modern nations, all with more or less success, voluntary enlistments, the draft, and bought substitutes, and that all Officers of experience will confirm his assertion that the men who voluntarily enlisted at the outbreak of the war were the best, better than the conscript, and far better than the bought substitute.

## APPENDIX D.

A Prussian battalion on a peace establishment is not called upon to feed other corps, and on its expansion is fed by reservists from its own neighbourhood, who have probably served in its ranks; the population in England is more urban and more migratory, and though some regiments can draw their recruits from their own sub-district others cannot. The rate of wages varies so much that though everything is wisely done to encourage the completion of regiments from their own sub-district, the result cannot be counted on, nor can it be guaranteed that a man will reside after his service where he resided before it. Besides, the men in a Prussian regiment are of all grades and all degrees of education, therefore, a monitorial influence pervades the mass; in an English regiment, on the contrary, the men are almost exclusively drawn from the wage-receiving class; therefore, the two cases are not absolutely identical, and it may be that while expansion is good for both services, it ought not to be pushed to the same extent in the British Service as it is in the Prussian.

General HIGGINSON, C.B. : My old association with Colonel Blundell, as he lately belonged to the Staff of the district which I have the honour to command, tempts me to allude to one point in his lecture which he and I have frequently discussed, and which I think ought to interest everyone who considers military subjects, whether he be civilian or soldier. I allude to the deferred pay, which is now supposed to be so strong a temptation to recruits to enlist. My experience leads me to doubt whether deferred pay has produced the advantages which the country was led to expect. There is one point so dangerous in it that I have some hesitation in alluding to it; at the same time I think that we ought not to separate without being aware that one who has a right to know, is prepared to assert that the deferred pay of soldiers is what is vulgarly called "discounted" previous to their discharge. That alone is a very serious element of danger. The men borrow money, in short, upon a reversion which is practically inalienable, that is to say, nothing but conviction for felony or desertion can prevent the soldier who has earned his deferred pay from obtaining it on his discharge. It is not, therefore, very difficult, if a man desires to get away from his regiment previous to his proper term of service, for him to obtain through a money lender sufficient money to purchase his freedom. The same uncertainty and, therefore, danger, partially applies to his service in the reserve; and when I tell you that within the last week, two of these reserve men have applied to me, as commanding a district, one saying that he was in a state of starvation, and would give anything in the world to be allowed to re-enlist, because he could not obtain employment, being known to be a reserve man; and another writes, "May I emigrate, because three situations which I have tried for I have

"been refused because I am a reserve man?" you will, I think, consider that the reserve principle is not working so healthily as many of us have been led to suppose. In saying this, God forbid that I should say anything against the principle of the reserve, but I think it should be well considered whether the enormous amount of money paid to soldiers entering the reserve as deferred pay, produces all the advantages that we are led to expect.

The CHAIRMAN: As no one else rises I must say a few words, though I am not inclined to differ from Colonel Blundell in any way. He has rather understated the difficulties that would occur in sending two army corps abroad. In 1877 and 1878 the reserve was less numerous and the difficulties greater. Though there are many who disapprove of the short service system, that system has enabled us to do more than we could ever have done with long service. We could now, with the aid of the reserve, without great difficulty, send two corps d'armées abroad and leave about 7,000 of the first reserve at home. After sending eight battalions to the Mediterranean to relieve the eight battalions taken for the first corps, there would remain at home thirty-one battalions of weak strength, which would be filled up by the militia reserve, leaving the 7,000 of the first reserve to fill up the casualties which would be caused, as Colonel Blundell truly says, very quickly on service. When the Crimean War commenced we could not have sent one corps d'armée. In those days of boasted long service what was the case? To despatch the small force first embarked it was necessary to draw men from other regiments. Volunteers were called for in order to bring the regiments up to war strength. The 93rd, for instance, were called upon to volunteer for the 42nd, and the 93rd were sent out shortly afterwards, having to call for volunteers from other corps. That has, unfortunately, been the system in our Army from time immemorial, and though, perhaps, volunteering of late has occurred more frequently than formerly, it was because we were carrying on two wars on a peace establishment. I entirely concur with Colonel Blundell that it would be most advantageous to have two classes of reserves—one available for small wars and the other for European wars. I believe myself, after an experience of some forty years amongst soldiers, that if there were different rates of pay for the two classes nearly every man would accept the higher rate of pay. If this pay was 6*d.* or 7*d.* for the first class, and only 4*d.* or 5*d.* for the second, he would elect to take the former, and we should then be able to fill up our regiments for small wars as easily as possible, more especially, as you must remember, the establishments of regiments are now on quite a different footing to what they were formerly. We have now twelve battalions in England at 950, we have four battalions at 850, one battalion at 800, and four at 650; the remaining battalions are at 500 and 480. I would advocate also a change many Officers will object to, that is, a reduction in the number of battalions. What is the use of those thirty-one battalions at home which, as Colonel Blundell so lucidly explained, would be reduced to almost nothing by calling for volunteers for the different corps abroad? Would it not be far better to have, say, twenty or twenty-four battalions at home 950 strong than to have all these paltry little battalions? And, without conscription, the ballot, or something of the sort, we shall find it difficult enough to keep the two corps d'armées in the field efficient. If the whole militia were called out in England, which would be the case during a great European war, they would be quite sufficient for home and colonial garrisons with the twenty-four or thirty-four line battalions which would remain. I trust that the Government will consider what Colonel Blundell has suggested with regard to the difference in the two classes of reserve men. I must say I do not agree with General Higginson in the remarks he made just now about the deferred pay not being popular or of any advantage to the men. And with regard to the desire of reserve men to come back to the Service to serve for pension there are a great many fallacies. If you remember when the men were called out about four years ago an offer was made that any man who liked might continue to serve with the colours. How many do you think accepted the offer? None. Those are the men that you see mentioned in the papers as having been hardly treated and sent away to starve. I am not stating what I do not know, but I am stating facts—there was not a single man who accepted that offer. Again, only a year or a year and a half ago the authorities tried to obtain 1,000 men from the reserve to come forward voluntarily. These are the men that they tell you cannot get work and

wish to rejoin regiments. How many came? The number has not been filled up. Therefore, I do not believe all the stories that are told; but I do believe that the men would come out manfully on a great national emergency, and that if the war was popular we should not have the slightest difficulty in getting any number of men. With regard to what Colonel Blundell has said as to the increase of wealth in this country, it has no doubt been immense, and why should not the insurance increase in the same ratio? If we have property worth millions more than we possessed years ago, why should statesmen grudge a fair proportionate amount to provide a thoroughly efficient Army as an insurance for the safety and prosperity of the nation? What is the amount of the Estimates in comparison with the wealth of Great Britain? It may be a large sum, but it is nothing for such a nation as ours. I do not think that Colonel Blundell would find many commanding Officers who would be induced to suggest great economies. So far as I know economies are not at all popular in the Army, and I also know the authorities are too much inclined to make economies, and to reduce, without consulting commanding Officers, not only allowances but also the clothing, which ought to be improved. The men are badly clothed, and they might be far better clothed at a very trifling additional expense. I will not trouble you with a long speech, but I beg to return our sincere thanks to Colonel Blundell for the very interesting lecture he has given us. He has shown us that he has studied the subject and thought over it deeply, and that there is a great deal to be done by Officers in the way of bringing forward to the notice of the authorities suggestions which may hereafter be taken up.