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Utilization of Colonial Forces in Imperial Defence.

BEFORE THE TORONTO (CANADA) MILITIA INSTITUTE ON SATURDAY, 25TH OCTOBER, 1879.)

Lieutenant-Colonel T. C. Scoble, Canadian Engineers.

relations of Great Britain with her colonies are of a complex nature. With those having responsible government she is more by the ties of kindred and affection, and that fertility which seems to be developed by expatriation, than upon interest. In fact, in many cases colonial and Imperial interests are of a most conflicting character. To colonies which are still in a state of tutelage, where the Government is in the hands of Imperial officers, and the revenue and expenses are under their control, the Empire is bound by an interest. To those colonies which have been planted for military or strategic reasons, the obligation is purely Imperial.

Colonies may therefore be classed as follows:—

Independent Colonies.—Canada and Newfoundland, Liberia, and the Cape Colonies.

Governed Colonies.—India, Ceylon, the West Indies, the West Indies, Honduras and Guiana, the Mauritius and Straits Settlements.

3rd. Military Colonies.—Malta, Gibraltar, Aden, Hong Kong, Labuan, Cyprus, Fiji, the Bermudas, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Gold Coast, Ascension, Falkland Islands, St. Helena.

Assuming that each section of the British Empire is alike responsible for its share in a scheme of Imperial defence, according to its population and resources, it will be necessary that they shall be grouped geographically, the larger with the lesser, Great Britain forming the central group, from which all the others radiate as follows, viz:—

Indian possessions, including Ceylon, the Straits Settlements and Hong Kong.

African possessions, including Cape Colony, Natal, the Mauritius, St. Helena, and Ascension Island.

Australasian possessions, including Fiji, Labuan.

American possessions, including Canada, Newfoundland, the West Indies, Honduras, Guiana, and Bermuda.

The chief colonies in these groups, having responsible governments, should be communicated with, and advised of what was expected of them on the outbreak of a war which threatened the empire collectively. They should be called upon to furnish garrisons to each adjacent coaling station and naval depot, of such strength as might be deemed advisable by a military commission employed in time of peace for such a purpose. The forces so engaged should be drawn from the colonial militia, or, in the case of India, the standing army, and should be placed at the disposal of the Imperial Government.