THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR--REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

THE GOVERNMENT has issued in the form of a Blue-book the report of His Majesty's Commissioners appointed to inquire into the military preparations and other matters connected with the South African war. The Blue-book is a bulky volume of 316 pages, and is divided into four sections, the first of which deals with the military preparations for the war. Section 2 applies to the supply of men; section 3 to ammunition, equipment and transport by sea and land; and section 4 to question of War-office organization.

PREFACE TO THE REPORT.

The Commissioners, in the course of a lengthy preface to their report, criticize the terms of reference. They point out that although the first two heads were more precise than the third, questions of intricacy arose under all of them. The report, they say, endeavors to indicate any defect which seems deserving of notice in the matters of preparations for war; but it does not fall in their province to deal with the whole military system in detail, or to submit an elaborate scheme for reorganizing the army, nor was it their duty to compile a military history of the war. Statements which might be regarded as historical were invited from three generals only, namely, Sir George White, Sir Redvers Buller, and Lord Roberts, and the statements of all three had been compiled with conspicuous care and ability. Differences of opinion arose, and still more so in statements admitted from other officers, and the Commissioners avoid the impossible task of reconciling these. Throughout they say they had no desire to conceal anything which could properly be made public, and have insisted on the publication of much information which would ordinarily be regarded as confidential. The Commission sat on 55 days to take evidence, examined 114 witnesses, and received replies to upwards of 22,000 interrogatories.

After dealing with the question of military preparations, the Commissioners go on step by step to the developments which led to the final rupture, and quote the various despatches exchanged on the grievances raised.

SUGGESTIONS INDEFINITE.

Under the head of "Military Preparations at Home," the Commissioners declare that under the provisions of an order in council, the commander-in-chief was responsible for the general distribution of the army at home and abroad, and for the preparation and maintenance of schemes of offensive and defensive operations, but that the papers of the Intelligence Department contained no definite suggestion of the nature and amount of reinforcements which might be required in the event of hostilities. The general officer commanding in every dependency of the Empire was responsible for schemes of defence, but the regulations provided that those schemes should deal only with men and material actually available. Such was the scheme of the general officer commanding at the Cape, and there was a separate local scheme for Natal, in respect of which Lord Roberts had since declared that it was a very ambitious scheme for the small force at disposal to carry out, and, as a fact, none of these schemes seemed to have been even submitted to the generals in command during the war. "If," say the Commissioners, "it was not the function of the Intelligence Division of the war office to formulate an estimate of the force required, and if the generals on the spot were not required to do more than detail the positions which might best be occupied by the troops under their command, it becomes necessary to look to some authority higher than both which was competent to bring their energies into line, and obviously this was to be found only in the commander-in-chief." This officer was Lord Wolseley, and from a minute of his, made in 1896, it appeared that in regard to the Cape, his lordship proposed an addition of one cavalry regiment, one battery of horse artillery, and two battalions of foot. It is significant, says the report, that Lord Lansdowne, replying to this minute, urged that we should be strong enough at the Cape, not only to resist the attacks from without, but to put down at once any international troubles, and urging that much stronger reinforcements would be required for this purpose.

Lord Wolseley, in his evidence, defended his proposals as adequate. In the summer of 1899 Lord Wolseley stated that in the event of war with the Transvaal, the South African forces and one battalion of mounted infantry with four battalions for the lines of complete army corps one cavalry division, and one battalions for the lines of communication. He went on to suggest that much could be done forthwith without attracting attention. Three companies of Army Service corps could be sent out, one at a time, and under cover of the recent fever outbreak in Natal they might accumulate a large amount of medical transport and material. Nominally to superintend the hunting of troops at Ladysmith and elsewhere, they might send out three field companies of Royal Engineers. Lord Wolseley further urged the increase of the Cape Natal squadron, and the mobilization forthwith on Salisbury Plain of one of the three British Army corps and a cavalry division. The expense would be extremely small compared with that of a war, and the experiment would rouse the Transvaal to the fact that England was in earnest, and thus prevent war altogether. The Commissioners say the latter plan was never seriously considered by the government, but served as the first indication of the nature of the force which it was supposed would suffice in the event of war, and which was eventually despatched.

SIR REDVERS BULLER AND SIR W. BUTLER.

The report goes on to credit Lord Wolseley with having stated that he asked Sir Redvers Buller in July, 1899, whether he thought the British position in Natal and Cape Colony was safe in the event of an ultimatum to President Kruger, and Sir Redvers replied that he had complete confidence in Sir W. Butler's ability and forethought, and if men like him and General Penn Symons on the spot saw no danger, he (Sir Redvers) saw no necessity for sending out troops in advance of the Army Corps.

LORD WOLSELEY'S SUGGESTIONS

In August, 1899, Lord Wolseley submitted a minute to the Cabinet declaring his full concurrence with Sir A. Milner in his anxiety about the weakness of the military force in South Africa, and making detailed suggestions for improving the position, illustrated by minute geographical and strategical details. The danger, he said, lay in the triangle formed by the Drakensberg, the Buffalo river, and the Tugela river, and unless that triangle was held by at least 10,000 men the British could easily be turned out of Ladysmith and all positions north of that town. He, therefore, begged the government to send 10,000 men to Natal with the least possible delay. He could see no reason why this should not be done, the only objection he could find being a cost of half a million, a sum well worth spending for the object in view, but he knew the repugnance of any administration to spending large sums on an eventuality that might not arise.

The Commissioners proceed to summarize Lord Wolseley's various suggestions. They say that the actual additions to the normal garrisons before the war had been in excess of the proposals, and add: "But the general impression to be derived from the whole circumstances must be that the special function of the Commander-in-Chief—the preparation of schemes of offensive and defensive operations—was not exercised on this occasion in any systematic fashion. Lord Wolseley in his evidence would seem to be inclined to rely chiefly on the officers on the spot. . . . On the other hand, we were definitely informed by Lord Lansdowne that the papers of the Intelligence Division were never officially communicated to him as the basis of any proposals through the regular channel, viz., by order of the Commander-in-Chief." The report further refers to the extraordinary state of affairs that the Secretary for War first had his attention specially directed to important War office papers by the Colonial Secretary. It is not suggested that the papers were suppressed.

NO PLAN OF CAMPAIGN.

The commissioners declare that no plan of campaign ever existed for operations in South Africa. Lord Roberts stated, for example, that when Sir George White reached Natal he had no instructions as to any particular plan of campaign, nor was he aware of any general plan of operations in South Africa. From Sir George White and Sir Redvers Buller on the one hand, and from Lord Wolseley and Lord Lansdowne on the other, there is the assurance that no written instructions were ever given or received. "In no other line of life," the commissioners say, "would an agent be entrusted with a difficult and responsible task without some attempt at precise and careful definition of the object in view, and there seems to be no reason why military duty should be a solitary exception."

LORD ROBERTS ON DEFECTS.

Lord Roberts, in his evidence, spoke of the main defects (so far as the War-office was directly concerned) as the selection of Ladysmith as the principal military station and advance depot in Natal, the plan for Buller's advance in three columns through the Cape Colony and the Free State, the absence of organized transport, the failure to foresee the necessity of a large employment of mounted infantry, under-estimating the enemy's strength, neglect to supply sufficient mobile heavy artillery, and the want of suitable maps.

STRATEGICAL QUESTIONS AND DEFICIENCY IN STORES.

The commissioners say it seems clear that the accepted view before the war was that the proper line of advance was across the Orange river, direct on Bloemfontein, and on this point Lord Wolseley, though loth to assume the role of the critic, still maintained an opinion in favor of the direct advance, and considered Sir Redvers Buller going to Natal and Lord Roberts' movements in his advance on Bloemfontein to have been strategically wrong. This divergence of views among such experts as Lord Roberts, Lord Wolseley, and Sir Redvers Buller could not possibly be reconciled, and the only fair course was to place them on record and to leave them to individual judgment.

On the question of deficiency in stores, which the commissioners deal with at some length, they say the Army Board minutes indicate that the main difficulty up to September, 1899, was the refusal to sanction for an expenditure of some £640,000. It is equally manifest that Lord Lansdowne fully appreciated the deficiency and brought the whole matter before his colleagues, so that the decision not to sanction the expenditure rested with the cabinet as a whole. The reasons of the government were the assurance of their military advisers that the reinforcements sent to South Africa, and those which could be added before a field force was despatched would ensure the defence of the colonies against invasion, and that the position of the South African negotiations was such that it was not expedient to ask parliament for large sums which might have precipitated a crisis. The commissioners describe as more serious than any other facts which had come to light in the inquiry a minute of Lord Lansdowne's of May 19th describing the condition of affairs as full of peril to the empire, inasmuch as we were not sufficiently prepared even for the equipment of the comparatively small force which we had always contemplated might be employed beyond the limits of this country in the initial stages of a campaign. The defects had happily now been coped with, for the government, on the recommendation of two special committees, in 1900 granted a sum of £10,500,000 to be expended in three years. "It may be acknowledged," say the commissioners, "that to have dealt so promptly and effectually with this matter in the midst of a great war reflects credit on those concerned. What is not so satisfactory is that so far as any cause is assigned for the occurrence of so serious a scandal no sufficient safeguard is suggested to prevent its recurrence."

SCATHING OBSERVATIONS.

The commissioners express strongly the view that the maintenance of proper reserves for the army is so vital that no system can be recognized as adequate which does not give assurance on which the nation can more safely rely than that which is conveyed by the evidence. For at least three years before the war the Intelligence Department had been fully aware of the Boer warlike preparations and their object, yet they had the decision of the government to limit the additions of men and stores in South Africa for political reasons. It certainly seemed that with more forethought and arrangement in the provision of stores and equipment, with the addition of perhaps another brigade, the situation in Natal might have been so strengthened that the whole course of the war might have been altered. In determining the measure of responsibility for deficiencies, it must be remembered that no one, even in the Intelligence Department, ever anticipated the Boers to be capable of so sustained an effort on a large scale. It was a dash at Natal that was apprehended. That apprehension, however, might be said to have been communicated to the cabinet, and was certainly known to the Colonial and War Secretaries. It was an apprehension of which civilians could well take cognizance, and though it undoubtedly lay with the military heads of the War-office to develop and insist upon the danger which it involved—as, indeed, Sir John Ardagh did insist in his memorandum of April, 1897. "We are not prepared," say the commissioners, "to say that in estimating the admitted risks of the policy which they adopted the cabinet itself gave due consideration to this very essential point."

THE SUPPLY OF MEN.

In section 2 the commissioners deal with the supply of men, and particular of the strength of the force employed in South Africa, the total number of officers and men being 448,435. The evidence before the commission showed that mobilization was effected smoothly and with remarkable despatch. There was general agreement among the witnesses that the moral of the men of the regular army, including in that term the qualities of courage, endurance, discipline, and cheerfulness, under adverse circumstances, left little or nothing to be desired. With regard to physical condition the evidence was less unanimous, but also seemed to point to certain conditions in the cavalry and artillery which attract a somewhat better class of recruits. Witnesses agreed in praising the physique of the infantry regiments as they first arrived in South Africa, and concur in thinking that the high average was in no measure due to the large proportion of reservists in the ranks. The general concurrence of the witnesses as to the good marching powers of the infantry was evidence that the physique of the troops sent out in the first instance must have been fairly good. The evidence referred chiefly to the period up to the occupation of Pretoria, which was that in which most of the long infantry marching took place.

On the subject of the intelligence of the average private soldier, Lieut.-General Sir Archibald Hunter thought that it was not so good as it ought to be, and Sir Thomas Kelly-Kenny said of the soldier that "his mental qualifications are not up to the general run of European soldiers, and the reason of it is that we get them mostly from a class where education is not looked to as much as it is in Germany and in France." Major-General Sir Bruce Hamilton said that the regulars were "not anything like so good as regards intelligence as the Boers or as some of the colonial troops." On the other hand, the commissioners received evidence of a somewhat different character, and they say that a lesson of the war is that the British soldier, in spite of the disadvantages under which he is recruited and trained, is capable of profiting by experience, and of becoming under the discipline of war a first-rate fighting machine. It had been pointed out by many witnesses that the conditions of modern warfare with long-range arms and smokeless powder involve an immense extension of lines of battle, diminish the power of control by commanding officers, and increase the degree of individual intelligence required in each individual private, both in attack and defence.

SHOOTING.

With regard to the shooting of the troops there was some diversity of evidence. Some witnesses thought that the shooting, although not good, was equal to that of the Boers on the average, but not equal to that of a minority among the Boers. Other witnesses thought that the average shooting of the troops compared unfavorably with that of the Boers. The Boers were better judges of distance and better shots at moving objects than the British regulars proved themselves to be. Sir Charles Knox considered that the shooting of the regulars as compared with that of the Boers was about equal, "if they had been shooting at targets on a range. The difference was the Boer shot with his head; the British soldier by regulation." The troops had not been trained to shoot at unknown distances, chiefly because it is difficult to obtain adequate ground at home for practising field firing. At the beginning of the war the troops did not appear to have been clever either at making good use of cover or in constructing field entrenchments, but they rapidly improved in the art of entrenching and learned much in this respect from the Boers, whose originality and ingenuity in making field works was remarkable. Towards the end of the war, witnesses stated, the men did entrenching work when they took up a new position as a matter of course. The men also rapidly improved in the art of taking cover under the teaching of hostile fire.

USE OF CAVALRY AND MOUNTED FORCES.

Most of the witnesses agreed that in view of the great extension of the field of operations of modern warfare an army should contain a much larger proportion of mounted men than formerly. There was, however, much diversity of opinion as to what should be the nature and armament of the mounted forces. On the whole, the prevailing opinion seemed to be: (1) The regular cavalry should still be armed with the sword, not with the lance, and trained in shock tactics, but should also be more carefully trained than heretofore to fight on foot and use the rifle; and (2) that there should be available a considerable force of mounted riflemen not trained to shock tactics or to the use of the sword, but well trained in horsemanship, horsemastership, shooting, and working in loose formation.

QUALITIES SHOWN BY OFFICERS

Speaking of the regimental officers in general, Lord Roberts said: "There were certainly failures among them in South Africa. A certain percentage of failures is inevitable, but among the subordinate regimental officers in South Africa it was extraordinarily small. It was seldom that they displayed any want of initiative, and their knowledge of their duties in the field left little to be desired." Lord Roberts thought, however, that the younger officers should take their profession more seriously, and be better able to instruct their men in every detail. He said that the proportion of failures among officers commanding regiments and brigades was considerably larger than it was in the junior ranks. He ascribed this to the fact that the "men as they get older are often less inclined to accept responsibility and they lose their power of decision"; also to the fact that many who held these positions in South Africa had had few previous opportunities of practising the duties which devolved upon them during the campaign, and to the fact that manoeuvres on a large scale had at home been so infrequent that the ability of officers to handle troops in accordance with the principles of modern tactics and their retention of nerve had been insufficiently tested. Lord Roberts did not find satisfaction in the combatant staff in South Africa, stating that the absence of a definite system of staff duties leading sometimes to an overlapping of responsibilities, sometimes to waste of time, and sometimes to a neglect of indispensable precautions, was undoubtedly prejudicial to the smooth running of the military machine.

Lord Kitchener made similar observations with regard to both staff and regimental officers. He said, "There appears to be often a want of serious study of their profession by officers, who are, I think, rather inclined to deal too lightly with military questions of moment. The junior officers were, in my opinion, better than the senior officers. The officers on the staff were very mixed. Some were excellent, whilst others had no staff training, and had everything to learn. There was no reserve of qualified staff officers to fill vacancies. The tendency on the part of some generals and commanders to do their own staff work was noticeable, and should be discontinued. In the higher ranks there seems to be a want of the professionalism, which is essential to thorough efficiency."

Many suggestions as to the more independent training of junior officers were made by witnesses, as the result of their recent practical experience of the defects of the present system when applied to modern war. It was clear, however, that junior officers very rapidly developed in the actual war their natural power of initiative, and the deleterious effects of a system based upon a past-away mode of warfare were more apparent among the senior officers. That which was said upon this subject by Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener was corroborated by Sir John French. He said that there was no lack of initiative on the part of the junior officers, much on that of the seniors, and he attributed it to the fact that a certain improvement in the system had come in time to save the younger, but not, looked at as a class, the older men.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Commissioners say:

If the war teaches anything it is this—that throughout the empire, in the United Kingdom, its colonies, and dependencies, there is a reserve of military strength, which for many reasons we cannot and do not wish to convert into a vast standing army, but to which we may be glad to turn again in our hour of need, as we did in 1899. In that year there was no preparation whatever for utilising those great resources. Nothing had been thought out, either as to pay or organisation, as to conditions of service, or even as to arms. Even here in England it was to be an experiment. The new force was not to be discouraged, but was allowed to equip itself, and it was denied anything beyond the barest complement of trained officers. We regret to say that we are not satisfied that enough is being done to place matters on a better footing in the event of another emergency. No doubt changes have been introduced with regard to the training of volunteers and yeomanry, but this again is a controversial topic which has been referred to another Commission, and one which need not be pressed in connection with a point we desire to make. It must be recognized that no amount of training which can be enforced will convert volunteers or yeomanry into regular troops, but volunteers and yeomanry proved themselves of value in the late war, under an organization which was improvised for them in the face of the enemy.

Where is that organization now? So far as we can learn nothing has been done to collect systematically the valuable experience of the officers who worked that organization; certainly nothing to formulate that experience, to embody it in handbooks, or to create a framework which would be ready for prompt and effective action. Doubts and difficulties surround us when we attempt to imagine the British Empire as a great military power in the sense of our Continental neighbours, but our inquiry inspires us with much confidence in the strength and unanimity of the loyalty of the empire, and of the value of that loyalty if properly used within the limitations which circumstances impose.

Section 3 deals with ammunition, equipment, and transport by sea and land.

The Commissioners elicited that in March, 1899, there was a reserve in this country of 161 million rounds of small arm ammunition, but it was suddenly discovered that about 66 million rounds of this stock was not available for the purposes of the war in South Africa, as it was what is known as Dum-dum ammunition, or expanding bullets, which it had been decided should not be used against white men. Of gun ammunition there was a reserve of only 200 rounds per gun, in addition to the 300 rounds with the batteries, and the whole of this reserve was absorbed by South Africa long before December 15th, 1899. Sir Henry Brackenbury told the Commission that "the whole powers of the ordnance factories and the trade had to be turned on for further supplies. Naval orders for ammunition had to be held in abeyance from the beginning of October. We borrowed ammunition from the navy, and we borrowed ammunition from the Government of India, and yet I was unable to meet Sir Redvers Buller's demands for 5-inch howitzer ammunition and 7-pounder ammunition until a fortnight after they should have been complied with. I had to take guns from the armament of Plymouth to meet Sir Redvers Buller's demands for longer range guns. On November 20th, 1899, the Secretary for War had to cable Sir Redvers Buller that there was only eight weeks' supply of small arms ammunition in the country, and that all gun ammunition would be exhausted before eight weeks. "It caused me," said Sir Henry Brackenbury, "the deepest anxiety as to what would take place in the event of a war in which both navy and army were engaged, for if in this war, in which only the land force were engaged, we had in order to keep up supplies to borrow ammunition from the navy, what would happen if the army and navy were both to be engaged? It would be impossible to meet the demands for ammunition in the conditions then existing."

In regard to the field armament, the Commissioners think it would be unjust to say that it was inferior to that which was in use by other great nations, or that there was a deficiency in the number of guns, though there was undoubtedly deficiency in reserve. "It does not appear," remark the Commissioners, "to have occurred to anyone before the war that the Boers could or would bring the heavy fortress guns which they were known to possess into action in the field." Taken as a whole, the evidence is held to prove that in volume and effective fire with good bursting shells, the British artillery was superior to that of the Boers, although the Boers may have had a few field guns of more modern pattern. The supply of rifles during the war appears to the Commissioners to have been adequate and satisfactory, but it was discovered—not by the War Office, the Commissioners point out, but by the Imperial Yeomanry authorities—that about 200,000 of the new Lee-Enfields were sighted incorrectly, and that the rifle shot at eighteen inches to the right at a distance of 500 yards. "It was an awful blow," Sir Henry Brackenbury told the Commission, "just at the moment when we were beginning to take this new weapon into use to find that this mistake had been made." On this the Commission comment—"It was in fact, an oversight comparable to that which has already been mentioned in regard to the Dum-dum bullets, and one still less excusable, since it was some years since the manufacture of these rifles had begun."

In regard to the cavalry, the stock of lances in reserve at the beginning of the war proved sufficient, but in the case of cavalry swords the authorized reserve of 6,000 was found to have fallen to 80 swords. At the beginning of 1899 Sir Henry Brackenbury asked for the preparation of six months' reserves of clothing, at a cost of £320,000, but no notice was taken of this. "It appears to be singular," remark the Commissioners, "that in a critical time a demand of this magnitude, put forward by the chief of a great supply department, should not at least have been brought to the notice of the Secretary of State, even although the estimates had been framed."

Lord Roberts in evidence stated: "Our experiences in South Africa have shown us that in the way of artillery material we were considerably behind other European nations at the commencement of the late war." With regard to rifles, the Commissioners think the supply during the war appears to have been adequate and satisfactory. Sir John French thought that "the present cavalry sword is the very worst that could possibly be used for any mounted troops at all," and Major-General Baden-Powell said "the present sword is a perfectly useless weapon in my mind, whether as a sword or anything else."

With regard to clothing, Sir Henry Brackenbury, when he became Director-General of Ordnance, found that the reserves of clothing were inadequate to meet even peace requirements. In regard to the supply of horses during the war, the Commissioners state: "No horses seem to have been more useful than those derived from the London Omnibus Companies, used for artillery. The arrangements in the field at first suffered not only by reason of the great pressure, but for want of a special central officer charged with the control of the whole system of special remounts. There appears to have been an entire absence, also, of well thought out forms and manuals for the guidance of officials at the different depots in the field, such as those used in the Indian Army. In fact, the real complaint against the Remount Department does not so much relate to its purchases of horses during the war as to the fact that, from first to last, there was not the symptom of an idea in anyone who was responsible for its organization that in time of war there would be necessity for expansion.'

ENGINEERS AND THE MEDICAL AND ARMY SERVICE CORPS.

The Commissioners state that the military witnesses spoke highly of the work done in the war by the Royal Engineers, and also of the zeal and energy of the Army Medical Service, though some of them pointed out that the service was often short handed, and that the orderlies, many of whom were mere untrained privates, brought in as makeshifts, were not always good. Lord Roberts said in evidence that "The Army Service Comps did well throughout, and deserves great credit."

TRANSPORT BY SEA.

"The transport by sea to South Africa," state the Commissioners, "affords a remarkable illustration not only of the greatness of British maritime resources, but also of what can be done when careful forethought and preparation is applied to the object of utilizing rapidly in war instruments which are in peace solely engaged in the purposes of civil life. If the same forethought had been applied throughout there would have been little criticism to make in regard to the South African war."

UNRELIABLE MAPS.

Referring to the Intelligence Department, and to the provision of topographical information and maps, about which there had been a good deal of criticism, the Commissioners say: "There can be no doubt that the means for obtaining information prior to the war were limited. Rightly or wrongly, the Government had made it an essential part of the policy to avoid any measures which might lead to friction. It was admitted by many witnesses that it would have been impossible for British officers to have collected information openly, or, indeed, in any systematic fashion, without running the risk of hostile demonstrations, and this applied not only to the Transvaal and Free State, but even to our own colonies. There was no suggestion that after the outbreak of the war there was any lack of money for the intelligence work. It was as to the provision of maps that there had been most general complaint, and there was no dispute that where maps were supplied at all they were, with perhaps one exception, very incomplete and unreliable. The question was how far that defect was one which could have been foreseen and avoided. Prior to the war the department possessed no means of producing maps, the duty of the two officers who formed the permanent staff of the mapping section being, therefore confined to the providing of maps which could be obtained from the different countries, but as difficulties increased in South Africa, the importance of better maps was recognized, and Colonel Grant was sent out to Natal. In 1896 he had given evidence in which three important points were noticed—(1) That great economy had to be exercised to avoid the necessity of an application to the Treasury; (2) that the state of feeling in the country rendered great caution and secrecy a necessity; (3) that the country north of Ladysmith was considered to be the probable theatre of war. The Intelligence Division statement alleged that "the department was in possession during the period 1896-9 of all maps material of all parts of South Africa affected by the war which was known to exist." Lord Roberts, while he admitted "that a survey of the theatre of war before hostilities commenced was practically impossible," seemed to imply that something more might have been made of existing material, and he further agreed in the opinion that "as the probability of war was foreseen about the month of February, 1899, there would have been ample time to prepare all these maps with a little foresight."

The Commissioners add that it is desirable not to overlook the opinion of Sir John Ardagh that "a topographical survey of the empire is a longer and more costly and more tedious process than most people imagine." The position of the department with reference to the production of maps remained the same as it was before the war, but the Commissioners accepted the assurance of the Secretary of State that he had intentionally deferred dealing with the matter until he had seen how far the work of the Defence Committee affected the work of the Intelligence Division, and that a proposal was now before the Treasury for an increase of at least 50 per cent. to the staff.

WAR OFFICE ORGANIZATION.

On this subject the Commissioners say that War Office organization and its reform involve questions so numerous, so important, and so complicated, that it would under any circumstances be inexpedient to include their detailed consideration in an inquiry which had to cover a great deal of ground in other directions and for other purposes. But in the present case it would be undertaken under the additional and serious disadvantage that the main part of the work of the Commission was concerned with the period before and during the war, and that since that time circumstances had completely changed. There was scarcely a department of the War Office in which changes had not been effected as a result of, or at any rate, following upon, the events and experience of the war.

To criticize the conditions prevailing before the war would be to beat the air. To make an examination of present conditions would imply a review of much that was still in the experimental stage, and in which recourse must be had for authentic information not to the evidence before the Commission but to statements made in the House of Commons. The only practical course was to concentrate attention on those parts of the system which the war brought into prominence, and to rely principally on the evidence recorded in the minutes of the Commission itself. It had been pointed out that the work of the Intelligence Department had been inseparably connected with the definition of the position and functions of the Commander-in-Chief. On that subject there had been much difference of opinion and controversy. There was no part of the War Office organization that had been more essentially modified by changes introduced since the war than the office of the Commander-in-Chief. The Council Order of 1901 re-established his control over the department of the Adjutant-General, but the formation of the new Defence Committee, and the inclusion therein of the Commander-in-Chief and the Director-General of Mobilization and Intelligence, was of still greater significance. Short of his being a member of the Cabinet, it would be difficult more effectually to secure, and the views of the Commander-in-Chief, and the military opinion of the War Office should be known to the Cabinet. Though his functions might remain the same as regards the preparation of schemes of offence and defence, still, as Mr. Brodrick has stated, "his position is strengthened by the fact that his responsibility will be shared, or rather the responsibility of adopting his schemes."

The Committee, they were told, would if there were again a possibility of war, call for plans at an early date, and such a state of things as existed in 1899 could not again exist. Finally, it was said that the Committee would co-ordinate the work of the Admiralty and the War Office to a much greater degree than heretofore with the prospect of a very considerable saving of public money. If that meant that the Committee would satisfy itself that the stores and equipment, and the two departments were adequately maintained there would be some measure of security against a recurrence of the deficiencies disclosed by Sir H. Brackenbury's memorandum of 1899, and a guarantee, liable to fewer difficulties than were suggested by Lord Wolseley, to which Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Brodrick took strong exception. The position of the head of the Intelligence Department was still more materially changed by his introduction into the Defence Committee. The advisory functions which he was to exercise were so important that he must be kept free from all executive work, and in view of the opportunities which he will possess of expressing his opinion it was here again to be hoped that the state of affairs in 1899 could not recur. No defect in War Office organization had excited more hostile criticism than the want of consultative power which had characterized its administration. The Royal Commission of 1890 commented adversely on the then condition of matters, and especially on the "wholesale recourse" to separate and independent committees, and in the ten years which followed the report the evil which it condemned was certainly not removed, though there were some attempts at improvement. One great difficulty in estimating the various committees and boards of the War Office at their true value was still the fact that they had been so numerous, and so indeterminate in their functions. The council now met regularly once a week, kept minutes of its proceedings, and, according to the Secretary of State, conducted its business in a manner well calculated to minimize the difficulties arising out of the variety of the interests in the office. But it was premature to say whether or no the present form of organization had removed the defects noticed in the past.

Caesar At The Telephone

Flushed with victory, Colonel Julius Caesar left the scene of the battle and hurried to the nearest telephone booth.

"Hello, central," he said; "give me Rome."

"A little louder, please," said central.

"Give me ROME."

"Stand closer to the 'phone, put your lips against the receiver, and speak in a firm tone," ordered central.

"Think I am going to climb into this thing?" asked Caesar; "you connect me with Rome or there'll be another magazine article provided for around here with you at the central illustration."

"Here's your party," was the only reply.

"Hello!" yelled Caesar; "is this Rome?"

"Yes."

"Gimme the palace."

The connection was made.

"Hello! Is this the palace?"

"Yes."

"Who is this?"

"Horatio Claudius, the messenger."

"Hello, 'Ratius."

"Hello, who is speaking?"

"Why, this Caesar."

"Sneezer?"

"No! Caesar!"

"Wheezer! I don't know any Wheezers."

"I said Caesar."

"Geezer? Who in the wor——"

"Caesar! C-A-E-S-A-R! Dadgum you! Can't you hear thunder? Julius Caesar! Me! I! The whole thing! Got it now? Understand who's yelping to you?"

"Yes, sire."

"That sounds more like it. Pretty state of affairs when I have to identify myself every time I want to issue an order. Nice state of things, I must say! Now listen——"

"Yes, sire."

"We've just won a great battle, and I want you to put a bulletin on the walls of the city where everybody can see it."

"Yes, sire."

"Better write it down now, so you'll get it right. Listen now. Are you ready?"

"Yes, sire."

"Well, say 'Veni, Vidi, Vici!'"

"Yes, sire; I have it. Bainy, Beedy, Beeky."

"No, no! Veni, Vidi, Vici!"

"Shainy, Sheedy——"

"Great heavens! Were you never at school? Veni, Vidi, Vici!"

"Oh! Wainy, Weedy, Weeky. I'll go and tell Mrs. Calphurnia——"

"Here! Wait! You haven't got it at all! I said Veni, Vidi, Vici——"

"I have it now. Clainee Creedee——"

"Now, by the shade of Mars, this is too much! Out upon thee, dog! Would that my fist could reach thee, even as my voice doth! Back to the woods!"

"Tell it me once again, and I——"

"I'll tell you to——"

Here Central broke in, asking: "Did you get your party?"

Then did the royal rage of the late J. Caesar manifest itself, and the telephone building was scattered over the plain, while the central girls fled, shrieking for home and mother.

And thus it was that the loyal population of Rome must needs wait until the slow feet of a messenger brought them tidings of the glorious victory.—Chicago Tribune.

Want of a Chance.

Maud and Margery worried the life out of their mother by running away. At least once a week she would alarm the neighbors, and a hunt would be started to find the runaways. Usually they had not gone far, but their mother was very much frightened every time she missed the little midgets. She determined to break them of this trick. Calling them to her room one day, she said: "Now, I have never whipped my little daughters, but if they run away again both of them are going to receive a smart whipping. Now, remember that the next time you are tempted to leave the yard."

The two little sisters looked very grave and promised never to run away again. But a few days after they forgot all about their mother's injunction and raced out of the yard and far down the street. Their mother found them taking to a big colored man and grimly brought them home. Then she took them into the house, gave them the switching promised, and sat them down hard in two little chairs in the nursery. Maud's screams were terrific, and as her mother heard them from the library down stairs she said to herself: "Well, I guess the punishment has made an impression on those children and they won't run away again."

Just then there was a momentary lull in Maud's yelling, and her mother heard Margery sob out: "Now, Maud, you just stop crying a minute. I want to let 'em hear me cry."—Philadelphia Ledger.