

depôts were to be created instead. Regiments were to be quartered in their own counties, and an elaborate new set of barracks was to be built. Every one who knew anything about the subject at once foresaw that these measures would not and could not work. But Mr. Arnold Forster, convinced of his own superior knowledge, refused to listen to his Army Council or any one else.

To begin with, recruiting with us really depends on the labour market, except—for the credit of the nation be it said—in time of war. The majority of recruits we get under any system are those who cannot find anything else to do; and to these the term of service makes little difference; and we shall not really tap another class unless the pay is increased to an altogether prohibitive amount. But if we set up two distinct periods, two years and nine, it is obvious that no man in his senses would bind himself for nine, when he could do so only for two. The two years' plan no doubt is useful for the creation of a large reserve. But it is not long enough to provide for the Indian drafts, whilst a nine years' term provides the drafts, but is too long for the creation of an adequate reserve.

In the issue what has happened is this. The War Office authorities dare not open the short term of enlistment for fear of not getting enough men for the long one. So the long term is the only one now open for line infantry; and so far it appears to be doing well, though it cannot provide an adequate reserve. The linked battalion system again is by no means an ideal one. But it has proved to be much more satisfactory than any of the various systems—depôt battalions, four company depôts, &c.—which had been tried before; and at least it is economical, which was one of the chief reasons why it was introduced. Home battalions also fulfil the double object of providing a more advanced school of training for recruits than depôts, however large, can do, and of being capable of expansion into war units by means of reservists, a plan which did not, after all, work so badly in the South African War.