

son by Cox, R.E., said he thought the failure of the system at present was occasioned by not bidding for what was wanted. Men were only taken who were reckless, and those when got were not liked. The mistake was in applying the same term of short service to the Indian and the home army. A long term should be applied for the Indian and foreign service, while the term of six years would suit for the home army. Lads of eighteen could not be sent out to India for two years, and thus so much was lost of their six years. He thought we ought to bid for men such as we wanted, and for both terms. There need not be the smallest dislocation of the regimental system. He would divide each regiment into three battalions, one of which should be the foreign battalion and permanently stationed abroad, while the remaining two should be home battalions. Men should enlist for the foreign battalions for ten or seven years. The men should not be interchangeable between the battalions, but the officers should be interchangeable, and would serve in all the battalions in their regular rotation. Men should enlist in the home battalions for nine years, three of which should be with the colours, in order to make soldiers of them, and the remaining six in the reserve. In this reserve service they should be still attached to the regiments, readily able to be mobilized, each knowing his own position at once. This enlistment for a defined short term of three years, with the inducement of a pay of 7s. a week for the six years in the reserve, would, he thought, give us the pick of the unskilled and rural population, and if this were done the best advertisement possible would be those reserve men with their 7s. a week. We should then be able to pick and choose, and to reject those who were physically or morally unfit. The corner would thus be turned, and better men would join the service when they knew they had good men to associate with. The men in the reserve should be able to be had at once, and to return in a few hours to their colours. This would be rendered readily practicable with the proper localisation of the regiments, and the formation of army corps. Corps and regiments should be located within limited districts. If the short service system were properly applied and worked, it would prove efficacious.

Lieutenant Champion, Royal Marine Artillery, who had been himself a candidate for the gold medal, thought that conscription would be at any time a national calamity. He did not agree with the proposal to increase the army from the Militia, for this would be to weaken the reserve force, and was not fair to the Militia officers. He thought we ought to make service with the reserve compulsory, and we ought to give something to men for ten or fifteen years' service. He thought pensions would be the greatest attraction to men in the rural districts. He would propose their serving for periods of ten, fifteen or twenty years, with three corresponding periods of service in the reserve. He would have twenty-five years' service from every man enlisted, and by this plan they would have in five years a reserve army of 60,000 men, which in fifteen years would have become 140,000, all highly trained soldiers ready for employment in case of war. As an officer of Marines he had to study the service both of the army and navy, both of which were highly important, and this question was of interest to both. If this country were to maintain its treaties and obligations to the last coin and to the last man, the sooner conscription was established the better but if we have a

few years of repose and peace before us we can adopt the other mode, still employing the voluntary system.—Colonel Leahy, R.E., did not agree with either Captain Hime or Sir Edward Waide. He thought short service ought to be really short service, being for the three years which were just sufficient to make a man a soldier. He thought three classes of men should be enlisted—for home, for the colonies, and for the reserve, and the army ought to be so managed as to make the mere dismissal of a man a punishment. He thought that along with military training some industrial pursuits and handicrafts ought to be taught to the soldier. There should be separate engagements for long service. The regimental system needed better development, and the Reserves ought in all cases to be under the direct control of the colonels of their respective regiments, who should be responsible for their efficiency. The establishments of the regiments should be fixed, and not liable to be reduced or varied on the mere dictum of the Minister, but only by a formal vote of Parliament. There should be three reserves—a regimental reserve, a Militia reserve, and a Volunteer reserve, and an option should be given to the soldier as to which of these he would go into. Improvement was much needed also as to non-commissioned officers, to whom suitable pay should be given, especially to the sergeants and staff-sergeants. He did not believe that the conscription could be carried out at a small cost; indeed, he thought each man would cost as much as at present.—Mr. Clifford Walton, deputy assistant commissary-general, who had also been a candidate for the gold medal, considered that if we were to continue to occupy our place in Europe, we must come to manhood service. The question was not the supply of a few thousand recruits or the loss of a few thousand deserters, but the unlimited supply of trained soldiers. It was said that the country was not ripe for manhood service, but it was the duty of that institution to lead the public mind on such a question.—Major Weatherhead, paymaster of the Royal Artillery, thought that men enlisting at twenty-one or twenty-two years of age ought to receive higher pay than boys of sixteen or eighteen. Great improvements were needed as to the non-commissioned staff, and he thought the regulations of barrack-rooms ought to be relaxed; there were too many roll-calls; men ought also to be encouraged to pursue some profitable trade in time of peace. Sir Harry Verney, M.P., had the management of the recruiting for the Guards, and had made it the greatest favour to admit a man; he had, consequently, had no difficulty in getting as many as he wanted. He thought it was the duty of the Government to give to old soldiers as many of the small civilian appointments as possible. We might with advantage, he thought, introduce the system of training boys for the army, a plan which had been very successful with regard to the navy.—Brigadier General Sir John Acland said what we needed was a short service with large reserves; but the cost of conscription had not been estimated, and no army estimates would show it. Was the country prepared to make the sacrifices necessary for the conscription? To place the army before all its trade and commerce? Continental countries, which were separated from their neighbours merely by a line on a map, were obliged to adopt the system, but to them it was so onerous as to be almost unbearable. He was in favour of localisation, with the partial adoption of short service. Short service, followed by service in

the reserve, and long service followed by a pension. His own experience did not justify the complaints that recruiting had fallen off in any respect, and he read the reports of other officers to show that it had not done so. These, he said, were sufficient to blow away the apprehensions of these panic mongers. He believed the army to be much improved; the officers especially were much better educated than they had been at any time, and he was of opinion himself that the British army was more effective and better prepared for war at the present moment than it had been at any former time.

Colonel Lumley Graham said that under the short system we did not get a sufficient number of recruits, and we had too many young soldiers in the army. The whole question was one of money, and the nation must pay either in money or in person, either by a larger expense or by universal conscription. An army of one year's men would be useless, for we could not make soldiers in one year, though we might make them drill and shoot fairly. He would have voluntary service with long periods, and would make use of the Militia and Volunteers. He proposed that the Militia should be the foundation of the whole military system, and should be raised by conscription without substitution or dotation. Efficient Volunteers should be exempt from the conscription, making them thus take the place of the one year's Volunteers in Germany. We should not need all the young men in the kingdom, but he would have an extra proportion of them drawn from the Militia so as to feed the Line. He would let the Line soldier serve for ten years, and then discharge him, allowing good non-commissioned officers to re-engage for five years. The others should join the reserve for ten years. He would have twenty years' service from every man, and to the soldier who had served twenty years in the Line he would give him full pay on retiring. He then referred to the paper of Captain Trench, who had, like himself, contended for the gold medal, and approved of Captain Trench's plan of giving an extra 6d. a day to the soldier, to be paid him at the end of his term of service.—Captain Luard, R.E., was in favour of conscription, but, assuming that the voluntary system would be continued, thought that regimental enlistment was much the best way of carrying it out. The short service system had never been successful. He thought Sir Edward Waide's proposal to call upon men to serve in the Militia after leaving the army might succeed if they got full pay. Captain Hime's paper was an excellent historical essay, but was afraid it stopped there. The question had never been presented to the country in a proper light. It was not the duty of the army to provide its own recruits, but that of the country; but the nation had become too rich, and wealth had become its ruin, as had been the case with Rome, Spain, and other countries. It had led to moral blindness and the extinction of true patriotism. He thought we must have conscription.

Captain Hime, as he could not attend next day, replied briefly. He had become a sort of military Ishmael, and had been attacked as liking conscription, he did not like it; but he thought it inevitable. He did not propose either the German or the French system, but an English system should be adopted when the nation came to admit what was as positive a truth as that the three angles of a triangle were equal to two right angles.