

the quality of seamen has been attributable to that cause. If, on the other hand, you limit the number of boys in training, in strict accordance with the requirements of the Naval Reserve,—and the Liverpool shipowners, who are the warmest and ablest advocates of the training system, have never suggested that we should go further,—then you will fail in producing any appreciable improvement in the efficiency and supply of seamen for the Merchant Service.

Having given my most careful consideration to this question, and having studied the various plans proposed from time to time by Sir Frederick Grey and others, I have arrived at the conclusion that the scheme projected by the Manning Committee, and approved by Sir Frederick Grey, is the only practicable plan. Any scheme for a partial contribution by the Government and the shipowners would break down, because the majority of the shipowners will not contribute voluntarily, and you cannot in fairness extort a contribution under the compulsion of law. The only reliable source, to which we can look for pecuniary aid in support of training ships, is the public purse; and the State cannot be called upon to expend a sixpence more than it is necessary to lay out in order to provide for the wants of the public service.

The plan of the Manning Commission was, as it is well known, to establish ten school ships, distributed at the principal ports. Each ship was to be capable of receiving 200 boys, 100 of whom were to be nominated by the Admiralty and supported by the State; the remaining 100 were to be day boarders, who were to be maintained at the expense of their friends. The ships were to be moored to a quay, so as to give ready access to the shore. A commencement might be made upon the plan of the Commission by establishing a ship of the class described at a few of the principal ports. One or two might be established at Liverpool, another at Cardiff, another at Cork, another at Glasgow, and one in the Tyne. In each of these ships 100 boarders should be entered under an engagement to join the Naval Reserve. They should be trained, according to the plan of the Commission, for one year, on precisely the same system now adopted on board the "St. Vincent." At sixteen they should go to sea in the Merchant Service; at twenty they should be required to join the Navy for a year, to be trained in gunnery, according to the plan sketched out by Captain Wilson in his recent lecture before this Institution. In each of the school ships there would be vacancies for 100 additional boys, who might be either boarders or day boarders. The fees for the day boarders might be paid by the Education Department. The boarders would be supported by the subscriptions of the merchants and shipowners, or by the contributions of wealthy and benevolent persons, desirous of availing themselves of the facilities, afforded by the Government on behalf of poor boys, in whom they might feel an interest. The number of boys in training in the school ships at Portsmouth and Plymouth should be reduced, so that the aggregate number should not be increased by the establishment of the new training ships at the commercial ports. If the plan succeeded, the number of naval school ships at the commercial ports might be gradually increased.

The recent destruction by fire of the "Warspite" and the "Goliath"