

Office chiefs were at once evicted with scant ceremony, and an Army Council and an Inspector-General appointed. But if the recommendations of the Committee had been carried out in the spirit as well as in the letter—for they aimed at giving greater prominence to expert opinion—a strong Army Council should have been created which would really have influenced the Secretary of State, although of course it was inevitable that he alone should be responsible to Parliament. It was also laid down that in case of disagreement with Government measures, the military members were expected to resign.

But a strong Army Council was not appointed. Four comparatively unknown general officers, three of them very junior major-generals, were appointed under the presidency of a Secretary of State who, whilst a journalist, had won a certain shallow reputation as a military critic, but who in his own estimation was a glorified combination of Carnot and Cardwell. In his journalistic days he had already committed himself to all kinds of wild ideas, and on the old principle that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, he was the very last man who should have been appointed to such a post. He lost no time in setting to work. He had always objected to the short service and reserve system and linked battalions, the working of which by the way he does not even now understand. Forthwith there were to be two armies—a hundred general service battalions enlisted on a nine years' engagement; and the remainder converted into home service units with a two years' engagement and no liability for foreign service except in case of war. Each of these was to be only 500 strong, and there was to be a striking force of 16,000 men at Aldershot, always kept ready, which could obviously be only of use in a very small war.

At the same time the fourteen newly raised regular and five garrison battalions were to be suppressed, and the establishments of all reduced by fifty men, whilst the Militia and the Volunteers were virtually to be improved out of existence. The linked battalion system was to go, and large