

The War Secretary, Mr. Brodrick, had started in 1900 with some advantages on his side. He knew already the "ropes" at the War Office; and, unlike most War Secretaries on their arrival, he was at once able to find his way about that puzzling document, a War Office paper. This gave him a certain fictitious advantage, of which, unfortunately, he was only too ready to avail himself; and soon the whole business of the Office became centralised in his hands. Still, in justice to him it must be said that, though unquestionably he had a passion of centralisation, the apathy and lack of grasp shown by his military colleague obliged him to take many things in hand which were not his business, or else they would not have been done at all. Likewise, in his own defence, he was obliged to look into certain details for the simple reason that, until he did so, he found that he was often placed at a disadvantage in the House of Commons.

He began his career by launching an ambitious though not, as has been said, a hastily devised scheme. The Army Corps were not of his making. In 1888 Mr. Stanhope, then War Secretary, had drawn up a plan of our military requirements, in response to the persistent representations of his military advisers, who for years had been urging on successive War Ministers the necessity for some definite mobilisation plan. This scheme laid down that two regular Army Corps might be necessary for oversea purposes, and that three, partly composed of auxiliaries, were needed for home defence. For many years subsequently, however, the military authorities emphasised the necessity of these two Army Corps being increased to three. But they were not strong enough to carry their point; though Mr. Brodrick, coming in on the ephemeral wave of a khaki craze, was enabled to do so. Thus the scheme was by no means his own idea; and its prosecution did not entail the addition of one extra man to the army, since it mainly concerned the distribution of troops and the provision of adequate stores for mobilising them.

The name of Army Corps, nevertheless, was ill chosen. It frightened the nation, which conjured up to itself all kinds of