

The Defence Movement In Great Britain.

Mr. J. Windsor Lewis (National Service League, Great Britain). I think we all recognize that this movement must be promoted in each of the great self governing Dominions of the Empire according to the local necessities and the local means. As this movement was started earlier in England than in Canada, perhaps you will not think it a disadvantage to hear something of what has been going on in England since the movement began and of what progress has been made.

British Difficulties

We have undoubtedly had greater disadvantages to contend with in England than you will have here, because we have more deeply-rooted prejudices in the Old Country than you have in Canada. Against these, however, we have made considerable progress within the last eight years. The League was started in England about 1902, so soon after the end of the South African War, and since then we have been trying to push forward the same great principles that you have adopted, and with encouraging results.

Growth and Progress.

Our membership has gone up by leaps and bounds, and I think that in a few years we shall see an enormous increase. Of course, the membership is not in proportion to the large population we have, but we should make considerably more progress in the next few years. We have undoubtedly a much greater influence in the British House of Commons than we had at the beginning. In 1902, when this movement was started, I believe there was not more than one member of the House of Commons who would get up and speak in favor of the principles for which we stand. In the present House of Commons we have something like thirty members who are ready to get up and defend the principles of the League. In the debates on the army estimates you may constantly hear these principles brought forward, and the programme of the League advocated. That is a very remarkable indication of the progress made in eight years. Only last

year Lord Roberts brought forward a bill in the House of Lords advocating the programme of the League, and it was defeated by a majority of twenty-one. Everyone knows there was some political reason at the back of that defeat. I believe if each member of the House had voted according to what he felt ought to be done, that bill would have been passed by a very large majority.

Support of the Press.

In England we have succeeded in gaining the support of the most influential part of the press. The Times newspaper supports us in every possible way, and so do many of the other influential papers. The progress we have made in England, in the centre of the Empire, where we have a very deep-seated prejudices to fight against, is a proof of the success which I think should be of very real encouragement to you here.

The Organization.

May I say one word about our organization? We have a great advantage in being under the presidency of Lord Roberts, whose name carries weight everywhere. Then we have an executive committee composed very largely of people who have served their country, either in the army or in the navy, and we have a general council. We also have county branches all over England, and to some extent in Scotland and Wales, but not yet in Ireland. These county branches have done remarkably good work, and it is hoped in nearly every county to have shortly a paid organizing secretary who will promote the work of the League, and organize sub-branches in the villages and towns. These sub-branches are represented on the general county committees.

These are the general outlines of our plans of organization. Undoubtedly the paid organizing secretaries, who are in touch with headquarters in London, have done an enormous amount of good in promoting a knowledge of our principles, and the increased