

Royal Colonial Institute.

The seventh meeting of the present session was held at the Whitehall Rooms, Hotel Metropole, on Tuesday, May 13th, when the following Paper on "THE MILITARY DEFENCE FORCES OF THE COLONIES," was read by Col. John F. Owen, R.A. The Right Hon. Hugh C. E. Childers, M.P., presided.

"The subject proposed this evening is one which covers a very wide field. It embraces different descriptions of military forces established, under very varying conditions, in three of the great Continents—in Africa, America, and Australia. It is of far too important a nature to be dealt with in anything like an exhaustive manner in the time at our disposal, nor is it intended to-night to do more than to touch upon these forces generally, in a brief sketch, and to mention some of the conditions peculiar to them as they are at present constituted.

There are many gentlemen in the audience possessing an intimate acquaintance with our great Colonies, and it is only in the hope of stimulating discussion, and of gaining for us the advantage of their valuable experience and knowledge, that I venture to lay before you a certain amount of information, neither new nor original, but collated from various sources, as to the strength and the governing conditions of forces which though yet in their infancy may become in the future potent factors in the world's history.

You are all aware of the marvellous advance made by our Colonies during the last quarter of a century, in population, in social well-being, in increase of commerce, in political importance. Chequered by misfortunes, perhaps by errors, as this progress has been, in the main it has been rapid and ever onwards, and there seems every reason to suppose it will happily continue. The motto of the great Southern Continent, "Advance Australia," represents no idle boast, no passing wish, but the strenuous determined aim of a young nation rapidly maturing. Nor will our offspring in America and South Africa, much tempered as it may be by other blood, be behindhand in the race.

Many a gifted writer has of late described our Colonies, some with words of solid truth, others in brilliant word pictures, the colours of which, though charming, will not always stand too close inspection. It is difficult from any description, however admirable, to imagine to oneself the progress mentioned. Those only who have had the privilege of themselves visiting these countries can thoroughly realize how these germs of mighty nations of the future have passed through the stages of infancy any childhood, and are developing with startling rapidity a youthful manhood of the highest promise.

No less wonderful than their progress generally is the growth in recent years of that spirit of true patriotism which has founded, and which is continually pushing forward the development of Military Forces we are about to consider. The legend of these forces is "Defence, not Defiance," but they are determined that, if possible, the defence shall be such as to surely safeguard their lands from the foot of the foreign invader.

Certain tables have been kindly prepared by my friend Captain Bunbury, Royal Artillery, to which I beg to call your attention. The data given must be taken as only approximately correct; time, unfortunately, has not admitted of their being subject to much revision. Time will not allow of more than a passing allusion to the smaller colonies, so that we shall be limited practically to the forces of the Canadian Dominion of South Africa, and of Australia (including New Zealand.)

Appendix I. gives an epitome of all these forces, which amount to a total of about 73,000 officers and men. An addition of some 5,000 more would have to be made for the smaller Colonies mentioned, bringing up the grand total to 83,000 of all arms, with some 120 to 150 guns.

Considering the comparative scantiness of the population of the Colonies, and the manner in which it is distributed in most cases over a great extent of country, these figures express far more than they seem to do. They tell of great difficulties overcome, of much self-sacrifice, and of determination to justify a laudable ambition to take place amongst the nations as part, we may hope, of the mightier Greater Britain of the future.

We must realise the conditions under which the services of these forces are mainly given. There is no pressure of great nation armed to the teeth on any of their borders, nor, fortunately, any socialistic dangers of magnitude to be guarded against.

The Military Defence Forces of the Colonies show not merely the wise de-

termination of their statesmen, but are the outward sign of an ardent patriotic feeling which prevades their youth. The members of these forces are soldiers for love of country and of arms—soldiers almost by nature, many of them. The spirit which prevades them is excellent.

With respect to the nature of the forces. They are exhibited in Appendices II, III, and V respectively, in the several classes of—

Permanent Forces,
Militia (or partially paid forces),
Volunteers (unpaid forces).

The Permanent Forces are paid, housed, clothed, and fed by the State during the term of their engagement, usually from three to five years, and are, for the time, soldiers by profession coming under a more or less stringent military law. They are, in fact, the nucleus, or even more than that in some cases, of a standing army. Their number, it will be seen, is very small indeed as compared with the total forces. This is as it should be. In new countries more especially is labor required to conquer the difficulties of nature, and the less can men be spared by the country for unproductive work.

It is thoroughly recognised, however, that where the Colonies have provided forts and expensive armament for their protection, and where apparatus requiring scientific care, such as torpedo defences, have been provided, it is absolutely necessary to have a certain number of men permanently embodied and trained to their use and care. Moreover, as the forces of a Colony increase it is found expedient usually to have a limited number of such professional soldiers to assist in training the remainder, to provide an example, to be copied as it were, as to drill, discipline, and general training, and to act as a stiffening generally for the other portions which have but little time to devote to military training.

The value of this constituent, small as it comparatively is, cannot be over-rated. It consists for the most part of artillery, a few engineers, and torpedo corps.

The greater portion of the military forces of the Colonies are of the class shown in Appendix III.—Militia Forces or "partially paid" forces as they are termed in some cases. Their members give up a certain portion of their time, the maximum of which is usually fixed by Act of Parliament, to the service of their country, and while engaged, during that term, in military work or training, receive payment at definite rates.

In addition to arms and equipment they are also provided with uniforms at the State expense, and lodged and fed at its cost, if out in camp or otherwise. This class of force serves under very different conditions in the several Colonies: as to training, whether at intervals, continuously, or under a combination of the two; as to pay and allowances and similar points, clothing, etc. This system of Militia Forces partially paid seems to answer well, and it is worked in a very cheap manner, giving on the whole a fairly reliable defence at a small cost.

The third class consists of the Volunteer Forces proper, who give their service without receiving any individual pay; the country supplying arms and accoutrements, ammunition for practice and training, and in some instances, uniform, though the latter is usually supplied by the Volunteer corps.

A capitation grant varying in amount, is generally paid to the corps for each volunteer rendering himself efficient, according to a fixed standard. Theoretically such a system should supply the cheapest form of force; but there are, especially in these Colonies, great difficulties to be contended with as to the proper training of such—principally from the sparseness of the population in country districts and the distances which must therefore be travelled by the members in order to collect numbers sufficient for drill and training. There are further difficulties as to the supply of instructors and many other minor points in connection with the widely-scattered country companies. All this makes the tax both upon the citizen soldier himself and on the country heavier than it is with us, where population is so much more dense.

In some of the Colonies there are large numbers of mounted Volunteer corps providing horses at their own expense. This form of Volunteer Force seems a very valuable one, particularly where long distances have to be traversed without much assistance by railroads. We might ourselves, I think, profit by the example set us regarding these corps.

You will see then that, in the Colonies, every arm, as found in a regular army, exists in a manner more or less complete. Garrison artillery, engineers, submarine miners, and torpedo corps,

for the permanent defences; for an army to take the field, cavalry in small numbers, mounted infantry, field artillery (and machine guns in some cases), and infantry.

Medical departments also exist, and in some of the Colonies are established on a small scale the nucleus of the very important branches of transport train, ordnance store department, ambulance service, etc. It is in these auxiliary branches, without which no force can take the field satisfactorily nor be rapidly moved, that the Colonial Forces are especially deficient.

In new countries, however, where man is accustomed to great difficulties in conquering nature, and many of whose inhabitants are obliged constantly to adapt themselves to new conditions, it seems easier to improvise these necessities than in older lands, where matters and men are more in set form, and where things move in more distinctly fixed grooves. In some of the military operations undertaken by Colonial Forces, great readiness has been shown in rapidly improving the necessary transport, but it must be remembered that such operations have only been on a small scale and against enemies not of a very formidable nature.

To go somewhat more into detail regarding the several groups of Colonies, the strength and description of their forces are given in Appendix V.

THE DOMINION OF CANADA.

You will see that Canada possesses an army of 38,000 officers and men, including 1,000 mounted police in her North-West Territories.

Of these the Permanent Force always embodied numbers 1,000. This consists of cavalry, mounted infantry, and three batteries of artillery. It appears to be in a fair state of efficiency, and is distributed among the several schools of instruction for the three arms, which are of such very great value for the training of the militia.

The defence of her coast she so far leaves almost entirely to the Imperial authorities. She has not, as many of the Australian Colonies have done, spent large sums in coast defences. In fact, the long land frontier, continuous with that of the United States, and the work which her Military Forces have so far had to do, have impressed her more with the necessity of having a large Field Army. The special corps required where heavy guns, torpedoes, etc. are used for defence are, it will be seen, but scantily represented.

The great bulk of her soldiers are the 36,000 Militia. This force was instituted in 1855, and consists of two divisions, the Active Militia and the Sedentary Militia. All able-bodied men between certain ages (with a few legal exceptions) are liable to be drawn by ballot for service in the Active Militia; but, practically speaking, there are sufficient volunteers for the Force to make it unnecessary to enforce the laws. The Sedentary Militia consists of all men up to sixty years of age who have not served, but this has never been more than a Force on paper.

The term of service in the Active Militia is for three years, and the period of training each year is only twelve days. It appears that this period is at times supplemented voluntarily, but it is evidently much too short.

The Mounted Police recruited for service in the North-West Territories of the Dominion are a most serviceable body of men. Their duties are often associated with exposure to great fatigue and danger.

Camps are held each year in different localities for exercise and training of the Militia in brigade drill, etc. For military purposes the Dominion is divided into twelve territorial districts, each administered by an officer of rank holding a permanent appointment, and having a small staff to assist him. The whole of the Forces are commanded by a general officer of the Imperial Service, having a suitable staff.

The Dominion possesses good Schools of Instruction for officers and non-commissioned officers—one for cavalry and mounted infantry respectively, four for artillery, and three for infantry in different cities and towns—the different corps of the permanent force supplying the instructional material in the way of officers and men. There is, moreover, a very good Military College at Kingston, modelled originally on the American Military Academy of West Point, where cadets are trained for commissions in the permanent force. A certain number of commissions in the Imperial service are given annually to cadets who have passed through this college.

The whole of the uniform is made in Canada. An ordnance factory manufactures rifle ammunition for the Snider rifles, and no doubt will soon be able to turn out Martini-Henry ammunition as well. Shells for field artillery are also made. So that for the supply of her

ammunition the Dominion is already partly independent.

The Canadian forces are all entirely under the Central Government of the Dominion, and not under those of the several States (or Provinces) composing it. This is a very important advantage. It is administered by a Dominion Minister, styled the Minister of Militia and Defence. A most useful Blue Book in the shape of a report upon the whole is laid before the Dominion Parliament each year.

SOUTH AFRICA.

Though other British territories, such as Bechuanaland, exist in South Africa, some of which may have a great future before them, it is only with the two older Colonies, Cape Colony and Natal, that we have to do in considering the forces they have established for their own protection. The numbers, it will be seen, are as yet but small comparatively.

As it appears absolutely necessary that we should always hold the important harbors of Simon's Bay and Table Bay for Imperial purposes, we kept Imperial forces at the Cape of Good Hope, while a small proportion of such forces is also maintained elsewhere in South Africa. Until very lately we have had considerable Imperial garrisons in this part of the world, and carried on, as you all know, many small wars with them, aided by Colonial contingents more or less irregular.

The formation of forces in these Colonies on a definite footing is, therefore, of very recent date, with the exception of the corps of Cape Mounted Rifles, which has existed, in one form or another, for a considerable time, and has rendered frequently most excellent service.

To burghers called out, if necessary, by ballot was entrusted in a large measure the safety of these Colonies in former days, and this provision still holds good, I believe. Accustomed to an active, hardy life, and to the constant use of the rifle, and living in the proximity of native tribes which might at any time become hostile, the men so called out made excellent irregular soldiers, but no prolonged effort was possible, as they could not leave their scattered farms for any length of time.

As civilisation advances and wealth increases, the value of such levies becomes less, and the formation of more definite forces becomes more necessary.

CAPE COLONY now possesses about 1,500 permanently paid troops (including police), mostly mounted. Of Volunteers partially paid (in reality a Militia) she has a small body of cavalry, some 500 mounted rifles, three field batteries (armed with light field or mountain guns), a few engineers, and about 2,500 infantry. Besides these there is a coast corps of about 650 officers and men, meant to assist in manning the coast defence batteries of the Cape Peninsula.

The forces of the Colony are evidently no more than sufficient to cope with tribal disturbances on the frontier, and to assist in the defence of Table Bay and Simon's Bay.

NATAL has a small body of Mounted Police permanently paid, and a volunteer force, partially paid, of about 1,200 including one field battery. Now that the formidable Zulu power lies utterly broken, these forces may, perhaps, be sufficient to keep down any possible native troubles, but that is all that could be expected of them unaided. A recent Act of 1885 has constituted on a definite footing the forces as shown in the Appendix. The time of paid training allowed (ten days) is much too short to be effective.

The two Colonies are so far separated that they could hardly assist one another in case of trouble. They are not bound together by any common government or interests. In fact, from a military point of view, as from a political, South Africa is at present a difficult problem to deal with. In case of danger the State would have to rely apparently very much upon Imperial aid.

A commencement has, however, been made, and as the Colonists of Dutch and English extraction weld more completely into one people with the self-same interests, as the States become more homogeneous (and perhaps unite into a Federation like that of the Dominion), are as now so rapidly being pushed forward, become more complete, a time may arrive when the united forces of these Colonies may be able to hold their own against any possible alien enemy.

No military institutions for the instruction of officers, nor means of manufacture of ammunition, appear to exist at present in South Africa. Her Colonies are, therefore, entirely dependent for their supplies of the same on extraneous sources.

AUSTRALASIA.

We now turn to the great Southern Colonies of Australia and New Zealand.

In each of the States or Colonies we find a small army more or less complete in itself, but having no relation to, nor connection with, those of its neighbors. The total strength of the Australian Forces is about 24,000 officers and men, and of the New Zealand Forces about 8,000. Except in New Zealand and Victoria, where there are no unpaid Volunteers, we find in each Colony the three descriptions of permanent Militia, partially paid, and Volunteer proper, or unpaid forces. In each the Militia, or partially paid, constitutes the bulk of the force.

NEW SOUTH WALES, the premier Colony, has a permanent force of about 600, mainly artillery. The partially paid or Militia Forces receive a fair amount of regular training, and are principally located in or near the capital, Sydney. The Volunteers proper, about 3,000 strong, are mostly distributed in small bodies over a wide extent of country.

It was from the forces of New South Wales that there came to serve under the British flag in the Sudan that gallant body of men, known generally in England as the "Australian contingent" and well they supported the credit of the forces from which they were drawn. A special Act was necessary to enable the Government to send away the contingent. Now, the permanent force is liable for service anywhere in case of war; the remainder only for service within the bounds of their Colony.

VICTORIA comes next, with a permanent force of about 350, and a Militia of about 6,000; included in the latter is a horse artillery battery armed with machine guns, presented to the Colony by one of her wealthy citizens (Sir W. Clarke). A part of the field artillery is armed with powerful breechloading guns. A body of 1,000 mounted infantry, recruited principally in the country districts, have proved a useful addition to her forces.

Victoria possesses a School of Instruction for Officers and a United Service Institution, both on a small scale.

She has a factory recently established for the manufacture of ammunition for Martini-Henry rifles—the only one existing at present in Australia.

QUEENSLAND has a small permanent force of about 100, a Militia force of nearly 3,000, and Volunteers to the number of about 2,000.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA comes next, with a small permanent force of garrison artillery, a Militia force of about 1,600, and Volunteers numbering about 1,500. The present Defence Act is very much the same as that of Queensland.

The mounted Volunteers recently established promise here, as in the other Colonies, to be a most useful addition. Mounted on hardy horses, inured, like their riders, to rough work, fatigue, and exposure, the amount of work these Volunteers will do when called upon is astonishing.

TASMANIA has a force of about 1,500 all told. There are no mounted branches. Her artillery are required for manning the Derwent forts, and for additional coast defence she has a small torpedo corps.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA has a small force of about 600, all Volunteers proper, having a capitation grant of 30s. for each "efficient."

NEW ZEALAND has 350 in her Permanent Force, artillery and special corps for employment principally with her coast defence, on which much money has lately been spent. Of Volunteers partially paid, she has about 7,500 of different arms.

You will see that I have merely made a few notes as to the Australasian Forces, following the statistics in the Appendices given. To attempt to go into all details as to the forces of the several Colonies, or to make any comparisons, would not be possible here. It may be remarked that naval forces are included in some of the tables. It is hardly fair, perhaps, to include them under the head of "Military Defence Forces," as in case of hostilities they would, no doubt, be employed afloat. They have been allowed, however, to remain, as these naval brigades are trained to infantry exercises and to manoeuvring on land, and very well and smartly they do such work, even though they be away from their proper element.

In many of the Australian Colonies there are a large number of Cadet Corps which do excellent service in the military training of rising youth, and are very popular institutions. In Victoria 13,000 cadets were instructed in drill last year by qualified teachers, and in an encampment for cadets only 2,000 underwent in the same year a continuous training of four days. Other Colonies also pay much attention to the Cadet Corps system.

Looking to the position of the Australasian Colonies as regards one another and the easy means of access possessed,