

numbers have fluctuated like a fever patient's temperature-chart. After the close of a great war reduction has invariably been the order of the day ; whilst when once the danger is again upon us, increase is ordered at ruinous cost, with the result that millions are expended instead of thousands. So it was in the eighteenth century, at the close of the Napoleonic wars, the Crimean and Mutiny campaigns, and so it is once again at the close of the South African War. The latter experience, however, is somewhat different from the others ; because, although a certain reduction has already been accomplished, and more will certainly come—for that part of the programme will survive whoever may be in power—a reduction of the estimates to the normal scale in vogue before the war will not take place.

Reduction of *personnel* is essentially a clumsy and ineffectual method of economising ; because the actual cost of *personnel* is always a small proportion of the total sum expended. For instance, in the current estimates *personnel* only absorbs a third of the whole charge ; and in any case the saving effected is not worth the risk, especially as the late war showed that we had not a man too many, the resources of the country being strained to the uttermost to maintain an adequate force in the field.

At the close of the war, however, the usual clamour for reduction was raised, and demand made for increased efficiency. This at last culminated in the Report of the War Commission ; which contained many reflections on the then existing *régime*, but in no way proved that the old system was altogether effete. Indeed it could not have been, seeing that it fulfilled stupendously greater demands than had ever been made or expected of it. The Commission attributed blame chiefly to what had nothing to do with the system—the inadequate supply of stores which had been collected, and the unsatisfactory relations which prevailed between the Secretary of State and the Commander-in-Chief—and it in no way referred to the War Office *régime* as it existed in 1903, nor did it indeed intend to do so. But the House of Commons and the public were in no mood to discriminate. The state of affairs then was briefly this.