

# The Army of Britain

### Is Conscription Coming?—Our Vast Resources That Remain Untapped.

#### Major Arthur Griffiths Deals With the Question in London Daily Mail.

Is conscription coming? "Why should it?" one is tempted to ask in reply, throwing the onus of proof upon those who assert its manifest necessity. No doubt there are times when that necessity speaks, or seems to speak, out trumpet-tongued.

It was so in 1870, when the humiliation of France rushed to the terrified appreciation of what it costs to be unprepared for war; a warning that brought universal service within measurable distance, but which had no tangible consequence beyond the abolition of purchase in the army.

Now, once more we are passing through a much keener, a more agonizing spasm of alarm, now when the almost insupportable demand of a distant war has put so severe a strain upon our land forces that the alarmist may be excused if he cries aloud, a little hysterically perhaps, that the Empire is in danger.

But the emergency is surely not of the crucial character that calls for extreme measures. We are passing through an unpleasant, a painful, and distressing experience, but we shall surely win our way to peace and honor.

**Without Panic Legislation.**  
We do not want conscription, as a matter of fact. The blood tax, the obligation of personal service imposed on every adult male in neighboring countries may be and should be avoided in this, and for the simple reason that with us conscription is obviated by good-will.

Given the need, the response will come voluntarily, spontaneously, and, as we are seeing at this moment, certainly to the most satisfactory extent. People talk a little too glibly about conscription, forgetting exactly what it means. Yet the very word is abhorrent to the genius of a free-born race. It implies servitude, the surrender of independence to the will of some despotic superior, whether king or demagogue. Its action may be disguised. It may be called by various high-sounding expressions; it is patriotism, judicious co-operation for self-defense, the general uprising of national spirit seeking union for the better resistance of attack from without.

Not the less does it constitute a tax of the most grievous kind, an intolerable burden because an unavoidable burden which no one in the community can hope to escape. There is all the difference in the world between a bond entered into voluntarily and one imposed by force majeure. So long as the British people, taking them in the largest sense as members of the great Empire, are prepared to defend its heart and soul and of their own accord, we need no conscription.

**To Safeguard the Realm.**  
This is the key to the whole situation. While the national spirit, as embodied in its present high level of patriotism, will generally suffice for Imperial needs. When that spirit droops and flags conscription itself, the gathering together of the whole male population, the ban and arriere ban, from aged men to callow striplings would not save off disaster.

If, however, it can be proved to demonstration that we need not have recourse to compulsory service because all its advantages can be otherwise attained we yet cannot afford to let the plentiful supply of good material run to waste as has been too generally the case hitherto. Our resources are almost unlimited; there is a latent strength upon which we can draw without end, and which would put our national armaments on an unquestionably adequate footing if only our rulers have the wisdom to utilize the available material to the full.

It is necessary only to systematically and organically abandon the old niggardly short-sighted policy which has left so much good stuff without consistency or efficiency.

It would be far cheaper to increase the army estimates by a few millions than to establish conscription, which is quite the dearest of all taxes.

for it withdraws the whole manhood of the nation for a term of years from wage-earning, or acquiring the power of earning wages, and pays a mere pittance to the wealth of the state.

There would be with us, moreover, the added drawback that conscription would provide much larger quota than are really required. Anyhow, Great and Greater Britain does not really require the mammoth legions of our continental neighbors. We want more troops than we have, a larger regular army, and more elastic, more effective reserves. But they can be got at a far less cost than by conscription.

It is, perhaps, hardly likely that we shall ever be again involved in external war on the same scale as this now in progress against the Boers. Except on the one contingency of a hostile invasion of India, or a direct attack upon our power in Egypt, the demands made upon our fighting forces will be no more than could be met by a couple of army corps.

At this moment there are troops sufficient to make good any such corps present in South Africa, and we could be required, send half as many more to the Cape within a few months. Here is material enough for any, even the most abnormal demand, and it has been got without conscription. The ordinary current needs would never rise so high. All that is imperative in the near future so far as a regular army goes is that it should keep pace, as it has never done, with the growing exigencies of Empire, and that as our frontier widens and responsibilities increase, there should be a corresponding addition to the Imperial police. This can always be got without conscription, if the recruiting sergeant is empowered to offer sufficiently liberal terms in the labor market.

Of equal, if not transcendent, importance is the second great need, that for an adequate protecting force for the defence of the realm, and that again exists without conscription. We have a great store of fine fighting stuff always on hand, provided, as has been said, by goodwill and voluntary effort, capable, too, of easy, nearly indefinite expansion. The proved right quality of the national reserves, both in these islands and in the colonies beyond sea, is one of the strongest arguments against the necessity for conscription.

One of the most marked consequences of the present campaign has been the rank taken by these auxiliaries as effective troops; they are one and all equal in the best. What the comparatively small and, it may be, selected bands of colonials, of militia, and of volunteers have done, all these various forces can be counted upon to do if only they are properly dealt with and encouraged. There can be no more gibes at playing at soldiers.

These, the youngest of all, have jumped at once into the status of veterans, and their example will undoubtedly react on their fellows, the tradition of gallant service performed by predecessors will be treasured by future generations, and by adding to the prestige of the service keep the ranks always full. Where, then, is the necessity for conscription even for home defence?

**EPWORTH LEAGUE CONVENTION.**  
Programme for the Gathering Shortly to Be Held Here.

The programme for the ninth annual convention of the Epworth League and Sunday School Association of the Methodist church of British Columbia to be held at Victoria May 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th, 1900, is as follows:

**Thursday Morning.**  
9:00.—Meeting of executive of convention. Meeting of local billing committee.  
10:00.—Preparation and praise services, conducted by the president.  
11:00.—Address of welcome and reply, appointing of committees and receiving reports from standing committees.  
**Thursday Afternoon.**  
J. H. Fife, of Vancouver, chairman of the session.  
1:30 to 2.—Devotional service to be conducted by the Queen's Ave. church, New Westminster.  
2:45 to 3:45.—Paper on "The Responsibility of Personal Effort in Winning the World for Christ," by Ralph Williamson, Agassiz.  
3:45 to 4:30.—Paper on "Christian Citizenship," by F. W. Davey, Centennial College, Victoria.  
4:30 to 5:15.—Open parliament on Sunday school work.  
4:15 to 5.—Paper on "Systematic Bible Study and How to Interest Our Sunday School Scholars in Same," by T. W. Mowat, Nanaimo.

**Thursday Evening.**  
President Keith in the chair.  
8:00.—Lecture on "Christian Citizenship," Rev. E. E. Scott, Collection.

**Friday Morning.**  
2.—Ralph Williamson, of Agassiz, chairman of the session.  
9:30.—Prayer and praise service, conducted by members of Princess St. Church, Vancouver.  
9:30 to 10:15.—Address on "The Discipline of the Methodist Church," by Rev. R. Whittington.  
10:15 to 11.—Paper on "The Forward Movement in Missions," by Rev. W. H. Barracough.  
11 to 11:30.—Paper on the Sunday school "Lookout Work," by a member from Chilliwack.  
11:30 to 12.—Paper on "The Home Department," by Mrs. Siddall, Metropolitan church, Victoria.

**Friday Afternoon.**  
T. W. Mowat, Nanaimo, chairman.  
1:30 to 2.—Devotional services, conducted by members of James Bay church, Victoria.  
2 to 2:45.—Paper on the "Lookout Committee," by H. B. Whyte, by Dr. Riggs, Homer street, Vancouver.  
2:45 to 3:30.—Open parliament on League work.  
3:30 to 4:30.—Under the control of superintendents of junior leagues of the different churches.  
4:30 to 5.—In charge of the intermediate league of the Metropolitan church, Victoria.

**Friday Evening.**  
8:00.—Programme to be arranged by the members of Metropolitan church.  
**Saturday Morning.**  
President Keith in the chair.  
9 to 9:30.—Praise service to be led by president.  
9:30 to 12.—Reports of committees, answers to question box, election of officers. Choosing place and date for next convention. New business.

**Saturday Afternoon.**  
In charge of local societies.  
**Sunday Morning.**  
10 to 11.—Love feast.  
11:00.—Special sermon to delegates.

**Sunday Afternoon.**  
2:30.—Mass meeting of Sunday schools. Appropriate addresses, singing, etc.

**Sunday Evening.**  
7:00.—Special sermon on "Entire Sanctification." Conscription service, and at the close the usual impressive separation service.

The officers of the convention are as follows: President, G. S. Keith, New Westminster; 1st vice-president, T. W. Haslam, Nanaimo; 2nd vice-president, Mrs. Ashton, Agassiz; 3rd vice-president, F. W. Davey, Victoria; 4th vice-president, Miss G. Robson, New Westminster; secretary, Horace J. Knott, Victoria; treasurer, Miss M. Nicolls, Vancouver.

In McClure's Magazine for May, Professor Simon Newcomb will write of the total solar eclipse that is to occur on May 28th, telling where and to what degree it will be visible and what astronomers hope to learn from it. He will also give an account of the important things that have been learned from previous eclipses. The article will be fully illustrated.

Alex. W. Gilechrist, for over a quarter of a century conductor on the Grand Trunk railway running between Toronto and Brockville, is dead, aged forty-nine years.

# Operations in Free State

### Gen. Hamilton is Trying to Cut Off the Retreating Boers.

#### Burghers When Beaten are Returning to Their Farms and Hide Their Rifles.

London, April 27.—Israelspoot, mentioned in Lord Roberts' dispatch, which is not marked on the maps, lies between Sanna's Post and Thaba Nchu.

Gen. Hamilton has probably by this time arrived at Thaba Nchu, as he is using his utmost endeavors to cut off the Boers who are retreating from Dewet's Dorp. The Boer forces at Thaba Nchu are not unlikely to make a stand to cover the escape of the envoys from the southward. They have laagers eight miles apart stretching from Brandfont to Thaba Nchu, with a base camp at Samalldell station.

A report comes that a small force of British mounted infantry had a brush with a party of Boers ten miles east of Karree Siding, who were trying to establish a connection between Brandfont and the Boer forces to the southward.

Otherwise there is no news beyond the official dispatches of Lord Roberts, except belated details of recent operations.

It appears that Gen. Brabant in the fight with the Boers at Wepener had a narrow escape.

Gen. Pole-Carew's advance was much hampered by the tardy arrival of artillery, which prevented him from capturing Leeuw Kop before darkness set in, enabling the Boers to secure their retreat.

The report that the Boers had recaptured Boshof proves to be untrue. Lord Methuen is still there, and Gen. Hunter's division from Natal, which was supposed to be coming to Bloemfontein, is arriving at Kimberley.

Dispatch from Roberts.

The following dispatch from Lord Roberts, dated Bloemfontein, April 26th, is published by the war office:

"Gen. Hamilton yesterday drove the enemy off a strong position at Israelspoot, which was admirably carried out by Gen. Ridley, commander of the Second Mounted Infantry Brigade, and Gen. Smith-Dorrien, commanding the 15th Brigade. The troops are to-day advancing toward Thaba Nchu.

"Our losses are slight, only one yet reported—Major Marshall, Grahamston Mounted Rifles, severe wound in the shoulder."

**Other Reports.**  
The Standard Bloemfontein correspondent telegraphing on Thursday says: "Gen. Ian Hamilton, with mounted infantry, naval guns and a howitzer battery, advanced from the water works in the direction of Thaba Nchu. A large force of infantry supported him. The Boers, on opposition, abandoned the Ladybrand district."

The Bloemfontein correspondent of the Daily Telegraph, telegraphing on Wednesday, says: "Our mounted infantry entered the high moorland a splendid amount of Thaba Nchu to-day, almost without opposition. As Thaba Nchu is a natural fortress, this must mean that the Boers have practically thrown up the sponge in this section of the country. If the force presses on to Ladybrand, the whole of the country between that point and Thaba Nchu will be completely in our hands. One difficulty is that many of the Boers forming commandos, immediately on finding themselves beaten retreat to their farms and resume the role of peaceful citizens, hiding their rifles."

**Failed to Surround the Boers.**  
Bloemfontein, April 27.—General Pole-Carew's forces are seven miles north of Thaba Nchu. The Boers are to be seen at the point of the mountain.

They are disappointed at the failure to surround the Boers, but believe the march will have a good effect on the Free Staters.

Wherever he found Free Staters, who had broken their oath, Gen. Pole-Carew seized their cattle and horses.

**British Subjects Expelled.**  
Pretoria, April 25.—Another batch of British subjects consisting of ten men, 263 women and 420 children, have been put over the border and are going to Delagoa Bay.

London, April 27.—The Lorenzo Marquez correspondent of the Daily Mail, under Wednesday's date, commenting upon the methods of the Transvaal government in expelling British subjects at a time when there is no steamer to take them from there, says: "United States Consul Adelbert S. Hay is doing his best to delay their departure until a steamer is ready. As the British are suspected at Pretoria of causing today's explosion by means of a tunnel dug from a house on the opposite side of the street, the affair is likely to precipitate the expulsion of those remaining. It is also feared that the Boers will make reprisals on the mines."

The Pretoria correspondent of the Daily Mail, telegraphing on Wednesday, says: "The government inquiry suggests that the explosion was a planned outrage. The explosion occurred in a house quite separate from the forts and required a much larger quantity of nitroglycerine than could have been found on the premises. The factory will be worked again in a fortnight."

**Boers and Basutos.**  
Toronto, April 26.—J. H. Balger, with five South African native boys, aged from 8 to 14 years, two Basutos, one Bushman, one Zulu and one Kaffir, all bright looking boys, whom he took in their wild state and civilized, arrived here yesterday. Mr. Balger, while not approving of blacks fighting against whites, thought that it would do the Boers good to let 20,000 Basutos on horseback at them.

John Sparling and D. J. Slackpole, of Winnipeg, are registered at the Dominion Hotel. They will leave shortly for Dawson.

# HER MAJESTY'S RETURN.

### The Queen's Parting Message to People of Ireland.

#### Dublin, April 26.—The Queen, before her departure from this city, briefly conversed with the Lord Mayor and the Lady Mayoress, and expressed her regret that she was obliged to leave. She said she had had a most pleasant visit and intimated that she hoped to be able to return.

#### The Queen conferred honoretties upon the Lord Mayors of Dublin and Belfast, the title of Lord Mayor on the Mayor of Cork and the Mayor of Londonderry. Her Majesty gave £10,000 to be distributed among the poor in the Dublin hospitals.

#### By the Queen's command Lord Cadogan, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, has published the following: "The Queen is very anxious before leaving Ireland, where she has spent a most agreeable time, to express through the Lord Lieutenant to her Irish people how very much gratified and how deeply touched she had been by her reception during the past three weeks. She has been received by all ranks and creeds with an enthusiasm and affection which could not be surpassed. Each time the Queen came before, with her dear husband, they kindly and warmly welcomed her, but on this occasion, after the lapse of thirty-nine years, her reception equalled that of previous visits, and she carried away with her a most treasured and affectionate memory of the time spent in Ireland. The Queen earnestly prays that good will and harmony may prevail among all her people, and that they may be happy and prosperous."

#### Queen Victoria arrived at Holyhead at 8:30 p.m. The town was profusely decorated. The Queen and her suite dined aboard the yacht after anchorage had been reached. They will remain on board the vessel till 6:30 to-morrow, when the party will take a train for Windsor.

# BOOK TITLES.

### A question which often arises, and has doubtless come to the front of late, seeing that we have just passed through the most bookish season of the year, is that of the titles of books. What's in a title? It has never myself been able to see that the title makes much difference.

### John Smith, in a special matter, what have argued that Dickens wrote books with suggestive titles, and others with titles which were not particularly suggestive. For instance, in the first category I should place "A Tale of Two Cities," and in the second "David Copperfield."

### At De Ar, on the way to the north, I noticed enormous accumulations of stores. At Orange River, further north, were still more enormous accumulations.

### "What regiments do they belong to?" I asked, pointing to a half acre stack of boxes.

### "Regiments!" I was told. "Why there's enough to last all the regiments here for ever."

### I had to wait at Orange River for permission to go towards Modder River, where Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener were headquarters.

### The Orange River depot everything that was happening on the other side of the big railway span was the unknown business of another world. But great lumbering, long army wagons, drawn by strings of sixteen oxen, were continually going out loaded up and continually coming in empty.

### "What regiments were the stores being taken to?" I asked.

### To no particular regiments, I was told. They were merely going forward. Going forward whether I asked. No one knew. They were just being moved forward, and would be directed where to deliver themselves when they got.

### Further Forward.

### I got my own authority to go forward, after what seemed ages of waiting. The telegram came to me from Lord Roberts' headquarters at Modder River, but it told me to go to Enslin.

### The train was due to leave Orange River at half-past two in the afternoon. It did not start until half-past seven at night, and it took from half-past seven until half-past five the next morning to cover the thirty miles.

### But even long as the long night was, it was not long enough to see the huge transport business that was going on. All along by the side of the railway for miles the moonlight fell softly upon clouds of silver gauze, the long lines of silent oxen leading to their yokes.

### At Witteputts, the first station out, was a town of white tents and the blanketed forms of soldiers covering the ground. This, then, was where Lord Roberts' army was stationed, and this the place for which the enormous transport was making.

# The Herding Of Cronje

### Organizing a Coup—What Concentration of Regimental Transports Meant.

#### Another Letter From the Correspondent of the London Daily Mail.

### Jacobdahl.

### In Capetown, 600 miles away, and ages ago, I had seen the heads of the firm of Roberts, Kitchener & Co. (unlimited) organizing a coup.

### I did not know—no one knew—and could only vaguely guess what kind of a coup was being engineered; but we saw the senior partner sitting alone in his inner parlor with an easy look of confident purpose, and the junior partner sitting in front of papers in the big office where a row of heads of departments were grinding away at documents that looked like estimates.

### So we thought we knew that one of the two knew exactly what he wanted done, and that the other knew exactly how he was going to do it.

### For the rest we knew only this: that Lord Kitchener was engaged in the entire reorganization of the army transport.

### We thought that was a strange sort of thing to be doing in the middle of a campaign, and some of us talked darkly about swapping horses while crossing a stream.

### But we were all prepared to admit that to stop the proceedings, while he took away all the units of transport belonging to regiments, and combined them into a huge army transport system, was not a mere Kitchener fad.

### It meant something, and something big. But what?

### Well, a movement, plainly a big movement, said the Orange Free State, said the correspondent. But what had the concentration of Regimental Transports to do with that? That was a conundrum beyond me. I gave it up. But I had seen how Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener looked, and I felt that whatever it was it was the right thing.

### At De Ar, on the way to the north, I noticed enormous accumulations of stores. At Orange River, further north, were still more enormous accumulations.

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### of troops and an organization of transport that left the regiments free to move. Now for facts—as nearly as I have been able to collect them, for no one was eye-witness of it all.

### First of all, the railway skirting the western boundary of the Free State, which the country, for South Africa, is lying open, between Orange River and Modder River, is in our possession. Cronje was away north in his ill-fatedness of Magerfontein.

### Now then. On or about February 25th, Hannay, with his force of mounted infantry, went out from Orange River to the country of any mischievous rebel raising commandos. That he was not acting without reason was shown by the fact that he had some hot fighting before he could clear the way for a big transport in his convey.

### On February 11th General French, with his cavalry division of three brigades, under Porter, Broadwood and Bartlett, Enslin with such provisions as could be carried on the saddle. He had seven left, ten to his artillery with him, and struck across the Free State border for Riet River, and thence hot-foot northward for the crossing drifts of the Modder River, seizing three of them.

### With Some Little Trouble.

### But his force of between 7,000 and 8,000 men were easily able to account for any opposition that might be offered him, and making a wide bend eastward rounded Cronje's position and headed for Kimberley from the northeast.

### By this time Cronje at Magerfontein knew what was happening, and hurriedly departed for home before the doors were locked, that on February 14th Kimberley, to its great surprise, found itself relieved.

### But if Cronje knew what was happening, Lord Kitchener knew that he would know, and knew also what he would do.

### For on February 12th, the day after French started, the Sixth Division (Kelly-Kenny's), to which Lord Kitchener was giving his personal attention, set out from Graspan, which is just a little south of Enslin, and keeping slightly on the outside curve of French, struck eastward to get to the way of the course for Bloemfontein, which it was supposed Cronje would try to take.

### Now, the wonderful part of this is that the Sixth Division set out to intercept Cronje before Cronje himself knew that he would be going that way.

### And on the same day that the Sixth Division started to get to the eastward of Cronje's retreat, the quick moving cavalry having already started to hold him and turn him from the north, the Seventh Division, with Lord Roberts personally supervising the operations of General Turner, left Enslin, and making use of the drifts over the Riet River, which the cavalry had captured, took an inside curve and occupied Wedgraal, and the important supply centre of Jacobdahl, where they held Cronje to his easterly course, and at the same time kept open an easy short line of communication with the railway at Modder River.

### All this had happened without any serious fighting. Except for scattered bands of surprised Boers at river drifts there was no one more to fight with. As to Cronje, he was not being fought. Where he might turn there was a division to block his way.

### In the meantime there remained at Enslin and Graspan, close by, the Ninth Division, under Colville, ready to move in whichever direction, Cronje's movements might necessitate.

### On February 13th they moved, following the division ahead as far as Riet River, thence keeping on his line, but to his right so as to be ready to strike further eastward if necessary—as far as Waterfall Drift, over the Riet River, and thence making a forced march, never going into Jacobdahl at all, but leaving that town on the left, and striking across for Kildrif, on the Modder River, where they struck the track of the Sixth Division, and kept along the south bank of the river until on Sunday, the 18th, they arrived at Paardeberg Drift, in time.

### To Take Part in the Action.

### There Cronje was bottled.

### It had all happened just as it had been planned in Capetown by the man who knew in advance what he wanted done and the man who knew just how to do it.

### Three infantry divisions and a division of cavalry all acting separately, some of them in split parties, but all of them acting in accordance with a carefully arranged hierarchy and time table, had moved by various routes through the country to join up and concentrate at the very spot where the enemy could be cornered, and to concentrate in such a way that the enemy was completely surrounded.

### And at one stroke and in four days the whole aspect of the war had been changed by the man with a plan and the man with a system.

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