

## APPENDIX III.

## COLONIAL TROOPS FOR IMPERIAL SERVICE IN WAR.

## MEMORANDUM BY THE COLONIAL DEFENCE COMMITTEE.

THE Secretary of State for the Colonies has referred to the Colonial Defence Committee for their consideration a copy of the following notice of motion, which has been formulated by the Government of New Zealand for discussion at the Conference of Colonial Premiers to be held shortly after the coronation :—

“That it is desirable to have an Imperial Reserve Force formed in each of His Majesty’s dominions over the seas for service in case of emergency outside the dominion or colony in which such reserve is formed. The limits within which such Reserve Force may be employed outside the colony wherein it is raised to be defined by the Imperial and colonial Governments at the time such reserve is formed, and to be in accordance with any law in force for the time being respecting the same. The cost of maintaining and equipping such Imperial Reserve Force to be defrayed in such proportion and manner as may be agreed upon between the Imperial and colonial Governments.”

The Secretary of State for War, at the suggestion of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, has referred to the Committee a paper drawn up for the War Office by Lieut.-Colonel Altham, C.M.G., Assistant Quartermaster-General at Headquarters, on the organization of colonial troops for Imperial service. The paper is printed as an appendix to this memorandum.

2. The principle brought forward in the notice of motion is identical with that embodied in “The New Zealand Defence Act Amendment Act, 1900,” which was discussed by the Colonial Defence Committee in their Memorandum No. 271 M, dated the 2nd August, 1901. In that memorandum they pointed out that the Act represented the first attempt by a colony to evolve such an organization of its military resources as would enable it to place in the field trained troops available for Imperial service outside the colony, and they expressed the opinion that the measure constituted an important step towards facilitating the conception and execution of comprehensive schemes of Imperial defence.

Such schemes, drawn up to meet the conditions of the various wars in which the British Empire might be engaged, involve the despatch by sea of a certain number of expeditionary forces as soon after the outbreak of war as naval conditions permit. These forces may be required to reinforce the local troops in any part of the Empire specially exposed to attack. For such a purpose troops despatched by the self-governing colonies would be of special value: no European Power other than Great Britain is in a position to draw on large communities of white subjects outside Europe for military assistance, and the action of expeditionary forces based on Australasian and Canadian ports might be of great importance during the early stages of a war. But in order that the operations of the various expeditionary forces should be effectively combined, it is essential that the co-operation of all should be assured, and that each force should be efficient in all respects for the service required of it.

3. Lieut.-Colonel Altham’s paper, written from the point of view of the Department of the Headquarters Staff, which has recently been charged, under the control of the Commander-in-Chief, with the preparation and maintenance of detailed plans for the military defence of the Empire, lays special stress on these two essential points, and makes definite suggestions in regard to the organization of contingents for Imperial service from the self-governing colonies.

The Colonial Defence Committee are in entire accord with the principles laid down in this paper, and are of opinion that the detailed proposals in regard to organization are based on a correct appreciation of the military resources and requirements of the various colonies, and deserve the most favourable consideration of the Governments of Australia, New Zealand, and Canada.

4. It is fully realised that arrangements for insuring the combined military action of all parts of the Empire in times of great emergency must be dependent on the voluntary co-operation of the self-governing colonies. In such a contingency it will be essential to success that the military forces of the Empire should be employed against the common foe in conformity with one general plan, and that the supreme military control of those forces should be vested in one central authority. The disadvantage of divided military counsels and disconnected enterprises in war is apparent from the study of all military history.

The general plans for the defence of a great nation against the most serious dangers which it may be required to face must be drawn up in peace-time, as on them should be based the organization of the national forces and their preparation and training for war. But it is necessary for the preparation of such general plans, and for the due elaboration of subsidiary schemes of offence and defence, that the central authority, which is responsible for the defence of the Empire as a whole, should know in peace what forces are likely to be at its disposal in time of war.

For these reasons the Colonial Defence Committee earnestly hope that the great self-governing colonies may be able to give some assurance as to the strength of the contingents which they would be able to place at the disposal of His Majesty’s Government for extra-colonial service in a war with a European Power. On the other hand, the Committee suggest that it would be of advantage if the Imperial authorities could confidentially communicate to the colonial authorities the general nature of the duties which it is proposed to assign to their contingents in such a war.

5. The two points embodied in the second and third sentences of the notice of motion are dealt with on lines differing somewhat from the provisions of the New Zealand Act already referred to.