

Suggested Review by Committee of Imperial Defence of Policy of South African Coastal Defence.

I should like, therefore, to take this opportunity of putting forward a suggestion in the following concrete form: That the Committee of Imperial Defence may be asked to review the policy of South African coastal defence, and, on the assumption that in the near future it will be necessary to re-arm some of the South African coastal defences and perhaps to increase the defences at certain ports, and in view of the probable nature and scale of attack against South Africa, to consider whether aircraft could not be more efficiently and economically employed for that purpose; further, to take into special consideration the enormously enhanced internal security which this increase in the strength of the South African Air Force would give, and the additional advantages of (i) coastal reconnaissance including convoy work and anti-submarine patrols; (ii) air co-operation with the African Squadron, Royal Navy, in gunnery and strategic exercises and increased co-operation with Army coastal units; (iii) possible employment on coastal and fishery survey.*

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEWFOUNDLAND.**Newfoundland's Contribution of Men to the Royal Navy.**

Mr. Monroe: Men are the only considerable direct contribution which Newfoundland can make to Empire Defence, under her existing financial conditions. Her men for serving in the land forces possess, perhaps, no virtues not common to English-speaking peoples, but experience in the Great War has amply proven, to those who should know best, that her sea-going men have qualities that especially fit them for difficult and important operations at sea. It has been admitted that in conditions that existed very frequently in the North Sea the fishermen of Newfoundland who had been trained in the Royal Naval Reserve had a fitness for rough sea work and for mine laying peculiarly their own. Their lives spent very often in a small boat fishing, and in boat work in connection with sailing vessels, had given them a fearlessness and skill such as only a comparatively small number in the Empire can attain to. It was at one time thought, and even said, that for such men the Navy had no particular need, but this belief was found to be utterly false when the test of service came.

Early in the present century a branch of the Royal Naval Reserve was established in Newfoundland, with a training ship located in the harbour of St. John's, and the training and discipline which were thus afforded had a very valuable effect when the trying time came.

Training of Naval Reservists in Newfoundland.

Newfoundland lost more men at sea in the Great War than the other Dominions put together, but after the war financial considerations caused the Admiralty to withdraw the training-ship from St. John's and to abandon the training of reservists. Newfoundland contributed only a small portion of the cost, and is, unfortunately, not now in a position to offer a much larger contribution, but she is willing to continue to do her share in the work which proved so valuable, and she urges that training at St. John's should be renewed. The Reserve is not needed for her particular defence, and would not be used for that purpose alone or even, in any very striking way, be valuable for her especial purposes. She feels, however, that in offering her men she is tendering a really valuable contribution to the defence of the whole Empire, and not for any selfish considerations. When the Great War began there was not in Newfoundland any regular military organization of any kind. It was regarded at the outset as improbable that under these circumstances any large number of men would volunteer for the war, but to the gratification of the Dominion her youth sprang to arms, with the enthusiasm so universal throughout the Empire; several thousands volunteered and many of them made the supreme sacrifice during service.

Newfoundland's Part in Empire Defence.

Newfoundland still has no regular military organization, and the formation of one has so far not been seriously considered, but her population includes officers, non-commissioned officers and men who have seen service on the battlefield, and who could be made the nucleus of an organization which would keep alive the patriotic spirit, and train and discipline a force which in time of emergency would prove of value to the Empire. There are in the colony a number of voluntary Cadet organizations which give a degree of training and discipline to the youth, and from which many would graduate into any senior military organization which might exist. Here again it must be said that a local military force would not be necessary, and probably not very valuable directly for any purpose confined to Newfoundland itself, but it might be of some advantage within the colony in any time of turmoil. The chief value, however, would be to the Empire as a whole, in giving opportunities for the training of men who could be used in any part of the Empire in time of need. Such a force, if created, should be enlisted for service within and without the colony, and, if assistance could be given from without for the organization and maintenance, Newfoundland might herself be willing to contribute to it. I speak of this suggestively only, because it is a subject which has not been considered by my Government, and could not be so considered until some detail has been worked out in co-operation with the military authorities of this Kingdom. I do, however, speak of the Royal Naval Reserve with authority and conviction. The matter has already been brought to the attention of the Dominions Office and the Admiralty, and I may earnestly hope that as a result the Royal Naval Reserve will be re-established at St. John's at a very early date. I would finally like to impress upon

* This proposal was accepted by the Prime Minister of Great Britain, on behalf of the Committee of Imperial Defence.