

markets for its produce outside Australian waters. It therefore follows that Australian interests cannot be assured by the defence alone of Australian soil. Defence is the primary duty of every State and of every citizen, yet the defence of Australian interests outside Australian waters is at the present time solely in the hands of the Imperial Government and of the Imperial army and navy. It is hardly consistent with the present development of Australia as a young and vigorous nation to neglect her responsibility for defence outside Australian waters, and in the robust period of her youth thus to rely entirely upon the strong arm of the Mother-country (*vide* final paragraph of Section VIII. and appendix).

Political developments in the East.

It must be remembered that the rapid and continuous improvements in steam and telegraph communications have now destroyed the former isolation of Australia, and modern developments in the East have brought the States of the Commonwealth upon the arena of the Old-world strife. The last six years have witnessed a momentous change in the balance of power in the East. The rise of Japan into an armed Power of the first magnitude; the acquisition of Port Arthur by Russia; the occupation of the Philippines, and of Guam (Ladrone Islands) and Tutuila (Samoa) by the United States; and of the remaining Samoan Islands and part of New Guinea by Germany; and the annexation of Madagascar as a colony by France, are facts of the gravest significance to Australian interests. The transformation of the United States into an overseas Power by her acquisition of Porto Rico and the Philippines, the development of Japan, the evolution of China, the opening of a Panama Canal at an early date, and the movement of Russia towards a port in the Indian Ocean with her increasing interest in Persia, all point to the Indian Ocean, the Northern Pacific, and the China Sea as the probable scene of the future struggle for commercial supremacy. Australia cannot in such an eventuality remain unconcerned. It may be assumed, therefore, that Australia will determine not only to defend her own soil, but to take steps also to defend those vast interests beyond her shores upon the maintenance of which her present existence and her future prosperity must so largely depend.

Factors determining Australian defence.

Two factors, therefore, may be considered as governing the future organization and administration of the military forces of the Commonwealth, namely:—

- (a.) The defence of Australian soil.
- (b.) The defence of Australian interests wherever they may be threatened.

Garrison force and field force for defence of Australian soil.

(a.) For "the defence of Australian soil" there are two essentials, namely, garrison troops (hereafter styled "the Garrison Force") for the protection of certain pre-determined strategical centres and places of commercial importance; and field troops (hereinafter styled "the Field Force") for those active operations which are, as has been shown, an essential element, in conjunction with the garrison troops, for the defence of such an extended area as Australia. It is not necessary that the troops for garrison duty as a whole should be mobile, but it is absolutely essential that the field troops be not only well trained, carefully organized, and well equipped, but also ready for active operations in the field at the shortest notice.

Field forces for defence of Australian interests.

(b.) For "the defence of Australian interests wherever they may be threatened" it will be obvious that the first essential is the supremacy which is guaranteed by the Royal navy, and that the second is in the possession of a Field Force capable of undertaking military operations in whatever part of the world it may be desired by Australia to employ them. The Field Force above indicated in (a) could, if necessity arose, be made available for this purpose.

II. NUMBER OF TROOPS AVAILABLE AND REQUIRED, AND HOW PROVIDED.

Troops now available in Australia. Voluntary military service.

It is now proposed to consider, in the first place, the minimum number of troops which will be required to fulfil the foregoing conditions, and, in the second, how those troops are to be provided. As regards the first, it is only proposed in the present recommendation to deal with the troops which now exist in the six States under voluntary terms of service in accordance with the estimates, 1901–2. The numbers should be taken as the very least which Australia requires for her protection, and may be considered as the peace footing of her future military force. As regards the second, the strong military feeling now prevailing renders compulsory service by conscription unnecessary. A voluntary military service is the pride of all Anglo-Saxon communities, and it is safe to accept the fact that whenever a national emergency occurs a sufficient number of citizens will always be found ready and willing to voluntarily undertake the duty of defence. The liability to serve should, however, always be maintained, so as to establish the principle of the privileged duty and sacred right of every free-born citizen to bear part in the defence of his country.

The most essential element, therefore, in the organization of the future is to provide a military system which shall be elastic, capable of expansion, and which shall form a carefully constructed framework into which the fighting-material of the nation can be fitted when the emergency arises. This framework must consist (1) of a carefully considered and thoroughly complete military organization; (2) of a well-trained, competent, and experienced staff of officers to lead and to administer; and (3) of modern and efficient equipment.