

Fourth Day.
20 April 1907.

MILITARY
DEFENCE.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : That is so, but the same thing applied during the time of the South African War in all our countries; we had many men giving up their ordinary occupations and going out to fight.

Mr. DEAKIN : Many of them suffered for it afterwards, too.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : No doubt that is one of the difficulties that unfortunately are inseparable from the troubles of war, and I do not quite know how you could, in the event of Volunteers occupying a position of complete dependence in the country who would desire to come here for instruction, arrange for the continuance of their appointments in their own country until they returned. That to a large extent would have to be a matter for them to consider.

Regarding the interchange of officers, the suggestion of Mr. Haldane upon that is a most valuable one. We are doing it now to some extent at the invitation of the War Office; we are sending some of our officers now from time to time here for purposes of instruction, but if they were to provide now, which I understood to be referred to by Mr. Haldane, for allowing responsible officers from here to go out paid by the Imperial Authorities to take the place of the responsible officers we have in our country paid by us, so that in the interval the void created by the despatch of our officers to the old country would be filled by the men from here, both countries paying their officers, that is that we paid ours and you paid yours, the purposes of information and instruction of officers and, in my opinion, it would be most valuable indeed. Up to now we have really had nothing of the kind. It seems to me that if we could have Imperial officers coming out to our country and our Colonial officers coming home here, each temporarily filling the position vacated by the other, it would, without additional cost to our respective Administrations, enable the changing of these officers to be going on for all time I should say, until that splendid scheme which is in all our minds of a common system of organization with a view to having, in time of trouble, uniformity in all respects and consequently greater efficiency. A highly educated Empire staff from all standpoints is desirable. I should most heartily support that from the standpoint of New Zealand.

This Resolution which I have read carefully, while not expressing anything binding upon our respective countries, and which may require to be altered in some respects, would be a good thing for us, as the representatives of our respective countries, to affirm. It would show at all events that this Conference of responsible men meeting here "without" (as the Resolution itself expresses it) "wishing to commit to immediate action any of the Governments represented, recognises and affirms the need of developing throughout the Empire the conception of a General Staff recruited from the forces of the Empire as a whole." I am quite prepared to support a resolution of that kind. It does not take away from us the all-necessitous requirement of our own staffs being responsible to their own Governments, of the control of our own staffs. It does express a desire that we should recognise and affirm the need throughout the Empire of having a General Staff recruited from the forces of the Empire as a whole, and for my part I most cordially support that. Sir Frederick Borden has well expressed upon such material points the views that his Government entertain in the matter of protecting their position. Naturally we