

Dr. SMARTT : Do you mean under any circumstances ?

Sir JOSEPH WARD : Yes, and for this reason—I would like to make it clear from the New Zealand point of view—we want to have our Volunteer system carried out under a complete organized defence system in New Zealand, without distinction of any kind for over-sea purposes. We are against anything in the nature of a standing army. We have now in existence our Volunteers many of whom are actively engaged in helping to develop the country. We have a very large reserve force of private individuals who are qualified to serve anywhere, and we want to be in the position, in New Zealand, of allowing it to be a voluntary offering from the Government and the individual to fight over-sea when called upon for the Empire, and we know we could get thousands of them, and if we were to attempt to create a first line or company, whatever is suggested, to be always ready for over-sea defence, I think you would create internal difficulties amongst the ordinary, or rather regular, forces who would willingly and spontaneously go out and fight when the time arises. I believe, with all due deference to my friend Dr. Smartt, that it is far better to let the country as a whole realise, in the event of trouble arising, that we can draw upon our volunteers for wherever we are going to fight, not ear-marking them beforehand. A good system of defence in our own country for use externally when the time arises is the better course to follow. It would entail legislation in our country if anything of the kind were proposed, and our people in time of peace do not want to have paraded a permanent organization to go outside the country to fight. That is the sort of thing that would deter them to some extent from general action when the time arises. I do sincerely hope at all events that Mr. Haldane will not, so far as New Zealand is concerned, expect us to go upon lines of that kind.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN : I would like to add a word. This very question was brought up at the Conference five years ago, and discussed thoroughly and disposed of, for that time at least. I, perhaps, cannot put the matter better than I put it then. I will read what I said then : “The suggestion which was made that there should be a special force known as the Imperial Force for service abroad is one I cannot subscribe to, because I believe, in the first place, it would have a derogatory effect on the militia itself. I am quite content, from what I know of the militia of Canada that, to have a special force receiving special favours, specially named, specially drilled and trained, would have an unfavourable effect on the militia at large. I would propose as an alternative,” and so on, and I concluded :—“It seems to me that I do not think it is necessary that a set of men shall be labelled as being set apart for any particular service, but that our militia should be made absolutely effective, so that when the moment arrives we can take part and assist the Imperial Army by a voluntary enlistment.”

Mr. HALDANE : I am, at the moment, keenly conscious of the difficulty which Sir Joseph Ward and Sir Frederick Borden have raised, because I have just had to face it in framing the scheme of our own second line at home, and perhaps I might read to the Conference the clause in which I came to the conclusion that I had gone to the utmost limit possible with the second line. It makes me think that what Dr. Smartt proposes is really in the nature of a special contribution of the Colony to the first line of Defence, a most valuable thing, but it is outside the strict organization of a second line force which is what we are mainly discussing here.

Dr. JAMESON : On behalf of the Cape, may I say that, while I quite agree with my colleague (in case there is any idea as to the Cape wanting to press this), this is perhaps one of these advanced ideas we have

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MILITARY
DEFENCE.