

knowledge of drill, getting them well set up, used to simple formations, and handling the rifle, they do very well. Rifle shooting is rather a national pastime with us; it is favoured everywhere. I have had made, and shall be glad to hand in three maps, one showing that in every quarter of Australia there are rifle-clubs in active practice—from the extreme north at Thursday Island to the extreme south, Hobart in Tasmania, and to the extreme west in Perth. Wherever there is a settlement there is a rifle-club or there is going to be a rifle-club, and although we have not yet associated that movement with formal drill the desire to have rifle practice and be a good shot being strong, we have great anticipations. I will show you on another map that wherever there is a settlement, and almost wherever there is a school, there is to be a cadet corps in active operation. There is some kind of drill in every school. I will show you another map which exhibits every detachment of our forces, whether it is Artillery, Mounted Infantry, Infantry, or permanent forces, in different colours. You have only to look at the map to see in an instant what and where our forces are.

Fourth Day.
20 April 1907.

MILITARY
DEFENCE.
(Mr. Deakin.)

The question of patterns, the question of purchase of material, and the Military College having been touched on, the only matter remaining is a permissible parallel between the General Staff and the Committee of Imperial Defence in respect of which a Memorandum is laid before us. I am happy to know that you have complied with the request we have made, to be somewhat more practically associated with this Committee, just as we desire a practical association with the General Staff. I find that your Imperial Defence Committee bears an analogy to this Conference itself, except that we are represented politically. Both are devised to facilitate common discussion and agreement, to devise in the case of questions of local or general concern which may be referred to us, and to bring experts into direct touch. Both are purely consultative bodies having no executive powers or administrative functions when national and colonial questions are discussed. We have already enjoyed the benefit of the advice of this Committee, generously given when it was asked by our Government in 1905, and we have now gained the further advantage of permission to send a representative to it when any questions we submit are to be dealt with. I would like to add that as this is the Committee of Imperial Defence, covering both military and naval affairs, we shall hope to be represented there occasionally. Although it is easy to put a question, it is not always easy to put it without undue prolixity in indicating precisely where our difficulties lie. We obtained a valuable report from the Committee of Imperial Defence, but it did not answer a number of queries in which we were specially interested, and which we hoped to receive advice upon. Now that we have permission to have a representative enabled to attend that consultative committee, we shall be able to point out just where our difficulties lie. Your reply would not be as the last was, most admirably drafted from a general point of view, without meeting some of our particular difficulties at that time.

In conclusion let me once more say that your broad-minded view of Imperial possibilities in the way of military defence, and the way they can be utilised, is not only of the highest interest to us, but I can assure you will be practically reviewed in relation to our own circumstances with the warmest possible desire to co-operate with your office in the great projects you have clearly outlined to-day.

Sir JOSEPH WARD: My Lord, the value of the meeting of the Ministers from the self-governing countries will be enormously enhanced as the outcome of the discussion and the information which has been