

Ordinary cadet corps.

In addition to the school cadet corps there are a number of youths in the colony who are not old enough to join the Volunteer corps, and the formation of these cadet corps and the enrolment of these youths would be of material advantage. The number likely to be enrolled is estimated at 5,000; the cost of rifles and equipments, estimated at £3 each, would make a total of £15,000.

From school cadet to Volunteer.

The necessity for the establishment and enrolment of these cadet corps any one who has given this subject any consideration must readily admit. You commence to train the boys in the school; after leaving school they enrol in the ordinary cadet corps; and then, when they come of age, they will enrol in Volunteer corps. You take them from the schools and keep them under military training until they attain the Volunteer age. At the present time the lads, from the time they leave school until the time they attain the age at which they could be enrolled in the Volunteer corps, have their ardour damped as well as their liking for drill; and this has been the means of preventing them from enrolling in the Volunteer Forces of the colony. No such thing as conscription is at all necessary in this colony; and I am satisfied that, if the suggestion now made should be given effect to, we should have in the course of a few years fully 20,000 Volunteers equipped and complete.

Future maintenance of force of 20,000 efficient Volunteers.

NAVAL RESERVES.

Naval drill on cruisers in port.

In respect to the naval branch of the Imperial and Colonial Reserve Forces, arrangements should be made for the drilling of our Naval Volunteers, on a certain number of days in each year, on the cruisers belonging to the Australasian Squadron, these cruisers to be at the several ports in the colonies at times fixed for the purpose.

Conversion of steamers into cruisers.

CONVERSION OF STEAMERS.

There are many of the merchant steamers coming to the colony which could be converted into cruisers. At present the officers and engineers on those steamers cannot qualify for the Naval Reserve. If they were allowed to have short periods of service on the cruisers when both steamers and cruisers were in port, these officers and engineers would in time qualify for the Naval Reserve.

Equipment for converted steamers.

EQUIPMENT OF STEAMERS.

There should be naval guns, equipment, and munitions of war for these colonial steamers convertible into cruisers, to be left at a depot within the colony, to be approved by the Imperial authorities; not necessarily at a port, yet safe from seizure, and within easy reach.

Strengthening the Australasian Squadron.

AUSTRALASIAN SQUADRON.

Owing to the altered conditions it is necessary that the Australasian Squadron should be strengthened by raising the class of vessels and increasing the number of cruisers, the colonies to pay the increased cost on the basis of the present agreement.

Withdrawal of obsolete cruisers.

Several of the cruisers now in the Australasian waters, not being up to date, and not belonging to the squadron, should be withdrawn and replaced by a better and more useful class of cruisers.

Suggested military conference.

MILITARY CONFERENCE.

With the developments that have taken place in South Africa, the difficulties met with by the Australasian Colonies in enrolling, equipping, and despatching contingents for service outside the colonies point to the fact that a conference of Imperial officers, Commanders of the Forces, and Defence Ministers would be of great service in working out a scheme such as is here proposed; and should Field-Marshal Lord Roberts be able to accept the invitation to visit the colonies, he should be invited to preside at such conference. Failing this, the Imperial authorities should be asked to send one of the British generals who has taken part in the South African campaign to preside at such conference.

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