and I would venture to point out that our whole progress in this country for the last twenty years has been to some such end as that which we are now asking you to put your seal upon. National defence had been allowed to go very much backward during the "seventies." During the "eighties," sir, very considerable progress was made, especially after Lord Randolph Churchill's resignation as Chancellor of the Exchequer, which was based upon and which formed a subject of a trial of strength as to whether our coaling-stations for the navy and national defences should be maintained. Since then attempts have been made from time to time to estimate what our land forces might be called upon to undertake. Those attempts have become more necessary year by year. It is practically impossible to exclude from our minds the necessities not of offensive but of defensive action for the maintenance of our colonies and dependencies all over the world, and the Government have, within the last two years, definitely stated, I think almost for the first time, how they adjust our land forces at home, and what proportion they hold in readiness for the protection of our interests in other parts of the globe.

Perhaps I might recapitulate the views which I put before the House of Commons, now eighteen months ago, on behalf of the Government, and which after long discussions were accepted, and have been generally agreed to by Parliament. We are prepared—and our organization enables us in the future—to send 120,000 regular troops abroad to any part of the British Empire which may be threatened. We keep up a home field army of another 120,000 men; we keep 190,000 men for our garrisons; we have a large number — somewhere between 100,000 and 200,000 — employed in various positions for the defence of London and for strategic positions which might be threatened in case of invasion. But, large as these preparations may sound, they are certainly not deemed too large by our military advisers, in view of the possibility of our at any time losing the command of the sea, and I would venture to remind the Conference that what Great Britain does off her own bat towards defence of colonies and dependencies is not limited by her power to send 120,000 men to any threatened position in case of emergency. We have close upon 80,000 British troops in India. We have always some 30,000 in the colonial garrisons; and at present—and probably for some long time to come—we must, in view of South Africa, look to keeping a larger number than that. Therefore, we have, either abroad at this moment or liable to go abroad on any emergency, close upon a quarter of a million of men. And I would point out that this is not a force kept for ambitious schemes or offensive operations, or for an attempt to involve ourselves in the great quarrels of our neighbours in Europe. We have only got to look to the illustrations of the late war to see that in fixing 120,000 men as our contingent, we are rather under than over the mark of what we might be called upon to send, having in view that we have had to send double the number, with your assistance, for the defence of two of our colonies.

I recognise that in bringing these subjects before you I am bound to show that the Mother-country is doing her part. I do not think that anybody will contend that a nation which keeps 110,000 or 120,000 men permanently abroad under a system of voluntary enlistment, and is prepared to send the same number in the case of emergency, is not doing her share in protecting her colonies and dependencies, which are relying upon her assistance. On the other hand, it is held—speaking in this room, by our military advisers it is strongly held—that circumstances may occur in which it is most desirable that we should have a call on further troops. Of course, we should have a certain number at home, which, if the sea is safeguarded, we should, as we did in the case of South Africa, send out; but the whole secret of success in war is time, and we can never count on having so much time as we have had in the late war. We should never count—either in respect to policy or as to time—on having an enemy who would enable us to make up during the war the deficiencies which we found at the beginning. I should like to speak, if I may, quite frankly to the Conference on this subject. In the Boers we had an armed enemy—not an army—shrewd and brave, and provided with good weapons; but they neglected, at the beginning of the war, obvious opportunities—obvious and many opportunities. I am not a tactician, but I have studied the opinions of those who have written and who have given me their advice. I might point out that there were incidents, earlier in the war, there were occasions when a powerful and determined enemy, properly organized, could have taken advantage of our early reverses, and could have moved with great effect upon our communications. That was not done because the forces were not an organized army. Again, in individual battles there were many opportunities of which a determined leader who had an organized force at his disposal, would have taken advantage to break our line—very often a long-extended one—and would have put our troops to a much more severe test than even they were put to. I only mention that fact for this reason, that we have to consider what would be the effect if we found ourselves pitted against European troops. We should have both these contingencies, which were neglected by the Boers, to look to. My object in mentioning this is to remind you that we had largely to rely—both in our own and in our colonial levies—on relatively untrained troops. I admit to the full that our levies—that is to say, our yeomanry and other hastily levied troops—differed extremely in their composition and in their military quality. They all improved enormously after some months, but no general commanding British troops would have been willing, in the condition in which many of them went out—nor would it have been fair—to pit them against European troops; and the same, in a lesser degree, holds good as regards the colonial force sent to our support. They differed, and they were bound to differ exceedingly, in their military quality, especially at the beginning, and on first landing; and it is not disrespectful to them to say that, with the training which they had received before they landed, there was a considerable number of those troops which no general would have had a right to pit against European troops without further training, and it is exceedingly important to us in laying down our plans of action for the future to know to what extent we can depend in an emergency upon colonial support. Of course, I realise in regard to all these questions that we should not ask for—that we should go too far if we asked for any general promise of support in an