

nineteen years prior to this last war, whether military, naval or air training, or all three, be decided upon.

The Defence Act of 1909 made military training universal in New Zealand for young men up to the age of 21. In 1911 the age was amended to 25. Recommendations of Field Marshal Lord Kitchener during a visit to New Zealand in 1910 greatly increased the effectiveness of the Act with the result that it became a decisive factor in the part played by the 1st NZEF in the Great War. In that war New Zealand was ready. On August 15, 1914, only eleven days after the outbreak, New Zealand troops embarked for Samoa. Two months later to the day, the Main Body of nearly 8000 men left for Egypt. This prompt action would have been impossible without the universal training carried out under the Defence Act. After the war universal training was continued until 1930 after which the compulsory provisions of the Defence Act were not enforced.



If the compulsory system had not been relaxed in this way, no doubt New Zealand's task of mobilising her forces and preparing her defences in

World War II would have been much simpler, commendable though her efforts in the circumstances were. With the increased tempo of modern war and the startling introduction of atomic bombs, the need in any future war for an immediate effective defence would be considerably increased. If New Zealand showed that she had an adequate defence against aggression, it might deter invaders from crossing the great expanses of ocean to attack her. To be so prepared, she must have a system of compulsory military training.

It may be that New Zealand will concentrate upon air power as the best means of defence. It was the air power that saved her from invasion when the Japanese were turned back in the Battles of the Coral and Bismarck Seas. With only small reserves of manpower to draw upon, her most effective defence might well be her air force. The "few" saved England. A thousand young pilots with modern fighters and bombers could make New Zealand an equally hard nut to crack. There should be no dearth of aircrew material. Two years ago it was announced by a high Air Force official that there were sufficient New Zealanders in England in the R.A.F. or R.N.Z.A.F. squadrons to man a 1000-bomber raid with full fighter aircraft escort. A very much larger force of planes could no doubt be manned today. These experienced airmen would themselves constitute a strong bulwark of defence until their places were filled by younger men year by year—if New Zealand had the aeroplanes for them.

There, of course is the main difficulty. An air force of the size envisaged would be a huge burden on the taxpayer's shoulders. Aeroplanes, with jet propulsion as yet in its infancy, would become obsolete quickly. Constant replacement with new types would be necessary. The aircraft industries of Australia and New Zealand would have to be expanded. It