Stiftelsen norsk Okkupasjonshistorie, 2014

116636

COMPULSION IN DEFENCE

We shall never be adequately prepared to deal with air-bombardment in our great cities until some system be found by which the local manhood can be called into disciplined formations under orders, for the purpose of carrying out the necessary protective measures and ensuring the essential public utility services. Some such organization is indispensable to security; but I do not see how it can be established on an adequate basis or on principles of democratic equality unless the obligation is rendered universal and a sufficient contingent is annually trained in every city or other area.

Even in a book which never shirks controversy and is at times, out of the sincerity of its convictions, deliberately provocative, no passage is more likely to stir up angry criticism than this proposal of compulsory defence against air attack. It is therefore only fair to Sir Edward to point out that his insistence on the principle of democratic equality is by no means confined to war purposes. He is, for example, frankly aghast at Sir John Orr's analysis of the nutrition of our people. He quotes the passage which lays it down that the three lowest and largest wage-groups are under-nourished and wishes that their needs had aroused even a tenth of the enthusiasm lavished on Abyssinia. The fault, he urges, lies with our system of education, which, in so far as it deals with citizenship at all, imparts inadequate and ill-balanced ideas.