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# REARMAMENT SURVEYED

## £343,000,000 TO BE SPENT IN 1938

### 1939 THE PROBABLE PEAK YEAR

The Statement relating to Defence, which was issued by the Government last night, is as follows:

The Statements relating to Defence, presented to Parliament in March, 1935 (Cmd. 4827), and March, 1936 (Cmd. 5107), explained the circumstances which led his Majesty's Government to the conclusion that steps must be taken to make good the serious deficiencies which had accumulated in all the Defence Services, and outlined the objectives aimed at in the plan which had been drawn up for the reconditioning and modernization of our defence forces. The Statement presented to Parliament in February, 1937 (Cmd. 5374), dealt mainly with defence expenditure consequent upon the wide range necessarily covered by the programme and the growth in the complexity and cost of new armaments generally, and gave an indication of the order of magnitude of the expenditure which must be contemplated.

2. The scope of the present paper is necessarily different. The essential features of the policy underlying the defence programme remain unchanged, and what is needed is rather a survey of the progress achieved, with reference to such changes in organization of such special requirements as are likely to be of interest. The paper proceeds upon the assumption, now almost universally accepted, that the steps taken by his Majesty's Government to make good our defences are unavoidable, and that they furnish a steady influence upon the present state of international relations.

It will be appreciated that for reasons of public interest this survey must, for the most part, be expressed in general terms, and that it is impossible to give specific details as to, for example, the output of any particular type of equipment. In some particulars the information will inevitably overlap with that in the separate Memoranda accompanying the Estimates of the Defence Departments.

#### NEW FACTORIES

3. The general lines on which it was proposed to expand capacity for the production of armaments was explained in the White Paper of February, 1937. A number of new factories have been brought into production, and others are under construction. Existing factories are working to a high level of output.

4. It is not to be expected that no setbacks should be encountered in a programme of this magnitude, which, moreover, includes the development of a number of articles of new design. For example, the full expansion of production necessary to enable the programme to be completed within the time originally contemplated has made demands on the supply of certain materials and on certain types of skilled labour which could not be met without some delay, the more so as it has been the policy to avoid as far as possible interference with the requirements of private industry. The helpful cooperation of all concerned has done much to diminish the difficulties of the situation, but constant attention to this aspect of the programme is required if the best results are to be obtained from the very large outlays made on the erection and equipment of factories.

Regarding the task as a whole, it can be said that, while delays and difficulties have been experienced, and deliveries have not in some cases come up to anticipation, progress has on the whole been satisfactory. The difficulties hitherto encountered have been largely

also started production, and a shadow factory for bombs is on the point of doing so; the factories are additions to the programme as at first conceived and are examples of the arrangements which the working out of the programme entails.

12. Concurrently with industrial requirements for armament production, the defence programme involves a large number of works services, many of them of considerable magnitude. An instance is the additional storage accommodation, entailing heavy expenditure, for the accumulating reserves of all kinds of the three Services.

#### MODERN BARRACKS

#### WORKSHOPS FOR THE NEW MECHANIZED FORCES

13. Good progress has been made with the Army works services for bringing barracks accommodation up to modern standards, and providing the workshops and buildings required for modern mechanized forces, both at home and abroad. A large building programme is also being carried out to provide the new type of accommodation which is necessary for the units and equipment of the two Anti-Aircraft Divisions; the majority of such units have now been provided with accommodation, either permanent or temporary.

14. The total number of new aerodrome sites acquired since the expansion programme started is 59; of which 30 are now occupied by units. In addition large extensions have been made to a number of existing stations.

15. The organization of recruitment and training in all three Services has received special attention. Not only are recruits being entered in greatly increased numbers, but the complexity of modern warfare requires the adoption of a higher standard of training.

16. To keep pace with the growing strength of the Fleet, naval personnel has expanded at a steadily increasing rate. Additions were made in the year 1937 an increase of over 10,000 has been planned, the effect over the five years being an expansion of about 25 per cent. In 1938 an increase of 7,000 is in contemplation.

17. There is every reason for confidence that the higher level of entries will be maintained. Actually, during the first three quarters of the year 1937, over 11,000 recruits have been entered for the Navy. Some difficulty has been experienced in the past year in obtaining skilled tradesmen, owing to the demands of the rearmament programme, but the position in this respect is showing most satisfactory improvement.

18. The rapid rate of expansion of naval personnel has taxed to the utmost the organization for recruiting, training and drafting. At many naval training establishments building has been undertaken to accommodate the larger numbers receiving instruction. The Caledonia (late ss. Majesty), the new boys' training establishment at Rosyth, has proved invaluable and her location has been followed by an increased entry of boys from Scotland.

#### HIGHER AGE LIMIT

19. A number of measures have been taken to facilitate and encourage Army recruiting. These measures fall under two headings: revision of the qualifications for enlistment and improvements in conditions of service. Under the first heading, physical and educational standards have been adjusted to suit the duties of the various arms, and in certain Corps the age limit has been raised. Under the second heading there have been increases of ration allowance and of recruits' kit allowance, the improvement of messing and accommodation, the abolition of "holding" for an extra year's service abroad, and the granting of permission to soldiers over 21 years of age to sleep out of barracks. During 1937 3,600 more recruits were taken than in the previous year.

20. Last August men serving in sections A and B of the Army Reserve were invited to rejoin the Colours; up to the end of January some 2,600 had done so.

21. The year 1937 was a record recruiting year for the Territorial Army; 45,320 recruits being obtained and the strength of all ranks

White Paper will shortly be issued. Special material for which has already been delivered.

29. A successful start has been made with the balloon barrage scheme, most of the Sufficient regular personnel have been fully trained to enable them to supervise and train in their turn the auxiliary personnel who will be primarily responsible for manning the barrage. Recruiting of the auxiliary personnel, which awaits the completion of the necessary stations, is expected to start in May.

30. As regards the system of organization, the Air Ministry is responsible for the air defence scheme as a whole, and the anti-aircraft units of the Territorial Army, which provide the gun and searchlight defences, come directly under the Air Officer Command-in-Chief, Fighter Command, in operations in war and combined training in peace. Plans are prepared in a joint Committee, the membership of which includes the anti-aircraft divisional commanders and representatives of the operations branches of the War Office and Air Ministry, the Air Officer Command-in-Chief, Fighter Command, being chairman. The latter has on his staff two General Staff officers from the Army, the anti-aircraft divisional commanders have their headquarters with the commanders of the Fighter Groups in peace. In all operational matters there is direct communication between Headquarters, Fighter Command, and the anti-aircraft divisions.

#### A.R.P.

#### SCHEMES TO MEET NEEDS OF EACH LOCALITY

31. The measures for the protection of the civilian population against the consequences of air raids have been taken an important stage forward by the Air Raid Precautions Act, 1937, under which local authorities will discharge the duty of preparing comprehensive schemes for the purpose, with substantial financial assistance from the Exchequer, and respect of approved schemes.

The underlying principle is that the schemes will be prepared under the guidance from the Home Office or Civil Defence Office, and in respect of some parts under central direction, they will be framed in the requirements of each local authority, thus ensuring the action best adapted to the needs of the locality, and the flexibility, which the scheme might break down in an emergency. Air-raid precautions are based fundamentally upon a wide diffusion of the knowledge among the people of the country of the enrolment and instruction of large numbers of volunteers for the local organization of public duties.

32. The local authorities have already received information on the matters which they should include, both in fire-precaution schemes and in air-raid precautions. Broadly, they are required to provide for the instruction of the public, the enrolment and instruction of voluntary personnel for air-raid warden, first aid parties, first aid posts, &c., arrangements to deal with dangers of poisonous gases, a survey of accommodation locally available which could be used, with adaptation where necessary, for public shelters, the organization of hospital services for casualties, the organization of emergency fire services, coordination with public utility undertakings, lighting restrictions and warning systems, as well as the preparation of plans on which the Secretary of State could, if the emergency arose, give directions as to evacuation.

33. The Air Raid Precautions Department has been strengthened and additional numbers of regional inspectors are being appointed, who will be able to give up-to-date information and advice to the local authorities in the preparation of the details of their schemes.

#### TRAINING SCHOOL

34. A general training school for Air Raid Precaution Officers of Local Authorities is being opened in London. About 25 to 30 officers will attend each course, which will last between two and three weeks. The two schools for anti-gas measures are now fully in operation and a course for superintending instructors in the measures for dealing with incendiary

taken in future years. Taking the programme as it then stood, however, it was stated that it would be imprudent to contemplate a total expenditure on defence during the next five years of much less than £1,500,000,000.

41. Estimates for the current financial year provided for a total expenditure by the three Defence Departments (including Royal Ordnance factories) of £278,250,000, of which £80,000,000 was to be met by issues from the Consolidated Fund under the Defence Loans Act, 1937. In addition, about £5,250,000 was provided for air raid precautions schemes.

42. For the ensuing year 1938 provision is made in the Estimates of the three Defence Departments (including Royal Ordnance factories) for expenditure amounting to £343,250,000, of which it is proposed to meet £90,000,000 by issues from the Consolidated Fund under the Defence Loans Act. In addition, nearly £8,500,000 is provided for air raid precautions services.

43. Present indications are that the defence programmes now in hand are likely to involve defence expenditure in 1939 in excess of the provision made in the Estimates for 1938.

The course of expenditure in subsequent years is necessarily dependent upon circumstances which cannot at present be foreseen, and in particular upon the degree of success which attends the efforts of his Majesty's Government to achieve some appeasement in international affairs.

44. The continuous development of modern armaments has given rise in the past 12 months to a number of new needs; and the growing power and complexity of new weapons tends to increase their cost. The flexibility of the whole programme has made it possible to meet by reductions in other directions some part of the increased cost arising from these tendencies; but under present international conditions they must continue to operate. It must therefore be expected that even on the assumption that 1939, as now seems probable, will be the peak year of defence expenditure, the total expenditure on defence over the five financial years 1937-41 will exceed the sum of £1,500,000,000 mentioned in the White Paper of February, 1937.

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