

A RESERVOIR OF OFFICERS

THE STUDENT IN TRAINING

ARMY AND UNIVERSITIES

By Major-General Sir F. Maurice

The Officers Training Corps has entered on the thirtieth year of its existence. The idea of using the public schools and universities as a reservoir for the provision of officers for the Army originated with the late Lord Lovat. To Haldane, who was an educationist before he became an Army reformer, Lord Lovat's scheme appealed at once, and he formed a committee composed of four representatives of the universities and public schools, Lord Lovat, and two soldiers, with his Permanent Under-Secretary, Sir Edward Ward, as chairman to give form to Lord Lovat's idea. He announced his plan to the House of Commons in February, 1907:—

To my mind there is no more serious problem to be solved than how to get over the deficiency of officers. We want 4,000 to make up the deficiency on mobilization for the Regulars and about 6,000 to make up the deficiencies in the second line. We saw that there was only one source from which we could hope to get young men of the upper middle class, who are the usual source from which this element is drawn, and that was the universities and big public schools like Eton and Harrow, and other public schools of that character, which at present have large cadet corps. You are not in danger of increasing the spirit of militarism there, because the spirit of militarism runs fairly high both there and at the universities. What we propose to do, in our necessity, is to turn to them and to ask them to help us by putting their militarism to some good purpose.

Haldane's first object then was to bring the existing cadet corps of the universities and public schools into the national military system, and to organize from them a supply of officers. His second object was to bring the universities into closer touch with the Army.

I have noticed with delight in our new universities degrees established in special sciences. Why should there not be a B.Sc. degree in the science of war? A part of the study must consist in work at some military school close to the university. Sympathizing as I do with the growth of the scientific spirit among the officers of the Army, I look forward to the time when such university education will play a large part in the training of the officer.

IF KITCHENER HAD KNOWN

After 30 years, how far have these aims been achieved? The number of officers required in a great national emergency is certainly not less to-day than it was 30 years ago. In the early years of the War the Officers Training Corps proved its value, but that value might have been very much greater if Kitchener had known more of Haldane's plans, and if public clamour had not prevented Haldane from giving Kitchener advice. As it was, thousands of young men who were potential officers were allowed to enlist in the ranks, and were killed or disabled before they could be taken out and given the training to make them fit to lead. Arrangements have now been made to use the Officers Training Corps to assist in providing on mobilization the necessary training cadres, and those who are of the officer type and are not already sent to officer cadet training

units, so that in a future emergency we may hope for more efficiency and less waste. An effective system of organization has been built upon the foundation which Haldane laid. The Officers Training Corps is organized in two divisions, the senior provided by the universities, the junior by the public schools. There are 177 schools which have contingents of the junior division, with a strength of 25,500 cadets, and there are 20 contingents of the senior division, drawn from every university in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, with a strength of 5,200 officer cadets. The Officers Training Corps is therefore an important element not only in our military but in our educational system.

I have been connected for 11 years with the contingent of the University of London, and during that time have inspected some score of contingents of the junior division. I have therefore a fair working knowledge of how the system of training works in time of peace, and of its results. Haldane's ideal, which is still the ideal of the War Office, was that the system of training should be continuous and progressive from junior to senior division, from public school to university, and lead from the university to the Territorial Army, or to the Supplementary Reserve of Officers. Figures show that his ideal is far from being realized. As I have said, there are some 25,500 cadets in the junior division and 5,200 in the senior division. I happen to know that a considerable number of the latter come from schools which have no O.T.C. It is safe to say that not more than 3,000 of the cadets of the senior division have come from the junior division, and as the normal service in the senior division is three years, that means that about 1,000 of the junior division cadets join the senior division annually, while from 8,000 to 9,000 junior division cadets leave their contingents every year. Making all allowance for boys who do not go on from public school to university, there is here a considerable wastage, and only a small number of those leaving public school O.T.C.s without going to the university take commissions in the Territorial Army.

THE TWO VALUES

A number of headmasters have expressed their appreciation of the educational value of the junior division of the O.T.C., finding that it provides training in discipline which the public school system does not furnish to the same extent in any other way. Naturally they have not expressed any opinion on the military value of these contingents. But, if most of the junior division cadets do not follow up the elementary military training they receive, its national value from a military point of view is comparatively small. Our pacifist friends are wont to campaign against the junior division of the O.T.C. on the ground that it puts wrong ideas into the mind of youth, training them to be militarists and inspiring them with the desire to stick bayonets into their fellow men. My own experience of the effect of the present system of training in the junior division is exactly the contrary. A majority of the boys are keen enough when they join, but the training in the junior division is infantry training and, owing to the lack of facilities at most schools, is for the greater part of the year confined to drill and shooting in the miniature range. Most boys get their certificate A, a certificate of proficiency in the elementary theory and practice of infantry training, when they are 16, and then have 18 months or two years in the corps, with nothing much to interest them when they are keen on foot.

MR.

MR.

MR.

MR.

MR.

MR.

MR.

MR.

MR.

MR.

MR.

MR.

MR.

MR.

MR.

MR.

MR.

MR.

MR.

MR.

MR.

MR.

MR.

mentioned from 11 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.
hall of the hospital will be open on the days
Friday, May 10, 11, 13, and 14, at 11 a.m.
The hear Royal Com

