Britain's Land Force

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THE IMPROVEMENTS OF SIXTY YEARS

What Gen. Sir E. Wood Says Concerning It. Was in Poor Shape, but is Now Excellent.

The following article is from the pen of General Sir Evelyn Wood, V. C., G.C.B.:—

In 1837, when her Majesty the Queen came to the throne, the troops had never before, within this century, been so weak in numbers and efficiency. On the return of the Army of Occupation from France, wholesale reductions were carried out, 33,000 men being discharged in the month of November, 1818. Now, after 60 years, her army has, if considered as a machine of war, reached the highest point ever attained, but the calls on it have become incomparably greater.

Although, in order to arrive at the numbers maintained, it is not safe to trust the actual sums entered in the annual estimates, because changes have been made from time to time in voting money for the army and navy—as, for instance, army estimates used to provide large sums for naval stores, and the navy estimates found money for the transport of the army on the seas—yet for practical purposes, the estimates for 1837-8 may be accepted as the lowest of the decade prior to her Majesty's accession. The economy was in pursuance of the policy of those who objected to the maintenance of a standing army. Such politicians were imbued with views expressed by Lord Carteret early in the 18th century, when he said: "A standing mercenary army in any free country necessarily destroys the martial spirit of the rest of the people," and after the Reform Bill of 1832, the constant endeavor to keep the estimates down to the figures voted in that year, resulted in a further reduction of a million and a quarter below the sums voted in 1827. The estimates of 1837 provided for 80,000 men in the United Kingdom and colonies, and 20,-000, including four cavalry regiments, stationed in India.

This reduction was not obtained, however, without causing entire loss of efficiency to the army as such, and terrible subsequent suffering to our soldiers. They were then enlisted for life, or for 21 years, and, although in the first ten years after the Queen's accession efforts were made by His Royal Highness the Prince Consort to form an army reserve, somewhat on the same lines as those adopted in 1872, yet, the idea being opposed by the commander-in-chief, the Duke of Wellington, the matter was allowed to drop till the events of the Franco-Prussian war awoke the British nation to a sense of its danger.

A battalion of infantry at the commencement of the Queen's reign generally consisted of ten companies, six of which, when required, went abroad to the colonies, four remaining as a depot, while one company remained in the United Kingdom as a nucleus for each battalion in India. From the four depot companies of a battalion in the colonies every efficient man was withdrawn, and, moreover, it was generally necessary to call for volunteers from other regiments to make up 600 men, the foreign establishment. The depot of one distinguished regiment, which is a fair average example of the system, consisted in 1837, of between 40 and 50 worn out soldiers. These cripples were kept serving on in order to save their pensions, and as each day one of them was discharged, or became unable to perform even garrison duties, his place was taken up by a recruit. Amongst the forty or fifty soldiers in the particular battalion which I have in my mind, it was nearly impossible to find any man capable of acting as an officer's servant.

From the small number of recruits in the ranks, a great majority of the privates in the Service companies were of middle age, and in one important respect excelled the soldiers of this decade. In those days the size and weight of knapsacks were, according to our present ideas, enormous; there were no such things as kit-bags, and the soldiers carried heavy loads, indeed every article they possessed, without apparent difficulty. Yet little attention was paid to their health at the time, and we cannot say how many men were invalided on account of heart disease, induced by pressure of the front straps which passed over the pectoral muscles. The number was, however, doubtless considerable, as we know from later experience of the same evil. The battalion of which I am writing marched in 1841-2 from Carlisle to Portsmouth to embark for Canada, and after the first few days men were constantly seen in the evenings going out walking, after having carried these loads on their backs throughout an ordinary march.

Long marches cannot be accomplished unless the discipline of the troops is sound, and one result of this very long service in the ranks was that the habit of obedience became deeply engrafted into the rank and file. In 1852 even in a force chiefly made up of drafts of young soldiers for the battalions then in Africa a memorable manifestation of this discipline was given. These were proceeding in the steamship Birkenhead round the Cape of Good Hope, and when the vessel struck at 2 a.m. on February 26, on a rock near Danger Point, the soldiers, encouraged by the examples of their officers, remained steady at the pumps, while the sick, women and children were placed in the only available boats. There were 638 souls on board, and after [illegible] as far as they could be allotted, two-thirds were still on board. As the ship broke into two parts the captain called out to the men standing on the poop: "Jump and swim to the boats." Two military officers ordered the men not to do so, lest the boats should be swamped. All but three obeyed, and being thrown into the water among sharks thus perished, those only in the boats escaping death. The King who was afterwards the first Emperor of Germany, paid our Army the remarkable compliment of ordering this heart-stirring story to be read on parade at the head of every regiment in his Army.

In January of this our Sovereign's and nation's year of thankfulness, a somewhat similar proof of discipline has been reproduced, but happily without loss of life. The Warren Hastings, a troopship of the Indian Marine, struck on a rock off the Isle of Reunion. The ship "listed" over, and on the captain's advice the officers King's Royal Rifle Corps, and York and Lancaster regiments, marched their companies down below, where they remained until they were ordered up to make for the shore.

I have often read that latter-day soldiers on the Continent allege there is a lack of discipline in the British Army. In the Continental sense (inapplicable to Britons) it may be imperfect, but while our soldiers, at the word of command, promptly face death, whether by suffocation between decks or by ravenous sharks brought out by our Army system.

Sixty years ago, for about six months of the year, there was absolutely no parade at all at the depots which I have mentioned above, and in those held by the battalions on home service the evolutions had no resemblance to anything which could occur in war. The usual movements were "marching past in slow and quick time," "counter marching," which may be likened to a complicated form of "ladies' chain" in a quadrille, and "changing front to the rear on the two center companies." The cavalry and artillery practiced the same sort of evolutions, the former "inverting line to the rear by the wheel inwards of wings" and by the "wheel about of troops," and the latter "changing front to the rear on the center sub-division."

These movements were still practiced by the infantry as late as 1866, and both in their method and in their value for war, even as understood in those days, may be aptly described by the old nursery rhyme of "Turn about and wheel about and do just so—and every time you turn about, you jump Jim Crow." Nor is this state of ignorance in tactics difficult of explanation. The greater part of the officers who had practical knowledge of war had left the Army, and those who had entered since the great war in the Peninsula had seen no service in the Field.

As the lessons learnt under Generals Craufurd, Picton, and other fighting leaders were forgotten, so our books of military exercises became longer, more fantastic and theatrical. Nor are we singular in these respects, for it was found that in Prussia, during the 20 years in which they had no annual manoeuvres, the drill became markedly more suited for show than for service in the field. It is strange that no one in authority amongst us remembered that it is only the simplest formations which are used in war. When, on March 21st, 1801, the Gloucester Regiment gained the unique distinction of a double-fronted head-dress for its conduct while being attacked simultaneously in front and rear, there was no "counter-marching," the commanding officer simply shouting: "Rear rank, right about face. Fire!" Similarly, the rear rank of the Essex (44th) Regiment was faced backwards to repulse a rear attack at Quatre Bras, June 16th, 1815, and the 8th Hussars at Balaklava, October 25, 1854, went squadrons "Right about wheel—charge!" at a Cossack regiment advancing to attack the Royal Irish Hussars in rear. Some old officers maintained that if "Chinese puzzle-like movements" were not practical, yet they made the soldiers handy; but the principal effect was to destroy a man's individuality.

The chastisement inflicted on the soldiers up to the Queen's Accession inhumanly severe, was now reduced, the sentence for corporal punishment being limited to 200 lashes. It was gradually reduced later, 50 lashes being the maximum in 1850, and it was finally abolished in 1880.

In some stations abroad at that period soldiers were virtually confined to barracks for long periods. General Sir Charles Napier wrote in a book published in 1837: "Within three months two men shot off their feet, in a regiment quartered in the same barracks in which I was living, in order to obtain their discharges." Besides the irksome monotony of the soldiers' duties, the discomforts of barracks were great; the cubic space allowed by regulation was from 300 feet to 400 feet per man, but as in 1837, in spite of regulations issued in 1807 forbidding the practice, the barracks were overcrowded, this allowance was seldom available. Even 10 years later the result of a Parliamentary enquiry elicited the fact that in some barracks the space was less than 250 cubic feet per man. The present [illegible] in 1837 were low, insufficiently warmed, and without light after sunset. Thus the few men who could read had no opportunity of doing so.

There were no Ablution rooms and no Laundries, all washing being carried out in the barrack-rooms. There were no reading-rooms, libraries nor regimental schools. In some battalions a non-commissioned officer was detailed as a schoolmaster, and sergeants who were unusually badly educated were ordered to attend for instruction, for which they paid. In 1837, one of the pay sergeants in the battalion I have taken as an example, could neither read nor write, and the company accounts were kept by his wife.

The recruit on enlistment received a bounty of £4, out of which he paid for his kit £3, and after various other necessary articles had been taken over from the Quartermaster's store, there remained a balance of 7s. 6d. payable to the man. The following clothing was furnished by the colonel: A coatee, a pair of trousers, one pair of boots, and a shako. When the colonel was of an illiberal turn of mind he naturally sought out the cheapest contractor he could find, and as the sizes of the suits issued to him were limited, the soldiers had considerable sums to pay for alterations. Greatcoats were furnished by the Ordnance Department, and were miserably thin in texture. In the hottest climate the soldier was sent into the field wearing a high stiff leather stock and closely buttoned jacket, with a thin cover for the forage cap, generally worn at home, with the result that many died from heat apoplexy.

All necessaries were purchased by the Quartermaster, or by order of the commanding officer. This system gave rise to much fraud and illicit gain at the expense of the men. My informant, now a general officer, when acting as Quartermaster for a few days received £20 from the clothing contractor. The writer himself, having, as acting Quartermaster in 1857, rejected the meat for two successive days, received a £10 Bank of Ireland note sent anonymously. In each of these cases the amounts were credited to regimental funds.

The soldier paid 8½d a day for messing and washing. He received free, ¾ pound of meat and the same allowance of bread, but paid for coffee, sugar, vegetables, salt, etc. The meat was always supplied by a local butcher, and the groceries were purchased by the orderly corporal, who, as a rule, received a monetary consideration from the hucksters. There were no ovens, and, mutton never being issued as a ration, boiled beef was the invariable dinner. The potatoes were boiled with the beef. No puddings or pies were supplied except at Christmas. In those days there was no such thing as a tea meal, and the men went with empty stomachs from 1 p. m. one day to 8 a.m. the next. They provided a bowl and plate at their own expense. All non-commissioned officers had their meals with the men, as sergeants' messes did not then exist.

Lord Wolseley, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army.

There were but a few married quarters, and, as a general rule, a man, his wife and children, lived in a corner of a barrack-room, blankets being hung around the beds to screen the family off from the single men. There were certain rooms named married quarters, and in them numbers of families were accommodated. My friend, to whom I am indebted for most of the information of the first 10 years of the reign, tells me that he saw in Corfu, after the Crimean War, 40 families collected in one very large room.

I have endeavored to write accurately of the Rank and File. As for the officers, they were ignorant of even the words of command, and an officer placed immediately behind them on the flank of the squadrons or companies. In 1837 the general officer commanding what is now called the Northwestern District, wrote: "The officers are very fine fellows, full of life and spirit, but the Devil could not make them read a book." It naturally followed that of "outpost" duties there was no knowledge at the Accession, and it was not till Lord Frederick Fitzclarence, when commanding at Portsmouth, took up the subject that the lessons learnt in the Peninsula were re-taught to some battalions of the army at home.

I do not wish to impute blame to the officers. If they would not study they were willing to face death, at the shortest notice. Moreover, nobody required them to have any military knowledge, and, indeed, in 1863, there was a colonel, who had commanded a battalion for many years, who during his service of 35 years had never seen a brigade field day; and this was the case with the commander of several battalions which came to Chobham in 1853, of which I shall write presently.

Nor was much attention paid to the physical efficiency of officers. In one garrison in Canada in the early forties there were two colonels, supposed to command battalions who could not mount their horses unless provided with a chair or mounting block. It was doubtless difficult to maintain efficiency, for the administration and government of the army was divided between several heads, the Secretary of War, Colonial Secretary, Home Secretary, Commander-in-Chief and Board of Ordnance.

It is interesting, when observing the names of private soldiers killed or wounded in action, now telegraphed from our most distant possessions with the same care as are the names of officers, to look back to the debates in the Houses of Parliament on the subject of the services of soldiers, and the scanty recognition of the acts of courage which helped to gain for Europe peace lasting forty years. There had been several attempts to obtain a medal or decoration for the privates who, in the Peninsula, had carried our flag from Lisbon across Spain to Madrid, and thence to Paris. All these attempts were, however, defeated, until 1847, when the Government gave way, mainly owing to the efforts of the Duke of Richmond, who presented a petition from the undecorated officers who had served in the Peninsula, asking that their case might be considered by Her Most Gracious Majesty. The Duke of Wellington, on this as on previous occasions, opposed the consideration of the petitives, who argued that if a medal were given to every soldier who had fought in the Peninsula it should be equally given to the sailors who had blockaded the coast of France during the wars with that nation. Throughout these debates the Duke of Richmond was apparently the only person who urged that sergeants and private soldiers should be granted a medal for their services in the Peninsula campaign. Eventually, on June 1st, 1847, the order was issued for the preparation of the rolls, but it was not till four years later, in 1851, that one of my relatives, who had left the army in 1814, received the medal.

The cavalry was scattered in small detached bodies all over the United Kingdom, some of the squadrons being at great distance apart. In 1837 the Horse Artillery in the United Kingdom consisted of seven troops of two guns each, making a total of 14 guns. There were six batteries of four guns each, besides four batteries of instruction. When the Emperor Nicholas of Russia visited this country in 1844, he was shown three batteries of Horse Artillery at Woolwich, of four guns each, and in 1874—30 years later—when the Emperor Alexander came, he saw 96 Horse and Field and a 40-pound battery, total 100 guns. Now the guns of Horse and Field Artillery number 574, capable of augmentation on mobilization to 648. Of these, about half the Horse Artillery, and one-third of the Field Artillery is in India, or abroad elsewhere.

At the time of the Queen's Accession the Staff arrangements were as peculiar as those in the regiments. Officers once on the Staff remained for years in the same appointment. One officer was 40 years quartermaster-general, and one of his assistants remained in that position 29 years, each serving on until removed by death. These arrangements were not calculated to further improvement in the Army.

As regards firearms, also coincidently with the Queen's Accession flint locks were discarded, and the percussion principle adopted. The army is conservative in its ideas, and does not readily accept changes, as is seen by the history of this innovation. The patent for percussion muskets was taken out in 1827, yet it was not till 1834 that it was tested, and then, although the result was satisfactory, it was five years before it was adopted in the service.

The average distance from the muzzle at which the bullet of the musket struck the ground, when fired horizontally at the height of 5 feet, was 120 yards. Target practice was carried out at 50 and 100 yards. A man who could put one-third of his bullets into the target, 6 feet by 3 feet, at the latter range was classed as a marksman. It was not unusual to find a target without a single hit on it after the company had fired a volley at 100 yards' distance. Even when the Army went to the Crimea there was still one division armed with the "Brown Bess" musket, the same weapon that was used in the Peninsula, but with new locks. The remainder of the Army had then, however, received the Minie rifle, which was superseded in 1855 by the Enfield. This change was not accepted in principle until Lord Harding became Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of Wellington having opposed it. It is not my intention, in this paper, to do more than glance at the military operations which took place in the first decade of the Queen's reign. The first war of any importance was that against Doset Mahomed, undertaken in 1839. A perusal of its events, although instructive for commanders and for statesmen, makes unplesant reading for the British public. The lessons to be learnt from its history, however, are that to ensure success, generals in the field should be young, to have retained vigor of mind and body, and that they should not be hampered in the field by the presence of political agents.

Expeditions and wars followed in China and in the Punjab, but the most important event occurring in the army at home was the substitution of the 10-year enlistment Act in 1847 in place of the service for life or 21 years, which was so distasteful even 60 years ago that the effectives of the army were seldom or never within 10,000 of the authorized establishment. The increasing difficulty of obtaining 10,000 men, the number annually required, helped to bring about the 10-year act. At that time three-fourths of the infantry were always abroad (about one-fifth was in India), and, as Lord Wolseley pointed out in an essay written 10 years ago, one battalion had spent 137 years abroad out of the 187 years it had been in existence.

In the decade of 1847-57, the army was fully employed, and with varying fortunes. In the north of India we suffered a decided repulse in November, 1848, at Ramnugger, and at Chilianwalla the British and Sepoy army fought from noon till dark against double the number of brave Sikhs. This fight cannot be claimed by us as anything more than a drawn battle, in which, indeed, we lost four guns and five stands of colors. The British public had always been accustomed to hear of victories in its far-distant possessions, and the news of this event in the Punjab caused the supersession of Lord Gough, the commander-in-chief, who was replaced by Sir Charles Napier, to whom the Duke of Wellington observed: "Either you or I must go out." Before the new commander-in-chief arrived, however, the victory of Goojerat and the capture of Mooltan had been followed by the acquisition of the Punjab, which was carried out in the spring of 1849.

In 1852 there were signs of unrest on the continent, and in June the Ministry passed a Militia Bill authorizing the enrollment of 80,000 men. Various efforts had been previously made to revive the old constitutional force, but not always on a reasonable basis. Perhaps the most futile proposition was that of local militia, who were never to serve out of their own country. The Duke of Wellington in this year told the Ministry plainly that the British army had not sufficient men to do more than just relieve battalions on duty in the colonies. It numbered 145,000, the population of the United Kingdom at that time being 25 millions.

While the British public were still enjoying the belief that the millennium of peace having arrived with the great Industrial Exhibition of 1851, there would be no more wars in Europe, our Ministers, feeling less confident, were induced, mainly by the efforts of the Sovereign and the Prince Consort, to assemble at Chobham the first troops ever brought together since the Waterloo year.

In June, 1852, a division of all arms was assembled on the Common, near what is now Sunningdale station on the London and South Western Railway, and these troops were succeeded by another division in August, which broke up after three weeks' exercise. It is interesting to notice that the staff and regimental officers wore full dress coatees at their daily work, a fact which was impressed on my mind by hearing, many years ago, that the Assistant Quartermaster-General, being irritated by the complaint of the cavalry commanding officers that the horses would be drowned in the ponds which had been made for watering purposes, insisted on their galloping after him, in close formation, through the whole of the ponds, to the great detriment of their clothes. Two years later the officers landed in Crimea, in September, 1854, wearing full-dress uniform.

We had, in 1852, done something to exercise our troops for the first time in thirty-seven years, but, as the Prince Consort pointed out, though we had got battalions we had no generals trained and practised in the duties of that rank; for as soon as a colonel was promoted he was placed on half-pay and was very seldom employed afterwards. There was no staff, known as such, no field commissariat, ambulance corps, nor transport. There was no general qualified to handle more than one arm, i.e., the cavalry or infantry, while the artillery was kept as distinct from the rest of the army as if it had been a separate profession! The army was in this state when England drifted into a war with Russia, of which the only recollection to be recalled with thorough satisfaction is that our soldier gave to all time an enduring example of the highest form of discipline. Forty per centum of those who served before Sebastopol, in the depth of the winter of 1854-5, rest on the uplands of the Crimea or in the Scutari cemetery at Constantinople. These heroic men, who were destroyed by unnecessary and preventable privations, exposure, disease and undue exertion, never gave in, and lay down to die without even a murmur.

In spite of our losses, however, when peace ensued, in 1856, England stood in a better position for war than two years previously, when the great struggle commenced. The 25,000 men who disembarked in the Crimea in September, 1854, had practically all disappeared, but they had been replaced by another 52,000, with 96 field cannon, or treble the number landed in 1854. It is strange how slow our countrymen are to learn. While the indescribable miseries, the narration of which by the Times' correspondent had overturned the Ministry, were still fresh in the public mind—even before the treaty of peace was signed—the Cabinet was considering what retrenchment could be made in the army and navy. Nor is this extraordinary when we reflect that in those days no British Cabinet, so far as I know, had ever understood war, and that our expenditure was at the time about three millions sterling a month; but the misfortune was we commenced to reduce the army without considering what the military policy of the country was to be.

Immediately following the return of our troops from the Crimea came the revolt of the Sepoys, beginning in the spring of 1857, which was not put down for two years, during which time both the Queen's and the East India Company's soldiers performed a succession of heroic deeds.

Two years later the excitement of some senior officers in the French army, consequent on the attempt made by Orsini on the French Emperor's life, an attempt which was arranged in London, gave rise to the fear of invasion, the result of which has been the formation of an Auxiliary Army of 220,000 volunteers, which has grown steadily in numbers and efficiency up to the present date.

In 1870 Imperial troops were withdrawn from our larger colonies, and ten years later there was a further concentration, it being recognized that Imperial garrisons are to be maintained only at certain coaling stations held to enable the navy to protect our mercantile fleets.

In 1871 Mr. Cardwell, then Secretary of State for War, carried out the abolition of purchase in the army. In that system, bad and unjust as it was, there were good points, the principal one being that it secured a rapid flow of promotion, though this was obtained at the expense of the individual officer. Under the new system the State has had to take over that charge, to the enormous increase of the non-effective vote; but, on the other hand, it has abolished that quasi right of ownership in a commission which existed, and while it lasted rendered difficult the practice of selection, to which we have only just now come, 39 years after it was suggested by the Queen to Lord Palmerston, and a quarter of a century after the country paid the price of Mr. Cardwell's great reform! The hard-

To enumerate merely the numerous wars waged by our army during the Queen's reign would unduly extend this paper, and it may suffice to state that during the 60 years Her Gracious Majesty has sat on the throne, exclusive of the operations of Chartered and other trading companies, her Majesty's Imperial soldiers (officers and men) have fought, in great or small expeditions, for 50 years, leaving 10 years only of absolute peace.

The young soldier of to-day, on joining, is in a very different position from that of his predecessor 60 years ago. He is supplied with a complete outfit of clothing, and a kit containing all such necessaries as brushes, combs, razors, etc. He is supplied periodically, later, with the principal articles of his uniform without charge; but he has to keep up the necessaries, which include underclothing, at his own expense, and to pay for any repairs to clothing while it is in wear.

He pays for groceries, vegetables, and personal washing, the cost of which varies now from 3d. to 4d. per diem, but his bedding is washed by Government. It is a fair estimate to put a soldier's rations, pay, lodging and clothing as equivalent to 15s a week, which sum increases gradually, according to the soldier's conduct, and consequent promotion. He is credited also with a sum of £3 per annum under the head of "deferred pay," which is given him on his joining the Army Reserve, or at the expiration of his service. After deducting all stoppages, a well-conducted soldier of our infantry—the lowest paid of our army—may reckon on having 4s. a week as pocket money. On the other hand, he sacrifices a great deal of his personal freedom; but, it must be remembered that if he were employed in civil life on a weekly wages, this ceases on his becoming ill, and he would have to pay for medical treatment, which to the soldier is afforded free, 7d per diem being, however, stopped from his pay while he remains in hospital.

I endeavored to describe the painful discomforts of the married soldiers' life 60 years ago. Their accommodation now, though not in old barracks what is desirable, is, at all events in the new quarters built under the Barrack Loan Act, almost equal to that of artisans in civil life. Quarters for non-commissioned officers and private soldiers are now built in three classes: (a) Two rooms and a scullery; (b) three rooms and a scullery; (c) four rooms and a scullery; and these are allotted to sergeants and rank and file, irrespective of rank, according to the number in the family. All the non-commissioned officers of the higher grades are permitted to marry, sergeants 50 per centum, and of the rank and file 4 per centum. This may seem a small number for the privates, but as the majority of the recruits enlist at the age of 18, and complete their seven years' service with the colors at 25, there is no excuse for their marrying, unless they have become non-commissioned officers and intend to remain in the army.

Although some corps have a better regimental system than others, yet in the majority of the mounted corps the men have coffee or cocoa at 6 a. m., served outside the stables. All branches of the serivce have, as a rule, bread and butter, with, in some cases, bacon, brawn or some such relish for breakfast. For dinner they have boiled, baked or roast meat, and generally a pudding of some kind, the rations being increased by grants from the regimental institutes to the company's messing book.

If, at the end of the seven years' service, the soldier does not wish to join the Army Reserve, but serves on to complete 21 years' service, he receives on final discharge a lump sum of £36 (deferred pay), and a pension of 1s a day for life. A sergeant under similar circumstances, receives £63, and a pension varying from 2s to 3s 9d a day, while the pensions of warrant officers run to 4s 6d per diem.

If we turn now to the state of the active army in 1897, we find that at home, in India, and the Colonies, there are 195,000 effectives, and 78,000 in the Army Reserves. Numbers alone, however, give no adequate idea of the efficiency of an army for Field service, and, without alleging that our arrangements are yet perfect, for, indeed, yet it may be confidently asserted that as regards the departments, or auxiliary branches, which clothe, cure, subsist, and transport the Army, and are therefore essential for its well-being in the Field, we have never previously been in so efficient a state. The growth of the volunteer forces and our innumerable minor wars have, through the agency of an enterprising press, made the army known to the taxpayers, and the War Office has thus been enabled to organise a modern system which has replaced the hand-to-mouth fashion prevailing 60 years ago.

While our Army has improved during the Queen's reign, those of all our continental neighbors have been increased to a much greater degree. Our population has gone up by 15 millions during the Queen's reign, and the National debt is only one-third per head of what it was about 60 years ago. We have doubled our Army, but our colonial possessions have increased out of all measure with the means we maintain of defending them. We have dotted over the surface of the whole globe, settlements which, though in the great majority of cases undefended by Imperial troops, are closely bound to is by the ties of loyalty to the Sovereign and brotherhood amongst the British people.