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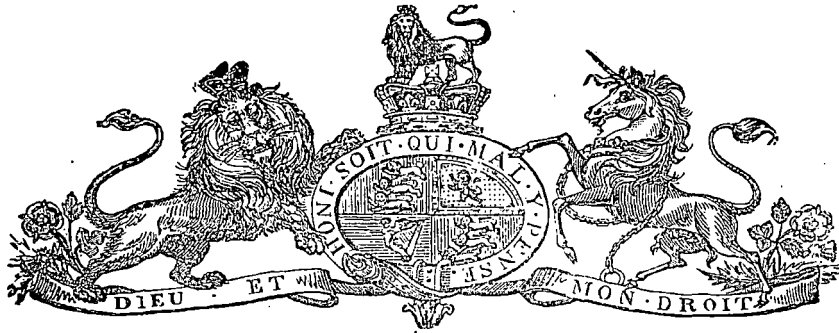
1889.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

REPORT OF MAJOR-GENERAL EDWARDS :

1. Local Forces and Defences of Tasmania.
 2. Memo. of Proposals for Organization of Australian Forces.
 3. Memo. and Estimate by the Commandant.
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LOCAL FORCES AND DEFENCES OF TASMANIA.

I.

From Major-General J. BEVAN EDWARDS, C.B., Commanding the Troops in China and Hongkong, to His Excellency SIR ROBERT G. C. HAMILTON, K.C.B., Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Tasmania.

Government House, Sydney, 9th October, 1889.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to forward the accompanying Report on my recent inspection of the local forces and defences of Tasmania; and also a memorandum, containing proposals for the organisation of the Australian forces.

The result of the inspection leads me to conclude that the local forces are not in a satisfactory state, and that little reliance can be placed upon them as a means of defence. They would be able to man the works for the defence of Hobart; but if an enemy succeeded in landing a few hundred men in any of the bays or harbours within a day's march of the capital, there would be nothing to prevent his turning the batteries, and capturing the city. The material of which the forces are composed is very good, and if properly organised a reliable force may be created.

The authorised establishment of the forces is as follows:—

Permanent Artillery	27
<i>Volunteers.</i>	
Launceston Artillery	100
Hobart	220
Torpedo Corps.....	75
Tasmanian Rifles.....	320*
Launceston	282*
Cadet Corps.....	120
Rifle Clubs	1500
TOTAL	2644

The actual strength is, however, much below this establishment, and the two battalions of Rifles could only muster 179 officers and men for inspection.

The volunteer system was previously tried in Tasmania, and as it was not found to answer, the partially-paid system was introduced. This being found expensive was given up, and the volunteer system again tried, with the result that the local forces are again in an unsatisfactory condition. A return to the partially-paid system becomes necessary, if an economical and reliable force is to be established.

* Including a band of 21 men in each battalion.

The recent formation of rifle clubs throughout the Island is a movement of great importance; provided sufficient cadres are formed to draft the men into, a force can be readily organized, sufficient for your present requirements. To create these cadres, the two rifle battalions should form one regiment, and become the Tasmanian Regiment, one of its battalions being at Hobart, and the other at Launceston. The battalions should be 300 strong, and each consist of four companies; the strength of the regiment on the peace establishment will be 600 officers and men. In time of necessity it can be made up from the rifle clubs to 2000, and, with the Artillery, Mounted Rifles, &c., would form a field force of 2500 men, which could be rapidly concentrated on a given point for the protection of the Island.

Without mounted troops the field force would be liable to be surprised, because you would have no means of gaining information of the enemy's movements, nor could you delay his advance. A corps of Mounted Infantry will therefore be required.

The Field Artillery should be separated from the Garrison Artillery, and be formed into a battery of eight guns—four at Hobart, and four at Launceston.

A small Company of Engineers, and a nucleus for the Medical, Commissariat, and Transport Service, should be established.

The strength of the local forces would then be:—

Permanent Force.....	27
<i>Partially-paid Force.</i>	
Garrison Artillery—3 Batteries—2 at Hobart and 1 at Launceston	160
Submarine Miners—1 Company	60
	247

These would be formed into a "Fortress Corps" for the defence of the works, the remainder being the Field Force, viz. :—

<i>Partially Paid.</i>	
Battery of Rifle Artillery	120
Company of Engineers	30
Four Companies of Mounted Infantry.....	160
Tasmanian Regiment	600
Medical, Commissariat, and Transport	55
	965
<i>Volunteers.</i>	
Rifle Clubs	1500
	1500

The annual camps of instruction should on no account be given up, as without these camps the troops cannot be trained. Each alternate year the whole of the force should be brought together, and the battalions made up as strong as possible from the rifle clubs.

Defences.

The defences of Hobart are in good order, and they would protect the city from bombardment by an enemy's cruiser, provided the men are efficient, and the organization of the defence complete; but this cannot be until the Garrison Artillery and the Submarine Mining Corps are amalgamated.

My opinion was asked as to the construction of additional defences for the protection of Hobart further down the harbour. On account of the width of the channel at this point, the batteries would have to be armed with powerful guns, and supported by a very considerable mine field. Looking to the great expense which it would involve, and to the necessity of increasing the expenditure upon the local forces, I recommend that these works be postponed until the local forces are made efficient.

Nothing has yet been done for the defence of Launceston; and steps should be taken to construct and arm the small work proposed at Brown's Bluff.

The defence of both the Derwent and Tamar would be greatly strengthened by the provision of first-class torpedo boats for each. They would not only deter an enemy's cruiser from entering the rivers, but they would also protect the coast for some distance on both sides of the entrances. I would therefore recommend these "floating" defences in preference to batteries, because they would be a more economical and efficient means of defence.

My attention was called to the cost of the staff of the defence force. The detailed estimate, as submitted to Parliament, is misleading, because all the permanent officers are included under the heading of "Permanent Staff; and this gives the impression that the staff is excessive. The only staff officers are the Commandant and his Adjutant; and the latter also commands the Permanent Artillery. The cost of the staff appears to be about £950 a year. The other officers are commanding officers; and their pay, and that of the instructors, should be shown with the part of the force to which they belong. It is not necessary to pay an officer £300, and also an instructor £180 a year, to take charge of the small submarine mining defence. The officer might command the amalgamated Corps of Artillery and Submarine Miners, and become responsible for the combined defence.

The number of rifles should be increased to 4000, with 500 rounds of ammunition to a rifle. The ammunition for the guns in the batteries is sufficient; but the Field Artillery should be provided with 400 rounds per gun.

These proposals, summarized in the order of their relative importance, would be :—

1. All the troops (except the Permanent Force and the Rifle Clubs) to be raised on the "partially-paid" system.
2. The Tasmanian and Launceston Rifle Battalions to become the "Tasmanian Regiment," with one battalion at Hobart, and a second at Launceston. Each battalion to be 300 strong, with four companies.
3. Four companies of Mounted Infantry.—A battery of Field Artillery and a small company of Engineers to be raised.
4. The Garrison Artillery and Submarine Mining Corps to be amalgamated.
5. Brown's Bluff to be defended.
6. The removal of the Test-room for the mine defence to Queen's Battery.

In conclusion, I would strongly impress upon your Government that batteries and fortifications are of little value unless they are supplemented by a proper field force, to prevent their being turned.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

J. BEVAN EDWARDS, *Major-General.*

2.

PROPOSED ORGANISATION OF THE MILITARY FORCES OF THE AUSTRALIAN COLONIES.

HAVING made detailed reports on each of the forces of the Australian colonies, and brought to the notice of the different Governments various points in their military systems which seemed to me worthy of special remark, I now propose to deal with those general questions which are common to the whole of Australia, and to propose an organisation which will not only enable the different colonies to combine for mutual defence, but lay the foundations of a sound military system.

Before the completion of the railways which unite Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane it was impossible for the colonies to co-operate for defence; and this is not even now possible, on account of their different organisations, and because the colonies cannot employ their forces outside their own borders.

Combined action for defence would be more economical and far more effective than the present system of purely local defence. Suppose, for instance, an enemy captured Newcastle, in New South Wales, the joint action of the colonies would at once supply a powerful force to retake it. The fact that 30,000 or 40,000 men could be rapidly concentrated to oppose an attack upon any of the chief cities would deter an enemy from attempting such an enterprise; and this can be accomplished by means of a common system of organisation, and without materially increasing the present strength of the forces. It would also prevent the unseemly scares which take place whenever the relations of the Mother country with a foreign power are somewhat strained: the mere fracture of the cable between Darwin and Batavia, which recently took place, was sufficient to cause uneasiness throughout all the colonies, and in Victoria preparations were actually made to resist an attack.

Organisation.

Every army before it can be efficient in war must be composed of certain definite units, each perfect and complete in itself. In the great European armies these units are called Army Corps, each of which is a perfect little army in itself of 30,000 or 40,000 men; several of these Army Corps being brought together to form an army. The same principle holds good in determining the

organisation of any army; and in order that the military forces of the different Australian colonies may be able to combine for mutual defence they must also consist of definite units, each of which must be perfect and complete in every detail, although these units will of course be very small in comparison to the Army Corps of a European Army.

The unit which is most suitable under the present conditions of the colonial forces is a brigade of all arms, of the following strength on the peace establishment:—

Infantry—2 Regiments of 2 four-company Battalions— each Battalion 300 strong.....	1200
Mounted Rifles—1 Regiment of 6 companies.....	360
Field Artillery—2 Batteries of 6 guns each.....	180
Engineers—1 Field Company.....	60
Commissariat, Medical Staff, &c.....	110
TOTAL.....	1910

When mobilised for war this brigade could be quickly expanded to 3000 men, and a reasonable time being allowed even to as much as 5000 men of all arms. The forces of Queensland and South Australia can readily supply a brigade each; and, calculated on the basis of population, New South Wales and Victoria ought to supply three brigades each, which would give eight brigades among the colonies. To do this, however, New South Wales and Victoria would have to reorganise their infantry, and increase their partially-paid forces. If they do not feel inclined to do this at the present moment they can, in the first instance, organise their forces into two brigades without additional expenditure, leaving the third brigade to be established at an early date.

These brigades, properly established and complete in every detail, and mobilised and expanded for war, readily adapt themselves to combined action. The Queensland Brigade united with the Northern Brigade of New South Wales, under the Queensland Commandant, would form a division for the protection of the coast from Brisbane southwards. A second division would be formed out of the two remaining brigades of New South Wales, and under the command of its Commandant would cover Newcastle and Sydney. A third division from the Melbourne military forces under the Commandant in that colony would cover Melbourne; and a fourth division from the remaining brigade in Victoria and the South Australian Brigade, under the command of the Commandant of the latter, would cover Adelaide. Finally, these divisions could be assembled and formed into a considerable army of 30,000 men or 40,000, at any point of the coast, from the head of Spencer's Gulf, in South Australia, to Moreton Bay, in Queensland, and even as far as Rockhampton when the railway is completed.

The Permanent Forces of Australia.

Permanent forces of Garrison Artillery and Submarine Miners are maintained in the different colonies, the strength of the different corps being as follows; viz. :—

Queensland.....	104	Artillery and Submarine Miners.
New South Wales.....	464	ditto.
Victoria	287	ditto.
South Australia.....	48	Artillery.
Tasmania	24	„ and Submarine Miners.
TOTAL.....	927	

It is most essential that the Artillery and Submarine Mining services should be brought under one head, so that they may work together without friction; and this can be brought about by the amalgamation of these Permanent Forces into one corps, calling it the "Australian Fortress Corps," so as to distinguish it from the Field Artillery. It would then only be necessary to slightly increase it, to enable the men to be found to take charge of the defences proposed at King George's Sound and Thursday Island. A few of the officers should be sent to England to be put through courses of instruction in gunnery and submarine mining at Shoeburyness and Chatham; and they would then be able to become the instructors of the officers and men in the corps.

The Partially-paid Forces.

This system appears to be well adapted to the present requirements of the Australian Colonies, giving it a cheap and effective defence force without the disadvantages of a standing army and the removal of the population from civil life.

The greater part of the colonial forces are termed "partially-paid," and the men receive a certain amount of pay to compensate them for the loss of wages when taken away from their employment for military instruction. In Victoria and New South Wales it amounts to £12 per

annum for each man, and in Queensland and South Australia to about £6. It is made up of a certain number of whole or half days, or of night drills—calculated at 10s. a day in the two first-mentioned Colonies, 6s. a day in Queensland, and 5s. a day in South Australia. In addition to this they receive free rations when in camp, and when called out for service. This system of pay has many advantages; and provided the conditions of service are sufficiently stringent—such as they are in Victoria—it will give the Colonies a force sufficient for its present requirements. Under it the forces of Victoria and New South Wales have attained a considerable degree of efficiency; but if the military forces of the other Colonies are to be of equal value, they must be brought up to the same standard.

Volunteers.

The services of volunteers have been generally discouraged in all the Colonies, as the system was not found satisfactory, especially in the country districts. The great centres of population, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Brisbane, might, however, be encouraged to keep up a certain number of battalions. They should only be formed from amongst the members of the rifle clubs, and they should become the 3rd and 4th battalions of the local regiments. They would undertake the local defence, and free the 1st and 2nd battalions for service in the field.

Rifle Companies.

The organisation proposed for the military forces of Australia gives the small cadre of 300 men for a battalion of infantry—a cadre which might with advantage be raised to 500 as the population increases;—it will be economical in peace, and capable of great expansion in war, provided the ranks can be filled. Some means must be devised for doing this with men trained to the use of the rifle, and with a certain amount of knowledge of drill. It is for this reason that I attach great importance to the system of rifle companies, which has now become general throughout the Colonies; and when they are affiliated to the local regiments they will find the men to fill their ranks in time of war. The people may always be relied upon to come forward when there is a necessity for them to do so, but unless they have been previously instructed in the use of the rifle, their services would be of little value. It is, therefore, well worthy of consideration whether every man on attaining the age of 18 to 20 should not be compelled to join a rifle company.

Dress.

As so many different uniforms are worn by the military forces of the Colonies, it is desirable that one universal pattern should be adopted. The feeling in some of the Colonies is in favour of red, but the colour is most unsuitable for the Australian bush. When the regiments at home proceed on active service they generally discard their tunics for a more suitable dress. As it is impossible for the colonial forces to keep up two different uniforms, it would be better to adopt a dress which would be of use on service. Such a dress is now worn by the Mounted Infantry in all the Colonies, and by the Victorian Rangers, and it is not only smart and soldierlike, but it is a distinctive national dress. I recommend it for adoption by all arms of the service, with badges and distinctions to show the corps to which the men belong. This dress must also be worn by members of the Rifle Companies, so that the men may be clothed when they come forward to join the regiments.

Federal Military College.

Nothing is more necessary for the efficiency of an army than the proper education of its officers, but at present no means exist in Australia to meet this important want. Canada was formerly in the same difficulty before she was federated, and it was only overcome by the establishment of the Royal Military College at Kingston. Having had personal experience of the officers educated there, I can testify to the excellence of their instruction. In addition to the primary object of the College, the course affords a thoroughly practical, scientific, and sound training in all branches essential to a high and general modern education. The tendency of it has been to cause the students to feel a greater pride in their country, and to look at it from the broad standpoint of Canadians, whose aspirations are not circumscribed by the limits of a municipality. A college such as this would be eminently adapted for the education of the officers of the Australian forces.

Railways.

Railways are now such important factors in war that no combined operations are possible over a large area without them. The break of gauge which exists between the Colonies would be fatal to celerity of movement; it would practically prevent Victoria and South Australia coming to the assistance of New South Wales or Queensland; nor for the same reason could the two latter Colonies render effective assistance to Victoria or South Australia. If, therefore, full benefit is to be derived from the railways, a uniform gauge must be established, at all events on the through lines.

Western Australia and Port Darwin.

No general defence of Australia can be undertaken unless its distant parts are connected with the more populous Colonies in the south and east of the Continent. If an enemy was established in either Western Australia or at Port Darwin, you would be powerless to act against him. Their isolation is, therefore, a menace to the rest of Australia, and the loss of the latter would

cut off all telegraphic communication with the rest of the world, the station at Roebuck Bay not being capable of defence. Standing as it does face to face with the teeming populations of Asia, and connecting Australia by means of its cable with Singapore, it has become a harbour of the first importance. In its present unprotected state the telegraph station might easily be destroyed, and, although cables which have been cut by an enemy at sea may be repaired, the station and its valuable instruments could not be made good. The cable would certainly be interfered with whilst we are at war with a naval power; but if Port Darwin was protected by two or three guns and a small force, a fast steamer could shelter there, and be employed in keeping up communications through Singapore with the outside world. The interests of the whole continent, therefore, demand that the railways to connect Port Darwin and Western Australia with the other colonies should be made as soon as possible.

Tasmania.

If, however, the isolation of Western Australia and Port Darwin is a menace to Australia, the position of Tasmania is still more dangerous, situated as it is within three days' steaming of Adelaide, one from Melbourne, two and a half from Sydney, and four from New Zealand; and it might even become necessary to send troops from the other colonies to protect it in time of war. No enemy could seriously threaten Australia until he had established a convenient base near at hand, and such a base he would find in Tasmania with its numerous harbours and supply of coal.

Federation of the Forces.

A common system of defence can only be carried out by a federation of the military forces of the colonies, each State agreeing to organise its forces on the same system, although they may continue to pay and maintain them separately. An officer of the rank of Lieutenant-General should be appointed to inspect the forces in peace, and command the whole in war. If the colonies had had the advice and assistance of such an officer during the last few years, their forces would be more efficient than they now are, and they would have been saved much unnecessary expense. It is therefore strongly recommended that, even if a federation of the forces does not immediately take place, that the colonies at once agree to the appointment of this officer to advise them, inspect their forces, and to be ready to take command in time of war.

Military Expenditure.

Some additional expenditure will be required to carry out these proposals; but its amount is inconsiderable in comparison with the results which will be obtained. Comparing the present expenditure of the different colonies with that of the mother country, and even with the United States of America, it cannot be said that the burden of defence presses heavily upon the great resources of the Australian colonies. While England expends $\frac{1}{3}$ of her income on defence, and the United States $\frac{1}{6}$, Australia expends $\frac{1}{10}$.

There are other, but not less important points which cannot be considered in detail, such as the supply of rifle ammunition—the difficulties of which will be overcome when the manufactory now being established at Melbourne is finished—and which must be in sufficient quantities to meet the demands which would be made when a state of war becomes probable and the whole of the forces are mobilised for further training; also the supply of ammunition for the Field Artillery and a common armament of the field batteries, the establishment of a railway corps, and a proper cadres for the medical—a well thought out scheme for which has been prepared by the Principal Medical Officer of New South Wales—and commissariat corps, and a common Federal Ordnance Store and Gun Wharf, and a federal camp of instruction to be formed from time to time by the forces of the contiguous colonies.

My proposals, briefly summarised, are as follows:—

1. Federation of the forces.
2. An officer of the rank of Lieutenant-General to be appointed: to advise and inspect in peace, and command in war.
3. A uniform system of organisation and armament, and a common Defence Act.
4. Amalgamation of the Permanent Forces into a "Fortress Corps."
5. A Federal Military College for the education of the officers.
6. The extension of the Rifle Clubs.
7. A uniform gauge for the railways.
8. A Federal Small-arm Manufactory, Gun Wharf, and Ordnance Store.

In conclusion, I will take this opportunity of acknowledging the courteous reception which has been accorded to me by their Excellencies the Governors of the different colonies, the members of their Governments, and the Commandants, and for the ready assistance which has been given in the inspection of the different forces. In making these propositions, I wish it to be understood that I do not commit myself in any way as to the sufficiency of these forces for the defence of Australia. The proposals which I have made are based upon the number of troops now maintained by the different colonies; but what the actual strength should be depends upon political considerations, and the possible combinations among the different foreign powers.

If the Australian colonies had to rely at any time solely on their own resources, they would offer such a rich and tempting prize that they would certainly be called upon to fight for their independence, and isolated as Australia would be, without a proper supply of arms and ammunition—with forces which cannot at present be considered efficient in comparison with any moderately trained army, and without any cohesion or power of combination for mutual defence among the different colonies—its position would be one of great danger. Looking to the state of affairs in Europe, and to the fact that it is the unforeseen which happens in war, the defence forces should at once be placed on a proper footing, but this is, however, quite impossible without a federation of the forces of the different colonies.

J. BEVAN EDWARDS, *Major-General.*

3.

Head Quarters Office, Hobart, 15th October, 1889.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to forward an approximate estimate of a reorganization of the Forces on the partially-paid system, as recommended by Major-General Edwards, and which was called for last evening by desire of the Honorable the Premier.

I forbear to make any comments upon the Report, except to remark that, from the General's comments to me on the drill of the Defence Force, I am well aware that the words, "not in a satisfactory state," refer to organization and small numbers, not to training and drill.

I have, &c.

W. V. LEGGE, *Col.-Commandant.*

The Hon. the Minister of Defence.

*Head Quarters Office, Hobart,
15th October, 1889.*

APPROXIMATE Estimate of Partially-paid Force, including Cost of Camp, calculated on basis of South Australian Pay.

ESTIMATE OF ANNUAL EXPENDITURE.

Annual Pay, £6 per annum for Privates.

	£
Cost of men	7110
Extra for Non-commissioned Officers, say	400
Officers—	
5 Majors, £30.....	150
14 Captains, £20	280
30 Lieutenants, £15	450
1 Surgeon-Major, £30	30
3 Surgeons, £20	60
Commanding Officer of Infantry	400
Adjutant acting as Brigade Major	300
Commanding Fortress Corps (Artillery and Submarine Miners).....	300
Seven Instructors at £150	1050
	£10,530
Permanent Artillery	2400
Commandant, Staff Clerk, and Messenger.....	700
Miscellaneous, and cost of Ammunition, Artillery and Infantry	2200
Contingencies, total	640
Capitation at full strength, 1200 men at 35s.	2100
	£18,570
Allowances.....	420
Camp—Rations, £300 for 1500 men; incidental transport, £150.....	450
Capitation Country Rifle Clubs, 1500 men at £1.....	1500
	£20,940

Out of this, with savings for non-efficiency and non-payment for corps under strength, about £17,000 would be spent annually.

W. V. LEGGE, *Lieut.-Col. R.A., Colonel-Commandant.*

The Main Line Railway has been taken in the above calculations as a Government Line.

W. V. L.

NOTE.—In case this scheme cannot be entertained this Session, I would recommend a small sum for training (daylight) for the Launceston Artillery, T. R. Regiment, and Launceston Rifle Regiment, amounting to	£450
And a divisional camp, the cost of which would be, with pay at 6s., for 500 men of the Defence Force	950
Cost of a Class of Instruction for 30 days for 30 Officers and Non-commissioned Officers Country Rifle Corps	100
	<u>£1500</u>

P.S.—It will be observed that the numbers proposed for the defence of the Colony are precisely those proposed by me, and which have been authorised by the existing Acts and Regulations issued since 1885; viz. :—

Defence Force	1200
Country Rifle Clubs	1500

W. V. L.